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LIB-LAB WAR ON JOBS

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Steel workers in 1975 protesting at announced redundancies

In a move aimed at destroying trade union organisation in the shipyards, British Shipbuilders management last week withdrew work on Swan Hunter yard on Tyneside, with the expected loss of at least 800 jobs.

The orders were withdrawn because workers refused to give an assurance that they would take no industrial action during the contract, which is for the Polish government.

Closure threat

With the Lib-Lab coalition government's decision to reallocate a further order—for a Navy cruiser—the Swan Hunter yard now faces the clear threat of closure.

This situation is a symptom of a new stage in the government's drive to restore the profitability of British capitalism—a drive that is leading to a wholesale massacre of jobs in the nationalised and state-owned industries.

The world-wide capitalist crisis and the slump in world trade is having a particular effect in heavy industries such as steel and shipbuilding which produce investment goods.

Full brunt

And the coalition government is determined that the full brunt of this crisis should be born by the working class.

Plans have already been announced to axe 25,000 jobs in the steel industry, and the rationalisation of British Leyland is expected to destroy another 12,000.

The 800 shipyard workers under threat of redundancy at Swan Hunter are among the 50,000 shipyard workers scheduled for sacking throughout the EEC if the European bosses' latest plans are put into effect.

And while a special Commission proposes closing 46% of EEC shipbuilding capacity, Japanese shipbuilders, who produce half the world's

Swan Hunter launches assault on union rights



Airlie

tonnage of ships, announced plans to cut back their capacity by 50%.

Blackmail

Under these conditions of slump the employers are seizing the opportunity to blackmail sections of workers into accepting massive speed-up and worsening of working conditions.

The only answer to such an offensive is a principled unity of workers both nationally and internationally in an all-out fight to defend jobs and conditions.

There is no doubt that, given a firm lead, support would be forthcoming for such a policy, and that the Swan Hunter ships could be blacked in every yard in the country.

Other ideas

But the Stalinists of the Communist Party have other ideas.

The convenor at Govan Shipyards is CP member James Airlie.

Airlie has already agreed

to scab on Swan Hunter workers by persuading Govan stewards to accept one of the reallocated ships.

Dirty work

Now that three more are virtually certain to go to Govan, Airlie has again refused to call for blacking.

Instead he has called for the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to do his dirty work and take the decision.

Airlie knows that this is tantamount to referring the matter to the employers. Indeed one prominent member of the Confed, Boilermakers' leader John Chalmers, is on the Board of British Shipbuilders and is a party to the sacking decision—which will first hit his own boilermaker members at Swan Hunters.

Other leading Confed figures include union leaders already up to their necks in collaboration with management rationalisation plans and "worker participation" schemes for speed-up in British Leyland and the steel industry.

Sweeping plans

But while union bureaucrats cook up sweeping plans to attack their own members, the resistance of the Swan Hunter boilermakers to this blackmail attempt indicates the mood of the working class.

The onslaught on jobs, conditions and the independence of the trade unions must be resisted, and a leadership built to fight for a clear programme.

We reject all attempts to

make workers the victims of the crisis of capitalism, whether such attempts take the form of calling for import controls—exporting unemployment—or involvement in reactionary "worker participation" schemes to increase the profitability of the employer.

Redundancies must be combatted by occupation centred on the demand for the sharing of the work available among the whole workforce in each trade—without loss of pay.

State-owned and nationalised firms must be forced to open their books to elected committees of trade unionists to expose their links with private industry and the banks, and to reveal the unused productive forces squandered by capitalism.



Chalmers

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

With this information workers can show the need and the basis for a planned programme of useful public works to utilise and expand the productive forces and create new jobs.

In order to carry through such a fight the whole trade union and labour movement must take up the fight to break the anti-socialist Lib-Lab coalition that is now the main vehicle for the employers' attacks, and remove its defenders from the Labour leadership.

Such a fight—whatever the difficulties—offers the only way forward for workers threatened by these mass sackings.

UNITE TO BREAK 10% LIMIT

2,000 tanker drivers employed by Shell are to impose an overtime ban as from Wednesday of this week.

This action, which will quickly hit petrol supplies to the private motorist, marks an important new development in the struggle of the working class against the wages policy of the coalition government.

It comes at a time when claims on behalf of hundreds of thousands of workers are being submitted to the employers.

Substantial claim

On Tuesday the rail unions meet British Rail to submit a "substantial" claim and a meeting is due to take place with the Cas Board following the rejection of the bosses' recent 8.9% offer by the 40,000 workers in the industry.

On Wednesday, leaders of the steel unions meet BSC following the rejection of the pathetic 6% rise which employers had offered in return for 25,000 redundancies.

At the same time British Shipbuilders are to reply to a claim on behalf of 85,000 shipbuilding workers.

40% increase

On Thursday EETPU officials meet the Electricity Board on behalf of electricity supply workers who are demanding a 40% increase.

On Friday a further meeting takes place on the

claim for a substantial increase in minimum rates for the three million workers in the engineering industry. Employers have offered a derisory 2½% increase!

A 10% offer to 30,000 water workers has also been rejected by the unions concerned.

Pressure

In each of these claims the leadership are determined to settle within the 10% pay limit.

But they are faced in most cases with determining pressure from the rank and file.

The tanker drivers confront all the leadership problems faced by sectors of workers in struggle on wages over the past year.

Their 30% claim lacks the necessary demand for cost-living clauses against inflation, and their leaders have restricted them to an inadequate form of action.

These same leaders will leave them isolated—opening up the danger of defeat as happened with the firemen.

Break isolation

After all, the tanker drivers themselves were helped back by union officials in order to isolate the firemen.

The key issue in this struggle is again to bring out other sections of workers on their own claims alongside the tanker drivers in order to break the isolation and wage a united fight to break the 10% pay limit and destroy the Lib-Lab coalition, the job of which is to enforce it.



French Stalinists try to hide from power

With France's general election now less than six weeks away, it is as unclear as ever which party or group of parties will emerge as victor; what government France will have after March 19 is thus very much in doubt.

The former components of the French Union of the Left are fielding separate candidates and not a joint slate as they did in last year's municipal elections.

The two major components of the popular front bloc—the Socialist Party, led by Francois Mitterand, and the Communist Party—led by Georges Marchais—split last autumn, ostensibly on the question of updating the Union's common programme.

Since then there have been few moves to knit the Front together again, but at the beginning of this month the split was significantly deepened.

No decision

The Communist Party announced that they could not make any decision on supporting Socialist candidates on the second round of the ballot until the first round results were known.

This decision is a marked departure from previous practice whereby the CP and SP had an arrangement to support each other's candidates on the second round, thereby maximising the vote for the "workers' parties".

This break-up predictably infuriated SP leader Francois Mitterand who denounced

the CP in a mid-January edition of his party magazine *L'Unité*, alleging that the CP had wanted to split the Union of the Left from as early as two days after it was first formed in June 1972!

Hot on the heels of the split in the Union is a split in the governmental forces. On January 11, Gaullist leader Jaques Chirac announced that his party, the Republican Assembly, intends standing a candidate in every constituency, even in areas where members of President Giscard's party are standing.

This decision brings to an

abrupt end 10 years of parliamentary partnership between the Gaullists and kindred right wingers.

The dangers this involves for Giscard's forces have already been pointed out by Interior Minister Poniatowski, who pointed out that it is now possible for no government candidate to proceed to the second round of the ballot since a minimum of 10% is needed in the first round in order to proceed.

This, though, has not deterred Chirac, despite the fact that he has indicated he will support governmental

candidates on the second round.

This seemingly strange decision by Chirac seems to have its roots in his fear that President Giscard is now trying to put together a "centre-coalition" between his own party and Mitterand's Socialists which would exclude both the CP and Chirac's Gaullists.

In his latest speech, however, with which Chirac has expressed satisfaction, Giscard defended the continuation of the present majority (which opinion polls clearly show is in fact a

minority).

A poll by the bourgeois daily *Le Figaro*, last week showed a combined right wing vote of 44% and a combined vote for the left of 49%.

Shelter

This would probably give the CP and SP a parliamentary majority if they both stood down in favour of the other in the second round of the elections.

Their refusal to agree to do so indicates that neither the CP nor SP leaders intend to be pressed into an alliance which would produce a government independent of the bourgeois parties.

Their counter-revolutionary perspectives require them to shelter behind some form of coalition with the bourgeoisie.

CP-SP government

Workers must answer this by rejecting the Stalinist and reformist leaders' calls for "social peace" during the election campaign, by demanding throughout the labour movement that the mass workers' parties break with the bourgeoisie and be prepared to form a CP-SP government independent of all capitalist parties.

The battle over policies, if such a government were formed, would create the conditions for the exposure in struggle of the reactionary Stalinist and reformist leaders and for the winning of advanced workers to a revolutionary programme.

Mass arrests in Tunisia

400 officials and militants of the Tunisian UGT have now been arrested by the Bourguiba government.

This move by the one-party state followed the national general strike on 26 January.

The strike—the first of its kind since independence from French colonial rule in 1956—was termed by the UGT leadership a "warning" to the ruling Destour Socialist Party.

The warning was answered by troops and the police. As the strike developed into street fighting, at least 40 people were killed and 300 more injured.

Massive pressure

Curfew was imposed, and troops occupied the UGT headquarters in Tunis.

Habib Achour, general secretary, and the other bureaucrats at the head of the union were driven to organise this action by the massive pressure from workers which has built up over the last few months.

A series of strikes for higher wages had met with increasing attacks from the government, and token gestures of support from Achour and his companions.

But while Bourguiba and his ministers ranted about "deviationism", they sent in their troops to break up the strikes, and instructed the party militia to attack union offices in the major towns.

Militant layers

The police protected these thugs of the state before moving in to assault the demonstrators who had gathered in Tunis to support the union's independence from the state.

These 1,000 workers, mostly youth, represented the militant layers who have been demanding that the

UGT break completely from the DSP.

Achour has responded to their calls for an independent workers' party by criticising the "methods" of the DSP, but insisting at the same time that talks to reach a compromise should continue.

Subjection

In reality, only one 'compromise' will be acceptable to the Bonapartist government which serves the Tunisian bourgeoisie: the complete subjection of the workers' struggles and organisations.

Thirteen years ago, in the last major upsurge of proletarian militancy in Tunisia, Achour was arrested for criticising the government's wage freeze and its attempts to control the union.

Whatever his role may have been then, it is clear that the UGT's general-secretary is now a major obstacle to the development of the present struggles.

'Neutral figures'

Wage control is still in operation, and the DSP is seeking to suppress the union by installing judges to control its internal elections—as 'neutral figures'! If this fails, there are already plans to split the union so as to isolate the militants in illegality.

Within all these conflicts, Achour is hoping to exploit the movement of the working class so as to secure his rise to power in the faction fight to succeed the dying President Bourguiba.

Achour's other main base is the support he receives from the Gaddafi dictatorship in neighbouring Libya. To substitute this 'left' opportunist for the present regime would be no advance for the Tunisian masses.



French workers on the march

Dictatorship in crisis in Nicaragua

The Nicaraguan dictatorship of General Somoza and his dynasty has lasted for 40 years. Last week it looked as if its days were nearly over.

For four days the country was virtually at a standstill as a result of a general stoppage of work.

Leaders of all the legal and semi-legal parties called for the immediate resignation of Somoza as a condition of ending the work stoppage.

It is not in any ordinary sense a strike since it is supported by the main bourgeois parties and the employers' organisation and many workers are continuing to be paid.

Corrupt regime

These capitalist, landowning and other conservative forces want to replace one anti-working class form of rule (Somoza's dictatorship) with another (some form of limited bourgeois democracy).

Somoza's prospects have seemed shaky for over a year, as US imperialism found its alliance with his brutally repressive and corrupt regime an increasing international embarrassment and Carter looked for new pro-imperialist forces to attach himself to.

He hit upon a right wing "democratic" opposition led by a newspaper editor Chomorro.

Economic power

Chomorro had the support of sizeable sections of Nicaraguan capitalists and landowners.

For them this is seen as a struggle against the unbelievable economic power of Somoza and his family—who own 20,000 square kilometres of land and a huge proportion of the country's manufacturing and service industries, and who have granted themselves all kinds of commercial advantages through their

political dictatorship.

Two weeks ago Chomorro was assassinated, it is presumed by Somoza's agents.

This was the spark which set off a wave of nation-wide anti-Somoza agitation.

This is in part a popular movement which the landowners and capitalists are desperately trying to control by appearing to put themselves at the head of it.

Disarray

In this situation of crisis and disarray for the Nicaraguan ruling class, a united and independent struggle of the working class and the peasants could overthrow all the factions of the capitalists and landowners.

But the workers and peasants still lack a leadership which is ready to undertake that task.

The Stalinists of the Nicaraguan Communist Party, far from fighting for an independent workers' struggle, stand side by side with the conservatives and other reactionaries in the anti-Somoza Democratic Freedom Union (UDEL).

Close alliance

UDEL, which is trying to lead the present agitation, wants to set up a different capitalist government which, like Somoza, will make a close alliance with US imperialism.

The other main party which claims to offer leadership to the oppressed classes is the Castroist Sandinist Liberation Front (named after Sandino, an anti-imperialist guerrilla leader of the 1930s).

The FSL, as it is known, has for the last ten years put up an intermittent guerrilla struggle against the regime.

Material aid

Its small army (never more than 200 or so) has used the



General Somoza - kept in office through the political weakness of the opposition forces.

mountains and sometimes the territory of neighbouring Costa Rica and Honduras for shelter. And it has received some material aid from Cuba.

Many of its members have been captured and are in jail. And at the end of 1976 some of its main leaders were killed.

Bolder actions

But recently the organisation has reappeared on the political scene, carrying out bolder guerrilla actions in the towns.

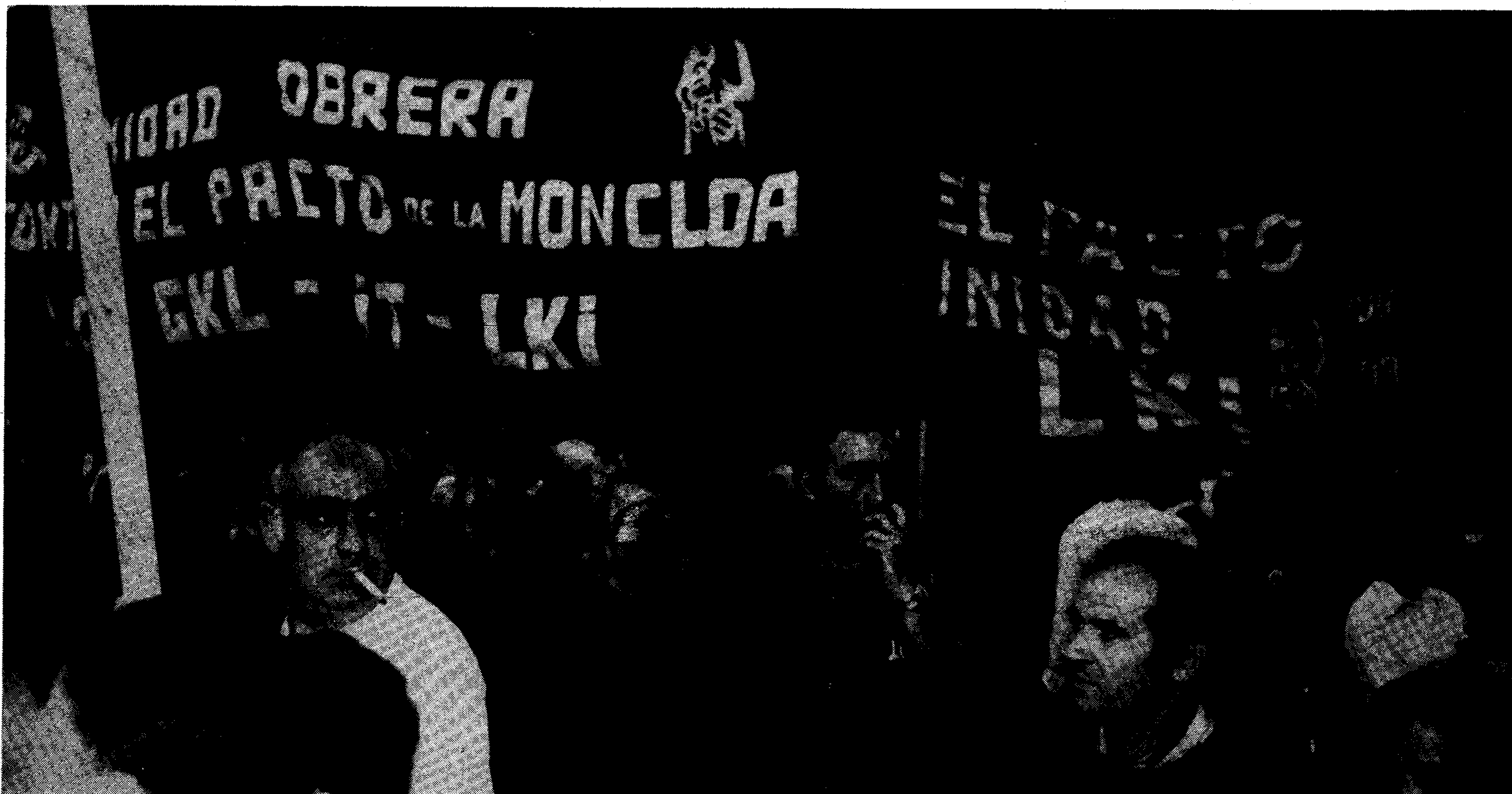
There is no doubt that the FSL has a good deal of passive popular support.

But it has shown itself completely incapable of offering any programme on which the workers and peasants can unite and go forward.

The border war between Vietnam and Kampuchea (formerly Cambodia) is continuing though most recent reports fail to bear out earlier ones about the massive scale of the fighting.

The Kampuchean leaders are now described by the Vietnamese as "reactionaries".

A clear hint is given that the Vietnamese want to see the overthrow of the present pro-Chinese leadership group under Pol Pot.



Workers march against the Moncloa Pact

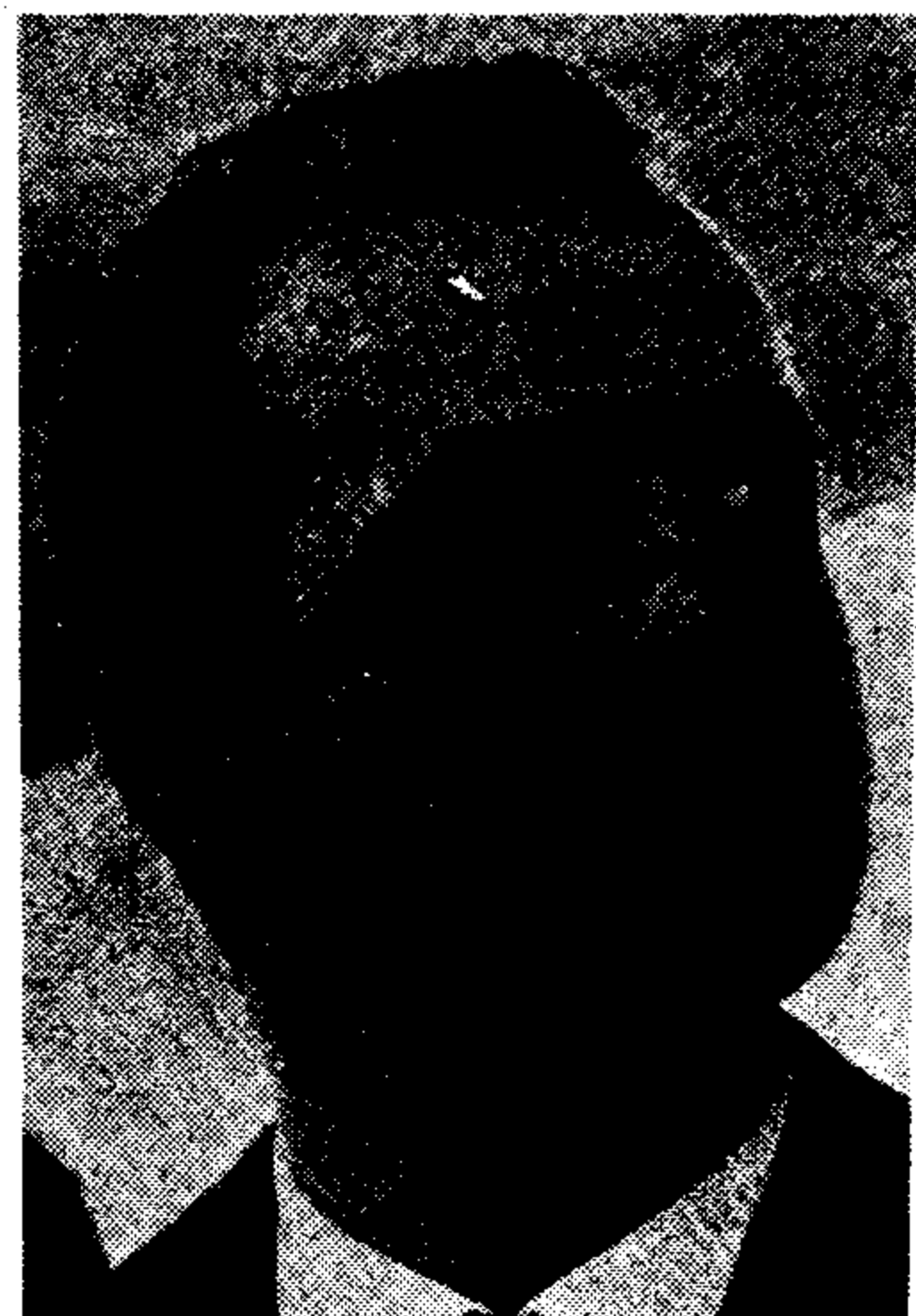
Franco style elections must be fought by boycott

On the question of trade unions, as on all other political questions, Spain's "democratic" Francoist government is in a perilous position.

It is unable to keep functioning Franco's old fascist "union", the CNS, known as the "vertical union".

This is because the mass of working class has shown time and time again its rejection of the fascist institution and its demand for free workers' organisations.

But the Suarez regime is completely unwilling to grant freedom to genuinely independent workers' organisations because that will make it more difficult to impose on the working class the vast economic burdens which Spanish capitalism needs to load on the working class.



Franco's heir, Juan Carlos

Just as the Francoists used the fraudulent guise of parliamentary democracy to legitimise themselves in power last June, so now they are trying to carry out a similar political con-trick in the field of trade unions.

In all factories and workplaces, the government says, workers must elect factory committees which will be the only bodies entitled to negotiate with the management.

Elections will take place in all factories simultaneously and only when the government decides.

Factory committees are not permitted to form organisations of liaison or joint

action among themselves. They must confine themselves to their own workplace.

There are separate committees for manual workers and white-collar workers. And all "employees", including management, may vote.

Not answerable

Workers less than 18 years old and those with less than six months continuous work in their present factory may not vote except when short term employees are more than 20% of the workforce, in which case they get separate representation.

The committees, once elected, are not in any way answerable to workers' mass meetings.

In fact they are not answerable to anything until the government decides it is time for new elections.

But under the regime's new trade union legislation these committees will be the only recognised representatives of the workers.

Unrecognised

That means that all the free committees, assemblies, factory councils and co-ordinating bodies, which Spanish workers have already built to replace the crumbling sham of Franco's "trade unions", will be unrecognised and virtually illegal.

According to the government they should now be dissolved and replaced with the new committees elected according to the government's norms.

In factories where workers refuse to implement elections within these norms then the members of the old committees (called enlases and jurados) of the vertical fascist CNS will remain in office and will be the only legal workers' representatives.

Vertical system

It is very clear that these elections are seen by the regime as a way of attacking the independence and organisation of the working class.

The regime is trying to retain as much as possible of the content of the old vertical Francoist system by dressing



Carrillo signs the Pact

it up in new "democratic" frills.

They do not tire of pointing out that the elections will be run "by the workers themselves" (as long as they obey the government norms to the letter) and that independently organised trade union sections are allowed freely to put up their lists of candidates for elections.

But the elections are designed precisely to weaken these sections of free trade unions by forbidding them to represent workers except through the semi-capitalist committees.

Support

As in all its other major anti-working class endeavours—the general elections of 1976 and the Moncloa Pact of austerity measures—the Suarez regime would not have any hope of imposing these fraudulent committees on the working class if it did not have the support of the Stalinist and reformist bureaucrats.

Spokesmen of both the Workers Commission and the General Workers' Union (UGT), politically dominated by the Communist Party and the Socialist Party respectively, have both backed up the government's plan.

A Workers' Commission spokesman said that "at last the working class is going to have instruments adequate to its needs".

Formal dispute

There was a dispute between the Workers' Commission and the UGT about whether the voting procedure should be based on selecting closed lists of candidates or selecting a certain number of candidates from any list.

Apart from this formal dispute, however, both the Stalinist and reformist leaders have completely accepted the norms imposed on workers' representation by the Francoist government.

Workers' Commissions everywhere, along in most places, with the UGT, are participating fully in the elections.

But large sections of the working class have seen clearly what government interference means and have shown themselves ready to fight it in a principled way.

Boycott

A minority of local sections of the UGT, and the whole of the CNT, the anarchist trade union federation, have declared a position of boycott towards the regime's decree.

The CNT's position, however, is a negative one in that it rejects the governments elections without seriously tackling the provision of a concrete alternative which genuinely strengthens the organisation of the working class.

The process of building elected factory committees answerable to the mass meetings of the workers, of unifying those committees within industries and linking them to other committees regionally and nationally must continue.

Free elections

Independent, free elections, open to trade

unionists and closed to management which reject the regime's norms and all state interference in the labour movement must be organised in place of the regime's mock elections.

This does not necessarily mean a total boycott of all elections which take place according to the government's schedule.

But in that case voting could only be justified if there is a candidacy standing on the platform of refusal to accept any of the constitutional norms of the committees contained in the regime's decree.

In practice in the great majority of factories the Workers' Commissions and the UGT will be standing rival slates of candidates all fully committed to compliance with the government's reactionary decree.

In those circumstances Trotskyists should fight for an active boycott based on the campaign to mount elections to genuinely free and independent organs of workers' representation in which Trotskyists would fight for the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

This contrasts sharply the position taken by "Trotskyist" section of USFI, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR)

Although they say that norms favour the capitalists and criticise the Workers' Commissions and UGT accepting them, they characterise the elections themselves as a "gain" which the government has "forced" to concede.

Unconditional

It has therefore, advocated unconditional participation in the elections along with effort to make them "democratic" and unitary.

It has argued for change in the norms in much the same way as the UGT Workers' Commission leader

And its suggestions uncannily similar to those of the Stalinist leaders of the Commissions.

Every opportunity for the demands of the Transitional Programme adopted in the constitution of workers' committees discarded by these self-styled "Trotskyists" in favour of some minor quantitative adjustments to the constitution proposed by Stalinists.

Opposition

Despite some opposition to the implementation of the Decree (especially from the managers of organised factories who long ago elected their committees without state interference), in most places elections are likely to take place in the next few weeks nominally under the regime's norms.

But as soon as any struggle develops then there is doubt that workers will break out of the strait-jacket which the government's Decree aims to put on the workers' movement.

Over the last two years workers have not only rejoined trade unions, especially the UGT, but also a number of areas (especially Euskadi) they have formed strike and occupation committees and factory coordinating committees.

Prepared to defend

These committees have usually sprung up in relation to specific anti-government struggles.

They have shown the way in which large sections of the Spanish working class prepared to defend their material conditions, their political rights and their independence, all of which are attacked by the regime's Decree on factory elections

IN BRIEF

BOLIVIA

The Banzer dictatorship, after last week's political concessions, has now announced that restrictions on trade union activity have been lifted. The Bolivian Confederation of Workers (COB), illegal since 1974 has resumed public activity. Troops, however, still occupy the mining areas and there can be no doubt that Banzer is hoping for a moment to seize back the concessions he has been forced to grant.

HOLLAND

Philip Agee, ex-CIA agent and exposé of the Agency's activities, has lost his appeal against an expulsion order from the Dutch government. Last year he was expelled from Britain, France and West Germany.

INDIA

As the strike of one million teachers and other government employees entered its sixth week in the

state of Maharashtra, further seven million workers joined them in a 24-hour general strike. This action on Tuesday brought Bombay a standstill.

PORTUGAL

Soares' new coalition government with the Christian Democratic Party "lefts" faces a vote of confidence this week. The Communist Party has offered no more than formal opposition to this right wing coalition.

INDONESIA

Troops have been placed on an emergency footing and told to be "ready for anything" after new outbreaks of agitation against dictator Suharto. Hundreds of people, especially students, have been arrested and many newspapers closed down. In March Suharto faces a presidential election; he is the only candidate.

Green pound fall means prices must rise

Agriculture Minister Silkin was defeated last week on the subject of the "green pound"—the special exchange rate at which transactions in food products takes place inside the Common Market.

The defeat was in the Commons where Silkin's proposal to devalue the green pound by 5% was replaced by a Tory-Liberal amendment to devalue it by 7½%.

At the present time the fact that the "green pound" exchanges for more "green marks" and "green francs" than the ordinary pound means that food prices to consumers in Britain are low in comparison with the rest of the EEC.

And also payments to farmers are also lower than in

the rest of Europe.

The bigger the devaluation the more food prices both in the shops and to farmers will rise.

A 7½% devaluation would increase prices to consumers by 1½% and to producers by about 8 or 9%.

Silkin's defeat was so convenient to him that it might almost have been planned.

If the devaluation goes through he can blame the higher shop prices on the Tories and Liberals.

He and Callaghan have played on this for all it is worth, which is not very much.

But if the devaluation fails to go through Silkin can blame the failure of the



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

farmers to get their long-promised increase in revenue on the recalcitrant EEC.

The reason that the EEC has so far refused to agree to

the devaluation is that the other governments do not want the British to use the measure simply as a way of increasing farmers' incomes.

This is because in the rest

of the EEC, too, farmers are demanding higher food prices and those demands can only be met by a generally agreed increase in EEC food prices.

That measure would be politically difficult; and doubly so if it were being opposed by a British government which had been able to achieve the same result through devaluing the green pound and producing a much lower increase in shop prices than would be needed in the rest of Europe.

This, as yet, incomplete story, is a new illustration of how the political problems created for capitalist governments by the economic crisis lead them not to cooperate with each other but to try to cut each others' throats.

Other figures released last week showed up another aspect of the world capitalist crisis—the extreme problems of the steel industry.

Steel production in the 29 most important capitalist producing countries fell by over 4% in 1977.

It has fallen over 12% since the last peak in 1974. Production today is in fact scarcely higher than it was a decade ago.

While production in capitalist countries has fallen, it has continued to expand in the bureaucratized workers states, despite their growing economic problems.

One significant result of that is that while in 1973 the USA was the world's largest steel producer, (with an output of 137 million tons) in the last two years it has been dramatically overtaken by the USSR.

Last year the Soviet Union produced 147 million tons of steel compared with 113 million in the USA and 102 million in Japan.

NEW WAVE OF FASCIST ATTACKS

Indications that the Tory leadership are vying with the National Front for the racist vote in the next general election merged last week with evidence of an all-round right wing offensive against the immigrant community.

Police in Wolverhampton have at last admitted that a gang of white thugs wearing Ku Klux Klan hoods had been roaming the town at night and had beaten up ten black youths.

Confrontation

One outcome of these provocations was Saturday night's confrontation between black and white youth and police in which bricks were thrown and seven arrests were made.

Meanwhile youth supporting the National Front were reported to have beaten up a Kenyan-born Asian teacher in Pimlico, London.

In the North West, Greater Manchester Chief Constable Jim Anderton, who gained notoriety for turning out 5,000 police to protect fascist leader Martin Webster, again admitted secret preparations jointly with the National Front in order to protect the fascists—this time at a meeting in Hyde Town Hall.

A demonstration of 1,500 anti-fascists turned out, blocking every road leading to the hall and forcing police to the lengths of carrying the audience of less than 100 through in police cars.

Fingerprinted

Interviewed later on television, Anderton gave another clear hint of his political views when he predicted that in 10 years time everyone would have to be fingerprinted and carry identity cards.

"Subversives" should be severely dealt with by the law, he told radio reporters. But "innocent citizens" would have nothing to fear, he claimed.

In case this obvious link between the police and the anti-communist, vicious racism of the National Front seemed accidental, police in London last Thursday joined the anti-immigrant crackdown by rounding up 40 "illegal" immigrant hotel workers in a move headlined in the evening press.

The judiciary too, anxious

not to be left out, moved in as if to show solidarity with Judge McKinnon whose sympathetic remarks from the bench to fascist leader Kingsley Read provoked such a stir recently.

Indications

Judge Wild, sitting in Cambridge Crown Court, fined two Libyan students for assault after a fight:

"This all came about because you were drunk and it is a pity that you did not have the decency to stand up and admit it.

"But then, as people about the courts know, people of your origin never admit anything; well, hardly anything", he declared.

These are only the latest open indications of a racist offensive by these open agents of the bourgeoisie.

The offensive is feeding on the falling living standards and mass unemployment consciously created by the Lib-Lab government in the name of boosting the profits of private industry.

Cynical trick

And rather than change these policies, Labour leaders are now playing the cynical trick of simply blaming the Tories and the NF for the violence.

The Tories in turn have now stooped even lower and accused the coalition government of creating the problem by allowing black youth to remain on the dole—as if the Tories' own policies would not massively boost unemployment and racist violence!

Workers must respond to this sharpening situation. Poverty and unemployment must be fought by an end to wage controls and the defence of all jobs through work sharing on full pay and the implementation of a crash programme of public works.

Such a policy demands a break in the Lib-Lab coalition. At the same time the immigrant communities must be protected against fascist attack.

Workers' defence squads must be built wherever the fascists are active in order to guard the lives and property of immigrant workers as well as protecting labour movement organisations and meetings.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

Police at Hyde hold back anti-fascist demonstrators

Defeat right wing attacks on gay rights

'Blasphemy' and 'Heresy' were the charges regularly used by the Christian Church to condemn homosexuality.

But the trial and successful prosecution of *Gay News* and its editor last year were not simply a revival of ancient customs.

This initiative by Mary Whitehouse represented part of the gathering international drive towards the complete oppression of gays.

In December, Canadian police raided the offices of *Body Politics* (one of North America's major gay liberation newspapers), and charges have been brought under the obscenity laws.

Reactionary

This was followed by a visit to Toronto from Anita Bryant, in an effort to extend the "Campaign for Decency" she has launched in the US.

The main objective of this reactionary crusade has been the persecution of homosexuals, and withdrawal of the scattered democratic

rights they have gained in recent years.

The press witch-hunt of Jeremy Thorpe was an indication of the underlying pressures that were developing in Britain.

Hysteria

Since then, the hysteria generated by the bourgeois press on the issue of lesbian parents has been further proof (if any was needed) of the growing strength of this offensive.

These attacks have not gone unchallenged. Massive demonstration of gays erupted in North America, but this spontaneous movement has now largely evaporated.

In Britain, the Gay News Defence Committee was formed to campaign around the appeal which will be heard on February 13th.

In addition to its appeal for the funds that are necessary if *Gay News* is to continue after paying the fine and costs, the committee has been working to mobilise forces from the labour movement, student unions, women's and

gay groups for a national demonstration.

The campaign's central demand has been for the repeal of the blasphemy laws. This diversionary call offers no real perspective for gays to counter the reactionary forces ranging against them.

The blasphemy law is only one light weapon from the vast arsenal at the disposal of the bourgeois state.

Its use comes at a time when the ruling-class, and its police-force in the labour bureaucracy, rely increasingly on the repressive apparatus of the state to attack the independent struggles of the working-class.

Counterpart

Many forms of censorship will certainly be employed more frequently, and this is one lesson that must be drawn out of the *Gay News* case.

These developments also have their counterpart in the mounting efforts to restore the stability of the family. One aspect of that drive is the necessity to suppress homosexuality.

The campaign provides an opportunity to forge real links between the gay movement and the labour movement, by showing the necessity for a common struggle against repressive legislation.

The specific oppression of homosexuals is made far more severe by the same crisis of capitalism which threatens all workers with wage cuts, unemployment and political expression.

Wherever the defence campaign can be extended into trade union branches and constituency Labour parties, it must be taken up as the basis for a campaign to repeal all legislation which restricts the democratic rights of gay women and men.

DEMONSTRATION

The *Gay News Defence Committee* has called a national demonstration in London on Saturday February 11th, two days before the appeal is to be heard.

THE DEMONSTRATION WILL MEET AT 1.30 TEMPLE

JOB FIGURES DECEIT



Government ministers may deceive themselves with their smug optimism every time the official unemployment figures get worse.

But they can hardly fool anyone else.

This month the total of jobless once again surged up above 1½ million (over 6% of the workforce).

Of course, as the statisticians always say, the figures "always rise" between December and January—as if that makes it alright that last month 60,000 more people

were sacked than got jobs.

In any case the figures rose even more than usual at the time of year and so the underlying trend of total unemployment still, despite Healey's promises, shows no sign of falling.

But further below the surface there are trends which look even more alarming.

First, there is evidence that, but for the government's various temporary "job creation" schemes and job subsidies the jobless total would be 250,000 higher than it is.

These measures are no

more than a cosmetic measure which conceal the true size of the mass unemployment problem created by capitalism.

Alarming sign

The second alarming sign from these latest figures is that although the number out of work for a short time fell during the month, the number of workers under 60 who were unemployed for a month or more rose by 70,000.

This and the overall national average of 6% unem-

ployed (twice the level of 1974 when Wilson's government took office) hides the fact that in several regions the problem is even worse.

In the north of Ireland the rate it now almost 11% (going close to 30% in towns like Newry and Strabane); it is over 8% in Scotland and the North of England; and over 7% in Wales and the North West (over 12% on Merseyside).

Finally, what jobs there are are less and less in manufacturing and more in services.

Manufacturing jobs have dropped by 6½% since 1974 alone; Jobs in services went up by 3% but this was not nearly enough to compensate for the decline of industry.

BENN TALKS OF 'PUBLIC OWNERSHIP' AGAIN

Public ownership is "back on the agenda again" according to that one-time darling of the Labour 'left' Tony Benn.

Now a pillar of the Lib-Lab establishment, Benn was attempting to scrape some of the corrosion off his 'left' image, in a speech unveiling what has been grandly described as a "left wing manifesto for Labour in the next election".

Nothing to offer

But for those within the Labour Party who have always regarded public ownership as a topic on the agenda, and who regard the Lib-Lab Coalition as a major obstacle to such policies, Benn had, predictably, nothing to offer.

He praised the progress made against inflation—thus implicitly giving his support to the vicious wage cuts that

have been at the heart of Healey's economic policies, and for which Benn himself has consistently voted.

And he declared the willingness of the Labour movement "to do everything it could to sustain the Lib-Lab Government".

"Past achievements [of] present difficulties and party loyalty are not sufficient to win the support of those we represent, and bring about the return of the Government. Something more is needed, and it is as well to set it out clearly".

No exception

The Labour 'left' has never previously been noted for its willingness to set things out

clearly. Benn's speech was no exception to this rule.

Spelling out "six campaign themes for Labour in 1978" Benn called for full employment and better public services—while remaining a key element in a government which is attacking both.

Stayed silent

Calling for socialism internationally, Benn stayed silent on the Lib-Lab Government's role in betraying the liberation struggles in Southern Africa and continuing the military repression in Ireland.

And while calling for "human rights at home and abroad" and "a struggle against fascism and racialism", Benn drew a diplo-

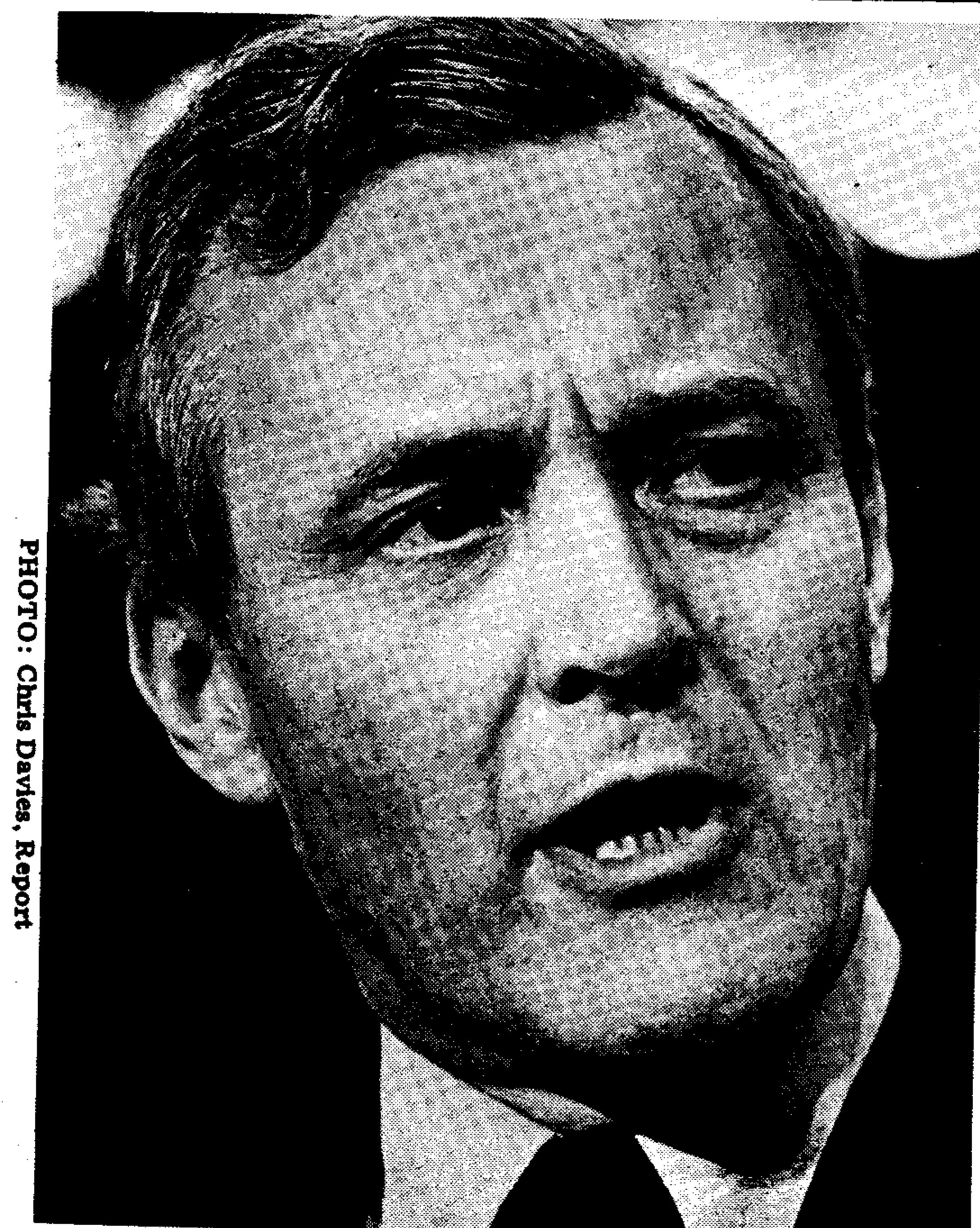


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

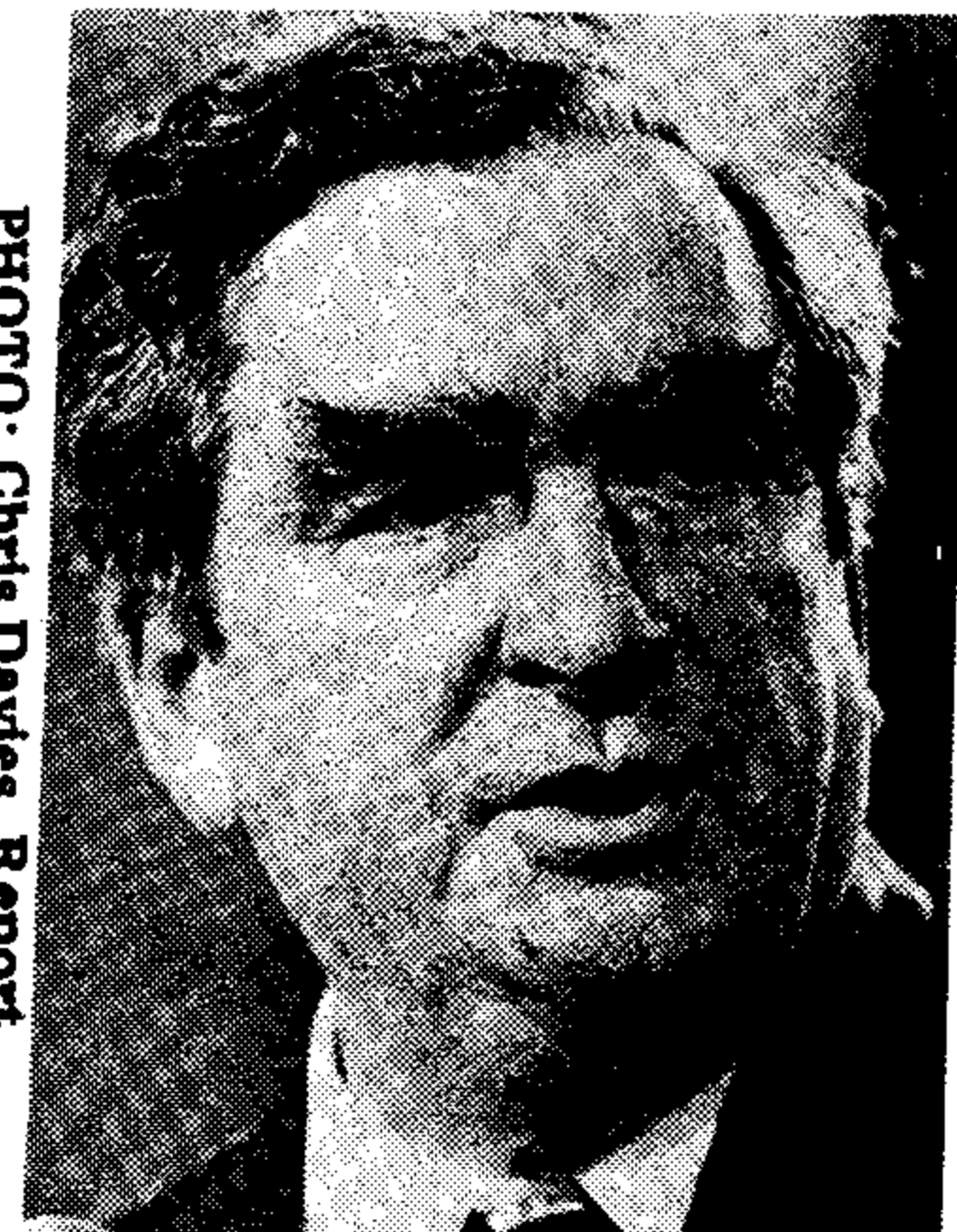


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Healey

Dennis Healey, leading architect of the pro-capitalist economic strategy which has produced this intolerable level of mass unemployment, says that jobs for workers are a prize for good, self-sacrificing behaviour towards capital.

For two years this has centred on wage controls. If workers accepted the pay controls, said Healey, there would be more jobs; if they didn't they would "price themselves out of a job".

In fact, two years of rigidly policed wage control have coincided with the doubling of unemployment.

And this policy has been pursued without any opposition from Labour's so-called "left wingers".

Even when January's enormous unemployment figure was announced in Parliament there was not a single Labourite prepared to confront the vicious attacks on jobs and wages carried out by Healey and Callaghan.

Scottish Labour Party MP Jim Sillars brought this out clearly.

Near violence

He contrasted the near violence with which Labour MPs had greeted the Tory government's achievement of one million unemployed.

The Speaker had had to suspend the sitting.

"Now, with unemployment over 1.5 million there has been scarcely a ripple of anxiety or concern from Labour ranks", he said.

Left talker Eric Heffer, who has loyally walked into the Lib-Lab lobby to vote support for every wage cut and every rationalisation measure, was stung by this home truth.

As usual he responded not by deeds but by more words.

"Had he been given the opportunity", Heffer announced, he would have produced not a ripple of anxiety but "a positive explosion".

And, as usual, he sat straight down again.

Eric Heffer and his 'left' cronies must be confronted on their record by the labour and trade union movement.

And they must be told, "Either mount a fight to break the Lib-Lab coalition and oust the Callaghan-Healey leadership, or stand aside for those that will!"

PRESS GANG Mellow Yellow

What has Jack Jones in common with Vladimir Klebanov—former Russian miner? At first glance not a great deal.

Jones is about to retire from the leadership of Britain's largest trade union to occupy his time on quasi Governmental jobs and counting his medals.

Klebanov on the other hand is just setting out as the leader of the tiny "Trade Union for the Defence of Workers" in the Soviet Union.

Yet both were portrayed as heroes on the same day last week (Friday) in the two most reactionary British papers.

In the *Daily Express* Janice Morley profiled Jones "the man some say is more powerful than the Prime Minister" under the whimsical title "Hail and Farewell Emperor Jones".

"With the sober, gold rimmed glasses and silver hair, the jowly jaw and softly wrinkling face, he was set in

the mould of an elder statesman.

"But behind those glasses and inside that suit there stood a cloth capped Liverpool docker with a diamond hard will to die fighting".

After Jones the statesman, comes Jones the unspoiled worker, Jones the family man and finally Jones the patriot.

"Accused of the sort of idealism that turns into tyranny as in the Soviet Union he returns: 'I'm a patriot, no-one could call me anything else, who believes in the protection of working people'."

It is that which links us to Vladimir Klebanov. The *Daily Mail* spotlighted his campaign for an 'independent' trade union under the heading of "The real hero of the Soviet Union".

Seen in the distorting mirror of the *Daily Mail* it is impossible to make an assessment of what the TUDW represents—but it possible to have a shrewd guess.

True Klebanov bases his

movement on workers attacked by the Soviet trade unions.

But it is doubtful if his 'union' is based on any direct intervention into the working class.

His appeal—as represented in the *Mail*—is as an industrial wing of the 'dissident' movement.

Klebanov appeals to the treacherous labour organisations of capitalist countries, applying for recognition to the Geneva-based International Labour Organisation.

He is receiving support not from those who defend the interests of the working class, but from those who see in him a stick with which to beat communism.

Klebanov is on the right road for a Companion of Honour medal—but on a dead end route so far as the Soviet workers are concerned, if they are to throw off the bureaucratic yoke.

The *Daily Mail* knows that. Neither they nor the *Express* choose their heroes carelessly.

matic veil over the government's continuing policies of immigration controls that stand as a major concession to the racists and fascists.

All of a sudden Benn announced his disagreement with the policy that has stood at the base of government economic strategy.

It is wrong, he told a baffled audience, to think that public spending cuts and higher profits will lead to increased investment by private industry.

Of course none of this 'left' verbiage—which even extended to an attack on the Liberals—was connected to any kind of attack on Benn's political paymasters—the Callaghan/Healey leadership.

But Tory press commentators have not hesitated to claim that Benn is jockeying for position as a 'left' contender for the party leadership—next time it comes up for election.

They went so far as to

Blow to LP Tories

The extreme right wing infiltration of Newham North East Labour Party suffered another setback this week.

After the failure of the latest court action, supporters of Mr J. Lewis and his backers found themselves ousted in Branch elections for officers and GMC delegates.

Their defeat in St. Stephens Branch was seen as a particularly severe blow.

However these people who have done little to disguise their intention of using Newham as a test run for paralysing the movement (see back issues of *Socialist Press*), remain in the Labour Party.

With their sinister and apparently unlimited financial backing, money is no object. Since their defeat

hint that Benn's theatrical opposition to Callaghan's bid to guillotine discussion on European elections might be a part of this strategy for power.

The reality is much more humdrum than this. Benn had dropped from the limelight and become regarded as no more than a menial Lib-Lab hack.

But now Benn along with other 'left' elements in the Labour Party, has spotted a growing hostility within the ranks of the Party to the leadership's brazen class collaboration—a hostility that he fears might end Callaghan's rule at the next General Election.

The 'left' words combined with support for the Lib-Lab deal are Benn's way of seeking to head off any independent opposition and smooth the path for further years of reformist collaboration.

they have already declared their aim of pouring yet more cash into court actions.

The labour movement cannot rest until people who rely only upon cash reserves and sympathetic Tories are expelled from its ranks once and for all.

Last week's court proceedings served to indicate only the determination of the Labour leadership to obstruct the essential work of clearing out crypto-Tory elements.

Lewis and McCormick were unsuccessful in their effort to obtain an injunction preventing Transport House suspending them from Party membership—but only because Party agent Reg Underhill had submitted an affidavit declaring that no such action was being considered!

CP chiefs Carrillo, Napolitano spell out their... INTERNATIONAL ROADS TO DISASTER

A review of 'Eurocommunism and the State' by Spanish CP leader Santiago Carrillo, (Lawrence & Wishart, £2.75) and 'The Italian Road to Socialism' - an interview by Eric Hobsbawm with Italian CP economic spokesman Giorgio Napolitano (Journeyman Press £1.95).

The most immediately obvious aspect of these books is the similarity of the positions argued by Carrillo and Napolitano. Both men are at the very basis of Communist movements and the policies they advocate show how they have been drawn attempting to solve problems of capitalism in their own coun-

tries. Their policies are similar in the same way that social democracy throughout the world argues an identical policy of class compromise—to the "historic compromise" in Italy, the Moncloa with Franco's heirs in Spain and the Lib-Lab pact as the continuation of the Social Contract in

Special role

The link between all these movements is that they flow from bureaucracies within the Communist movement operating in the requirements of the "own" capitalist class. It is the fact that Communist Party leaders can follow identical policies unlike the reformist parties, falsely claiming to maintain the continuity of the Russian Revolution and the Communist movement, that they play a very special role in holding back militancy of the working

class. Each book in its own way states this. Napolitano's book is the form of a series of interviews with British Stalinist Eric Hobsbawm between 1977, and shows the role of the immediate leadership of the Italian CP. Carrillo's book, on the other hand, was written in 1977 when Carrillo was still in "ground", and contains much more "theoretical" material, reaching back to the position of the so-called "EuroCommun-

History defended

ism. Both of these Stalinist leaders set out to defend the history of their own parties, trying to separate these from the history of the Soviet

Union. Napolitano, for instance, tries to say on the origins of the "Italian Road to Socialism".

The Italian Party had suffered greatly from the fact that in 1947 on an internal level, the search for roads to socialism had abruptly cut off by the

Communist movement, even though this search had been undertaken right after the end of the Second World War and not only in Italy. The Italian Party had suffered particularly, because it had advanced considerably in mapping out an original road to socialism and had begun to do so in the period between the two wars, after the Seventh Congress of the Communist International. Well, when the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU presented us with the opportunity to vigorously resume the interrupted search, to render consistent a whole series of our positions, including theoretical ones, the leadership of the Italian party did not hesitate to seize this opportunity." (pp 26-27)

Seventh Congress

Carrillo likewise defends the Seventh Congress of the Comintern, which in 1935 developed the strategy of the

Popular Front embracing both workers' and bourgeois parties.

Like Napolitano he defends the decision of the French and Italian CPs not to struggle for power in 1945-47 (when there was a real chance of success):

"They continued to develop a strategy towards unity and democracy. . . They worked out their own road to socialism based on democracy."

And, like Napolitano, Carrillo looks back favourably to 1956 and defends Khrushchev. He claims that there were continuous differences between the European CPs and the Soviet

The fact that both "Euro-Communists" look back to the same historical periods is important. It confirms that the positions of these leaders are not the outcome of some "theoretical" development exclusive to the Italian or Spanish CP.



Carrillo (centre) at last year's Labour Party Conference.

The Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, the official birthplace of the strategy of the Popular Front, took place under the control of Stalin. The policy was clearly endorsed by him, and reflected the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

Carrillo falsely claims that it was the experience of the rise of fascism that drove the national Communist Parties to adopt the policy of unity of what he terms "democratic" forces.

"Experience"

As Carrillo writes: "What the experience of fascism really demonstrated—and the Seventh Congress of the Communist International took this into account—was not the usefulness or uselessness of the vote and of the democratic road, but the experience of a working class doomed to impotence by division and incapable of uniting and rallying round itself a section of working people and the middle strata in order to confront the danger." (p92)

Napolitano clearly shares this view.

But the reality was very different. The first experience of fascism was not in

Germany but in Italy. Yet the Stalinist-led Communist International drew no lessons from this whatever.

It was not the inability of the workers to unite that opened up the danger of fascism—in France workers united spontaneously.

'Social fascists'

Rather it was the criminal, false and divisive policies of the German Communist Party, implementing the line of the Communist International, and declaring that Social Democratic workers were "social fascists".

On this basis, asserting that "social fascists" were worse than open fascists, the German CP opposed any unity in action with social democrats against the Nazis.

As a result of this disastrous policy, Hitler was able to crush the entire German workers' movement, including its giant social democratic and Communist parties that, if united, could easily have defeated him.

United front

The "social fascist" policy was opposed by Trotsky and the Left Opposition—and for doing so they were hounded by the Stalinists.

Trotsky continuously countered Stalinist ultra-leftism by a call for a workers' united front against fascism.

But in every country the bureaucratic directive from the Communist International caused obedient CPs to call for setting up alternative "red" trade unions in opposition to the existing reformist unions, and to brand social democrats as social fascists.

And this line continued even after the German debacle. No lessons were learned from this catastrophic defeat.

The very lack of any response to this within the ranks of the Comintern showed that it was a completely bureaucratized body, dead for the purposes of revolution, and brought Trotsky to the conclusion that it was necessary to prepare for the building of a new, Fourth, International to give leadership in workers' struggles.

Deal with Hitler

The 1935 "turn" by the Comintern to the strategy of the Popular Front was not the outcome of the German defeat, so much as the result of Stalin's failure to reach a diplomatic arrangement with Hitler.

Seeking a means of "protecting" the Soviet Union without mobilising the working class at home or abroad, Stalin looked instead to treaties with the "democratic" bourgeois states.

A lesser motive for the Popular Front turn was the massive fall in CP membership brought by the ultra-left policies of the "social fascist" period.

From the outset, then, the

Popular Front policy can be seen to seek not the unity of the working class in struggle, but an attempt to tie the working class to a section of the bourgeoisie that claimed to oppose fascism, in the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

This same policy led to the defeat of the Spanish working class—just as an ultra-left Comintern line had led to the defeat in Germany.

The Popular Front line obstructed the fight for demands that could win the Spanish middle classes—and in particular the peasantry that made up much of Franco's army—to the side of the working class.



This was because the Stalinists' and reformists' bourgeois partners in the Popular Front refused to accept any policy that threatened private property. The Stalinists thus ended up opposing peasants who took over the land, and suppressing a workers' uprising in Barcelona.

This kind of "unity", venerated by Carrillo and Napolitano, led to the victory of Franco and the 38-year illegalisation of Carrillo's own party.

Yet the only criticisms he voices of this line now are that the CP were not actually in the French Popular Front governments.

For the benefit of his "liberal" supporters today, (and his self-styled "Trotskyist" admirers in the Pabloite "United Secretariat") Carrillo also criticises the murder of centrist leader Andres Nin.

And he tries to claim that the Spanish Stalinists' attitude to Trotskyism was different from that in other countries.

Suppression

Yet Carrillo specifically defends Stalinist involvement in the brutal suppression of the Barcelona uprising—demonstrating that his defence of "democracy" means no more than defence of capitalism, as



Armed Italian partisans in 1945: Stalinist policy led to the CP entering a bourgeois coalition.



The signing of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, 1939.

well as pointing to his present-day attitudes to the struggles of Spanish workers.

An earlier series of articles in *Socialist Press* traced the development of a dual pressure on Communist parties in the capitalist countries.

On the one side there remained the control exerted by the Soviet bureaucracy through the Comintern, while on the other was an increasing accommodation to their "own" ruling class in their efforts to preserve "peaceful co-existence".

Diplomacy

The Communist Parties followed the twists and turns



Stalinist tanks in Budapest 1956

of Moscow diplomacy throughout the war period.

From the signing of the Stalin/Hitler pact in 1939 to the Nazi invasion of the USSR in June 1941, every Communist Party denounced those nations warring against Germany, and branded it an imperialist war.

But, just as unanimously, they all switched direction after June 1941, and allied with their "own" bourgeoisie in each country in what they termed a "people's war" against Germany.

Cold War

This collaboration continued even after the end of the war, until in 1947 the USA launched the "Cold War" against the USSR.

But throughout this period another process was at work behind the scenes. The control exercised by the Kremlin bureaucracy was weakening and the bond between the CPs and their "own" capitalist class was strengthening as the working class engaged more and more strongly on the scene, threatening to disrupt the cherished "peaceful co-existence" of bureaucrat and boss.

This process grew more rapid with the divisions between the bureaucracies in the deformed workers' states, especially the Stalin/Tito split

of 1948, and the increasing independence of the Chinese CP.

Tactical divisions also arose within the Soviet bureaucracy itself as how best to combat the working class.

Each of these divisions interacted with the bourgeois pressure on the national CPs.

Significantly, while both Napolitano and Carrillo now point to the importance of 1956, for both it was the 20th Congress of the Soviet CP and not the Hungarian uprising that is the main event.

Indeed no current within Stalinism has ever been able to draw strength from the independent struggles of the Hungarian workers' councils

tion of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois".

(*State and Revolution* P 40) Carrillo, however, has no time for such theories:

"I am convinced that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the way to succeed in establishing and consolidating the hegemony of the forces of the working people in the democratic countries of developed capitalism".

(P 154) Napolitano, too, talks of the need to "correct" Lenin on this issue.

But Lenin was not advocating a slogan or discussing conditions peculiar to Russia. He was actually drawing on experience from precisely the so-called "democratic" countries. On parliament, he wrote:

"To decide once every four years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through Parliament—such is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics".

(P 54)

Lenin also replies to Kautsky, a forerunner of Carrillo, who had written that "The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in Parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government".

Lenin vigorously attacked this reformist perspective (which strangely anticipated the formulation in today's *British Road to Socialism*):

"For "winning a majority in parliament" and converting parliament into the "master of the government".

A most worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the bounds of the bourgeois parliamentary republic".

(PP 141-2)

Advanced

Kautsky of course was from one of the most advanced "democratic" countries.

Yet Carrillo was in hiding from the fascist state forces at the time he wrote his book. His members were actually being gunned down and tortured while he was formulating his call for winning power peacefully through parliament and for taking over the "ideological apparatus" of the press and television.

He goes on to argue that the family unit is a force against capitalism, and even makes a case for winning over sections of the Francoist army and police force, including officers, as well as

"executives".

All this is proposed to take place peacefully, without the development of organs of workers' power. Indeed Carrillo argues against anti-officer agitation in the army and in favour of "law and order" against "multiple police forces".

Increased votes

Having shown that they adhere to an entirely reformist perspective, both Carrillo and Napolitano grandly point out the increasing votes for the Communist Parties.

Both men brush aside the stark warning of Chile as an "exception". Napolitano goes further and argues that Allende's mistake was not bringing the extreme right wing into the Popular Front!

But of course it was the complete capitulation of Stalinist and reformist leaders to the bourgeois forces in the Chilean "Popular Unity" alliance that left workers defenceless against Pinochet.

Disarmed

Allende literally disarmed the working class in the face of the fascists, while bringing the army into his cabinet, branding them as "workers in uniform". The catastrophic result of this policy needs no repetition here.

But it is ominous that Napolitano ignores the grim opposite of the increasing CP vote in Italy. While the Stalinists hold back the working class in a "historic compromise" with the Italian Tory Party, the fascist movement is growing and attracting capitalist support.

If no break is made from Stalinist Italian workers could learn in the harshest way that Chile was no exception but the working out of the rule of the Popular Front strategy, which has brought nothing but disaster and defeat since its first conception.

Redistribution

On policies for today, Carrillo has little to add to his call to maintain the investment of multi-national corporations.

Napolitano, however, is much more specific. He argues for just and equitable relations between income levels among all the different categories of workers and goes on to argue for "redistribution within that share of the national income which goes to income from labour".

He attacks "each group looking exclusively after its group interests".

"Questions of making sacrifices and of a redistribution of income even inside the working classes can be posed only insofar as they are related to the objective of overcoming the crisis along the lines of a profound renewal of the economy and of society". (p.44-45).

So having argued for acceptance of the continuation of capitalism, Napolitano argues throughout for cuts in

the standard of living. For example he praises the worsening of the escalator clause agreement:

"When it was realised that extraordinary fiscal measures were necessary we could have argued that the working class should pay nothing or, on the contrary, that only the working class should be called upon to make sacrifices in order to maintain its alliances especially with the middle groups.

"In fact, however, the problem was and is to establish an equilibrium whereby neither objective nor subjective conditions would exist which would require the working class to make sacrifices without the middle sectors also paying a price for the crisis.

"At the same time, we had to combat tendencies which do exist at present in the working class to unload the weight of the crisis solely on the middle sectors on the grounds that the middle sectors have up to now enjoyed far better conditions than the working class.

"We have been and still are engaged in the search for a point of equilibrium between the defence of the interests of the working class, a correct division of concessions between the working class and the middle sectors (and other social strata) and the consolidation of the politics of alliance of the working class and the whole alignment of democratic forces." (p.112). (Our emphasis).

Right wing

So this is the real meaning of the "historic compromise" whereby the Italian CP protects the right-wing Christian Democrats in government.

Napolitano is calling for nothing other than wage-cutting and he even goes so far as to attack workers fighting for wage increases—on the grounds that this could lead to the "disintegration and dissolution of society".

Far from this strengthening the support of the middle class for the working class, they will regard this as a sign of weakness and complete acceptance that the capitalist crisis should be put on their backs and those of the working class.

As a result middle class forces will be attracted to the only "strong" force they can see—the fascists.

Different approach

The Workers Socialist League does not regard these books in the same way as other self-styled "Trotskyists" have approached them.

They look eagerly for points of agreement, or for signs that the Stalinists have been "pressured" to the left under the influence of their mass membership.

This is because deeply embedded in the thinking of these "Trotskyists" is the

hope that a spontaneous development within the Stalinist movement or among petty bourgeois nationalists will throw up a ready-made revolutionary leadership with which they can simply "fuse" and dissolve.

For us, on the other hand, the arguments of the Stalinist bureaucracy flow from their counter-revolutionary role in the workers movement.

Common Market

Carrillo for instance now argues against the age-old Stalinist tenet of "socialism in one country"—only to argue in favour of the capitalist Common Market!

If the policies advocated by these Stalinist leaders were implemented they could only lead workers to crushing defeat at the hands of fascist movements throughout Europe.

The only answer to the consistent line of complete class collaboration spelled out in these two books is the conscious development of Trotskyist parties in Spain, Italy and internationally.

Only the Trotskyist movement is equipped with a programme capable of leading workers in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Expose CPs

A Trotskyist party in Spain or Italy would have to begin by exposing the daily betrayals carried out by these CP leaders and their class collaboration in action.

On a world scale the working class is on the move, in the fight to assert its rights and defend its living standards.

It is the Stalinists' determination to hold back that movement and maintain capitalist rule that keeps them tied on the one hand to the counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucrats, and on the other to their "own" capitalists.

Workers government

Napolitano shows the Stalinists' fear of the working class and its ability rapidly to expose the Stalinists when he argues against calling on the Italian Socialist Party to join with them in a workers' government. He argues that this would be wrong even if they won 51% of the vote!

The demand systematically made on the European CP and SP leaders, that they break from the bourgeoisie and its parties and form a government, is thus a key element in the fight to expose their reactionary positions to the millions of workers who still mistakenly follow them, and in building Trotskyist parties on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

By Tony Richardson.



Bitter fruits of Popular Frontism - Chile

ETERNAL WAR IS NOT ONE OF NATURE'S LAWS

IN REVIEW

NO HONOUR ON THE RED TERROR TRAIL

ORIGINS
by Richard Leakey:
Macdonald & James
£8.95

The Christian Church has always believed that God created Man in his own image, and that Man is therefore on a completely different and higher plane than the animals.

Yet Man, they say, has "fallen" from God's grace and is therefore doomed to the unending struggle against "original sin". The defeat of this mediaeval superstition by Darwin and others opened the way for major advances in anthropology, of which the greatest was made by L. H. Morgan.

Drawing upon his study of American Indian societies, he came to an understanding of the development of society very similar to that of Marx and Engels.

Not surpassed

That "classical" period of anthropology has probably not been surpassed.

In recent years an attempt has been made to resurrect (in the name of science) a conception of Original Sin, by Konrad Lorenz (a Nobel Prize winner) and Desmond Morris (who at least had the wit to make a large amount of money out of it) amongst others.

They maintain that the evolution of Man as a hunter for meat has condemned him to eternal conflict and war, since his primitive aggression remains in his genes.

In *Origins* Richard Leakey, one of the most eminent anthropologists today, attempts to refute this theory using the latest evidence about Man's early development.

Tree living apes

In his book he uses much material that is of interest to Marxists.

In the first part Leakey shows how Man's ancestors evolved from tree-living apes, into hominids which moved out into the grass lands which were opening up in Africa about twelve million years ago.

He correctly sees the *division of labour* as the key to Man's development from



this Ramapithecus compelled to co-operate and share the fruits of labour by the necessity to hunt and defend the troupe from danger.

As he points out, the first permanent division of labour in human society was that between men, the hunters, and women, restricted by their almost unceasing responsibility of childcare, to the role of gatherers of wild fruit, nuts and roots.

Regulation

In fact he believes language evolved firstly amongst women, since like Marx he sees language as primarily a tool for living socially for the better regulation of the complex relationships within human society.

Men, more concerned with the technical problem of hunting, would require a silent sign-language, as used by many hunting peoples today.

Women would therefore have a greater need (and opportunity) to evolve a complex language.

To prove the barbarism of primitive man, some anthropologists have cited the evidence of cannibalism such as at Chouboutien near Peking.

Leakey points out that these practices show clear evidence of ritual, and rather than the indications of Man's innate savagery, they appear as the indications of Man's superstitious attitude towards his own body.

Indeed he cites several examples of tribes which ritually avoid conflict with others.

For him warfare amongst primitive peoples is caused by material pressures—shortage of food, or of hunting grounds—rather than by any natural rapaciousness in Man.

Perhaps one of his most interesting beliefs is that warfare became a real part of human society only with the development of agriculture, which led Man to settle down and acquire private property (in the form of land) for the first time.

This permitted a massive growth in population and the beginnings of accumulation of wealth.

Thus a material basis to war appeared and indeed this period in human history is marked by its extreme violence.

Here lies the main weakness of the book. Having understood warfare as a result of the development of private

property, he fails to go on to analyse the *development* of private property and the *contradictory* process in which it changes.

To equate the petty strife of Bronze Age tribes with the catastrophic struggles of the imperialist epoch is patently ridiculous.

Since Leakey sees the development of the human mind, human culture, as a smooth one, a process of enlightenment, he is left with the humanistic "solution", of "co-operation" and "understanding" between nations, for the crisis of humanity that the imperialist epoch represents.

The brotherhood of man of which he talks will only be achieved by the world proletariat under the leadership of a new revolutionary party. There lies the hopes for the future of the human race.

Such a party will need a vigorous understanding of human society in order to formulate a scientific programme. This book will assist in that.

Despite its price, every class-conscious worker should read it.

By Mark Alexander

The Transitional Programme

"It is a programme for action from today until the beginning of the socialist revolution.

And from the practical point of view what is now the most important is how we can guide the different strata of the proletariat in the direction of the social revolution".

TROTSKY

30p plus 10p p & p from
WSL, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

"The Lost Honour of Katharina Blum" was made in 1975—before the latest wave of "anti-terrorist" repression and press hysteria which followed the kidnapping of Hans Martin Schleyer last year.

It reflects instead the period during which the original Baader-Meinhof group were being rounded up and imprisoned.

The film is based on the book of the same name by Heinrich Boll who has himself been a victim of press attacks for daring to suggest that the German state's treatment of people awaiting trial for "terrorist" activities was somewhat excessive

Deaths in prison

That treatment not only involved torture and the denial of prisoners' democratic rights but has led to the mysterious deaths in prison of Ulrike Meinhof, and more recently Baader, Ensslin and Raspe.

Despite the efforts of forensic scientists to "prove" that they committed suicide, the events surrounding their deaths, even those made public, point towards murder. This film does not deal with the treatment of political prisoners, or with the clampdown on democratic rights which the Social-Democrats, liberal Free-Democrats, and Christian Democrats alike have called for and enforced (after all these anarchists "threaten our democracy").

Hysteria

Instead, it is a study of the role of the press in creating the atmosphere of hysteria which is a necessary prelude to that attack.

Katharina Blum is an innocent. She meets Ludwig Gotten (an "anarchist" according to police and press) at a party and takes him home to her flat.

He is under police surveillance and in the morning the flat is raided by a mob of police, complete with marksmen armed with sub-machine guns.

Gotten is gone and the press campaign gets underway as Blum is dragged to the police station for questioning.

Everything about her private life is distorted (or simply invented) and splashed all over the pages of the mass circulation *Die Zeitung*—her "political views" (actually non-existent), her "callousness" (untrue) and, in particular her sex-life.

Obnoxious

Although all this press sensationalisation is shown to be the fault of one paper and in particular of one obnoxious reporter, Totges, the film shows the power of the mass media, not just to destroy, innocent individuals like Katharina Blum, but to prepare the way for attacks on people who are "radicals".

Gotten's "crime" turns out to be very minor and

only mildly political (he deserted from the army and robbed the regimental safe) but Totges and the police seize on every slight indication that Blum might be a "red".

A distant relative of Blum's voluntarily emigrated to "the other part" of Germany; she kept a quotation from Marx as a book-marker—obviously this woman has the most politically dangerous opinions.

Thinly veiled

The main purpose of the film is as a thinly-veiled attack on the newspapers of ex Nazi Axel Springer.

Die Zeitung is the *Bild Zeitung* in thin disguise.

Bild Zeitung is the most popular daily in West Germany, notorious for its witch-hunts of militants, communists, homosexuals and other "dangers to safety".

It is also the paper responsible for the prosecution of Boll himself.

We are left with the general impression that there are "good" bourgeois newspapers and "bad" ones.

Crude line

A policewoman tries to comfort Blum by showing her cuttings from other papers—which only mention "Katharina B" and show no photographs.

Of course not all papers pursue the crude line of attack of Springer's, publications, but the German capitalist press has been united in its advocacy of harsh measures against anarchists, terrorists and others who "endanger democracy".

Police methods and brutality are only touched upon, although at the beginning of the film it seems that they might be the main target.

However the collusion between police and press is made clear with the swapping of information between the police chief and public prosecutor and the reporter Totges.

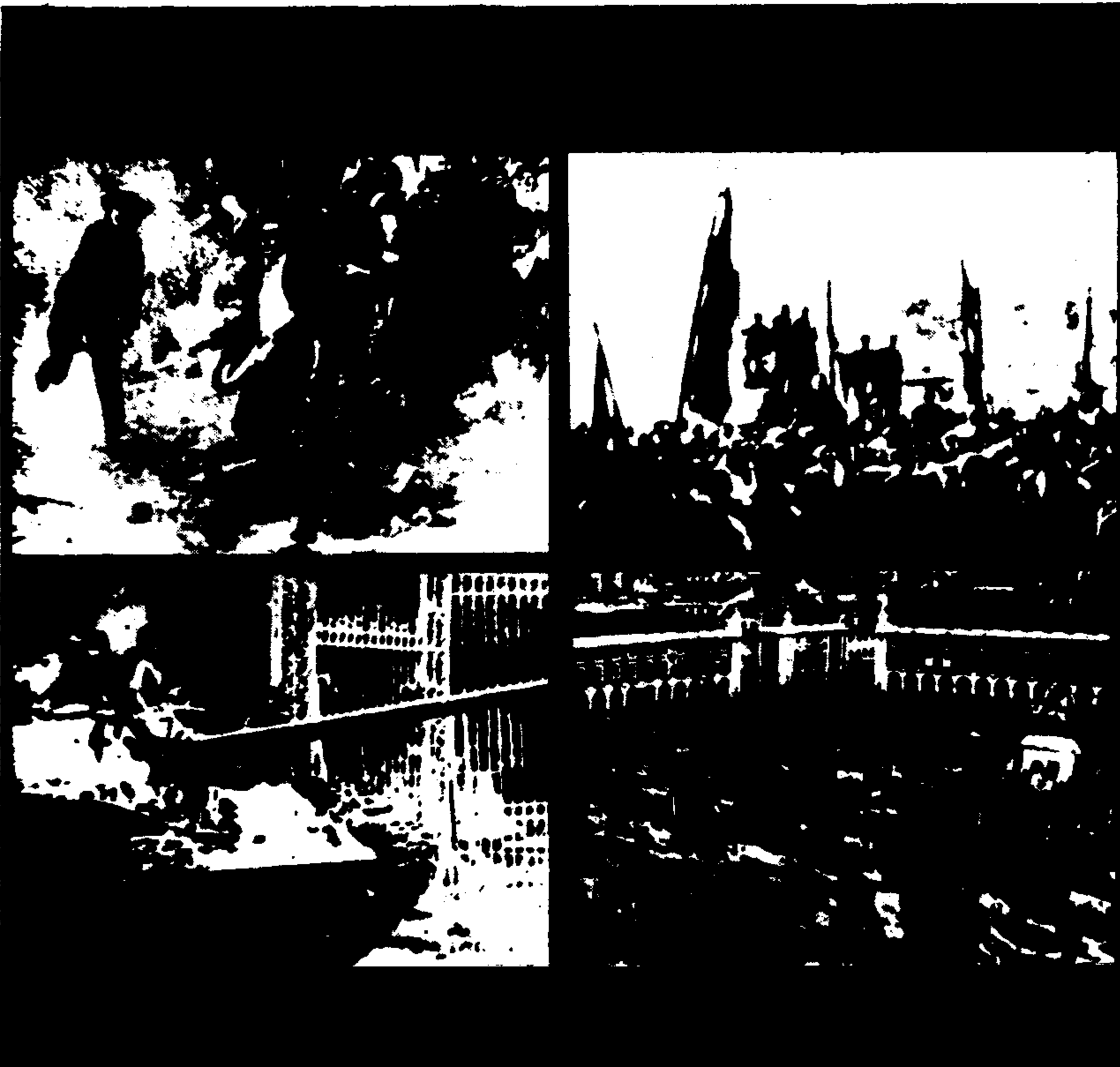
Mutually beneficial

They have a cosy, mutually beneficial relationship. The police give the reporter details about the case in return for the handy titbits which Totges digs up (or makes up) about Blum's background.

Despite the limitations, the *Lost Honour of Katharina Blum* is highly successful in recreating the hysteria of which Katharina Blum is the victim and the fear and persecution she suffers.

Perhaps the most significant comment on German bourgeois democracy is provided by one of Blum's associates. He points out that he is the only person who knows Katharina well and yet has not been slandered in the press, and adds: "Perhaps that's because I'm an ex-Nazi".

By Ann Evans



OUR POLICIES COUNCILS OF ACTION

PART 4
By John Lister

"How are the different demands and forms of struggle to be harmonised, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through *soviets*. These will unite the representatives of all the fighting groups. For this purpose, no one has yet proposed a different form of organisation; indeed it would hardly be possible to think up a better one. *Soviets* are not limited to an *a priori* party programme. They throw open their door to all the exploited. Through these doors pass representatives of all strata, drawn into the general current of the struggle. The organisation, broadening out together with the movement is renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the *soviets* on the basis of the widest democracy. The slogan of *soviets*, therefore, crowns the programme of transitional demands".
Transitional Programme P.28 (Folrose Ed.)

Three previous articles in *Socialist Press* have examined the way in which the British working class, in the upheavals leading up to the 1926 General Strike, at several points moved to the creation of councils of action as all-inclusive working class bodies drawing delegates from trade union organisations and working class political parties.

They spelled out the essential point that the formation of such organisations does not in itself resolve the problem of correct revolutionary leadership.

Confusion

The Stalinist-led British Communist Party took its incorrect line on the General Strike into the councils of action and created as much confusion there as elsewhere in the workers' movement.

Since that time there have been few occasions where an upsurge of working class militancy seemed to offer the possibility of going beyond the limits of trade union struggle to the point of directly confronting government.

And the degeneration of the British CP in the 1920s to the point of acting as no more than a counter-revolutionary arm of Moscow's foreign policy of "peaceful co-existence" has meant that the revolutionary strategy implicit in the call for

councils of action has now become the property not of a mass party but of the limited forces adhering to the Trotskyist programme.

Correct conditions

The demand for councils of action however, advanced even by small forces under the correct conditions, can win substantial support from militant trade unionists, Labour Party members and other working class organisations.

Such was the case in the mass struggles against the Heath government in the summer of 1972.

The working class had shown from the very outset its willingness to fight the Tories—who had been elected to office in the wake of the treacherous Wilson governments of 1964-70.

Huge demonstrations and protest actions had taken place against the hated Industrial Relations Bill, though at each point the TUC leaders, backed up by the Communist Party, fought to confine these actions to peaceful protests aimed at "changing the line" of the Tories rather than bringing them down.

Huge support

At the same time a national level struggle in defence of jobs at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders had generated huge support



Council of Action banner on Oxford march in Spring 1973

within the working class—which was again defused with the aid of the Stalinists.

1972 itself saw a national miners strike force back the Tories hard line on pay.

The use of flying pickets on power stations and the mass head-on confrontation at Saltley coke depot forced the Wilberforce enquiry to concede the miners were a "special case".

The implementation of the Industrial Relations Act against dock pickets attempting to prevent container firms using non-registered labour was the basis for the biggest single confrontation between the working class and the Tory government.

Levying fines

After the leaders had succeeded in holding back workers' anger at the levying of fines on the TGWU by the National Industrial Relations Court, five dockers were jailed in July for "contempt of court" when they continued to picket a non-registered container firm.

The response was immediate and enormous. Hundreds of thousands of workers in almost every section of industry stopped work.

Dockers, print workers, engineers and thousands more joined huge demonstrations to Pentonville jail where the five were being held—without the slightest official lead from the union bureaucracy.

The TUC leaders were so alarmed at the dimensions of the mass movement that they were pressed into tentatively

calling for a one-day general strike.

Despite the fact that it was the height of the holiday shut down period in industry, resolutions from union bodies were flooding in to show that with or without this call a general strike movement was on the way.

Arena

It was under these conditions that the Trotskyists of the Socialist Labour League took up the call for the formation of councils of action to offer an arena within the growing mass struggle within which revolutionaries could fight

for the acceptance of their programme.

Yet it was not until the confrontation was past its peak that such demands began to bear fruit, and councils of action were set up in several areas where the SLL had trade union strength—in particular in Oxford, in Lambeth, and in North London.

In Oxford the initial resolution for a council of action was passed by the local Confed, and subsequently endorsed by the Trades Council, as well as a number of car workers shop stewards committees and union branches.

The inaugural meeting at

Transport House, Oxford drew over 60 delegates from 40 labour movement organisations including the Confed, the Morris Motors Joint Shop Stewards Committee, British Leyland Service Joint Shop Stewards, the two biggest TGWU branches in the town, several AUEW branches, the Communist Party, Labour Party Young Socialists, the SLL and other political groups.

After a battle with the Stalinists it adopted a policy of fighting for the removal of the Tory government.

But the conditions for such a body to establish itself at the head of a growing mass movement were no longer present.

The Tories had been forced to use the pretext of the "Official Solicitor" in order to free the "Pentonville 5"—and were subsequently to shy away from such open confrontations.

The TUC leaders, thoroughly frightened by the scope of the mass movement that had erupted, did everything possible to defuse workers' militancy.

And with the easing of pressure, the Stalinists and 'left' talking elements that had been forced forward into the Oxford Council of Action breathed a sigh of relief, and began to do all they could to ensure its collapse.

So although the Oxford Council of Action lasted well into 1973, leading campaigns against the Tory pay laws and an important intervention attempting to mobilise housewives on the issue of pay and prices, it eventually faded from the scene.



The release of the Pentonville Five in 1972

What the camera saw in the Mirror

"I for one certainly feel sorry for the position Les Dixon and the national panel are put in because they are certainly prepared to settle".

The speaker—addressing a TV camera in his board room was Ted Blackmore, production director of the Mirror Group of Newspapers—the man trying to push through £1.5 million worth of new technology.

His sympathy was for the national president of the National Graphical Association, who, in theory at least was his opponent in this drive for 'progress'.

Dixon was off camera, somewhere, being given a hammering by the FoCs whose members jobs he was selling.

The question sadly, was only how long it would take Dixon and the Mirror management to wear them down.

This was the plot of the BBC documentary last week on the introduction of new

technology to the Mirror Group. The company was preparing to pay out—in addition to the equipment—£8 million in redundancy money.

They stood to regain their money at the rate of £2.5 million each year.

Already installed

Theoretically the talks were about whether the equipment would be introduced.

In fact as the cameras lovingly revealed the new equipment, complete with display terminals and electronic keyboards, was already installed in a brand new print room. The printers were merely haggling over the price.

The film was made by Elwyn Parry-Jones, who has specialised in TV films about the newspaper industry.

While management allowed the cameras to film the most intimate discussions on tactics and while the NGA executive voted to give full cooperation to the film, the

FoCs threatened to walk out of the talks if the cameras were allowed inside.

Parry-Jones stood ineffectively outside the Daily Mirror building, waving his microphone at printers coming out and being ignored by them.

His ingratiating manner and sly insinuation of knowing more than he did, said more about the habits of Fleet Street than all the Mirror board's moans about "Spanish customs" and "Bingo nights".

Class position

Despite surface slime his class position was spotted immediately by the printers.

The programme rapidly developed into a cosy triumvirate of Parry-Jones, Blackmore and Dixon, broken only at the point of contact with the working class.

Dixon, coming out of a meeting ahead of the FoCs flung up his hands in horror when he saw the camera.

His expression was straight from one of those formula

Hollywood films where the big time gangster is visited by one of his small time henchmen and frantically whispers "How many times have I told you not to visit me here?"



The programme played up the claim from the printers (over £200 a week, a 3-day, 28-hour week, and eight weeks holiday). It played down to the point of ignoring

it, the 97 jobs that were to be lost.

"Obviously they would like a higher rate" Dixon told the camera after one particularly hard meeting with the shop floor. "That comes out quite clearly. But I had to make it clear that as far as the Mirror management were concerned, that was the end of it".

The programme provided an inside view of the open collaboration between the union bureaucracy and the employers

Executive

Despite endless patience and sympathy for Dixon, the management at times looked like giving up the softly, softly approach. Blackmore said:

"I think we will have to call the national executive of the NGA and ask it what they want to do about it. We can't go on like this with the tail wagging the dog".

The "tail" was the

membership of the union. The "dog" was the leadership. Blackmore openly talked of sacking the printers and calling in scab labour.

Since the local leadership had no perspective for a fight against the job cuts, the end result was inevitable. They settled for £174, six weeks holiday and a four day week.

Dixon congratulated himself. He did not know (and Parry-Jones did not remind us) that at the very beginning of the programme that was exactly the deal (give or take £4) that the management had privately said they would be prepared to concede.

The programme was timed to go out on the night that the new technology was used for the first time. Unfortunately for Parry-Jones the Mirror printers walked out, refusing to set Reville on the new presses.

It was only expected to be a temporary hold-up. Probably the work of those FoCs again. You never can trust people when they are off camera.



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

GRUNWICK

Committee makes call for mass lobby of TUC

We reprint below a letter to the left press from the Cardiff Grunwick Strike Support Committee, together with our reply.

labour movement—we must show them that this faith is justified.

Yours fraternally,
Keith Morgan
Secretary,
Cardiff Grunwick
Support Committee

We reply

Socialist Press welcomes this initiative from the Cardiff committee, which is in line with the policies we have been advocating since the strike committee's abortive hunger strike outside the TUC last year.

We have stated our view that the call for a full scale mobilisation of trade union-

ists to lobby the TUC must be based not on protest but on demanding the immediate implementation of blacking on all essential services to Grunwick as the only way the strike can be won.

Since any struggle that might expose the treachery of the TUC will almost certainly provoke the expulsion of the strikers from APEX it is certainly essential to make adequate financial provision for such a step.

Assistance

We offer our assistance to such a campaign and urge trade union bodies to declare their willingness to provide financial aid to strikers should they be expelled by the APEX bureaucrats.

Ambulance pay sell out

It looks as though the leadership in the Ambulance Service unions will be successful in persuading their membership to accept a derisory pay offer within the 10% limit.

The original claim by the unions (COHSE, NUPE, GMWU and TGWU) was for a 26% increase, consolidation of previous awards, and increased holiday and sick pay.

This was answered by an offer of 6½% from management, which was theoretically rejected by the union leadership, thus preparing the ground for their "reluctant" acceptance of the latest offer.

This offer comprises a 10% increase in basic pay—but, by some bureaucratic sleight of

hand, calculated on a lower basic than the current one, which means it is actually nearer 8%—and a consolidation of a mere £3 of previous pay awards into the basic, bringing it up to about £47 a week.

Low basic wage

With a low basic wage level and overtime rate, ambulance men and women are still forced to do enormous amounts of overtime to make a living wage.

In the context of a depleted, undermanned health service, this means a divided workforce competing for jobs and money whilst the union leadership make platonic comments about the cuts.

Keep fit

Len Murray's contribution to the health of the nation is to advise us all to keep fit; a good idea if you're last on the waiting list for a kidney machine!

The leadership of the ambulance unions should have fought for the original claim. This meant calling for strike action alongside the firemen, and for the building of councils of action to co-ordinate and broaden the struggle against wage controls and the anti-working class Lib-Lab government.

Sliding scale

A new leadership must now be built in the public sector union, capable of leading the fight against the cuts by fighting for a sliding scale of wages and public expenditure.



PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

Journalists at Marshall Cavendish, London, are on strike in an effort to obtain fulfilment of a wage agreement negotiated for 1976-7. Management have withheld payment of an agreed £500 across the board payment due "when Government/TUC pay policy permitted". - claiming that the 12-month rule stopped them paying up.

NUJ pay fight

NUJ members in provincial papers have imposed sanctions this week to uphold their right to local pay bargaining.

Sanctions include a ban on night jobs, a refusal to use personal cars for work and general withdrawal of cooperation in a number of minor ways.

Contradictory

The action is as contradictory as it is difficult to implement.

NUJ members voted to accept a 10%, £7.06 pay offer and are taking action to prevent chapels being tied to a ban on local bargaining.

Clearly NUJ members want to fight on pay—and equally clearly they saw no way forward in the national negotiations.

Local fights

A successful outcome to their campaign will allow strong chapels to fight locally on wages, but small chapels will scarcely benefit from an action which brings a theoretical right to fight Phase 3 locally.

The action was implemented nationwide with mixed success.

With the Newspaper Society in an uncompromising mood NUJ members need a stronger action than a work to rule.

Drivers strike

An estimated 1,500 South Wales lorry drivers began strike action on Monday 30 January over a wage claim which the employers in the rest of Britain have already conceded.

The sticking point in the claim is that the men want their ten percent calculated on a basic wage into which the £6 Phase 1 settlement and the £2.30 Phase 2 settlement have been consolidated.

Their union, the TGWU, are claiming that this does not represent a breach of the 10%. The employers, on the other hand are insisting that it does break the government guidelines and are threatening redundancies if the men do not return to work.

TGWU Regional Secretary George Wright told the local press that companies employing 1,000 drivers had settled before the strike and that he expected companies employing 500 of the strikers to cave in almost immediately.

Steak house workers fight for union

Eighty workers were sacked last week by the management of Garner Steak Houses when they took strike action in support of a claim for union recognition.

All the Garner Steak Houses, located throughout London's West End, were affected by the dispute.

Of the 185 workers employed, 80% are members of the TGWU. The union, according to official George Abraham, were due to make the dispute official on Monday 30 January.

Workers at the steak houses have been fighting for union recognition for a year.

The reason is obvious. Cashiers receive a take home pay of only £28 for a 50-hour week while waiters receive £26 for a 40-hour week before stoppages.

Because of these low wages, the steak houses are undermanned—so the workers have to work even harder for their money.

Management have stated that even if the strikers get 100% support the union will not be recognised.

The strikers have set up a strike headquarters at 12-13 Henrietta Street, London WC2, to which donations and messages of support should

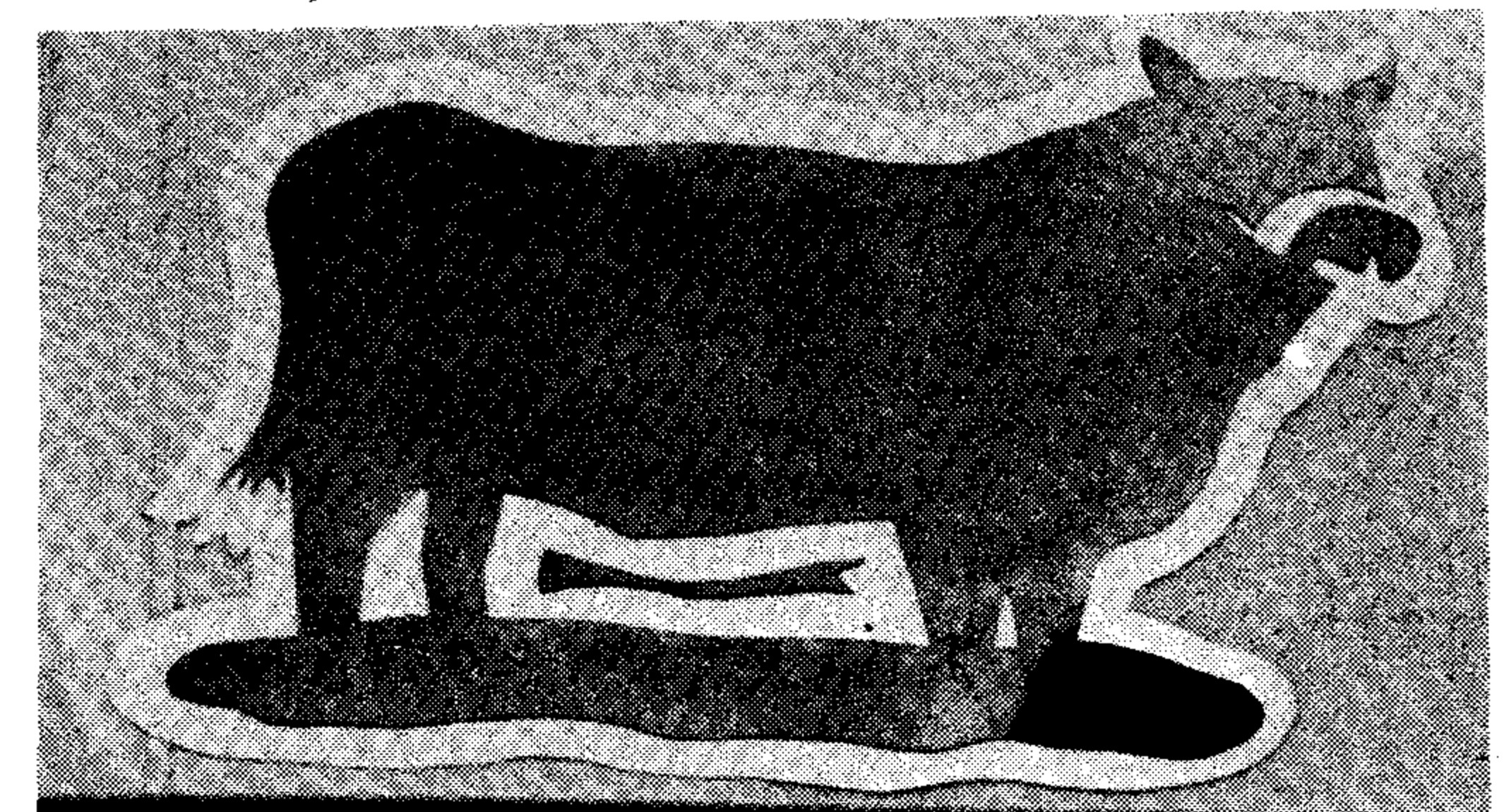


PHOTO: Mark Fisher, IFL



be sent.

As in previous unionisation struggles in the hotel and catering industry, the fight

for blacking of supplies to the Garner Steak Houses will be central to the winning of this dispute.



PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

A meeting last week of the campaign to save the threatened Bethnal Green Hospital now under the Healey axe.

Speke, Halewood, hold line against speed-up

Two determined strikes against management attempts to impose speed-up have halted two of the three major car producers in Merseyside.

At British Leyland's Speke Hall plant—where the Triumph TR7 and bodies for the Dolomite are produced—production has been at a standstill since a mass

meeting vote for indefinite strike action on November 1 last year.

Obstacle

The strike started when management refused to honour the agreement on manning levels that ensures changes are subject to prior agreement by shop stewards, and lays down a procedure for arriving at temporary

arrangements in the case of dispute.

The agreement stands as an obstacle to Leyland's all-out drive for increased exploitation on the shop floor, and the attack on it is part of a sustained management offensive on working conditions throughout the corporation.

The strike in defence of the agreement is the first-ever major stoppage in the

new No. 2 plant at Speke—and the last big strike at the No. 1 factory was 8 years ago.

Now as a result of prolonged lay-offs followed by the 12-week strike, production has been at a halt since last August.

Management and the press are doing their best to exploit this, and using the failure of the Speke stewards committee to hold a mass meeting since November 1 as a lever to weaken the strike.

Friday's *Liverpool Echo* carried an appeal from management for the latest "peace plan" to be put to a mass meeting.

Manoeuvre

This concern for 'democracy' by the employer is a fraud.

If they were really interested in a return to work, all the management needs to do is agree to honour the existing agreement on manning.

Anything else is no more than a manoeuvre to split the workforce and break the strength of the union in the plant.

Hourly quota

Meanwhile at Ford's Halewood plant the strike by 1,000 press-shop workers against the imposition of an hourly quota system continues.

Last Tuesday they voted at a mass meeting not to meet again for a fortnight unless a new peace proposal emerged.

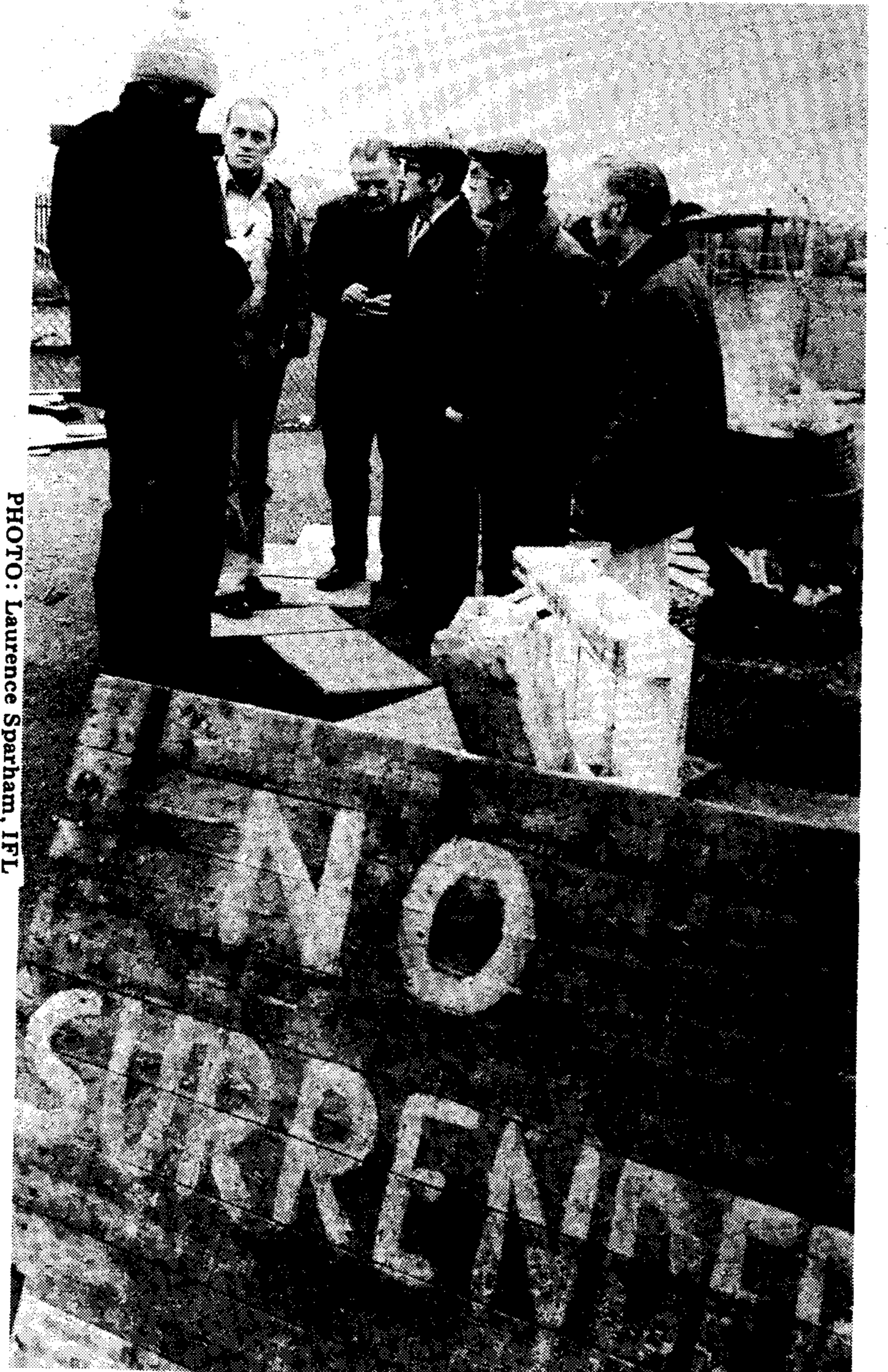


PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

The Birds Eye picket

Birds Eye face closure threat

The pay strike by 110 engineers at the Birds Eye plant in Kirkby which has halted production for the last 11 weeks faces a key test.

The engineers are demanding a pay settlement in excess of the 10% limit. Management have now threatened to close the plant, sacking all 1,200 workers, if there is no return to work.

Contingency plans

With cool cynicism, company chairman Kenneth Webb revealed last week that the firm had drawn up two contingency plans—one for a six-week stoppage and one for a twelve week one.

"We have not put in a third contingency plan", he announced.

450 workers have already been declared "redundant" by Birds Eye, and the sackings blamed on the strike.

But shop stewards pointed out that these sackings brought the total workforce at Kirkby to just about 1,000—the target figure announced by Birds Eye three years ago.

Occupation

Clearly any attempt to close the factory must be fought through immediate occupation and steps by a trade union committee to open the books of Birds Eye management to expose their long term plans.

Workers in other Birds Eye factories must be called on to support the struggle to defend all jobs in the Kirkby plant, and a campaign launched for the nationalisation of this highly profitable viciously anti-working class food monopoly.



SPARKS WALK OUT ON PAY

The Department of Employment, however, has stated that no more than 6p per hour can be paid.

Ominous

The strike has the backing of local EETPU officials—perhaps an ominous warning in view of the official "support" that ensured the sell-out of the EETPU lift engineers' 130% pay claim late last year.

As we go to press a mass meeting to be held tomorrow (Tuesday) is expected to take a hard line for the continuation of the strike.

300 North Humberside contract electricians employed mainly on building sites walked out last week in support of their pay claim.

The claim has been blocked by government intervention, since it breaches the 10% guidelines.

Employers, however, have declared their willingness to pay the claim which including incentives payments, would add 22p per hour to the electricians present rate of 1.53.

NUT sellout

Oxfordshire teachers in the National Union of Teachers last week voted 1200 to 270 in favour of accepting the Tory Council's "compromise" offer and calling off their sanctions against the cuts.

Their eighteen month-long dispute over the 1976-7 cuts which began with a half-day strike and a 4,000 strong demonstration finally fizzled out—divided and confused by the NUT bureaucracy.

At the high point of the dispute—last May—1500 teachers were prepared to strike.

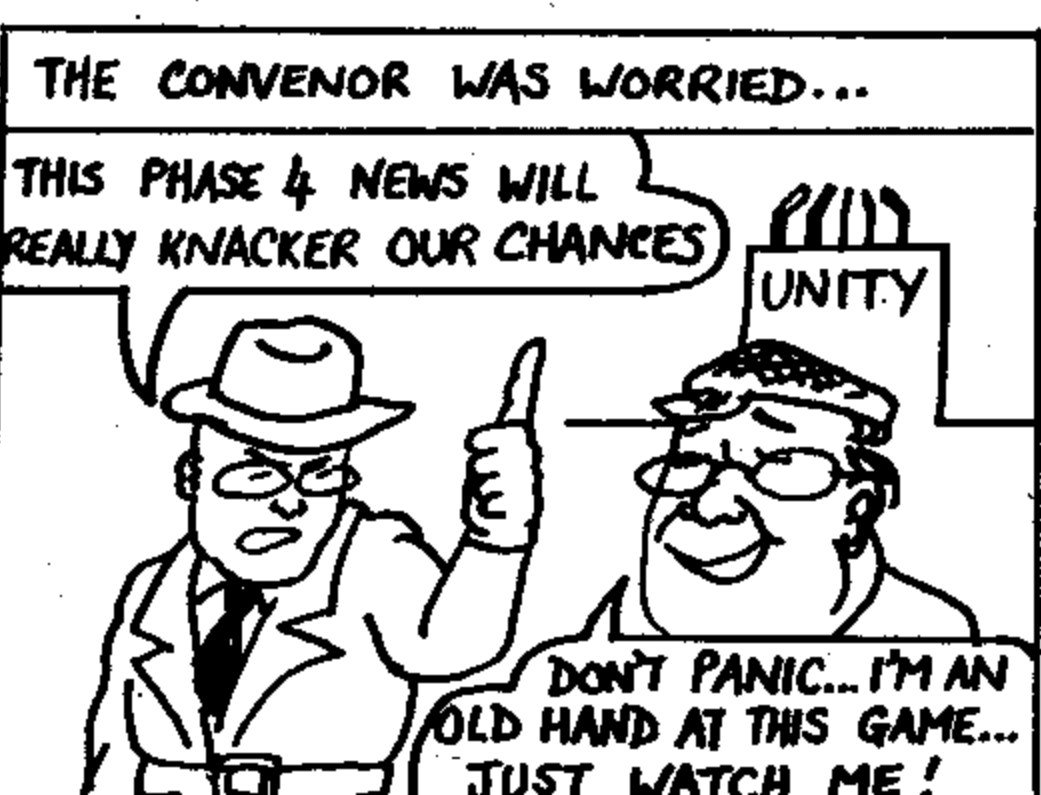
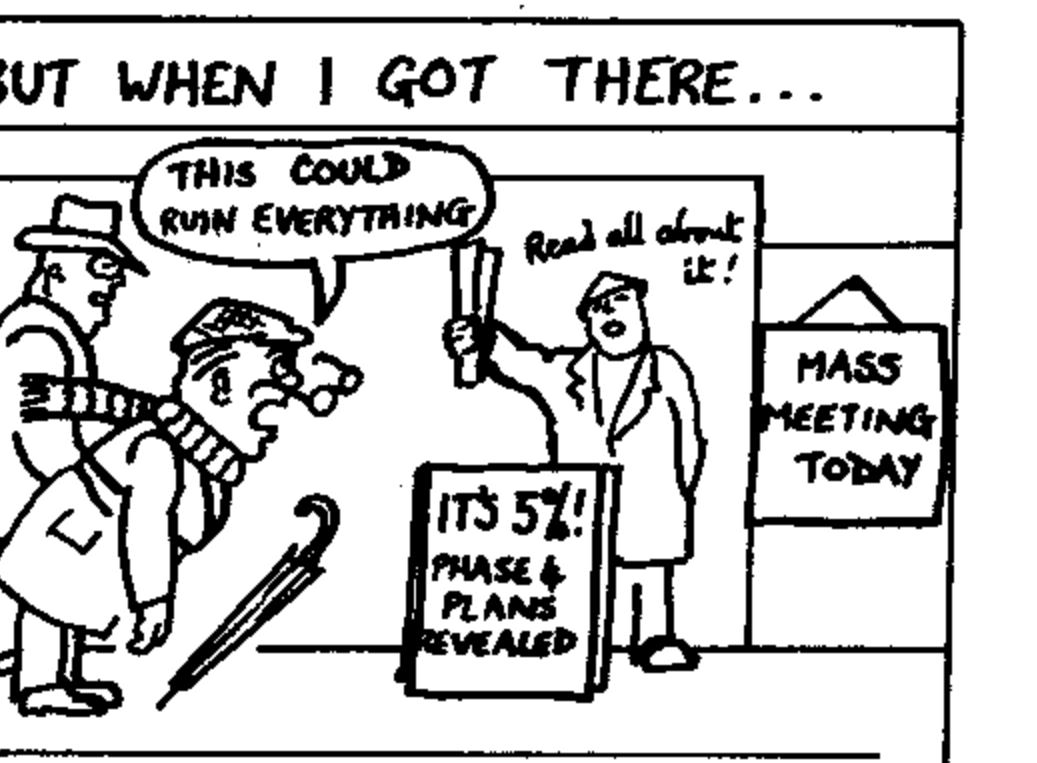
Instead of calling all-out strike action the NUT leaders

called a limited strike in one area of the county and then withdrew strike plans in favour of divisive sanctions.

These in particular separated NUT members in primary and secondary schools, and set teachers against parents.

Eventually, faced with a fraudulent ballot paper and a leadership recommendation for a 'yes' vote, teachers have called off the action.

The teaching force of over 4,000 has been cut by 10%, the ratios have been worsened to almost the levels intended by the Tory Council—but of course Max Morris, ex-Stalinist chairman of the NUT National 'Action' Committee is claiming a 'victory'.



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TREACHERY IN ZIMBABWE TALKS

Smith near deal with stooge blacks

The political leaders of Zimbabwe, guerrilla armies, Joshua Nkomo (ZAPU) and Robert Mugabe (ZANU) went to Malta on Monday to see if the imperialists would rescue them from political eclipse.

The imperialists, David Owen and the US representative Andrew Young, went to Malta on Monday to see if Nkomo and Mugabe would help them from being out-manoeuvred by racist Premier Ian Smith.

Stooge leaders

Ian Smith went to his internal settlement talks on Monday in the hope of signing an independence agreement with the stooge black leaders Chief Chirau (a paid servant of the white racists) and the renegade nationalist leader the Rev. Sithole.

They went to the talks because they hope Smith and the racists will give them some political power which, given their record of betrayal, they could never get from the

black masses.

The third party to these talks, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, stayed at home. He says that is because one of Smith's aides called him a 'liar'.

Stall the talks

But others say it is because British Foreign Secretary told him to stall the talks until after the Malta meeting since the British and Americans want to include him alongside Nkomo (and perhaps Mugabe) in their own rival neo-colonial solution.

So that is where all the characters stood as the curtain rose on what may be a new act in Zimbabwe's drawn-out independence saga.

As we go to press it seems unlikely that very much can happen in Salisbury before some clear message has come from Malta.

Opposition

Both Owen and Young set out with statements of opposition to a Smith/Muzorewa internal settlement "because it would cause more bloodshed".



Nkomo and Mugabe

By this they mean it would provoke so much hostility from the black masses that the stable neo-colonial solution they are looking for could not be maintained.

Owen and Young are now trying to persuade Nkomo and Mugabe to accept the British/American plan.

This means the disarmament of the guerrillas, and erection of an 'interim' British military dictatorship under Field Marshall Lord Carver.

This would be followed when all seems well by the installation of a client black government (probably under Nkomo and Muzorewa).

They will no doubt threaten that if Nkomo and Muzorewa refuse them they



Ireland: new guns not the answer

500 demonstrators joined a march called by Sinn Fein last Sunday to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the British army's bloody massacre of 14 unarmed civilians in Derry in 1972.

Biggest contingent was that behind the banners of Provisional Sinn Fein, with some 300-400 supporters.

A contingent of some 30 Workers Socialist League members and supporters shouted slogans demanding the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and self-determination for the Irish people.

A short distance away a rival march comprising a variegated display of centrist and self-proclaimed "Trotskyist" groups mustered a rather smaller number of supporters.

Morale booster

Meanwhile in Derry a 3,000-strong march organised by the Provisionals was treated to a glimpse of a new morale-booster in the form of the rapid fire M60 machine gun.

While this show of bravado indicates the ingenuity and tenacity of the republican fighters it is a poor attempt to substitute for the development of a programme to mobilise the Irish working class in the struggle for self-determination for the Irish people.

But while the republican forces find themselves reduced to reformist agitation combined with individual military actions against British imperialism, reactionary forces in Britain are demanding a still more rigorous crackdown on anti-imperialist forces.

Tory spokesman on Ireland, Airey Neave has now hinted at plans to remove democratic rights from Irish workers in Britain.

Using Eire premier Lynch's recent opportunist speech on Ulster as a pretext, Neave said:

"We've granted special privileges to about a million Irish citizens in this country, they know that Britain is fair and democratic".

Racist laws

He claimed that the attitude of the Lynch government could cause the question of Irish citizenship to be reviewed under the already blatantly racist immigration laws.

In conclusion, Neave said that Britain had already suffered insults and accusations from the Republic and:

"... We're no longer going to bear these insults with a stiff upper lip".

This speech should be seen for exactly what it is, a further Tory threat to the already limited democratic rights of Irish workers, especially those who have the audacity to criticise Britain's 'fair and democratic' behaviour in Ulster.

These Tory threats must be resisted by the whole trade union movement in this country.

This means fighting for the removal of troops from Ulster and the repeal of already existing repressive legislation.

Zimbabwe liberation forces

to crush the guerrilla armies and their supporters.

Whatever permutation finally results from the present complexes of talks and deals, there is no doubt that it will have to be subsequently fought and overthrown by the Zimbabwean masses.

Compromise

Any peaceful settlement must represent an abject compromise with imperialism either indirectly through Ian Smith or directly with Owen and Young.

Trotskyists must fight in the British Labour Movement for maximum moral and material support to any forces in Zimbabwe prepared to resist the imposition of a neo-colonial sell-out.



Muzorewa

will support the Smith/Muzorewa deal and use imperialist troops if necessary

Fascism is no single issue

Last Thursday saw one of the first local meetings of the Anti-Nazi League whose well-known sponsors include the ubiquitous Brian Clough and the unprincipled Tariq Ali.

One hundred and fifty anti-fascists gathered in Acton to hear SWP spokesman Kim Gordon, Mrs Desai of the Grunwick Strike Committee and recent Labour Party recruit Peter Hain spell out an almost entirely moral case against fascism.

Only Mrs Desai, by touching on NF harassment of Grunwick pickets, even

approached an analysis of the class role of fascism.

Propaganda

Hain, however, claimed that the Front was most afraid of being exposed as the Nazis they are. He called for the ANL to concentrate on anti-fascist propaganda around schools and in elections.

But such propaganda, detached from the political fight to end the material conditions of mass unemployment and falling living standards in which fascism festers and is utilized by the employers, is hopelessly inadequate to defeat fascism.

WSL speakers from the floor stressed the need to break the Lib-Lab coalition to open the way for such a fight.

But they were opposed by a Stalinist from the Young Communist League who declared that politics should be put aside until fascism had been defeated by 'democratic' forces.

The ANL is clearly fixed on precisely such a course, and like its fellow "single issue campaigns" is condemning itself to long-term avoidance of political discussion and vague exhortations against fascism.

3 ANNIVERSARY OF SOCIALIST PRESS Special meetings

OXFORD
Wednesday 8 February
8.00 pm
East Oxford Community
Centre, Princes Street

LIVERPOOL
Sunday 12 February
8.00 pm
Mitre, Dale Street

LONDON
Friday 10 February
7.30 pm
New Theatre, LSE
Houghton Street
London WC2
Plus FILM
'Salt of the Earth'

COVENTRY
Tuesday 7 February
8.00 pm
Old Dyers Arms
Spon End, Coventry

FUND

With two days to go we are still £100 short of our £600 target for the January Monthly Fund.

A really determined effort will have to be made if we are to raise the full amount.

At the same time, not a minute should be lost in getting the February Fund under way.

All donations should be sent to:

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