

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

## Missiles Conference

PAGE 5

## Reagan threats

PAGE 2

# Social democrats used to knife Labour

Like a grotesque Frankenstein monster, cobbled together from the left-overs of previous reactionary pressure groups and campaigns, the new social democratic party to be launched this week is an artificial creation.

It has been laboriously pieced together with the aid of a deluge of free publicity in the mass media that has subtly shifted the Council for Social Democracy's image from the unsavoury connotations of the "Gang of Three" to the apparently respectable notion of responsible politicians of the "Centre" who reject "extremes" of both left and right.

Only through huge transfusions of synthetic public interest could four defeated and ostracised pro-capitalist drop-outs from the Labour Party have been reconditioned and put back into service as a new party within the space of a mere two months.

But of course the social democrats themselves are not taken in by their own propaganda, or by the repeated, ridiculous opinion poll forecasts of their possible electoral support.

That is why none of the Labour MPs or the renegade Tory Brocklebank-Fowler has any intention of putting their supposed support to the test by standing for re-election as a social democrat.

### Weakest

They know full well that even the opinion polls have confirmed that their electoral standing is *weakest* in the constituencies they actually hold at present—where the issues are most openly posed.

They know that even the hundreds of cheques and letters they have received from middle class and capitalist sponsors around the country mean little in terms of actual, practical mass support.

Certainly they have as yet taken few supporters with them out of the Labour Party. Trounced at the last three Party conferences and shunned by the thousands of new members turning to the Labour Party as a way of fighting the Thatcher government, they have next to no support from the rank and file.

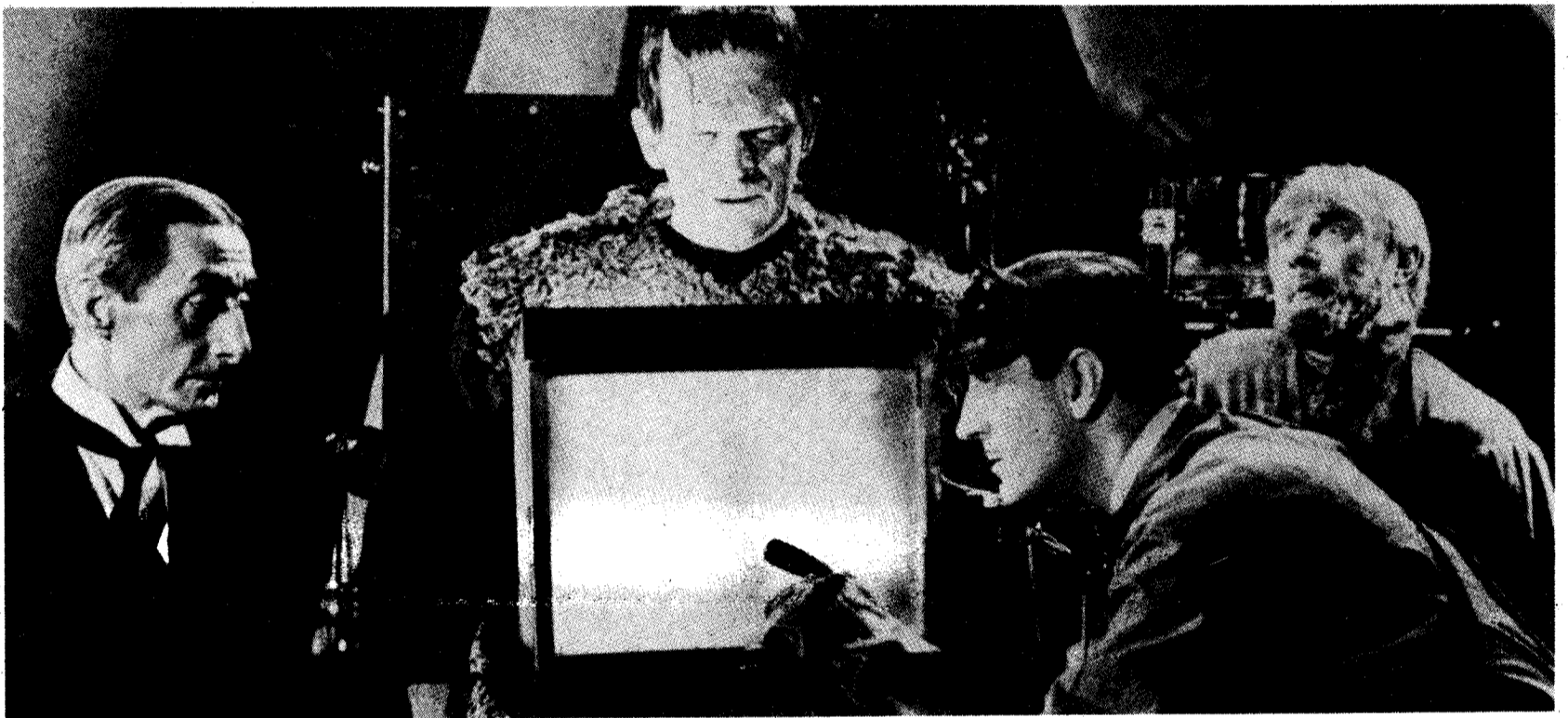
Their only hope is to utilise the media to the full in a coordinated attempt to win a base of support from confused layers of the middle class who oppose both Thatcher and socialist policies.

It is in part the existence of such layers that has persuaded sections of the capitalist class to lend their material backing to the new party—in the form of uncritical press coverage combined with an intensified attacks on the supposed ultra-left policies of the Labour Party.

### Unpopularity

The ruling class is plainly concerned at the massive unpopularity of the Thatcher government, which is now resulting in a growing crisis within both the Cabinet and the Tory Party in Parliament.

Particularly in the wake of the defeat inflicted on the government by the miners, the capitalist class now sees a real



# TORY PRESS LAUNCHES NEW PARTY

danger that the government could fall in the face of working class action.

In previous periods the capitalist response has been simply to turn to the right wing leadership of the Labour Party to manage the economy for a period, while the Tory Party regroup its forces.

Successive Labour governments have shown themselves willing and able to wage outright attacks on the working class in the name of preserving capitalist industry, and to collaborate to the limit in the maintenance of imperialist rule on a world scale—particularly through the NATO alliance.

But recent developments within the Labour Party have caused capitalists in Britain and internationally to question whether this remains the case.

An increasingly angry rank and file within the Labour Party has begun to step up the fight

for alternative policies—rejecting the wage controls, cuts and mass unemployment brought about under Wilson and Callaghan.

The working class has set out to prevent the repetition of another right wing Labour government—and forced through policies to make the party leadership for the first time accountable to the members, and to bring right wing MPs to heel. The ferment continues: the old order is being challenged—and in the process Owen, Williams and Rodgers have been roundly defeated.

In particular we should note that the last Labour Party conference while rejecting a call to withdraw from NATO, carried a motion for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

Such a policy is seen as a direct challenge by the imperialist chiefs both in Britain and in the USA. The recent Panorama programmes indicated

that the US imperialists would regard a left wing Labour government as so untrustworthy that the supply of secret information would cease, and NATO membership would be thrown into question.

And it has been revealed that former Tory Ireland spokesman Airey Neave plotted with the secret service contingency plans for the assassination of Tony Benn were he to become Prime Minister.

The capitalist class in Britain and the USA is thus determined to do anything and everything to prevent the election of a left wing Labour government.

The new party will serve their purpose in this task. On the one hand it will be able to utilise the mass media to create maximum confusion not only amongst workers but also, more significantly, among the sections of middle class electors whose votes are crucial to a Labour election victory.

When this is combined with the new electoral boundaries due to be introduced—which offer the Tories dozens of additional safe seats—then the capitalists hope that they can split off enough supporters to make a Labour government impossible.

### Coalition

At the same time the emergence of the social democratic party as an unselected grouping within Parliament immediately weakens Labour's opposition, and offers the possibility under certain conditions of propping up a flagging Tory government through a coalition arrangement.

This would remove from the capitalists' minds the haunting fear of a Heath-style defeat at the hands of the working class—and reinforce the offensive against jobs, services and living standards.

And while even the Liberals contain unilateralist, anti-war elements who can on occasion embarrass David Steel's leadership, the social democrats in a fusion with the Liberals would bring in a firm commitment to the hard-line pro-NATO, pro-nuclear missiles policies advocated by William Rodgers.

The new party thus fills an important role for the imperialists in Britain and on a world scale.

But while the bosses rub their hands in glee, and churn out reams and hours of sycophantic news coverage to promote their new creation, workers should look to their mass political party.

For if the social democrats fit the needs of capital, the Healey/Foot leadership and the politics of the Labour Party in no way fit the needs of the working class.

In fact it is increasingly clear that Healey, Foot, Shore and Hattersley are acting as the Fifth Column left behind in the Labour Party to carry on the work of the Gang of Three.

They are fighting tooth and nail to reverse the democratic reforms of Blackpool and Wembley; they are looking for the means to witch-hunt socialists who oppose their right wing policies; and they are totally opposed to any fight for action to remove the Thatcher government before the next election in 1984.

As the new Frankenstein Party crows its first reactionary sentences and embarks on its attacks on the working class, Labour Party members must step up the fight to secure control of their party.

Key to this is the building of a new, principled leadership in the struggles now taking place on jobs, wages, rents and social spending cuts, equipped with a programme of socialist policies.

The fight must be for mass action to bring down the Thatcher government, expose and remove the Labour traitors, and establish a genuine workers' government committed to building a planned, socialist economy.

# BRAZILIAN UNION LEADER

# JAILED

By Don Flint

The sentencing to three and a half years' jail of Luis Ignacio da Silva (Lula), leader of the Brazilian metalworkers' union and the Partido dos Trabalhadores, and eleven other trade unionists for 'inciting collective disobedience of the law' promises to accelerate class conflict in Latin America's largest state.

According to the Judge in the case, Nelson Guimaraes: "I took part in the trial with my mind already made up. So it

did not matter what was said by the press—I mean the defence and the prosecution."

The whole organisation of the 'trial' was so transparently directed towards obtaining a 'guilty' verdict that even sections of Brazil's puppet Congress and, allegedly, sectors of the military, were opposed to it.

The defendants' lawyers advised them not to attend—which they did not—for fear of their safety; eleven military cordons (comprising 2,000 men) were set up around the courthouse; the press was excluded; whole surrounding blocks were cleared of people and traffic and

only two days' notice of proceedings were given.

The result was a foregone conclusion. An appeal has been lodged which will give General Figueredo's dictatorship a chance to assess the political balance of forces before instructing its judges.

The workers' crime lies in their leading role in organising the metalworkers' strike of April 1980 in Sao Paulo which lasted for six weeks and gained the support of over 200,000 workers.

The strike was illegal under Brazil's 1937 Labour Law, which contains whole sections

lifted from Mussolini's fascist legislation.

The struggle marked a major step forward in the organisation of unions independent of the government-appointed 'pelegos', yellow leaders who guaranteed verticalist control.

Similar strikes had been held in 1978 and 1979 in the Sao Paulo industrial suburb of Sao Bernardo, laying the basis for the Partido dos Trabalhadores (Labour Party), a social democratic organisation led by Lula.

The regime is clearly determined to repress the PT and any form of independent workers' organisation while at the same time introducing a spurious "democratic opening" after 17 years of military rule.

Yet it will be unable to complete its manoeuvre (forced on the government in the first place by the rising mobilisation of millions of Brazil's working class, peasantry and impoverished masses) without running the risk of wholesale class confrontation.

This is one reason why the 'ultra right' of the military pushed for the prosecution of the workers' leaders and a reversal of the 'abertura'.

The dictatorship is faced

with a critical dilemma. For if it gives way, the workers' movement will move ahead apace: whereas if it proceeds with jailing Lula and the others there will be, in Lula's words:

"Ten Lula's tomorrow. If they arrest them, hundreds more will take their place, so many that they cannot all be arrested."

Figueredo and his generals are sitting on a volcano—it is only a matter of time before it begins to rumble again.

## Invasion threat from top Reagan aide

The notion that workers in Europe might prefer the (unlikely) prospect of a Soviet invasion to the (more likely) prospect of annihilation in a Reagan-launched nuclear war is "contemptible".

So says Mr Richard Allen, National Security Advisor to the Reagan government, in a public attack on the anti-war movement gathering pace in Britain and the rest of Europe.

"Right now the second largest party in Britain has adopted as part of its official platform the renunciation of nuclear weapons. We are even hearing in other countries the contemptible "better red than dead" slogan of a generation ago."

Allen's heavy-handed defence of Reagan's aggressive, warmongering policy is part of a pattern of similar statements emerging from White House aides in the last two months.

But in the last week the anti-Soviet rhetoric from Reagan's closest political advisors has reached a pitch that has even embarrassed the government itself.

Most outrageous of all was the speech last week by the White House National Security Council's "Soviet affairs expert" a Mr Robert Pipes.

"Detente does not exist," he declared. "Nothing is left of detente."

The Soviet leaders face a choice of "peacefully changing" their social system to line up with that in the capitalist countries "or going to war".

"There is no other alternative, and it could go either way."

Pipes looked towards an

international policy as brutal as Reagan's domestic economic policy, designed:

"to do to the Soviets what they have been doing to us in Ethiopia, Angola, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

At a very low cost, without a big investment on our part, we can make it very hard for them in these places."

The USA "would not yield" to pressure from the West German government for new talks on the limitation of the nuclear arms build-up, he said.

The Reagan administration at first attempted to suppress Pipes' name, and then hurriedly disavowed the statement itself as alarm grew among NATO allies.

But it is clear that—as Reuters news agency pointed out:

"the tough line appears consistent with early statements by Mr Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander Haig."

And indeed Pipes' superior, General Haig, had only just completed testimony to Congress in which he talked of the war in El Salvador in terms that revived the "domino theory" which was used as the pretext for US military intervention in Vietnam.

Claiming that the Soviet bureaucracy stands behind the struggles of the liberation forces in El Salvador, Haig declared that this was the second stage of a four-phase operation:

"one of which has already been completed—the seizure of Nicaragua. Next is El Salvador, to be followed by Honduras and Guatemala.

I wouldn't necessarily call it a domino theory . . . but a hit list if you will."

It was also revealed that the vicious thugs of the US "Green

Beret" commando units are being prepared for action in El Salvador.

But while Reagan's team prepares the most savage onslaught on workers and oppressed masses on a world scale in the name of opposing "international terrorism" they are also extending the hand of economic and military aid to the terror campaigns waged by the most barbaric regimes and right wing guerrillas.

Dictatorships in El Salvador, Chile, Argentina, the savage apartheid capitalist state of South Africa; and anti-communist guerrillas in Angola and Afghanistan have all been the subject of political overtures and economic and military assistance in the last week.

Reagan is seeking to change the law to enable him to supply arms to the reactionary UNITA guerrillas in Angola, and to the Argentinian dictatorship. He is debating the possibility of openly increasing the supply of imperialist arms to the Afghan rebels.

And there are rumours that South African Prime Minister Botha might be invited to make the first post-war state visit of a South African leader to the USA—as a means of consolidating Reagan's alliance with a regime seen as both a crucial supplier of raw materials and a bastion of anti-communism.

But of course Reagan is not alone in his international orientation. His every move is warmly greeted by the Thatcher government in Britain. British workers must act to break this potentially lethal alliance—before it turns, as in El Salvador, from warmongering in words to warmongering in fact.



Lula addressing Sao Paulo mass meeting

## PRESS GANG



The *Sunday Times* quotes Sir Thomas Hetherington, the Director of Public Prosecutions, in his evidence to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure.

He said: "In deciding whether or not to authorise a prosecution, we must have regard to the effect which the prosecution . . . would have upon public morale and order, and with any other considerations affecting public policy."

That policy was certainly followed by the DPP in the infamous Paedophile trial.

Tom O'Carroll, who was campaigning for paedophilia, was jailed for two years for conspiracy; while Sir Peter Hayman, former High Commissioner in Canada, had his name covered up in the court proceedings, despite being a central figure in the child pornography circle.

Clearly 'public morale' is done no harm at all by launching a conspiracy trial against O'Carroll and jailing him.

But to pillory an establishment figure who is amongst other things chairman of his local Tory constituency party, might just undermine public confidence in the dignity of the aristocracy and therefore in the state.

Geoffrey Dickens, a Tory MP who has not come to terms with the patrician wing of the party, blew the whistle.

Up to this point the press

had been wallowing along in the wake of events.

When Dickens named Hayman in Parliament the story filled the front pages for two days—once on the leak and once attacking it.

At this point the press began to make the running. The paedophile witch-hunt had turned over a stone they had not meant to turn and found a scorpion that stung its keeper.

Even while inside pages were still running profile pieces on the Knight they called Humpty Dumpty, the front pages had the knives out for Dickens.

Mary Kenny wrote a piece in the *Daily Mail* saying that even 'liberal opinion' was outraged by paedophilia: but the press was about to demonstrate that it does not discriminate between paedophilia and adultery when it has a target in its sights.

Dickens, half realising what was about to happen, announced the break-up of his marriage at a press conference—and then phoned home to tell his wife.

The break-up of his marriage was the lead story in every tabloid paper the next day.

His wife was interviewed almost as she heard the news. The skeleton in the cupboard was rattled as loudly as the bones would stand.

Headlines spoke for themselves: Confession of Porn Row MP (*Sun*); The Skeleton in My Cupboard (*Mail*); My Secret Life (*Mirror*); Porn Row MP Leaves Wife (*Express*); and Porn Case MP says 'I've left my wife but please don't tell her yet'

(*Star*).

The following day the story was still the lead in the *Mirror* and *Star*. A 'third woman' was named.

By now it was the hapless Dickens who was linked with the child sex material!

Hayman had disappeared from the headlines while Dickens was 'Porn Row MP' (a description which had also equated pictures of children being sexually assaulted with 'porn' in any other sense).

Dickens was also—at least by implication and sometimes more directly—accused of hypocrisy 'fancy pointing the finger at Hayman while he had a mistress'.

### Passive role

The woman of course was cast in a passive role throughout. Dickens 'had' a wife and a mistress (or two, or three depending on which paper you were reading).

So within a few days we had arrived at a position where the same papers which had treated O'Carroll as a monster were now giving the MP who exposed Hayman similar treatment.

This narrow, bigoted, prudish and evangelical attack on Dickens did not just flow from sexual puritanism.

It began from a need to deflect attention from Hayman and the establishment.

The 'morality' displayed by the proprietors of our great and truth loving daily gutter sheets has, as usual, a direct and crude material base.

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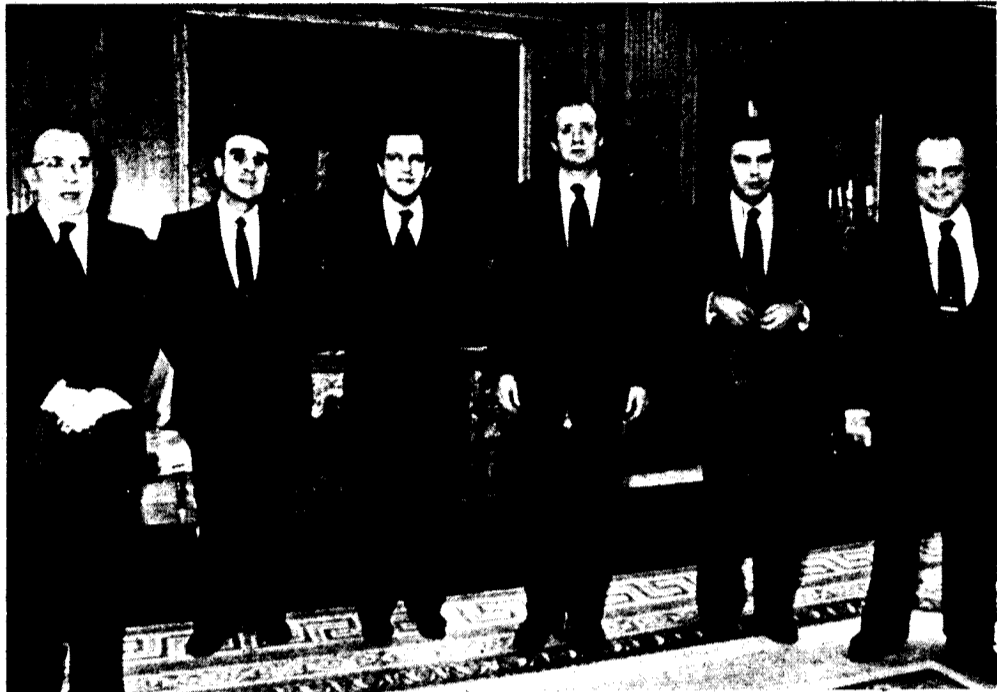
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# Spain: workers' leaders make no preparations



Class collaboration in practice. The day after the coup. Left to right: Santiago Carrillo (Communist Party), Rodriguez Sahagun (UCD), Adolfo Suarez (UCD), King Juan Carlos, Felipe Gonzalez (Socialist Party), Manuel Fraga (Democratic Alliance).

The Defence Minister's leaked secret statement to parliament last week about the just-failed military coup on February 23 confirmed the worst fears about the fragility of Spain's post-Franco 'democracy'.

Oliart's report revealed a plot of very wide extent among military and Civil Guard officers which had been carefully planned over several months.

He made it clear that many more senior officers were implicated in the plot than the four who have so far been arrested, and who are now held in luxurious conditions under a liberal regime in army barracks awaiting trial by military judge.

Oliart also admitted something which was already widely suspected—that the government itself knew of the plans at least in outline for several months.

The widespread speculation that Adolfo Suarez resigned from the Premiership because of military pressure is thus demonstrated to be more or less correct.

This also explains something of the timing of the coup attempt. Suarez evidently resigned to reduce military pressure against his ineffective, though reactionary, regime.

The plotters therefore moved (before many senior officers were ready) at the moment of Calvo Sotelo's installation as Premier before the UCD government got a new lease of life under a new leader.

Oliart's statement was leaked to the press by members of parliament who had secretly recorded it on tape.

Though the government was unable to resist the clamour inside and outside parliament to know what happened, the leaking of the report goes completely against their strategy of refraining from anything which might arouse military ire.

And even though the Socialist and Communist leaders are willingly going along with this craven surrender to the Francoist army, the publication of even the limited government report will make it much more difficult to continue with the kind of cover up of the plot which the

government had hoped for.

Even before the leak the government has been planning to introduce legislation which will curb the freedom of the press and which will allow them to close down not only the embarrassing official Francoist daily *El Alcazar* but also the Basque daily, *Egin*.

In the Basque provinces the ETA-militar campaign against the army has continued, regardless of the coup attempt. Since February 23 ETA have succeeded in killing a group of armed police and seriously injuring an army colonel.

These remain circumstances in which the majority of people in Spain are counting the days to the next coup attempt.

The main workers' parties and unions continue to do nothing to prepare the political and physical resistance to such a seemingly inevitable event.

They have decided to leave it to the Francoist 'democrats' and the 'constitutional' generals and Franco's protegee King Juan Carlos to preserve democracy in Spain. A recipe for disaster.

# LETTER New FI has long way to go

London 16 March 1981

Dear Comrades,  
It is to be hoped that *Socialist Press* will be able to carry more extensive material on the newly proclaimed Fourth International (International Committee) soon. From my point of view the 28 February meeting reported in issue 238 raised more questions than it answered, and cannot be seen as a definitive solution to the problems of the fragmentation of the Trotskyist movement in Britain and the world.

Although these points will, however, have to await a more detailed discussion, I would like to add to your report on the 28 February meeting.

## 'Fusion'

It must have been apparent to even the most casual observer that the 'fusion' between the aspirants to 'orthodoxy' as represented by the SLG and LWR, (as the mouthpieces of the OCI), and the current led by Moreno, which steadfastly refuses to give an account of its period in the 'Pabloite' United Secretariat, has a very long way to go before anything resembling a politically coherent world proletarian leadership can emerge from it.

The most glaring example of this, and one which your account should have mentioned—given that it was juxtaposed to a piece on the FI(OC)'s defamatory of Lora—was the striking contradiction between John Archer's opening contribution for the SLG, stressing the importance of history, continuity and tradition, in particular the SLL in Britain (a view which we would largely support) and Moreno's vulgar dismissal of history as a fit subject for a few specialists but hermetically isol-

ated from the real work of politics.

His dismissal of history can only lead to a refusal to evaluate and learn from past errors, and in some cases crimes of leaderships, and will inevitably lead the working class into the same traps that have held it in its historic impasse since 1938.

## Attacks

Moreno's violent and repetitious attacks on the whole history of Lora's organisation not only undermine his own rejection of historical analysis, but question every central decision made by the 'orthodox' SLL-OCI current in Latin America.

It is important that the SLG, if it is serious about its claims to a continuity with earlier struggles to build a movement in Britain and internationally, give a proper account of its position in relation to Lora and his movement, and of his expulsion from the OCRFI.

It would also be worthwhile to record the dishonest way in which Moreno replied to the points raised by WSL and Workers Power speakers. None of their points were seriously dealt with, and both were dismissed as provincial establishments trying to maintain their own little enterprises.

## Debating tricks

In fact he sought to combine the two groups in the minds of the audience by a series of debating tricks that would be more appropriate to the Oxford Union than the workers' movement.

He failed entirely to explain why he had broken off his earlier approaches to the WSL and had not been prepared to

support their request to present material to the founding conference of the FI(OC). He refused to even consider the international work of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.

Certainly the discussion must continue, and joint solidarity work must be undertaken with the SLG on the assumption that they are a group of serious workers. Equally we should insist on an honest approach in these discussions and an end to sharp practice.

Fraternally,  
Ernie Stubbins



The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle

The founding programmatic document of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.

Available, price 80p including postage, from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

# Winsford vote for rate/rent strike

A plan for a massive rent/rate strike in Winsford and possibly throughout mid-Cheshire has been adopted.

The audience at a rally held on Monday night agreed almost unanimously that residents should not pay the increase in rents and rates to be introduced next month.

The rally was organised by a Council of Action formed from trade unionists, Labour Party members and others to fight such increases, as well as fight cuts in jobs and public spending.

## Organisation

From the chair, Dave Murphy warned a 90-strong meeting at Grange Community Centre that a rent/rate strike would have to be almost 100% supported or it would fail.

"We need an enormous amount of organisation: we need tenants' groups on the various estates."

He said the movement had to be at least Winsford-wide—and hopefully throughout mid-Cheshire.

Past history, said Murphy had shown previous movements had failed because the support was not strong enough and one or two martyrs were left to take the rap.

## Band together

Although the meeting voted by 57-1 in favour of the action, Murphy noted that about 40 people abstained.

He said that residents now had to band together into tenants' groups to get other people to join the movement.

He hoped trade unionists would be encouraged to support the action, to add industrial

muscle to the fight.

It was also hoped that the council of action could join forces with a similar organisation in Runcorn.

## Broader base

Peter Lawes, of the Halton Castle Rent Action Group, said his organisation was based on 3 estates in Runcorn.

"The broader base we have in a struggle like this, the more chance we've got of success," he said.

Murphy said that the problems facing workers were caused by a class war government: but he also blasted local Labour councillors and Party leaders.

## 'Traitors'

It had been planned to hold the rally at the Labour Club: but the Labour Party withdrew its permission.

Ken Unwin, a member of the council of action, branded councillors such as Ellen McGrane and Percy and Josie Tipple as "traitors" for not giving their support.

Jim Needham, a council of action member, said Labour Party members were asked not to speak at the rally because they would be "urging residents to break the law."

A Labour Party member from the audience said he did not think councillor McGrane was a traitor, but had been put under pressure not to speak at the rally.

At a recent meeting of the Mid-Cheshire Trades Council a right wing motion to disaffiliate from the council of action was defeated by a 2-1 majority.

It was then emphasised that the trades council should respond more quickly to the initiatives and requirements of the council of action!



Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

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# HESELTINE'S WAR ON DIRECT LABOUR

Statement submitted to the CDLM/SO Conference on the Cuts, Saturday March 21. (See page 8).

Apart from the massive cuts in public expenditure and the threat they represent to all local government workers, the Local Government and Land Act which becomes law on April 1 is the most comprehensive attack yet mounted against Direct Labour.

The Act is part of the Tories overall strategy towards the privatization of local government services, opening public services up to 'market forces'.

At present Direct Labour Organisations operate in such a way that they provide—to some extent—the following advantages:

\*Providing a service to the local community based on need, not profit.

\*Maintaining a high standard of work.

\*Acting as a check on outside contractors.

\*Providing good, safe working conditions.

\*Supplying skilled labour through apprentice schemes.

\*Allowing a certain amount of accountability to tenants.

The Act will compel DLOs to work on the contracting system, requiring them to make a profit, and eventually this will lead to the removal of all the hard-won gains and benefits which DLOs represent. A rigid, bureaucratic standardisation will be imposed as the guide to the running of all types of work. It is the standard of private contractors, and its success is measured by profit.

Not only will the decline of DLO under the cuts open up a massive new market to contractors, it will remove the only practical demonstration that the contracting system is not the only way to organise the building industry.

These are the main areas to be cut:

1. Tendering. The Act requires DLOs to submit a tender in competition with at least three other contractors for the following work:

a) General highways work over £100,000.

b) New build over £50,000

c) New build under £50,000 if the value is two-thirds greater than the total value of such work from the previous year.

d) Maintenance work over £10,000.

The Secretary of State will have the discretionary power to

determine what constitutes a contract, so councils will be unable to get round tendering regulations by splitting up contracts.

2) Accounts. Central to the whole Act is the accounting method, which highlights tendering and profit-making as measures of success. The Department of the Environment has specified four different accounts to be kept, distinct from other local authority accounts:

a) General highways.

b) New construction over £50,000.

c) New construction under £50,000.

d) Maintenance.

The DoE will have the power to decide exactly what items should and should not be included in any account.

These accounts are required neither for convenience nor for information. They are trading accounts to show profit or loss. The rate of return prescribed by the DoE is 5% on capital. This was the rate achieved by the private sector two years ago. The CBI estimates a rate of return for the private sector in 1981 of 3%.

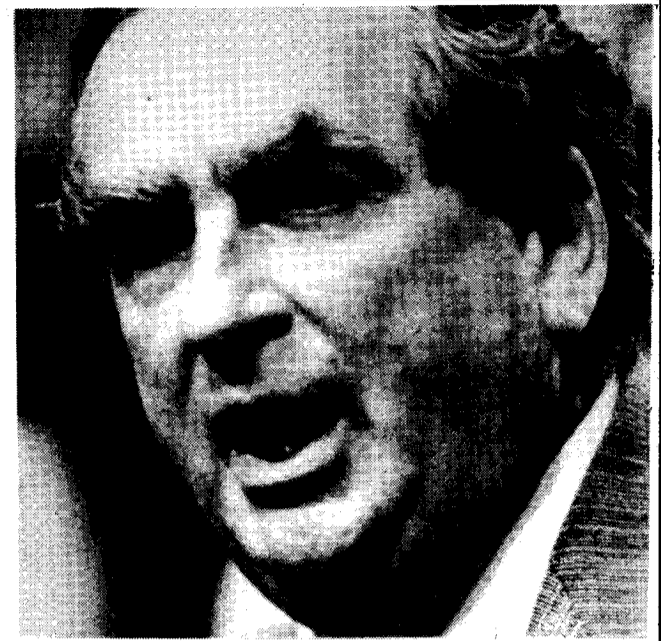
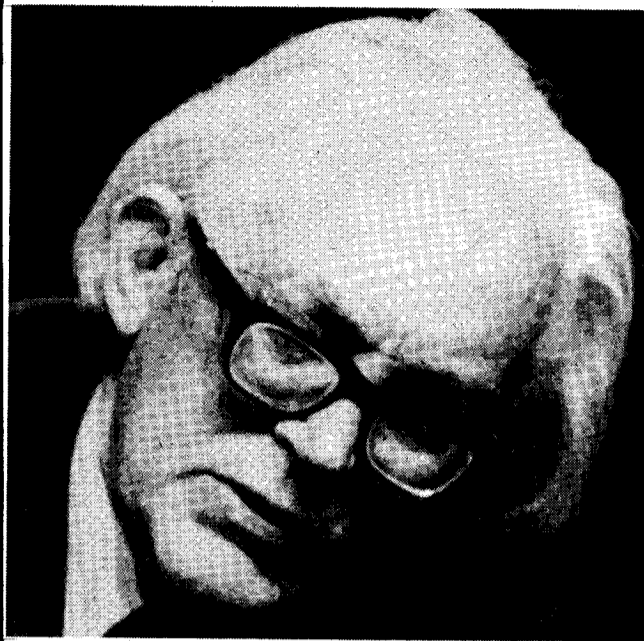
The Act requires that the accounts will be publicly available.

3. Disclosure of information. This has been dressed up in the guise of public accountability. However, it is quite clearly aimed at generally discrediting DLOs. And, specifically to assist private contractors' tendering strategies. It has been likened to publishing all DLO tender prices the week before the closing date.

The effect of the Act is two-fold. Firstly, in the short term, it means a drive by local authorities towards profitability and efficiency. This has led to a general attack on direct labour workers; redundancies, attacks on working practices, etc. And the DLO will now be looking to make a profit out of the other departments of the council; it will choose contracts according to what is most profitable, not what is most needed.

Secondly, in the longer term, the provisions of the Act, and the discretionary powers of the Minister, are so weighted against the DLOs that without an all-out fightback the DLOs are doomed. At best they will remain as a rump doing the work the contractors have rejected.

# FOOT AND MOUTH



## LABOUR'S EPIDEMIC!

*With most diseases, it falls to the healthy to cure the sick. But in the Labour Party it is the right wing leadership that is desperately seeking ways to infect the rank and file—with its own brand of crypto-Tory politics. And if this tactic fails, then Dennis Healey, for one, is advocating action against healthy members—through a campaign culminating in the expulsion of socialists and supporters of the Militant tendency. The disease is of course endemic among the right wing leaders of the PLP. And one-time 'left' wingers—such as Neil Kinnock—who fail to take adequate disinfection precautions—have plainly fallen*

*victim. Now the laughably misnamed 'Labour Solidarity' campaign has been set up to actively spread the contagion. While Michael Foot has adopted a more temperate tone than Healey in his fulminations against the left, he too has declared himself a part of the fight to bring Labour Party policies back into line with those advocated by the late and unlamented social democrats. It is up to healthy rank and file socialists to take up the fight to stamp out the disease within Labour's ranks.*

## NUPE strike vote

In Coventry last week about 2,500 NUPE workers in schools and colleges attended a mass meeting.

This was in response to the Council's proposed package of cuts which deals most viciously with these workers who are already the lowest paid.

The Council want to break both national and local agreements by reducing the retainer fee paid during the school holidays.

This would reduce wages for full-time cleaners over the year by a massive 17% and for part-time workers by 11%.

In addition they want to reduce the number of lunch

time supervisory assistants by 200.

It emerged in the discussion that NUPE has already made suggestions to the council for cuts which have saved them £800,000, but if NUPE thought this would make the Council deal kindly with them in this round of cuts they were sadly mistaken.

Instead it has clearly only whetted the Council's appetite to demand a further £300,000 cuts.

The most militant speeches which demanded immediate all-out strike action got the best response at the meeting, but by careful manoeuvring the branch secretary, Joe Little, ensured

that the motion which was carried left the date of strike action deliberately vague and failed to stipulate whether it would be an all-out strike or selective strikes.

Of course the implementation of the reduced retainer fee will be during the spring holidays when it is impossible to go on strike. This leaves any action to the beginning of the summer term—leaving the press and Council plenty of time to whip up anti-strike hysteria.

Nevertheless the massive turnout and overwhelming response of these workers is an encouraging start to the fight to prevent the Labour Council carrying out the Tories' cuts.

## SUGAR WORKERS PICKET

The second mass meeting at Tate and Lyle's threatened Merseyside refinery on Tuesday 10 March saw an adaptation to demands embodied in a Workers Socialist League leaflet put into the refinery earlier in the morning.

The leaflet, entitled "Ten questions for Tate and Lyle workers to ask Humphries and the Action Committee at today's mass meeting" detailed the actions necessary for the victory of the struggle.

They centred on occupation, blacking, a shop stewards' conference for the whole of the sugar industry, and the opening of the books of Tate and Lyle—coupled with the formation of a joint occupation committee with others fighting redundancies.

As though carrying on a dialogue with the WSL, union official Tony Humphries first words were on the bureaucracy's efforts to black Tate and Lyle goods and on "their" proposal for—a shop stewards' conference.

On occupation, however, we were treated to a repeat of his earlier statement that no occupation had ever been successful. Humphries skillfully "forgot" both Gardner's and the miners' victory.

Instead, Tate and Lyle workers will be sent round to North West sugar distribution depots to picket them.

Meanwhile, Tate and Lyle workers will be producing sugar for all they are worth!

They will, however, be blockading the sugar from leaving the refinery, but this, by itself, is completely inadequate.

Only when the refinery stops producing sugar and is occupied will the rest of the working class in the sugar industry, in the firms supplying and trading with Tate and Lyle, take them seriously enough to take the supporting strike and blacking action necessary to defeat the employers.

Only then will local workers rally round to form a council of action.

## Leicester nursery fight

Shortly after this paper comes out parents at Beal Street Day Centre in Leicester will make a last attempt to stop it closing down.

This 35-place day centre will close on Friday March 27 unless the parents can prevent it.

They have already lobbied the Council and the Director of Social Services. And they have written letters appealing to councillors to keep it open—to no avail.

Two weeks ago they called a public meeting and formed a defence committee from parents and supporters including members of Leicester Nursery Campaign.

### Unlikely

At their first meeting it was decided that it was most unlikely that either Social Services or the Council would stop the closure at this stage and so the question of occupying the nursery was raised.

The feeling was that since neither the Council nor Social Services could see the importance of keeping the day centre open, we should appeal to the community and the trade union

and labour movement to support us.

Within a few days a petition was taken round, gaining almost a thousand signatures and at least 20 names of parents with under 5's who would like to use the day centre facilities.

### Hardened

Although the parents have never before been involved in any kind of action, they were heartened by the support of the community and occupation was discussed as a serious possibility.

They ran through the practical details of when and how this would take place, where we go for support, who would run the occupation and the problem of enlisting support to continue the nursery classes.

As well as contacting trade unions it was agreed that the unemployed could well play an important role through the unemployed workers union.

A public meeting has been organised, where a speaker from Coventry's Wheatley Street Nursery Campaign has been invited.

### Determination

Readers may remember that parents and supporters occupied

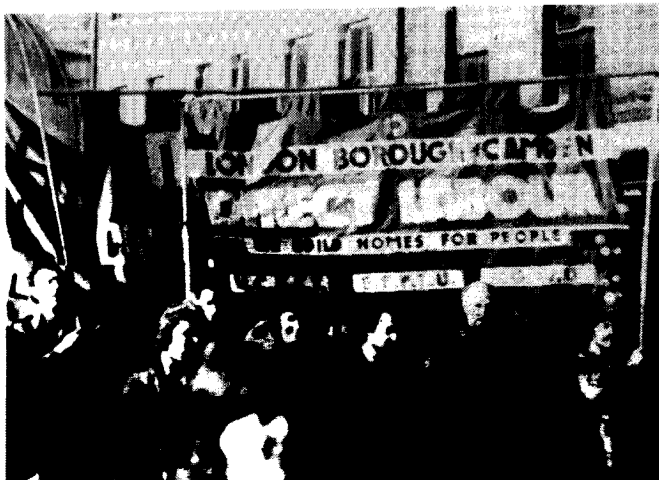
Wheatley Street Nursery last June to prevent closure.

The determination of the parents is strong—the main question will be the supporting action needed from the trade unions to ensure its success.

### NURSERIES — HOW & WHY TO FIGHT FOR THEM

**"The aim is to force the state to run the services we need. Many unions — NUPE, NALGO, NUT, etc., cover all sectors in the social and educational services, and their union officials must be forced to act in support of policies already accepted against the cuts..."**

**So states this vital booklet 60p plus 15p p&p from NCCC, c/o Surrey Docks Child Care Project, Dockland Settlement, Redriff Rd, London SE16.**



# TURN MISSILES FIGHT TOWARDS WORKERS' MOVEMENT

John Lister looks at the issues that ought to be paramount at the CND national labour movement conference on March 28.

The decision by CND to convene a national labour movement conference against the missiles is to be welcomed.

Workers and youth, increasingly concerned at the danger that Thatcher and Reagan will plunge the world into a nuclear holocaust in the name of opposing "international terrorism" certainly need a forum to discuss the policies necessary to halt the drive towards war.

The question is whether CND and its leadership is capable of offering adequate answers to this basic problem.

It is certain, for instance, that a major thread running through the platform speeches will be that of simply building protest action against the Cruise missiles.

Advocates of protest politics believe that it is possible, through pressure, to persuade the Thatcher government to change course.

## Crisis

Such a view leaves out of account the material basis from which Thatcher is driven towards her aggressive policies at home and abroad.

It is no arbitrary whim that has brought the Tory government onto the offensive—slashing jobs, living standards and social services at home, and stepping up its efforts to intimidate and crush liberation struggles by workers and peasants abroad.

Thatcher is spurred on by the profound, insoluble economic and political crisis of imperialism and in particular the acute economic chaos of the British capitalist class.

Her offensive, like that of Reagan, stems not from a position of strength, but one of weakness. As the Budget showed, this Tory leadership sees no scope for retreats or compromise—least of all in the face of merely a protest movement.

It was the class action of the miners' strike, like the threatened national dock strike, which forced the only substantial retreat by this government.

In other words it is only the power of the organised labour movement which can carry through the fight to prevent the deployment of the Cruise missiles.

It is the organised labour movement alone which has the power to oust the Thatcher government, and to carry through a fight for a workers' government that will implement a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

## Defeat Tories

The debate at the CND labour movement conference should therefore focus on the steps necessary to mobilise such class action.

It should reject a campaign restricted in scope to protest marches, propaganda and more conferences. Instead it should spell out a programme of activity for trade unionists and Labour Party members, which can mobilise practical opposition to the nuclear build-up as part of the overall fight to defeat this savage government of bankers and exploiters.

It is in this respect that a labour movement conference should mark out its special role, as against the more usual type of CND event—in which workers and representatives of working class organisations are in general outnumbered by individual protesters from the middle classes.

The other way in which the March 28 conference should



Liberal banner prominent on anti-nuclear march



in rejecting the abstract, pacifist notion that the war dangers stem equally from "two super-powers".

All the facts show unmistakably that the pace has been set in the post-war nuclear arms race by the imperialists; that the Cold War was initiated by the imperialists; that it is imperialist intervention—from Korea through Vietnam; from Angola through Nicaragua; and today in El Salvador and the Middle East, that has served to heighten political tension and create the threat of war.

From the other side it is clear that the Stalinist leaders in the Kremlin have doggedly set their face against revolutionary struggles by the working class in Europe, Asia and elsewhere; have responded to imperialist military threats not by mobilising

imperialist countries but by crude military counter-measures; and are at present once more on the retreat in the face of the Reagan offensive, seeking once again a new agreement to divide up the world into "spheres of influence", through which capitalist rule will remain unchallenged.

## Exploitation

On the one hand is a vicious capitalist system driven by its own internal crisis and contradictions to seek to extend its rule and exploitation over the toiling masses of the world; on the other bureaucratic regimes seeking by bureaucratic means to defend a system of nationalised property relations, on which they depend for their

Those nationalised property relations are in fact historic achievements of the world's working class. A genuine labour movement policy against imperialist war must also be a policy for defence of the deformed and degenerated workers' states against imperialist attack.

As such we should call for the unilateral, unconditional nuclear disarmament of the imperialist nations, giving no quarter to lying propaganda peddled both by the Tories and by their co-thinkers in the labour movement about the supposed "Communist threat" or the alleged need for "defence".

For the March 28 conference to offer the necessary lead, it would need therefore to base itself on the strength of the labour movement, and defend the international interests of the working class.

On a practical level it must map out policies for action in the workers' movement.

## Blacking

There are numerous possible avenues for intervention. There is of course the question of the construction work involved in the development of the missile bases themselves.

A fight must be taken up in the construction and transport unions for the blacking of all such work and of supplies and materials from yards and firms.

At the same time local Labour councils and councillors should be called upon to play a leading role, in mobilising mass opposition; in fighting to block planning permission for development; and in blocking any extension of facilities or public services to supply the new bases.

But aside from the missile sites themselves there is the whole apparatus of war preparation—so-called "Home Defence"—for which the government depends to a certain extent on local councils.

Tory plans to step up "Home Defence" include a

expenditure—at a time of massive overall cuts in spending.

Nothing could more clearly underline the "guns, not butter" line of the Thatcher government.

Under the "Home Defence" plans, elected councils would be immediately superseded by appointed Controllers and a staff of professional officers, backed up by police and army.

Far from defending "democracy", collaboration in such preparations is laying the groundwork for military dictatorship!

Trade unionists and Labour Party members must demand that Labour councils take action to expose the real nature of these Tory war plans; to block

the implementation of these plans through withholding funds and cooperation and refusing to release council personnel for training; and draw out the fact that increased spending on these preparations means increased cuts in essential social services.

Within the broader trade union movement, the fight must be taken up for a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament, not simply at the level of national affiliation to CND, but in the form of an active campaign to educate and mobilise rank and file members on the issues involved.

Of course many union leaders who happily make tub-thumping speeches on disarmament at Labour Party conferences stand firmly opposed to mass action against the Thatcher government. They will use the disarmament issue as a 'left' cover while betraying the fight on jobs, wages and social services.

## Political obstacle

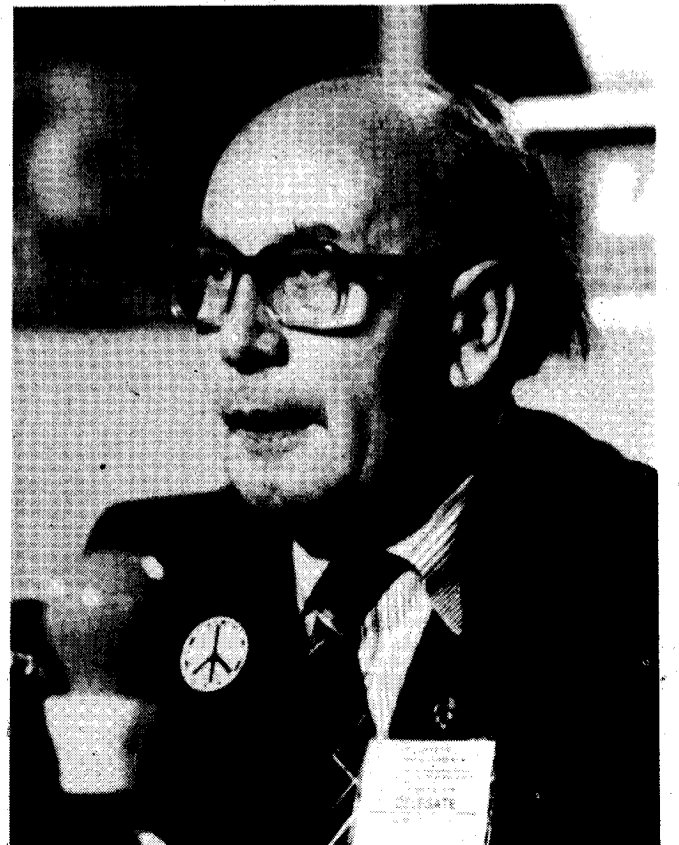
The fight for action on the missiles issue therefore runs up against the same political obstacles as the fight for action on any other problem facing the working class.

The main stumbling block is the reformist politics, the class collaboration and national chauvinism of the established leaders of the labour movement.

This can be tackled only by the fight to construct a new, revolutionary leadership within the workers' movement as a whole, committed to mobilising the strength of the working class to defend its own independent interests.

CND and its leaders have no such conceptions. It remains a heterogenous, cross-class grouping with no defined political perspective.

It is up to socialists to take up the fight within the ranks of CND to raise the central political issues and turn its supporters in fact rather than simply in form towards the labour movement.



Unilateralist talk and right wing politics: SOGAT leader Kevin Lister

**WORKERS! UNEMPLOYED!**

On 23rd, 24th, 25th February the Hunger Marchers will be in London. They are fighting for your rights and your lives against Capitalist oppression.

**You must get out onto the Streets and Support Them!**

Read the following directions carefully:

1. You must demonstrate in disciplined military formation.
2. Maintain this formation at all costs.
3. Deal ruthlessly with ALL AGENTS PROVOCATEURS who attempt to break your discipline.
4. See that your slogans are short and to the point, e.g.
  - a. Down with Capitalism!
  - b. Against Poverty in the Midst of Plenty!
  - c. Smash the Money Bosses!
  - d. Down with the Unemployment "Slave" Bill!
  - e. There is no work! We demand money!

**DEMONSTRATE AS AN ARMY-NOT AS A RABBLE**

Issued by the British Workers Revolutionary Movement, February, 1934.



Women's section, hunger march 1934

# Forced labour in the 1930s: forerunner of

## the YOPs

For the British working class probably the dominant memory carried, from the 1930s is that of mass unemployment.

The Hunger Marches, the soup kitchens, the vicious means test of 1931—all these are memories burned into the consciousness of British workers.

They form part of the history of the class struggle in Britain.

But these were years of defeat. The Jarrow March and the soup kitchens were symbols of that defeat.

As such, therefore, the struggles against the unemployment of the 1930s never went beyond the bounds of protest; heroic but eventually futile protests.

Behind each march, petition and protest rally loomed the historic defeat of the 1926 General Strike and the total capitulation of the labour and trade union leaders to capitalist rule symbolised by the defection of Ramsay MacDonald in 1931.

In the name of defending the sacred "gold standard", in October 1931 unemployment benefit was reduced by 10% and subjected to a vigorous anti-working class means test.

### Suffering

By October 1933 this had cost the registered unemployed £54 million [in the money of those days] not to mention untold suffering.

Putting it another way, the unemployed had been compelled to pay £54 million towards solving the crisis of the capitalists, and securing new profits for these big business leaches.

But the oppression of the working class by the capitalist state went far beyond that.

What the ruling class required—in Britain and throughout Europe—was cheap labour—a labour force which would be worked till it dropped without any more than minimal expenses on food, etc.

In Germany, Hitler's concentration camps reached the ultimate level of capitalist class hatred for the working class and ruthlessness in exploitation for profit.

But Britain too had its camps!

Programmes, Manpower Services Commission or other similar schemes today would do well to note the following course of events from the inter-war years.

In 1925 the government began to open training centres for the unemployed. Courses ran for six months and were directed towards instruction in specific trades such as brick-laying, carpentry and welding.

### Reconditioning

In many respects they were similar to the present government re-training centres.

But, in 1929 these were supplemented with a *different* type of training. In May of that year the first Ministry of Labour 'Instructional Centre' was opened.

These were *not* skill centres. They were commonly known as "training and reconditioning camps". Typical work was forest clearing, quarrying and roadmaking.

And the camps were residential! In other words they were work camps, or to be blunt labour camps.

These special camps paid no wages. The "volunteers" instead received four shillings a week 'pocket money'—and the rest of their employment benefit was taken from them for food and accommodation at the camps.

### Slave camps

The trade union rate for labouring at that time was 42 shillings a week. Little wonder that these camps became known by workers as 'slave camps'.

But the crucial basis for such schemes was the idea that the unemployed should work for their benefit.

That was the wedge used—along with the fake offers of training—to crack unionised rates and prepare for the replacement of paid employed workers with a cheap, unorganised workforce crushed by military-style discipline.

From 1931 onwards, the National Government constant-

### Part One

by Colin Morrow

labouring jobs to "earn" their dole.

Thus, the Royal Commission on Unemployment in its report of 1932 commented:

"It ought to be possible to give occupation to men, especially young men, on schemes of work, not on the basis of proportioning their pay to the duration of their work [i.e. wage rates, ed] but on the basis of assigning them periods of work roughly corresponding to the amount of payment (unemployment benefit) made to them."

More sinister still, the report then added:

"We see no objection in principle to the application of compulsion if opportunities exist for the provision of occupation for able-bodied unemployed workers after the resources of commercial employment and voluntary services are exhausted."

What we have here is the real attitude of capital to labour. Workers are reduced to 'able bodies' open for exploitation. And the *means*-forced labour—are justified for the capitalist class by the *end*-profit.

The *Sheffield Telegraph* in May 1933 correctly saw the way the wind was blowing, even if it did so from the reactionary viewpoint of its owners.

"The plans for training during idleness will not be so drastic as the industrial conscription which Herr Hitler proposes in Germany, but the Home Secretary's words prove that the British Cabinet will act boldly."

In 1934 a new Unemployment Act was passed and the role of the 'slave camps' was extended, particularly among youth.

One of its provisions gave powers to the government to make attendance compulsory for those drawing benefit. Those who refused were liable to prosecution.

During 1935 there were numerous fines meted out to unemployed workers who refused to be shipped off to the camps in the north.

Thus, what we had in the 1930s was the gradual introduction of forced labour camps.

But all this was done under a smokescreen of talk about 'voluntary service'.

From 1932 the government backed the creation of 'Social Service Centres'.

Its public stooge body, The National Council of Social Service' announced to the 3½ million unemployed who had seen their jobs taken away and their benefits slashed that:

"The good life can only be achieved in a modern community if the spirit of voluntary service can be developed."

For the bosses there was little doubt that an unpaid worker was the route to the good life. But to make doubly sure, they weren't averse to arresting 400 members of the National Unemployed Workers Movement in 1934 to stifle opposition to their sinister

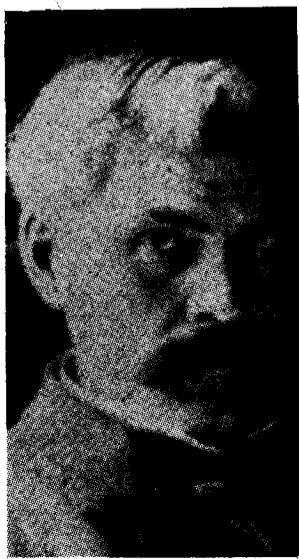
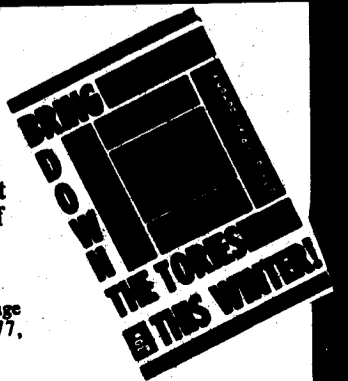


Jarrow marchers 1934

## Our policies

Socialist Press pamphlet outlining programme of action against the Tory offensive.

Price 45p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.



# CHILDCARE: THE SERVICE CAPITALISM WON'T OFFER

Part Two

**Nursery campaigner Ann McKinley explodes the myth that even the most 'progressive' capitalist societies provide adequate childcare facilities.**

**Germany.**

In Germany maternity leave for the mother only is 30 weeks on full pay. In 1979 women represented 36.7% of the workforce and there were 48.4% of women working.

Provision for under 6's is 41.3%—but in reality this is worse, since German children attend school for only half a day.

Some of Hitler's policies—of keeping women at home in an attempt to create the super race and to conceal the embarrassingly high unemployment figures remain in the minds of many today.

The official figure for women unemployed is 51% although the real figure is thought to be nearer 66%.

It's amazing that reforms as late as the 1970s removed laws which meant that a wife no longer had to have her husband's permission to work!

As the economic recession bites in Germany, the Christian Democrats are attempting to make motherhood more attractive by proposing an upbringing wage so that women will stay at home.

**Holland.**

Maternity leave for the mother only is 14 weeks full pay. In 1977 women represented 25.3% of the workforce and there were 27% of women working.

There is no tradition of married women working in Holland and this is hardly surprising where no pre-school provision is provided by the



state.

There are 115 subsidised centres catering for 5,914 children for a population of about 14 million.

A two-year waiting list is normal. Care is provided for children over five between 8.45 and 3.30 with 1½ hours for lunch and no school meals. This would make a full time job for a working mother very

difficult.

**Ireland**

No one seems to know how many working mothers there are in Ireland. Approximate figures from the Department of Internal Revenue have 330,000 married couples paying tax, 120,000 of which have wife and husband both working.

Out of the 330,000 married

couples liable to taxation 100,000 have no children. But it isn't known what the overlap is, how many of the families have children where both parents work.

There are approximately 15,000 unmarried mothers.

Straying between these figures are unguessed numbers of children minded by unregistered people with no set legal status.

The going rate for private minding is £3 a half day, but since most childminders don't want the taxman to know, that £15 a week has to come out of the mothers taxable income.

If a mother wishes to declare payment for tax relief she will have to be responsible for the minder's PAYE forms.

The Department of Health attitude to childminding is that they don't see themselves as providing substitute care for children whose mothers just want to work, but they do provide facilities for unmarried mothers or women whose husbands have left them.

The 80 day care centres that are funded by the Department of Health are run by the eight Health Boards. A final report is being prepared which will advise 'radical' changes in all aspects of child care. These radical changes may not be all that women in Ireland desire:

"The board couldn't see itself as funding day care in order that the mother could work, in fact they'd be more likely to give money in order that she wouldn't work."

There are only 17 nursery schools around Dublin but gradually private facilities are being set up and coming out in the open.

Various groups have been trying to start creche facilities in their workplaces. RTE management have agreed in principle to a creche and a company in Athlone has already set one up after they found they

were losing a lot of trained people.

There's also a knitwear factory in Roscommon—whose managing director is a woman and feels she doesn't want to train new machinists.

She has seven women with babies and says it is cheaper to run a creche for them than to train seven new machinists.

The demand for adequate childcare facilities is part of the current campaign to implement the Workings Women's Charter launched by the Women's Advisory Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. However the ICTU's comprehensive policy urges the government and its agencies to 'enter into immediate discussions with trade unions on workplace nurseries' instead of demanding facilities from the state itself.

**Italy**

Maternity leave for mother only is 12 weeks on 80% pay, but there is an option of 24 weeks at 30% pay for either parent.

Women represent 29.6% of the workforce and 37.1% of women were working. Women's unemployment is 13.3% compared with 4.9% for men.

Italy's high unemployment rate creates extremely difficult conditions for women who wish

to enter the labour force.

Employers who can afford to pick and choose generally choose not to hire women. Therefore many women are forced to engage in home working, monotonous piecework which companies contract out at meagre pay to women who perform the tasks at home.

This decentralised, isolated and unorganised labour force is easily manipulated and exploited.

There are about 1½ million home workers, of whom 85% are women. There is no pre-school provision provided in Italy, 82% of nurseries are private.

**United States**

The USA is the only major industrial nation without a national health insurance plan. Though the 1964 Civil Rights Act did give women job security this means little without adequate childcare provision.

In 1960 only 18.6% of mothers of pre-school age children were employed and this had only risen to 30.1% in 1972.

In 1972 tax allowances for child care costs were introduced whereby the American state sees its role as helping parents to buy child care rather than setting up adequate state provision.

## National Child Care Campaign

AIMS AND ACTION CONFERENCE

Redfield School  
Blackbird Leys, Oxford

Saturday 11 April from 11 am. to 5 pm.

Delegates from labour movement bodies— £2.50  
Unwaged £1

Creche provided

### LETTER

### Why not

We invite further discussion on this important issue.

## workplace nurseries?

Dear Comrades,

The recent *Woman Worker* article on workplace nurseries seems to be very confused on why you are opposed to them.

The various horror stories you relate about workplace nurseries (e.g. a civil service nursery closed because the employers claimed they couldn't afford it) don't seem to me arguments against workplace nurseries in themselves.

They are just examples that show that with the slump women are being thrown out of work, and nurseries everywhere are under attack.

Also, it seems a bit ridiculous to argue that union leaders must be made to fight closures of workplace nurseries when *Woman Worker* wouldn't support a campaign to open a workplace nursery!

The TUC Under 5's Report referred to does not, as is claimed, take a position against workplace nurseries.

In fact their view seems to me more acceptable than that of *Woman Worker*.

They examine the problems of workplace nurseries—in particular the danger that they may be used as a "tied cottage" to depress women workers' wages, and employment

prospects. And they try to find solutions.

They conclude that while the only fully satisfactory solution is state facilities on demand to all parents wishing to make use of them, workplace nurseries can make a contribution towards meeting the day care needs of working parents provided they are removed from unilateral employer control.

They recommend joint union/parent/employer control over the setting up and general administration of company nurseries; the full involvement of the local authority and possibly places allocated to other parents in the area.

It seems to me that it would be a lot more constructive if *Woman Worker* were to fight for workers' management over workplace nurseries—so that the nursery place couldn't be used to depress working conditions—rather than to oppose all campaigns for workplace nurseries.

To take up briefly some of your other arguments:

a) you say that trade union bureaucrats are using workplace nurseries as a diversion from the need to defend state provision.

But trade union leaders who want to find excuses for not defending state provision of nurseries can always find excuses and I'm sure it will prove no easier to make them

fight for workplace nurseries than for state nurseries.

I know of no current examples where there is a serious fight to extend state provision. At the moment the workers' movement is mainly preoccupied to defend the public services they have rather than to extend them.

But circumstances may arise where one could go on the offensive and demand a workplace nursery. Many hospitals for example have wards closed because they say they don't have enough nurses.

One could use this to demand a nursery for any staff needing it and maybe mobilise layers of workers around the need for more nurseries who have never seen any possibility for making nursery provision meet the needs of parents.

b) You mention the high cost to employees of some of these schemes.

Whilst I think that workplace nurseries should be free, you must realise that local authority day nurseries are far from free.

Coventry Council have a means-tested scale of payment—but for most working parents this means the full amount of £12.25 per child per week; hardly chicken feed!

c) You say that management

their own convenience (e.g. reduction in absentee rate). The TUC Under 5's Report shows that in the absence of any union pressure, most nurseries were started on the employers' initiative most often because of staff shortages.

But does this mean that the unions shouldn't fight to control them, or in other circumstances, have them set up?

d) You mention that management at the Chix factory provide scab women workers with child care facilities. Is this really an argument against workplace nurseries? If it is, then surely we should oppose work buses because scab workers are usually brought to work on special buses!

Finally, I don't think we should be blind to the potential advantages of workplace nurseries. As someone who has to travel one way to take my child to nursery and the exact opposite way to go to work, I can see many advantages of having a workplace nursery.

It would also mean that parents could drop in during the day to see their children and maintain some contact with their activities.

Provided that we fight for workers' and parents' management over workplace nurseries it seems to me we can only gain from supporting these struggles.

Carol Jones

### LETTER

## Ideology as a material factor

Dear Editor,

I very much welcome the article in *Socialist Press* 236 on "Man Made Language" as a continuation of the discussion about sexist language.

However, the article implies that writers like Spender, who raise sexist language as an issue see "ideas, ideology and consciousness as the primary issue to be confronted" while ignoring the fight against other aspects of women's oppression.

This may be true of Spender, but it is not true of all opponents of sexist language.

This misunderstanding derives from Lister's contention that "ideas and ideology flow from material conditions; that it is the material world of oppression which leads to sexist language and not vice versa". For Lister, the English language is a reflection of capitalist relations of production and the domination of the bourgeoisie. I would argue that language

provides the concepts by which we perceive ourselves and others and hence guides our practice. Thus sexist language itself plays a determining role in the maintenance of women's oppression.

Moreover, since sexist language did not emerge with the rise of capitalism, and is not co-extensive with capitalism, the establishment of socialism will not, of itself, guarantee the liberation of women, although it will obviously secure the basis for our liberation.

Thus, while the fight against the oppression of women cannot be restricted to the sphere of consciousness and ideas, it demands a recognition of the part language and ideology play in women's oppression, and that the struggle against that oppression must be waged over language as well as over economic and political issues.

Mary Wilkins

# A unique forum for discussion on the cuts

John Lister reports on the CDLM/SO Cuts Conference held on Saturday March 21

"Today's conference is very different from the endless one-day conferences on the cuts called by the union officials.

They blame 'apathy'—and particularly the 'apathy' of women workers—for their own refusal to fight. Yet women, searching for means to develop their struggles are leaving behind them the union bureaucrats in their swamp of pessimism and gloom.

Today we are not going to hear their excuses for inaction. We are going to hear experiences of struggles against the cuts.

We have things to learn. It is not enough simply to work out simple slogans. We must face the problems of fighting for these policies. We can make a start on that here."

With these words Anne Marie Sweeney, a delegate from Oxford Trades Council, opened the afternoon session of the Cuts Conference jointly convened by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement and Socialist Organiser.

And indeed the 300-strong



Part of the 300-strong audience

conference did bring together a unique wealth of experience in the struggle for action to stem the Tory onslaught on jobs, conditions and services.

A major discussion point was the fight for rate and rent strikes to oppose the average 30% increases being forced through by Heseltine and in many cases by Labour councils doing the Tories' job for them.

While veteran campaigner Charlie Taylor brought in an

account of the struggles of St. Pancras Labour councillors against the 1957 Rent Act and the subsequent rent strike movement, other speakers from tenants organisations in various parts of London, Basingstoke, Coventry, Cambuslang and Paisley outlined the fight to mobilise tenants in struggle against Thatcher.

There were reports from hospital occupations at Longworth and St. Benedicts; of

nursery occupations and campaigns; from the fight to defend the school meals service; of the problems in defending Direct Labour Organisations; and from the battle against the right wing of the teaching unions to defend education.

Such contributions by no means simply idealised the struggles taking place: in almost every case they attempted to assess the relative strengths, weaknesses and political prob-



Neil Turner

lems of these actions. Some raised questions which time did not allow to be properly answered.

But the conference did vote to endorse the general line of a booklet submitted by the Organising Committee incorporating proposals for action on rate/rent strikes, nurseries, education and the NHS.

## Health Service

The biggest ovation of the day was given to Longworth Hospital Occupation Committee speaker Kate White, who made a moving appeal for action to defend the young, the old and the sick who cannot fight for themselves.

Condemning the inactivity of union leaders and the role of Labourite AHA chairperson Lady McCarthy, Kate asked:

"What has happened to the top ones in the Labour Party? They're all in with management, and more like the Tories than the Tories themselves."

Though the Longworth occupation is at present suspended, the fight there is far from over, she stressed.

Her questions about the Labour Party leadership were amplified by Longworth occupation supporter Dr Ken Williamson.

As a GP and a member of MPU/ASTMS Williamson has played an important role in the fight to defend not only Longworth, but other hospitals in the area.

Yet for his pains he has been barred from joining the Oxford City Labour Party—of which AHA chairperson Lady McCarthy is a leading member.

Oxford Labour Party apparently extends a welcome to those who close hospitals—not to those who fight to keep them open!

From the defeated occupation at St. Benedicts Hospital, Andrea Campbell stressed the main warning for militants in the health service:

"If you're going into occupation, don't rely on the bureaucracy, whatever you do. They won't do anything."

We had hospital workers who would have walked out in our support. But they were never called out.

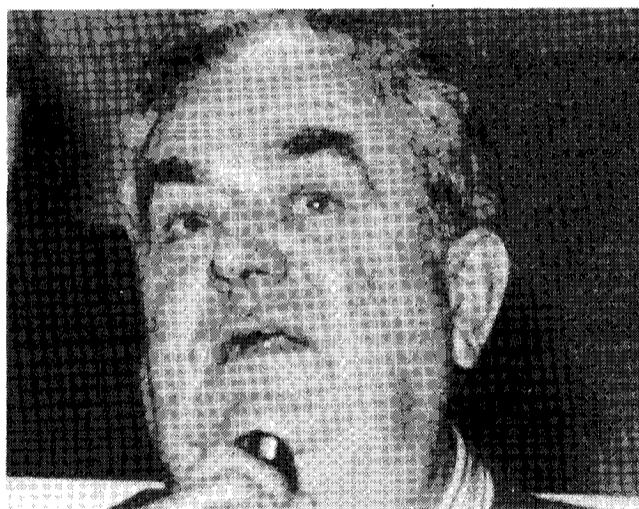
The only reason people are weak is because they are frightened. It is up to us to provide them with leadership. Let's end the defeats like St. Benedicts, Ettwall and the raid at Longworth."

Both Andrea Campbell and Geoff Williams, NUPE convenor in University College Hospital, Cardiff, stressed the importance of health unions adopting a policy of no cover for unfilled vacancies in the fight to prevent the run-down of facilities and staffing levels.

Williams was able to relate one victory over management from implementing this policy—and also underlined the danger of inroads into the service being made by private practice.



Alisdair Jamison



Charlie Taylor



Kate White

## Rate-Rent Strikes

From the lively discussion on rent and rate strikes a number of key elements emerged that are vital to build such actions.

Alisdair Jamison of the Basingstoke Tenants Action Group underlined the necessity for extensive propaganda—in the form of bulletins, broadsheets, and frequent estate meetings—not simply to persuade tenants of their strength, but also to make clear the limited powers at the disposal of the councils.

"We need to show that the struggle is a difficult one for the Council as well as the tenants."

Linked to this fight to build the confidence of the tenants is the necessity to prepare well in advance the organisation of pickets against any possible evictions, and to seek out industrial support from local unions both in local government and in local industry.

The immediacy of this struggle means, as John Docherty from Paisley pointed out, that the tenants' organisations are now emerging in a

new form, in which political leadership is necessary to meet the growing awareness that jobs and living standards can only be defended under a planned socialist economy.

And the reactionary role of the right wing "mafia" who run most Labour Groups was exposed by many speakers, including Coventry tenants' leader Les Bennet, who condemned the expulsion of 12 councillors from the Group for their 'no rate/rent increase' stand.

It became very clear that the fight must be taken beyond the tenants' movements, into a fight for new leadership and accountability within the Labour Party if the necessary movement is to be built.



Ray Davies

## Linking the struggles

The necessity to link up the various struggles against the Tory public service cuts was referred to by many speakers.

Eric Jones from the Lancashire School Meals campaign emphasised the importance of linking action by school meals workers with parents and with fellow trade unionists in the local government and supply firms.

Anne McKinley, from the Oxford Nursery Campaign, charted the growth and development of the fight to defend nurseries from the time of the first occupation—at South Oxford nursery, three years ago in 1978.

She pointed to the development of the overall Oxfordshire Campaign Against the Cuts as one way in which the nursery fight had helped broaden the resistance—and also to the initiatives which had led to the formation of the National Child Care Campaign.

Colin Kenny spoke of the campaign to save London's medical schools from heavy cut-backs or closure, and emphasised the necessity of linking this fight to other campaigns throughout the London NHS.

And Mick O'Sullivan from Hackney DLO spoke of the fight for joint shop stewards committees to coordinate resis-

tance to the Tory attack on direct works.

But a harsh reminder of the determination of the union bureaucracy to prevent such links being forged and to isolate sections of workers that do fight the cuts was brought by victimised NUT militant Vanessa Wiseman.

Wiseman, President of Lambeth Trades Council, has been victimised along with five other Lambeth NUT members for refusing an instruction by NUT officials to withdraw branch support from the recent Lambeth Week of Action against the Cuts.

Five of the six have been sentenced to six months suspension from the union, followed by an 18 months ban on representing the union in any way.

Lambeth Treasurer and NUT Executive member Dick North is suspended from the union for a year, and also banned from representing the union for 18 months.

This action by the NUT bureaucracy is part and parcel of its betrayal of struggles on pay and against the cuts.

But it has not dented Wiseman's determination to fight on:

"We are still against working people's living standards being attacked by whatever means. We

will fight on for affiliation of the NUT to the Labour Party. We hope you will invite us to come and speak to meetings in your areas."

Developing further on the role of the NUT leadership, Peter Flack, moving the conference Proposals for Action on Education pointed to the necessity to democratise the teachers' unions.

"Who are the NUT Executive responsible to? Who do they represent?"

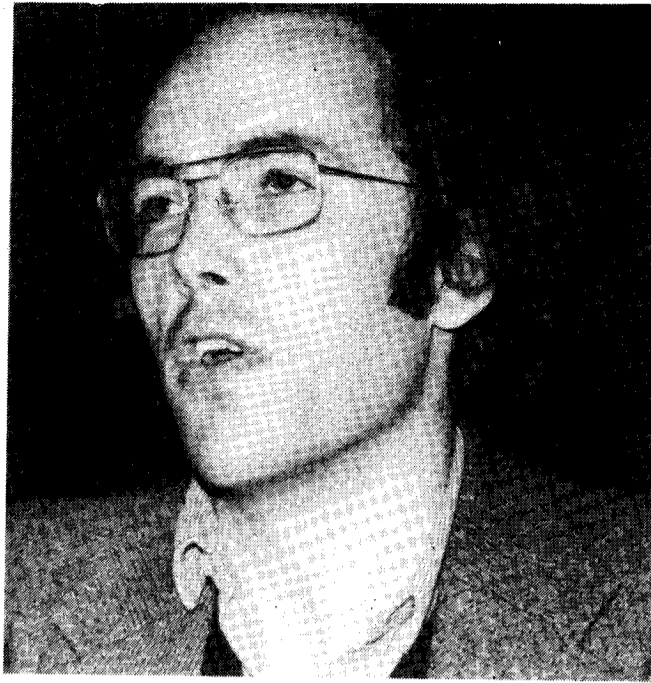
We must fight against restrictive rules, and fight for a programme of action.

To fight to defend education today is to fight against the capitalist system."



Vanessa Wiseman





Bloxam

# Local Government

"Do we want to fight the Tories now, or do we want to leave it all to someone else?"

This was how John I. Bloxam introduced the morning session on the crisis of local government. He emphasised that the issue in the cuts was not the actions of an irrational "mad axewoman", but the outcome of a system in crisis seeking to restore profitability.

In this situation, he stressed: "Piecemeal reforms are not on. Capitalism offers no solutions. This is a statement not of the future but of the situation here and now."

We must fight to kick out the Tory government. But we must also fight for a government of a radically different sort—a workers' government. That is not the perspective of the Labour leadership."

## "Choice"

Instead of arguing that the choice is one between capitalism and socialism, Bloxam argued, Labour politicians are pretending to workers that the "choice" is between cuts or rate and rent increases!

Pointing to the link between the cuts struggle and the fight for accountability of Labour Councillors as well as MPs, Bloxam emphasised that the real issue now facing Labour's right wing is not to reverse the anti-cuts motions carried at last year's conference—which they have ignored—but to reverse the democratic reforms which seek to make them answerable to the membership.

Ray Davies, expelled from the Labour Group on Mid-Glamorgan Council for his opposition to the cuts, exposed the hollowness of right wing claims that they can both implement cuts and protect workers from their worse effects.

"The cuts are like a rubber ball. If you push it in in one place, it bulges out somewhere else!"

And if all Labour councillors can do is implement Tory cuts, what are we doing there? Why do we need Labour councillors?"

Dave Spencer, a prospective Labour County Council candi-

date pointed to the expulsion of 12 Coventry councillors for opposing rate/rent increases.

Camden councillor Phyl Turner sounded a rather different note, explaining to the conference the background to the decision he and nine other left councillors had taken to climb down from a stand of opposing rate and rent increases.

"From my point of view, councils like Camden cannot continue to operate unless they go outside the law", he argued.

There are a lot of frightened people in the Labour Group, scared of personal surcharges and the threat of disqualification."

In the short term he had seen no alternative but to vote for "compromise" rate/rent increases: but, he said:

"The left must organise to get left wing councillors elected. Then maybe next year we will stand more chance."

He was answered by Graham Shurety of the Camden Labour Left, who underlined the fact that:

"We cannot answer the problems of the working class in the confines of the Council Chamber. We have to bring down this Tory government."

Phyl Turner focussed all the time on the debates within the Labour Group. That fight has our full support.

But you must also look outwards to the movement of the working class coming into struggle—the unions and tenants' associations."

From Lambeth, councillor Neil Turner showed how the latest cuts and rate increases had proved the November Lambeth conference right—the supplementary rate had not bought time but defused the struggle.

Knight had helped lead the fight against cuts in 1976—but built no mass base of support. Now the local Party is dominated by the council elite—pushing through cuts.

"We must learn the lessons of Lambeth—and copy the kind of work done by the Camden Labour Left—linking up with the community, local Labour Parties and unions before the fight gets under way."

# LINWOOD: QUESTIONS UNANSWERED

By Duncan McVicar

The decision of the workforce at Talbot (Linwood) to refuse to back a call by the shop stewards committee for an occupation at the factory marks the end of the struggle to prevent the closure of the plant with the subsequent loss of almost 5,000 jobs.

No one can deny that this constitutes a serious setback to the working class in the West of Scotland and to the labour movement throughout the country.

The crucial question is—how did this situation arise?

There can be no doubt that throughout the sixties and seventies the workers at Linwood proved their militancy and combativity.

Time and again, in conflict with first Rootes and then Chrysler management, they displayed their determination to resist management attempts to deepen their exploitation.

Despite the inadequate, vacillating leadership of elements in the leadership such as the erstwhile convenor John Carthey, they became a byword for militancy in the West of Scotland.

Obviously a fuller analysis of how that combativity was undermined and dissipated over a long period is essential: but it cannot be attempted without a fuller consideration of all the elements involved.

What can and must be asked right now is—was the campaign to resist the closure conducted in such a way as to realise the full potential of the capacity of the workforce to struggle?

On that score some big

question marks must be recorded.

When the closure of the factory was announced by the Peugeot management five weeks ago, the initial reaction of Jimmy Livingstone, the factory convenor and chief representative of the TGWU in the plant, was to express his "surprise" that the management had acted in this way.

## Endorsed

He and other stewards then went to the workers who strongly endorsed a campaign of resistance to the closure.

But how could Livingstone and his fellow stewards have been in any way "surprised"—when it was clear from the outset that Peugeot had no intention of making Linwood a viable car producing plant, but had only acquired Chrysler (UK) in order to secure the extensive chain of retail outlets?

Surely the duty of the stewards was to forewarn workers of the prospect of closure and prepare them for occupation on a class basis. The contrary was the case.

The stewards then proceeded to troop down the well-worn protest road already marked out by stewards committees at Dunlop (Speke), Prestcold (Hillington) and elsewhere—meetings with MPs, councillors, government representatives, management and so on.

As we warned at the outset of the campaign, "exhausting procedure" has meant exhausting the membership in a futile round of pleading.

What was the alternative? A handful of stewards at the beginning of the campaign moved that there should be a decision to immediately estab-

lish an occupation.

Why was that not supported?

Why did not only Livingstone and Rigby themselves move against that but why also did the policy not receive the backing of the Socialist Workers Party shop stewards?

The argument advanced by Peter Bain and other supporters of the SWP in the factory is that such a step at that point was premature. It would "not have received adequate support" from the workforce.

Better, they say, to allow the Livingstone/Rigby line to proceed and to tactically judge when the situation was ripe to move the motion for occupation.

Why, then, decide to move the motion in the fifth week? The SWP stewards argue that the mood of the workforce had been shifted towards a more positive stance by the support they had received from Clyde-side shop stewards and the Scottish Conference of the Labour Party in the preceding week.

## Dissipated

This, they say, created the conditions for a development of consciousness among the workers, making the acceptance of occupation more likely.

But was not the *opposite* the case? Was it not that the initial enthusiasm for a struggle was *dissipated* in an endless round of lobbying and negotiations, which was carefully nurtured by the STUC bureaucrats, and which failed to actively involve the workforce in the campaign?

In the final vote on the occupation there were 1,500

workers who supported the stewards' recommendation. But were not these 1,500 votes there from the start of the campaign?

And were there not more votes which had drifted away as the prospect of a worthwhile struggle receded?

It will now be said in some quarters that the workers refused to fight and grabbed their redundancy money instead.

That money, however, amounts to only £4,000 per person at the maximum. There was no word, nor will there be, of larger payments such as we have seen in steel, the docks or the mines. Are we seriously being asked to agree that the majority of the Linwood workers were seduced simply by such paltry sums of money?

More to the point would be to ask whether they had confidence in the capacity of the majority of the shop stewards committee for an all-out struggle to defend their jobs.

We are not engaged in factional political point-scoring nor indulging in a complacent "told you so" attitude, commenting from the outside of the struggle.

We are seriously asking Linwood workers to consider the following questions. Was the course pursued throughout the campaign correct? Should there not have been a determined struggle for an immediate occupation from day one?

Was it correct for militant shop stewards to remain loyal critics of the Livingstone/Rigby line when it was clearly leading to disaster?

We hope that Linwood workers, and especially those who have supported the policies of the SWP, will avail themselves of the pages of *Socialist Press* to answer these questions.

## NUPE attacks nursery pamphlet

NUPE bureaucrats have been angered by the publication of the pamphlet *Nurseries: How and Why to Fight for Them*, produced by the National Child Care Campaign.

NUPE's East Midlands Divisional Organiser John McGuigan claims that he has been "libelled" by the pamphlet's account of his failure to defend 136 Nottingham nursery jobs.

The pamphlet points out

that the resultant increase in the staff/pupil ratio was the motive force in the refusal by NUT member Eileen Crosbie to teach an over-sized class.

NUPE officials are now demanding that the booklet—which offers a wealth of practical and political guidance for workers in struggle to defend nursery provision—be withdrawn.

Despite the witch-hunt generated by these bureaucrats, NCCC militants are standing by the pamphlet.

## JEANS ACTION SOLID

THE NIGHT after the decision against occupying Linwood, the women workers sitting in at the threatened Lee Jeans factory in Greenock voted 169-4 to reject improved redundancy payments.

They decided at a mass meeting to continue their occupation indefinitely—and learned that their action has now been made official by the NUTGW.

Donations should be sent to the treasurer, c/o TGWU, 4, Brougham Street, Greenock.

## Defeat for BL bosses

BL has received a setback in its plans to break down protective agreements and increase the rate of exploitation of its workforce.

Management at the Cowley Assembly Plant attempted to use current production changes to abolish the plant's Movement of Labour Agreement, which gives workers the right to jobs on the basis of seniority.

Production of the Ital was slashed last week from 1680 to 1080 per week while the Maxi's programme is increased marginally from 880 to 1200 per week.

The move throws up 800 workers of which management intend to keep half to staff the Honda Acclaim when production begins next month. They are trying to persuade 400 others to take voluntary redundancy.

When the new programmes came into force, management refused to reschedule the Maxi track on the basis of the Movement of Labour Agreement.

## Suspended

They announced the agreement would be suspended until October which would allow them to staff the Honda Acclaim by management selection.

The hard line, however, was short lived. Management rapidly retreated following a mass meeting of production workers which voted not to return to work until the agreement was re-established.

## Pergamon: Maxwell's plots fall flat

Attempted 'dirty tricks' by millionaire Labourite employer Robert Maxwell to undermine the three-week old NUJ strike at Pergamon Press, Oxford, have come seriously unstuck.

A lying press statement, inferring that strikers and pickets had been responsible for an assault on a Pergamon security guard was refuted by Oxford police.

Maxwell had wrongly claimed that an identity parade was to be held: and that a car allegedly connected with the incident was linked to strike supporters. Neither was true.

But a more subtle manoeuvre, through which Maxwell

hoped to secure a decision of the NUJ's Emergency Committee to call off the dispute, failed even more disastrously.

Maxwell had hinted to NEC member Vincent Hanna that the strike was run by 'extremists' and that there was a large number of potential members at Pergamon just waiting to join the union—as soon as the existing NUJ chapel leadership were removed.

But at a meeting last Friday of the Emergency Committee, attempts to act on Maxwell's proposals fell flat when confronted by a detailed factual account of the background to the dispute.

After discussion, a vote of confidence was carried in the chapel leadership; the official

dispute benefit being paid to the nine striking journalists was increased from £25 to £35 per week; Maxwell's press statement was referred for possible legal action as a libellous document; and General Secretary Ken Ashton undertook to take more urgent steps on the crucial question of securing supporting blacking action from the NGA.

With strikers' morale strengthened by the week's developments, it is more vital than ever that the blacking is achieved, Pergamon's journals production halted, and Maxwell forced to concede the chapel's pay and conditions demands.

Messages of support—particularly from Labour Parties and print unions—should be sent to the strike committee, c/o 5, Union Street, Oxford.

London-wide public meeting  
No Cuts!  
No rate or rent rises!  
No council house sales!  
Friday 3 April at 8 pm  
Lambeth Town Hall,  
Acre Lane, SW2  
Organised by Lambeth Labour Left  
All Labour Party members welcome

March against Cruise and Trident  
Saturday 18 April  
Assemble 11.00 am.  
Bulldog, Whitpash followed by rally.  
Organised by Leamington for European Nuclear Disarmament

# SOCIALIST PRESS ★

## POLICE ATTACK ON SOLIDARITY

As we go to press it seems unlikely that Solidarity leader Lech Walesa will succeed in his efforts to prevent a renewal of strike action in Poland, following the beating up of three local union leaders.

Police had been called in to evict Solidarity National Committee member Jan Rulewski, and farmers' leaders from the Provincial Council chamber in Bydgoszcz. The protesters had refused to leave after the Council's session had been suspended—denying them the right to speak.

### Hospitalised

As they were led out, Rulewski and two colleagues were set upon by police and hospitalised. The union in the town called an immediate strike alert, and a stoppage was prevented only at the request of the National Committee.

But since that point, even while Walesa has declared himself opposed to a strike, the Stalinist regime in Warsaw has raised the political temperature—by publicly endorsing the police action.

A politbureau statement declared that the Bydgoszcz police had acted "within the law".

Perhaps a factor in this was

the stern warning to put the Polish house in order given to Party leader Kania at the recent CPSU Congress in Moscow.

Soviet Stalinist chief Brezhnev will be breathing over the shoulders of Polish bureaucrats and trade unionists.

### 26 demands

Meanwhile local leaders of Solidarity have drawn up a 26-point list of demands, including a call for the dismissal of Deputy Premier Stanislaw Mach who was inside the chamber at the time, as well as the removal of the deputy governor, local police commander, and regional prosecutor.

The incident confirms once again the uneasy balance of power established between the Polish working class and their bureaucratic leaders in the wake of last year's strike wave.

### Retreats

Only the political overthrow of the Warsaw bureaucracy can resolve this crisis in the interests of the Polish workers.

Yet the consistent political retreats by the Solidarity leadership underline the necessity for a revolutionary leadership in Poland to carry through this fight.



Polish strikers

## FASCISTS WIN BANS ON MARCHES

With the willing cooperation of Tory Home Secretary Whitelaw, a handful of fascists can now, at whim, effectively bring about a ban on all labour movement demonstrations in any chosen area.

That is the implication of the wave of police bans on marches throughout London, in Leeds, South Yorkshire, Leicester and Wolverhampton.

### Announcement

In each case an announcement from the National Front, New National Front or British Movement that they are to demonstrate has been sufficient to prompt police chiefs into suspending the democratic rights of the labour movement to march.

Such bans in no way hurt the fascists. Indeed they inflate the importance of the fascists, assist them in their objective of further confusing, weakening and tying down the labour movement, and enable a small

handful to play this role on a national level.

And at the same time the fascist marches which do take place are heavily protected by the police. This was the case last Sunday, when anti-fascists mobilising to combat a New National Front march in Burton-on-Trent were tailed by police, kept away from the 100 based-in marchers, and flagged down by police and forced off the motorway when they attempted to follow one of the fascist coaches.

The fact is that the labour movement is ready and able to mobilise to sweep these scum off the streets. The police activity is deliberately designed to prevent this taking place, thus giving the fascists their best chance to mobilise and put on a show of apparent strength.

In fighting for action to crush the fascists, socialists must oppose state bans, and argue instead for full scale mobilisation of the unions and Labour Parties in mass action to drive them off the streets.



Fascists: given power to bring about ban on marches

## Hospital for hunger striker

As two more Irish republican prisoners joined the hunger strike at the Long Kesh camp in the North of Ireland, the first to begin, Bobby Sands, has been transferred to a prison hospital.

He has now been 3½ weeks without food in his struggle to force a restoration of political status to the 400 republican prisoners currently in Long Kesh, and the women prisoners in Armagh Jail.

Yet once again, as with the previous hunger strike last winter, the solidarity with Sands' struggle has come from anywhere but the British labour movement.

The Portuguese government has declared support; the French CGT union confederation

and Communist Party leader Marchais have backed the fight.

But in Britain union leaders, Labour leaders and Communist Party members have joined in a coordinated campaign of silence on the issue. In essence they support British imperialist rule in Ireland and will do nothing to support the liberation struggle.

Bobby Sands has not long to live—unless a movement is built in Britain to force the Thatcher government to concede the legitimate demand for political status.

Socialist Press readers must take up this fight in their union branches and Labour Parties.

Contingents must be mobilised for the national demonstration called for April 25 by the H Block/Armagh (London) Committee, in London.



## Spread Civil Service strikes!

After a tremendous rank and file response drove back the government last week on the issue of the Liverpool suspensions, the civil service pay dispute has entered its third week with members preparing for a long battle.

The main question now is to escalate the action and bring out as many of the selected strike centres as possible at the same time.

This in itself should only be seen as the build up to a national indefinite strike, with just the key unemployment benefit computers exempted.

Anything less will allow the Council of Civil Service Union leaders the chance to prepare the kind of sell-out they have

already indicated they are looking for.

The most likely form this will take is to trade the 7% cash limit for a revived version of the Pay Research Agreement—despite the fact that the CPSA (the largest of the nine unions) is split down the middle on whether such an agreement is necessary.

All civil service activists must work now to prepare the membership to resist any sell-out deals. Strike-breaking by top Inland Revenue officials must be met with mass picketing.

The decision by the bank workers' unions to black any work redirected to their members shows the kind of solidarity which will be needed to outmanoeuvre Thatcher.

Spread the strikes to win the full 15%!

## FUND

Another good week for the fund has brought the total so far to £621.10, leaving us with £230 to raise in the next week if we are to complete our fund on time.

This means we still have a tough fight on our hands if we are to succeed, but we cannot afford to ease up now. Every penny of the fund is needed to maintain our press in the face of constantly rising costs.

So send us a donation today and help us make sure we reach that £850 target before the end of the month.

Our address is:  
Socialist Press Monthly Fund  
BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX