

SOCIALIST PRESS

FORTNIGHTLY PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

No 52 * 2nd February 1977 * 10p

MASSIVE 'NO' TO LEYLAND CONVENORS

The Ad Hoc Committee of class collaborators who have been used for the past year to railroad the policies of British Leyland management onto the shop floor has received a heavy rebuff from Leyland workers.

The Committee, whose members were appointed by the national officials of the various unions, was set up to co-ordinate the introduction of the Ryder 'participation' plan.

Consisting of right wing convenors from several Leyland plants, and dominated by Stalinists of the Communist Party, the Committee was kept in existence by management and trade union bureaucrats who saw it as the embryo of a National Joint Negotiating Committee ready for the day when they can end plant bargaining and establish a corporate structure.

The "fringe benefit" diversion - motivated by those who want to avoid confrontation with the government and the TUC over wages policy - was tailor made for this Committee.

Negotiations on a fringe benefit package were opened with management, over the heads of the individual plants, at corporation level.

This developed into the most important management threat against car workers since the battles over the ending of piecework and the introduction of Measured Day Work - a move which has substantially reduced wages and worsened the conditions of Leyland workers.

'KEEP WORKING'

Faced with a Committee which, under 'participation' had become a puppet of management; which accepted that the 'viability' of the company was the primary question; which backed Jones and Scanlon in their 'Keep Working at

all Costs' statement in Leyland's Company journal, management can hardly be blamed for taking full advantage.

WORSE

The first draft of the proposals (which were enthusiastically accepted by Derek Robinson, Stalinist convenor of the Longbridge complex and chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee) attacked virtually every existing procedure agreement. It established no-strike penalty clauses; brought senior stewards into the discipline structure on the management side; gave management the right to redeploy workers between the various plants; and established corporation-wide bargaining which would abolish the independence of individual groups of workers to fight for wages and conditions.

After lengthy negotiations the Committee ended up with a revised document arguably worse than the first draft. This was accepted by a 3 to 1 majority at a full meeting of convenors from all Cars Division plants, and recommended back to the labour force.

MISCALCULATION

This move was a major miscalculation by the right-wing. The mood of the working class - angry and frustrated over wage control, price increases, spending cuts and unemployment, made itself forcefully felt.

In the Cowley complex - crucial to the scheme - right wing convenors holding key positions on the Ad Hoc Committee enthusiastically supported the proposals - yet out of the 500 shop stewards in the complex only three supported the document!

The massive shift among the stewards - quickly followed by similar decisions in other factories

Cont'd Back Page, Col 4.

AS CP BACKS GOVERNMENT

SPANISH WORKERS SHAKE FASCISM

Two million on strike and hundreds of thousands demonstrating in the streets. That was last week's response of workers all over Spain to a political crisis which raised the spectre of a new civil war. The Spanish ruling class can no longer hang on to power by the means which have served it for the last forty years.

But while the working class once again showed its readiness to fight with all necessary means to throw off Spanish fascism, its Stalinist and reformist leaders lined up with the fascist government.

Their criminal policy of national reconciliation and a "peaceful road" to democracy through a negotiated pact with the fascists has never been more dramatically exposed than in the last ten days.

The present political crisis developed with astonishing speed.

On Sunday January 23rd, during a demonstration in Madrid in support of amnesty for all political prisoners, a student was killed, shot in the back probably by members of the Warriors of Christ the King, one of the fascist terror gangs to which the government has given virtually complete freedom of action.

BLOWN APART

The next morning another demonstration assembled to protest against this killing. The police attacked the demonstrators with exceptional violence - and in doing so murdered another student whose head was blown apart by an exploding tear gas cannister.

The same day, General Villacueva, head of the military court was kidnapped. Responsibility was later claimed by "GRAPO" (the "First of October Anti-fascist Group"), the same organisation which claims to have held the head of the Council of State, Oriol, for the last two months.

Late the same night, an armed terror gang broke into a law office and murdered three Communist Party lawyers; six others were wounded and two of those later died in hospital.

CRIMINAL STEP

It was at this point that the "democratic opposition" which groups together the Communist Party, Socialist Party and the Christian Democrats, took the criminal step of signing a joint declaration with the fascist government,

"... expressing their identity of views condemning political extremism which, through violence, is trying to halt the ongoing process towards democratic normalisation in Spain."

This opened the way for the government to activate the vicious Anti-terrorism Act which allows "suspects" to be held for ten days without charge and grants the police virtually uncontrolled free-



Carrillo - police bodyguard

dom of search. Though the government claimed this was directed against the extreme right, the almost exclusive use of such measures in Spain has been against the workers' movement.

Asked the next day, at the funeral of the murdered lawyers to comment on these steps, CP leader Santiago Carrillo, (himself along with the CP Central Committee, now protected by a police bodyguard) backed them to the hilt:

"I think the government ought to be supported and pushed on in order to avoid these acts of gangsterism and there is no room for the slightest doubt that I have complete confidence in the goodwill of Prime Minister Suarez and the members of the government"

On Friday 28th the police were

Cont'd Back Page, Col 1.



Leyland convenors

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



IN BRIEF

DENMARK

THE MAJORITY SOCIAL Democratic government has been forced to call an election for February 15th because it has lost the confidence of the capitalist class (represented by the Liberal Party).

Plans for rent control and 'measures to stimulate employment' were to sugar the pill of wage control, but these are regarded by the capitalists as too high a price to pay.

The new political crisis is a continuation of the situation in December when the government was almost forced out of office by a near general strike against the wage policy.

New contracts restricting increases to 6% a year for two years are due to be agreed by March 1st.

It looks increasingly as if no political party in Denmark has the power to force this policy down the throat of the Danish workers.

In that case the election will only open the way for an intensification of the social crisis.

HOLLAND

DUTCH UNIONS PLAN TO begin a campaign of strikes and other action in private and nationalised industry in the next two weeks.

The action is in defence of the limited automatic compensation for inflation, which has been built into wage contracts since the early 1970s. This the employers say is 'too expensive'.

The social democrat led coalition government has so far not intervened directly but is expected to do so once the strikes begin.

ARGENTINA

THE VIDELA DICTATORSHIP has unveiled a new batch of anti-working class measures.

In public sector industries the working week is to be raised from 35 to 42 hours, and union officials are to lose the few facilities which remain to them.

Paid maternity leave, sick leave and holidays are to be cut. Huge redundancies are also planned including 15,000 railway workers.

Leaders of unions which have not been taken over directly by the regime have participated in a government cover-up of these measures from a visiting investigating commission from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (the reformist, anti-Communist, trade and international).

ZIMBABWE

THE RACIST SMITH REGIME has refused to go along with the British Labour government's efforts to kill the black liberation movement with compromise.

Smith has sabotaged Ivor Richard's plans to reconvene the Geneva conference and has instead hanged eight black political prisoners and stepped up its military plans.

Exemptions from military service for whites have been reduced and steps taken to stop food reaching the guerrillas.

This shows desperation in the face of a new offensive by the liberation army and the waning strength of the racists.

Since the war began 250 members of the Rhodesian security forces have been killed. What is more serious in the long run, the net emigration of the white population last year was over 7,000 (about 3% of the white population).

EGYPT: BASTILLE IS STORMED

It will take a long time for the dust to settle in Cairo, Alexandria, and the other main Egyptian towns since the masses took to the streets on the 18th and 19th of last month.

The immediate efforts of the Egyptian government to impose price increases at the behest of the International Monetary Fund were pushed back. The subsidies were continued and wage increases maintained.

But at the same time the entire direction of the pro-capitalist, pro-American economic policies were brought into question, along with the so-called 'open democracy' policy of Sadat - and even his efforts at accommodation with Israel.

The eruption of discontent that followed the announcement of the proposed price increases showed the deep-seated dissatisfaction which has not been allayed by 25 years of nationalist rule or even the military victory of 1973, when the Suez Canal area was won back from the Israelis.

BROKE WINDOWS

The very evident differences between the poor masses and the rich minority was shown clearly when the poor came into the streets.

In Cairo they broke windows in the big hotels and the night club district and then went on to the Parliament building.

In Alexandria, they attacked the headquarters of the Arab Socialist Union, which also houses Egypt's two other legally tolerated political organisations.

The demonstrators in Cairo showed their real class hatred when they shouted against Sadat:

"Your daughter is wearing the latest fashions and we are sleeping ten to a room".

When the riot police threatened them with rifles, they shouted:

"We are dying of hunger in any case, so carry on with your bullets".

When a curfew was announced in Cairo, with anybody defying it to be shot, 30,000 people remained in the streets. At least 80 were shot dead.

Sadat's surrender to the main demands of the crowds by restoring the subsidies has in no way solved the problem either for the Egyptian masses or for the regime itself.

Ever since Sadat decided to reverse the political and economic policies of Nasser and to lean to the western capitalist powers, economic crisis has assumed new forms.

Some industries nationalised by Nasser have been handed back to private capital, and as a result the number of idle rich inhabitants of night clubs has increased, with no sign of real economic development.

"KULAK"

Similar trends can be seen in the countryside. At the village Nasinjah - the Arabic for Nasserism - a journalist called Mohammad Sahnawi from the prestigious *Al-Ahram* newspaper found a now rich peasant "kulak" class developing under Sadat's economic policies.

His article saying so was, perhaps needless to say, not published, but the phenomenon he described will inevitably lead to further outbreaks of social discontent.

The fact is that Sadat's attempt at economic development through capitalism has been a complete failure.

The 2,000 million dollar loan promised by President Nixon in 1974 never came.

The influx of American capital which was supposed to come never came.

No major US company has set up any manufacturing industry whatever, despite 'planning', and what foreign investment there has been is in the unproductive service sector.

Nor has help been forthcoming from oil rich Saudi Arabia - from whom Sadat has been demanding a large proportion of his enormous arms bill, so far without success.

American help has thus been used to buy expensive limousines and gas canisters for police to throw at rioters.

It has not helped to deal with raging inflation - 50% since the 1973 war - nor with the average wage rate of just above £12 a month, the legal minimum.

NOT ENOUGH

The official level of subsidised food, including one kilo of rice and one of sugar per person per month in large families is not surprisingly not enough to convince the Egyptian people that they are gaining any benefit from Sadat's regime and its policies.

The correspondent of the

French paper *Le Monde* saw some parallels of recent events with those in the history of his own country.

"GREAT FEAR"

They have had their 'July 14th', their 'storming of the Bastille', he said.

Now, as in the revolution of 1789 there is a 'great fear', this time amongst Egypt's rulers, about what might happen next.

The authorities have tried to explain the discontent with the somewhat discredited theory of a 'communist plot'.

They used this story in order to arrest 2,000 people, including members of the officially approved opposition party, the National Progressive Unionist Party of Khaled Mohiedin which holds four seats in the National Assembly.

But the 'communist plot' theory was not taken very seriously, even



Sadat

by the authorities.

A spokesman told the *times* journalist that the arrests were:

"for the public to see. They will be released eventually".

Most of those arrested are from the various wings of the Arab nationalist movement, particularly the splits to the left.

Some claim to be 'authentic Nasserites' and of course they get some support from the masses who identify with the revolutionary side of the late President Nasser's political movement as well as with

the left rhetoric of his rule.

There are also supporters of the Communist Labour Party, formed in 1968 and identified with the political trend of George Habbash and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

There are others in the Workers Communist Party identified with the Palestinian Democratic Front.

The mass offensive in Egypt shows that despite the setbacks in Lebanon and Jordan in recent years, the Arab masses remain strong and prepared to fight.

RIGHT TO WORRY

They also show that the Arab bourgeoisie, whether they turn to Stalinism or to imperialism are unable to serve the interests of the Arab masses.

The return to 'Nasserism' cannot provide a way forward any more than the various other varieties of



Habash

nationalism.

Nevertheless the Egyptian authorities and their media are right to worry about 'communism'.

The building of a seriously organised communist movement in the working class and breaking from the old nationalist notions is the way to present a real threat to Sadat, his Zionist and imperialist friends, and his reactionary Arab allies.

MAURITIUS: LEFT WING GAINS

The result of the December general election in the tiny, sugar producing Indian Ocean island of Mauritius was a judgement on the two reactionary and bureaucratic parties which have dominated Mauritian politics since independence in 1968.

Both the Labour Party led by Prime Minister Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam and Gaetan Duval's even more right wing Social Democratic Party are deeply compromised with imperialism which has always shown an appetite for this island because of its important strategic position.

Ramgoolam boasts an alliance with Indian dictator Gandhi who also has designs on the island which she visited last October.

The contempt of these two parties for the masses of workers and peasants of Mauritius is shown by the fact that the largest party after the elections, the 'socialist'

Mauritian Militant Movement had no seats at all in the previous parliament.

With 30 seats it is still two short of an overall parliamentary majority, though its leader Paul Berenger has said he is prepared to form a government.

The leaders of the other two parties are now engaged in an attempt to sink their bitter personal discords to prevent the MMM forming a government and threatening their monopoly of political power.

The previous coalition between Ramgoolam and Duval broke up during major strikes in 1971 and 1972.

For his part in organising these, Berenger was jailed for eight months by Ramgoolam's government which suspended the constitution under which new general elections were then due.

This 'state of emergency' under which Ramgoolam has undemocratically clung onto power has lasted for four years.

Berenger predicts that a new

coalition could not last more than a year, by which time the Labour Party would have lost its remaining supporters.

The extraordinary growth of the MMM and the General Workers Federation, the trade union with which it is linked, suggests that he is right.

If so, the professions of 'socialism' made by the MMM will soon be put to the test. The Party's election programme was a very limited one but include a number of potential reforms.

FAMILIAR PROPOSAL

It advocated the nationalisation of the five largest of the island's 21 sugar companies, of the docks and transport system, the insurance companies (not the banks) and of the major hotels (Mauritius is an important tourist resort), together with restrictions on trade with South Africa (though not a complete boycott) and the ending of landing rights for South African

EAST EUROPE IN FERMENT

The Stalinist bureaucracies of Eastern Europe are facing political opposition on a scale which is again causing serious worry to the Kremlin leadership.

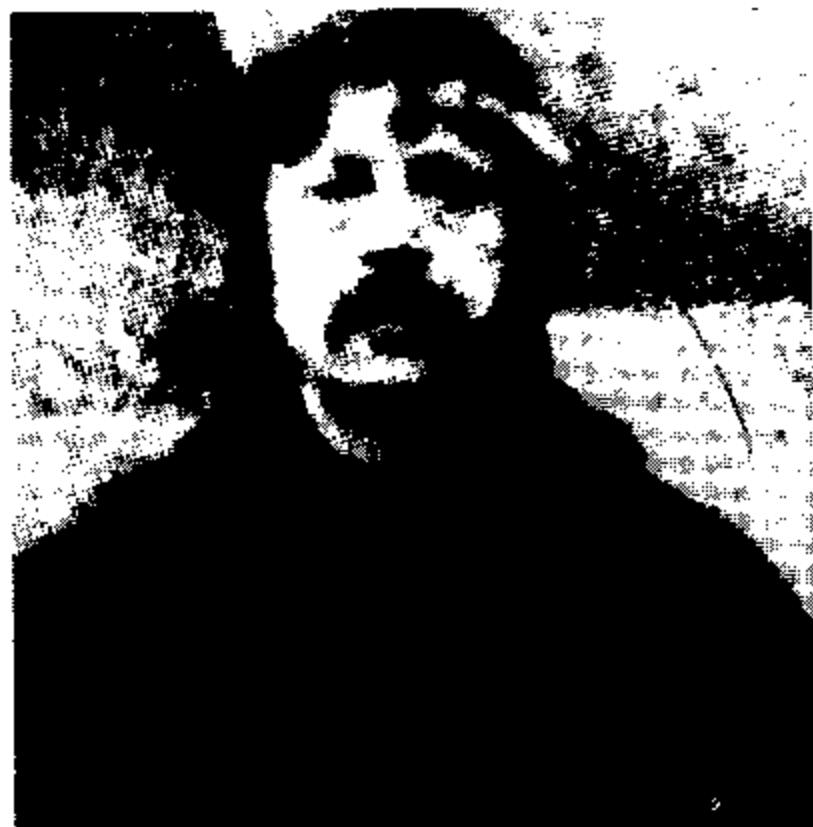
A campaign was begun last week by the Czechoslovak authorities to forcibly deport several leading signatories of the 'Charter 77' petition for political rights.

Those singled out for the offer of 'a free passage to Austria' included writer Ludvik Vaculik, playwright Pavel Kohout, former Foreign Minister Jiri Hajek and three former Communist Party officials.

'INTERFERENCE'

Four other signatories had already been arrested. The suspicion exists that Czech protests against 'interference' by the British intelligence services within Czechoslovakia — based in part on the activity of a British ambassador who left in 1966 — may be one aspect of a plan to brand the 300 signatories of the Charter as pawns of the West.

The moves for political rights in Czechoslovakia have at the present a purely democratic, not a socialist, character — reflecting the middle



Biermann

class and intellectual composition of this disparate opposition to Stalinist rule.

Some elements of the 'Charter 77' movement will very probably shift decisively to the right in the weeks and months to come.

But the background to the events in Prague is a much wider and deeper opposition to Stalinist dictatorship throughout Eastern Europe, which broke surface with the general strike movement in Poland last June against sharp government-imposed rises in food prices.

Gierek's regime was forced to beat an overnight retreat, but since then it has conducted a continual campaign of victimisations, frame-



Gierek

ups and harassment against hundreds of the workers involved and those who have come forward to support them.

Last week two leading members of the Workers Defence Committee set up to defend the victimised workers were fined for 'illegally collecting money'.

In East Germany, too, the regime's expulsion to the West — last November — of dissident playwright Wolf Biermann was intended as a warning against any form of opposition.

And similarly the reshuffle last autumn, which brought in hard-liner Willi Stoph as head of the government, reflected the desire for a 'firm' team to bring on revised



Polish riots in 1970.

wage controls and production norms — changes which, they fear, may provoke resistance from important sections of the East German working class.

The international economic crisis is making itself felt in Eastern Europe, not only through more difficult trading relations with the West, but in the mounting cost of imports from the USSR, especially of oil. All the regimes, in one form or another, are forced to try and curb working-class living standards — while having no intention of relinquishing any of their own bureaucratic privileges.

The defence of workers against the bureaucracy in Poland has received little support abroad.

SANCTIMONIOUS

The same is not true of the Czech 'Charter 77', which because of its potentially right-wing uses has been endorsed by an international array of social democrats, headed

by Austrian Chancellor Kresky.

The Spanish and Italian Communist Parties have also made sanctimonious protests against repression in Czechoslovakia — as has the official Chinese news agency!

RESHUFFLE

One Communist Party which is at odds with Brezhnev and his apprentices in Prague, but has not issued a word of protest, is Rumania.

Last week, it was announced that Ceausescu, general secretary of the CP and effective head of the regime, had appointed his wife, Elena onto the top committee of the Party — as part of a major reshuffle of the top echelons of the Party and state.

It also involved promotions for Mrs. Ceausescu's brother (made Minister of Industry) and Butica, another close relative of the family, also brought onto the Politbureau.

INDIA: Gandhi's Repression Continues

Mrs Gandhi's proclamation of a general election to be held in March is not the end of her dictatorship. It is a way for her to reap its political fruits.

The election is bound to take the form of the sham referenda beloved of other dictators.

Many imprisoned opposition leaders have been released; but tens of thousands of opposition party and trade union militants, whose work would be necessary to any serious opposition campaign, will remain behind bars throughout the campaign.

Press censorship has been lifted; but newspapers remain under a government injunction not to say anything which will worsen national divisions.

Most of the papers which were prepared to offer serious criticisms of Gandhi were forced to close during the emergency and may now find it impossible to start up again.

And Gandhi maintains a monopoly of the radio and television.

Only forty days have been allowed for the development of any opposition campaign before the election, which along with the continuation of acute day to day repression of the mass of the population makes anything other than a Congress Party victory out of the question.

The only principled course would be to boycott such 'elections'. There is, however, no shortage of unprincipled political organisations ready to participate in the sham, while giving token opposition to the Gandhi regime.

The main opposition grouping is an unprincipled alliance of the right wing nationalists (Jan Sangh), Gandhian traditionalists (led by J.P. Narayan) and Social Democrats (the Socialist Party).

This alliance can offer absolutely nothing to the Indian masses.

The Communist Party of India, which has slavishly supported the dictatorship, has now been partly ditched by Mrs. Gandhi and may



contest the election on the basis of support for her policies but opposition to the growing power of her son, Sanjay.

But the CP may still make an accommodation with the Congress Party in order to get a few guaranteed parliamentary seats.

She knows that the capitalist

opposition parties will be no threat since her policies up to now have increasingly won the allegiance of big business away from the non-Congress parties it once supported.

The election, if and when it takes place, represents no more than a new tactic to maintain the anti-working class dictatorship.

...and in Sri Lanka

Hundreds of workers have been arrested for 'incitement to strike', press censorship has been imposed and troops have been used to maintain essential public services.

These are some of the repressive measures taken by Mrs. Bandaranaike's Popular Front government over the last four weeks in its attempt to crush the recent massive wave of strikes.

They began on December 22 when railway workers struck over a pay claim. The government granted some of the claim but large numbers of railway workers refused to return to work on January 6 under the terms of the agreement.

They were joined on strike by virtually all workers in the public services — including electricity, water, bus transport — in spite of reactionary laws forbidding strikes in these sectors.

Playing a leading role in the organisation of the strikes, was the Ceylon Federation of Labour which is dominated by the sometime

'Trotskyist' LSSP, once a sympathising section of the "United" Secretariat of the Fourth International and a member of Mrs Bandaranaike's unprincipled coalition government until it was expelled in 1975.

Reports indicate that the leaders of the Federation of Labour failed to provide any clear programme for the near general strike.

The essential item of that programme should be the demand for the reactionary Popular Front government to resign.

As a result of this failure of political leadership, some workers were being forced back to work by Bandaranaike's vicious attacks on all democratic rights.

Part of the direct responsibility for these attacks lies clearly with the Communist Party which has a member in the Bandaranaike Cabinet.

Just as in neighbouring India, the Stalinists are loyally lining up behind the savage repression of the working class.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE



The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class to lead the mounting opposition to the betrayals of both 'left' and right wing Labour and trade union leaders and the Communist Party, as they attempt to enforce wage control, sackings, speed-up and public service cuts.

As workers take up the struggle against these policies they are forced by the sheer weight of forces opposing them to confront political questions. Only with an understanding of the role of the labour bureaucracy and a programme to unite the broadest sections of workers in struggle can a way forward be found.

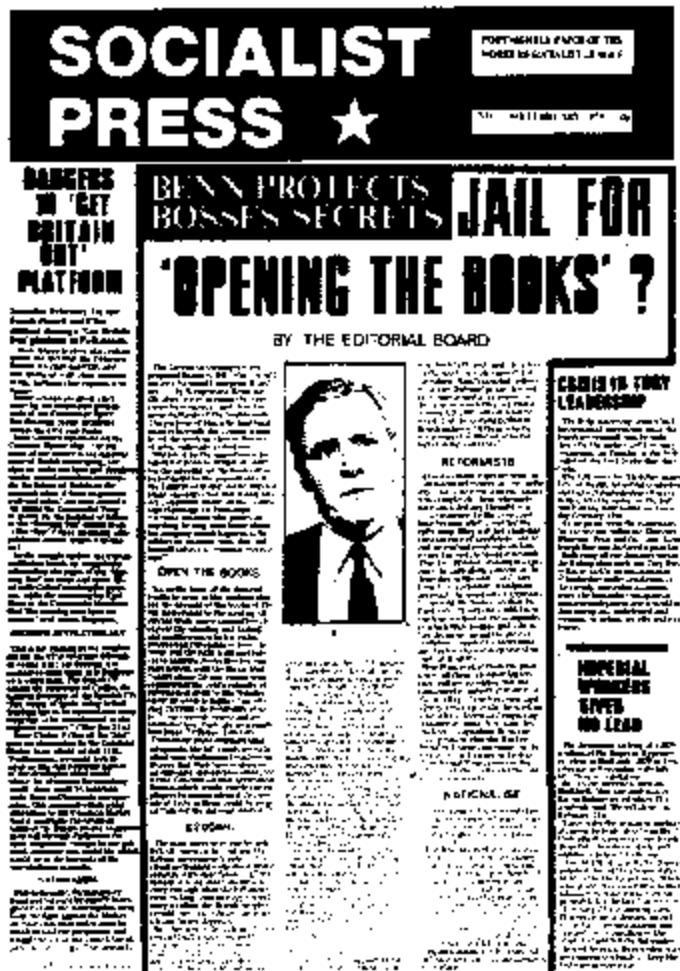
The Workers Socialist League is the only movement that sets out to do this, fighting consistently in the working class for transitional demands, which go beyond simply trade union militancy to raise the political questions to workers and prepare the forms of organisation and the knowledge necessary for the struggle for socialism.

As a result we have been at the forefront of struggles against the cuts, against wage control, for unionisation, and against redundancy. We have done more than any other tendency to fight the introduction of 'workers' participation' in industry. And we have strongly supported the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, which has set out to show the link between the reactionary policies of the Social Contract and bureaucratic dictatorship in both the unions and the Labour Party.

But our practical struggle for the continuity of the principles and method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme is in no way a task confined to Britain. It requires an attention and involvement in the struggles of the working class internationally, and the fight to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International.

So there has been a consistent drive within the WSL to deepen and enrich the movement's understanding of the history and the present crisis of the Fourth International as an essential part of our initiative towards its reconstruction.

We urge all readers who agree on the need for revolutionary leadership and the demands we put forward to find out more about the WSL and join our fight in the Labour movement.



First edition of Socialist Press, Two years ago the first edition of Socialist Press rolled off a primitive sheet-fed litho press in Leeds, only six weeks after the founding meeting of the Workers Socialist League.

It headlined on the betrayals embodied in the Labour government's National Enterprise Board - at that time under the direction of Benn as Industry Secretary, showing that the strategy it embodied was simply the payment of subsidies to private enterprise and the furtherance of class collaboration.

Two years later the issues posed in that lead article are still central to the struggles of the working class against the betrayals of the Labour government.

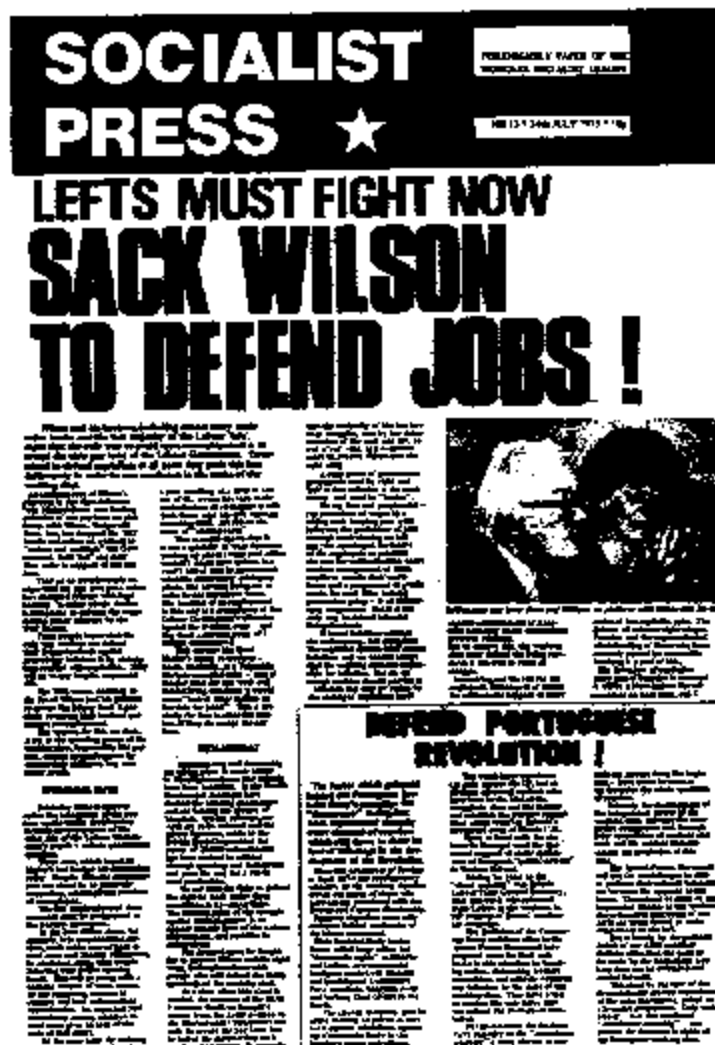
GOAL

The economic goal of the Callaghan government remains the regeneration of British capitalism - at the expense of mass unemployment, huge cuts in the social services and working class living standards.

And at the same time the Ryder report, drawn up as the first practical test for NEB intervention, has begun to be implemented in British Leyland at the cost already of thousands of jobs.

The Ryder scheme itself leans heavily for its implementation upon the collaboration in management of whole layers of convenors and stewards sucked into the apparatus of 'worker participation' which has been lauded from the start by 'left' MPs and union leaders as well as the Communist Party as a 'step towards workers' control'.

Socialist Press has stood from its



First edition on newsprint, July 1975.



First twelve page edition, November 1975.



Regular industrial news begins, June 1976.



First sixteen page paper, August 1976.

period of massive price inflation and falling living standards it is necessary considerably to expand the circulation of Socialist Press, ensuring that the increased expenses of weekly production can be met.

READERS

For this reason we are taking this opportunity to call on our readers for support.

If every reader took just one extra copy of Socialist Press and sold it to a friend - or donated a mere 10p to the Monthly Fund - we could immediately take the decision for a weekly paper. It is as simple as that.

WSL members in every area are of course already seeking ways of raising the circulation of the paper - but you do not have to be a member of the League to donate to our fund or sell a copy a week of the paper.

In assisting the transformation of Socialist Press into a weekly you would be assisting the struggle in every union against wage control and for policies and principled leadership which can defend the working class.

The first two years of Socialist Press have been years in which the fortnightly paper has been vastly improved and enlarged. Help us make 1977 the year of the weekly paper!

For additional copies of Socialist Press contact your local branch or write to: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

2 YEARS OF SOCIALIST PRESS

first issue absolutely and consistently opposed to these moves of the Labour government, backed by their allies in the TUC.

We have based our analysis and programme on these issues on lessons drawn directly from the practical struggles of WSL members against cuts, sackings, speed-up and participation.

PRACTICAL WORK

And it has been the practical work of our movement which enabled us to highlight from early on the growing gulf between the determination of the TUC leaders to impose a second stage of wage control in the form of the 4 1/2% limit, and the mood of the shop floor union membership.

We have been able consistently to show in lead articles and features, the link between wage control and the drive towards

bureaucratic dictatorship within the unions.

FORESEEN

And we alone on the left have been able to foresee the current explosion of militant struggles in the working class.

At the same time the devotion of at least two pages in every issue to analysis of the international struggles of the oppressed masses against imperialism has meant that movements in Britain have always been seen in an international context and not in isolation.

It is this approach combined with serious attention to theoretical and historical questions which has established a firm footing for Socialist Press, enabling us to modernise our method of production, expand from an eight page to a twelve page format, to

undertake the frequent publication of our theoretical supplement, Trotskyism Today, and provide the basis to sustain our considerable coverage of industrial news.

But we are obviously not content to let matters rest at the present level.

Many additional areas of work need to be given coverage.

And a fortnightly paper, however comprehensive, must lack the immediacy and close coverage of events possible in a weekly paper.

QUANTITATIVE

Our next goal for the development of Socialist Press is therefore not to quantitatively increase further the number of pages, but to make the qualitative step to a weekly paper.

To undertake such a step in this

expected to come down. It will not be long before the 10% annual cut in real wages, which Socialist Press has predicted would be the effect of the social contract, becomes a reality.

But at the same time as these figures are released, TUC leaders are making it abundantly clear they are hell-bent on enforcing a Stage Three of wage control after July.

Now there is talk of a Special Congress of the TUC to be held in March in an attempt to pre-empt resistance at this summer's union conferences to a new round of wage cutting.

TUC General Secretary Len Murray is stating that a pledge to cut unemployment is a 'precondition' for a Phase Three.

Yet at the same time workers in every industry - from nuclear power to shipbuilding; from coal-mining to the National Health Service - have their readiness to fight every aspect of the Social Contract.

To struggle against these betrayals a programme and perspective must be agreed. This is why the Recall Conference on Wage Control and Union Democracy called by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement is of central importance in preparing the fight back.

We urge all readers and supporters to fight in their union branches, shop stewards committees, trades councils and Labour Parties for delegations and individual militants to attend the Conference, which is to be held in Digbeth Hall, Birmingham on Sunday March 27th, beginning at 10 am.

Copies of the Draft Resolution and credentials (50p) are obtainable from the Conference Secretary, Kevin Lee, 44, Devonshire Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham 22



Students on the November 17th anti-cuts demonstration

STUDENTS' STEP FORWARD

The fight against Shirley Williams' attack on the education service was stepped up at the weekend.

Last Friday about 100 students picketed the Department of Education and Science in Waterloo. On Saturday 150 students attended an overseas students conference in London.

Trevor Phillips of NUS Executive presented a totally evasive strategy for "fighting" fee increases.

This included a "day of action" on March 2nd, and a national demonstration on March 9th.

The conference rejected these proposals, calling instead for the

NUS to co-ordinate national occupations.

The Executive are not, however, bound by this motion, as the conference was not a policy making one.

Despite the inadequacy of the motion passed, it does reflect the willingness of students to fight the increases.

The conference on overseas students to be held at Middlesex Poly, on February 12th is an opportunity to take this struggle further.

Details about the conference can be obtained from the Overseas Students Group there, telephone 01-804-1958.



Murray

Murray Prepares Phase Three

The Labour government's own figures are giving almost daily confirmation of the huge cost which the social contract is imposing on the working class.

Total unemployment (excluding school leavers) went up by 70,000 in December to reach more than 1,400,000, well over 6% of the workforce.

At the same time, the real wages of those still in work are falling faster than ever.

In the year up to last December earnings went up by 10%. When income tax and social security are taken into account, this meant a rise in take home pay of no more than about 7-8%.

Over the same time prices soared a full 15%. This implies a cut in real pay, therefore, of between 7% and 8% over the year.

It is going to get worse. The Price Commission last week predicted that inflation would get faster over the next few months.

And as Stage 2 settlements are made the growth of earnings is

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

LABOUR NEC LAUNCHES WITCH-HUNT

An amended resolution which "notes with concern" reports of entrust activities into the Labour Party, and which states that the broad nature of the membership of the Party does not condone creating organisations within it to "undermine its democratic objectives" has been passed unanimously by the National Executive at its meeting last week.

This vote indicates the complete refusal of 'left' talkers on the NEC - including LPYS delegate, Militant group member Nick Bradley - to take a principled stand against bans and proscriptions within the Party.

Once this was established the NEC proceeded rapidly at the instigation of one-time 'left' Michael Foot, to set up a special sub-committee of five to examine the catalogue of witch-hunting material collected by the Party's National Agent Reg Underhill.

Three NEC members who normally vote with the 'left' rallied behind Foot's motion, while TGWU delegate Alex Kitson (backed in the current elections by the Militant Group) tactfully left before the vote - leaving the motion passed by 16 votes to 10.

There is no doubt that this rightward swing on the NEC reflects pressure from union leaders anxious to batten down all the hatches against their own members.

Far from being aimed at the

spineless Andy Bévan and the equally invertebrate Militant group, this witch-hunt is to set the scenes for a crackdown on principled opposition to the social contract both within the Labour Party and in the unions.

Principled Labour Party members should immediately move in CLP's motions demanding the NEC reverse its decision and disband the committee, and in the interim refuse to co-operate in this witch-hunt.



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Prentice

BUT IN NEWHAM...

While right wing Labour MP Neville Sandleson held on to his candidacy by the skin of his teeth in Hayes and Harlington, Newham North East Labour Party has finally decided to proceed with the reselection of its Parliamentary candidate.

The endless manoeuvres of sitting MP, extreme right-winger Reg Prentice, have failed to prevent this step taking place, though they have delayed it for months.

Prentice has now been offered a regular column in the local Tory rag, 'Newham Recorder', through which to conduct his war against the rank and file of the Labour Party.

The removal of Prentice can represent a victory against the agents of Toryism in the Labour Party, and point the way forward to the ousting of the whole anti-working class Callaghan-Healey clique.

But this will only be fully achieved if Prentice is replaced by a candidate who can offer a serious alternative for the working class.

Every effort must be made to ensure that the next election campaign (in which Prentice will no doubt stand against the Labour Party) is fought on total opposition to the spending cuts, wage cuts and job cuts of the government, with a commitment to act against these measures inside and outside Parliament and struggle for the removal of the leadership carrying them out.

NAC TRIBUNAL - REFORMIST JAMBOREE

The National Abortion Campaign, the IMG's "Mass one issue campaign" has turned into a reformist ginger group.

Final confirmation of this came at the National Tribunal on Abortion Rights Day of Evidence which took place last Saturday, January 29th, in Central Hall, Westminster.

Five to six hundred gathered together to hear about the effects of the 1967 Act; what it was like before and therefore what it will be like if abortion is restricted again; the situation internationally and

the problems in trying to obtain an abortion on the NHS due to the inadequacy of the 1967 Abortion Act.

Even within the limits of this one issue it would have been possible to discuss concrete action which could widen the area of struggle for abortion on demand on the NHS.

But instead it was kept to abortion with no "diversion" onto cuts or women's rights or the fact abortion is a class issue.

We were told by an NUT member who was giving the "trade union side" of the issue that we would not get support from the

Trade Unions in any concrete way because most of the active trade unionists are men. In her view it was "time for the NAC to take the issues out of the Trade Unions and onto the streets".

But in most people's experience once the NAC won the verbal support for abortion on demand from the TUC they stopped fighting in the union movement as they had "their support"; instead they should have used the victory at the TUC to force the bureaucracy to do something instead of just talking.

Also, as long as abortion is kept to the issue of "a woman's right to choose" it is difficult to see how it can be fought through in the trade union movement.

The only speaker who put abortion into its context as a class issue was the speaker from Chile who was talking in the international section.

Tess Gill who was speaking from the Abortion Law Reform Association gave details of the law they would like implemented, the complications in formulating a law and the ensuing battle to get it through parliament gave a clear indication that it would be a lot easier to overthrow the bourgeois state than reform it!

The nearest thing resembling a constructive task put forward by this interesting abortion jamboree was for each delegate to lobby their MP, by letter or in person, to get them to vote against the William Benyon Bill!

There will also be demonstrations and meetings to correspond to the vote on the Bill's second reading. But it was made quite clear that this is a one issue campaign.

In no way does the NAC relate it to the class struggle, leaving it restricted to what one speaker called the "pro-choice movement".

Women of the world unite and choose!?

POLITICS EXCLUDED FROM WOMEN'S RALLY

An open letter from the Workers Socialist League Women's Commission to Mandy Snell, Secretary of the Planning Committee for the Rally 'One Year After the Sex Discrimination Act and Equal Pay Act' to be held at Alexandra Palace, on February 27th.

WSL members (from ASTMS, NALGO and NUT) attended and contributed to the first three meetings of the Planning Committee for the Rally to be held in February.

We did so on the basis that we were in agreement with the concept of the Rally and that therefore we would involve ourselves in its planning and organisation.

Early on, however, a factional struggle in the Working Women's Charter resulted in a major modification to the concept of the Rally.

From being a Rally for women workers who see the need to develop a strategy and programme for fighting the trade union bureaucracy and the economic policies of the Labour government, the Rally was transformed into a mass event on a much lower level - a mass "consciousness-raising" session which will put forward no programme in order that it offends no one.

In particular, the majority of the Working Women's Charter Secretariat (led by IMG members) did not wish to offend the Communist Party and the women it can mobilise; nor did it wish to come into conflict with the assortment of women MPs, trade union officials and Labour Party bureaucrats who support the struggle for women's rights - so long as it does not threaten their own positions (which by their very nature depend on them supporting the anti-working class policies of the Labour government in collaboration with the TUC).

Thus it was decided to leave politics out of the Rally.

The politics of the WSL brings us into conflict with organisations which retreat from offending those who attack any section of the working class.

Thus we were faced with the question "How to fight for our politics in the context of the Rally?"

After the Planning Committee meeting at which a motion was passed prohibiting taking a position on the social contract or on the role of the present leadership of the working class, it was clear that "unity" adapted to the lowest possible level of political consciousness had won the day.

The leaflet advertising the Rally states:

"The Rally will draw together the experiences of all those fighting for women's rights. By drawing the lessons of the last year we can carry the struggle forward and begin to counter the mounting attacks."

How? Pooling experiences is useful only insofar as it helps in developing a programme on which

to carry the struggle forward. In the WSL's "Perspectives for Work Among Women" we put it this way:

"As the crisis of capitalism worsens, the crisis of leadership of the working class is heightened. It extends down to the convenors' witch hunts of militants and onto the shop floor where stewards are sucked into class collaborationist participation schemes to lend credibility to the employers' efforts to impose wage cutting, speed-up and redundancy. The only way these attacks can be fought and the emergent struggles of women broadened and given political direction is if these bankrupt leaders are exposed and a new leadership basing itself on principle and programme is built."

"In the current period any struggle for democratic demands will bring workers into conflict with the bourgeois state, which must now take away democratic rights as it attempts to solve the crisis of the working class. Thus the need is posed for a programme which develops workers' consciousness beyond the limitations set by the bourgeois state."

We argued for these positions on the Planning Committee up to the point where the decisions had all been taken.

We are withdrawing from the Planning Committee now because, in our view, the Rally as it is going forward will intentionally abstain from giving women workers the leadership they now require.

We are requesting instead permission to have a stall at the Rally through which we can make known our programme for women workers and for the working class as a whole:

*For the right to a job, to full nursery provision; for free abortion and contraception on demand.

*For a programme initiated by the trade unions to unionise all women workers, including all part timers and those unemployed.

*For equal pay and equal opportunity, under the control of the workers themselves.

*No more wage control. For immediate catching-up increases and then for wages to increase with every rise in the cost of living as determined by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

*No redundancies. For all the work to be shared out equally at no loss of pay - part-time workers included.

*No cuts to the public services. United strike action by all public sector unions against these cuts.

*To achieve these demands - strike, occupy, open the books!

Trial Exposes Frame-up

Of the numerous charges of murder and arson brought against the besieged of Balcombe St. certain key offences to which the defendants have pleaded guilty are missing from the indictment.

This is not surprising for three Irishmen and one young English woman have already been framed and are doing life for those offences, the pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich.

After the siege of Balcombe St. was lifted one of those arrested, Butler, included the Guildford and Woolwich pub bombings amongst those for which he admitted responsibility.

At the time Surrey police who were carrying out the investigation, had quite a different and unconnected group of people in custody.

Whether they would have proceeded with their prosecution

"extracted" from the accused while in custody) if they had known of Butler's admission is now idle speculation, since the Bomb Squad kept the information from them.

Each of the Balcombe St. accused have given separate testimony from their different prisons, in front of lawyers and witnesses, admitting their own involvement and stating the innocence of those sentenced for the Guildford and Woolwich bombings.

Lawyers say their stories closely corroborate and that at many points they confirm information collected by Surrey police at the time of the investigation but not used in the trial and not made public.

Clearly this exposure of the way the state frames up groups of Irish people based on circumstantial and other evidence procured by dubious methods explains the deafening embarrassing silence with which the so called "free" press has greeted the admissions from



Women are in the forefront of the fight against the cuts



BLOODY SUNDAY - 5 YEARS LATER

JAMES SHORT looks for signs of progress in the struggle for Irish liberation since January 1972

Bloody Sunday, January 30 1972, marks the high point of British army repression in Northern Ireland.

By killing 13 unarmed Civil Rights demonstrators that day, the army thought they could bludgeon into submission the anti-imperialist movement within the Catholic ghettos.

In this they failed. For within two months the Unionist government at Stormont had been forced out of existence; and within six months, the Tory regime in Northern Ireland, under William Whitelaw, was negotiating with Provisional IRA leaders.

SHIFT

The reasons for this apparent shift from open repression to negotiation and conciliation can only be found in an analysis of the changing tactics of the British government since the introduction of the army into Ireland in August 1969.

The changing pattern of British imperialism's interests in Ireland during the fifties and sixties had meant that for Britain, Ireland was now a single economic unit.

The division of Ireland into two separate states — a division which had suited British interests at an earlier date — was now no longer necessary.

In fact it was fast becoming a barrier to lucrative exploitation of the island as a whole, and in this context British imperialism's task was to rationalise Northern Ireland to reform it and bring it into line with the South.

CIVIL RIGHTS

The mid-sixties saw therefore, a series of discussions between the Northern and Southern administrations on various economic matters and the growth of a Civil Rights movement in the North designed to secure equal rights for the Catholic population there.

This movement soon discovered that the Northern Ireland state was going to resist any attempt at reform — using the methods it



UDA thugs

the movement itself.

Northern Ireland was and is an artificial political unit created in 1921 on the most pragmatic basis possible.

Six counties in the North-East of the country were chosen as its geographical domain because this was the largest possible land mass compatible with permanent Unionist rule.

From the very outset, Northern Ireland was undemocratic, and anti-democratic, sectarian practices were built into the state to ensure that the nationalist population would never gain governmental power.

Gerrymandering, forced emigration — a whole array of sectarian devices were thus part and parcel of the Northern Ireland state from its inception.

By trying to secure reforms within the context of the Northern Ireland state itself, the Civil Rights movement was attempting the impossible. The Northern Ireland state was irreformable, and the problem was not that it was undemocratic but that it existed at all.

The early days of the Civil

of running clashes with the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and B Specials.

The winter of 1968-9 passed in this way — Derry, Armagh, Newry, Burntollet and Derry again all witnessed Loyalist attacks on Civil Rights marches. By the summer of 1969 the Catholics had had enough.

FIGHT IT OUT

Exasperated by the repeated refusals of the Stormont regime to concede any reforms, they decided to fight it out once and for all.

Thus occurred the famous Battle of the Bogside of August 1969, when the Catholic workers of Derry succeeded in inflicting a major defeat on the RUC and B Specials.

It was at this moment, when the Catholics had actually won a temporary, but important victory, that the British government, fearful lest all of Northern Ireland erupt, sent in the army.

This was done not to protect the Catholics, but to stabilise and defuse a highly volatile situation, where the old forces of law and

The army's task from the outset was a contradictory one. British imperialism's interests in Ireland demanded that certain reforms be made, and this could only be done by dismantling the more cumbersome features of the Northern Ireland state — disbanding the B Specials, disarming the RUC, etc.

On the other hand there existed the Catholic population, who had shown their capacity to fight the state, and who were now clamouring for the immediate implementation of long overdue reforms.

The army's first move was to keep this militancy in check, to ensure that whatever reforms were made, were made in accordance with British policy, and not in accordance with Catholic demands.

This antagonism soon came to a head. In July 1970, soon after the Tory government came back to office in Britain, the army proclaimed a curfew over the Falls Rd area of Belfast.

During the curfew the army killed four civilians; and in anticipation of further army attacks the Catholic ghettos began to arm themselves.

It was in this context that the Provisional IRA grew in strength and established themselves as an independent force.

The Provisional campaign got under way in earnest in 1971. The first soldier to be killed in Northern Ireland was shot dead in February of that year — a full 18 months after the army had first been brought in.

INTERNMENT

Between February and August, eight more soldiers were killed, a tiny fraction of the numbers to die in later months of that year.

On August 9th 1971, internment was introduced, a measure which marked a new offensive against the Catholic ghettos. This offensive was to bear fruit in 1972,

in the Bloody Sunday murders.

If the Provisional policy in this period can be summarised in the two words — Smash Stormont, then British policy can be summarised as neatly — Smash the Provos.

This policy of undisguised military repression failed. In the South, workers and students answered the Derry killings by burning down the British Embassy in Dublin. A week later, 60,000 people marched in Newry in defiance of a government ban on demonstrations.

PROROGUED

This spontaneous outburst of militancy brought home to the Tory government that their vital interests, North and South, were in serious jeopardy. Faced with this unpleasant prospect they changed tack and conceded certain Provisional IRA demands.

By the end of March, Stormont was prorogued; officially for one year only, yet everyone knew it was gone forever.

By the beginning of July a series of negotiations between the Provisionals and Whitelaw had taken place, and a ceasefire had been arranged. On the face of it, mid-1972 was the highpoint of the Provisional campaign.

Yet the rejoicing was to prove premature. The army, who had opposed the ceasefire from the beginning seized the first opportunity they could to break it.

Within nine days hostilities had been resumed because of an incident in Lenadoon Estate in Belfast.

The negotiations with the Provisionals were terminated, and by the end of the month Whitelaw acceded to Loyalist demands and instructed the army to invade the "no-go" areas of Derry and Belfast.

July 1972 also saw the escalation of the campaign of sectarian



assassinations by Loyalist murder squads. It was now clear that the army and the Loyalists had hammered out a new anti-Catholic alliance, and that between them they were determined to crush the Catholic resistance once and for all.

The summer of 1972 marks a clear turning point in the Irish struggle.

Faced with the breakdown of the ceasefire and intensified army belligerence, the Provos retreated into the ghettos and fought back. Yet this retreat signified, as no other event had done, the bankruptcy of the entire Provisional strategy.

CONFUSION

In the face of the army's offensive, the Provisionals could only respond *militarily* when a clear *political* response on *class* lines was required. Such a response only led to confusion within the Catholic working class.

The crisis of proletarian leadership is not of course a crisis of a single moment, and failure to capitalise on the gains of 1972 would not in itself be sufficient testimony to the bankruptcy of the Provos.

But the sudden changes of July 1972 were themselves a direct result of the Provisionals' failure to advance a programme capable of uniting the working class on a clear anti-imperialist basis.

After Bloody Sunday, the Southern Irish workers demonstrated their clear support for the liberation struggle in the North. Yet the Provos let that support fritter away to such an extent that by Easter the *Southern* administration had established a special criminal court to try political cases, a court which was to send hundreds of Provos to Southern jails.

DEMAGOGUES

And in the North, Provisional failure even to try and win Protestant workers to its side on a common working class anti-imperialist basis left those workers in the hands of reactionary demagogues like Craig and Paisley.

The result — the creation of the anti-Catholic paramilitary outfit, the UDA, and the campaign of sectarian assassinations — was almost inevitable.

Now, five years later, the war in Ireland is still continuing, but the prospects of a clear cut anti-imperialist victory are more remote now than they were then.

IRA prisoners are now denied political status.

The focus of IRA activity has shifted from town to country, and though the army are on a hiding to nothing in border areas, the overall situation is one of stalemate and stagnation.

This degeneration of the struggle, accompanied by a growing isolation of the Provisionals, is irrefutable proof that petty-bourgeois nationalism is *incapable* of leading the anti-imperialist movement to victory.

The events of the past seven years furnish striking confirmation of Trotsky's thesis that only the working class can bring the struggle for national liberation to a successful conclusion.

Indispensable to that struggle is a revolutionary party which bases itself on a clear revolutionary programme and which forms part of an international revolutionary movement.

PARTY

The construction of such a party is the most pressing task facing the Irish working class now. It is the duty of socialists who take their commitment to proletarian internationalism seriously to assist in this task.

In Britain, revolutionary socialists have a particular duty in this respect, one which is equally important as our work for the immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

Failure to address ourselves seriously to *both* these tasks will mean the continued fragmentation of struggles North and South, and as a result the continued domination of Ireland by British imperialism. That domination has given Irish workers their fill of Bloody Sundays; we must now ensure they do not suffer another repetition.

Beethoven: A Child of the French Revolution

By Louis Wells

An oration by the Austrian poet Franz Grillparzer was delivered before the coffin:

"The last master of tuneful song, the organ of soulful concord, the heir and amplifier of Handel and Bach's, of Haydn and Mozart's immortal fame is now no more, and we stand weeping over the riven strings of the harp that is hushed . . . You have not lost him. you have won him. No living man enters the halls of the immortals. Not until the body has perished, do their portals uncloset. He whom you mourn stands from now onward among the great of all ages, inviolate forever".

The occasion was the funeral of Ludwig van Beethoven, who died one hundred and fifty years ago next month.

Grillparzer was in some respects wrong. Beethoven did in fact enter "the halls of the immortals" during his lifetime. He was the first composer to win from his own age the nearly universal judgement that he transcended it.

CURIOSITY

A sense of optimistic curiosity about the developments which led to "perfection", a desire to master the past as part of the totality of nature — these factors led 19th century European bourgeois society to resurrect the music of earlier "great" composers, as they did to historical investigation in every sphere.

Beethoven was the special case, the first great composer to be mummified in music's museum without first having to be exhumed.

He has remained there ever since, occupying an unshakable position in bourgeois concert life, and more recently in the culture of the workers' states of Eastern Europe.

In its strong individuality, its assertiveness, its aura of mastering the insurmountable obstacle, Beethoven's music appealed — and still appeals — to the cultural values of capitalism's most progressive phase.

PRODIGY

It has been interpreted in other ways as well: as evidence for the superiority of the German "master race", or alternatively as a foundation stone for the musical application of the principle of socialist realism.

If Beethoven was immortal, he was not, as Grillparzer believed, inviolate!

Beethoven was a child of the French Revolution. He grew up in an atmosphere in which the possibility for men to control their destinies seemed a reality as never before, yet where social change and political flux posed the greatest practical difficulties for the artist's survival.

Even his earliest childhood suffered effects of the musician's changing circumstances. In the late 18th century child prodigies were everywhere.

The thirst for novelty of bourgeois concert audiences in major cities such as London, Paris and Vienna led eager parents to drive their children to premature accomplishment.

Beethoven's father, a bibulous tenor employed by the Electoral Court at Bonn, had ambitions of this sort for Ludwig, and in 1778 presented him playing the piano in concert as "his little son of six years" (he was in fact seven and a half).

The rigours of enforced precociousness may have contributed to the composer's neurotic personality, but they produced early mastery of some of the techniques of musical craft, particularly improvisation and harmony, and an iron determination in the face of difficulty.

In 1792, at the age of 22, Beethoven travelled to the musical capital of Vienna, where he was to spend the rest of his life.

On the way he met the French revolution for the first time: his expense book for the trip records



Napoleon

a: "tip [to the coachman] because the fellow drove us at the risk of a cudgelling right through the Hessian army going like the devil".

His stipend from the Bonn court soon dried up, when the Elector retreated before the advancing French army, and Beethoven was faced with the problem of earning a living.

Much has been made, and rightly so, of the fact that Beethoven lived and worked at a time when the system of courtly and aristocratic patronage was yielding to the capitalist "free" market.

But the composer's own attitude towards the aristocracy was ambivalent.

He had been raised to be a court servant, as his father and grandfather had been before him, only to see what must have seemed an immutable institution crumble.

His great talent won him both patrons and friends among the aristocracy, such as the Archduke Rudolph, Princes Lichnowsky, Lobkowitz and Galitzin, and Count von Waldstein.

He even cultivated a confusion between the Flemish "van" of his surname and the German "von", to give the impression of noble lineage.

Yet he held the aristocracy in contempt, particularly when the elements of it which were supporting him failed to pay up, or when faced with the suggestion of his own inferior rank.

Conscious of his own immense abilities, he conceived of a sort of "aristocracy of merit" to which he, Beethoven, belonged.

This consciousness, the struggle for self-consciousness, the drive consciously to control the processes of creation (to see this one has only to examine the many sketchbooks in which Beethoven's musical ideas were painfully formed) these are unmistakable hallmarks of Beethoven's artistic character as well as of the age of bourgeois revolution to which he belonged.

RHYTHMIC ENERGY

Beethoven's earliest published works show a care in the working out of ideas otherwise found only in the music of such great predecessors as Haydn and Mozart.

They also exude a drive and rhythmic energy that mark them off from the products of even his ablest contemporaries.

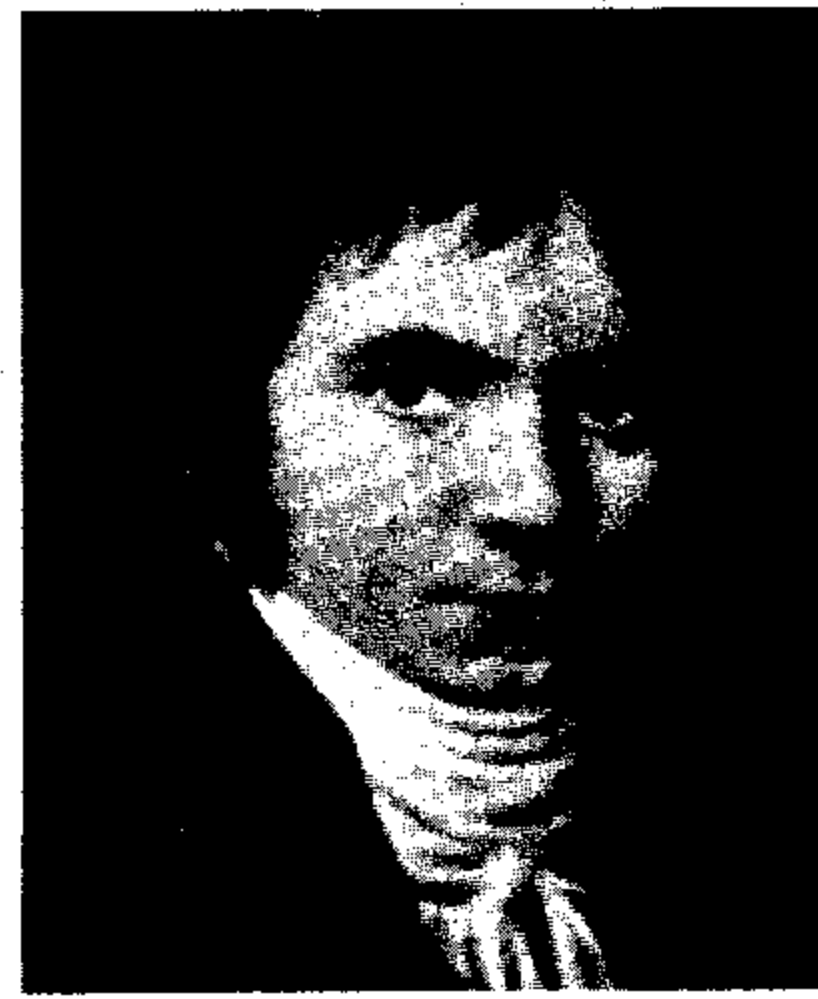
The trios dedicated to Haydn (1793-4), the first set of piano sonatas (1794-5), the early concertos (1795, 1798), which he used as vehicles for his own virtuosity as a pianist — all are

firmly rooted in the style of his musical mentors, yet by no means tentative, and in some respects, individual, even eccentric.

Under the surface lies another characteristic, which is yet more central to Beethoven's genius: the forging of subtly related musical ideas, of ideas that take account of each other, that can contribute to organic, dialectical processes.

In a superficial way this trait manifests itself even in the sets of variations on opera tunes of the day — gifted hackwork with which Beethoven tried to eke out a living from the amateur market.

Unlike the countless "bead-strings" of other composers, his variations are not merely a succession of different ways of ornament-



Beethoven

ting a popular tune.

Each variation is related by development or conscious contrast to what preceded it, and the result is a logical and coherent, if artistically modest whole.

Beethoven was probably in sympathy with radical circles in Vienna and, like them, at first saw the French Revolution as containing the possibility of liberation from the remnants of feudal oppression.

After years of threatened war, the continued erosion of financial support from the aristocracy and two invasions of Vienna, his political attitudes, never particularly clear or consistent, underwent a change.

Despite his deep-rooted commitment to individual freedom, he probably welcomed the reactionary Congress of Vienna in 1814, for which his opera *Fidelio* was the crowning musical event.

Most of Europe saw in the figure of Bonaparte the epitome of the French Revolution. For Beethoven Napoleon was that, but something else besides.

The composer clearly identified with the general, saw in him the same characteristics of genius: invincible determination and altruism that he imagined himself.

From as early as 1798 he conceived the idea of writing a symphony on Napoleon — not a pictorial description, but an attempt to give musical expression to states of the human spirit.

The result was his Third Symphony, completed late in 1804 and originally entitled "Buonaparte".

It marks a point of arrival in Beethoven's artistic development and a point of departure for modern European music.

To the energy, the coherence, the wilfulness of his early work are added, as never before, the impression of struggle with an idea and an overwhelming sense that the music's form comes not from an received notion of construction but from the dictates of the material itself.

MAMMOTH

Its four movements contain a range of expression, a combination of humour and pathos, a capacity for irony and brusque change of mood which were until then virtually without a parallel in symphonic form.

In the mammoth opening allegro a world of sharpest contrasts unfolds, but also one of stress and complexity; for Beethoven expands those parts of the movement traditionally used for the elaboration rather than the presentation of ideas.

One can see in the slow movement a sublimation of the operatic funeral music, such as Gosses' march on the death of Mirabeau heard in the streets of Paris in the early days of the Revolution; and the scherzo, a kind of military exuberance.

CHALLENGE

The Promethean last movement is a kind of variations on a theme exploded from within was Beethoven's first (but by no means his last) serious challenge to the traditional form of the symphonic finale.

That the symphony as we know it today is called the "Eroica" and not the "Buonaparte" owes to the fall of a hero, though not of the heroic ideal, in Beethoven's eyes.

Already troubled by the Concordat which Napoleon signed with the Pope in 1801, Beethoven reacted violently to Napoleon's self-proclamation as emperor in May 1804 and tore up the title page of the symphony:

"Is he then, too, nothing more than an ordinary human being? Now he, too, will trample on all the rights of man and indulge only in ambition. He will exalt himself above all others, become a tyrant!"

But Beethoven's illusions Napoleon, perhaps encouraged by the hope of favours, persisted.

He once more changed the title of the Third Symphony before finally dropping it, spoke one of his pupils about a mysterious trip to Paris which never materialised, and as late as 1805 used the offer of a court post from Napoleon's brother Jerome, King of Westphalia, to blackmail the remaining Viennese aristocracy into subsidising him.

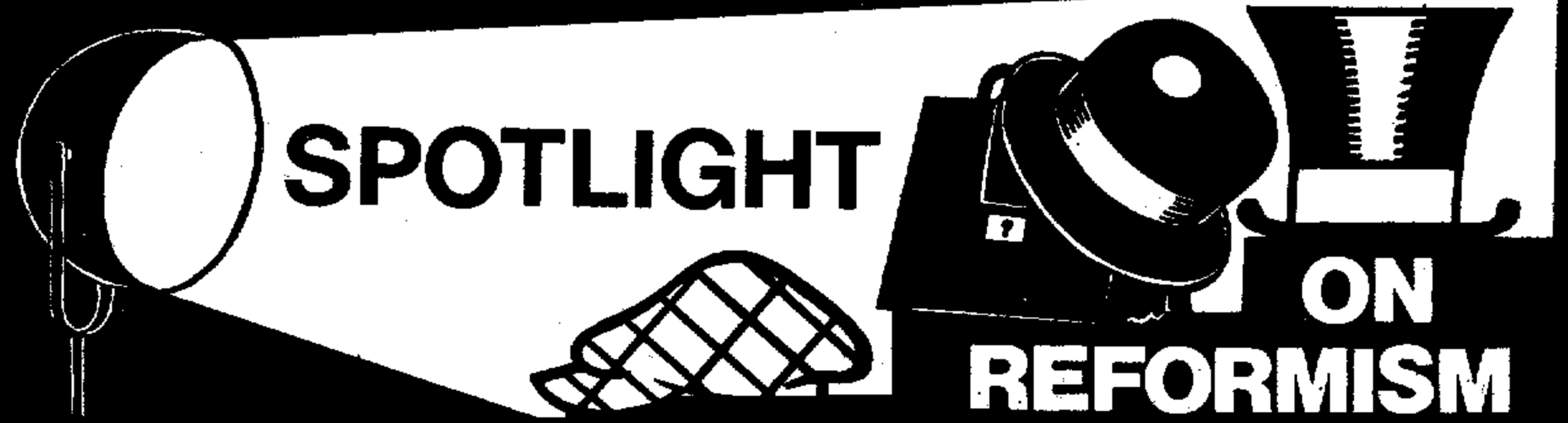
But Napoleon, however important a stimulus, is only incidental to the real meaning of the "Eroica". Its heroism is universal, not specific; of an age, not of a person.

And if it also embodies the struggles of an artist, those struggles are themselves inconceivable except in the context of the revolutionary battle against feudalism and of the fight for mastery over nature.

Beethoven's specific optimism was belied by the further development of capitalism.

But the most fundamental qualities of his music, those progress and struggle, keep it alive and in our age are part of the rightful inheritance of the proletariat.

"But the proletariat is held in check by just these groups who are their directing upper circles, in other words, by the Fabian politicians and their choral accompaniments. These bombastic authorities, pedants, arrogant and ranting poltroons, systematically poison the Labour Movement, befog the consciousness of the proletariat and paralyse its will. Only thanks to them do Toryism, Liberalism, the Church, the monarchy, the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie continue to retain their hold and even feel they are firmly in the saddle. The Fabians, the ILPers, the conservative bureaucrats of the trade unions represent at the moment the most counter-revolutionary force of Great Britain, and perhaps of all the world's development." Leon Trotsky, *Where Is Britain Going?*



MACDONALD RESURRECTED

By John Lister



Williams

In an exuberant display of complete ignorance, falsification and Tory politics, Cabinet minister Shirley Williams last week launched a broadside on behalf of the organised right wing within the Labour Party against "Trotskyist" "infiltrators".

Williams, who, as Education Secretary is eagerly supervising the frontal onslaught on teaching jobs and educational standards unleashed by Healey's budgets, dragged up motheaten and hoary arguments long ago discredited in the eyes of militants to back up her view that "Trotskyists" should be hounded out of the Labour Party, though the only group she refers to — the International Socialists (now terming themselves the Socialist Workers Party) — are not only *not* Trotskyists, but not even in the Labour Party!

NOTHING LEARNED

It is hardly surprising Williams is unable to grasp this, since her thinking on the nature of the Labour Party is more or less exactly the same as that of the Fabians whose arguments Trotsky himself so ably demolished over 50 years ago.

The Fabians (of which Society Williams was for four years General Secretary) have plainly learned nothing and forgotten nothing in half a century of drawing-room "socialism".

Williams claims for example, with the same blinkered vision as Ramsay MacDonald claimed in the 1920s, that "The Labour Party has a proud record in respect of widening the rights and liberties of individuals". She uses this as a prelude to a section on "free speech".

Yet even while she speaks, the Labour Government of which she is part, is attempting to deport former CIA agent Philip Agee whose "crime" was exposing the actions of those paid enemies of the working class: to do so they use the Immigration Act, broadened out by the Tories after it was introduced by the previous Wilson Government and which embodies a brutal attack on the rights and liberties of millions of people throughout the world: and at the same time the man deporting Agee — Home Secretary Merlyn Rees — has only recently returned from a tour of duty in Northern Ireland where he won his spurs as a supervisor of the British military repression of the Irish people.

CONTEMPT

Meanwhile in Britain those unlucky enough to be thought supporters of the IRA and others besides are subject to a complete violation of their rights under Labour's so-called "Prevention of Terrorism" Act.

These attacks, together with the £2.5 billion spending cuts, which threaten the hard-won rights of working class families, are clear examples of the Labour Govern-

rights of the oppressed — and concern to protect only the "rights" of the British capitalist class.

The rights and liberties Williams claims to protect are therefore very restricted and specialised. At the same time the other main plank of her platform is *not* socialism in any form, but "democracy" — meaning Parliamentary democracy.

In the closing paragraphs of her speech, Williams makes it clear that this stands *above* socialism in her eyes:

"Do you accept that, if the cause of socialism (as you define it) and the cause of democracy should come into conflict, you will stand by democracy?"

No Tory could ask for any more. Any consistent Tory will defend the 'liberty' of the 'individual', understanding that to mean the "liberty" of the employer to exploit the worker, alongside the "liberty" of the worker either to be exploited or to starve.

Every Tory would join with Williams in her (unvoiced but obvious) belief that this "freedom" under bourgeois democracy can legitimately be enforced by the employers through the use of the police and the army whenever necessary to repress the exploited.

And that any attempt by the worker to end this exploitation by confronting the police and the army is "a threat to freedom".

At the same time every Tory, whether consistent or not, can only rub his hands in glee at the total bondage of the Labour Party, the only mass party of the British working class to the Parliamentary system — a system glorified by Williams.

Trotsky pointed out in 1925 the absurd abuse of the word 'democracy' when used to refer to the capitalist state:

"... the 'democratic' state of British capital has a still more super-class character for him (MacDonald). True the present state, administered by landowners, bankers, shipowners and mining magnates is not "complete" democracy. Certain imperfections still

remain in it.

"Democracy" and, for example (!!) an industrial system not administered by the people are two incompatible conceptions.

In other words, you have democracy, only a little damaged; the wealth created by the people belongs not to the people but to an insignificant minority of the people.

Perhaps this is accidental? No, bourgeois democracy is a system of institutions and measures by the aid of which the needs and demands of the working masses, reaching ever higher, are neutralised, distorted, rendered innocuous, or are simply stultified.

He lies who says that in Britain, France, the United States and other democracies private ownership is maintained by the will of the people. *No one ever asked the people about it.*"

Indeed the only time the Labour Party ever approached asking the workers about a full programme of nationalisation — in the immediate post-war election — they swept to office with a massive majority.

"CONSENT"

But for Williams the right people to ask about nationalisation are not the propertyless majority — but the *minority* of capitalists and bankers.

If they cannot be persuaded to give up the spoils of their exploitation peacefully, says Williams, we must give up any idea of nationalisation:

"It is vitally important that people *consent* to these changes, that they accept the changes, whether they like them or not, are the result of the workings of a free democratic process through the agency of a sovereign government."

The actual readiness of the capitalist class to "consent" to such changes can be gauged from the downfall of the democratically-elected Allende government in Chile, smashed by a right wing coup.

Parliamentary norms were set aside indefinitely by the capitalists while the *real* business of smashing

the workers movement took precedence. While reformists everywhere urge workers to respect the "rules" of bourgeois democracy, they are most often broken by the employers.

BITTER STRUGGLES

The reformist view is even more absurd when we realise that we would not have Shirley Williams talking to us at all if workers had not dared long ago to wage lengthy, bitter and often *violent* struggles against the employers in order to secure the right to build trade unions and to secure the vote for Parliament.

Every reform, every concession won since the Industrial Revolution is the product not of capitalists' generosity but of harsh head-on conflict with the employer and his state machine.

the use of violence in defence of the working class.

Williams in her final series of questions to hound out "infiltrators" demands:

"Do you share our belief that our socialist objectives must be achieved by the method of democracy?"

This attempt to tie the hands of the workers in advance of any struggle is the surest guarantee that no concessions will be made to the working class. Force is not however an end in itself: like democracy it is a means to an end:

"It is absolutely unchallenged that the aim of socialism is to eliminate force, first of all in its most crude and bloody forms, and afterwards in other concealed forms. But we are discussing not the character and morals of the future Communist society, but the concrete ways and means of the struggle



"The MacDonalds inherited from Puritanism not its revolutionary strength, but its religious prejudices. From the Owenites they received not their communistic fervour but their Utopian hostility to the class struggle. From the past political history of Britain the Fabians borrowed only the mental dependence of the proletariat on the bourgeoisie. History turned its nether parts to these gentlemen; and the writings that they read there became their programme."

One can imagine the horror in the minds of the pioneers of the labour movement if they had foreseen 150 years later workers would be saddled with the likes of Williams as their representatives!

Williams preserves a tactful silence also on the complete failure of so-called "democratic" socialism ever to successfully defend democracy against determined attack by the employers.

In Italy in 1922; in Germany in 1933; in Spain in 1939; and in Chile in 1973, workers were crushed under the heel of fascist reaction after years of bankrupt Parliamentary manoeuvres by Social Democratic Parties.

In *not one* country has a social-democratic party even protected against fascist aggression, let alone achieved socialism!

This of course is directly because of the fact that such "socialists"

with capitalistic force. When fascists disorganise strikes, capture the editorial staff of a newspaper or a cashbox, injure or kill workers' representatives, while the police encircle the burglars with a ring of inviolability, only the most corrupted hypocrite could counsel the workers not to answer with blow for blow under the pretext that in the Communist society there will not be room for force."

Trotsky, *Where Is Britain Going?*
A little later Trotsky amplifies the point:

"In deciding the question of revolutionary force the parliamentary democratic principle is not in the least accepted as the highest example by us. *Not humanity for democracy, but democracy as one of the auxiliary instruments on the road of humanity's development.* Where bourgeois democracy is converted into an obstacle it must be pulled down."



PHOTO: Andrew Ward (Report)

democracy, Trotsky was *not* of course advocating bureaucratic dictatorship. Only the cramped intellect of the Fabian Shirley Williams could confuse Trotsky's argument here, and his life long struggle against Stalinism with support for the political regimes of the USSR, China and Eastern Europe.

"PROBLEMS"

And it takes the arrogance of a completely ignorant right winger to announce as if a new fact that these countries have four "unresolved problems" - each of which have been extensively dealt with seriously only in the writings of Trotsky and Trotskyists since the mid-1920s.

Trotsky's views on the kind of democracy which would *supercede* Parliamentary democracy in Britain are also to be found in *Where Is Britain Going?*

"And what would there be of evil - we take the liberty to ask - in a Soviet order, applied to British technique, to British industry, to the cultural habits of the British working class? . . . First, the royal authority would be abrogated . . . Secondly the House of Lords would be abolished . . . Thirdly the



Lenin

present Parliament, of whose shiftiness and impotence even the *Daily Herald* writes almost every day, would be liquidated. The land parasitism of the landlords would be annihilated for ever. The basic spheres of industry would pass into the hands of the working class, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the people in Britain.

The mighty apparatus of the Liberal and Conservative newspapers and publishing houses could be utilised for the education of the working class . . . The workers would select their own representatives not within the framework of those fraudulent electoral regions into which Britain is broken up today, but by workshops and factories.

The Soviets of Workers' Deputies would renew the governmental apparatus from bottom to top. The privileges of birth and wealth would disappear together with a counterfeit democracy based on deposits in banks. A true labour democracy would follow, which would focus the economic with the political administration of the country."

Trotskyists therefore aim *not* at bureaucratic dictatorship - but at workers' democracy.

And the Labour Party, as the mass party of the working class, is the natural place to argue for such policies.

RIGHT INFILTRATORS

Only the extreme right wing will oppose their right to do so - fearful lest principled forces rally to the cause of removing the Healey-Callaghan leadership and taking up the struggle for socialism.

The splitters, the wreckers, the gangs of mansion and country farm infiltrators are on the *right* wing of the Party not the left. The Labour Party was not built by them or for them. They are a parasitic growth upon it.

It is *they* who should be drummed out of the movement.

Leon Trotsky
WHERE IS BRITAIN GOING?

in
WRITINGS ON BRITAIN
(New Park Publications)
Vol. Two, Pages 1-107

Available from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, NW5

STALIN'S LAST YEARS

PAUL STEIN reviews 'The Communist Movement: from Comintern to Cominform' by Fernando Claudin. English edition, translated by Brian Pearce and Francis MacDonagh, Penguin, 1975, £4.75.



Hungarian uprising, 1956

This is an important book - detailed, frequently accurate, bitter and iconoclastic, uneasily organising revolutionary facts by means of reformist theories.

The author was for nearly twenty years (1947 to 1965) on the Political Bureau of the Spanish Communist Party.

Fernando Claudin was expelled as part of an opposition tendency early in 1965; his opposition to Stalinism began, however, much earlier - with the events of 1956, when Krushchev's 'Secret Speech' and the uprisings against Stalinist rule in Poland and Hungary opened up the most massive divisions within the official movement throughout the world.

Claudin's book is of importance because it deals with some of the main events which give our own period its basic political shape, and because it attempts an all-sided treatment of them.

The first section of the book centres on Stalin's dissolution of the Communist International (in June 1943) as a 'peace-offering' to his allies in the Second World War.

TWISTS AND TURNS

Claudin tries to show how this was the inevitable outcome of the Communist International having been prostituted to the twists and turns of Stalin's foreign policy for years before this.

The second part of his book goes on - in a more narrative form - to deal with the post war settlement between Stalin and the 'allied' imperialist powers, the Cold War and the formation of the Cominform, the break with Tito, and the victory of the Chinese Revolution, up to the eve of the new situation opened up by the death of Stalin in 1953.

What mars Claudin's book is the basic standpoint from which he approaches the history of the Comintern.

Communist movement he has moved - in certain respects - decisively to the right. He therefore attacks not only the Stalinist policies and methods in which he was politically educated, but at the same time Lenin and the leadership of the Comintern in the early years after the Bolshevik revolution.

NEW "CLASS"

Although he nowhere spells out how this came about, his book is written on the assumption that Stalin's Soviet Union became 'a totally new social system' controlled by a 'new ruling class' which:

"became the real beneficiary of the means of production, immune to any intervention or control by the mass of the workers, and gradually acquired the subjective characteristics of a dominant class". (Epilogue, p.599)

But at the same time when (in the first section of the book) he tries to discover the origins of the political crisis which - in his view - led to the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, he starts with a Chapter entitled 'The Crisis of Theory'.

Its main burden is that the perspectives of international revolutionary developments held by Lenin and the other leaders of the Comintern immediately after 1917 were over-schematic, foreseeing more-or-less similar and simultaneous national revolutions in a large number of countries, which the sections of the Comintern would have to lead.

SUBORDINATION

This conception, which in Claudin's view underestimated the resistance of European capitalism and its servants in the social democratic and trade union bureaucracies, opened the door to Stalin's subordination of the Comintern to the interests of Soviet foreign policy, under the banner of 'socialism in one country'.

clearly what has been established for years - that the 'theory' of 'socialism in one country' had nothing to do with the work of Marx or Lenin, and is a Stalinist invention pure and simple.

Although, therefore, Claudin has a theory of the social degeneration of the Soviet State, this theory informs the body of his book only to a very small extent, and he in fact treats the destruction of the Bolshevik Party and the Comintern as revolutionary organisations in purely political - even 'theoretical' - terms.

Worse, he shows this Stalinist political degeneration, not as the negation of Lenin's Bolshevism, but in some respects as an *extension* of it.

This is especially to be seen in Chapter 3 ('Monolithicity') where he attacks both democratic centralism as the organisational principle of the Comintern and the famous '21 conditions' in which the Comintern drew a clear line between itself and the old leaders of the Second International parties.

Claudin describes the '21 conditions' as: "a model of sectarianism and bureaucratic method in the history of the working class movement."

Page 107.

This is an opportunist and facile assessment by Claudin, which ignores the fact that the October Revolution itself was made only on the basis of the most vitriolic opposition to the treachery of the Second International in the 1914-18 war.

And this assessment accords with Claudin's own class collaboration, today, with the Spanish Social Democratic Party (PSOE), which is busy preparing, hand-in-glove with the Communist Party leadership, for a new Popular Front in Spain.

Claudin is a living example of the fact that the politics and method of Stalinism can only be fought successfully through a thorough defence of Leninism.

Do these faults, though, deprive

merit? Surprisingly, the answer - no.

In a curious fashion the deficiencies of his approach tend to cancel each other out, and make especially the second section of the book - dealing with the period after 1943 - well worth reading.

Claudin writes an essential political history and deals mainly with the relationship between Soviet foreign policy and the crisis of the official Communist movement.

And it is within the state apparatus - and especially in its relations with the main imperialist powers - that the Soviet bureaucracy has gone furthest towards restoring the methods of capitalism.

Therefore Claudin's approach essentially that of looking for the 'raison d'etat' of those who rule the Soviet Union - combined with a wide and sceptical study of the available materials, cast a good deal of light on events.

COVERT CAMPAIGN

This comes out, for example, when he deals with the bombshell expulsion of Tito's Yugoslav Communist Party from the Comintern (June 28th, 1948).

Claudin is able to show not just how this was the general result of the independent role and social basis of the Yugoslav Communists in the war, but of specific national pressures from the bureaucracy then developing in the Eastern Europe workers' states.

Stalin's covert campaign against Tito within the Yugoslav Party and state, and then the sudden break followed by the slandering of Tito as a 'Trotskyist', 'fascist' and agent of the Western intelligence services were all closely connected with attempts by other sections of the Eastern European bureaucracies to loosen their direct political and economic domination by the Soviet Union.

For instance, in the early part of 1948 the negotiations (under way since 1944) between Tito and Dimitrov (then leader of the Bulgarian CP) to combine the two countries into a Balkan Federation had reached an advanced stage, and had gained the behind the scenes support of Gomulka and the leadership of the Polish CP.

In January, 1948 Dimitrov publicly spoke of the possibility of a confederation of all the Peoples Democracies, plus Greece. He was promptly brought to heel by Stalin.

He aimed to create a 'buffer zone' of states in Eastern Europe each individually tied to the Stalinist apparatus in the Soviet Union, with autarchic economic plans and with any political 'collaboration' orchestrated from the Kremlin.

CIVIL WAR

Equally important, Dimitrov's proposal (quoted by Claudin on p. 490) by including Greece crucially at the roots of Stalin's post-war agreement with imperialism.

Greece was to be left capitalist. Stalin thus refused to give any military help at all to the Greek Communists who had been comparably strong with the Yugoslavs during the war and who, in 1948, were still fighting a civil war in the north against the American-backed government.

Tito's attempts to give some aid to the Greeks accelerated the break.

Claudin chronicles the political events accurately and perceptively. And in general his book is well worth reading as a political narrative of Stalinism in the years after the war in Eastern Europe.

PUNGENT CRITICISM

He writes with a correct and pungent scepticism towards the public motives and statements of Stalinist politicians. This is especially so, for example, of the 1948-52 purges in Eastern Europe, where Claudin seems to be trying to correct - in retrospect - his support for them at the time.

Claudin does not understand the social, material roots of the bureaucracy. Consequently he cannot treat of its history scientifically.

But he gives an account which is free of anti-communist prejudice and well argued and researched on the major phases it deals with.

The main obstacle to reading his best chapters is the text - the Penguin edition is an excellent

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

HOLBROOK STRIKE ENDS

On Thursday 27th January the fifteen-week strike of four cleaners at the Holbrook Annexe of the North East London Polytechnic came to an end.

The dispute began over the question of safety — namely the use of asbestos in the Holbrook buildings.

The demands of the strikers have been partially met through the promise of the Joint Education Committee to have all asbestos removed from the buildings and to pay three weeks' back pay (seven were demanded) for the loss of earnings sustained during the strike.

Further, the cleaners will receive four weeks' pay during the period while industrial cleaners remove the asbestos.

There can be no doubt that under extremely difficult conditions the result of the strike marks a victory for the cleaners.

Equally certain is the fact that the strike could have achieved all its demands much earlier had it not been for the treachery of GMWU officials who are supposed to represent the cleaners.

A special mention must be given to the energetic scabbing of regional officer, Bill McCall.

In the course of the fight this bureaucrat rewarded the four women for their union dues contribution to his salary by telling them that for all he cared they 'could go to hell'.

He followed up by encouraging other workers to cross the picket line on the grounds that the strike was 'unofficial'.

In fact at an earlier stage *he* had declared it *official* and has not to this day informed the strikers when the 'change of heart' took place.

It is a tribute to the determination of the four cleaners that they took their struggle through to a conclusion against such treacherous 'leadership'.

Nalgo NEC evades action

The role of the trade union leaders in using bureaucratic manoeuvres to prevent any action developing against the cuts is illustrated clearly by recent developments at Middlesex Polytechnic.

Last November the NALGO branch at Middlesex Polytechnic voted at their AGM by 200 to 7 in favour of a series of one day strikes against the non-replacement of staff vacancies.

However this overwhelming vote was not big enough for the NEC of NALGO to declare the strikes official. Instead they demanded a ballot of the membership.

This took two months to

organise, taking place just after the Christmas vacation. Yet under these highly unfavourable conditions the result of the ballot was 194 against the strikes with 187 for, a majority of just 7!

Using this highly dubious result, hardly a true reflection of the feelings of the NALGO members, the NEC are refusing to declare the strikes official.

This has only saved the NEC for a short time however. A special EGM has been called to discuss the situation. If this meeting confirms the original strike decision as it inevitably will, the NEC will again be put on the spot.

Just how serious is it about backing branches fighting the cuts?



FORD SPEED-UP FIGHT

Attempts by Ford management at their Halewood plant to impose speed-up through the imposition of severe disciplinary measures have been met by a strike of 4,500 body plant workers.

The dispute which began on Thursday 20th January over the sacking of a welder is the biggest confrontation since the company's letter of November 15th last to all employees asserting 'malpractice' and laying down new disciplinary conditions.

The letter was followed immediately by a number of dismissals and suspensions (about 100) provoking a series of stoppages in the period before Christmas without any major challenge to the company's measures.

Stewards in the body plant claim that management are ignoring established procedures and using the foremen as instruments in indiscriminately disciplining the workforce.

But it is not just a question of discipline and disciplinary procedures: at the same time the company are attempting to increase productivity through the stopping of overtime (until production targets are met).

The hostility to these measures was clearly expressed at the mass meeting of body plant workers held on Monday following the outbreak of the dispute. The vote for strike action was overwhelmingly carried with an 80% majority.

Apart from calling for official backing, however, the resolution from the shop steward's committee only called for 'a satisfactory written guarantee' from the company — and the intervention of Moss Evans (TGWU national officer in the motor industry).

PEACE FORMULA

Evans did in fact intervene — via regional organiser Dick Palmer — who organised a meeting between representatives of the stewards and management which produced a 'peace formula' to be put to a mass meeting on Sunday.

The deal however came unstuck when Senior Stewards asked for a further meeting to clarify certain points.

The Company refused, saying that this was their final offer.

A meeting of the 40 Body Plant stewards on Saturday therefore voted to continue with the strike. This must be maintained until all attempts to impose speed up have been dropped.



MASSEY STRIKE

Assembly workers at Massey Ferguson are continuing their stand against management attempts to impose 20% speed-up on two new tracks at the Coventry plant.

It is over five weeks since management took 136 assembly workers off the clock for alleged "slow working".

The rest of the 1,000 plus assembly force immediately came out in support.

While the machine shop voted against support this was by no means unanimous and where the case was argued by machine shop stewards support was won for the assembly men.

Workers on picket duty bitterly attacked the management targets.

"The production target of 48 tractors a day is just ridiculous. At the moment we do an average of 40.

We've tried to do 48. We've even worked in the safety areas. It's just not on without more labour."

Management is insisting that the men can return to work if they accept the 48 tractors target.

This attack is part of a generalised attempt to speed up production.

"They've taken people off the clock at Manchester and Kilmarnock, now they're doing it here".

Following an occupation of the plant — ended voluntarily by stewards, who led workers out of the plant after management had gained a court order, identity cards have been issued to those still working and extra guards stationed at each gate to prevent the entry of "unauthorised personnel".

Both management and workers are now dug in for a hard battle.

"If we lose this one they'll go right through the factory" pickets told *Socialist Press*.

NUT MOTIONS

The rising militancy of NUT associations is reflected in the motions submitted to conference.

Many associations have called for the rescinding of Rule 8, the disciplinary change sneaked into last year's conference which allows the Executive to suspend and expel members who really want to fight the cuts.

Many motions on salaries reject the Social Contract and any incomes policy and motion 174 also calls correctly for "inflation proofing by automatic rises to compensate for increases in the cost of living", (proposed by East London and Croydon).

Several motions express their opposition to the government expenditure cuts and call for the restoration of all social services and

full employment for all teachers.

Motion 75 from Haringey also instructs the Executive to ballot for strike action to achieve these demands.

The disgraceful situation of not allowing unemployed teachers to have full union rights is also taken up in a number of motions.

Motions in the section on racialism call for the exclusion of members of the National Front and the National Party from the Union.

Westminster and Greenwich propose that the Union affiliate to the Labour Party. This would be an important step in allowing union members to play their full part in fighting the anti-working class policies of the Labour government and for the removal of the right wing.

CLASH CONFERENCE

The need to strengthen and co-ordinate the NHS Joint Shop Stewards' movement in London will be the main theme of the Conference of the London Area Stewards in the NHS (C.L.A.S.H.) on Wednesday 23rd February.

This conference, for all London NHS shop stewards and lay officials has been organised by the South Camden Health District Joint Shop Stewards Committee and has already received support from other JSSC's, trade union branches and the London Health Service Advisory Committee of ASTMS.

CLASH will take place against the background of an ever increasing number of local actions led by JSSC's against the effects of NHS expenditure cuts.

The platform of speakers will be shop stewards, including Arthur Churchly of the Elizabeth Garrett

Anderson occupation who have played a leading role in the struggle against the cuts.

The conference will also be addressed by one of the three shop stewards at St. Bartholomew's Hospital who were suspended and then reinstated following their strike.

The week long strike (reported in SP 51) took place over attempts to cut overtime.

Reductions in overtime pay are adding to the enormous effects of 15% inflation at a time when union bureaucrats have imposed the 4½% pay limit on their members.

An official survey in 1975 showed that overtime accounted for 10% of the total pay of ancillary staff.

The CLASH conference organising committee has prepared a resolution that seeks to draw on the lessons of these local struggles and to point the way forward.

Key demands include: No sacking; work sharing on full pay; strike action and unconditional support for occupations of hospital buildings; and sliding scales of NHS expenditure and pay based on labour movement assessments of the effects of inflation.

A proposed constitution for an all-London Shop Stewards Committee with a full conference every three months, is also being circulated. Health Service JSSC's and trade union branches have been invited to submit alternative resolutions or amendments.

Further details of this important conference, which will be held from 2pm to 6pm on Wednesday 23rd February at Bonham-Carter House, 52, Gower St., London WC1, can be obtained from Terry Prosper, Secretary, South Camden JSSC, University College Hospital, Gower Street, London WC1.

EGA picket

EGA CLOSURE DELAYED AGAIN

Plans to close the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson women's hospital in London have been deferred for another two months.

At a meeting with staff at the hospital last Tuesday, the Chairman of Camden and Islington Area Health Authority admitted that the proposed replacement facilities at the Whittington hospital were inadequate for treating patients and that it would require at least eight weeks further work on the replacement wards to bring them up to standard.

Previously, the AHA had stated their intention of closing the EGA, now entering its third month of occupation, on February 15th and of removing essential equipment on January 28th.

In answer to this threat, the EGA shop stewards committee had called for a mass picket of the hospital on both dates and in spite of the postponement of the closure date, 150 pickets manned the entrances to the hospital on Friday in case the AHA broke its promise of not moving equipment at this stage.

And workers at the nearby University College Hospital threatened to walk out if any attempt was made to remove equipment from the EGA.

The main danger now lies in the confusion which the AHA is attempting to sow amongst the medical and nursing staff at the hospital and which has already been swallowed by some of the Trade Union officials involved in the dispute.

By admitting some "mistakes" in the way in which they were dealing with the EGA closure and inviting members of the EGA staff to become involved in planning the details of the move to the Whittington, the AHA have duped some people into forgetting the principle of keeping the EGA open on its present site.

This has been most clearly expressed by NALGO secretary, Vince Burns, who told the management that the unions were no

longer against the eventual resiting of the EGA at the Whittington, but that it was the details of the short term that were being disputed.

Needless to say, Burns' view of the union's position had not been discussed with any of the staff beforehand.

This again emphasises the need for regular meetings of union members at the EGA to control the way their officials are running the occupation.

McKINSEY, THE TOP US management consultants, planned the reorganisation of the NHS in 1974. For this they received a fee, believed to be fat.

They have just produced a further report on the NHS. They recommend that patients should pay fees to see doctors and have hospital treatment, and that the management structure of the NHS should be 'slimmed down' since it is 'inefficient'.

For this report they are also to get a fee which (due to inflation) is believed to be even fatter.

JACKSON DUCKS BEHIND THE LAW

As the dust settles on the week of non action by British trade unions against the regime in South Africa, the question to be asked of postal workers union leader Tom Jackson is this: Was the blacking of mail and telephone calls a gigantic fraud?

Evidence from letters and circulars sent by Jackson to branches of the Union of Post Office Workers suggest he never had the slightest intention of blacking anything except industrial action by his members.

They reveal that the leaders of the union knew in advance that legal action was almost certain and that they had already decided to bow before it.

And they have been followed by an instruction from Jackson to all his members - action in support of other trade unions is banned.

Wherever strikes erupted postal workers are immediately involved. Their support in not crossing picket lines is one of the first demonstrations of working class solidarity.

When this happened at Grunwick in November the union was threatened with an injunction. Immediately the union withdrew its action stating that this was to allow ACAS to intervene in the dispute.

The real reason is now clear. Jackson was not sure whether his members would accept what is clearly true - that any action by postal and telephone workers which disrupts mail and telephone calls is illegal.

It is banned by the Post Office Act of 1953 and the Telegraph Act of 1863.

In a letter to branches last week Jackson says that the union hired Counsel's Opinion on what the law meant.

He complains that he is still waiting for that opinion. (Throughout the letter his respect for the legal profession is demonstrated by the capital letters he gives to each mention of this "Opinion").

In the meantime he spells out his own Opinion in the form of an edict.

"It is clear that in their (Law Lords) opinion the right to take sympathetic action is illegal in accordance with the two Acts referred to earlier. Branches for the time being, must not become involved in matters of this kind for they too would be open at the moment to charges of a criminal character."

With the next sweep of the pen Jackson declares that no-one has challenged their own right to strike.

"Indeed there have been references made that this is quite legal." (The Acts of Parliament make no distinction about how post is disrupted. They simply make it a criminal offence).

Jackson promises a special report on the Counsel's Opinion at the annual conference. Presumably it will arrive on a tablet of stone.

The day before this circular, Jackson sent off to all branches a long nine page apology to branches explaining why they heard about the blacking first when they switched on their TV sets or opened their newspapers.

The decision to introduce the blacking was made on January 5th - nineteen days after they had been asked to do so by the Post, Telephone, Telegraph International.

Another six days went by before the circulars were sent out. The news broke in the newspapers on January 13th - two days later.

Jackson claims that this was due to leaks from branches and that this was why other branches did not know of the decision (presumably blaming postal workers for a staggered delivery).

What throws this claim into doubt is the fact that the National Front claims that one of its major

recruitment areas is within the Post Office.

Clearly any action to be taken against South Africa needed a major campaign within the union to fight the Front's poison wherever it appeared.

Instead Jackson handed to all racials and fascists a club with which to beat the union.

It is in this circular, sent out after the blacking had been cancelled, outlining action taken against black trade unionists in South Africa. Even this statement contains nationalist and racist material.

"Remember too that large British firms are investing heavily in South Africa because of the cheap labour available. Every job created by a British firm in South Africa could be one created in Britain to ease our unemployment problem."

He claims also that the union has been successful, even after calling off the blacking:

"We have been informed by the PTTI that our union has had world-wide publicity for its stand"

Jackson also states:

"The Executive Council have been accused of dabbling in international politics. This is not true! We were and are, involved in assisting workers everywhere to obtain democratic trade union rights. This is not politics."



Jackson

He makes it clear that union officials have lost "not one minutes time" from their "prime trade union jobs" through the blacking call.

That is not even one minute was spent in campaigning for support within his own union.

What their time was spent doing is clear. In the second circular Jackson states:

"Immediately after the Grunwick dispute in November last year it became clear to the union that our right to take sympathetic action was under challenge."

A little later it states this even more clearly.

"This extremist group which took action against the UPW in the Courts is very anti trade union. It was always possible that they would try to take action against us on the South Africa issue."

Had we pulled away from our international trade union obligations on the basis that this organisation might attack us then we would have constantly been prevented from taking any action on behalf of our members".

In the longer document Jackson says:

"It was at no time the intention of the Executive Council to take action which was illegal."

Taken together these statements stand as an indictment against Jackson and the Executive. Socialist Press readers should be forming their own Opinion - Is Jackson an idiot who fell into an elementary legal trap, or has he seized his chance to become the first union bureaucrat to enlist the aid of the law to ban strikes in his union?



SELL OUT DANGER IN STEEL

Last Friday officials of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions in Sheffield agreed to reopen talks with Edgar Allen Balfour management over the closure of their Capital Tool Works in Sheffield where over 400 have been given redundancy notices.

With the unions in a strong position following the half-day strike two weeks ago which stopped most of Sheffield engineering, and with the whole workforce of the Edgar Allen Balfour group still out on strike to defend these jobs, the Confed's decision to negotiate with management is a clear retreat.

SELL OUT

Previously the Confed had rightly insisted there could be no negotiations until the redundancy notices were withdrawn.

To negotiate now when not one concession has been made by management clearly is a preparation for a sell-out.

Right from the start the Communist Party have resisted extending the strike. They have issued no call for the occupation of the Capital Tool Works. Nor have they even mentioned nationalisation of the employer to defend the jobs.

The one IS member, Clive Hartley, Secretary of the Strike Committee, has not openly fought



the Stalinists; playing down the question of nationalisation and arguing solely for a one-day rather than the 4-hour stoppage and for an overtime ban.

With short time being worked in many Sheffield factories, the demand for an overtime ban is no more than a protest action.

In line with the moves towards a sell-out, the local press, which has scarcely reported the strike, is now starting a 'back to work' campaign. These developments clearly show that the policies of the CP present a grave threat to the strike.

The workers have rejected all attempts by the Confed to deal with management behind their backs and maintained the fight to defend all jobs.

Negotiations with management must be called off and an occupation of Capital Tool Works (due to

close this week) organised at once.

The demand must be for the defence of all jobs through work sharing on full pay and the nationalisation of the entire firm under workers' management.

The Confed nationally must be forced to call strike action and the District brought out in full supporting action.

LETTERS

We welcome letters from readers. Letters for publication should be kept as brief as possible and sent to:

Socialist Press, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

THORNETT'S STATEMENT FOR T&G BALLOT

The election addresses of the candidates in the election for TGWU General Secretary have now been issued by the union. We reprint below the address by Alan Thornett for whom we urge all TGWU readers to vote.

At the last Biennial Delegate Conference (our union's highest body) I moved two motions on wages. One rejected wage control, the other called for substantial wage increases plus cost of living clauses tied to a union compiled price index to protect against inflation. I argued that inflation is rooted not in wages but in the contradictions and dislocations of capitalism internationally, over which workers have no control.

Jack Jones and his supporters presented the opposite view — that wage control would beat inflation. Yet employers are demanding not only lower wages but *price increases*, resulting in a higher rate of inflation in Britain today than before wage controls were introduced.

Unions were built at great sacrifice to *improve not destroy* the wages and conditions of the working class. But now living standards are substantially reduced, not by employers or Tories, but by TUC leaders, working with the Labour government. Who do these leaders represent?

The Biennial Delegate Conference accepted the social contract subject to eight stringent conditions including *lower unemployment, massive public spending increases, and strict price controls*. None of these conditions was fulfilled, yet the General Executive Council used that vote as authority to cast the union's

1.8 million votes in favour of the five per cent pay limit. The majority of members, who in my judgement are *against* wage controls, were not consulted.

This is symptomatic of a general trend in our union — the increasing influence of *appointed* officials who often support the employers, while the hard-won power of *elected* shop stewards and members is eroded. Plant bargaining is replaced by corporation-wide agreements. Participation in management and the check-off are also eroding the independence of our union from the employers.

This trend must be reversed and power restored to the membership, with *all* full-time officials made subject to regular election and paid the average wage of their members. Fee-paying "QUANGO" committees in Union time must be ended and ballot procedures reorganised to prevent corruption.

The direction of the TGWU must change from the class compromise epitomised by Bro. Jones' "Year of the Beaver" speech, to defence of the interests of the working class.

I therefore oppose the social contract and all cuts in public spending. I call for the opening of the books of employers who declare redundancies or closure and support occupations demanding work sharing on full pay to maintain jobs. I am for the

nationalisation of any employer who refuses these demands and for the removal of Callaghan and Healey by left MPs who must form a government which will support these demands.

All racial discrimination must be actively opposed and the wages and conditions of women workers improved. Politically I support the policies of the Workers' Socialist League and stand for ending capitalism and establishing socialism.

I have 17 years' TGWU membership, 14 years a shop steward, seven years deputy convenor of a large car plant, four years Midlands Regional Committee and Oxford District Committee. I am chairman of the No. 5/293 Branch.

LEYLAND From Page 1.

— was the reflection of the feeling on the shop floor.

In the Cowley Body Plant a mass meeting of 5,000 production workers followed their almost unanimous vote to reject the deal with demands for the resignation of the leadership.

And in the Assembly Plant, extreme right wing convenor Reg Parsons moved acceptance of the proposals in opposition to the shop stewards recommendation of rejection on the basis of the penalty clauses.

The shop stewards motion was carried with a big abstention — but then workers moved beyond the position taken by the stewards.

A mass demand was voiced for a motion of "total rejection" as against the stewards' motion which left a loop hole for a possible revised document in the future.

Parsons ignored these calls, announced that the decision was final, switched off the amplifiers and attempted to end the meeting.

The result was uproar. The meeting refused to disperse, making it impossible to restart the plant.

Faced with this situation (and being in favour of "continuous

production") the right-wing were forced to concede to the mass demand for a second vote — a demand which was being increasingly supplemented with demands for the resignation of the leadership and for votes of no confidence.

The meeting was reopened and the motion for total rejection was voted almost unanimously and with great enthusiasm.

The force of the vote throughout Leyland Cars — only one factory, Llanelli has voted in favour — has discredited and exposed the Ad Hoc Committee.

But already dangerous moves are being made which could give them a second throw.

Shop stewards from the Rover plants — while rejecting the document — have advanced alternative proposals which embrace the main element of management policy.

They call for corporate bargaining ("democratically controlled") arguing that it provides the basis of "unity" of the working class; for a new grading structure to abolish unjust differentials; and for a substantial wage increase *after July* when the present pay policy comes to an end.

Apart from being completely in line with management policy this resolution accepts completely Stage Two of the Social Contract.

It is in line also with the recent statement of Peter Nicholas, Stalinist convenor of the Rover stewards who has called for "free collective bargaining *after July*, but no *breakaway* claims now".

This resolution sketches the likely terrain for battle in the forthcoming meeting of the combine committee. Like the fringe benefit document it must be fought and defeated.

*FOOTNOTE

800 BLMC workers on the Marina in the Cowley Body Plant voted *unanimously* on Monday to strike and not to meet again until Friday.

The strike is a manning strike in defence of "mutuality" on manning. The company declared last week that they would run the Marina lines without union agreement at new speeds with the company's manning.

HOTEL BATTLE

More than two weeks after the TGWU agreed to national blacking of Trust House Forte Hotels in support of hotels on strike for union-recognition in Sheffield and Oxford, the strike-bound members are still waiting for action.

The strike at the Randolph Hotel in Oxford is also crucial to an identical strike at the Linton Lodge Hotel there, although this is not owned by THF.

The action was delayed to

allow talks to take place, but after an initial approach from ACAS there has been dead silence from the union officials.

Workers at the hotels, some of them now in their third month of struggle are demanding a quick end to this delay.

Union officials — and the matter has now reached the supreme bureaucrat Jack Jones — must either show some quick results from talks or put the national blacking on immediately.

Only their prevarication now blocks a complete victory in all three hotels.

SPAIN from Page 1.

given a free hand to hold detainees indefinitely without charge following the murder in Madrid of three policemen, once more, it was claimed, by "GRAPO".

This has given the green light to a wave of arrests of hundreds of members of illegal trade unions and left wing political groups over the last few days.

The nature of "GRAPO" is a mystery. It is described as the military arm of the "Reconstituted Communist Party of Spain".

There is growing evidence, however, that the group may in fact be a bunch of ultra-right provocateurs. A Cabinet Minister apparently let slip to a journalist that he had evidence to prove that.

If that is true, "GRAPO"'s actions could be part of a plan directed to easing the way for some form of direct military takeover.

And it is the army — the physical power on which the regime rests — which has loomed over the events of the last two weeks.

the post-Franco regime, sections of the ruling class see the only avenue for the re-stabilisation of fascist rule in a takeover of power by the military.

Such a move would inevitably land the regime in a new Civil War. It would only be taken as a last resort.

But a measure of the desperation of the ruling class is the growth of rumours last week of an impending seizure of direct rule by the army.

Behind the soothing official denials lies the evident fact that many sections of the military hierarchy would like to take this step *now*.

The extraordinary public slanging match between senior military officers over the graves of the dead policemen is a clear proof of this. The working class movement has shown through its actions over many months that its strength poses an immediate and lethal threat to Spanish fascism.

But at the same time the events of the last ten days have placed the working class in the gravest danger.

The policies of the main workers' parties stand in stark



Spanish workers demonstrate

opposition to those needed to overcome this peril.

In conditions where the working class and its allies require a policy of complete independence, the CP and the Socialist Party tie it not only to class collaborationist "opposition" alliances such as the Platform of the Democratic Opposition but also to the fascist government itself.

In last week's major crisis in the struggle of the working class for democracy and socialism, the policies of the fascist state and of the Communist Party were virtually *identical*.

When the working class needs to wage an integrated fight on economic and political issues, the CP and Socialist Party leaders insist on their separation.

They totally oppose the policies (such as the sliding scale of wages and hours or nationalisation) which are essential to resist the economic attacks of Spanish capitalism.

They know that, given the economic crisis, the capitalist class can afford to grant only *token* steps towards free trade unions and other democratic rights.

It cannot afford to allow trade union rights to be used to gain higher wages or prevent redundancies.

The CP, therefore, has been ready to compromise on even the

most elementary democratic demands such as 'amnesty', freedom for non-fascist political parties and trade unions, and the setting up of a constituent assembly.

The rulers have no intention of granting these rights in any real sense and the CP has based its whole policy not on what the working class needs but on what the ruling class is willing to concede.

In the hands of the Stalinist and reformist leaders these democratic demands have thus become, in Trotsky's words, "a democratic noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie's agents".

It is plain from the present crisis that there is no peaceful way to achieve any of these demands in Spain today.

The fight for democracy must, therefore, be taken up in the context of a struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the fascist government, in which Carrillo and co. have such complete confidence, along with all its repressive apparatus.

At the top of the list of policies for the workers' movement must be placed the building of *armed self-defence* — against the fascist gangs and against the police and army, which themselves supply the bulk of person-

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE
Public Meeting
AYLESBURY
THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SOCIAL CONTRACT
Wednesday 9th February at 7.30
The Plough and Harrow
Stoke Rd, Aylesbury.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE
Public Meeting
WINSFORD
"AGAINST WAGE CONTROL"
Sunday 13th February at 7.30
Wheatshaf Hotel

SOCIALIST PRESS ★

PAPER OF THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

BRITAIN	EUROPE
6 issues £1	6 issues £1.15
12 issues £2	12 issues £2.30
24 issues £4	24 issues £4.60

I would like to take out a subscription to *Socialist Press*. I would like issues, I enclose £

NAME

ADDRESS

FUND

WITH ONE FINAL DAY TO go to the end of the month, our fund total stood at £502.41 as we went to press.

With many of the basic costs of producing *Socialist Press* having just risen by 20% this month, it is most important than ever that a major effort is made to raise the full £600 Monthly Fund target.

All donations are welcome from readers and supporters and should be sent to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

nel of the terror gangs. Self-defence is essential; but it must be combined with an offensive political strategy in which the overwhelming strength and courage of the working class are mobilised in an indefinite general strike to bring down the fascist government and establish a workers' government.

The British labour movement can give material aid to this struggle — through a boycott of all trade, especially that in arms for the fascist state, between Spain and Britain.

To implement this policy requires a struggle against the reformist leadership in Britain parallel to that against Stalinism and reformism in Spain.

The Labour government's diplomacy every day helps to give credibility to the supposedly "reformist" intentions of the Spanish police state.

Jack Jones and Len Murray on a recent visit to Spain echoed the line of the Spanish "opposition" leaders that "The Civil War is over".

Last week's events demonstrated that the Civil War threatens to begin again. Now, as in the 1930's, it is only the policies of the Stalinists and reformists, like Carrillo and Jones, which prevent the working class from being victorious.