



Steel unions sign away jobs

There are no gains whatever for steel workers in the latest contemptible sell-out package signed last week by leaders of the 65,000 strong Iron and Steel Trades Confederation.

Wage increases are held between 6-10%—meaning that some sections of workers won't even get a 10% rise, after two years of wage-slashing pay policy.

Massive price

But in return for this paltry settlement the British Steel Corporation has extracted a massive price.

*THOUSANDS of jobs will be axed through the closure of Beswick and so-called "high cost" plants—with full cooperation from union bureaucrats.

*WORK-MEASURED productivity schemes will be introduced with union cooperation. Their aim is to slash manning levels in those plants left intact.

*"INTERNATIONAL" manning levels will be enforced as new plants are opened up. This means attempting to lower steelworkers conditions to the worst levels in the world.

*UNION OFFICIALS will assist management to victimise and discipline unofficial strikes, poor timekeeping and absenteeism.

This vicious bosses' charter runs parallel to the no-strike clauses being forced onto union members in the shipbuilding industry, and embodied in British Leyland's fake "security of earnings" deal.

And as in these other industries, the Lib-Lab government is pressing the employers forward into an all-out onslaught on jobs and working conditions in its effort to restore the profitability of British capitalism.

Key to these plans is the reactionary role of the union leaders—who have in each case been sucked into the apparatus of management, and now act only to police their own members on the shop floor.

Independence

To fight these attacks workers must begin by insisting on the independence of the trade union movement—and struggle for a clear break from all forms of "participation".

In place of class collaboration aimed at maximising private profit, workers must take up the fight for trade union committees to open the books of these "nationalised" concerns to show the necessity to expropriate the privately owned suppliers, manufacturers and banks that all stand to gain from mass sackings and speed-up.

And they must fight to break the Lib-Lab coalition that is the organising centre of the bosses' offensive.

FORCE TGWU TO DROP COWLEY CHARGES!

A full scale McCarthyite witch-hunt is underway in Cowley where TGWU Region 5 Committee is conducting an "inquiry" into nine members charged by the Oxford District Finance and General Purposes Committee.

Included among those charged are newly reelected Cowley Assembly Plant convenor Bob Fryer and three newly reelected deputy convenors—Frank Corti, Tom White and Alan Thornett.

Thornett has already been recommended for expulsion and Corti and White for removal from all office for life. Recommendations on the remaining six have not been publicly revealed.

Major charge

The major charge advanced is that of "campaigning against elected and unelected officials of the union".

The whole set-up is a brazen attack on the rights of all TGWU members. It makes it a punishable offence to disagree with the union leadership.

The clear message from the TGWU leadership to the union's two million members who may want to express their views on official policies is "pay up and shut up".

There is certainly no chance of a fair hearing for those summoned before the present inquiry.

Kangaroo court

The first day of the "hearing" has just concluded as we go to press, confirming that the Regional Inquiry is just as much a bureaucratic Kangaroo Court as the District F&GP inquiry that preceded it.



Alan Thornett

In that inquiry the same people laid the charges, conducted the hearing, decided the verdict, and pronounced sentence. Those sentences are the basis of the current inquiry.

The 'prosecution' remains in the "hearing" the whole time, discussing with the "judge" and "jury". Questioning is being carried out almost exclusively by District Secretary David Buckle, JP. There is no right to cross-examine.

Those charged are brought in one by one, interrogated and told to leave. Only the "judge" and "jury" and prosecution know the whole of the proceedings.

Corroborating "evidence" is being called from the Oxford District F&GP bureaucrats, who remain cloistered with the Regional officials. It appears that chosen right wing witnesses are being called.

These proceedings surpass even the bureaucratic lengths of the 1974 Regional Inquiry—which decided to remove elected Senior Steward Bob

Fryer and Deputy Senior Steward Alan Thornett from office, after a campaign against them carried out by extreme right winger Reg Parsons.

Nobody then suggested that to campaign against elected union representatives opened up the prospect of expulsion from the union.

Nor were any charges laid when Jack Adams the right wing senior steward at MG Abingdon went into the local *Oxford Mail* with a letter attacking the newly reelected left wing leadership in the Cowley Assembly Plant last December.

Opponent

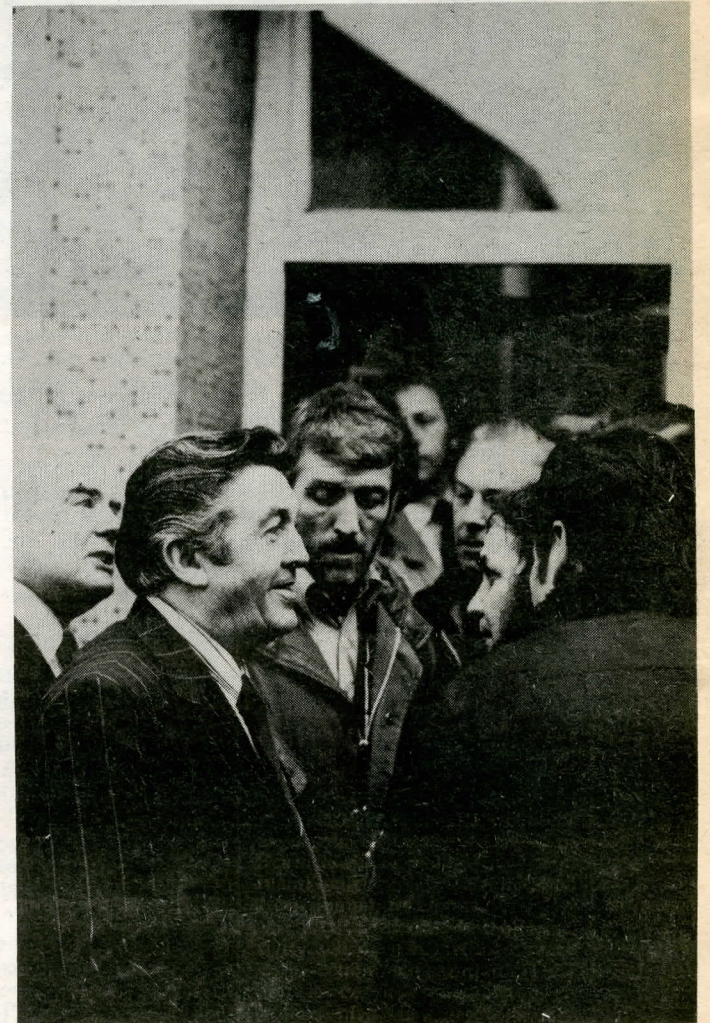
The reason for this discriminatory treatment is clear. Bob Fryer is well known as an opponent of 'worker participation' in Leyland, and was the only Leyland convenor to attack the Edwardes plan for speed-up and sackings when it was announced last month.

Alan Thornett is well known as an opponent of all forms of wage control and class collaboration, and led a fight at the TGWU conference last year for a sliding scale of wages to protect against inflation.

The Edwardes plan has already brought the closure of Speke. Its meaning is clear. And behind Edwardes stands the Lib-Lab government with its determined plan to step up the exploitation of the working class as a whole.

Speed-up

Yet the 17 week strike against speed-up at Speke demonstrated clearly that the Leyland workforce is determined to defend jobs and conditions.



Cowley transport drivers present petition to Region 5 Secretary Brian Mathers outside the inquiry on Tuesday.

This is why TGWU officials cannot allow any independent voice to be heard within the union. A principled lead from the Cowley Assembly plant could find a huge response among Leyland workers.

Now, after four years of removal from office, harassment, splitting of union branches, disbanding of committees and orchestrated press witch-hunts have failed to prevent the re-election of a left wing leadership in Cowley, the officials feel forced to undertake this unprecedented inquiry.

No-one safe

If this attack succeeds, then no militant will be safe within the TGWU. Anyone opposing the line of the officials publicly or privately is liable to be expelled from the union on trumped up charges.

There must be an immediate campaign throughout the union to demand the dropping of these charges. Within the Assembly Plant itself the membership must be fully informed of the way their elected leaders are being victimised by their own union.

Thornett's section last week decided on a day's strike action to lobby the Regional Inquiry—which was only called off on the personal intervention of Bob Fryer.

This approach by Fryer is

mistaken. It leads away from the only real defence against bureaucracy—the hostility of the membership to their officials' action.

Petition

To ensure that they demonstrate their support for Thornett, transport drivers have now elected a twelve man delegation to lobby the Inquiry, armed with a petition signed by nearly every member on the section (see p. 11).

There is no answer and many dangers in the bid by Frank Corti to get the courts to prevent the union inquiry.

We are opposed to any attempt to involve the bourgeois courts in the unions. The problem of bureaucracy is one to be solved by the workers' movement, not legal writs.

Broad based

We call for a broadly based defence campaign directed through stewards committees, branches and other TGWU bodies to force the dropping of all charges and defend democratic rights.

Resolutions condemning the Kangaroo Court proceedings must be sent at once to Transport House, London and to Region 5 headquarters in Birmingham. We suggest copies to be sent to Frank Corti, TGWU 5/293 Branch Secretary, 4, Queen's Close, Botley, Oxford.

Buckton runs from pay fight

As we go to press it seems certain that ASLEF train drivers will press ahead with the one-day strike called by their leadership in pursuit of increased bonus payments.

We support any section of workers prepared to fight the employer for an improvement of wages and conditions.

ASLEF leaders have stressed repeatedly that they are seeking increased bonuses equal to those agreed for NUR pay train guards—and not fighting to hold up or block those increases.

For this reason workers should brush aside the press hullabaloo and confusion-mongering and the vicious

reactionary positions argued by NUR leader Sid Weighell, and support the ASLEF action.

But at the same time it is necessary to see the way ASLEF leader Buckton has used the token strike on this issue to duck the central issue of the ASLEF pay review.

Buckton was one of the TUC 'lefts' who sounded off verbally last year against any Phase 3 of wage control.

He went as far as voting against a Phase 3 at the TUC, and was one of the 17 union bureaucrats pressured into voting in support of the firemen's strike in the December meeting of the TUC General Council.

But Buckton had no intention of applying these words and gestures to his own union.

Despite an ASLEF pay claim calling for 30-40% increases, Buckton—who sat on his hands while the firemen were defeated by the Lib-Lab strike breakers—has made no call or preparation



PHOTO: John Sturrock. Report

Ray Buckton

for serious action. The series of token strikes outlined by ASLEF are completely inadequate, and have been divorced from the pay claim itself.

Train drivers must demand that these actions are immediately turned into a full-scale stoppage in support of the full 30-40% pay claim, and call on NUR members—whose union conference drew up a 63% claim which has been brushed aside by Weighell—to take simultaneous action to win their own claim.

DRIVERS VOTE SOLID SUPPORT

The statement reprinted below was signed this week by 110 TGWU members working in the Transport Department at British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant.

"A full meeting of the membership of the Transport Department has passed a unanimous vote of confidence in our shop steward Bro. A. Thornett who has represented our interests for the past 16 years.

The meeting decided that it would not tolerate any interference with Alan Thornett's shop steward's card or his membership of the union.

It was the wish of the department to stage a token strike on Tuesday 28 February in order to demonstrate our resolve on this matter.

We have however now received

a personal request from the senior steward Bro. Bob Fryer not to proceed with the strike under conditions where the management intend to precipitate an unnecessary closure of the plant in order to inflame the situation.

We are prepared to accept this advice at this stage but we emphasise that we cannot stand aside and see victimisation take place.

We intend to sign this statement collectively and to deliver it to the district office by means of an elected delegation".

NUJ: isolation danger

The dispute began over the right to make local claims on top of the 10% national agreement. With a clause now agreed that allows chapels to put in local claims, the fragmentation of the settlements over backdating is making a united fight over wages against key employers less and less likely.

The NUI tactic of a work to rule rather than all-out strike was the correct one. The union membership—due entirely to a combination of SWP ultimatism and right wing sabotage—voted against strike action on the national wage claim.

Those chapels prepared to fight for wages had to avoid the trap of allowing the employers to dictate an all-out battle over the preliminary issues.

Likewise the tactic of allowing some chapels to reach local agreements was also correct, since this split the unity of the employers and created divisions in the ranks of the Newspaper Society.

But the tactic has now become self defeating. As the number of chapels settling increases so the number of chapels fighting on diminishes, the danger of isolation grows and the confidence of the employers to deal with the remaining chapels, including some of the toughest in the country, increases.

Chapels must demand that the NUI negotiators make themselves accountable to the membership still struggling.

Several chapels have

already faced lock-outs of short periods and a general wave of lock-outs is now expected against chapels which have increased the severity of their sanctions.

They must demand that no more local settlements are permitted and that national action be called if a wave of lock-outs takes place.

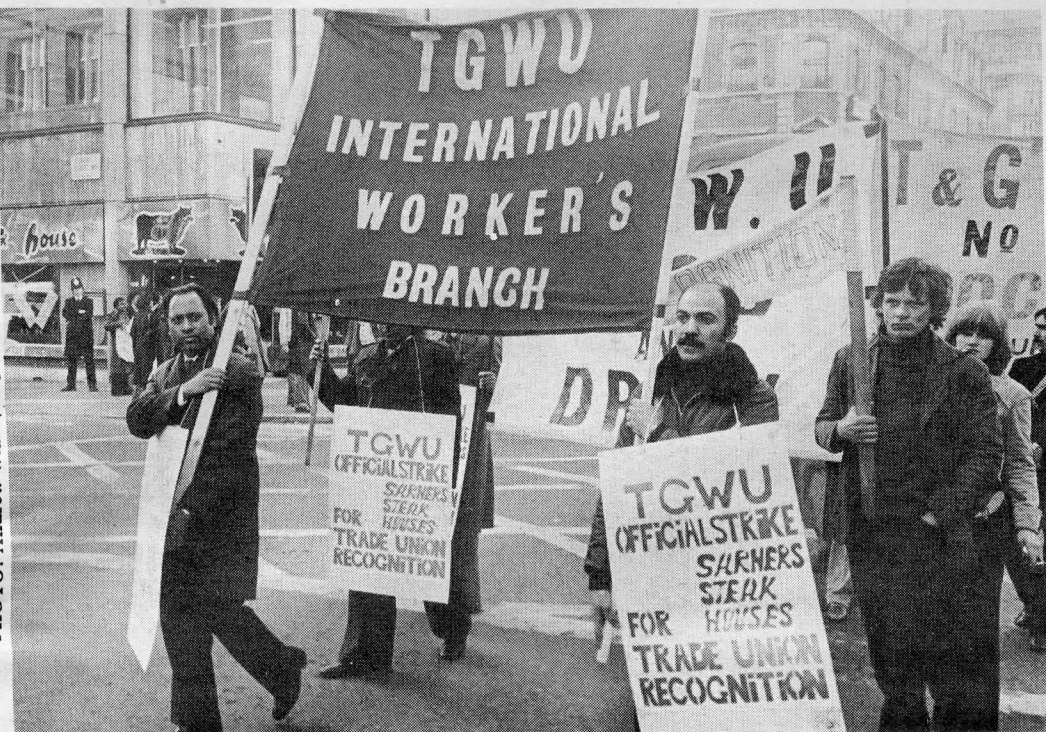
Chapels have won the right to make local claims and must unite to ensure that wage claims are submitted and fought for, not by negotiating phony productivity agreements, but by combating wage controls head on and demanding wage rises to restore and retain living standards.

It is necessary to fight for wage rises to match inflation and for elected committees of workers, and working class unemployed and housewives, to dictate what rises are necessary.

Primary

But the importance of the present struggle must not be underestimated. Although it takes the form of a preliminary struggle having its roots in a seemingly secondary question of backdating, the employers have chosen to make it an issue of primary importance in the continuing campaign to destroy the NUI and prop up the weak and ineffectual company union, the Institute of Journalists.

NUI members must therefore be prepared to fight this battle through as if the rights already won by the union depended on it.

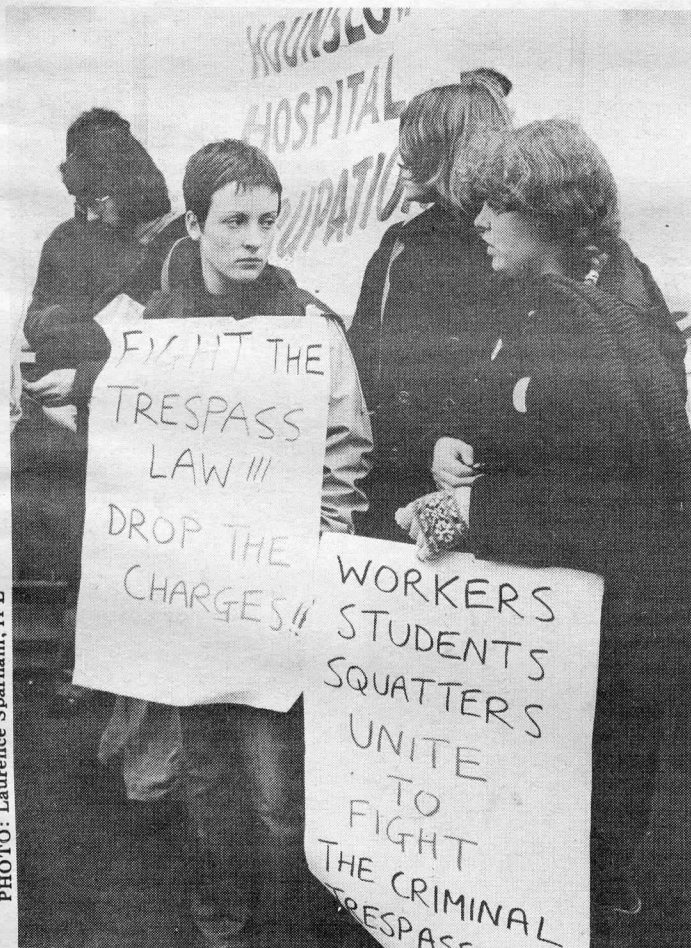


Still solid—the union recognition strike by workers at Garners Steak Houses.

NUJ chapels fighting for backdating of their national agreement to January 1, face an increasing danger of being left isolated.

Many employers have

conceded the demands at local level—including Thomson Newspapers—and only Westminster Press and United Newspapers of the large employers are refusing local deals in a significant number of chapels.

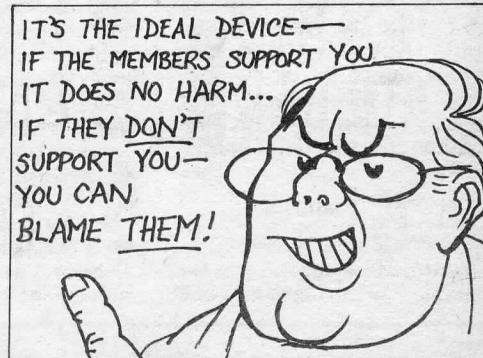
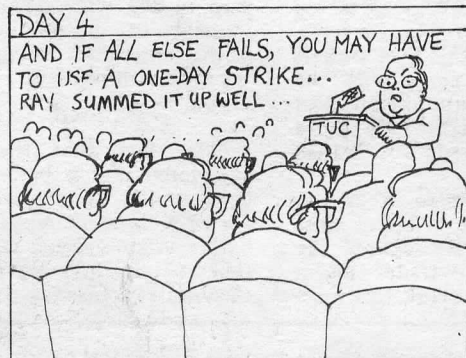
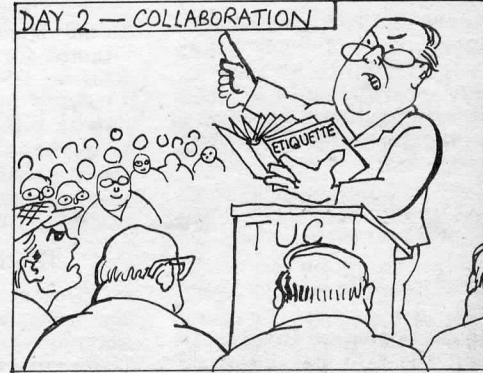
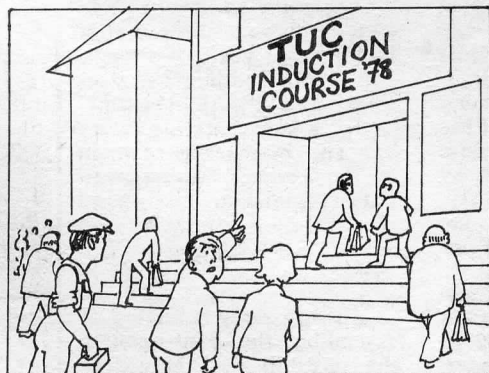


A picket of the trial of the first person prosecuted under the Criminal Trespass Law—the law designed to outlaw sit-ins and occupations.

O'fishall's Diary

...YOUR MAN AT THE TOP'S FIGHT TO STAY ON YOUR BACK.

TIM





'Democracy' in Spain just a play on words

The following story was recently published by the Solidarity Committee of the Els Joglars theatre group in Barcelona.

The play referred to is alleged to contain passages attacking the armed forces.

We reprint the story as an illustration of the fraudulence of the claims of the Francoist government to have 'democratised' Spain.

The scandalous story of Alberto Boadella, director of Els Joglars, is one instance among several in recent weeks of the Francoist army heaving unilaterally imposed its system of 'justice' on civilians.

Another recent example is the confiscation of an entire edition of *Combate*, newspaper of the 'Trotskyist' Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (Spanish Section of the self-styled 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International).

La Torna

'On September 6 1977 the Spanish ministry of culture authorised "for the whole public" the show called *La Torna* presented by the Els Joglars theatre groups.

On September 7 the first performance took place in the town of Barbastro in the province of Huesca.

In September and October various performances took place in Aragon, the Basque country Valencia and Majorca.

In November the show toured around the major towns of Catalonia and contacts were made to present



Signing of the Moncloa Pact

the show in a Barcelona theatre in January.

On November 30 in Rens, a few hours before the performance, the group received a telephone call from some-

one who claimed to be from the military, advising them to cancel the performance.

The group, taking account of the fact that it had all the required authorisation presented the show in the ordinary way with no trouble or disorder.

Then on December 11 Alberto Boadella, the director of the group, was asked to attend a military tribunal.

He was given the order of the Captaincy General of Barcelona to suspend the show and this was complied with.

Boadella made his statement and the following day he received a new summons to appear before the same judge on December 15.

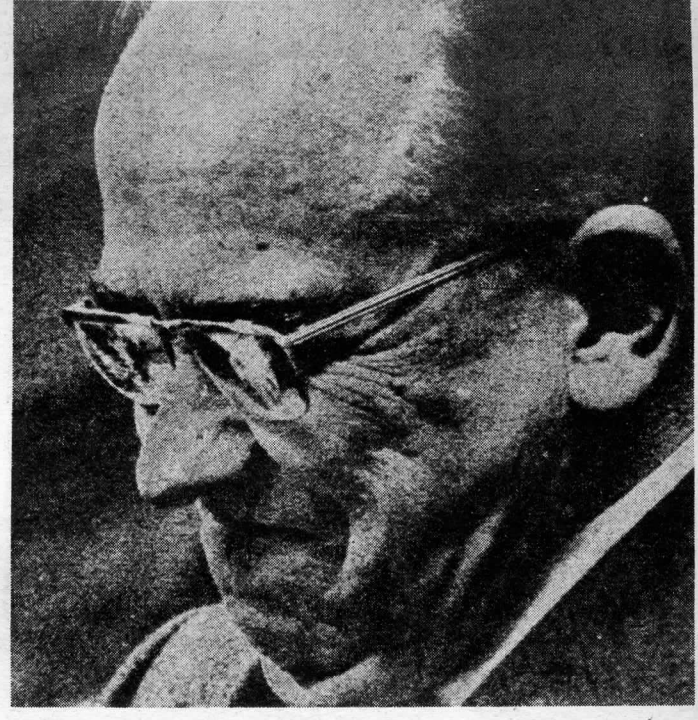
For the rest, all that is known of him, is that he arrived at his lawyer's office under armed guard (machine guns) and there left a note saying that he was being held in custody in the Models jail.

On December 16 the other members of the group were charged in front of the same judge.

The all declared themselves to be equally responsible for what they regarded as a collective creation.

The permanent assembly of theatrical workers in Barcelona met at once and to defend professional rights and freedom of expression organised a week of struggle which culminated in a general strike of theatrical workers on December 22.

The Grand Liceo Theatre, the Scala, and the cabarets and even the cinemas all



Spanish CP leader Carrillo—where does he stand?

joined the strike.

Other actions were undertaken in the cinemas and television in Madrid, Bilbao, Seville, Valencia, Vitoria, Sarregossa.

On December 28 a judicial procedure was opened against all the members of the Els Joglars group who are accused of alleged offences injurious to the armed forces. Except for Boadella the others have not been detained but are under surveillance."

The Solidarity Committee say that Alberto Boadella's health has seriously deteriorated in detention.

He is still awaiting his definitive trial and faces a sentence of up to 18 years jail for insulting the armed forces.

Protests have been made against the procedure by the reformists and Stalinists in Spain.

But they say they object to it all because it is contrary to the Moncloa Pact!

Reformists

This part embodies the popular frontist alliance which the reformists and Stalinists in Spain have with the 'reformed' francoist government.

In the pact the workers' parties agreed to accept rigid austerity measures including wage and public spending cuts in exchange for the vaguest of promises from the Suarez regime about continued 'democratisation'.

Armed police

But Suarez's 'democratisation' includes no significant changes in the army or armed police because his rule and that of the capitalist class in Spain still rest as they did under Franco—on the possession and control of this massive repressive apparatus of the Spanish state.

Socialists in Spain must fight for the dissolution of this repressive apparatus and its replacement by an armed workers' militia subject to control through the democratic organs of the working class.

The reformists and Stalinists, however, talk pathetically of 'reforming' and 'restructuring' the Francoist army just as Allende and the Popular Unity used to talk about 'reforming' the Chilean army.

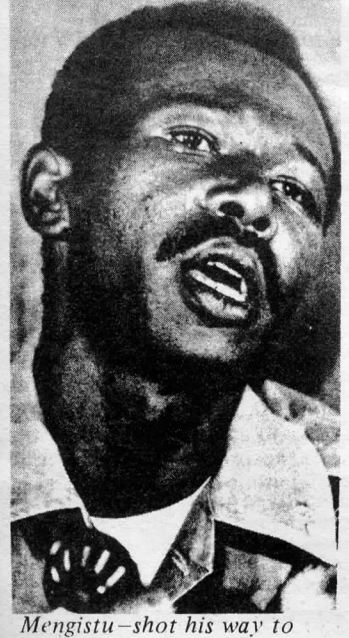
The prospects of doing that are the same in Spain today as they were in Chile.

'Red terror' hides Derg's nakedness

It was a feeling of weakness which led the fake—"socialist" Ethiopian military dictatorship, the Derg, to open its doors this month to reporters of the world's capitalist press.

Through the confusion and anti-communism of the resulting flood of reporting it is possible to see a picture very different from the image of strength and stability which Derg leader Mengistu had aimed to convey.

Virtually all the reports have given first emphasis to the obvious presence of large numbers of Cuban soldiers and the "red terror".



Mengistu—shot his way to power

The terror, which involves the systematic murder of suspected oppositionists, results according to reports in several dozen deaths every night in Addis Ababa during the curfew, the bodies being found in the streets the next morning.

Many of the victims of this slaughter are members or suspected members of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party (EPRP), a guerrillaist Maoist organisation which characterises the Derg as "fascist".

The EPRP is said to have maintained its strength in the Muslim suburbs where the regime has found it harder to organise popular support and where sympathy is strong for the rebel Eritreans and West Somalians.

Repression

Elsewhere the Derg rules through the hebbelles—nominally organs of "people's power" but in fact they seem to have become agencies of the Derg's repression.

The reporter of the French daily *Le Monde* claims to have been told that hebbelles which do not come up with their ration of "red terror" victims are subjected to specially high demands for money to finance the war effort.

The EPRP is not the only party to suffer repression. One of the others is a part of the Panethiopian Socialist Movement, known as Meisan.

This group also holds Stalinist conceptions of the two-stage revolution, its main

present slogan being "democratic rights now".

Until last year the Meisan, composed largely of intellectuals, played a leading ideological and political role in the Derg.

It was only when the US army trained, now pro-Soviet Colonel Mengistu shot his way to power that the Meisan was expelled from power and persecuted.

Military

At that time senior military officers in the Derg were founding their own political parties.

The most powerful of these is the "clandestine" Abyotawi Sedede set up by dictator Mengistu himself.

It is composed mainly of leading military officials of the Derg and controls many of the mass organisations.

The Derg is also supported by the "Proletarian League" founded by the former joint leader of the Political Bureau of the Derg, Senai Legue, who was shot dead in the shoot-out of February 1977 in which Mengistu came to power.

A third supporter of the Derg is the Malerid ("Revolutionary Marxist-Leninist Organisation") composed of renegades of the EPRP who have opportunistically compromised with the regime.

Exclusively

These three parties comprise a "Quadripartite Progressive Front" along with the Etchat, a party based exclusively on the Oromo people.



Ethiopian boy soldier with display of captured NATO ammunition

This latter group, however, seems to be on the point of being persecuted in the same way as the Meison.

One question above all has dominated the way Mengistu's dictatorship has been built since the overthrow of the Emperor and the establishment of the Derg—the national struggle by the people of Eritrea and the Ogaden.

Virtually all the political splits in the Derg (only half of whose original members have physically survived the successive purges) have been on the question of Eritrea.

In each purge leaders suspected of "softness" on the question of Eritrea have been

eliminated.

Yet, despite some success with Cuban, Soviet and Israeli help, in repulsing the Somalian army in the Ogaden, the Derg has made no progress in Eritrea.

Apart from the three main cities which are tightly besieged, the whole of Eritrea is now under the control of the two main Eritrean nationalist organisations.

The failure to rectify this situation even with such gigantic military aid from Cuba and the USSR, must be a sign of the political weakness of the blood-stained Derg which is now destined to become a regime increasingly kept in power by

Castro's and Brezhnev's troops.

The head of this murderous clique is Haile Meriam Mengistu, a man who last week called his personal enemies in Ethiopia "counter-revolutionaries and Trotskyists".

But Trotskyists is just what most of them are *not*—and that is their fatal political weakness.

The Ethiopian masses can only be saved from continued barbarism through the building of an opposition based on the strategy of permanent revolution, which recognises that the fight against the repressive dictatorship is at the same time the fight for socialism.

GRUNWICK: WHICH WAY FORWARD?

This interview with Grunwick Strike Committee chairman Kamlesh Gandhi was conducted early this month. As our reply makes clear, we do not agree with all Brother Kamlesh says, and we feel that a much more positive call to action is needed from the Strike Committee. But Kamlesh Gandhi's assessment of the lessons of the dispute is of importance to other sections of workers fighting for union rights.

Socialist Press (SP): Could you begin by giving an indication of the mood amongst the strikers at the moment?

Kamlesh Gandhi (KG): Well, at the moment the strikers are obviously very depressed—in fact, they're fed up with the present situation.

After 17 months out on strike, we feel that our hands have been tied—especially since the Scarman inquiry.

The mass pickets in November didn't secure us a victory, neither did the hunger strike outside the TUC headquarters.

Ever since then we haven't been able to take any action as a strike committee because of the restrictions put on us by APEX.

This is one of the reasons the members are frustrated. But another reason is that looking at the present situation we're in, you realise just how complicated it is—it's difficult to know what to do.

So that's the present situation.

Restrictions

SP: What exactly have been the restrictions put on you by the APEX bureaucracy?

KG: Since the hunger strike, we've been told that decisions can only be taken by the strike committee when an official from APEX is present.

We've been told that we can't have any more mass pickets, we can't have any more hunger strikes or any more demonstrations outside the TUC.

If we do any of these things—then we'll be suspended from the union and have our strike pay cut off.

Proposals

SP: What then have the APEX leaders attending your strike committee meetings had to propose?

KG: Well, essentially to work through ACAS. After the House of Lords verdict, it was realised that they'd have to carry out a further ballot.

The proposal was that following this re-ballot, union recognition would be forced onto Ward.

We realised that there was a loophole in the law and that this would be exploited once again.

We certainly don't intend to wait until the new Bill gets through, it might take six or seven months.

Blacking

SP: Ever since the strike began, the WSL has, as you know, argued that the only way to secure victory is through the blacking of supplies and services to the company.

Following the TUC Congress resolution last year many people thought there was a possibility that the Trade Union bureaucracy

might take a step towards achieving these goals.

We believed otherwise and predicted that the resolution, vague and empty as it was, served as a face-saver for a union bureaucracy under pressure.

After the Congress, the strike committee had talks with some union leaders. These talks achieved nothing positive.

Goods still come in and out of the factory and services are still connected . . .

KG: Yes! After 12 months on strike we realised that blacking the supplies and services was the key to victory.

I still believe that, although cutting off the water and electricity is important, the blacking of mail in and out of the factory is more crucial.

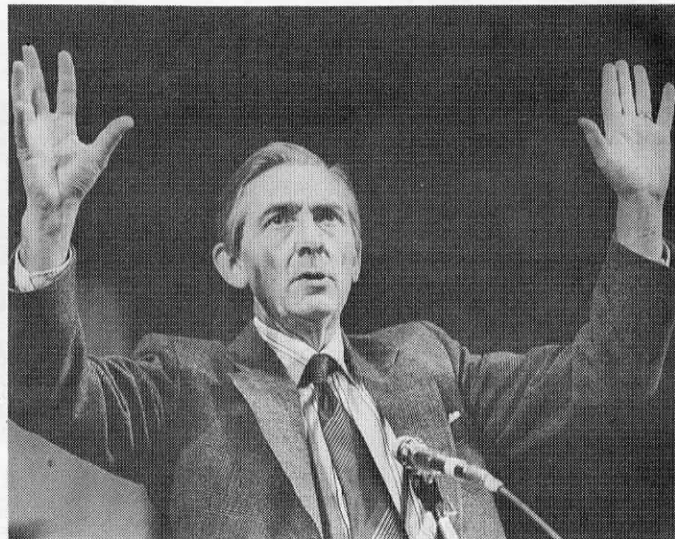


PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

Murray

SP: What's the possibility of getting the postal services blacked once again? Have you made approaches to the post office workers in the area?

KG: First of all let me clear up a common misunderstanding: when the Cricklewood postmen blacked the mail last year they only stopped the outgoing mail.

Although we certainly would like to see this happen again what's equally important is to interrupt the incoming mail.

It's the Central London branch of the UPW that handles this. The trouble is that we don't want to put the postal workers into a situation where they get locked out and lose their pay or jobs.

That's what would happen if they took unofficial action. We did, of course, have long discussions with Tom Jackson of the UPW and urged him to instruct his members to black the mail.

All he could do was to write a 13-page letter to the TUC explaining why he wouldn't.

It was one of the most pathetic letters I've ever seen. He laid down a set of

conditions that the TUC would guarantee to fulfil before he'd consider the blacking.

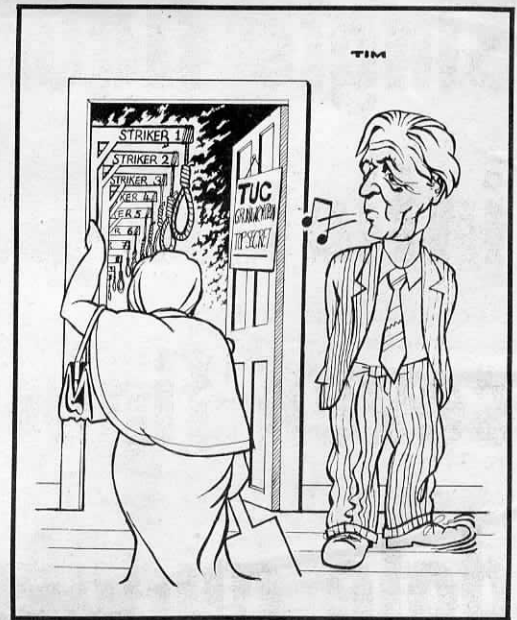
Most of these conditions he knew were impossible. That was the way out for the leadership.

That's not, of course, to forget all the work that's been done by all the UPW rank and file workers in solidarity with us.

What is a problem now is that the Cricklewood branch no longer handles Grunwick mail, it's been shifted to other branches, all of which have lots of National Front members.

I agree with you that all the talks were worthless. Towards the end we told the trade union bureaucrats that they were wasting our time.

We wanted the services cut off and they refused to do so. All they wanted to talk about



The way we cartooned the sell-out at Grunwick last summer.

simple protest but on demands for immediate implementation of blacking of all services by the TUC.

Such action, if supported by the Grunwick Strike Committee would provoke your suspension from APEX so we also believe that it is essential to make adequate financial provisions.

The Cardiff support group suggested a target of £10,000. What are your views on such an initiative?

KG: I agree with the idea. The question is, whether or not the Trades Council is prepared to call such a demonstration outside the TUC.

You remember that a conference called by the SE Region of the TUC [of which Jack Dromey is the secretary SP] was called off because APEX refused to support it.

It's the same situation here, you see. When the APEX leadership refuses to support the initiative it'll be called off.

Still, if it was called and we supported it—we'd be suspended. But if there's a levy or a fund set up, we don't give a damn!

But we feel it's up to the Trades Council to call such a demonstration; the problem is that Dromey thought the Cardiff Support Committee was trying to put pressure on him.

Ineffective

SP: Why doesn't the Strike Committee itself call such a demonstration?

KG: We haven't discussed it

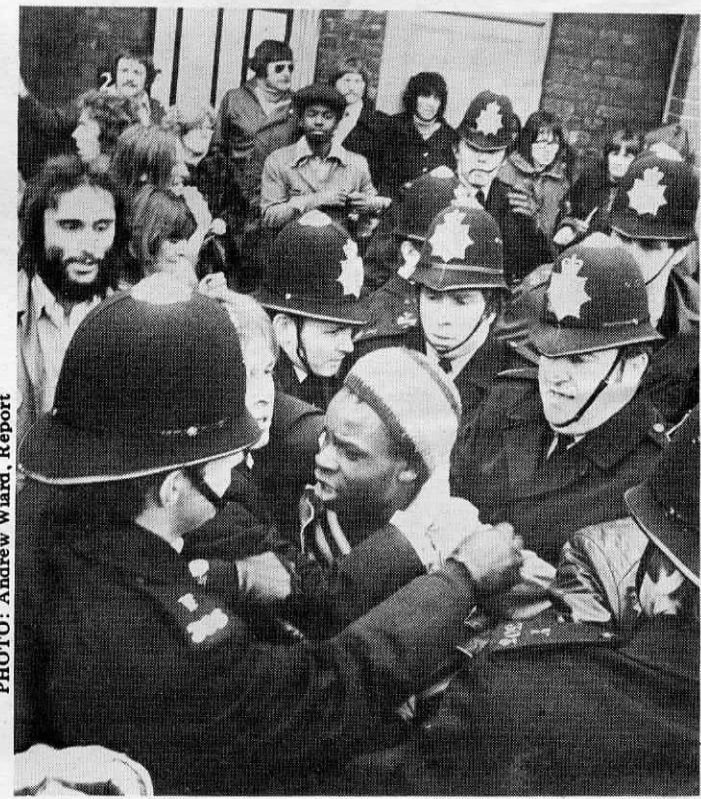


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Police arresting black youth during last summer's mass picket

yet. I don't think such a demonstration would really be effective in putting pressure on the TUC leaders.

After all, the firemen didn't get their support so why should we? They refused to break the government pay code so why should they break the law and enforce a postal black?

SP: What advice would you give to, say, the workers presently on strike through-

out the Garner Steak Houses chain for union recognition?

KG: Well—"Be very careful of your union leadership!" They'll try to keep the strike under control and refuse to mobilise other workers in support.

Of course, the workers should fight to get the supplies blacked and keep up regular picketing to stop customers and scabs getting in.

SP: Thank you.

We reply:

The points made by Kamlesh Gandhi in the interview above well illustrate the cleft stick in which the Grunwick strikers now find themselves.

On the one hand the present direction of the dispute by APEX officials is further isolating the dispute, opening up no prospect whatever of reinstatement or union recognition.

Threats

On the other hand the slightest initiative by Grunwick strikers themselves is met by immediate threats of suspension from union membership, the

cutting off of strike pay, and organised sabotage by the entire TUC apparatus.

Pernicious

But Kamlesh Gandhi fails to bring out another level on which the Grunwick strikers face obstacles—the semi-official role played by Jack Dromey of Brent Trades Council, who has acted throughout the dispute as the 'left' face of the APEX and TUC bureaucracy.

Socialist Press, unlike almost every other paper on the left has stressed the pernicious role played by Dromey—the man used by the FBU bureaucracy to combat 'extremists', and by the APEX bureaucracy to peddle illusions in

the Scarman report—and the necessity for the Strike Committee to confront the trade union bureaucracy.

Kamlesh Gandhi points out that the TUC refused to back the firemen despite a mass lobby.

But the TUC is already on record as 'supporting' the Grunwick strikers.

A mass lobby demanding that this 'support' be turned into concrete action could have a powerful effect in exposing the role of these leaders, and further pressuring the APEX leaders themselves who would seek to prevent such action.

Again and again mass pickets of Grunwick's gates have shown the willingness of thousands of workers to respond to the call from the Grunwick strike committee.

It has been proved that simply picketing the gates is not sufficient to stop the firm. Blacking action must be enforced by key sections of workers in the public services.

The obstacle to this action is not the courts, and not the government, but the TUC leaders and their supporters within the trade union movement.

If the Grunwick Strike Committee fail to mobilise their supporters, against this central obstacle, then there is no prospect of a successful outcome to the dispute.

It is for this reason that we are convinced the proposals of the Cardiff Grunwick Support Committee must be urgently discussed and acted upon by the Grunwick strikers, as the way in which this key battle can be won.



PHOTO: Mark Rubner, IFL

SE Region TUC Secretary Jack Dromey

KOLLONTAI'S ROAD FROM BOLSHEVISM TO STALINISM

Ann Evans reviews Alexandra Kollontai: Selected Writings. Edited by Alix Holt. Published by Allison and Busby at £2.95 (paperback).

Alexandra Kollontai is held in great esteem by various elements on the left in the West, because of her reputation as a Bolshevik, an opponent of the bureaucracy and an ardent campaigner for women's rights.

This collection of her 'Selected Writings' brings together a wide variety of articles, speeches and excerpts from books, which enables us to investigate the basis for her high reputation.

Fifteen years

Kollontai joined the Bolshevik Party in 1915, after about 15 years work with the Social Democratic parties in Russia and elsewhere in Europe, in particular the German party.

The outbreak of war in 1914 crystallised political differences within the Social Democratic parties, and it was the betrayal of the majority of the German party in voting war credits for the German bourgeoisie which decisively turned Kollontai towards the Bolsheviks.

Pacifist

At this stage Kollontai's position on the war was basically one of pacifist anti-militarism.

The *Excerpts from a Diary* published here (pp81-7) describe her horror at the growing chauvinism among the leading members of the German Social Democratic party, but contains no class analysis of why the war should be opposed.

It is only after she enters into correspondence with

Lenin that Kollontai develops these positions, and in 1917, during the period of the Provisional Government, she published *Where does 'Revolutionary Defencism' lead?*, which clearly explains what the imperialist war signifies:

"... colonies, trade agreements and the struggle between English and German capitalists for domination of the world market". (p.111).

She condemns the Menshevik policy of 'revolutionary defence of freedom in the face of the attack from the external enemy' as:

"The renunciation of independent class politics".

Kollontai supported Lenin's "April Theses" against the support given by Stalin and Kamenev to the Provisional Government, and played an important part in the organisation of the October Revolution, especially through the popularisation of Bolshevik policies in her pamphlets and speeches.

Loyalty

However, despite her loyalty to Bolshevism from 1915, there is some confusion throughout her theoretical work,—both on women's questions and on the more general questions—about the relationship of the spontaneous activity of the masses and the leadership of the revolutionary party.

There are constant references to the 'self-activity' of the masses, but this mystical concept is never explained.

In her pamphlet *Why was the German Proletariat Silent during the July Days?* she explains the apparent passivity of the German working class at the outbreak of the war in 1914, in terms of the leadership of the trade union centres, and of the German Social Democrats who were increasingly following the road to reformism and class collaboration for some years prior to 1914.

Teach masses

However, she sees the task of the revolutionary party as being to teach the masses:

"to respond independently and energetically to events... (and to) boldly advocate all methods of struggle which revolutionary creativity suggests". (pp. 102-3).

The overall impression the reader is left with from this pamphlet and others is that the task of the vanguard party is simply to teach the masses 'self-activity', rather than to lead them.

These ambiguities come to fruition in 1921, when Kollontai became a leading member of the Workers' Opposition, writing their programme which is repro-

duced in this collection. (pp. 159-200).

This faction represented a utopian reaction to the difficulties and contradictions involved in War Communism.

Protests

Their protests about the influx of non-proletarian careerist elements into the party were acted on by the party leadership, but their objections that the party had betrayed Soviet principles represent a utopian denial of the real economic difficulties in which the young Soviet Union found itself after the Civil War.

Production had fallen to 12.9% of the 1913 level, and the country had been ravaged by the wars—yet Kollontai was suggesting that the retention of money and the wage system was a betrayal of socialist policies:

"Taking into consideration the utter collapse of our industries while still clinging to the capitalist mode of production (payment for labour in money, variations in wages received according to work done) our party leaders, in a fit of distrust in the



The storming of the Winter Palace in the Russian Revolution

creative abilities of workers' collectives, are seeking salvation from the industrial chaos. Where? In the hands of scions of the bourgeois-capitalist class. In businessmen and technicians, whose creative abilities in the sphere of industry are subject to the routine, habits and methods of the capitalist system of production and economy". (p. 166).

Specialists

In criticising the hiring of bourgeois specialists in industry, and arguing that the workers should have immedi-



Kollontai

ate control over all production, she ignores the simple fact that the working class is barred, under capitalism, from learning about the workings of business and industry, and must hire those who have these skills, until the workers can also acquire them.

Naive belief

She has a naive belief that the working class will spontaneously develop new forms of production, as soon as they have direct control over industry.

The collection includes a large number of other writings on the woman question, which are in many ways more significant than articles

(written in 1909), she takes up this question with an attack on the bourgeois feminists:

"If, in the near future, a peasant woman wins a better position for herself, if the everyday conditions of her life improve and her economic and legal status raised, this will be thanks to the unified efforts of peasant democracy directed towards the realisation of the general peasant demands which the rural community has constantly put forward.

The attempts of the feminists to 'clear the way for women' are irrelevant here. If the peasant woman can free herself from the existing agricultural relations she will have won more than all the feminist organisations together are in a position to give her". (p. 48).

The most interesting writings on the woman question in this book are the excerpts from her book *Towards a History of the Working Women's Movement in Russia and The Social Basis of the Woman Question*.

As well as drawing the line between bourgeois feminism and communism, she describes the way in which she and other Bolsheviks organised working women around revolutionary demands.

She also goes into the important role which wo-

men played in the 1905 revolution, in strikes in the textile industry, and protests against the exclusion of women deputies from elected committees and the denial of a woman's right to vote for delegates to the Duma, the Russian parliament.

Oppression

When Kollontai goes on to discuss detailed aspects of women's oppression she attempts to formulate revolutionary policies to fight the emancipation of wom-



Lenin (right)—commended Kollontai's pamphlets popularising Bolshevik policies.



The Left Opposition—wrongly condemned by Kollontai for leading the struggle against the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union.

she makes some important points about bourgeois morality and the family, but these are often obscured by confusions in her own ideas about motherhood and the role of women.

One major failing of Kollontai's work on women's oppression is the total absence of any discussion of contraception and abortion and how women's control of their sexuality and reproduction relates to their emancipation.

Abortion

Abortion is only mentioned once, when she justifies the grounds on which abortion was legalised in Russia in 1920.

Abortion, still a dangerous operation, was regarded as an evil which should be regulated, until social conditions are ripe for it to be unnecessary, instead of as a part of the right of women to decide whether to have children:

"The task of labour in Russia is to strengthen in women the healthy instinct of motherhood, to make motherhood and labour for the collective compatible and thus do away with the need for abortion". (p. 149).

Kollontai constantly refers to the social obligation of women to have children, and regards motherhood, together with social provision for childcare and 'household' tasks, as a 'right'.

She is correct in arguing that the material basis of the family will wither away under communism. As dining rooms, laundries, childcare etc. become socialised, having a child is no longer a burden on individual mothers, but becomes a collective responsibility.

Bourgeois

However, she is inconsistent by remaining tied to the bourgeois idea that women have innate 'maternal instincts'.

She suggests that socialism will simply allow women to have children without hardship rather than give women a realistic choice as to whether or not they want children.

In *Society and Maternity* (published in 1916), she says that Social Democracy is fighting for a society in which a woman:

"without giving up her active role in the struggle for the ideals of her class, can fulfil her biological function". (p. 118).

This failure to draw out the logical conclusions of her positions about the supercession of bourgeois sexual morality and the family made Kollontai incapable of fighting the Stalinists' resurrection of the family as an 'ideal' social unit.

Kollontai became an ambassador for the Soviet Union after October 1922 in Norway, Mexico and Sweden.

Her writings became intermittent, but those reproduced in this collection show that her reputation as a leading Bolshevik was used to promote Stalin's policies.

Contradicts

In her attack on the Left Opposition's principled fight against Stalinism, Kollontai contradicts the views on party democracy which she put forward in the Workers Opposition, by denying Trotsky's right to form a faction within the party.

She accuses Trotsky's faction of:

"destroying the cohesion of the collective . . . The Opposition transgresses the basic demand of the masses: the demand that discipline be observed". (p. 313).

She covers up for the Stalinist bureaucracy by claiming that:

"The masses are already getting used to thinking things out for themselves instead of relying on a leader". (p. 312).

Expelled

This was written in October 1927, one month before Trotsky was bureaucratically expelled from the Communist Party, and about 18 months before Stalin made his violent 'left turn' and forced collectivisation on the peasantry on a massive scale—the same peasants who Kollontai pretends are:

"creating new forms of economy and new life-styles, establishing new ways of co-ordinating sections of the government and sections of the economic organism". (p. 312).

The reality, of course, was that the peasantry in 1927 were thriving on the private enterprise which was reintroduced as a limited and temporary expedient in 1921, and which Stalin had encouraged and extended, allowing the Kulaks to get rich at the

expense of the working class.

Eighteen months later, the bureaucracy went to the opposite extreme and violently imposed collectivisation, without paying much attention to 'the mood of the masses' which Kollontai seems so concerned about.

In *Soviet Woman—Citizeness with Equal Rights*, Kollontai covers up for Stalin's policy of rehabilitating the family—the instrument of women's oppression.

She lists the genuine gains in social services—creches, public canteens, etc—but then goes on to praise the Soviet Union for conferring the order of 'motherhood glory' and the 'medal of motherhood' on 1,100,000 women.

Three medals

Kollontai herself received three medals from the Soviet bureaucracy, including the 'Red Banner of Labour' in 1945, for her services to the Soviet state during the second imperialist war.

Reading this book makes it clear that Alexandra Kollontai's high reputation rests on some rather shaky foundations.

She undoubtedly made a major contribution to the October Revolution through her work among women and through her pamphlets, which Lenin commended as a means of popularising Bolshevik policies.

However, her writings indicate that she was unable to make a significantly original contribution to Marxist theory, either on the woman question or on wider issues.

Her subsequent journey through the Workers Opposition to ambassador for Stalinism, also reveals that she was not capable of conducting a principled and consistent fight for the two issues she is famous for defending: workers' democracy and women's emancipation.



Stalin (right)

The meaning of Trotsky's writings

"... the methods of *La Commune* are diametrically opposite to all my conceptions of the organisation of a revolutionary party. "No domination"—in other words, no programme. "On the basis of parity" means parity in cynicism with regard to principles, a scarcely enviable kind of parity. A "mass paper" is in reality an imitation of *l'Oeuvre*, dressed up in slogans borrowed from the right and the left and aimed at radicalising petty bourgeois who are not even able to understand that the preparation for civil war begins with the elaboration of a programme and that a "mass paper" can be nothing other than one of the instruments of this programme".

Trotsky, *Crisis in the French Section*, p. 116.



711 E. 11th St.
New York NY 10009

USA

Jan. 27, 1978

Dear Comrades,

In your January 18 issue, the Pathfinder Press book *The Crisis of the French Section (1935-6)* by Leon Trotsky is reviewed by Tony Richardson, who calls it an "important book" and a "valuable contribution" but accuses the publishers and editors of miscellaneous misdemeanours and crimes.

Why he asks, did we "choose to publish this book?" The answer he replies "lies in the factional debate within the USFI (United Secretariat of the Fourth International) itself".

He then attempts to relate our decision to publish the book with current differences in the USFI, or at least his version of these differences.

The stupidity of this attempt is clear from the following dates. The book was published in July 1977. The introduction is dated February 1977.

Work was started on the book more than two years before the introduction was completed. It was impossible at that time to foresee the current state of factional debate within the USFI.

The publication of this book had nothing to do with what Richardson's feverish mind imagines.

Its publication was really decided on nine years ago, in 1969, when we resolved to gather and publish in English everything Trotsky had written during his last exile, 1929-40.

Nine years ago, the recent factional disputes in the USFI had not even begun.

After nine years and more than twenty new Trotsky books, after a great deal of work and expense, the project is almost completed and today's revolutionary generation has access to an infinitely fuller and better grasp of Trotsky's ideas than was available in his lifetime.

It deserves a better response than Richardson's slanders.

Sincerely
George Breitman

We reply: It is only fair to separate out the two distinct strands in Comrade Breitman's letter.

On the one hand he points out with some justification that our review could be read

as implying that *The Crisis in the French Section* was published by the US Socialist Workers Party purely and simply as a factional manoeuvre.

We should stress that this is not the point we intended to make, and we regret any ambiguity on it.

We accept that the book is published as part of an overall scheme begun nine years ago.

Spells out

But on the other hand Breitman goes further, trying to turn this point into an attack on the political line of our review, which spells out the sharp contrast between Trotsky's conception of a revolutionary international—as outlined in the book—and the conception held by the US Socialist Workers Party of which Breitman is a leading member.

Breitman does all he can to duck this question and befuddle readers by a string of dates, and a partial quote from our article, when he paraphrases:

"Why, he asks, did we "choose to publish this book"? The answer, he replies, "lies in the factional debate within the USFI itself".

But our review was much more specific than this. It asked the political question:

"... why did the SWP choose to publish this book, which contains an implicit indictment of their own positions?"

The review goes on to examine political points made in the SWP's own *introductory comments* to the book, which Breitman himself points out were not completed until February 1977. This date is important.

By February 1977 the French USFI section's daily paper *Rouge* had been running for some time on the kind of broad basis of "left unity" attacked by Trotsky in the book.

Advanced

And plans were already well advanced for launching the IMG's "unity" paper *Socialist Challenge*.

The SWP leaders are known to have opposed both ventures.

But Breitman also knew when he wrote that the month before, in January 1977, the SWP leadership had

adopted a position of calling for the dissolution of the two main factions in the USFI.

This is why we justifiably drew attention to Breitman's comments on page 173 of the book where he states that:

"The current theory and practice of some sections of the Fourth International suggest that not all of their leaders have absorbed the lessons Trotsky tried to teach in 1935-6 about "broad" newspapers, the revolutionary attitude to centrist groups etc".

And we pointed out that this amounts to:

"a more diplomatic way of raising [the SWP's] differences . . . attempting to use Trotsky's writings for their own opportunist purposes". (*Socialist Press* 83).

If this was not the case, why does Breitman not explain his editorial comments, instead of evading this central issue?

No reply

Why does he not reply to our points demonstrating how the SWP, along with the USFI as a whole, refuse to absorb the lessons of these writings by Trotsky?

This does not mean that we in any way belittled the importance of the book itself. Headlined 'Lessons of Party Building' our article stressed that:

"Despite the factional stance of its editors, by showing Trotsky's method of approach to these problems of the Popular Front period, to the questions of political independence and revolutionary discipline, this new book makes a valuable contribution to serious forces fighting for the reconstruction of the Fourth International".

The current political method and programme of the SWP and of the USFI as a whole (to which the SWP is prevented from affiliation by reactionary US legislation) are counter to the positions fought for by Trotsky in the foundation of the Fourth International.

But even from this false standpoint the SWP has performed a useful function in publication of Trotsky's writings.

Our concern is that admiration of the work involved in producing these books should not blind readers to their political content and the lessons they carry for today's struggles.

A review of the film *Annie Hall*, directed by Woody Allen, and starring Woody Allen and Diane Keaton.

Woody Allen's film "Annie Hall" is billed as "a nervous romance" but in fact, though it follows the progress of two extreme neurotics toward the final breakup of their relationship, it is a paradoxically calming, reassuring little film.

It waves its anxieties like a banner, but much of the time it is really saying, "there, there", administering to its audience a kind of pat on the head—a lover's tap.

Departure

This marks a sharp departure from Allen's earlier films, which are anything but easy to watch: *Play It Again, Sam*, in which the monomaniacal couple (acted as in *Annie*, by Allen and Diane Keaton) gabble on endlessly about their anxieties while a life-size Humphrey Bogart, Allen's alter ego, disapprovingly looks on; or *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Sex*, in which Burt Reynolds, as the muscular embodiment of Allen's sexual imagination, shouts encouragement to Allen's flapping erection.

These films are punishing, they make the audience pay for the jokes with a high degree of embarrassment; in them Allen plays a more-or-less consistent character, a libidinous but unsuccessful little cringer, wry, funny and touching but at the same time a little contemptible.

"Real life"

But in "real life", as Allen points out in his interviews, he is none of these things—and *Annie Hall*, as the publicity for the film has taken pains to establish, is autobiographical; unhesitatingly, flagrantly so, the story of the failure of Allen and Keaton's real relationship.

It is perhaps this function of the film that has determined the shift from the roughness and difficulty of the earlier films to the lyrical surface and the romanticism of *Annie Hall*, in which would-be singer Annie meets successful comedian Alvie, lives with him for awhile in New York, then leaves him to live in California with another man.

"Alvie", assured and successful, though not without serious preoccupations, is much closer to the real-life Allen than were the creeping *schlemiels* of *Play It Again, Sam*, *Sleeper* and *Everything You Always Wanted to Know*.

And Annie "is" Diane Keaton—Hall is Keaton's real second name; and much has been made in the film's publicity of the fact that Keaton as Annie wears her own clothes throughout the film.

Style

Of course, the clothes are important—a kind of signal. For while the film ostentatiously displays a set of trendy anxieties—in particular anxieties about death, about cultural and political identity, about sexual confusion and the limits of monogamy—what it is really about is style.

It is a glamorous film, a glamorous love story, of a peculiarly American type.

For while on one level it is dealing with the way in which its characters seek to insulate themselves from their own very ordinary pasts and personalities by a kind of protective coloration of glamour, on another level the film itself is precisely doing

IN REVIEW



ANNIE HALL: BALM FOR NEUROTICS

that—it is all style, a film about a certain manner of being young-and-in-love-in-New-York.

It has less resemblance to other Allen films than to the innumerable Hollywood movies that centred on the adventures of witty, beautiful well-dressed couples: the sort of movie which in the '30s starred Clark Gable and Carole Lombard, or Carry Grant and Irene Dunne.

Cynicism

This film genre died away in the squeals of Doris Day as she made love to Rock Hudson while firmly clutching her pastel suit and matching fox-fur hat.

Those movies too had a kind of aggressive style, that is, they were as much about clothes and furniture as about people; but the incomparable cynicism which they manifested toward sexual relationships, made it impossible any longer for Hollywood to milk the set of illusions on which those movies depended.

At some point these glamorous young couples had to stop making wisecracks and—it happened in *Pillow Talk*, in fact, in 1962—the double bed which is all the time lurking in a shut cupboard, started to roll out as if of its own will.

Sex

Sex reared its ugly (in the case of Rock and Doris, particularly ugly) head.

But in the '70s movie, sex does not have to be wheeled off and on—it can stick around, quietly, even if not altogether comfortably, for the duration of an entire film, without bruising the glamour.

But the (honest) *Annie Hall* relies for some of its effect on what is fast becoming a stock image—the girl-standing-in-the-rain-wearing-jumble-clothing.

It is an image which insists on itself, and relies on associations drawn from advertising and glossy magazines, no less than did the pink suits and padded bras of Doris Day. It is a movie in the style of a certain period.

This is not to argue altogether that there is nothing singular or important about *Annie Hall*; it is for one thing persistently and even weirdly loyal to the romanticism it adopts.

In what is something of a feat, it manages to romanticise such aspects of Annie as her hysteria, and her fear and dislike of sex.

Self-absorption

As preoccupied by the neurotic self-absorption of its lovers as was *Play It Again, Sam*, it is nevertheless more able than the earlier film to offer an account of the process by which such self-absorption develops.

Again, as in *Sam*, the lovers' conversation is peppered with the language of psychoanalysis, but here less jokily, so that the film is able to cast an occasional sharply penetrating glance at the reflexes; particularly at the families in which they are fostered and developed.

The split-screen on which Annie's family chats to Alvie's sets up far more than the simply ludicrous contrast between the two families: it provides a kind of shock-explanation both of Annie and Alvie's love, and of its failure.

The film also plays a very interesting trick: it seems to be about Alvie, seemingly to be pulling the audience into his view of things, his corner.

Annie

But really its whole attention is given to Annie, to her story, her development, the changes in her life; and the dominance of Allen's voice in the script is really only an open confession of the film's male point-of-view, its projection of a picture of a woman, as she is seen by, explained by, a man.

The film's very sharp sense of this limitation connects it to recent films by other American directors, in particular Martin Scorsese and Robert Altman, who are similarly diffident about women, but absorbed by them; with Allen, they are the only mainstream directors who seem capable of a more than fleeting interest in the women whose faces their cameras flash past.

Harrowing

This attentiveness to Annie, in *Annie Hall*, produces an odd disjunction between the film's two effects—it is at once slick, and haunting, at once the film of the moment, and a film which unwraps at moments a quite harrowing ability to tell the exact pulses of a relationship.

By ELIZABETH THOMPSON

LETTER:

Destiny unfulfilled

A reply to the review by Keith White in *Socialist Press* of David Edgar's play *Destiny*.

Liverpool
14.2.78

Dear Comrades,

I don't think that "David Edgar's play is a weapon in the struggle to build a working class opposition to fascism" as your reviewer seemed to suggest.

Any workers who watched the play right through to the end, (not many probably), might well have ended up a bit confused. Because in trying to "explain" why workers can be attracted to fascism the play unintentionally gives the National Front a big boost.

What comes across very strongly in the play is the strength, confidence, purpose of the fascists versus the absolute feebleness and bankruptcy of the other political parties.

The scene where the Tory candidate goes to National Forward's offices to confront them was typical in this respect. Fascist Cleaver mops the floor with the Tory.

Cleaver's politics are based on the "reality" of the uncle who despairs as blacks move into his neighbourhood. The Tory can only offer pathetic liberalism and meaningless platitudes about fairness and decency.

What's missing from the play, of course, is the genuine voice of the left. Not the cynical, scheming corrupt left, like the left-labour friend of the Labour candidate.

The only characters who could have served as the authentic opposition were the strikers. And because of the structure of the play they were merely incidental to the main action.

The white worker who made the appeal in the labour club put in a rather belated, token, confused and inadequate appearance. And he seemed to reduce the whole question of anti-fascism simply to solidarity on the picket line.

The Left in general has welcomed this televised play,

as your reviewer did, as a useful weapon in the anti-fascist struggle.

I think this is based on a misconception of how we address our ideas to the class. The ideas we present have to be related to the experiences of the people we are talking to.

Most of the revolutionary left press is related to the experience only of the small circle of people who are pretty close to the revolutionary left.

David Edgar's play was only intended for a narrow audience of people who had a certain understanding already of fascism.

If there was any effective agitation in the play it was expressed entirely by the fascists who were able, with a few key ideas, to offer a plausible explanation of what was happening in the world to the workers.

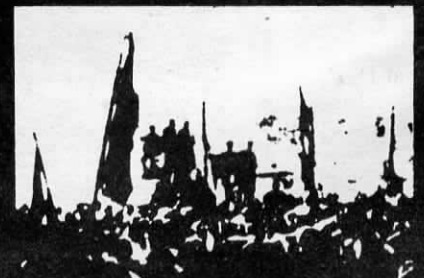
They spoke to the experiences of the working class. The class's understanding of those experiences was wrong, of course.

What the left has to do to change this false understanding is not to congratulate ourselves on the excellence of our dramas and propaganda, but to start expressing ourselves in relation to the real experiences of the class.

This may mean abandoning our comfortable rituals and the secret language we talk to each other with . . .

Yours,
Michael Bryant.

The Transitional Programme



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

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

TROTSKY

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OUR POLICIES Break the Coalition

We are publishing the first part of the section dealing with the coalition government contained in the British Perspectives recently adopted by the 2nd Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League.



PHOTO: Derek Speck, IFL

Tilbury power station burns during firemen's strike

Every aspect of the propaganda and practical work of the Workers Socialist League since March 1977 has centred on the political necessity for a break in the Lib-Lab coalition and to assert the political independence of the working class.

We have taken this line into our work in the unions, into day-to-day struggles against wage controls, against the cuts and into the work of Socialist Press supporters in the Labour Party.

Confused

But the fact that the working class remains confused on the issues involved has meant that the fight has had to be carried on at all levels in the labour movement.

We have in our press exposed the way in which the Callaghan government is tied hand and foot to the bourgeoisie and its parties, and the ways in which the wishes of the labour movement are subordinated to those of the Liberal Party.

We have fought at the same time to develop Councils of Action—most tangibly in the Firemen's strike—as the organisational basis for the new, independent working class leadership.

Complicity

Socialist Press supporters

inside the Labour Party have fought to raise resolutions and to focus discussion on the need to break the coalition, and the complicity of the 'lefts' in their tacit acceptance of the Lib-Lab deal.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Tribunite coalitionist Frank Allaun

But at the same time, whenever these 'lefts' have been faced in Parliament with the question of whether or not to vote in favour of the coalition and its policies we have spelled out the necessity for them to vote against it, and for them to launch struggles against it through-out the labour and trade union movement.

And whenever, predictably, these 'lefts' have trooped like sheep into the coalition lobbies we have drawn out the implications of their actions so as to ram

home the point for those workers who might expect them to fight.

We have pursued all of these avenues of work seriously, since we understand that workers will not spontaneously develop to a political understanding of their leaders or of their own accord jump over decades of parliamentary illusions.

Our movement has always stressed that workers learn political lessons like this not solely from books, theoretical magazines or even from leaflets.

Practical

Workers learn in the course of practical struggles in which their established leaders are put to the test.

We have aimed at proving to workers in practice that the 'lefts' in voting confidence in this bourgeois coalition are committing a class betrayal. And we have combined this agitation with propaganda for our programme and the need for a revolutionary leadership.

However it is necessary to further develop our demand for the breaking of the coalition in the light of the present situation.

The government, fearing working class resistance, is moving increasingly to reliance on the repressive machinery of the state to control the labour movement—using troops against strikes, riot police against pickets, courts against unions, etc.

But as it does so, the 'lefts' who prior to March would utter a protest here or there at government 'excesses' have with one or two exceptions fallen stony silent.

Absence

Last year's Labour Party Conference confirmed the complete absence of any 'left' challenge to the coalition.

Of the parliamentary 'lefts', only Denis Skinner is on record as publicly declaring his willingness to vote against the Lib-Lab deal—and he has done nothing to follow up these words.

We can expect this silence to be transformed into a blather of words under pressure of the mass movement, with the 'lefts' moving to head off any prospect of working class independence (as with the firemen's strike), but we must reckon with the positions actually adopted by the 'lefts' whose role complements that of the TUC.

Demands

Any leader that refuses to challenge the coalition government must now be sucked in to defence of the 10% pay limit. We must ensure that those demands we place upon the 'lefts' are directed towards drawing



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Labour Party Conference

from them a clear statement of position on this in front of the working class.

Indeed for all the bankruptcy of the Labour 'lefts', we are not yet at a stage where we can pose any credible alternative form of government and political organisation to workers.

Programme

Our programme, in so far as it is adopted and fought for by workers, obviously leads towards the formation of independent working class bodies—open the books committees, price committees, workers' defence squads and councils of action.

But we must recognise that the fight for such bodies is only at an embryonic stage.

To demand at this point that workers turn from their official leaders 'left' and right alike and build such bodies; and to assert that this is a "governmental slogan" could at best be termed a vain gesture and at worst an ultra-left adventure.

The technique of counterposing "higher", "more revolutionary" bodies which do

ing capitalism and represents the chief obstacle to historical progress.

The chief accusation which the Fourth International advances against the traditional organisations of the proletariat is the fact that they do not wish to tear themselves away from the political semi-corpse of the bourgeoisie.

Under these conditions the demand, systematically addressed to the old leadership "Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power!" is an extremely important weapon for exposing the treacherous character of the parties and organisations of the Second, Third, and Amsterdam Internationals.

The slogan "workers and farmers government" is thus acceptable to us only in the sense that it had in 1917 with the Bolsheviks, i.e. as an anti-capitalist and anti-bourgeois slogan, but in no case in that 'democratic' sense which later the epigones gave it, transforming it from a bridge to the socialist revolution into the chief barrier upon its path."

Of course in today's

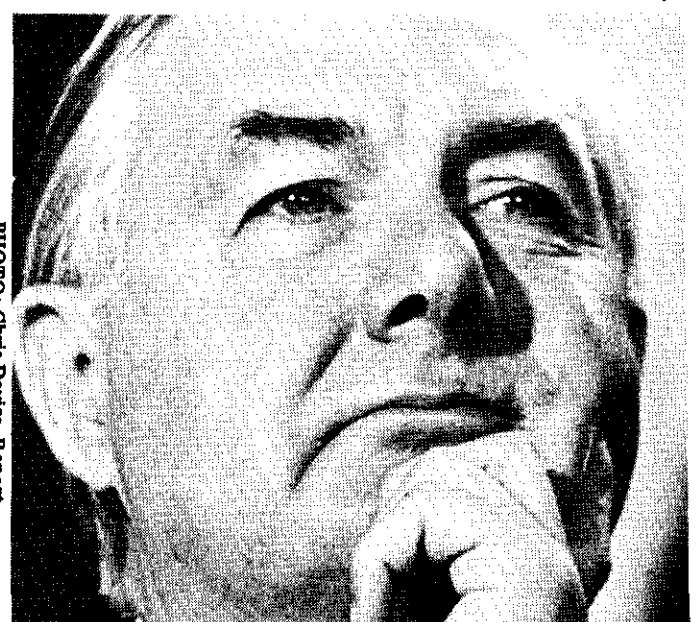


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Callaghan

not yet exist, to the actual trade unions and mass parties built in centuries of struggle by the working class is a hallmark of petty bourgeois "revolutionism" and a rejection of the method of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL must fight to raise the working class from today's conditions and today's consciousness to the understanding of the need to overthrow capitalism and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

And, as the Transitional Programme spells out, this involves the exposure of the existing reformist leaders:

"The central task of the Fourth International consists in freeing the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the catastrophic eruptions of disintegrat-

context the anti-capitalist slogan "break from the bourgeoisie, take the power" must mean much more than simply calling on the Labour leaders to terminate the Lib-Lab coalition and take the power in their own name.

Situation

This would amount to asking for no more than a return to the situation before March this year.

The complexity of the political situation demands a precise system of slogans and tactics which can lead workers to an understanding of the need for a government politically independent of the bourgeoisie.

As communists we stress above all the need for the mobilisation of the working class.

Not one important question can be solved while the masses trust their fate to the antics of reformist parliamentarians and trade union bureaucrats.

The WSL must pose the need, at each stage of the struggle, for transitional and partial demands, for the proletariat to control its leaders and drive out those who betray.

For the coming period the slogan 'Build Councils of Action' stands at the centre of our propaganda and agitation, as we have said, not only as the best means of immediately co-ordinating the struggles of the working class, but of preparing the apparatus through which the proletariat will be able to assert its power over the bourgeoisie.

Return

The working class has the task of preventing the return of an unprecedentedly vicious Tory regime.

The first step must be to break the undeclared coalition between Labour and the Liberals. The WSL pours scorn on the reformists' pitiful excuses for their anti-socialist 'Pact'.

Labour could be assured of power if it was willing to mobilise the strength of the working class against the bourgeoisie—but instead the reformists prefer to cite their lack of a parliamentary majority, to manoeuvre with Steel, and to pave the way for Thatcher.

Thus, alongside our call for Councils of Action we say "Keep out the Tories! Break the Lib-Lab coalition!"

But such a fight is unthinkable under the leadership of Labour's coalitionist traitors. Whilst constantly exposing the 'left' talkers of Labour's NEC and the Tribune Group, the WSL specifically calls for the removal of Callaghan, Healey, Rees, Mason and the gang of cabinet coalitionists.

Fake 'lefts'

The mobilisation of the labour movement to drive out these lackeys is at the same time the best means of compromising the fake 'lefts' by exposing their refusal to break with the right wing.

The spectacle of the firemen, marching in London at the beginning of their strike, chanting 'Rees Out!' even while on their way to a rally addressed by Tribunes Wise and Allaun is something from which we must draw the correct lessons.

Such situations indicate the importance in the fight to end coalitionism of the demand "Make the 'lefts' fight"—in conjunction with the demand "Kick out the Callaghan-Healey leadership".

Continued next week.



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Slave driver heads East

Transport and General Workers Union docks official, John Madden, has taken a £15,000 a year job in Saudi Arabia.

Madden has resigned as Divisional Officer for Tilbury Docks and gone to work as a labour supervisor for a firm which sacked almost 300 members of his union in 1975.

Racist

And he is going to work in a country which operates a racist cast system of employment, where whites are used as a privileged layer of workers to help ensure the continued super exploitation of Arab workers.

This will come as no novelty to Madden (whose

new job is revealed by docker Bob Light in *Socialist Worker*).

For two years Madden has been using his union office and union time to recruit dockers for Saudi Arabia, while at the same time he sat on the London Dock Labour Board.

This body is responsible for discipline at the docks and would play a decisive role in deciding whether dockers who had left to work in the Middle East would get their jobs back if they wanted to return home.

Madden, in becoming the Don Revie of the TGWU, will no doubt find familiar faces among his employers. The largest shareholder in the firm of consultants for which he

will work is Scruttons-Maltby, a firm which is supposed to have gone bankrupt in 1975, throwing 300 white collar workers in London onto the dole.

Madden himself was one of the negotiators for the union.

Madden's class role is little different from the rest of the unelected, boss loving TGWU bureaucrats whose fat salaries and 'company' cars are paid for by the union membership they betray.

As labour supervisor for a rotten regime in the Middle East he will presumably carry on his job much as at Tilbury.

Through their low wages Arab dockers will now indirectly pick up the bill for this parasite.

END JOB RUMOURS

Dealings in shares of Massey Ferguson were suspended two weeks ago following a massive loss by the company over the last quarter.

Production at Massey Ferguson Coventry plant has been cut by 50% and for some weeks a large proportion of the workforce has been painting machinery and the factory.

One rumour circulating the factory is that the suspension of dealings in Massey Ferguson shares followed a period of heavy trading which indicated that a takeover bid was in the offing.

The effect of the cutback at Massey's has been felt sharply in Sterling Metals, Nuneaton which produces transmissions for Massey Fer-

guson. Production has been cut from 1,000 units a day to 1,000 a week.

The 2,000 workers at Sterling Metals are now on an indefinite 3-day week with no immediate prospect of resuming full-time work. Inside Sterling Metals workers are saying that the 3-day week is planned to last until 1981 and that redundancies are in the offing.

There has been a gradual reduction in the workforce over the last two years. (It is thought that Sterling Metals' parent company, Birmid Qualcast, has a factory in France competing with Sterling Metals for Massey Ferguson orders).

It is high time that the workers at Massey Ferguson and Sterling Metals won the right to know exactly what is

going on.

While the threat of unemployment looms they are left with nothing to do but speculate on the reasons for the present problems and the future of their jobs.

The situation clearly calls for the demand "open the books" to be raised. Only with a comprehensive view of the real situation facing these companies can the workers be in any position to plan precise tactics in a fight for an alternative to the employers' cutbacks.

Alongside the demand for the opening of the books, workers in Sterling Metals must demand work sharing with no loss of pay.

If Birmid Qualcast can't pay up there must be a fight for nationalisation without compensation under workers management.

Defend health service

Some 300 trade unionists picketed the Birmingham Area Health Authority on Thursday (February 23) against the imminent closure of Romsley Hill, a small geriatric hospital.

The picket was called by BACHCCS—the Birmingham Action Committee Against Hospital Closures and Cuts in Services—an organisation set up by hospital workers when the AHA threatened to close eight hospitals immediately and another seven over the next ten years.

Already workers at Romsley have voted to refuse talks on re-deployment or redundancies and they have refused access to anyone seeking to transfer patients.

Similar stands must be taken in all the other hospitals and the campaign Committee must turn towards forcing local health service trade union leaders into protecting their members' interests and making a real fight against health service cuts.

A public meeting has been called by BACHCCS on Wednesday March 8. The Workers Socialist League will be

fighting for a two part programme at this meeting.

This will be: firstly to obtain increased support from a wider base in the labour movement including industrial workers; and secondly to demand the leadership of the public sector unions pledge themselves to call area-wide strike action in response to any attempts to close these hospitals.

Union leaders who have talked about defending the health service must either do so in action now or be exposed as fakes.

Speke return wrong way to fight closure

Workers at Speke who voted seven to one to return to work 'to save the plant from closing' have taken a seriously wrong step.

The workers returned to the tracks on Monday after 17 weeks on the streets, operating the faster line speeds which sparked off the strike in the first place.

Set against the threat of closure, this may appear to be a diversionary issue, the defence of which was not paramount.

Speed up

But for Leyland the strategy of speed-up and the strategy of closures are complementary strands in an all-out attack on the workforce.

A defeat on one issue is a blow against the whole fight.

The membership which has shown its determination to struggle has been defeated on the question of speed up because its leadership was unable or unwilling to draw the connection with the fight needed to save the factory.

The vote came at a mass meeting of 3,000 workers, only 1,800 of whom were strikers. To have pulled a majority vote for staying out under these conditions would have required a five to one majority among the strikers themselves.

Official

It is no accident that the decision to take the vote at a meeting including workers not on strike follows on the decision to make the strike official by only two weeks.

The TGWU made the strike official at the same time as the company made its first official noises about closing the plant.

The first step in heading off a fight against closure was to end the strike.

Clearly the move by the union bureaucracy was not the only factor. The seven to one vote reflects a majority for returning to work of nearly four to one among the strikers themselves. To have persuaded the strikers to stay out meant effectively opposing the propaganda being printed in the Press and on TV and radio.

The failure of the plant was blamed on the workers' 'laziness'. "Extremism" was said to be rife in the plant. Red baiting was the order of the day.

Attacked

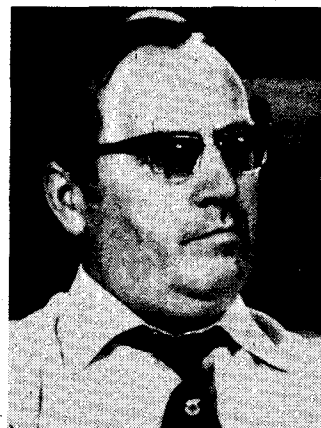
The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, the Most Rev. Derek Warlock, called last Thursday for the men to return to work and for the plant to be kept open. In doing so he attacked the workers as being the cause of the decision to close.

The workers at Speke must now urgently alert themselves to the fact that the arguments of their union officials and the arguments of this representative of the Vatican are identical.

Any campaign backed by either would be limited to appeals, lobbies of Ministers who have already refused to intervene and a final appeal for volunteers for voluntary redundancy.

Individual workers cannot be expected to effectively combat this smokescreen isolated and without leadership.

Yet the mass meeting to end the strike was only the



Moss Evans, TGWU leader

second mass meeting of the whole strike and the first since November.

Such a style of leadership is a negation of proletarian democracy—which demands that the leadership rest on the authority of the workers. It is also a serious error since it is through mass meetings, through discussions over tactics and the countering of propaganda that the working class develops and learns in a dispute.

What comes next? A joint committee of five unions has been set up at Speke to fight the closure. Already it has announced that no mass meeting will be held for about four weeks.

It is in crises such as the one at Speke that the need for a revolutionary leadership, able and willing to base itself on the independence of the working class and the defence of all jobs and conditions is most sharply posed.

Without one Speke will undoubtedly close. It is already too late to be wasting time looking to right wingers and Stalinists to lead opposition.

Transfer

Speke workers will be quite right to demand that such so called leaders refuse to allow transfer of work to take place and demand that they back their actions. But they cannot look to them for leadership or trust them to give backing. At the moment when an occupation is posed, when the determination of the work force to defend their jobs clashes with the determination of the Coalition Government to defuse the struggles of the working class, that is the exact moment when the right wingers and Stalinists will openly desert to the enemy and the 'lefts' will crumble.

Speke workers must choose leaders who are prepared to make no compromise with the independence of the struggle.

Above all they must never forget that every convenor or senior steward who voted last month for the Edwardes' plan voted for the closure of Speke.

Workers must demand the building of a truly representative committee to run the fight, to demand the opening of all books and accounts, all plans and projections relating to Speke. This must be linked to a call for genuine nationalisation under the management of the workers and for a programme of public works for the workforce to carry out if enough cars cannot be sold.

Work sharing

The workers must also demand work sharing on full pay where all work available is shared out among the existing workers, without a penny being lost from their pay packets.

These demands will bring them into conflict with much of their present leadership and with the Coalition Government, whose main aim is to axe jobs and defend profits, in this case in the private industry which feeds off Leyland.

If that happens new leaders must be found ready to fight for the demands and the Coalition must be broken.

'Left' MPs must be told that either they fight for the programme necessary to save Speke or they keep quiet about pretending to be on the side of the workers.

Unemployed

Preparations should be made to form a delegate council of action at Speke to defend the factory, drawing in all labour movement bodies, including the unemployed, women trapped in the home and all workers' parties and organisations.

Such a fight will threaten the bureaucrats who control the unions in Leyland and the ability of the Coalition to govern.

That must not be allowed to interfere with the defence of Speke.

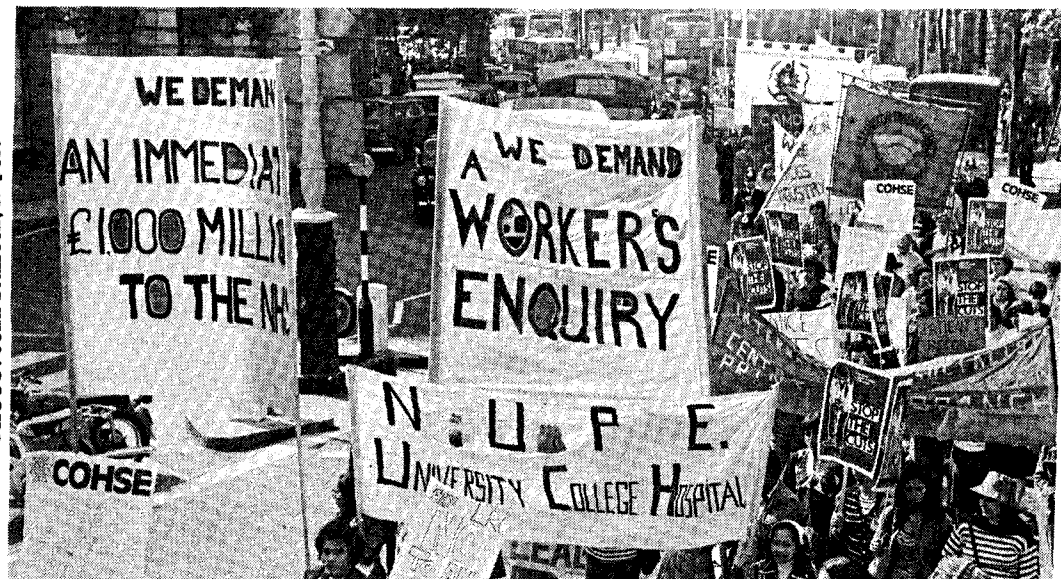
The workers at Speke—the whole working class—do not owe the union bureaucrats or the Coalition Government a living.

OCCUPY SPEKE!

OPEN THE BOOKS!

DEFEND ALL JOBS WITHOUT LOSS OF PAY!

FOR A PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC WORKS UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WORKERS!



Demonstration in support of EGA. This hospital has been kept open for two years as a result of an occupation and campaign throughout the London labour movement

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Buckton runs from pay fight

As we go to press it seems certain that ASLEF train drivers will press ahead with the one-day strike called by their leadership in pursuit of increased bonus payments.

We support any section of workers prepared to fight the employer for an improvement of wages and conditions.

ASLEF leaders have stressed repeatedly that they are seeking increased bonuses equal to those agreed for NUR pay train guards—and not fighting to hold up or block those increases.

For this reason workers should brush aside the press hullabaloo and confusion-mongering and the vicious

reactionary positions argued by NUR leader Sid Weighell, and support the ASLEF action.

But at the same time it is necessary to see the way ASLEF leader Buckton has used the token strike on this issue to duck the central issue of the ASLEF pay review.

Buckton was one of the TUC 'lefts' who sounded off verbally last year against any Phase 3 of wage control.

He went as far as voting against a Phase 3 at the TUC, and was one of the 17 union bureaucrats pressured into voting in support of the firemen's strike in the December meeting of the TUC General Council.

But Buckton had no intention of applying these words and gestures to his own union.

Despite an ASLEF pay claim calling for 30-40% increases, Buckton—who sat on his hands while the firemen were defeated by the Lib-Lab strike breakers—has made no call or preparation



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Ray Buckton for serious action.

The series of token strikes outlined by ASLEF are completely inadequate, and have been divorced from the pay claim itself.

Train drivers must demand that these actions are immediately turned into a full-scale stoppage in support of the full 30-40% pay claim, and call on NUR members—whose union conference drew up a 63% claim which has been brushed aside by Weighell—to take simultaneous action to win their own claim.

DRIVERS VOTE SOLID SUPPORT

The statement reprinted below was signed this week by 110 TGWU members working in the Transport Department at British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant.

"A full meeting of the membership of the Transport Department has passed a unanimous vote of confidence in our shop steward Bro. A. Thornett who has represented our interests for the past 16 years.

The meeting decided that it would not tolerate any interference with Alan Thornett's shop steward's card or his membership of the union.

It was the wish of the department to stage a token strike on Tuesday 28 February in order to demonstrate our resolve on this matter.

We have however now received

a personal request from the senior steward Bro. Bob Fryer not to proceed with the strike under conditions where the management intend to precipitate an unnecessary closure of the plant in order to inflame the situation.

We are prepared to accept this advice at this stage but we emphasise that we cannot stand aside and see victimisation take place.

We intend to sign this statement collectively and to deliver it to the district office by means of an elected delegation".

The dispute began over the right to make local claims on top of the 10% national agreement. With a clause now agreed that allows chapels to put in local claims, the fragmentation of the settlements over backdating is making a united fight over wages against key employers less and less likely.

The NUJ tactic of a work to rule rather than all-out strike was the correct one. The union membership—due entirely to a combination of SWP ultimatism and right wing sabotage—voted against strike action on the national wage claim.

Those chapels prepared to fight for wages had to avoid the trap of allowing the employers to dictate an all-out battle over the preliminary issues.

Likewise the tactic of allowing some chapels to reach local agreements was also correct, since this split the unity of the employers and created divisions in the ranks of the Newspaper Society.

But the tactic has now become self defeating. As the number of chapels settling increases so the number of chapels fighting on diminishes, the danger of isolation grows and the confidence of the employers to deal with the remaining chapels, including some of the toughest in the country, increases.

Chapels must demand that the NUJ negotiators make themselves accountable to the membership still struggling.

Several chapels have

already faced lock-outs of short periods and a general wave of lock-outs is now expected against chapels which have increased the severity of their sanctions.

They must demand that no more local settlements are permitted and that national action be called if a wave of lock-outs takes place.

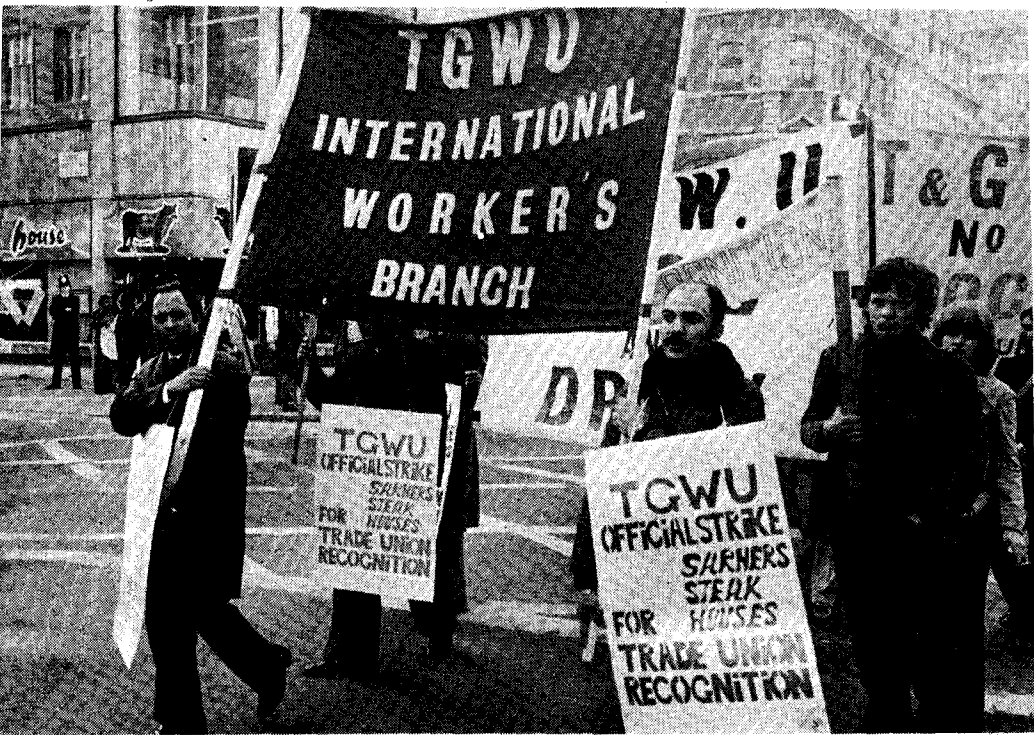
Chapels have won the right to make local claims and must unite to ensure that wage claims are submitted and fought for, not by negotiating phony productivity agreements, but by combating wage controls head on and demanding wage rises to restore and retain living standards.

It is necessary to fight for wage rises to match inflation and for elected committees of workers, and working class unemployed and housewives, to dictate what rises are necessary.

Primary

But the importance of the present struggle must not be underestimated. Although it takes the form of a preliminary struggle having its roots in a seemingly secondary question of backdating, the employers have chosen to make it an issue of primary importance in the continuing campaign to destroy the NUJ and prop up the weak and ineffectual company union, the Institute of Journalists.

NUJ members must therefore be prepared to fight this battle through as if the rights already won by the union depended on it.

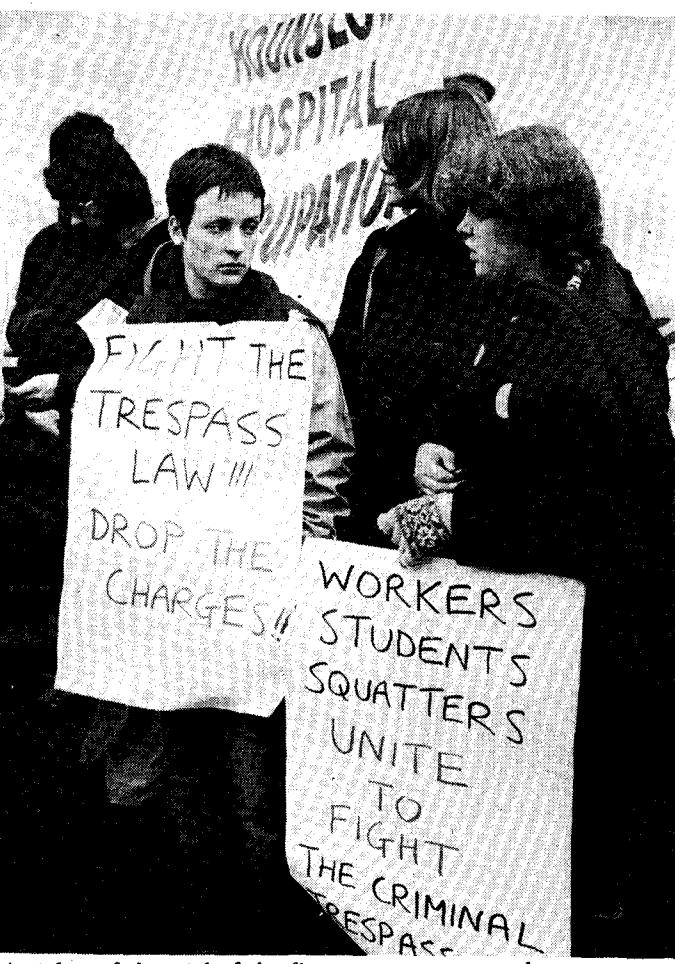


Still solid—the union recognition strike by workers at Garners Steak Houses.

—NUJ: isolation danger—

NUJ chapels fighting for backdating of their national agreement to January 1, face an increasing danger of being left isolated.

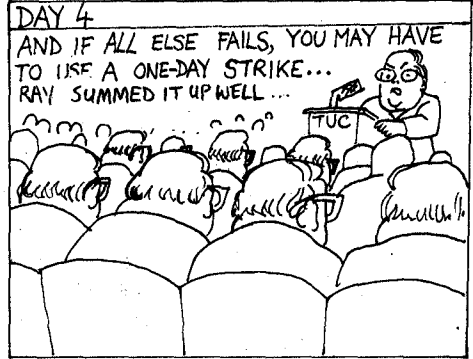
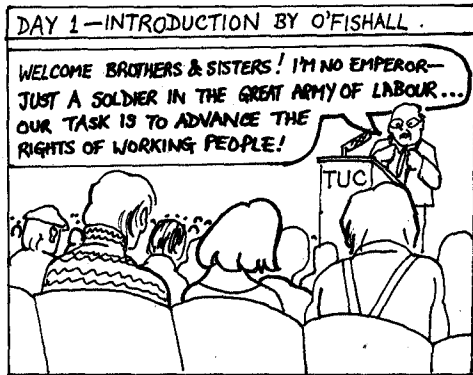
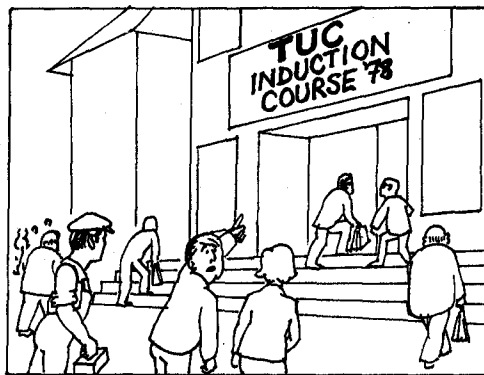
conceded the demands at local level—including Thomson Newspapers—and only Westminster Press and United Newspapers of the large employers are refusing local deals in a significant number of chapels.



A picket of the trial of the first person prosecuted under the Criminal Trespass Law—the law designed to outlaw sit-ins and occupations.

O'fishall's Diary

...YOUR MAN AT THE TOP'S FIGHT TO STAY ON YOUR BACK.



FIGHT BAN ON BASIC RIGHTS

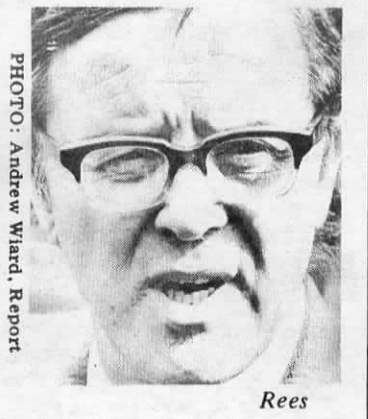


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Rees

The decision of Metropolitan police commissioner David McNee, backed by Prime Minister Callaghan, to ban all marches in London for two months is a major offensive against democratic rights in this country.

This attack—done under the guise of banning the National Front march in Ilford last Saturday—shows up all those liberals, reformists and Stalinists who have been campaigning for the capitalist state to ban the NF.

Sure enough the Stalinists in their paper the "Morning Star" have protested the ban as have some liberals.

But their answer to the ban is that of "Star" editor Tony Chater at the paper's 48th Birthday Rally:

"When are you going to use the Race Relations Act, Mr. Rees?"

In other words the Communist Party continues to campaign for the capitalist state to act against the fascists.

This is the very policy that led to the London ban.

These people continue to issue appeals to the Lib-Lab government—the very people whose policies, creating mass unemployment, housing shortages, plunging living standards and savaged social services, have developed the conditions on which the fascists feed.

Class solution

No! There must be a fight for a class solution, based on a policy to give a lead to the working class in fighting unemployment, the 10% pay policy and other government attacks.

Part of this policy must be the use of the organised strength of the working class to drive the fascists off the streets.

The refusal of workers' leaders to call such action gives confidence to what are only relatively small numbers of fascists. A mere 500 turned out to back the NF in Ilford.

The Communist Party's opposition to independent struggles by the working class emerges clearly on this issue.

While in industry CP members like Leyland convenor Derek Robinson refuse to fight the 10% pay limit and endorse Edwardes' plan for job-cutting and speed-up, and James Airlie fights to turn Govan shipyards into a scab yard, the Communist Party argues a similarly reactionary line on the fight against fascism.

Bishops

CP General Secretary Gordon MacLennan praises bishops who speak out



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Police control anti-fascists in Ilford

against racism, and calls on Home Secretary Merlyn Rees—famed for his repression of workers in Northern Ireland—to "act" against the fascists.

The problem is that Rees is acting—and already using the same language he used to justify army action in Northern Ireland.

Rubber bullets

"Decent people will insist on peace in the streets", he announced on Monday. No-one should forget that Rees' idea of "peace" includes use of troops on the streets, rubber bullets, live bullets and CS gas, along with the complete suppression of democratic rights for those forces opposed to British imperialism.

The answer to Rees and the Lib-Lab government must be a struggle throughout the Labour and trade union movement to break this reac-

160,000 US coalminers face a massive combined assault on their three-month strike for a new contract, leading up to a UMW ballot on March 6.

The Carter administration, the employers grouped in the Bituminous Coal Operators' Association, and their own union bureaucracy are using every device to force home acceptance of a vicious contract only slightly reworded from previous offers.

Embodied in the BCOA's latest proposal—which has now been passed on for ballot voting by the union's 39-man bargaining council—are provisions to discipline unofficial strike leaders, an end to free medical treatment for miners, and a continuation of sharp differentials in pensions between those retiring before and after 1974.

The bosses' only, much publicised, "concession" was to tone down their previous insistence on

a \$20 a day fine on unofficial strikers—a provision that had been rejected by the bargaining council amid a huge storm of protest within the union when first advocated by UMW President Arnold Miller.

Discipline

But retained is a clear statement that, according to the UMW's official summary:

"the 1978 Agreement will contain provisions recognising an employer's right to discipline employees who cause or engage in unauthorised work stoppages, including participating in a sympathy strike at the operation of any signatory employer".

The provision of free health

care for miners under union control—won in 1960 after bitter struggles—is to be replaced by a company-run scheme costing miners anything from \$10-\$14 a week, paid into private schemes.

This runs directly counter to the conference mandate on UMW negotiators to improve health and retirement benefits.

And the other key UMW conference objective—equalisation and cost-of-living protection of retirement pensions—has also been thrown aside.

But Carter has now taken the initiative in forcing the UMW negotiators to heel.

Massive pressure

His decision to invoke the

powers of the Taft Hartley union-busting legislation—which would compel miners to return to work for an 80-day "cooling off" period—and to seek to impose a federal seizure of the mines were taken under massive pressure.

Confrontation

Lay-offs as a result of power shortages caused by the strike have begun to take effect, and coal stockpiles built up by bosses in order to fight the miners are now dangerously low.

Even so, Carter had until the weekend hesitated to resort to legal measures, which could well have been defied by miners, provoking a huge confrontation.

His threat of such action was designed to have an impact on UMW bureaucrats rather than rank and file miners.

That the union's bargaining council has been stampeded into recommending this deal under pressure of Carter's threat should come as no surprise.

As Socialist Press has continually pointed out, the militancy of the miners in their marathon strike has not been matched by the development of any independent political leadership within the union, whose leaders remain tied to the coat tails of the capitalist Democratic Party.

These union bureaucrats now prefer to confront the hostility of their own members rather than mobilise the full strength of the UMW and the US labour movement in preparation for a massive collision with the forces of the state and the Democratic apparatus, in which workers could discover their real strength and take steps towards political independence.

For similar reasons UMW officials as much as the private coal bosses have declared their support for disciplinary action against unofficial strikes, which they see as a threat to their bureaucratic hold on the union.

Hostility

Despite the grovelling of these leaders it is still open to doubt whether or not they will succeed in forcing home this sell-out deal in a ballot.

Hostility to no-strike clauses and feeling on health benefits are running high.

One gauge of the mood of miners is the response to a petition by rank and file UMW members in Miller's home state of W. Virginia—which has attracted 15,300 signatures.

But the key question remains that of political leadership within the UMW.

The brazen alliance of Democrat and Republican politicians with coal bosses and union officials against the miners' demands demonstrates vividly the need to break the UMW and the whole American labour movement from these capitalist political parties, and to take determined steps for the formation of a Labour Party to defend the interests of the working class.

Miners must throw out 'new' offer



US miners make their aims clear

care for miners under union control—won in 1960 after bitter struggles—is to be replaced by a company-run scheme costing miners anything from \$10-\$14 a week, paid into private schemes.

Challenge

Already Rees is talking of extending the ban—opening the possibility of May Day marches being declared illegal.

This state crackdown must be challenged by every trade unionist and Labour Party member. The fascists will be crushed only by the workers' movement.

And the organised working class must insist on the freedom needed to destroy the National Front.

AS WE GO TO press, Massey Ferguson have announced that all 4,000 production workers at the Banner Lane, Coventry, plant are to be laid off for three days at Easter.

1,000 machine shop men will be laid off for the following five days—a total of 8 days in all.

The company are guaranteeing five day working only until April of this year.

These developments make even more urgent the demand for opening the books and for the demand for work sharing on full pay to be raised within the plant. (Full story, Page 10).

Massey's lay-offs

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