

SOCIALIST PRESS



Weekly paper of the Workers Socialist League * No. 153 * June 6, 1979 * 15p

CROSSROADS:
The story behind
**S. African state
climbdown**
CENTRE PAGES

Prices soar; jobs under threat OIL CRISIS HERALDS NEW RECESSION

The chronic, insoluble crisis of world capitalism—a crisis that has already given rise to two world wars, the horrors of fascism, and the Depression of the 1930s, and which currently brings unemployment, poverty, repression, disease and starvation to countless millions of workers and their families across the globe—has new developments in store.

The growing shortage of oil supplies, and the 50% increase in crude oil prices in the first six months of this year now threaten workers with the consequences of:

- *a runaway rise in inflation on a world scale, dwarfing the already upward trend in prices;
- *a recession in manufacturing industry, bringing wholesale sackings;

- *a growth of openly cut-throat competition between rival national groups of capitalists, leading to trade war and the threat of further escalation;

- *an even more ruthless spate of attacks on the jobs, living standards and working conditions of workers in the advanced capitalist countries;

- *further economic devastation, repression and misery for the millions in the underdeveloped economies of Latin America, Africa and Asia.

The Tories and the Labour leaders, who share a common support for British imperialism and the crisis-ridden capitalist system, will of course argue that this crisis is none of their making, but 'brought about 'from outside' by Arab oil producers.

But the fact is that the entire capitalist world economic system rests on the oppression and exploitation of the colonial and ex-colonial countries as a source of cheap labour and raw materials for the highly profitable manufacturing industry of Western capitalism.

Lynch-pin

Foremost among these raw materials is, of course, oil, which has emerged as the lynch pin of capitalist production.

Yet the anarchy of the international monetary system and the falling competitiveness and profitability of US capitalism compared with its European and Japanese rivals have brought a plunge in the value of the dollars paid out in exchange for oil supplies.

At the same time the growing resistance of the working class throughout the world to the attacks on their rights waged by international capital has reached its peak in the massive



Abadan oil installation, Iran

upheavals that ousted the butcher Shah from the crucial oil state of Iran.

The ripple-effects of this crushing defeat for one of the world's most self-confident and ruthless tyrannies are still being felt throughout dictatorships and despotisms of the Middle East.

And the loss of Iran as a major strategic bulwark for imperialism in the Middle East, coupled with the 2 million barrels a day cutback in Iranian oil production, has struck a shattering blow to the economic and political stability of capitalism.

Unlike the 1973-4 oil crisis, when supplies were eventually fully restored, following a four-fold increase in crude oil prices, the new balance of forces in Iran means that oil supplies must inevitably remain cut back for the foreseeable future.

Since the capitalist market's demand for oil has increased by around 4% during the last year, this means in effect a drastic curtailment of supplies.

Recognising this, and seeing an opportunity to recoup revenues which they hope will help to stabilise their reactionary feudal and nationalist regimes against popular resistance, the Arab oil producers have moved in to increase their prices.

Zionists

Through such policies they also hope to head off opposition at home by posing as active opponents of the US-backed 'peace' between the Egyptian bourgeoisie and the land-grabbing Zionist state of Israel.

Indeed such is the anti-imperialist mass pressure that even the feudal rulers of Saudi

Arabia have felt unable to proceed at once with their tentative offer of increasing oil supplies to the West by 500,000 barrels a day for fear of allying themselves too openly with US imperialism.

But as the crisis, created by imperialism, creates mounting panic amongst motorists, soaring fuel prices and shortages, each national section of capitalists is beginning to join in a mad scramble to corner the available supplies.

Last week Carter's US administration decided to introduce a \$5 per barrel subsidy on supplies of imported heating oil—in a bid to corner a share of the market.

Enraged French, German and EEC officials have responded with a chorus of protest and demands for a special session of the 20-nation International Energy Agency.



But no amount of talk of a 'planned' solution can disguise the fact that capitalist competition and the drive for profit must inevitably lead to such dog-eat-dog measures.

As long as rival groups of capitalists are left to squabble among themselves and to attempt to force their opponents to carry the brunt of the crisis, the real loser in every instance must be the working class in every country of the world.

Speed-up

Galloping inflation will gnaw at inadequate pay packets: frantic speed-up and 'rationalisation' policies by the employers will slash jobs by the thousand; and these attacks will be accompanied by an onslaught on hard won trade union rights and working conditions.

Certain sections of the capitalist class—driven to desperation by the threat to their profits may well begin to contemplate the prospect of outright war to secure supplies of oil, to eliminate capitalist rivals, or even for the reconquest of the deformed and degenerated workers' states whose relative economic strength rests on their nationalised property relations and planned economies.

To fight back in these conditions of crisis, the working class must be equipped with a programme of transitional demands which, in offering an answer to today's material problems, point unmistakably to the necessity for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a planned, socialist economy under workers' management.

The Labour leadership—whether 'left' or right—offers workers no such programme.

Nor do the Stalinists of the Communist Parties, whose compromises with their 'own' capitalist class are coupled to

their talk of a 'peaceful road to socialism', through parliamentary reform.

Transitional demands

The Workers Socialist League, as a Trotskyist party, fights consistently for action on the following transitional and anti-imperialist demands:

- *Defend living standards! Wage increases must be protected against inflation through cost-of-living clauses giving automatic rises in line with a trade union cost-of-living index.

- *Defend all jobs! Occupy to stop redundancies! Demand work sharing between the whole existing workforce without loss of pay.

- *Fight for mass action to bring down the job-cutting Tory government of employers and bankers!

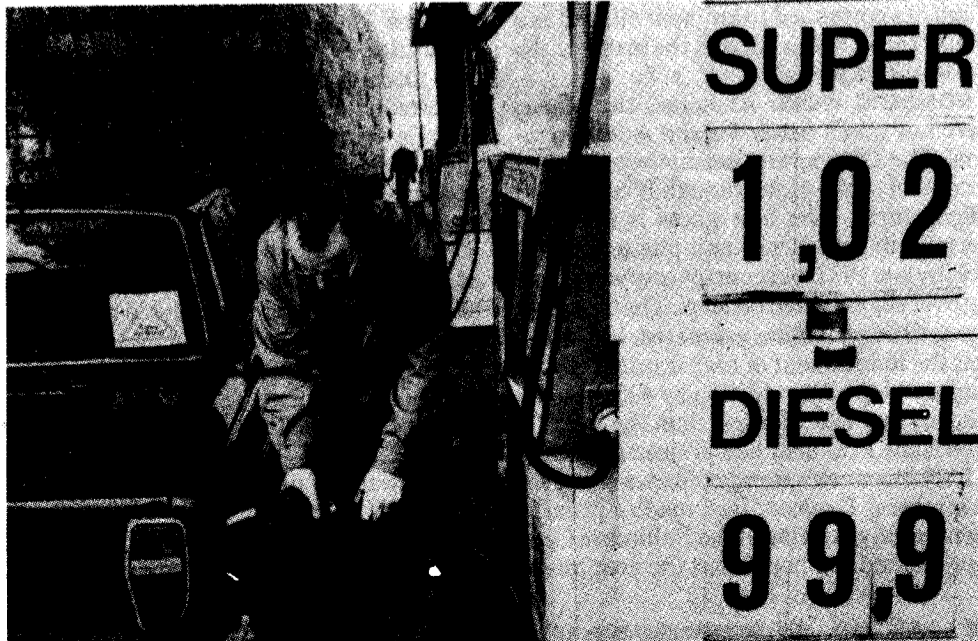
- *Open the books of the oil monopolies, along with the major industrial firms, the banks and the insurance companies to elected trade union committees! This will prove the case for their nationalisation without compensation, under workers' management.

- *No to import controls! Create new jobs through a crash programme of public works for nationalised industry under workers' management.

- *Immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and all overseas outposts! Down with slave-labour raw material contracts with ex-colonial countries. Renegotiate trade deals on equal terms!

- *Down with the reactionary Sadat-Begin 'peace' in the Middle East! Full support to the Palestinian war of liberation! Build Trotskyist parties in Iran and every Middle East nation! spearhead the independent struggles of the Arab masses!

- *Reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution, with sections in every country!



Diesel pump in Germany



THE BOAT PEOPLE: THE FACTS BEHIND THE CANT

We already have 1,500,000 unemployed, severe inner city problems and long queues for hospital treatment.'

This is not an extract from some kind of plea for socialism. These were the words of a Tory MP, arguing against the entry of any more Vietnamese 'boat-people' into Britain.

But Nicholas Winterton, and the group of extreme right wing Tory racists who share his position, have run ahead of Thatcher's leadership.

The Cabinet itself has reacted to this new crisis with a far more sophisticated response.

Hypocrisy

Of course the bourgeoisie does not hold a monopoly in hypocrisy but, as this example shows, they easily dominate a lively market.

At one level, there has been a straightforward double-standard which separated the Vietnamese fugitives from 'immigrants'.

Last week *The Guardian* reported how:

"Tory MPs, on the Right as well as Left, did not like the notion of refugees, especially from a Communist regime, being compared to immigrants".

Anti-communism was of course the force which led to the government's "admirable and morally cleansing" decision in stark contrast to the Tories' avowed intention to step up immigration controls.

Giscard's reactionary government in France has openly welcomed far greater numbers of Vietnamese, at the very moment when it was trying to introduce violent new measures against immigrant workers.



Devastation in war-racked Vietnam: and another cargo of boat people

Thatcher's self-righteous demand that other states should do more to share the burden has been an additional piece of hypocrisy which outraged other capitalist governments, well aware of the relatively small numbers of 'boatpeople' accepted into Britain.

With its liberal conscience easily satisfied, *The Guardian* moved on to advise the government to its own advantage:

"Nor should the British or any other government fear that refugees now coming from Vietnam would be idle or worthless citizens."

"A main reason why most of them are coming is that they were too successful, as capitalists, to suit the Communist designs of the government of Vietnam."

"Another reason for their leaving their country is that they are people of resource and determination. They will probably prove to be among the small businessmen of the future from whom Mrs. Thatcher hopes for so much."

This happy little picture does not square very easily with the scene in Hong Kong. While imperialist leaders beat their humanitarian breasts, the capitalists in the colony are busily scouring the refugee camps for labour to be put to work and super-exploited in the sweatshop conditions of Hong Kong industry.

But the major hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie has been its condemnation of the Vietnamese government for causing the refugee crisis.

The Stalinists of Hanoi have certainly followed policies which aggravated the situation. But the economic and social crisis within Vietnam was caused directly by the imperialist dominance and exploitation of the south, and the protracted imperialist war to protect those economic, strategic and political interests.

The escalation of the war transformed South Vietnam from a society bleeding from the ravages of foreign imperialism.

Collapsed

The structure of agricultural production collapsed; industrial development was directed towards the war effort and the speedy profits of entrepreneurs;

corruption and the black market came to rule exchange at every level.

All this was in addition to the more general social disruption caused by the war. In the north, too, the war exacted a toll that increased daily.

With the liberation of the south, the tasks of reconstruction were an immediate problem to be tackled.

But the Stalinist leaders of Vietnam approached these tasks with their own bureaucratic methods. At the same time they pursued their rivalries with the neighbouring Stalinist bureaucracies of China and Kampuchea.

The bitter fruits of their 'communism' are being gathered in Vietnam today.

The war of intervention in

Kampuchea and the war of defence against China have demanded a heavy price from the Vietnamese workers and peasants.

Beyond the cost of financing the military operations, there has been an almost total disruption of the programme of reconstruction.

Sections of the massive army had been sent as work-forces to develop vital projects. With the renewal of war, they were withdrawn to the fronts.

Abandoned

The building and rebuilding of hospitals, schools and power plants was abandoned. The sites of desperately-needed dams were emptied of workers.

For an agriculture based on irrigation, the consequences have been disastrous. In many areas crops have simply not been planted; in many others they will fail through lack of proper irrigation.

A situation of general hunger threatens to become a catastrophe of mass starvation.

In these conditions, the Vietnamese Stalinists have waged a campaign against the Chinese population. Many Chinese in Vietnam have been merchants and small traders, heavily involved in the black market.

But the Hanoi bureaucrats have exploited this class character, rather than based their actions on it.

Conflict

Their motivation has been to develop the conflict with their rival brothers in Peking.

At present there is no way of disentangling the reality from the propaganda of bourgeois reporting of the 'boatpeople'.

But it is difficult to believe that such large numbers can all be Chinese capitalists.

Already 1/4 million have fled to China alone; there are another 40,000 in Hong Kong, where 3,000 arrived on one day last month.

The Chinese Stalinists claim that 1/2 million refugees have left Vietnam since January, and that the Hanoi government intends to continue the flow at a rate of 10,000 per month. Other reports claim that 60,000 'boat-people' left Vietnam in April, but that only a quarter of them survived the journey.

It is clear that tens of thousands of these refugees, whatever their origin, will pass into lives of pauperdom in the imperialist colonies of the Far East.

Hard to assess

The part played by the Vietnamese government in this exodus remains the most difficult to assess. We have absolutely no sympathy with the plight of capitalists who have been stripped of their property before they can leave Vietnam.

But from the numbers involved, it seems certain that other layers must have been drawn into this movement—technicians, peasants, fishermen, fleeing in desperation from the crisis in Vietnam.

Such a development could only highlight immense material problems prevailing in Vietnam and the hideous bureaucratic deformities of the ruling Stalinist clique.

It reveals more sharply the urgent need for the building of an independent revolutionary party to overthrow by political revolution the Hanoi gang of dictators and traitors to socialism.

Arabs fight Iran tyrants

As the religious and bourgeois leaders struggle to impose their dictatorship on the Iranian revolution, they are confronted with growing opposition from huge layers of a society still in the throes of transformation.

The various sections of this latest movement have arisen separately. But they all share a democratic basis that is in conflict with the continuing repression of Khomeini's and Bazargan's divided regime.

Reign of terror

In this new stage, the reign of terror operated by the Revolutionary Courts and Guards will soon be directed away from the Shah's accomplices and henchmen towards the left wing and democratic opposition.

Wider attacks on democratic rights have already been foreshadowed by the attacks on gays—two more gay men were executed last week in the mullah's campaign against "vice".

Khomeini has now decreed that those who 'insult the clergy' should be punished by the revolutionary courts. This move is directed against all dissidents, but especially against the left.

The self-styled 'Marxist' forces of the Fedayeen have recently been attacked by large mobilisations of reactionary ele-

ments dominated by religious bigotry.

Khomeini has pressed ahead at other levels with plans to instal a Bonapartist dictatorship controlled by the Islamic clergy with himself as a powerful head of state. Promises of a Constituent Assembly have been tossed aside.

The latest proposal is for the new constitution to be ratified by a 'selected' and totally un-elected assembly before passing to a referendum.

This mockery of democracy has already provoked the anger of Iranian lawyers, but their protests will be only the first to be heard.

A fortnight ago, a demonstration of 100,000 people gathered in Tehran to demand an end to media censorship and press their claims for the democratic right to free speech.

Alongside these protests, the regime faces problems in its attempt to integrate the loyal Revolutionary Guards and the remnants of the Shah's army into one massive weapon to be wielded for the counter-revolution.

Orders disobeyed

There are reports from various areas of rank and file soldiers in the army who refuse to obey officers' commands and insist on reaching a collective decision after internal discussion.

But the greatest obstacle before the clergy and the bour-



Kurdish guerrillas in Sanandaj

geoisie at the moment remains the militancy of the national minorities.

Renewed fighting has broken out in Sanandaj, with Kurds attacking the headquarters of the local Revolutionary Committee.

For the first time, the large Arab minority in the southwestern province of Khuzestan has also come into violent conflict with the forces of the central government.

At Khorramshar (Iran's largest commercial port), a clash

between Revolutionary Guards and strikers led on to a violently racist, anti-Arab demonstration.

Troops and Revolutionary Guards then attacked centres of the Arab Cultural and Political Organisation, which has been demanding local autonomy.

Fighting rapidly spread, with paratroopers flown in, and extra troops to seal off and guard the nearby refineries in this major oil-producing area of Iran. Some 200 demonstrators were killed, with hundreds more seriously injured.



INTERNATIONAL

SPAIN'S TONY BENN LINES UP TO STEP INTO PSOE LEADERSHIP



Stepping up street violence—Fuerza Nuevo fascists

In an atmosphere of mounting political tension in Spain, with fascist bands stepping up their street mobilisations and calling for a military takeover, the struggle for the leadership of the Socialist Party (PSOE) has begun.

It looks fairly clear that one of the major contenders to replace Felipe Gonzalez as First Secretary of the party will be Francisco Bustelo, the best-known of the fake 'lefts' who lead the Madrid federation of the PSOE.

Parallel

There is a certain parallel between Bustelo and his

closest British counterpart Tony Benn.

Both men are self-evident political opportunists.

Both are limbering up for a shot at the leadership at a moment when the existing leader has lost prestige as a result of conference and election defeats.

Both men have for years cultivated a 'left' image despite the fact that in concrete terms they have gone along with every policy of the right wing leadership.

And both are now justifying their treacherous past but saying their parties now need a more left-wing policy for the future.

Same thing

Bustelo said so in so many words last week.

For the last two and a half years, he admitted:

"I would have done the same thing as Felipe Gonzalez."

For those years, he went on, Gonzalez had led the

party on the basis of "a declaration of principles even harder than the one we just adopted".

'Marxist'

He was referring to the declaration of the PSOE as a "Marxist class party" which was passed at the recent PSOE congress by an overwhelming margin—despite Gonzalez' pleas.

It was this defeat which pushed Gonzalez into what he clearly wants to be no more than a temporary resignation.

But, warns Bustelo, "If he says today he doesn't like those principles then it must be because he has a plan in his head which he

still hasn't told us about."

Bustelo referred particularly to a possible plan for a coalition government with the right.

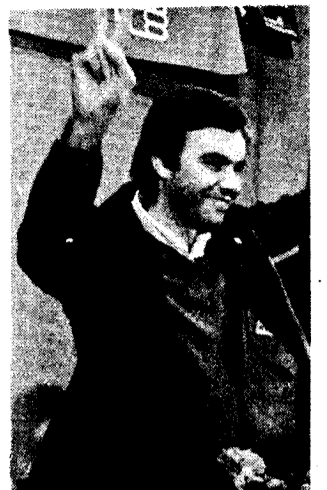
"Six months after entering such a government we would have to call the police to defend party headquarters against demonstrations of unemployed workers".

But Bustelo's defence of "Marxism" and opposition to coalitions remains on a formal level.

Refuses to fight

He refuses to fight for a programme of socialist policies.

Rank and file militants of the PSOE must reject



Gonzalez—in happier times

this crass opportunist attempt by Bustelo to gain the leadership.

The Bustelo bandwagon is not negligible.

But it must be derailed and substituted by a principled fight against the right-wing leadership based on the fight for the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.



Now jailed: UGTT leaders

Student riots shake Nepal tyrant

Tyranny is under threat in Nepal. The autocratic rule of King Birendra has been challenged by the development of opposition which has been spearheaded by the mass student demonstrations of the last two months.

Their democratic demands have symbolised the popular discontent with the political and economic system of the Himalayan state.

Poorest

Like nearby Bhutan, Nepal is among the very poorest countries in the world. The

average weekly income is £1 per head, in an economy dominated by agriculture, tourism and smuggling.

A product of Eton and Harvard, the young king succeeded seven years ago to his father's throne as the incarnation of the God Vishnu, King of Kings, the Five Times Godly, Valorous Warrior and Divine Emperor.

This panoply of names rests on the 'Panchayat' system of 'non-party' elections to a powerless assembly.

Designed to integrate every layer of Nepalese society in collaboration with the plans of the autocracy, the Panchayat system has met with deepening and broadening criticism.

Birendra is now faced with the terrible choice imposed on so many tyrants by the development of mass opposition.

Repression

With the Shah's fate as an unforgettable warning, Birendra must choose between methods of repression which may well spur on the determination of the opposition, and methods of reform which will give the opposition increased strength and political opportunities.

Already his hand-picked prime minister has been forced to resign.

Birendra himself has resorted to the time-honoured device of a referendum on a new constitution—revised but still anti-democratic through and through.

If Vishnu does not come to his aid, the Divine Emperor may have to fall back for more than moral support on the loyalty of the Gurkhas, trained like himself by the open-handed generosity which the imperialists display only to their most valuable servants.

Free Tunisia's union leaders!

Amnesty International has launched a campaign for the immediate release from jail of almost the entire leadership of Tunisia's trade union movement.

Twenty four top union officials were jailed last September for terms ranging from six months to ten years with hard labour, following the one-day General Strike called by the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) on January 28, 1978.



Tunisian premier Nouira

The strike—intended as a token protest—had followed a wave of unofficial strikes in defiance of a reactionary no-strike 'social contract' agreed between the UGTT and the Bourguiba government early in 1977.

Armed police

It was met by masses of armed police and the armed forces that took to the streets and occupied strategic positions in advance of the strike.

Over 1,000 arrests took place and hundreds were killed or wounded. The regime meted out savage beatings to many who were subsequently released.

And Amnesty quotes *Le Monde* which reported that afterwards over 150 people were tried in one week alone and sentenced to prison terms ranging from three months to seven years.

But the trial of the UGTT leaders was a particular mockery. Held before the State Security Court, the trial was closed to defendants' families and to an Amnesty observer.

All 76 defence lawyers withdrew in protest against the conditions of the trial. And when the court appointed 18 replacements they, too, stated that they were unable to defend the UGTT leaders since they had no chance to study the 4,000-5,000 page case dossier or to consult their "clients".

Following the predictable 'guilty' verdicts, 16 of the accused were sentenced to a total of 98½ years in jail.

Torture

Amnesty also report allegations of torture and ill-treatment made by defendants in court hearings in Sfax, Sousse and Tunis.

Its campaign circular calls on British trade unionists to fight for the release of the UGTT leaders by passing resolutions in union branches and trades councils; calling on union executives to send high-level delegations to the Tunisian embassy in London; and publicising the issue within the trade union movement.

Now in English, French and Spanish!

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EL POZO ENVENENADO



LAS RAZONES POR LA RECONSTRUCCION DE LA CUARTA INTERNACIONAL

WSL document submitted to the pre-conference discussion of the XI World Congress of the USFI.

US call to block arms to RUC

Once again the continuing war of liberation in Ireland has been brought into the headlines by a statement from leading US bourgeois politician "Tip" O'Neil, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

O'Neil, whose ludicrous remarks on Ireland being a 'political football' in British politics were angrily refuted by both Labour and Tory politicians during the election campaign, this time hit a more sensitive point by pressing for a US State Department ban on arms sales to the RUC.

He argued that the RUC—part of the armed backbone of the Loyalist sectarian statelet—was seen by many as biased, and that for the US to sell arms to the RUC would look like support for 'one of the factions in Northern Ireland'.

This stand has, more surprisingly, been supported by Michael O'Kennedy, the Foreign Minister of the pro-imperialist Irish Republic, and by the SDLP's spokesman on 'law and order' Michael Canavan.

The arms in question include M1 carbines and Mauser pistols—known colloquially as the 'Dirty Harry' gun, from the savagery of the injuries they inflict.

But it is significant that yet again the British military and police repression of the nationalist population in the North is highlighted by sources outside Britain, and met by a wall of silence from the leaders of the British labour movement.

The stopping of arms supplies to the brazenly sectarian RUC and to the occupying British army should not be left in the hands of US bourgeois politicians, but taken up as a task before the British working class.

Such a struggle is an essential part of the fight to force the withdrawal of British troops and open the way to the self-determination of the Irish people as a whole.



Bourgeois spokesman—"Tip" O'Neil

Tories put schools under the axe

The all-round offensive by the Tories against the education of working class youth was highlighted at last week's conference of the National Association of Head Teachers.

Education Secretary Mark Carlisle whose first move in office was to reprieve existing grammar schools and the reactionary '11-plus' exam and give financial aid to local authorities wanting to send children to independent schools, revealed plans to lower the school leaving age from 16 to 15.

In view of the inevitable massive increase in youth unemployment that will take place as the Tories' economic policies begin to bite in the growing recession, this policy makes good sense for the ruling class. Why spend out to educate youth for the dole, when the money could be saved and cut from the tax bill of big business?

Teachers cut

Carlisle also stressed that part of the Tories' spending cuts will include a reduction in the number of teachers.

"We hope local authorities will try to keep down teacher numbers. We expect them to follow that line", he declared.

One example of "that line" in operation is the swingeing cuts in education spending planned by the Tory-controlled Cheshire County Council.

Plans for a £5 million cut-back include the dismissal of 547 teachers, 256 manual workers and 114 clerical and administrative workers.

Such cuts can be expected in area after area, particularly after the coming Tory budget.

But one area of "education" that seems certain to forge ahead on an increased budget under the Tories is the intervention of the police into schools.

Police in schools

A report at last week's joint conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Association of County Councils and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities has urged that headmasters should be forced to allow policemen into schools to give children "lessons in citizenship".

Presumably they will show slides of the SPG murder of Blair Peach, the breaking of the Grunwick picket line, the harassment of black youth under the 'SUS' laws, and

pictures of the leading police officers convicted on corruption charges in order to convince school students of the case for "law and order".

Organise now!

It is more important than ever that school students, teachers and manual and administrative workers are fully organised now into unions and wage a joint struggle for action to halt the Tory war on working class education, on jobs and on the basic rights of youth.



Schools butcher Thatcher

Fighting for nursery care

Workers Socialist League supporters are in the forefront of moves to take up the initiatives of the TUC bureaucracy on the question of nursery provision.

Socialist Press has already spotlighted the TUC's Report on the Under Fives which came out last year.

At a time when increased cuts threaten even the existing meagre provision it is vital to expose those leaders in the labour movement who refuse to take up any real fight to defend a service to which they give verbal support.

The whole movement must be mobilised to fight for the maintenance and extension of nursery education as a key step towards combatting the oppression of women and drawing them into the organised working class.

In Leicester on June 16 the Trades Council has called a conference on 'Women's Right to

PRESS GANG



If there were a competition between on the one hand the bureaucracies of the degenerated and deformed workers' states and on the other the Catholic Church to find which has carried out most crimes against the working class then the Catholic Church would have to win the ribbon if for no other reason than it had several centuries start—an advantage which even the deepest dyed Stalinist would have trouble wiping out.

If Popery has not died in Poland, that is not a tribute to the staying power of religion but a condemnation of the Polish bureaucracy which has vacillated between accommodation to the Church and petty harassment, without ever challenging the social lie on which religion is based.

The visit of the Pope to Poland, though producing no events worthy of the name or 'news' was seen by the capitalist press in Britain as the most important 'SYMBOLIC' event of the week.

In describing the feudal pageantry the press found 'proof' of the superiority of capitalism.

These two strands were cunningly intertwined in the reports, as the Pope kissed the ground, inspected the Polish guard and then held a mass in Warsaw's Victory Square.

The *Sunday Telegraph* whipped itself into religious ecstasy (the real religion in this case being of course capitalism).

"Two million people lined the road taking him from the airport into Warsaw, threw roses, carnations and irises into his path and cheered clapped and shouted "Long Live Our Pope"...

"Many wept openly as the Pope climbed the raised dais to the altar and stood with open arms before the 30ft cross which was draped in red stoles."

You could be forgiven for thinking that this was a revolution that was being described, not the visit of the head of the most reactionary extortionist gang on earth.

The *Sunday Telegraph* reporter, John Miller, took in every nuance of the crowd at a glance.

"It was not a Communist rent-a-crowd but a genuine

and massive display of love and pride and joy—the sort of welcome never accorded by the man in the street in Eastern Europe to visiting Communist leaders.

The *Observer*, which marked the visit by turning over its colour supplement to studies of Stalin and 'Pope John Paul's Poland', also carried the visit as lead.

Not content with this, it carried a further article stressing that the state found religion an impossible nut to crack.

"Visits to any other places that might have shown the working class roots of Polish Catholicism were vigorously resisted by local party bosses who for years have been beating their heads against the obduracy of Polish faith.

"Doesn't his return to Poland as Pope mark the return of both the Polish Church and Poland to world history, a return predestined since the first Polish king was baptised a thousand years ago?"

So in tones of religious mysticism, does the press of the capitalists delight as the heads of the Polish deformed workers' state bow and scrape before the symbol of ignorance, reaction and exploitation.

SYL MEETS - ONE YEAR ON

"Workers and youth are fighting back. In Ireland and Zimbabwe they do this with guns: in Britain they are fighting through strikes and demonstrations.

"The problem is the leaders of the working class, who betray these struggles. We have to fight to get rid of these leaders and replace them with revolutionaries who will ensure that these struggles are successful and will

lead to socialism."

So spoke Phillip Moore, National Secretary of the Socialist Youth League at its annual conference on May 19, introducing the four-page main draft resolution.

The resolution stressed that in the mounting crisis of world capitalism the employers were determined to keep up their rate of profit—and this meant intensifying the exploitation of workers, in particular the youth.

The 50-strong audience that had assembled at the Whittington Youth Centre, Islington, included delegations from Scotland, Yorkshire, the Midlands, Aylesbury and Oxford as well as the London area.

They had been welcomed by conference chairman Matthew Jones (Glasgow SYL) who stressed in his opening remarks that the problems of unemploy-

ment, racialism and low pay faced by youth can be answered only by revolutionary policies.

A number of supplementary amendments strengthening the draft resolution were moved by SYL members: the topics covered included the struggle against Stalinism in the National Union of School Students; and the fight for equal rights, unionisation and free abortion and contraception on demand for girls and women.

New film

A strengthened SYL National Committee was elected and the conference saw an advance preview of a new film being made about the SYL and its work.

A showing of the film *Blacks Britannica* followed, and the day ended with a successful disco.



SYL National Secretary Phil Moore speaking at conference

PTA torture

Latest victim of the reactionary Prevention of Terrorism Act is Jimmy Scanlon, a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

He was picked up by police investigating the assassination of Tory MP Airey Neave.

His house was raided at 4 o'clock in the morning by an armed police squad on Tuesday 22 May. He was dumped in a cell at Paddington Green Police Station where it is reported he was kept awake for 96 hours (4 days!) by the police who brutally interrogated him every half-hour.

Now the state thugs, obviously frustrated at their inability to catch the killer of Neave have decided to deport Scanlon.

Despite daily pickets to get him released, the police requested an extension of their powers from the Home Office, which were granted.

On Tuesday 30 May a picket was organised outside the Home Office where the police limited the picket to six people in a desperate attempt to minimise its effect.

LONDON UTOM
Demonstration
Saturday 16 June
Assemble Speakers
Corner, 2.00 p.m.

WHY ARE MILITANT GROUP CALLAGHAN'S FAVOURITE MARXISTS?



We reprint below a letter from a supporter of Militant, together with our reply. The letter has been abridged for lack of space, but all its political points remain.

Bradford
21 May 1979

Dear Socialist Press,
As a "tame cat 'Marxist' of Labour's Militant Group", I was interested to read the whole page (1) which you devoted to the Labour Party in Socialist Press no. 150 (16 May 1979).

Unfortunately, it contained a number of distortions about Militant's role in the Election and afterwards.

You "quote" a sentence which appeared in the Editorial of Militant issue 455. The sentence being:

"Sections of the middle class were undoubtedly panicked by the Tory press's hysterical denunciation of last winter's strikes and particularly of the unskillful tactics occasionally adopted by some of the public service workers who had little or no previous experience of strike action."

However, rather than quoting the whole sentence, you quoted only the emphasised words added to which was the prefix: "climbing down to right wing attacks on the winter's pay strikes Militant even lashes out at what it astonishingly describes as: (and then the quote).

This more than implies that we are blaming last winter's strikes for Labour's defeat in the election.

This is a complete and utter distortion of our position, reminiscent of your "fellow travellers" in desperate ultra-leftist distortionism, the WRP.

To quote from the Editorial article in Militant which you claim to analyse:

"But Labour's rank and file will utterly repudiate this attempt (of the Right) to blame defeat on the workers who were pushed by the government's own policies into taking industrial action... Responsibility for the defeat lies with the Labour right's pro-capitalist policies."

A million miles removed, I'm

sure you'll agree from "just a back-stabbing attack on the strikes that did occur, for supposedly damaging Labour's election chances" as you claim in your article.

Yours is not the method of a revolutionary Marxist tendency, but that of a hopelessly sectarian grouplet, which, in despair at its inability to engage in real, scientific polemical criticism of Militant, a tendency which is a thousand times more correct in its perception of Marxism and Trotskyism than is the WSL, has to indulge in distortions, lies and fabrications, in order to attack Militant, presumably "to advance the theoretical level" of its revolutionary cadres.

Any fool, and 'fool' is the operative word, can omit parts of a sentence, add his own introduction, and then interpret the 'sentence' in a totally contradictory manner to the original meaning. However, to try to build a revolutionary tendency on it is bound to be a disaster. This appears to be what you are trying to do in last week's Socialist Press. [...]

Isn't it time that you started concentrating your attacks on:

1) The Labour Right instead of the Left and Pseudo-Left, when discussing the Labour Party.

2) The Tories, our class enemies, when examining the broader political spectrum.

Note—I say "concentrating" not "wholly devoting" to the groups mentioned.

You obviously have not forgotten your WRP past.

Fraternally yours,
Abdul Sheir
Bradford North LPYS and
Militant supporter.

WE REPLY

Brother Sheir's indignant letter sidesteps completely the political point that was being made in our original article—and



Militant supporters allowed to rule the roost in the LPYS, while Socialist Press supporters are hounded and expelled

in doing so reveals much about the nature of Militant Group politics.

We began by challenging the Militant's pathetically limp characterisation of the Callaghan government not as a thoroughly reactionary, anti-working class government but as a "failure".

We went on to query how any self-styled "Marxist" paper could find itself describing some of the witch-hunted pay struggles of last winter as "unskillful tactics".

The question we asked of the Militant Group, and which Brother Sheir refuses to answer in his lengthy letter was:

"Are we to believe that the subtle manoeuvres at the Militant editorial offices could have found a way to take strike

action in a hospital without a frenzied Tory press witch-hunt?"

The answer is clearly "no". It is not possible for Marxists to distance themselves from the "unskillful tactics" of the hospital and public sector workers without in effect separating themselves from these struggles as a whole.

Concordat

Indeed, it was through their willingness to concede that effective picketing and the solid industrial action in support of pay claims throughout the winter amounted to a "problem" to be "solved", that the TUC leaders wound up endorsing the reactionary restrictions of the Concordat.

For Militant to use the term "unskillful tactics" is undoubtedly a climbdown in front of right wing attacks and Tory press campaigns, and an attack on the struggles that *did* take place.

The fact that this was dressed up in the 'left' platitudes quoted by Brother Sheir about workers being "pushed into taking industrial action" by the "Labour right's pro-capitalist policies" does not invalidate our basic point that Militant, by using this tell-tale phrase echoes the positions of the bureaucracy.

Rather than railing at *Socialist Press* for highlighting evidence of such a bureaucratic approach amongst the Militant leadership, Brother Sheir would do better to investigate how it is that the paper he supports could refer to these major struggles of the working class only as embarrassing details to be explained away.

Our article went on to point out that:

"Militant says nothing of the importance of these strikes in preparing the basis of a fight against Tory attacks."

"Indeed it is back to the parliamentary arena and the inner-party debate, rather than political developments from such mass struggles, that Militant looks for hope in the future..."

Indisputable

Brother Sheir does not challenge this indisputable fact. Nor does he try to refute our criticism that Militant has consistently covered up for the capitulations of the Parliamentary 'lefts' including Tony Benn and remains opposed to the demand for the kicking out of Callaghan and the right wing leaders.

Indeed he himself demonstrates exactly the same approach when in his letter he urges us to "concentrate" our attacks on the Tories and the Labour right wing rather than the fake 'lefts' whose role is so crucial to the preservation of the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

The "anti-Tory" line of current issues of Militant show unmistakably the way in which such an approach blunts the struggle against Labour's right wing leaders.

The editorial of Militant 456 (on the Queen's Speech), for example, concludes by arguing that:

"the working class must be mobilised and united around a bold programme for the socialist transformation of society."

How, Brother Sheir, is such a programme to emerge without the removal of the right wing, anti-socialist Callaghan clique?

And how are they to be removed without simultaneously exposing the spinelessness of the 'lefts' who tamely allow the right wing to rule the roost?

The general call for 'unity' at this stage, with Callaghan declaring outright opposition to mass political action against the Tories, can only lead to impotence and surrender to the reactionary policies of the right wing.

Best equipped

If this is your view of "Marxism", then Militant is certainly the organisation best equipped to satisfy you.

But it also satisfies Callaghan and the Labour bureaucracy, who allow Militant free reign amongst Labour's youth in the confidence that it offers no real alternative and no serious challenge to their control.

Socialist Press supporters, on the contrary have faced bureaucratic attack, vilification, expulsions and exclusion from the Labour Party as a result of their tenacious struggle against both the crypto-Tory right wing and the 'left' fakers.

And it will be our supporters—though at present small in number—that remain at the forefront of the struggle in coming months for the mobilisation of the working class, not as pure election fodder for the Labour Party machine, but in the mass actions that are needed to defeat the Tory government and construct a principled revolutionary leadership.

THE 'UNITY' FRAUD

Militant is not the only left wing paper to make the deceptive call for 'unity' against the Tories and evade the fundamental problem of working class leadership.

Socialist Challenge, the paper of the International Marxist Group, has echoed the



McLennan

Militant's vague declaration that "socialist policies are the way: unite to fight the Tories" (front page, May 10).

IMG spokesman Rich Palsler actually declares that:

"... the fight to unite the labour movement in action against the Tories requires a political fight against the right wing." (31 May).

And in an extensive uncritical interview with newly elected Labour 'left' Ernie Roberts, Socialist Challenge revels in his call for unity of "all those on the left."

How far this "left" extends towards the right wing can be seen from the fact that Tony Chater, editor of the Stalinist Morning Star, was given extensive space in the supposedly 'Trotskyist' Socialist Challenge (May 17) to present a tarted-up 'left' face for the Communist Party.

Yet the Stalinists' real policy for 'unity' against the Tories was spelled out more honestly by CP General Secretary Gordon McLennan in the

Morning Star. He looks enthusiastically to an all-class popular front-style mobilisation:

"millions well outside the normal compass of the labour movement can be brought into action, including many who voted for the Tories."

The Star goes on to advocate:

"A broad alliance of democratic anti-Tory forces", as the means of resisting Thatcher's attacks.

The Stalinists have, of course, uncritically supported Benn in his opportunist moves to reconstruct his 'left' image in preparation for a bid for the Labour leadership.

But the real content of CP policy has emerged in the National Union of Students—where the Broad Left has now given way to a common front including the Young Liberals—and in ASTMS, where a sizable CP presence was mobilised at the union's conference in support of a package of right wing policies handed down by the NEC.

Unity in class action against the Tories will not be achieved through cuddling up to the Stalinists or capitulation to 'left' talking social democrats: it can only be achieved through the struggle against such forces for a principled programme of action in defence of jobs, wages and democratic rights.

This is the lesson that the IMG, like Militant, is unable to grasp.



Jenkins



Housing conditions in Soweto—the ma

Crossroads: black workers defy racist state

By Jim Farnham

The current acute phase of the worldwide crisis of decaying capitalism has forced the bourgeoisie in all countries to attack the living standards of the working class in an effort to restore the falling rate of profit.

In South Africa the effects of the crisis and the capitalist attack have been felt with fullest force in what the capitalist-apartheid state calls 'homelands' or 'Bantustans' and which are, in fact, poverty-stricken black labour reservoirs for 'white' capitalist industry.

The bare land of the Bantustans is totally unable to support the overcrowded and unemployed masses cast out by the capitalist system.

Since 1960, over 1½ million people have been removed from 'white' rural areas, and over 2 million from the cities.

They have been forced into the Bantustans where the shortage of land, minimal social services and unemployment are worsened by the corruption of the black bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie which 'governs' them.

Life there has become literally untenable: at least 85% of families live below the breadline and a third of all children die before they are five years old.

One result of this has been a continuous movement of thousands of people from the misery of the reserves into the cities, in a desperate attempt to evade starvation.

Legally, only workers already recruited through government agencies are allowed to work in the cities as migrant contract labour, living in segregated hostels and going 'home' for a few weeks each year to see their families and renew their contracts.

All wives, old people and unemployed workers are required to remain in the Bantustans, largely dependent for their survival on the inadequate wages of those in the cities.

For various reasons the Western Cape region, of which Cape Town is the industrial heart, has been most convulsed by this symptom of apartheid capitalism.

In Cape Town itself there is a chronic housing shortage. Even according to

official figures, in 1975 there was a shortage of 1,440 houses for even the black families *legally* in the area.

Yet in the past ten years no housing has been built for Africans, even those qualified to live legally in the area. In addition to this coloured (ie mixed race) workers and their families have suffered mass removals from 'white' areas.

About 250,000 squatters, mostly coloured, have built their shacks around Cape Town.

The largest squatter camp, Crossroads, consists of black (African) families who have left the overcrowded township ghettos, together with the wives and children of contract workers who have abandoned the

Bantustan death-camps and become 'illegal immigrants' to live with the bread-winning member of their family.

In fact, in 1966 the capitalist apartheid state declared its intention to 'de-Africanise' the area, which has the largest coloured workforce in S. Africa.

As a part of the ruling class strategy to divide the black working class and to create a privileged—hopelessly collaborationist—sector within it, the scheme was to 'phase out' African workers by a particularly ruthless enforcement of influx control and job reservation, leaving only coloured and white workers.

The plan proved a fiasco. Africans poured into the area seeking employment;

and the number of black contract workers in the Western Cape has, in fact, vastly increased over the past ten years.

Many of them were forced, by the lack of housing and the illegal status of their families, into the 'squatter camps'.

Intimidation

Of the 3,000 families at Crossroads only 100 are legally in the area. They have been subjected to continual police intimidation—raids under the notorious 'pass laws', evictions and the demolition of the shacks that are their homes.

Some Crossroads residents have had their homes demolished on as many as eight occasions.

By June 1976 when Crossroads was declared an

A brief chronology of the struggle for Crossroads

FEBRUARY 1975: The first shanties are built in the area—to become known as Crossroads.

MARCH 1975: Officials of the Bantu Affairs Administration Board (BAAB) serve eviction orders on residents.

MAY 1975: The first of a series of raids on Crossroads; 142 people are arrested on charges of trespass and the 'harbouring of wives'.

JUNE 1975: Some demolitions in terms of the March eviction orders takes place. Squatters obtain Supreme Court interdict that court orders are required before any demolition, but a subsequent amendment to the Act removes the necessity for this.

AUGUST 1975: Wives of men legally employed in Cape Town sent back to 'homelands'.

JUNE 1976: Residents appeal to have Crossroads declared an 'emergency camp' in opposition to an attempt to have it demolished as a 'health hazard'. As a result of their success, minimal water facilities, refuse removal and sanitation are laid on—for which a monthly levy of R10 (£5.00) is imposed on the squatters. The size of the camp is frozen. A school, built by the Crossroads residents, is opened.

AUGUST 1977: The nearby Modderdam Road squatters camp housing 10,000 people is demolished.

JANUARY 1978: The shacks of 10,000 squatters are destroyed at Werkgenot and Unibel.

FEBRUARY 1978: All residents warned that if they do not shortly pay the rent levy their homes will be demolished. The Deputy Minister of Plural Relations and Development promises that 'every method available to the government will be used to make them move', and it is announced that Crossroads will definitely be demolished before the winter.

APRIL 1978: The first Urban Foundation newsletter appears in the camps.

MAY 1978: Crossroads residents receive notices ordering them to break down their homes and return to the reserves. Some shacks are demolished.

JUNE 1978: Hundreds of people arrested during continuing police 'pass law' raids and harassment, and the police fire shots to disperse stone-throwing crowds. A reprieve is announced on demolition until after winter.

AUGUST 1978: The 'Independent'

Transkei reserve refuses to accept 'so-called Transkeians' expelled from the squatter camps. The Cape Town City Council and local capitalists, and lawyers support appeal for Crossroads not to be demolished until alternative accommodation is found.

SEPTEMBER 1978: A series of the most vicious attacks thus far is launched against Crossroads. Four people are killed and over a thousand arrested during the raids, carried out by nearly 1,000 armed police and BAAB officials with dogs, tear-gas etc. The police chief blames the loss of life on the squatter organisations and their 'spirit of resistance'. The government says it is determined to clear Crossroads of people by the end of the year—whatever it takes to do this: 'Time will determine what method we will use'.

OCTOBER 1978: The Cape Divisional Council announces its intention to repeal the 1976 provision of 'essential services' and to demolish the homes of those more than three months in arrears. The SA Council of Churches promises aid in paying these arrears. Hundreds of

squatters arrested in a camp near the coastal city of East London.

NOVEMBER 1978: Thousands arrested at Winterveld (a squatters' camp near Pretoria) by the police of Bophutswana (another 'independent' black 'homeland'); 500 houses demolished near Durban; 30 houses demolished at Germiston; 60 people arrested at Jabulani, a coloured-African camp at Cape Town.

JAN 1979: The Urban Foundation (a group of black and white capitalists with black petty bourgeois lackeys) raises R40 million (£20million), one fifth of which to be allocated to the Cape Peninsula. A government statement that Crossroads is to be demolished 'any day now'.

APRIL 1979: The Minister of Plural Relations and Development, Piet Koornhof, announces that 2,575 homes are to be built for Crossroads in a township to be designed by the Urban Foundation—which will nominate two out of three members of a board deciding on who will be allowed to be rehoused from Crossroads. Moves to get greater private sector involvement in housing.

In reality, the government was forced to back down in the face of persistent and united opposition from the workers of Crossroads, and fearing above all else not the international pressure of telegrams and resolutions, but the extension and development of struggle throughout the country which an all out assault on Crossroads might provoke.

With the extremely vigorous collusion of 'liberal' sections of the ruling class and its black petty bourgeois allies, the government has now announced proposals for the consolidation of a 'New Crossroads'.

The government concessions represent an important step forward in the Crossroads struggle, but that struggle is far from won.

For the plans announced in no way meet the central demand of the Crossroads workers—the demand for all residents to be given legal rights to remain at Crossroads.

Koornhof has announced that 2,575 homes are to be built at New Crossroads—clearly inadequate for the more than 20,000 officially recorded residents.

And no housing will be provided for those men and their families who fall into one of the two extremely broad categories:

(i) those with criminal records (fines exceeding about £300, or prison sentences exceeding 6 months)

(ii) those who have no means of support

In addition, the government will continue in its vigorous endeavours to 'persuade' people to return to the Bantustans.

Material needs

While the plans are totally inadequate for Crossroads workers, on the issue of the right to live in the area, they do nothing at all to meet the other objective material needs of workers—in relation to wages, unemployment, cheap and adequate housing, abolition of the pass laws, and the provision of a system of social services and education.

The Workers Socialist League has consistently

pointed to the fact that underlying the mass movement of opposition which erupted in Soweto in June 1976 and took the form of opposition to apartheid, was the struggle of workers in pursuit of working class interests.

Spontaneous mass struggles which develop in South Africa can only be properly understood when it is recognised that they rest upon the partial economic demands of workers in an industrialised capitalist country.

Not abstract

What gave such force and strength to the struggle which developed from Soweto was not essentially questions about Bantu education, autonomy for black capitalists to run Soweto, or abstract notions of human dignity and formal political rights.

Soweto and the rest of South Africa erupted essentially because of opposition on the material issues of housing, unemployment, wages and conditions, the pass laws the absence of satisfactory education and the lack of control by the masses over any of the decision which directly affect their material existence.

Now the gains of Soweto stand in danger as a result of the inability of the working class to develop of its own accord beyond spontaneous militancy.

The lack of leadership is compounded by the diversion of the opposition movement by the reformist capitalists and professional people who make up the 'Soweto 10', as well as the failure of the traditional nationalist movements to provide any way forward to the masses in struggle.

But despite the assault of the state, struggles around these underlying issues still persist throughout the country.

Stalemate

In this situation of temporary political stalemate, where the state has been unable to smash the forward movement of the working class, and the leadership class lacks the leadership and programme

to defend, develop and carry through the gains it has made, specific, apparently localised struggles may assume a particular importance as national focusses of struggle.

Since the dissipation of the Soweto eruption, Crossroads has come to assume such a national significance.

It is not simply because of the level of open and mass confrontation with the state that Crossroads represents an important continuity with the Soweto rebellion.

Indeed in a situation like South Africa where the enormity of repression can obscure the level of combativity ready to erupt, open confrontation and levels of organisation can not be relied upon as indicators of the political mood and movement of the working class.

Crossroads is so important because above all else it represents a continuity with the underlying objective political content of the Soweto rebellion—the struggle by workers to assert working class demands and a class independence.

Leadership

The task facing revolutionaries is the defence and development, through the struggle to build a revolutionary leadership, of the level of class independence expressed in the struggles of Soweto and Crossroads.

As soon as it became clear to them that the workers of Crossroads were in fact relying on their own strength and a national working class solidarity to pursue their demands, the South African government was forced to shift its strategy.

Seeing that behind the strength of the Crossroads workers is the level of class independence which they have attained, sections of the ruling class have persistently aimed, not at the physical destruction of the community and its organisations, but at the political destruction of their independence.

Throughout the history of the Crossroads struggle

therefore, state attacks have been coupled with a persistent campaign by liberals and reformists to pose as the allies of the people of Crossroads.

What all sections of the ruling class have feared is the possible national extension of working class struggle that an all-out assault on Crossroads might provoke.

Stem movement

Divisions within the ruling class have revolved around one central question—how best to stem the forward movement of black workers, and resolve the political crisis of control in the interests of capital.

It is testimony to the national strength of the working class that those favouring an all out assault have been unable to carry their position.

In this situation, the white liberals, black capitalists and reformists play an increasingly vital role in the efforts of the state to head off and destroy working class struggle.

Strenuous efforts are now being made by the liberals to foster the illusion that the concessions, actually forced by the mobilised and underlying strength of workers, were in fact the product of co-operation with 'good' capitalists.

Making great use of their black capitalist and black petty bourgeois lackeys, the white capitalists of the Urban Foundation are struggling to present themselves as the allies of black workers in their struggle against 'bad', openly racist capitalists.

Danger

The danger facing workers at Crossroads and throughout the country is that the significant, but totally inadequate concessions which have been won from the state will now be used, under the management of the liberals, to do what police attacks, government legislation and church conciliationism have all failed to do—divide, demobilise and destroy the Crossroads struggle.



erial basis for the mass revolutionary upsurge in 1976.

Workers

emergency camp and no more structures could be built there were over 3,000 hovels crammed together under intolerable conditions.

In those 3,000 dwellings lived 22,000 people—something under one tenth of the estimated number of squatters in the area around Cape Town.

The services provided by the Cape Divisional Council after Crossroads was declared an emergency camp consisted of eight sources of running water, the removal of nightsoil and rubbish, and visiting clinics.

In the wake of the black uprisings of 1976, which sent a chill death-wind through the palaces of the bourgeoisie, the state intensified its campaign of mass terror against Crossroads and the other working class squatter communities.

First Modderdam (in August 1977) and then Unibel and Werkgenot (in January 1978) were razed to the ground, leaving at least 25,000 blacks homeless. Most of these moved back into the overcrowded official townships, others

moved to other camps and built new dwellings.

Some were forced to return to the Bantustans and even more desperate poverty.

The attack of the bourgeois state focussed then on Crossroads, the remaining major bastion of workers' resistance.

Back down

On April 5th this year, against the background of a concerted state onslaught against those squatter communities where the level of working class organisation was low, and a general tightening up of the implementation of the pass law, came a surprise announcement by the South African government that it had decided to back down from its repeatedly declared intention to destroy Crossroads.

Cabinet Minister Piet Koornhof stressed that this climb down was a once-off, ad hoc, solution to a 'delicate human problem', to be accompanied by measures to prevent similar ones from arising in the future.

TUC backs computerised jobs massacre

Peter McIntyre reviews the new TUC Report on technology and the CIS Report, *The New Technology*, (available from CIS, 9, Poland St., London W1. Price 75p).

The Labour Government, shortly before its election defeat called in a public relations agency to boost the introduction of micro-electronics into British industry.

Armed with a budget of £10m the company has the task of contacting the top 50,000 "decision makers" in industry and winning them to a programme of the rapid introduction of the silicon chip industry, which reaches deep into every corner of the labour market.

What is particularly interesting is that the 50,000 "decision makers" include not only management but also trade union officials.

Judging from the TUC report published and launched last week, Employment and Technology, not a penny of this money will be wasted.

For the TUC has come out as chief cheerleader for the biggest attack on jobs internationally this century.

The document produced by the TUC as an 'interim' study stands as one of the most monstrous acts of betrayal that this body has yet managed to produce.

Under the guise of 'responsible' trade unionism it has declared its position firmly against any section of workers that seeks to defend jobs.

Yet the massacre of jobs on a scale that most workers have not yet begun to contemplate, is not something for the future. It has already begun.

Invaluable

The TUC report (Published by the Trades Union Congress at 75p) should be read side by side with a report from the Counter Information Services *The New Technology*, (also 75p) an invaluable guide to its real effects.

Although produced before the TUC report it effectively exposes it as a compendium of lies, half truths and distortions.

Silicon chip technology is not mysterious. It has reduced the computer to a tiny, cheap, mass-produced item which can be used in a multitude of ways.

The major uses planned and being put into effect cover virtually every industry and most jobs.

In the print industry, the technology has the capacity to do away with composing rooms, with written words stored on computers where they can be recalled for editing and set automatically.

In telecommunications the Post Office plans a fully electronic system (System X) which dispenses with telephonists for routine calls and which automatically prepares accounts. It would also drastically reduce the number of engineers.

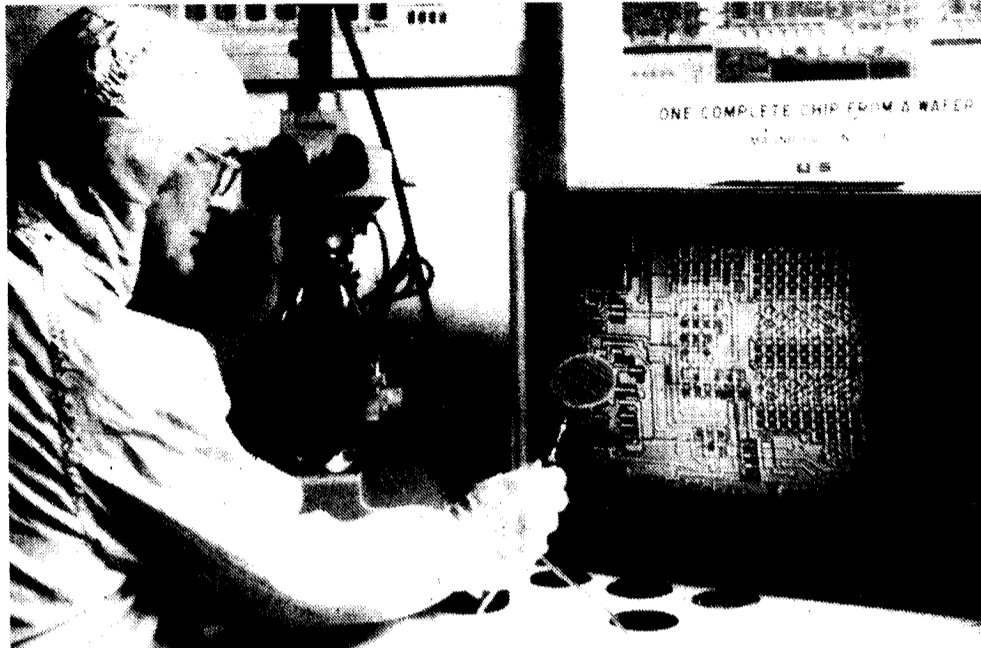
In office work word processors now can cut the number of typists by 30% or more, with typists forced to spend much larger percentages of their time actually typing.

Correct spelling

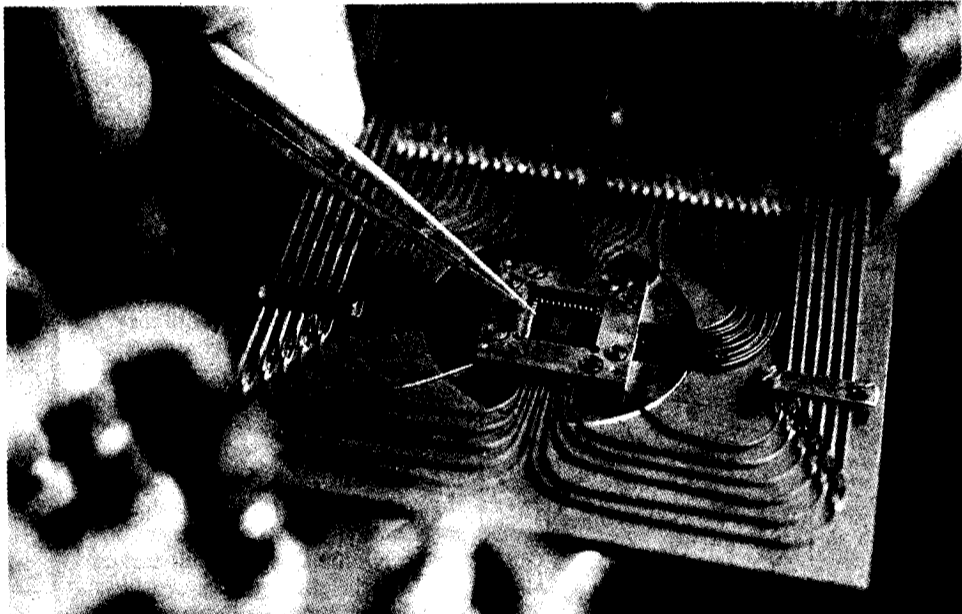
Computers can even correct spelling and thus do away with corrections. Letters can be automatically transferred between word processors, hundreds or thousand of miles apart, cutting out the postal system.

Since 40% of women workers work at office work, whether in banks, insurance companies, council offices or private firms, this, least publicised, piece of new technology can be expected to have a savage effect on unemployment among women.

German trade unions have



Technician inspects microprocessors at Bell Labs



Micro-electronics threaten millions of jobs

estimated that two million of that country's five million secretaries, typists and clerical workers, will be thrown out of work.

Warehouses: Fully computerised stores are now fully operative. Fork lift truck drivers selecting items according to a typed list of orders could be obsolete in a few years.

Production lines offer employers a fruitful source of cutting jobs. Already robots which can reproduce assembly techniques are on the market and every year sees their cost fall.

Leyland are introducing robots for parts of the new Mini production line at Birmingham, and Leyland has also announced a major investment in numerically controlled machine tools.

A computer-aided design system (which once programmed by a draftsman can reproduce designs exactly and be used to produce the tools themselves) cost a company in 1969 the equivalent of one worker's wages for 900 years.

But in 1978 it costs that same worker's wages for just 13 years.

That is not an exceptional decline in cost for computer technology. Silicon chips have brought about a position where managements can expect to recover the costs of capital equipment in very few years.

The TUC is not shy about mentioning the Government financed propaganda campaign it intends to run. In a chapter headed Trade Union Education we read:

"The Government has agreed to fund a programme aimed at

providing key trade union officers and representatives with a general understanding of the technology, its implications, and key union policies.

"The TUC proposal is to model the programme on the very successful campaigns to inform the Movement about the 1971 Industrial Relations Bill, and more recently about the HSC's Safety Representatives and Safety Committees.

"On these occasions, the TUC designed teaching and learning packs, trained professional tutors to instruct full time officers and convenors in their use, and conducted extensive short programmes to train officers."

Bureaucratic weight

The basis on which the full weight of the bureaucracy will creak into action is made clear from the very first paragraph of the TUC report:

"Technological change and microelectric revolution are a challenge but also an opportunity. There is the challenge that the rapid introduction of new processes and work organisation will lead to the loss of many more jobs and growing social dislocation.

"Equally however there is the realisation that new technologies also offer great opportunities—not just for increasing the competitiveness of British industry but for increasing the quality of working life and for providing new benefits to working people."

Of course the TUC has long seen it as its role as increasing the 'competitiveness of British

industry'—or to put it another way, increasing the amount of work done by each worker, and reducing the number in work.

The general, nationalist, tenor of the report is that Britain is 'lagging behind' Japan, America and other capitalist states.

The TUC go on to claim that new jobs created by the micro-electronic industry could equal or outweigh jobs lost by their introduction.

This is a barefaced lie. The CIS report points out that the best estimate of the number of jobs that the NEB-backed firm, Inmos, could create is 4,000. The number of jobs lost through new technology will run to several millions.

The 1978 TUC resolution on technology set the tone of this pamphlet.

In point one it called on the Government to

"establish and develop a viable and soundly financed British research development and substantial manufacturing capacity in the field of micro-electronics and allied computer systems."

Pious hope

In point seven it asked the Government to

"declare publically their concern at the prospects of the resulting unemployment and support the move towards a shorter working week, month, year or lifetime with no deterioration in living standards."

The new report builds on this mixture of support for job cutting policies and pious hope.

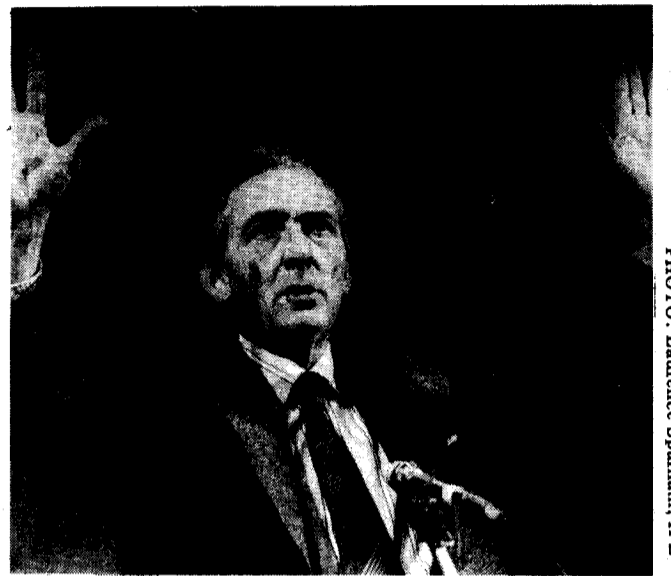


PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

TUC leader Murray

"If the British economy is to benefit fully from technological change our [!] industry must be in a position to make the right products, with the right processes, at the right time.

"Broadly speaking the 'successful' countries are those with corporations or industries that have developed strategies based on high output, low unit profit margins, and a high rate of plough-back into new machinery, research and development and product innovation."

The TUC also promises to help the Government identify "the constraints on growth and improved performance and work towards their removal".

This can only mean collaborating to remove the 'obstacles' of workers' opposition.

The UPW has a formal position of opposition to System X—the all-electronic exchange system which could reduce jobs by between 40 and 50%.

The TUC report however blithely accepts that this system will be introduced. Tom Jackson, who sits on the General Council, last year gave the Post Office full permission to take a demonstration of ACRE and CIR (computerised directories) around the country and to paint it in glowing light to telephonists who were paid overtime to admire its perfection.

This was in order to sell it to the membership before a Special Conference last year where Jackson was keen for trials to go ahead and for previous Conference policy tying the Post Office to a shorter working week before trials took place being overturned.

Statistics can be devised sector by sector to show the kind of cut in jobs that managements, lashed on by competition are contemplating.

But in its key section on "The Trade Union Response to Technological Change", the TUC says:

"Clearly no accurate forecasts of the net effects on employment can be drawn from these considerations. On the one hand the extent of job creation will depend in part on factors such as the overall level of demand in the economy, the speed at which new technology is introduced and the actions of our [!] competitors.

"On the other hand the destruction of jobs can occur in a more sudden, concentrated and substantial manner than the longer term creation of new jobs, through the development of new products.

"This is by no means inevitable however and

experience shows that positive trade union action is essential in gaining the maximum benefit for employment from technological change."

This 'trade union action' consists of pointing out new markets, a few quibbles over health, and desperate pleas to be taken into management's confidence.

Managements and the Government have not been slow to seize on the TUC's desire to co-operate in creating mass unemployment.

A Department of Industry report predicted that the technology would increase unemployment in Britain from 1.5m to somewhere between 2.5m and 3.5m.

A report from ASTMS for the TUC estimated that five million unemployed would be the most optimistic figure to hope for by the mid 1990s.

It is not because the TUC does not know the effects that it pretends the future is uncertain. It is precisely because it does know the effects, and that there is no reformist answer to them.

Perhaps the most vivid example of the TUC approach given in the CIS report comes not in mammoth statistics of jobs already lost in hundreds of thousands in such fields as cash register manufacturer and telecommunications—or even in the 100,000 jobs lost by garage forcourt attendants—but in one tiny example in Bradford Council.

Bradford Council reduced typists in one section from 44 to 22 by buying nine word processors.

The smaller department increased output by 19%, and the council saves nearly £60,000 a year.

No support

When the machines were unveiled, the women in the department, who were all members of NALGO, wanted to fight.

They could not get support however from their NALGO branch, because one of the senior branch officers had been on the working party which recommended their introduction!

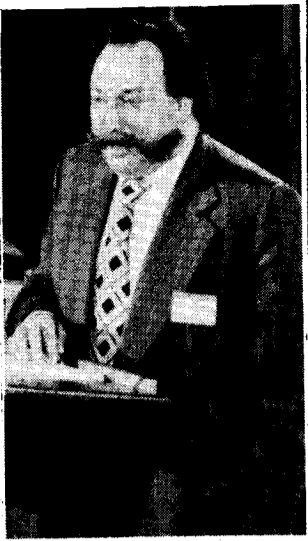
Now the council wants to introduce the word processors more widely, with a loss of 200 jobs in the education department alone.

Employers are driven on by the most frantic competition between the firms which produce the technology, in which the world leaders IBM, won their position through massive US military budgets.

Private manufacturers also want to break the Post Office

The mammoth Leonid Brezhnev Show

John Lister reviews the USSR National Exhibition on show at Earls Court until June 10.



Jackson

monopoly on supplying private exchange systems.

In 1976 Labour minister Eric Varley, sat on a committee of bankers and manufacturers which recommended the breaking of this nationalised monopoly.

The Labour Government, at the same time as launching through the NEB its own capitalist chip industry, provided such cushions for private industry that GEC-Fairchild managed to build a microelectronic factory in Cheshire entirely on grants. They paid only for the land!

No change takes place in a vacuum. The manufacturers seek to drive each other out of business. Buyers of the equipment hope to gain an advantage over their competitors. They are driven on by the forces of their class.

Unplanned resistance

In the same way the working class is driven to resist. This resistance comes, not in a planned way, not seeing the whole picture, but in bits and pieces. Workers on The Times fight to hold the line against direct inputting, while the management at the *Mirror*, introduces the technology without insisting on direct inputting, biding its time until its next attack on jobs.

In this era even a policy of defence of all jobs is a transitional demand. It is the starting point of many workers' fights yet it cannot be achieved under capitalist competition.

A policy of work sharing on full pay where workers demand that all jobs are kept without loss of pay, and that a shorter week is worked can and must be fought for.

But it is incompatible with the owners' drive to cut labour costs.

Workers who mobilise in support of these demands can be won to an understanding that talk of "using technology to improve workers' lives" is utopian waffle under capitalism.

Workers must demand that the full plans and accounts of the company—who always disguise their job cutting plans—are thrown open to committees challenge the concept of business confidentiality and business secrets.

Any challenge to job cutting must widen workers' horizons to an international scale. The problem is not 'Japanese and American competition' but the competition between all capitalists and the exploitation of all workers.

International

Micro-electronics above all other industries crosses national frontiers seeking the most highly exploited sections of workers.

Workers caught in this crushing vice must see that squeezing one end of it is the leadership of the unions. A fight for jobs requires the breaking of this leadership's stranglehold.

Only a planned socialist economy on an international scale can hope to use technology to improve the lot of the masses.

That is why the building of a revolutionary party capable of combatting the betrayals of the TUC and the Labour Party and leading to the overthrow of capitalism is the number one question for the working class.

There can be no middle ground between the employers and the revolutionary needs of the workers.

That is why the TUC have cast their lot in with the employers

There were queues at Earls Court last week to see the uniquely preserved ice-age baby hairy mammoth on display at the USSR National Exhibition.

But the organisers had omitted to put on show two less ancient hairy relics of the past that have far more relevance to the reality of today's Soviet Union.

One, of course, was the late Joseph Stalin, whose name (and that of his successor Nikita Khrushchev) was tactfully missing from the proceedings, though he would have been well pleased with the method of approach.

Sycophantic

And the other was Leonid Brezhnev, whose personal absence from one of the glass cases was compensated for by a veritable barrage of embarrassingly sycophantic references to him in almost every conceivable leaflet, brochure and sound commentary.

Indeed despite the splendour of some of the exhibits, the Exhibition could best be entitled The Leonid Brezhnev Show.

Nothing escaped his shifty, averted stare and attempted benign smile, whether it be the intricate working models of fully automated petro-chemical production, cross sections of nuclear fast reactors, bottled plums, colour television sets or medical equipment.

Luxurious hi-fi equipment was bedecked with copies of L.I. Brezhnev's racy best-seller *On the Draft Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the Results of the Nationwide Discussions on the Draft*.

Lada cars, moon modules and space exhibits all boasted a profusion of pamphlets bringing greetings from Leonid Brezhnev.

Gagarin

Brezhnev was also conveniently shaking hands with Russian space pioneer Yuri Gagarin, whose historic flight in 1961, took place of course in the era of Khrushchev.

But in case anyone should ask about this, a lavishly illustrated short *Life of Leonid Brezhnev* explains how, as Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, it was none other than the ubiquitous Leonid Brezhnev who was actually responsible for the space programme!

But it was not all light reading. For those who found Brezhnev's *The Great October Revolution and Mankind's Progress* a little flippant for their taste, the Zenith camera equipment stall offered a free 200-page book, *Marxist Dialectics Today*, in which straight-faced Stalinist theoreticians reel out sentences like:

"An impetus to the emer-



gence of neoconceptualistic and neonominalistic conceptions in mathematics and logic must have been given by the discovery of antinomies in Kantor's theory of sets..."

Alongside these bureaucratic professions of Marxist orthodoxy and Communist dedication came a wealth of propaganda designed to establish the 'democratic' credentials of the Soviet Union in the eyes of bourgeois public opinion.

Seeking acceptance

Booklets entitled *What do People Discuss in the USSR?*, *Church and Religion in the USSR* and *How the National Question Was Solved in the USSR* (sic) reflect the pleading of the Stalinists for political acceptance.

The Exhibition was in fact shot through with the same contradiction that characterises Soviet society and all the deformed workers states of Europe, Asia and Cuba.

It is this *progressive*, socialised property relations that have made possible the astonishing economic growth and technological advancement of the Soviet Union, its virtual elimination of unemployment and its striking development of medical care and the social services.

But the socialised means of production remain saddled and restricted in their further development by a reactionary, socially conservative and parasitic social caste—the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Inept

It is this *bureaucracy* that must be blamed for the incessant and inept attempts of the Exhibition to combine the crassest of political propaganda with the promotion of a range of luxury consumer goods—



Ubiquitous—Brezhnev

from furs, through carpets to video cassette recorders.

Only a Stalinist bureaucracy totally estranged from and hostile to the Soviet working masses could lay on an Exhibition on such a scale without giving the visitor the slightest impression of how Russian workers actually live,



what they eat, what they wear, or what their working conditions are.

Fashion shows proudly exhibit women in clothes that appear freely filched from Western sources—but which are clearly accessible only to the bureaucracy and to British and

other buyers who receive them as exports.

Similarly, with the Lada cars, the luxurious furniture and the other sophisticated consumer goods on display; the visitor is given no idea as to whether the average Russian wage would put all or none of these goods in the reach of the working class—nor any idea of the availability of such goods in the shops frequented by workers.

Privileges

Of course it is the bureaucracy's determination to cling on to its own material privileges and the political power that it has held since the mid 1920s which leads to the enforced political atomisation of the working class in this degenerated workers' state.

All the boasting of 'civil' and political rights centres on individual rights—not on working class organisations.

The bureaucracy fear above all the emergence of a mass movement of the working class similar to that in Hungary in 1956, when workers discovered the power of independent workers councils, cast aside their Stalinist "leaders", executed the hated secret police and attempted to seize political power in their own right.

Even Leonid Brezhnev is forced to bow, peremptorily in front of the obvious hostility of the masses to the bureaucracy that emerged in the "discussion" on the draft constitution.

Parasitism

While focussing his main hostility against those workers supposedly guilty of "parasitism, habitual breaches of labour discipline, drunkenness and other anti-social phenomena", Brezhnev admits:

"Some letters report disgraceful instances of abuse by some persons in office of their

position, instances of defrauding the state by means of falsifying records and cheating, of bribe taking, of indifference . . . instances of persecution for criticism."

Such "disgraceful instances" are of course no surprise in a system where the management of the entire wealth of the Soviet economy is in the hands of a self-perpetuating bureaucracy, whose drunkenness and parasitism is seen as an acceptable fact of life.

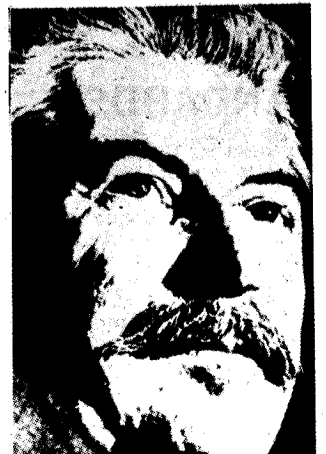
Brezhnev's "New Constitution", like Stalin's predecessor, rests on perpetuating this political domination through the transformation of the Soviets from their original role as organs of workers' power comprising workplace delegates, into privileged Parliamentary-style bodies, elected by general suffrage, answerable to no one, and not subject to recall.

It is with some justification, therefore, that booklets by Brezhnev and other hacks compare the "civil rights" of workers in the USSR to those notional "rights" they enjoy in capitalist "democracies".

But of course while in Britain, the USA and other bourgeois states the first task of the working class is to nationalise the private property of the exploiting capitalist class, in the Soviet Union this overthrow has already taken place.

Leonid Brezhnev and his fellow bureaucrats are merely a parasitic growth developed by the Russian workers' state as a result of its initial backwardness, its isolation and the hardships and dislocation it suffered in the 1920s.

In developing an understanding of this parasitic social layer and the political revolution needed to cast it aside once and for all, Russian workers will need to look to the record of struggle of a crucial figure in Russian history who was also notably absent—Leon Trotsky.



Not on show—Stalin



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

NATSOPA backs Sun sacking

The bosses' newspapers often rant and rave about unions, strikes, and the country going to the dogs.

Whole pages are devoted to ideas about how best to smash union strength.

Since the beginning of May, News Group Newspapers have been trying to put some of these ideas into practice at the Sun in Fleet Street.

On May 9 Mike Jones, supervisor of the Sun telephonists was called into the office of a Mr. J.A. Britton, a Labour Relations Executive.

He stated that from that time onwards £15 was to be deducted from each telephonist's wages and the position of supervisor was to be ended and the job to be done by a member of management.

Jones was also told that disciplinary action would be considered if any telephonist wasn't seen working hard enough.

The telephonists' FoC, George Hall, then asked for permission to hold a NATSOPA Chapel meeting. This was refused and Hall was told that if a Chapel meeting was held he would be sacked.

Britton was, until recently the chairman of the 8,000 strong NATSOPA London RIRMA branch.

During his period of office he devoted himself to protecting the interests of the employers—and has now been rewarded

with a job as a Labour Relations Executive.

At first the Sun telephonists tried to work normally and sought advice from NATSOPA.

But management insisted on sending people in and out of the switchboard department, constantly criticising work and making threats.

Two days later, May 11, the telephonists held a mandatory Chapel meeting and went on strike.

Smash chapel

Since then the NATSOPA bureaucracy have joined management in attempting to smash the strike and the union chapel.

The 15 strikers have all been sacked, although the employer has since said that everyone has been suspended apart from the FoC who has been sacked.

The strike may well have cost the Sun over £100,000 in lost advertising revenue, so the employers obviously see the smashing of this chapel as an important part of their plans to destroy union organisation.

The employer has been predictably helped in this task by NATSOPA full-time officials who have proposed a negotiated 'peace formula' to the strikers.

This formula proposed a

return to work with the removal of the job of supervisor.

The £15 was still to be deducted from each worker's wage until a new productivity payment was negotiated.

Worst of all, the dismissal of Bro. Hall was to be converted to suspension for a maximum of 4 weeks.

If it was not "established" that he was wrongfully dismissed by the end of the 4 weeks, then he would be sacked, with the agreement of the chapel, union and management.

If the chapel were to strike over this dismissal then NATSOPA would provide scab staff!

The chapel unanimously rejected this scandalous 'peace formula' and have called on the union to make the strike official.

Chapels should agree to weekly levies to support the strike, as has been done by the Usher-Walker chapel in Stratford, East London (a recent victim of a NATSOPA 'peace formula').

SERTUC CONFERENCE
 "Care of the Under Fives"
 Saturday 30 June 1979
 Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1
 Credentials (50p) from Jim Watson, 106 Mount View Road, London N4
 Speakers:
 Arthur Latham, Chairman, London Labour Party
 Reg Race, NUPE
 Margaret Cohen, National Campaign for Nursery Education
 Chair: Tess Gill, NCCL

Building support for EGA fight

On Tuesday 29th May in the Camden General Branch of NUPE the following resolution was unanimously passed.

"This branch pledges its support to the EGA Hospital occupation by:

1) sending a regular delegation every Monday to the EGA during working hours with loss of earnings to be compensated by collections amongst the branch membership.

2) to hold section meetings with invited speakers from the EGA to prepare the membership for further action in defence of the hospital.

3) calling on the London Divisional Council to immediately organise an all London Health Service delegate conference with invitations to other sections to attend.

We further call on the LDC to organise a campaign of all-out indefinite strike action by health workers in defence of the EGA and other threatened hospitals, with supporting action from other NUPE sections. Any action by other sections in defence of the EGA should get full backing from the LDC."

The EGA is of course slap bang in the middle of



PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL

the London Borough of Camden.

The Camden resolution could be an important step forward in getting the local workers' movement involved in the defence of the hospital and preparing the ground for a fight back against the vicious attack on public sector workers that the Tories are planning.

Hospital occupations, backed up by strike action, initially in the local Health Service, are essential if the cuts are to be fought.

The London District

Council of NUPE must convene immediately a conference for that purpose.

But other workers have got to be involved and mobilised to fight for their social services.

We have already seen the example of the Bethnal Green hospital occupation, where local dustmen went on strike in support.

Preparation

But such involvement doesn't come unprepared at one drop of a resolution.

By pledging delegations in work time and holding section meetings, the possibility can be created for wider layers of Camden NUPE to be drawn into the campaign for the EGA.

In raising collections amongst the membership the issue has already received a good response.

Home helps in area 5 discussed the issue last Thursday and raised £10 to finance their shop steward to join the delegation on Monday.

This sort of commitment and this sort of discussion is vital for the Camden labour force in the preparation not only to defend the EGA but also to defend their own jobs and conditions in the face of the Tory onslaught.

LEICESTER TRADES COUNCIL CONFERENCE
 Saturday June 16
 2.00 p.m.
 Highfields Community Centre
 "Women's Right to Work and the need for Day Care"
 Speaker from Oxford City Nursery Campaign
 More details from 74, Highcross Street

OXFORD TRADES COUNCIL CONFERENCE
 The TUC Under-fives Charter
 Sunday July 8
 OCCR Hall
 Princes Street
 Speakers from Oxford City Nursery Campaign and the NUT among others

JOIN OUR FIGHT AGAINST TORIES!

Returned to office after five years of Labour betrayals, the Tory government has immediately begun wielding a sharpened axe on jobs, conditions and social services. Trade Union rights face imminent legal attack. Prices are already beginning to rocket upwards.

Plum sectors of state industry will be handed to the Tories' profiteering big business backers; and the pay rises to police and armed forces mark only the prelude to increased state violence against pickets and anti-fascists, and an intensified army crack-down in the occupied North of Ireland.

The Callaghan-Healey leadership has made it clear that it will oppose any perspective other than settling down and meekly accepting five years of Tory devastation.

And, though they have once more dusted off their near-forgotten "socialist" speeches, Labour's "left-wing" MPs have continued to duck away from any fight to remove Callaghan.

TUC leaders, too, have set out to establish a basis for collaboration with Thatcher and the Tory cabinet, paralleling their anti-working class alliance with Wilson and then Callaghan.

But the working class has experienced and overcome such betrayals before—to topple Heath's union-bashing government in 1974, and smash through Callaghan's reactionary Phase 4 of wage controls in a series of monumental pay battles last winter.

These experiences are not dead. They point to the way that jobs, social services and hard-won union rights can be defended against renewed Tory attacks.

But a principled, revolutionary leadership is needed if the Labour traitors, the TUC collaborators and their hangers-on in the Communist Party are to be exposed and pushed aside, and the mass struggles mobilised that can defeat and remove the Tory government.

Such a leadership must fight day in and day out for a programme of *transitional demands* which, starting from today's conditions and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers to grasp the necessity for socialist revolution.

And in taking up democratic demands—such as an end to racial and sexual discrimination, it must show the crucial role that must be played by the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class capable of leading the struggle for the emancipation of mankind.

And it must fight on an *international* basis—mobilising solidarity against imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles—whether in Ireland, in Southern Africa or elsewhere throughout the world, and drawing strength and political lessons from revolutionary upheavals such as that which ousted the hated Shah in Iran.

This means fighting for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

This method of approach, rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, or concessions to any wing of the labour bureaucracy, is the method fought for by the Workers Socialist League.

The next period will see major class struggles in Britain. A principled, Marxist leadership is essential. Our movement though strong in programme remains small in numbers.

JOIN US and take forward the struggle for socialism!

DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!

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Garners sell out: proves officials cannot win rights

This week-end trade union delegates and observers will attend the London Conference called by the Garners Strike Committee.

The strike—betrayed and knifed by the bureaucracy of TGWU Region 1 (see last week's *Socialist Press*)—should be studied by every worker facing the prospect of struggle for the defence and extension of union rights.

The record and lessons are clear.

When the Garners workers struck in January 1978 against Garners' boss Margolis, they were well aware of the gamble.

Immediate sacking came as no surprise. The battle would be for reinstatement as well as recognition.

Hardship

But from the beginning their readiness to suffer hardship financially and on the picket lines stood in stark contrast to their official leaders' desire to be rid of a potentially serious struggle—while the Grunwick strike still continued—under their beloved Labour government.

By March the TGWU *Record* could report a treacherous offer to Margolis from the union "for members to return to work on the basis of reinstatement, no victimisation and acceptance of the right of ACAS to carry out a normal enquiry."

Drawing upon the lessons of bureaucratic betrayal at Grunwick, Desoutter, Trust House Forte and elsewhere, *Socialist Press* never ceased to warn the strikers and their supporters about the nature of their leadership.

Week by week each new turn was carefully followed by members of the WSL fighting consistently on the picket lines and throughout the labour movement, particularly in London.

Corruption

The Garners strike was not merely 'another small strike' but another key stage in the defence of union rights, and an example of the utter corruption of a bureaucracy—now incapable of leading a struggle to build the organisation upon which it depends for its comfortable existence.

It was largely due to this principled struggle, which found



Time and again Garners strikers lobbied Region 1 demanding support

a real response among members of the Strike Committee, that a host of fake 'lefts' proved incapable of getting their hands on the struggle and ensuring an early end to the dispute.

Jack Dromey, still able to play on his ill-deserved reputation at Grunwick, appeared in the early days of the strike—and left!

Quick retreat

Brian Nicholson, TGWU Executive member, was able to parade with empty promises of 'six hundred dockers' on the picket line—but quickly retreated in face of the demand that he translate his speeches into action.

The Garners strike showed clearly where people stood. At countless lobbies and at several demonstrations the Region 1 bureaucrats were faced with the basic demands of the Strike Committee for the TGWU to mobilise the picketing, finance and backing necessary to win the struggle. Time and time again they refused.

The high point of the bureaucratic betrayal can perhaps best be understood by recalling the main developments over the period of summer 1978—in many ways a turning point for the strike.

Support was never stronger than during this period, with powerful picket lines on the main Garners establishments.

It has been revealed that during that time the employer, Cyril Margolis, made approaches to the union offering to take back 13 of the strikers and give £8,000 to the remainder.

At a time when such a concession clearly reflected the paralysis and weakness of the boss, and the strikers rejected the offer out of hand, ready to press on to victory, the bureaucrats not only recommended acceptance but delayed for months before sanctioning a Strike Committee call for a labour movement demonstration in London.

Hope for employer

It is no surprise that from that point onwards the employer was able to regain some confidence and hope for defeat of the strike.

With the Biennial Delegate Conference of the TGWU coming up in July—with a platitudinous resolution on unionising the catering industry on the agenda (Moss Evans having personally ruled out an amendment on Garners)—the lessons of the strike must be taken into the whole of the

union and the traitors called to account.

Stalinists

Particular attention must be paid to the role of the Stalinists of the Communist Party whose members and supporters in the union officialdom have played a key role in the betrayal of this strike—particularly Sid Staden, the Region 1 Secretary and Les Shorter, who, in the last Garners conference in June 1978, drew the hatred of the audience by openly attacking the Strike Committee's call for mass pickets to close Garners and provide protection against police harassment.

The conclusion from any serious study of the Garners strike must be clear—especially when seen in the context of the continuing marathon struggles for recognition in the TGWU at Sandersons Fork-lifts in Skegness and the Economist bookshop in London.

An all-out struggle must be waged against the treachery of the TGWU bureaucracy and the struggle taken up for a leadership prepared to challenge the law of the ruling class on picketing and backing in industrial disputes.

*A full report of Saturday's Garners Conference will appear in next week's *Socialist Press*.

FBU witch hunt

The bureaucracy of the London Region of the FBU are attempting to kill any vestiges of democracy in the union.

This follows their acceptance of massive cuts in the fire service (a withdrawal of 45-50 fire fighting appliances in the London area alone) as strings attached to the implementation of the 42 hour week.

About twenty firemen responded in an unofficial circular calling for a meeting to discuss problems and developments in the fire service.

This open forum held at Brixton on May '9 was considered a useful exchange for issues difficult to discuss within the usual FBU framework.

However, last week, those in attendance began to receive letters from the London Region's Treasurer announcing a Committee of Inquiry seeking details of this meeting, and instructing recipients to attend a Committee of Inquiry meeting at an unspecified time in the future, where they will no doubt be forced to defend themselves against unspecified charges.

Firemen must defend their right to meet and discuss anywhere they choose, by refusing to cooperate with this bureaucratic witch-hunt which can only serve the purposes of management.

'WE WERE FORCED TO CALL IT OFF'

Striker Manuel Blanco speaks to *Socialist Press*

Why, in your view, did the Strike Committee call off the strike?

The Strike Committee was forced to call it off because of the total lack of support by the whole union leadership—especially the TGWU Region 1. Although Ron Todd was once supposed to be involved in the strike he only met us once and then nothing new came out. The strike was called off because they refused even to give the kind of token support they've given till now. They refused to do anything at all.

The strikers all signed a statement jointly calling off the strike with the officials. How do you see this now?

It was a mistake—they had the statement prepared for us to sign. They were bound to get the signatures of the majority of strikers who voted to end the strike.

But I opposed signing it—I asked for a clause to be inserted making it clear that a group of us were against. They said that this would be made clear in the minutes and then we all signed.

They may well use this to claim that we jointly called off the strike. The statement talks about 'our' inability to keep the pickets going.

The strike, as I have said, was defeated by financial starvation and lack of support—the responsibility of the union leadership.

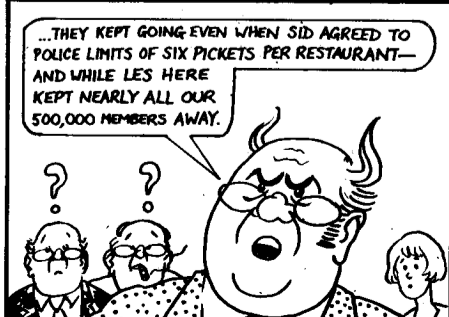
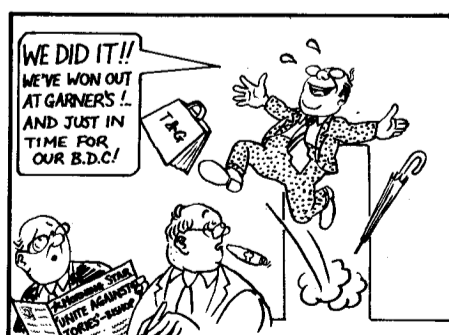
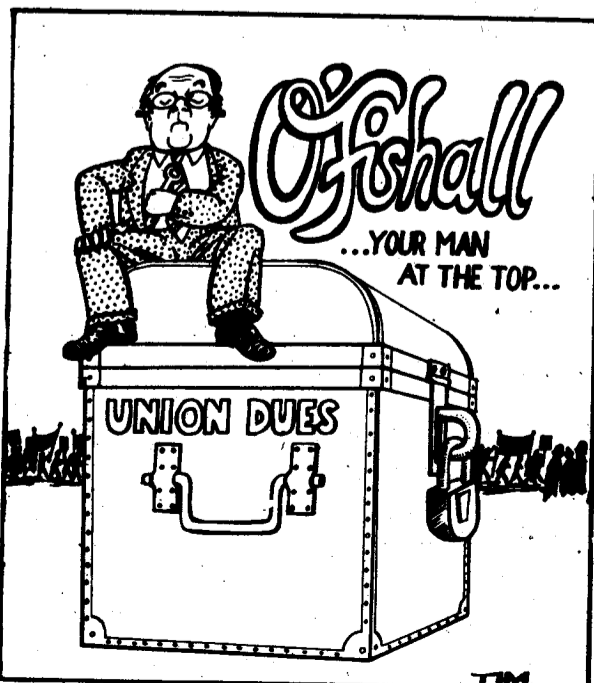
What is the main lesson that you have learned?

When I came out on strike I knew very little—now I can see that there is no way that we can win strikes for basic rights with these leaders.

Workers still on strike at Sandersons and the Economist bookshop should draw lessons from our betrayal.

Since Grunwick the employers have seen that they can win because the union leaders are not prepared to stand up and fight for the recognition of their members.

We must begin the building of a revolutionary leadership in the unions that can defend basic rights. This is particularly vital in the hotel and catering industry.



SOCIALIST PRESS



SMITH: PUPPETEER

WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

Five white racists and 12 black puppets were last week sworn in as Cabinet members of Rhodesia's mock majority government, under the watchful eye of a portrait of Cecil Rhodes.

Meanwhile moves by the imperialists towards recognition of the regime were stepped up.

The Tories in Britain, ready to grant recognition and to lift sanctions, recognise that they have not yet got sufficient international support.

Unilateral recognition by the British government is unlikely unless and until they despair of US support.

Carter has promised Congress—which voted that sanctions should be lifted—that he will make a decision by June 15.

Opposed

Recognition is being opposed by Andrew Young, US ambassador to the UN, who is the driving force behind the 'Anglo-American' proposals to reach a compromise sell-out involving the Patriotic Front.

Options for the imperialists are narrowing. If they grant recognition they stand to lose trade with some of the black African countries and intensify the war in Zimbabwe.

If they do not they strengthen the military drive by ZANU and ZAPU by weakening this unstable government's morale.



Smith

Clearly Muzorewa is no use to Smith if he doesn't deliver recognition.

The new government has skulked into office. There were no celebrations; they have not even been able to agree on a national flag or anthem.

As the Rhodesian flag was lowered on the night before the government officially took over, somebody stole it.

String-puller

The white members of the Cabinet provide its real character.

Smith himself, as Minister without Portfolio, has the task of pulling the Bishop's strings.

Although Muzorewa holds the nominal position of Minister of Defence and Combined Operations, control of the scale of

the war rests in the hands of Finance Minister David Smith who was responsible for organising sanctions busting.

Did not stand

Smith, incidentally, did not even bother to stand in the recent elections, such was his contempt for this new 'democracy'.

Former defence minister, Peter van der Byl, has been retained as a Minister (Transport, Power and Posts).

Even the *Daily Telegraph* was moved to remark:

"He has made little secret of his contempt for the black nationalism and many Africans regard him as the epitome of white arrogance."

Other posts directly retained by whites are Justice and Roads (together!) and Agriculture.

Reports that ZANU and ZAPU are making progress towards a joint military operation cast a long shadow over the charade.

Military unity between Nkomo (ZAPU) and Mugabe (ZANU) is to be welcomed.

But the crisis of political leadership for the masses of Zimbabwe cannot be resolved through such a pact.

Efforts to draw ZAPU and ZANU to a 'compromise' sell-out will intensify, and both Mugabe and Nkomo have previously shown their readiness to flirt with them.

Moreover the driving out of Smith and Muzorewa will not solve the economic problems of

the black workers and peasants.

A Trotskyist party must be forged, based on the working class, to give political leadership which cuts sharply across Mugabe's and Nkomo's ambitions.

The war of liberation—which must be supported—must be transformed into social revolution which could light a beacon throughout Africa.

In Britain workers must fight moves towards recognition.

The ground must be laid now, so that if and when the Tories do recognise the regime, British workers black all trade to and from Rhodesia.

Such policies must now be put through union conferences and dock and transport stewards' committees in preparation for the struggle to come.



Muzorewa

TUBE STRIKE THREATENED

LEADERS OF the three rail unions have threatened an all-out strike on London's tube network if there is not an improvement in management's 10.3% pay offer.

This advanced warning is an indication of the pent-up militancy among London Underground workers whose bureaucratic leaders have ensured that only one one-day strike has taken place on the tubes since the 1926 General Strike, while wage levels have been eroded by inflation and fallen in comparison to British railworkers.

But it is also a desperate plea from the bureaucracy for face-saving concessions from the employers to avert a head-on clash that would virtually paralyse London and face the Tories with a major industrial confrontation which they could scarcely hope to win.

There is little doubt that without some token concession by the employers, then chronically low paid Underground staff—whose basic rates range from only £45 to a maximum of £77—will respond overwhelmingly to the strike call, and set the pace for future pay struggles.

WRP hits huge cash crisis

The British Workers Revolutionary Party, headed by Gerry Healy, has entered what its Political Committee describes as "our worst financial crisis for a decade".

Now, according to the WRP's daily *Newsline*, financial problems make it necessary to "reduce" the Party's extensive body of full-time staff and cut the size of *Newsline* from 16 to 12 pages.

The Political Committee statement avoids any attempt to offer a political explanation for this crisis, citing chiefly the £48,000 deficit on the Party's £100,000 General Election Fund, designed to finance 60 candidates.

No campaign

Few of these candidates in fact mounted any campaign at all.

Though the decision to field so many candidates—a sizable proportion of the WRP's total active membership—is defended in the PC statement, the leadership find it impossible to deny that such a campaign was well beyond the reach of the WRP, and met with little or no response from the Party's periphery.

The explanation for this failure is, of course, located firmly in the programme and method of the WRP itself, whose shameless political subservience to the bloodstained, oil-rich Middle East despotisms of Libya, Iraq and Iran is matched only by their total absence of any serious struggle for the Trotskyist programme in the British working class.

Challenged

Such political bankruptcy has not gone unchallenged within the WRP's ranks.

And as each successive challenge—beginning with the struggle by then Central Committee member Alan Thornett for a return to the Transitional Programme—has arisen, it has been met by bureaucratic repression, and successive waves of expulsions that have liquidated the Party's cadres. The dwindling forces of

the WRP help explain not only the shortfall of the Election Fund but also *Newsline's* shortfall on its £4,000 Monthly Fund.

Clearly the WRP has now shrunk to a size where the leadership has been forced effectively to abandon hope of maintaining its top-heavy apparatus, and been driven to publicise its crisis in this striking way.

Seemingly bewildered, the Political Committee statement asks *Newsline* readers:



Healy

"Why, then, are we falling back when everyone can see that the Tories are on the warpath in no uncertain terms?"

Degenerate

The WRP are of course "falling back" because their degenerate blend of ultra-left sectarianism and opportunist adaptation to petty bourgeois nationalism is correctly seen by militant workers as incapable of resolving the crisis of working class leadership.

It is crucial that WRP members and supporters draw the harsh political lessons from this new inner party crisis, and look seriously back to the principles and programme on which the Trotskyist movement was founded, and which the WRP has so cynically abandoned.

The detailed critique of the record and the method of the WRP developed by the Workers Socialist League and our experience of struggle for the Transitional Programme offer opponents of Healy's line a principled and positive way forward.

Fighting Paddington closures

The Save Paddington's Hospitals Campaign has stepped up its struggles following a mass meeting of over 200 workers at St. Mary's Hospital Harrow Road.

The campaign has challenged the validity of a Community Health Council "survey" of local opinion, which proposes a community hospital on the Harrow Road site—running it down from its present 400 general beds to a maximum of only 100 non-acute beds.

The Save Paddington's Hospitals Campaign points out that the "survey" did not even ask its random sample of people whether they wanted all their existing hospitals to remain open!

Instead it offered people a choice between three different methods of cutbacks.

Fight cuts

Workers at the threatened Harrow Road hospital have made clear their willingness to fight any reduction in facilities



Paddington workers on November 17, 1976

or working conditions.

Sector administrator A. Crewe has stated in a circular that severe cuts have been made in spending this year and on non-recurring revenue.

Equipment

This includes a £140,000 cut from capital and expenditure; a cut in furniture for the wards and departments; a cut in medical equipment; further cutbacks in cleaning and redecoration; a cancellation of much needed fire alarm improvements and lift repairs; and further deterioration in staff amenities.

Workers now face an uphill battle not only to keep the hospital open but to ensure decent working conditions and the safety of patients put at risk by government cuts.

In this, health service workers find common cause with local trade unionists and their families, whose health care is at risk.

Paddington health workers, like their brothers and sisters at the EGA and elsewhere in London, must prepare for occupation and the fight for supporting action in the struggle to defend jobs and services.

FUND

That's much better! £209.00 this week, bringing us to £949.90. But it is still a long way to go to our target of £2,500 by the end of next month. Supporters in London and Oxford have announced plans for Summer Fairs to raise money for our Special Fund, the money for which is needed to launch our ambitious publishing programme.

Readers and supporters should consider other ways in which money could be raised to help us reach our target on time.

In the meantime, all donations to the fund are most welcome, however big or small, and should be sent to:

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