

SOCIALIST PRESS



LOBBY THE TUC!

FIGHT THE ANTI-UNION LAWS
Called by the Campaign for Democracy
in the Labour Movement
Wednesday 5 September, Winter Gdns, Blackpool

TUC CONFERENCE

STOP TALKS CALL ACTION!

All-out
strike
demand
grows

The TUC Concordat—which seeks to tie the working class in voluntary chains—is alive and well and will be paraded at Blackpool next week.

Under a smokescreen of angry language the TUC decided last week to drop from the agenda all resolutions which called for breaking off talks with the Tories.

Thus the crucial question facing the British working class in the immediate future—the attacks on basic trade union organisation and action—is not even to be discussed at its sharpest point, the point where the TUC is prepared to sit down and collaborate.

The TUC's own Concordat was reached with the Labour government as a means of trying to limit the effectiveness of last winter's strikes.



TUC lobby, Brighton 1978. The right to strike still the key question

It was largely ignored by the working class but was used by union officials to keep workers divided and was quoted as supporting evidence by

employers seeking High Court injunctions.

That same bureaucracy headed off organised opposition to the Concordat by declaring

that it had died with the Labour government.

Yet TUC general secretary, Len Murray, came out of talks with Prior announcing that it was not dead but sleeping. He threatened that if the Tories went ahead with their legal attacks then the TUC would withdraw their voluntary agreement.

In other words once the Tories have cast striking workers in chains of steel Murray will unlock his own fetters.

The Tories have taken the Concordat and added to it. They plan to:

- *Outlaw supporters from picket lines—thus rendering pickets at small plants or with small sections of workers impotent.

- *Outlaw 'secondary pickets', thus preventing essential action to shut off suppliers or plants which take blackleg labour.

- *Remove all immunity from sympathising action.

- *Remove some immunity from all strikers.

- *Widen the uses of secret postal ballots so that union elections can be manipulated by the press.

- *Restrict the closed shop to the point where it will be impossible to maintain it.

Passing laws is one thing. Enforcing them another. But the courts—spearheaded by Lord Denning—have been acting on these proposals for months.

In the lorry drivers' strike they granted an injunction to stop secondary pickets. They have backed this up with a similar decision against Wandsworth building pickets (see page 11).

The response of the union leadership has been—no challenge.

SHIPYARD LEADERS VOTE FOR THE DOLE

With only a handful against, a union delegate conference of shipyard workers in Newcastle last week voted for an 'orderly transition' to the dole queues of Scotland and the North of England.

This was the response to British Shipbuilders' decision to close yards and scrap 6,000 jobs.

The words 'orderly transition' were those of Boiler-makers Union chief Chalmers, declaring his opposition not to the destruction of whole sections of the industry but only to the means of carrying it out.

His opposition merely to 'compulsory' redundancies and the imposition of a token overtime ban confirms his reformist politics to be as bankrupt as the shipbuilding industry whose

viability he staunchly defends.

Certainly the employers are annoyed that the various sanctions decided on at the Confed conference are to be implemented. But they, like the union bureaucrats who proposed them, are well aware that such measures will not save a single threatened job.

Slump

Just as with steel (where Chalmers' co-thinkers have similarly ducked calling all-out action and supervised the industry's gradual run-down over several years), the capitalists in Britain are gripped by a huge international slump in these major sections of the economy.

While Confed leaders talk starry-eyed nonsense about a 'revival' in 1981, the drive towards rationalisation intensifies.

Yet key delegations in full support of the right-wing's line

included those led by prominent members of the Communist Party who are actually in the leadership of yards on the closure list.

Though their left reputation undeservedly gained during the UCS struggle against Heath, was based on the correct tactic of occupation, they show no sign of raising this demand against the latest attacks.

Instead it has been the Communist Party who have championed the one day protest strikes.

As with steel, seizure of workplaces in line for the axe must be accompanied by a campaign for elected rank and file trade union committees to open the books of the industry, its suppliers and bankers.

A programme of useful public works must be worked out to provide alternative employment as part of a struggle for a planned socialist economy.

FUND

With only a few days to go to the end of the month we are still well short of our target of £600. The last seven days has seen £91.43 arrive in our office bringing the current total to £432.09.

As reported last week we are having to raise our fund target to £750 a month in order to keep up with the effects of inflation on the cost of producing our paper.

It is crucial therefore, that in preparation for that harder task next month, a determined effort is made to raise well over the £600 target for this month.

Donations should be sent to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR
Oxford tote results
19 August, 9/12; 215; 26 August, 9/13, 140

LONDON

WORKERS SOCIALIST
LEAGUE
Public Meeting

DON'T LET TURKEY
BECOME ANOTHER
CHILE

Conway Hall
Tuesday September 4
7.30 p.m.

WORKERS SOCIALIST
LEAGUE
OXFORD

Public meeting
'How to fight the cuts'
Thursday September 6
8.00 p.m.
OCCR, Princes St.
Cowley Road

WORKERS SOCIALIST
LEAGUE
LEEDS

Public meeting
'The Engineers' Strike:
The Way Forward'
Monday September 10
8.00 p.m.
Room A, Leeds Trades
Club, 21 Saville Mount

'Trotskyist' brigade is expelled from Nicaragua

At the same time as the Nicaraguan governing Junta announced its new 'comprehensive' bill of rights it took swift steps to rid itself of the threat of independent working class action and expelled sixty 'Trotskyists' of the 'Simon Bolivar Brigade'.

The Brigade, said to number some 500 people, was organised under the leadership of the Colombian PST (Workers Socialist Party—a member of the USFI) and had within its ranks people of several nationalities and even more political affiliations.

The PST itself made a good deal of this fact.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the Brigade posed a challenge to the Junta and that it was able to mobilise appreciable popular support.

When FSLN leaders criticised the Brigade for 'lack of discipline' it organised a march outside the FSLN HQ in Managua which drew 3,000 workers demanding payment of wages and carrying banners saying 'The Revolution is in the hands of the bourgeoisie' and 'Power to the Proletariat'.

The march was followed by a hundred members of the Popular Militia who

shouted for weapons and asserted that they were the true vanguard of the proletariat.

Within 24 hours of the demonstration the regime expelled the 60 Brigade members, labelling them

'foreign provocateurs' and claiming that they had only arrived after the fighting had ended.

It is abundantly clear that just as the 'Bill of Rights' mirrors all the pristine clauses of the bourgeois constitutional heritage

so the expulsion reflects the ease with which these can be cast aside when required.

The formal democracy 'introduced' by the FSLN-backed regime would without doubt be a great step forward if it was implemented but the conditions for this remain extremely slight without a major struggle on the part of the workers and peasants.

Elements of such a struggle were evident in the demonstration organised by the Brigade and that is why it was summarily suppressed.

The fact that the following day the US Ambassador could declare that relations with the Junta were "as cordial and easy as I've ever witnessed with any government . . . We converse easily, we meet easily and have a lot of mutual business going on" demonstrates the degree to which this struggle will have to be fought against imperialism which now operates through the Junta's popular front politics.



Sandinista guerrillas

Somoza's fall casts long shadow over C. America

The repercussions of the overthrow of Somoza are becoming more and more apparent throughout Central America.

In Guatemala the dictatorship of General Romeo Lucas Garcia is increasingly on the defensive and relying heavily on the 'unofficial' secret anti-communist army to suppress opposition with its terror squads.

The flight of capital out of Guatemala since the fighting in Nicaragua has been estimated at \$40 millions and is rising, land prices have slumped drastically and there are signs of splits within the bourgeoisie, particularly between the traditional agricultural trading sectors and the industrial interests linked with the Central American Common Market.

This division has yet to take a decisive political form but the industrialists are heavily reliant upon Nicaragua for raw materials and are clearly anxious to achieve some form of rapprochement with the Sandinista regime.

A more immediate and potentially far greater threat lies with the Ejercito Guerrillero de Pobres (EGP—The Guerrilla



El Salvador's Romero (Army of the Poor) which has close links with the Guerra Popular Prolongada faction of the Sandinistas.

Many members of the EGP fought in Nicaragua and they have increased their activity in Guatemala noticeably over recent weeks with a series of occupations not only of farmland but also of villages and

small towns in the centre of the country.

These occupations have been undertaken by well-armed groups of up to 150 men and women, well-known in the area and they have gained the support of the local peasantry which successive regimes have always viewed as highly conservative and a firm guarantee against 'insurgency'.

Strikes

In addition to this the regime is facing increased difficulties in the towns. Nationwide strikes by students in the first two weeks of August obtained the reinstatement of 5,000 students expelled in Quezaltenango despite the fact that a member of the secret police was killed in one school and that the chief of the secret police had identified the strike with the 'extreme left'.

All indications from the urban trade union movement point to increasing reorganisation and strength although no major move has yet been made.

Reports from Guatemala City suggest that the popular movement there is stronger than it was in Nicaragua before the civil war.

Occupied

The crisis in El Salvador is even more acute. Churches and factories in San Salvador continue to be occupied by workers and students who brave the dangers posed by the regime's death squad—the White Warriors' Union—who have killed several hundred people in the last few months.

The most publicised action has, predictably, involved foreigners: two Salvadorean managers and a US citizen were held hostage for over a week by workers of the Apex textile plant in demand for increased wages and better conditions of work.

Actions such as this occur daily and the tempo of guerrilla activity is also increasing after a comparative lull in July and directed much more openly against government installations.

The regime, having lifted a state of siege only a few weeks ago, is on the verge of reimposing it and ditching its sham "dialogue" with those few religious figures and dissident bourgeois groups who were guileless enough to believe in any possibility of accord.

The real threat to the Romero government comes from the Bloque Popular Revolucionario (BPR—Popular Revolutionary Bloc) a heterogeneous organisation of unions, clerical groups, leftist and bourgeois opposition parties that is now said to number some 20,000 people.

Clandestine

The Bloc has links with the guerrillas and maintains a clandestine organisation but has not yet made a call for armed action.

The character of the Bloc and the rival Frente de Accion Popular Unificada (FAPU—United Popular Action Front) is in many respects similar to the popular frontism of the FSLN, and there is still very little indication of the strength of Marxist forces in El Salvador.

However, the crisis is sufficiently grave to merit a surreptitious visit by Viron Vaky, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, earlier this month to give a direct report to Cyrus Vance on the degree to which El Salvador is "salvageable".

'Extremism'

Vance is apparently reluctant to resume military aid to both El Salvador and Guatemala for fear of pushing the masses to 'extremism' and jeopardising the increasing rapport the US has established with the Nicaraguan Junta.

The Pentagon, naturally, argues for full support but in either case it is clear that the overthrow of Somoza has narrowed the options for imperialism and is urging on the revolutionary process throughout Central America.

YOUNG EXIT SHOWS U.S. WEAKNESS



Young

The desperate weakness of the United States intervention in the Middle East has become starkly clear in the wake of Andrew Young's resignation as US ambassador to the UN.

Efforts to get the Zionist regime to agree to a new United Nations resolution aimed at a settlement with the Arab bourgeois governments have failed.

President Carter's special envoy, Robert Strauss, failed to convince Begin to agree to any reference to the right of the Palestinians.

He even failed to convince Carter's poodle, Sadat.

Despite American and

UN pressure to arrange a 'ceasefire' Begin has continued his genocidal attacks on South Lebanon. Every day last week the Zionist artillery, together with their fascist allies, have been pounding villages and now also the main towns in the area.

Numerous villagers and some Palestinian commandoes have been killed.

On Monday 20 August phosphorous and fragmentation bombs were seen by correspondents to set fire to pine forests and apple groves in the area.

The Zionists and their allies are adding a scorched earth policy to their genocidal attacks on South Lebanon and their continual threats of a new invasion.

BASQUES CALL FOR BOYCOTT

The agreement on regional autonomy reached last month between the Suarez regime in Madrid and the bourgeois nationalists in Euskadi is crucial to the political stability of the whole of Spain.

Suarez was forced into concessions in order to try to help the Basque nationalist party maintain its dominant position in the face of the rapid growth of more radical nationalist forces associated with ETA (militar).

Not enough

Last week there were new signs that the autonomy statute will not be enough to encourage the stabilisation which both Basque and Spanish capitalist politicians are so desperately seeking.

The political coalition which is close to ETA (militar)—Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity)—self-confidently launched a campaign to boycott the forthcoming referendum in the Basque provinces on the proposed autonomy statute.

Herri Batasuna won 25% of the votes in the parliamentary and municipal elections earlier this year and has almost certainly gained support as well as political confidence since then.

It will have gained recruits from the groups supporting ETA (politico-militar) after the catastrophe of its recent "holiday war" bombings which it was forced apologetically to abandon to a chorus of abuse from all sides.

ETA (militar)'s widely supported campaign of selective terrorism against the state apparatus, however, has continued unabated.

Last week it was spread to include bombings of French-owned enterprises in Bilbao, Barcelona, Saragossa and elsewhere.

Deportation

This is in protest against the stepping up by the Giscard-Barre regime in Paris of repression of Basques living in France, including the deportation to Spain of several Basques, some with only loose or historic connections with Basque nationalism.

SAHARA BATTLE

The guerrillas of the Polisario Front have claimed a major victory over the Moroccan army of occupation in the Western Sahara.

They report that 400 Moroccan troops were killed in a battle at the oasis of Bir Enzaran two weeks ago.

This clash was only one in the escalation of fighting that has developed since the Mauritanian military regime signed a peace treaty with

the Polisario and the Moroccan forces moved in to take over their positions in the war.

In further blows to Morocco's 'revolutionary' King Hassan, the Mauritanian leaders reopened diplomatic relations with the Algerian government which backs the Polisario and condemned the latest Moroccan advances before tearing up their defence pact with Hassan.

Growing crisis faces E. European economies

On August 1 the Romanian ruling bureaucracy suddenly announced that motorists from other Comecon countries would not be allowed through Romania unless they were able to pay for their petrol in hard currency (which in effect means US dollars).

This surprise announcement, which breaks Comecon agreements, resulted in chaos on the borders of Romania with Hungary, Bulgaria and the USSR.

Romania is a major tourist resort itself, and is also on the route for holiday-makers going to the Bulgarian coast of the Black Sea.

Eastern European tourists are not allowed to travel abroad with hard currency—indeed in many cases they are never allowed to possess it.

Thousands of tourists were therefore left stranded on the Romanian borders.

This incident is the most graphic illustration of the severity of the economic problems now faced by the workers' states of Eastern Europe and the USSR, and of the way these problems have exacerbated the splits and divisions within the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Failure

It also underlines the complete failure of Comecon to integrate the economies of the deformed workers' states—the refusal of the Romanians to accept Comecon currencies amounts to an admission that they are not convertible on the world market and are therefore inferior to US dollars.

The figures for industrial production coming out of the USSR recently indicate that industrial performance is the worst since at least 1951.

Romania's experience of these economic difficulties has probably been no greater than other Comecon countries, but President Ceausescu has chosen to respond in a typically anti-Soviet manner.

Ceausescu has already established a reputation for independence from the Soviet bureaucracy—his refusal to increase Romania's military commitment to the Warsaw Pact is the most obvious example.

Double purpose

These conflicts with the USSR (and now with the other Eastern European states) serve a double purpose for Ceausescu: he uses the 'exploitation' of Romania by the USSR as a scapegoat for Romania's economic difficulties, using Romanian nationalism to bolster his own regime; at the same time, unrest among Romanian workers at low living standards is enough of a threat for the bureaucracy to attempt



Brezhnev

to divert more resources from military expenditure to consumption.

The recent crisis measures for oil conservation have been provoked by the drop in world oil production. Romania has its own oil, but the reserves are running out.

This year, domestic output of oil has fallen and Romania was hit by the Iranian crisis and the subsequent reduction in oil supplies.

It is rumoured that the Soviet Union has refused to supply extra oil to cover the shortfall that the cut in Iranian supplies has left, because of the tension in Soviet-Romanian relations, and particularly because Romania refused to buy nuclear reactors from the USSR some years ago.

The short-term measure of refusing to accept Comecon currencies is unlikely to benefit Romania in the long-run.

The tourist industry is important to the Romanian economy and is largely kept going by tourists from other Eastern European countries.

Serious blow

More importantly, other countries are beginning to retaliate. Hungary has already banned Romanian lorries which cannot buy petrol in dollars.

Since a large proportion of Romanian agricultural exports has to travel through Hungary by road, this could be a serious blow to Romania's trade.

The economic problems of the workers' states have been expressed in a slowing down of the growth rates.

Between 1960 and 1975, the annual rates of growth of the Eastern European countries as a whole (excluding Albania) have been steadily increasing.

Between 1961-65, the combined average annual growth rate for these countries was 4.9%, for 1966-70, 6.5% and for 1971-75, 7.8%.

However, this steady acceleration of growth is now being interrupted. In Romania, for instance, (where the average annual growth rate for 1971-75 was 11.3%) the target for the

coming five-year period has been reduced to between 6.7% and 7.4%.

The reduction in world oil supplies and the increase in OPEC prices have hit all the Eastern European countries, despite the continuing supply of oil from the USSR.

The Stalinist bureaucracies have reacted not by rationing, until alternative sources of energy are found, but by increasing prices to reduce demand.

In the last few months, petrol prices have been increased by 50% in Czechoslovakia, 100% in Bulgaria, 45% in Hungary, and by 60% in Romania.

The USSR has been unable to accelerate the growth of oil production—in fact oil exports have been frozen and the increase in production slowed down.

However, the balance between exports to Comecon and to capitalist countries has been weighted more in favour of Comecon.

Since the mid-1960s the Stalinist bureaucracies have attempted to shift resources to consumption and away from investment, in an effort to 'reform' the economies and to increase the living standards of workers who were beginning to show dangerous signs of militancy.

Imports

However, it has become increasingly evident that this shift of resources has not been accompanied by any significant increase in productivity in the agricultural sector.

The inevitable result has been an increase in food imports into the Comecon bloc as a whole.

The USSR, for instance, is now the world's biggest importer of New Zealand lamb, while Poland has recently raised a loan of \$50 million from the military government in Argentina to finance food imports.

The 1979 Soviet Union grain harvest is disastrously low and will have repercussions throughout Comecon.

The latest estimate for this year's grain harvest is 185 million tonnes, which compares with a target of 226.8 million tonnes, and last year's bumper harvest of 237 million tonnes.

The USSR has already made an agreement with the US (where there has been a bumper crop) to import up to 20 million tonnes, and another 10 million will be imported from other countries.

Inevitable

These imports should prevent serious shortages within the USSR, but they do not solve the Stalinists' problems.

A trade deficit is almost inevitable because of these extra food imports, and the Soviet bureaucracy has to find a way to finance this.

One option is to raise a foreign loan, thus involving the capitalist financiers even more deeply in the Soviet economy.

Another option would be to cut the import of industrial goods, which would impede industrial expansion (already under strain) even further.

It is also questionable whether the Soviet bureaucracy will be able to avoid increasing food prices.

In Hungary, where the pricing system is more flexible than other Eastern European countries (apart from Yugoslavia, where inflation runs at over 13%) food prices were recently increased by an average of 20%.

This included a 50% rise for bread, and 30% for meat.

The experience of Poland in 1976, where a Stalinist government was overturned as a result of riots against food price rises.



The Stalinist bureaucracies prefer to control supply and demand through queues rather than price rises which could lead to riots like these in Poland in 1970

inclines the Soviet bureaucracy to prefer putting up with queues instead of raising prices.

The Stalinists' response to these deepening economic difficulties has been to turn to capitalist multi-national firms and governments for assistance.

Besides asking for loans from capitalist governments and bankers, capitalist firms are increasingly invited to invest in Soviet and Eastern European projects.

This kind of involvement has gone to the greatest extreme in Yugoslavia, but is also increasing in the Soviet Union.

For example, the Soviet bureaucracy has decided to hire a Western capitalist car manufacturer to modernise the Soviet car industry.

At present, Volkswagen and Peugeot-Citroen are competing for the contract.

The economic problems of the workers' states, which stem

from bureaucratic mismanagement of the economy, will not be solved by investment from capitalist firms, or the sort of nationalistic measures that Ceausescu is pursuing.

The only long-term solution would be a political revolution that restores political power to the working class, thus opening the way for rational and democratic planning of the economy in the interests of the workers and not the bureaucracy.

Gandhi deals herself back into the game

'India—the world's largest democracy'. For decades that was how the bourgeoisie packaged its class dictatorship in India—as imperialism's alternative of 'freedom' to the Yellow Peril of Red China.

The image has been damaged over the years by the cruelties of history and the uncompromising reality of the class struggle.

Gandhi's 'Emergency' dictatorship exposed the vile apparatus of repression which served the needs of the ruling class. 2½ years of Janata government have done little to restore anybody's faith in the strengths or virtues of parliamentary democracy.

Permanent crisis

Corruption scandals flourished in an environment of permanent political crisis. While the workers, poor peasants and national minorities found no relief of their poverty, starvation and oppression, the Janata came to depend more and more heavily on the brutal force of laws designed like Gandhi's as a blunt instrument to batter and crush every independent struggle of the oppressed layers.

And on top of this



Caretaker P.M.—Singh

monstrous edifice, the Janata ('Unity') leaders writhed and wrangled in a spectacular display of perpetual incompetence.

United only by their opposition to Gandhi's power, Desai, Singh, Ram, Fernandes and their crew could not even agree on what general course they should take to defend capitalism in India.

Without a shred of political principle between them, lacking even the courage of their opportunism, they remained locked together in their grotesque dance of self-destruction.

The splitting of the Janata put an end to this black farce, and it was Gandhi herself who finally pulled down the curtain when she refused to support Charan Singh's bid to form a government.

The new political and

constitutional crisis was calmed by the calling of a general election.

The venerable fools who lead the warring factions and parties of professional opportunists are now settling down to a long period of uninterrupted manoeuvring, rotten deals, faithless promises and an orgy of lies.

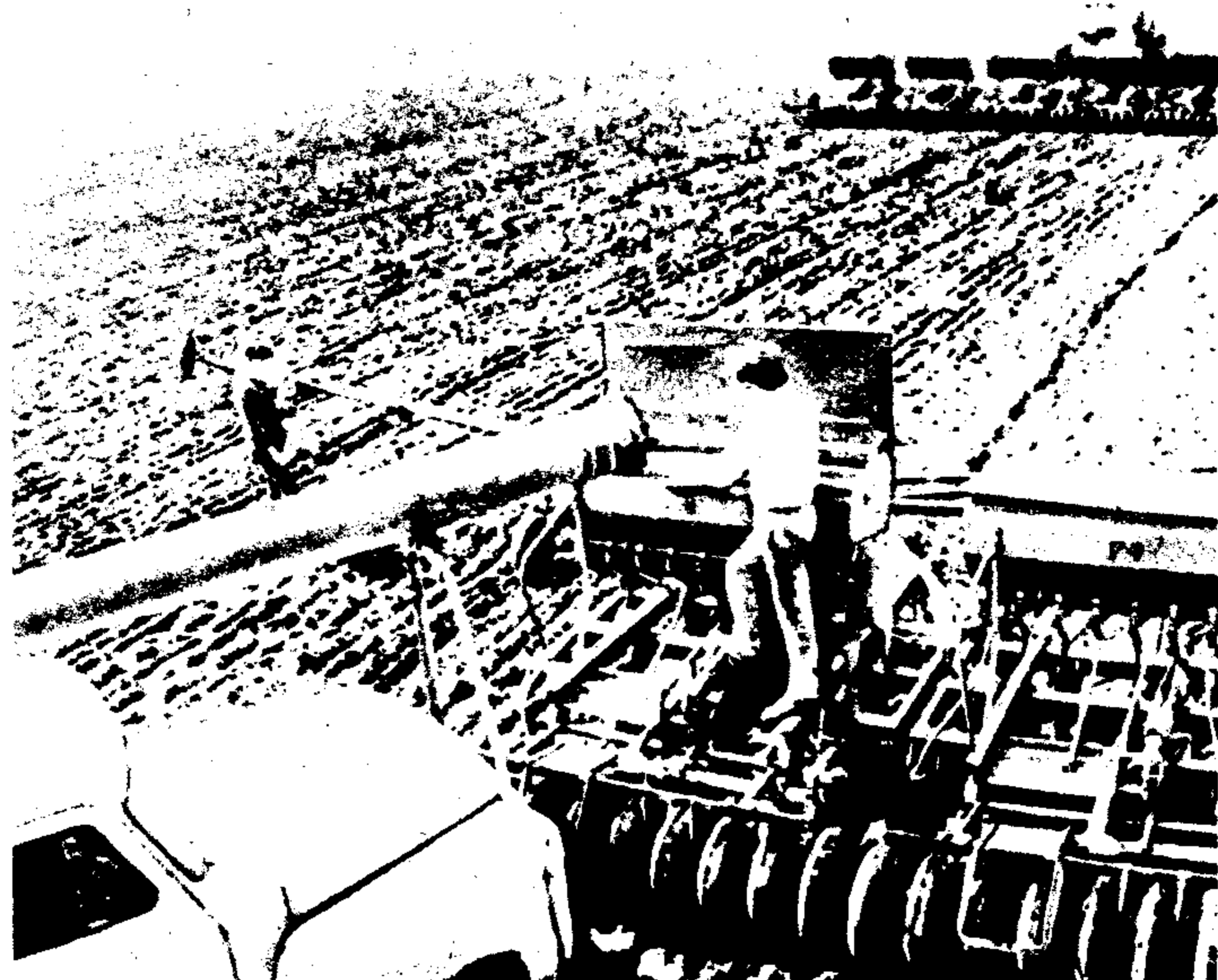
Singh has already gained the temporary advantage of installing himself as caretaker prime minister.

Sordid trade

But it is Gandhi who stands to gain most from the elections, and she will bring to the forging of new party alliances all the subtle tricks of a sordid trade she mastered long ago.

The working class of India will not gain one grain of rice from all the antics of these virtuoso performers, for all the hopes of 'progressive' popular fronts held out by the reformists and the Stalinists of the CPI and the CP(M).

The ending of their misery and oppression can be won only through the building of a revolutionary Trotskyist party to sweep aside the vicious charade of bourgeois democracy in India and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in the struggle for international socialist revolution.



Soviet agriculture is unable to meet demand. The USSR has arranged to import up to 20 million tonnes of grain from

Black youth club occupied to stop closure

The Notting Hill Metro Club has been occupied by local black youth in a bid to save it from closure for a month.

In an area of high unemployment and gross lack of community facilities, this action is of paramount political significance.

It shows how working class youth can fight for their rights by mobilizing in an independent way against the Tory cuts.

Sacked

Two weeks before 28th July, the senior youth club organiser Emmerson Moore was sacked from his post because of previous criminal conviction.

One week later, another youth leader from the Metro was informed by the local education authority (ILEA) that they no longer required her services.

Although the reasons for this were not made clear, it was revealed that the club would be closed forthwith for "re-decoration" purposes.

Hence the youth voted to stage a sit in to show their opposition towards the ILEA's proposals.

On hearing this decision the local education authority refused any proposal of permanent closure and maintained that when youth leader replacements were found, and the club re-decorated, the Metro would re-open.

However, only one week after the sacking of Emmerson Moore all credit facilities to the club were severed and suppliers were informed to terminate all further sales.

Four weeks later the occupation still holds strong despite a gross lack of money, threats of court injunctions and attempts by the ILEA to

occupied to stop closure

finalize the closure of the only black youth club in the area.

The youth believe that if they don't take it into their hands to defend the community's interest, nobody will!

Fight

Meanwhile these youth urge other young people to stand up and fight for their rights in other areas, for although its mainly black clubs under attack today, it will be all youth facilities tomorrow.

When asked what they thought of the cuts one black youth exclaimed:

"It's just Thatcher organizing against the working class, with the black people in the middle. The Tory Government attacks youths, trade unions, the old—and whatever branch of society we live in we must come to recognise this and fight it."

To do this the Metro desperately needs support and financial aid. So far, the local Labour Party has remained silent and only one T&GWU shop steward has come forward to support their struggle.

Support

These youth are determined to win and they will, if enough financial and political support is given. This means that each week the youth have to raise over £100.

Send donations either by care of *Socialist Press* or to The Metro Club, St. Lukes Road, Notting Hill, London.

ALL IRISH WORKERS HIT BY CRISIS

The rejection by Tory Northern Ireland Minister Humphrey Atkins of New York Governor Hugh Carey's offer of talks has done little to appease Orange demands on the Tories for a rejection of all talking and a stepping up of repression.

Atkins and Thatcher would dearly like to be able to arrange talks with the US bourgeois leaders over the best way to stabilise imperialist rule in the north.

The economic crisis is hitting Ireland north and south particularly harshly.

The OECD report on the South, published on August 20, predicted rising inflation, falling growth rate and a balance of payments crisis.

Slump policies

Two years of government-inspired boom is now being replaced by slump policies.

The working class in the occupied six counties of the North has always suffered the most depressed living standards in the British economy.

Unemployment, even according to official figures, is now 13%—over twice the British average. This overall figure obscures the fact that the jobless rate for Catholic workers is over 2½ times that for Protestants.

The crisis of profitability in the manufacturing industry caused the workforce to be slashed by 16% in the years 1974-77 alone and 41% of all male workers earn less than £60 a week (compared with 27% for Britain as a whole).



Over a quarter of all families live below even the bourgeois-defined poverty line. Electricity and gas costs exceed those in Britain by three times. According to an official survey, half the housing in Belfast, and a third of all housing, is substandard. All of these figures conceal the fact that the burden of capitalist tyranny falls heaviest on the Catholic workers.

'Poor productivity'

The last few months saw around 1,000 Catholic workers in Belfast lose their jobs in a spate of factory closures.

At the end of last month, 8,000 Protestant workers at the Harland and Woolf shipbuilding yard (the north's biggest single employer), were told that 1,800 jobs would be axed by early 1980. The yard's bosses blamed the deepest recession in shipbuilding since the 1930's and the poor productivity of the workforce.

The man-made fibre industry (the biggest in the six counties, employing over 9,000 workers)

has already started lay-offs, and threatens more to discourage wage strikes and force up productivity. Bosses blame cheap US imports and workers' "unreasonable" wage claims for the falling rate of profit.

Around 1500 jobs in the gas industry are in danger, as the 9 state and 4 private gas plants face complete shutdown. The imperialist rulers have withdrawn subsidies and turned down plans for a North Sea gas pipeline to save the profitability of the industry. These moves are designed to force a switch to electricity, in which there is heavy British investment.

Showing a willingness to fight to defend their positions, workers have responded readily to strikes called by their unions.

Over 2,000 workers (mostly women), came out on August 1 in the first six county-wide strike in the textile industry.

Further strikes followed on the 8th and 15th. The Monday strikes called by the CSEU have twice brought the engineering industry in the north of Ireland to a halt.

The road ahead is fraught with dangers for imperialism. But while the Tories hint at political reforms, the repression of the working class is firmly pushed ahead. If necessary, imperialism is always ready to call on the fascist solution, which incubates in the loyalist movement.

Party

The upheavals shaking the working class will not in themselves spontaneously create a basis for class unity. The crucial subjective factor—the revolutionary party—does not exist even in embryo.

As more workers and youth seek a way out of the impasse under capitalism, both the IRA and the Democratic Unionist Party (Paisley's loyalists) will deepen their influence in the divided working class.

Class unity can be won only on the basis of a struggle for demands that link the solution of the national question to the material conditions of the working class as a whole.

NUS THROWS SCHOOL STUDENTS INTO DEBTORS' PRISON

Since the founding conference of the National Union of School Students in May 1972, it has received the support—financially, organisationally and politically—of the National Union of Students, presently under the leadership of the Stalinist-dominated Broad Left.

The NUSS has, throughout this period, been dominated by the Young Communist League, which had a majority of seats on the National Committee.

Discontent

But the inability of the YCL to lead any national campaigns even for the most limited reforms (for example, against school uniforms) and a refusal to struggle for a broad based labour movement campaign against the cuts had two results.

On the one hand membership declined from a highpoint of 20,000 to a current membership of about 5,000.

On the other hand growing militant discontent with the leadership began to express itself in the last year.

At the NUSS Conference in July the rank and file anger found its expression in the passing of radical motions demanding militant strikes in schools and strike action and occupation with other trade unionists against the cuts.

Smokescreen

The YCL were routed and a new leadership, dominated by the SWP-backed Rebel and IMG-backed Revolution youth groups was elected.

On the day the new leadership took over, 9 July, the NUS President, Trevor Phillips, confirmed that NUS would continue to support NUSS regardless of the politics of the leadership of NUSS.

This proved to be nothing more than a smokescreen for a



By Neil James, NUSS Executive Committee member.

vicious policy of cutting essential financial aid and material assistance to NUSS.

On Tuesday 17 July NUSS full-timers met Pauline Roe and Helen Connor from NUS who have responsibility for the school students' union.

New offices

At this meeting both the move of NUS to new offices in Endsleigh Street and the financial position of NUSS (which owes NUS £7,000) were discussed.

The only point raised by NUS at that meeting was that there were accommodation problems but that NUSS would be given room in the new offices.

Subsidy ended

But at a subsequent meeting on August 8 the NUSS National Organiser and Secretary were told what "support" the NUSS new leadership would receive from NUS.

Firstly the NUSS were not to be given a rent-free office at the new NUS offices in Endsleigh Street.

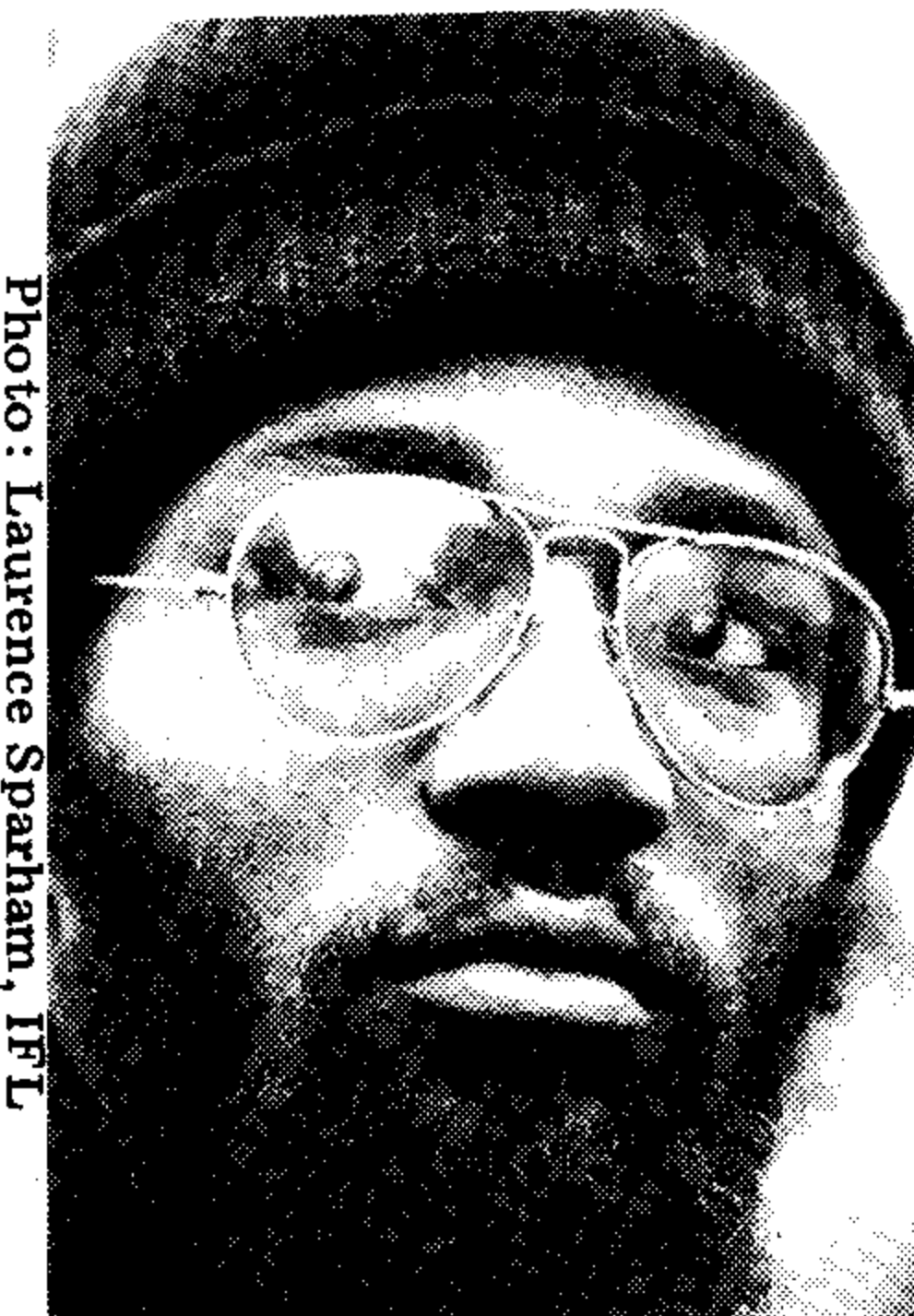
At the NUS Executive Committee it was agreed that no decision be taken until full consultation with NUSS full-timers. The NUS full-timers, however, had already decided not to give NUSS an office in Endsleigh St. without consultation.

Secondly NUSS was told it would have to repay the £7,000 debt in the future.

Despite the fact that NUSS is already chronically broke we were told that it would have to pay rent at any temporary accommodation NUS could find.

Finally NUSS was told that the 70% subsidy it receives from NUS for phone bills was to be ended.

If any of the measures proposed by the Broad Left full-timers in NUS were implemented the NUSS would become bankrupt.



Phillips—verbal 'support' for NUSS

This would mean no national union newspaper until the finance was raised; no materials for campaigning to build a mass fighting school students union.

So if NUSS didn't get smashed by the Broad Left then it would be incapable of providing any materials to co-ordinate a struggle.



Last July's NUSS conference

The NUSS Executive Committee immediately called a meeting to respond to this political attack on the independence of NUSS.

By providing only two weeks notice of the proposals the Broad Left has done its best to guarantee the collapse of NUSS.

A circular has been sent to all NUS constituency organisations detailing the history of the attack and raising some disturbing facts.

The mailing ends by demanding "disapproval" of the NUS full-timers; a full discussion at the next NUS EC on 30 September; temporary housing near enough to NUS offices so as to permit the continued use of photocopying, postage and duplicating facilities; continued payment of rent and phone bills by NUS and full consultation before decisions affecting NUSS are made.

It is clear, however, that the NUSS leadership do not understand the nature of the attack they face or the correct way to respond to it.

The demands they put forward fail to mobilise the rank and file of the NUS let alone the NUSS.

The conscious political attack on NUSS and the new leadership by the Broad Left must be met by the full-scale mobilisation of NUS to defend NUSS.

The Socialist Worker Student Organisation and the Socialist Students Alliance must be called on to lead a campaign against the Stalinists and right-wingers that make up Broad Left.

Confrontation

The enormous weakness of the bureaucrats is intensifying within NUS as the greatest-ever Tory education expenditure cuts begin to take effect.

The possibility of a major confrontation on NUSS would further damage the 'left' reputation of NUS President Trevor Phillips, who at last December's NUS conference strongly argued in favour, against the Conference decision, of letting the then NUSS President Munford speak.

Aware of the need to avoid a major confrontation over NUSS the Broad Left have now attempted to manoeuvre around any battle by providing NUSS with an office in North London Poly.

Mass lobby

This will make it extremely hard for NUSS to use NUS facilities because of the distance from NUS offices.

And the temporary accommodation will be taken away by the end of September.

WSL and SYL members will be campaigning in NUS and NUSS for:

*local student unions to censure the NUS full-timers! For full discussion on the NUS EC! For a mass lobby by NUS and NUSS members of the NUS EC on 30 September.

*Drop the debts! No cuts—free rent and phone.

*For an NUSS office in Endsleigh Street.

*Full consultation with NUSS full-timers before any decisions.

*No censorship of NUSS material before posting.

THE CUTS:- Lessons of AHA

and council revolts

The action of the Lewisham, Lambeth and Southwark Area Health Authority in refusing to implement the Tory cuts has been firmly supported by trade unionists in the area, and could be used as a starting point for an effective campaign to stop the cuts.

This was made clear at a public meeting called by the Lewisham-based suspended AHA members last week, which about 300 people attended.

But the meeting wasn't used as a platform to put forward policies to mobilise workers against the cuts.

Catalogue

Instead it heard a catalogue of the effects of the proposed cuts: the Sydenham Children's Hospital is due to close; kidney units will be axed; and every hospital will experience cut-backs, including Lewisham Hospital which is already in desperate need of decoration.

Dr. Robin Stock announced: "We will oppose hospital and ward closures" but failed to say how. It was proposed that an "action" committee be set up, but the "action" it would be involved in was left undefined.

The high attendance and militant feeling at the public meeting shows that local trade unionists are ready to



Knight

fight the cuts.

Other labour movement conferences on the cuts are being held, including a 'Local government conference' called on July 29 by Lambeth Labour Party's Local Government Committee, and a delegate conference which has been called for 10 November by an ad-hoc committee set up by the three local Trades Councils around Lewisham.

These must be used to plan action against the cuts.

The Lambeth local government conference was specifically concerned with cuts made by the council, in particular the proposal by

the Lambeth Labour Group to cut 4½% off expenditure. These cuts were justified by Ted Knight, Labour Group leader, on the grounds that they were a 'tactical' move to show local people what Tory cuts would really mean!

These arguments did not impress the conference, which was attended by 100 Labour Party activists, who called for no cuts, and for the councillors to refuse to implement the cuts and to organise a campaign in the labour movement to support their action.

Ted Knight is also a member of the South-east Thames Regional Health Authority, which has been made responsible for implementing cuts in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham following the suspension of the AHA.

According to Derek Prentice, a Labour councillor and suspended member of the AHA, who recently gave an interview for *Socialist Press*, Ted Knight has:

"consistently fought against the cuts at all levels, when Labour were in office as well. Anyone who accuses him of having ducked that fight at any stage would be politically naive."



Photo: Mark Risher, IFL

The EGA—not even an occupation without strike action can save the NHS from the Tories

The question has not been however whether Knight means well or not.

The sharp question for all those holding office on Labour councils is what do they do when their intentions and those of capital conflict.

Knight's position is quite clear. Either he will support some cuts or he will argue for a rates rise to compensate for the fact that the government will not meet the council's spending plans.

Challenge

Neither of these show any alternative to managing the capitalist system for the Tories. The choice is not a greater or lesser evil in the balancing of Lambeth's books, but whether or not 'lefts' in the Labour Party will fight the cuts and challenge the government head on, using not their own persuasiveness but the strength of the working class.

Knight not only voted for the 4½% cuts but declared:

"What we were doing and what we would have done, would have been to use the cuts we had made in order to show in real terms what cuts mean."

"No problem"

"The cuts we suggested were those that did not involve any redundancies or loss of jobs in Lambeth, and didn't damage the services in particular."

"So that what we were showing in practice was what Tory cuts mean in real terms for people living in Lambeth. So there's no problem. There was never any decision not to campaign."

"It is a question of tactics. What comrades seem to be doing is to raise the question of cuts into a principle. If they pursue that policy then there's really no future."

(*Socialist Organiser* interview).

What Knight clearly means is that if the fight against all cuts is taken seriously then there is no future for reformist policies. In his interview Derek

Prentice discusses the sort of campaign that the suspended AHA will be trying to implement. It is clear from his concentration on the argument that the area is a special case, that it was the particular problems that the area faced that provoked the AHA into this unique position of refusing to implement cuts.

When asked whether the 'special case' argument didn't limit the scope of the campaign, Prentice replied:

"We can only argue as far as our own AHA is concerned and on a basis that we're going to get them to stand."

"The alternative, and I accept entirely the political argument that you're posing but the alternative would have been not to carry the rest of the AHA members with us."

"If we didn't carry them with us, the effect now would be that these cuts would have started to be implemented."

Acceptance

Prentice lays a great deal of stress on the importance of carrying the AHA and the support of the British Medical Association. For instance, he states:

"I am delighted to say that the British Medical Association—perhaps the strongest trade union in the country—has come out with wholehearted support for us."

"The doctors have said—as they said at the meeting—that they don't care who tells us; they are not going to reduce patient care, and the trade unions are solidly behind us."

Leaving aside the rather bizarre characterisation of an organisation which is not even affiliated to the TUC as 'perhaps the strongest trade union in the country', it is clear that Prentice's perspective is limited by his acceptance of the legitimacy of the AHA. He states:

"We intend now to continue being members of the AHA. We have sought legal advice on the

Minister's action and are seeking ways to find out whether or not we can still meet as an authority."

An effective campaign against the cuts must challenge the authority of the AHA, not accept and bolster it.

The AHA is a totally undemocratic, appointed body, and a fight for workers' and users' control of the health service must be counterposed to it.

Prentice continually points out that the Labour 'representatives' on the AHA (and they are specifically not accountable) are in a built-in minority of one-third, but instead of arguing for a different structure, he simply argues the need to carry the other two-thirds in the fight by compromise.

Led by AHA

He also accepts that the campaign against the cuts will be led by the AHA, rather than the labour movement:

"The campaign is going to be extremely simplistic—no cuts to patient services, no redundancies... Now, that is our stand and we think—we know—we've got the people of three boroughs backing us, and we've got the doctors backing us as well."

And we will continue to expose what these cuts mean... I agree that we should call meetings—that the AHA should call meetings if we're still legally allowed to, and I shall be trying to convince my colleagues of that."

Alternative

Such meetings are obviously important as a starting point to a campaign. However, unless the alternative of workers' control is counterposed to the authority of the AHA, and the fight for occupation and strike action, which Derek Prentice says he supports, are taken into such meetings the campaign will fail to defeat the RHA and the commissioners appointed by the government.

PRESS GANG



August is the cruellest month for Fleet Street.

Their readers go on holiday; their advertisers wait for more opportune days and the news rooms swing their efforts into finding the most trivial stories of the year.

It was youth who caught it in the neck last week.

Runaway couple Susan and Nick were hounded round Britain as a High Court judge called in the newspapers to capture them.

On their return Judge Arnold told the press to lay off. He reckoned without the social concern that is instilled into true news hounds at birth.

As Susan Pengelly left court she covered her head with a bag. Fearlessly the photographers ripped it from her face and blazed away.

Reporters were hard at work composing conversations Romeo and Juliet were supposed to have had with their parents and each

Meanwhile 'Dino' Barbouris had also come home—not to mother—but to the cells. Since he'd been away the press had built him into a combination of Al Capone and Billy the Kid.

On his return he was charged with possessing an imitation firearm.

All this and much more. It is nothing out of the ordinary.

But Lord Shawcross chose last week to make his farewell croak from the Press Council.

His summary of this employers' poodle and the press were equally sanguine.

The only threat to the press came from unionisation and the only fault the press had was a tendency towards sexual prurience.

The *Observer* must have been slightly struck by the inadequacy of this defence. They had reporter Robert Chesshyre offer something more sophisticated.

He attacked the Stalinist-Labour 'left' proposal for a more 'neutral' watchdog than the Press Council and

offered this interpretation of press ownerships.

"In a country enjoying free speech, papers have the right to be partisan; they are not, like broadcasting, governed by a charter requiring fair play."

"Most newspaper proprietors are likely to be conservative minded. Most newspapers, therefore, are likely to be conservative-minded too, even right wing."

The Half Moon Photography Workshop—authors of *Camerawork*, a polemic on Ireland, are not unfortunately naturally right wing.

They adopt a position of saying that news from Ireland is censored and that the main use of photography there is to put people in prison.

The *Daily Telegraph* devoted an article to the booklet which was directed against the fact that the workshop is grant-aided by the Arts Council. Under a truly free press they would no doubt be suppressed. In August it might not even get in the papers.

USFI 'critics' give credentials to Viet Stalin



Celebrating the liberation of Saigon from US imperialism

The new version of Pabloism which the American SWP is putting forward in the USFI's important internal polemic on the South East Asia wars shows up in three ways.

First in its negative arguments (discussed in our two previous articles) as to why Kampuchea under Pol Pot was not a workers' state.

Second, in its positive arguments discussed in this article, about why Vietnam was a workers' state and why its invasion of Kampuchea was a progressive step.

Third, even more explicitly, it is shown up by the SWP leaders' arguments about the causes and consequences of wars between workers' states.

Together with the weaknesses of the counter-position of Ernest Mandel and the USFI majority, we will take these up in the next article.

VIETNAM AND THE USFI

The defeat of the imperialists in Indochina in 1975 was a major step forward for the working class and other oppressed and exploited classes throughout the world.

The vast US army, the

main physical weapon of imperialism, was shown to be unable to destroy the resistance of the working masses of Indochina.

This—as we have seen in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere since then—has led to a sharp setback to the political power of imperialism and in particular its giant, the USA.

This, combined with the prolonged crisis of the world capitalist economy, is opening up new opportunities for revolutionary advances towards socialism.

Decades of struggle

Many decades of struggle took place in Indochina between the exploited masses and French, Japanese, British and American imperialism in their turn.

Since the 1930s the leadership of the masses in Indochina has in large part, though not exclusively, been in the hands of Stalinist parties.

This leadership has not been uncontested. At certain times sections of the nationalist petty bourgeoisie and the Buddhist religious leadership have played a role at the head of mass organisations.

And at certain crucial

moments in the 1930s and the 1940s groups of revolutionary socialists, fighting Stalinism as part of the Left Opposition and then of the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky, struggled to expose and end the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist leaders in Indochina and of the more powerful bureaucracy in Moscow on whom they depended.

Held in check

The Indochinese Stalinists, however, succeeded in maintaining their own leadership through a combination of manoeuvre and at times naked oppressive force.

Independent movements of the masses have been held in check. The small group of Trotskyists was murdered by the Stalinist-led Vietminh at the end of World War Two after struggling to prevent the reoccupation of Saigon by the French imperialists.*

The Vietnamese Trotskyists who perished in the fight to build an independent proletarian movement in Vietnam displayed such persistence and courage because they had understood what the Stalinist

leadership represented in relation to the struggle of the masses in Vietnam.

They had understood, in Trotsky's words:

"The workers' line of march at all times cut a certain angle to the line of the leadership. And at the most critical moments this angle became 180 degrees."

Despite these cruel blows inflicted against revolutionary socialists by the Stalinist leaders imperialism in Vietnam has suffered a defeat. Capitalist property has been overthrown.

In the struggles which led up to these events, millions of Indochinese workers and peasants were mobilised against imperialism.

Prestige

And the leadership of the mass movement remained in the hands of the old Stalinist leadership which, despite the blood on its hands, emerged from the struggle with much international prestige.

There is a form of "logic" which has since the 1940s been an endemic infection in the ranks of those who have claimed to be Trotskyist.

This "logic" concludes that because Stalinists end up at the head of a victorious struggle against imperialism, then the Stalinists play a revolutionary role even though this may involve their "going further than they intended under the pressure of the masses."

Such has been the interpretation by some leaders in the Trotskyist movement of the role of Tito, Mao, (in a rather different way) Castro and most recently Ho Chi Minh and the leadership of the Vietnamese CP.**

That position is one of the basic manifestations of Pabloism in the ranks of Trotskyists.

So it was that in 1975 many sections of the leadership of the USFI, especially those associated with the former International Majority Tendency, took up

a position which gave (qualified) revolutionary credentials to the Vietnamese Communist Party.

This was underlined by their refusal to characterise it as counter-revolutionary and Stalinist or to call for political revolution.

In the latest dispute in the USFI, the SWP leaders (who have referred to the VCP as Stalinist and called for political revolution in Vietnam) note with justified (but in their case hypocritical) surprise that in his article on the dispute, (ICP, April 9 1979 p.348) Ernest Mandel had for the first time to their knowledge appeared to refer to the Vietnamese leadership as representing "hardened and institutionalised" bureaucratic rule which "can only be removed by a political revolution." (See ICP, July 16, 1979, p.713).

We certainly agree that *not* to label the Vietnamese leadership as Stalinist and counter-revolutionary; *not* to call for the formation of a Trotskyist party and for political revolution in Vietnam is an adaptation to Stalinism.

Adaptation

But the SWP is now showing more clearly than ever how the prescription of faultless, formal "orthodox" positions on these questions can also amount to an equally profound and dangerous adaptation to the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy.

But the SWP's minority resolution and the latest article by Clark, Feldman, Horowitz and Waters (CFHW), are among the grossest examples to have emerged from "Trotskyists" of such an adaptation.

Called into question

The positions put in the SWP resolution and in the articles are of course the same. All four authors of the article (CFHW) are among the leaders of the SWP.

Their positions call into question the meaning which the SWP is giving to the words it uses.

What kind of a "counter-revolutionary Stalinist" caste is it which takes measures to defend the workers state which "encourage the workers and peasants of Vietnam and elsewhere in the region, and can facilitate class mobilisations that will take the social revolution further than the Stalinist misleaders intend."? (ICP, June 4 1979 p.556).

What kind of political revolution will it need to dislodge a bureaucracy which "has made concessions to popular pressure and at decisive points has

This is the fourth of the political and the Secretariat of the Fourth International in East Asia. This article adapted to the Vietnamese 'progressive' qualities to

mobilised key sections of the Vietnamese people to drive through anti-capitalist measures." (CFHW, ICP July 16 1979, p.704).

Do CFHW envisage building a Trotskyist party independently in the mass movement, or could their "Trotskyist party" not result from the reform of such a responsive Stalinist party?

Shamefully silent

Mandel and the USFI majority resolution (ICP, June 4 1979) is shamefully silent on all these points.

It in effect maintains the positions of the former IMT's resolution on Indochina for the USFI World Congress (withdrawn when the factions were dissolved in 1977)—that the VCP was centrist and had followed a largely revolutionary course.

But, despite its characterisation of the VCP as counter-revolutionary, the SWP's minority resolution and the articles by its leaders are profoundly adaptationist.

In part this shows up as the counterpart to their treatment of Kampuchea (discussed in the two previous *Socialist Press* articles) where an attempt scientifically to characterise the nature of the state and the leadership in Kampuchea is substituted by moralising on the deeds of the Pol Pot leadership.

The true colours of the Vietnamese leadership, however, are whitewashed over.

Denied

It does appear that the prestige of the North Vietnamese leadership has in recent years allowed them, as in Cuba, to keep their bureaucratic power without the extremes of police-state repression employed in some Stalinist states.

Nonetheless all forms of workers' democracy are systematically denied.

*See "Some stages in the revolution in the South of Vietnam", *Quatrieme Internationale*, 1947: Anh Van and Jaqueline Roussel, *National Movements and Class Struggle in Vietnam* (in French); and "Vietnam: WRP on the road back to



Chinese tanks in Vietnam

revolutionary Vietnamese Trotskyists

Article by HENRY PHILLIPS about the political crisis within the United Fourth International arising out of the reformed workers states in South Vietnam. It shows how the American SWP have ousted CP leadership and searched for support their capitulation.



Chinese troops

It can be assumed that repressive measures are and will be used against anyone attempting to mobilise the masses independently of the bureaucracy.

When the Vietnamese army moved south in 1975 independent workers' committees in factories and neighbourhoods were forcibly disbanded and the Northern bureaucratic forms of rule extended to the whole of Vietnam.

The Vietnamese leadership has killed revolutionaries before. We should not expect it to hesitate before doing so again.

In short, no forms of independent workers democracy are permitted in Vietnam.

Cover up

It is every day more evident that the SWP's picture of the "boat people" as "expropriated merchants, traders and the like who left Vietnam voluntarily after losing their property and privileges" (ICP, June 4 1979, p.553) is now no more than a cover-up for a policy of systematic racist terror against the Chinese racial minority.

(It is worth noting that the SWP's minority resolution goes out of its way to condemn Moscow's anti-Chinese racism—ICP, June 4 1979, p.551).

No gulags

Despite all this, the SWP says that the Vietnamese regime is not very repressive. There are no gulags.

... those people being held in "re-education camps." the SWP resolution assures us, "are mostly the officials and army officers of the old regime, many of whom guilty of war crimes. They have not been treated in the horrendous manner they once treated the liberation fighters who fell into their hands." (ICP, June 4 1979).

"bloism" in *Socialist Press*, October 15 1975.

**See T. Wohlforth and Westoby, *Communists Against Revolution*, Folrose Books, 1977, and the WSL's documents "The Poisoned Well" and "Fourth International—Problems and Tasks".

In other words, the SWP is calling on revolutionaries not to criticise this "counter-revolutionary, Stalinist bureaucracy" because it is not really very repressive.

Where, we ask them, would any Trotskyists in Vietnam be today? Beyond question in the "re-education camps" as they were under Stalin.

Reminiscent

But, as far as we know, the Vietnamese bureaucracy long ago physically destroyed all the Trotskyists in Vietnam.

The SWP say that to criticise the repressive policies of the Vietnamese state (except in a purely formal way) is to join the campaign of imperialism—an argument which is reminiscent of those who defended Stalin in the 1930s.

Alongside this whitewash of the repressive nature of the Vietnamese regime (and of course, that of its new puppet FUNSK government in Kampuchea) goes a glorification of the achievements of the bureaucracy.

"Advances"

Thus, according to CFHW, Vietnam under the leadership of the VCP has undergone "social and political advances" in which the Kampuchean masses under the puppet government of the FUNSK now participate. (See ICP, June 16 1979, p.702 and elsewhere).

In arguing that Kampuchea did not become a workers' state in the period after 1975, and implicitly that Vietnam *did*, CFHW say that:

"A socialist revolution means establishing institutions that open the door to human progress and advance—that is, a better life for the masses of working people." (ICP, July 16 1979, p.717).

They repeatedly insist, without citing a single source, on the material benefits obtained by Vietnamese and Kampuchean masses and on the fact that the Kampuchean masses welcomed the Vietnamese invasion.

It should be noted that this argument is implicitly applied to other Stalinist bureaucracies, notably of

the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

So Stalin's collectivisation of agriculture or industrialisation programme have become, for CFHW, proof that the USSR, despite Stalin, remained a workers' state because the needs of the masses were partially met and rapid industrialisation took place.

This is totally at odds with the method used so brilliantly by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* where he distinguished between the material achievements made possible—and proved by what did take place—and the obstacles placed in the way of all these material achievements by the policies of the bureaucracy.

Worsened

The policies of the bureaucracy did not improve the condition of the masses, they worsened them.

Trotsky, contrary to CFHW, argued that Russian industrialisation in the 1930s was so great not because of the bureaucracy but in spite of the bureaucracy.

Under a revolutionary leadership the Soviet masses (and now the Vietnamese and Kampuchean masses) could have achieved much more—and, of course, socially and politically as well as economically.

The Stalinist bureaucracy in Vietnam, as everywhere else that it rules, does not unlock the creative powers

of the masses; it imprisons and destroys them.

The SWP, however, in the present dispute has failed altogether to involve this all-important distinction between the counter-revolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy and the potentially or actually revolutionary oppressed working masses.

So CFHW talk of the "Vietnamese revolution" and the Vietnamese bureaucracy in a way which is almost interchangeable.

They say they favour "decisive Vietnamese action to defeat Pol Pot and his counter-revolutionary gang" but they do not distinguish between action by the bureaucracy and action by the masses. (ICP, July 16 1979, p.707, our emphasis).

They say that "from the beginning, the Pol Pot regime took an extremely hostile stance toward the Vietnamese revolution" (ICP, July 16 1979, p.702, our emphasis).

Betrayal

But they do not say that there was every reason for the Kampuchean masses and the KCP to be hostile to the Vietnamese Stalinist leaders because of their betrayal of the interests of the Kampuchean revolution (see article 2 in this series, *Socialist Press*, August 15, 1979).

The cumulative effect of the SWP's positions on the relation between masses and bureaucracy is that either the bureaucracy in a limited way pursues the same interests as the masses, or, if it does not, this is of little significance because the bureaucracy has no power to divert the revolutionary movement of the masses.

Underlying these points is an erroneous view of what is permanent revolution.

Trotsky's strategy of permanent revolution was developed in the course of the revolutionary struggle in Russia.

Retrogressive

Based on the retrogressive stage which capitalism and imperialism had reached on a world scale, it is a strategy which stresses the need to fight for all revolutionary developments to be given a proletarian, socialist and internationalist content.

The historic tasks of the bourgeois revolution can be achieved in the age of the death agony of capitalism only by the international proletarian revolution and planned socialist economy.

When Trotsky finally in 1928 codified Permanent Revolution in a book of

that name it was as a counterblast to the strategy of "revolution by stages" and socialism in one country which were the "theoretical" bases offered by Stalin as a cover for his policy of betrayal and class compromise.

In the hands of the USFI leaders, however, permanent revolution has lost its content as a central theoretical strategic weapon in the conscious building of the revolutionary party.

It has become a description of a process whose participants are unconscious actors.

This tendency has been visible since 1963 in the USFI's analysis of Cuba where Castro, the "unconscious Trotskyist", is said not to have followed a strategy of permanent revolution but to have followed the logic of permanent revolution.

More distant

But the origins of the error are more distant as is shown by CFHW's approving quotation of an excerpt from the Fourth International's Executive Committee resolution on China in May 1952:

"The establishment of the People's Republic of China is only the beginning of a process of permanent revolution which is unfolding before our eyes." (Quoted in ICP, with this emphasis, July 16 1979, p.724).

So permanent revolution is here seen not as a strategy to be consciously implanted by a revolutionary party in the struggle to build an authentic workers state but as a process which unfolds and leads to the establishment of a deformed workers state.

Implicit

And if the political situation in Indochina has evolved according to the process of permanent revolution, what need is there of a revolutionary Trotskyist party, the political embodiment of the strategy of permanent revolution?

CFHW's answer is implicit in their analysis and stands in sharp contradiction to the SWP's formal commitment to the building of independent Trotskyist parties in Indochina.

A further way in which CFHW give revolutionary credentials to the Vietnamese Stalinist bureaucracy is by concealing its relationship with the Soviet bureaucracy in Moscow.

It is true, of course, that in particular during the war, the Vietnamese leaders maintained a relative neutrality between Moscow and Peking and received material aid from both, though predominantly from the USSR.

But this relative independence was not that of an independent non-Stalinist leadership but of a national Stalinist bureaucracy which at that time was in a strong position to support its own interests through taking its distance from the two main Stalinist bureaucracies.

Even this limited and bureaucratic independence rapidly evaporated after the end of the war in 1975 as the Hanoi leadership moved more and more into the orbit with Moscow.

Dependence

The material dependence of Hanoi on Moscow and their complete political involvement are now obvious, as they are also in the case of Havana.

But CFHW choose to ignore this and write about Vietnam (as the SWP writes about Cuba) as if it was completely independent of the USSR.

Ironically, the SWP in its present dispute with the majority of the USFI leadership makes much of the fact that the Chinese invasion of Vietnam took place a short time after Deng Xiao-ping's visit to Washington.

This, they say, proves that Washington approved the invasion. While their argument is a bit crude, they have a point against the USFI majority's virtual ignoring of this aspect of the crisis.

A few days before Vietnam's invasion of Kampuchea, however, the Vietnamese Premier Phan Van Dong went to Moscow—an event which CFHW and the SWP choose to ignore!

It is not, of course, the visit, but every aspect of the relationship between Vietnam and the USSR which shows plainly that the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea was carried out in full collaboration with Moscow and can only be understood as part of the international policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy of the Soviet Union.

This fact (like Cuban policy in Ethiopia and Angola) presents a difficulty for the SWP since they remain adamant that the Moscow bureaucracy remains counter-revolutionary in everything that it does.

Contradiction

How can events like the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea, or Cuba's military and political support of the Ethiopian military dictatorship be revolutionary in content—which the SWP says they are—and yet at the same time be an aspect of an international policy run from Moscow—which the SWP says is counter-revolutionary to the core?

It is a contradiction which the SWP deals with by a silence which amounts to a complete refusal to see the Stalinist bureaucracy as an international force.

In fact, in the SWP's view, as we will show in the next article, at an international level the whole of the Stalinist bureaucracy dissolves in the struggle between imperialism and the oppressed masses.



Vietnamese gun position



Charter 77 defendants (from left to right) Dana Nemcova, Vaclav Benda, Jiri Dieustbier, and Jarmila Belikova, Jiri Nemek, Vaclav Havel.

Defend Czech dissidents - and Lenin's fight for

Ivan Hartel was a Prague student leader in the sixties and a member of the Prague student parliament in 1968. He was a founder member of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe and an initiator of the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign.

A founder of the Plastic People's Defence Fund, he is also a member of the Charter 77 Defence Committee.

He left Czechoslovakia in 1969 after being implicated in the first post-invasion trial with the opposition, when a group of Prague students were jailed for their cooperation with the Polish student underground.

In 1977 he was stripped of Czech citizenship. This edited interview coincides with the 11th anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and also the current show trial against ten members of Charter 77 and of VONS (Committee to Defend Unjustly Persecuted Persons). They are charged with subversion and threatened with three to ten years in prison.

Hartel identifies the growing opposition to the Husak regime and its defence of democratic rights. He specifically dissociates the movement from the imperialist 'human rights' campaign led by Carter.

It is clear from this interview that Charter 77 rejects the Leninist party, relying instead on a broad anti bureaucratic movement which does not have a perspective of political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist leadership.

Trotskyists would struggle to forge a party capable of overthrowing that bureaucracy and replacing it with Soviets and genuine organs of workers control.

Socialist Press will at a later date publish an extended critique of Charter 77 and VONS.

Why have the authorities staged the trials just now?

You see the fundamental reason is that they are being forced onto the defensive by Charter 77, which constantly radicalises itself and which continues to grow despite the growing terrorism used against its members.

The Minister of the Interior himself admits that if their documents were allowed to be published they would get the support of millions, overnight.

All on trial are VONS members, and VONS has done what no dissident groups have previously done. It was established last year and it defends and takes up the cases of ordinary, unknown people who are charged for small acts—pinning up a pay slip, painting a slogan, etc.

Now, VONS, by giving support to ordinary people, and depending on their support in return, is robbing the regime of its main weapon—intimidation of the defenceless.

In what sense has Charter 77 'radicalised' itself, and why does it differentiate itself from Carter's anti-communist 'Human Rights' campaign?

It is to be fully expected from any establishment at any time that it will twist and attempt to utilise to its own ends any moral demands of an epoch. This is equally true of today's Carter as of today's Brezhnev.

Charter 77 has nothing whatsoever to do with Carter 77, and their simultaneous appearance on the world stage is pure historic coincidence, testifying



Above and below: Prague on the first anniversary of the invasion

PHOTOS: Gamma

merely to the increasing awareness about the struggle against oppression world-wide.

It chose its name merely to emphasise its coincidence with the International Year of Political Prisoners.

Charter 77 did not start on January 1 1977 when it was delivered to the Czech government. It has grown organically out of internal conditions in Czechoslovakia out of the past one and a half decades.

Since then, Charter 77 is radicalising itself in a social rather than in a narrow leftist sense.

It has been inspired by the radical young working class movement of the Plastic People and company, and it continues now to treat in a systematic manner the problems of every major social and occupation group (workers, women, children, writers, musicians, etc.).

In other words, it has broken the tradition of almost ten years of elitist dissident personalities, whose main concern was always primarily with the problems of their own narrow social group—the tradition which still to a large extent continues within the Soviet dissident movement.

The proof of this social radicalisation I see in the fact that, unlike in the past, Charter 77 is actively supported by many thousands, and passively by millions.

Out of the thousand public signatures alone, over 50% of

the signatories are ordinary workers. This was never the case with any dissident manifesto before Charter 77.

The campaign always sounds reformist, trying to make the police less 'arbitrary' and more 'just', concentrating on proceedings in the courtroom, taking up individual cases...

There is nothing reformist about taking up individual cases. On the contrary, it is precisely the concern about the individual and ordinary worker, that is the very opposite of reformism.

There was a strong Communist reformist current before and after 1968. After the occupation, this Dubcekite reformism, which in many ways is the predecessor of Eurocommunism was and continues to be very active in the opposition.

It was always in a very strong position because, consisting largely of ex-bureaucrats themselves, it continued to have the advantage over the other more radical oppositional currents.

Furthermore, they have a certain undeclared protection from the heaviest prosecution and imprisonment, which was as a matter of course meted out to the radicals and ordinary citizens.

The alternatives which this reformist current put forward were never fundamentally different from Dubcekism itself; they were merely its updated versions.

While practically everyone, within the narrow dissident movement, including Trotskyists, was in a way mesmerised by this current, the masses of ordinary working class men and women were fed up to their teeth with reformist Dubcekism almost as much as they are fed up with collaborationist Husakism.

Collaboration

They will never forget that while they defended Dubcek en masse, and wholeheartedly in 1968, in the moment of truth, the Dubcek leadership turned to collaboration with the Kremlin bureaucracy rather than to the mass movement opposing Stalinism.

This helped them to realise more than anything else that the interests of the reformist leadership and the interests of the working masses can coincide very rarely, if ever. Charter 77 is the first movement which does not treat reformists with the reverence they do not deserve, and which gives preference to treating problems of wide sectors of population to the problems of the elite only.

Legality, while it might look reformist to you, is in fact the Charter 77's strongest weapon.

The regime flouts its own constitution and laws so flagrantly, that to draw popular attention to it and to work out alternatives amounts to humble but nevertheless revolutionary activity.

Also, the movement breaks out of its reformist boundaries by breaking out of its national boundaries. Everyone, now, realises that an isolated revolution, only in Czechoslovakia itself will have no chance for success. That is why contacts to other East European countries are intensifying.

Co-operation

Furthermore this work, as well as the work between various currents of Charter 77 itself, is carried out in the spirit of cooperation rather than rivalry.

Therefore, our struggle takes the form of a movement, with diverse currents, rather than the form of a party.

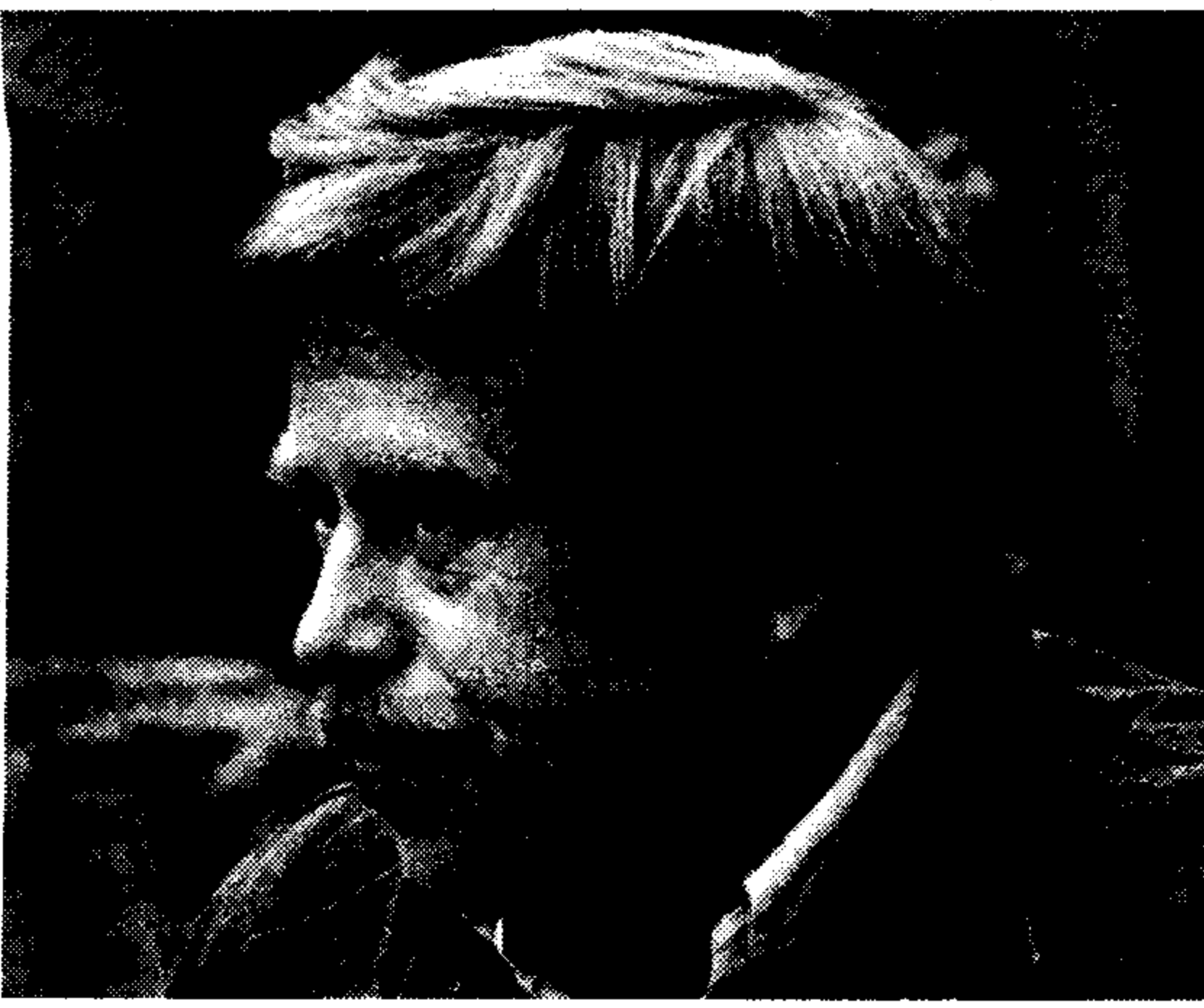
So you are saying that the vanguard party approach does not apply under Stalinism? Are you saying it's not necessary or not possible?

It's not possible. The party type of organisation gets smashed from the beginning. Uhl, a Trotskyist, did that. He formed the Revolutionary Socialist Party in 1969.

The programme and manifestos were some of the most developed positions we have seen. But it was infiltrated from the beginning. It was the first time the charge of 'subversion' was used.

There was also the Workers Councils Party, formed in 1974. Since 1975 we've heard nothing





PHOTOS: Plastic People's Defence Fund

defend a party

of it. Its manifestos called for general strikes and hinted at armed struggle. It wasn't economic, and was clearly worker and small town based—in contrast to the RSF, which was student and Prague based.

But Lenin developed his conception of the vanguard party precisely in illegal repressive conditions.

Many of the seeds of Stalinism are in Leninism. A good party is necessary, but it must never be a party which attempts to monopolise power. There is a natural distaste among the population for 'parties'—after the experience of the Stalinist parties. Also the development of political analysis and of programme does go on without the party.

Is there any connection between the Charter 77 movement and the more specifically working class developments in, for example, Poland and Romania, with the food price riots and the miners' strikes?

There is no direct connection. The situation varies. Since 1968 the USSR has tried to buy off the Czech population. It has poured in enormous amounts of money.

Romania has always been more dependent economically, and consequently poorer, as has Poland.

Our working class is frustrated politically. Until recent price increases it was more or less satisfied economically—despite the low productivity from absenteeism.

The separation between intellectuals and workers is much greater in other countries.

No support

In the strikes in Poland which toppled Gomulka the workers got no support from the students—who claimed they had no support from workers in 1968. Since 1976 they have started to get together.

It was achieved in Hungary in 1956. That is why the invasion was so rapid.

A cosy little dissident group is no threat. But once it becomes a mass movement on a common programme . . . over 50% of the signatories of Charter 77 are workers.

Why has the wave of human rights campaigns erupted in the 1970s?

Humanism is the Czech tradition. There is a logical development. We passed from feudalism to socialism in less than one century experiencing fascism and progressive social democracy on the way.

We understand socialism as the liberation of human and individual potential.

The bourgeois class was eliminated. But Stalinism has produced a new potential class.

The main priority is the fundamental extension of democracy. And we are at a historic juncture where it begins to be possible in our country.

It might even be possible without great social change. The parasitic group is very small, without a firm social base, and without a great hold on the individual. Though the military weight of the USSR might necessitate great violence.

By saying "without great social change", do you mean a more humanised, democratic version of the present social structures or a fundamental change—socialism based on soviet rule?

A fundamental change in social structure will have to be made. I see it in terms of a horizontal democracy of producers; a vast extension of self-management in the economic system. *The conditions for it are there—that is why the repression is so great.*

What about the Helsinki monitoring groups in the USSR?

We saw Helsinki as a second Yalta. Others saw it as a great hope.

What about theoreticians such as Bahro, Havemann?

I don't regard them as revolutionaries, though I respect them.

Bahro still belongs to the older generation of bureaucrats, although he has freed himself amazingly, and without turning to social democracy, as others have.

You are a co-founder of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe. How do you view that?

It took us many years to persuade the British left that Eastern European developments were fundamental because of the need to avoid the same mistakes here. The USSR would rush in if there was a revolution in the West. They are an utterly counter-revolutionary force today.

But why do we understand more from talking with you than from reading Labour Focus?

We wanted to avoid sectarian infighting and thought the important thing was to provide *hard information* and to avoid the political conflicts over state capitalism, degenerated workers' states, glorious communism, etc.

The magazine's intention is to *inform*; you can analyse.

I want people to develop their analysis of Eastern Europe and develop solidarity work.

We have also initiated the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign which is aimed at the Unions, Labour Party, etc.

But why do you not use the journal to fight Stalinism here? The emphasis on 'left' Labour and Communist Party sponsors consolidates the illusion that Eurocommunists are anti-Stalinist.

I personally do not share the illusions which some people have about Eurocommunism. I haven't seen many proofs that it is anything but an updated version of Stalinism, adapted to new conditions.

However, some people feel that Eurocommunism deserves respect at least for its awareness of East European dissent. Here I give only my personal opinions and cannot answer for the whole editorial collective and board of our Focus.

But if you have any criticism or suggestions, please get yourselves involved.

Write in, organise support campaigns of your own, affiliate to the East European Solidarity Campaign—do what you think is the best.

Trotsky's fight for internationalism against Stalin

In our continuing series on the major writings of Leon Trotsky to commemorate the centenary of his birth, Mark South looks at his polemical work directed at the Sixth Comintern Congress published under the title *The Third International After Lenin*. Available in paperback from Pathfinder Press.

The basic work in this volume is Trotsky's criticism of the Draft Programme submitted to the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928. It is vital reading for all who seriously wish to understand the struggle of the Left Opposition against the rise of Stalinism.

The *Criticism* itself has its own history. Stalinist suppression of discussion made its presentation to the Congress impossible—Trotsky was exiled in Alma Ata.

But by some quirk of fate the *Criticism* found its way into the hands of an underemployed functionary who knew no better than to translate it. A result of this administrative slip-up was that an American delegate, James P. Cannon came upon a copy, was 'converted' and on returning home took up the struggle for the Left Opposition in the US.

Burning questions

Even today the polemical power of the *Criticism* is striking. Though Trotsky sets out to *defend* the political line of the first four Comintern Congresses he does so through the application of this line to the burning questions of the period—particularly the Stalinist 'theory' of socialism in one country, the bureaucratisation of the Comintern and the problems posed by the Chinese revolution of 1925-27.

The product is not merely a reaffirmation but an important development of the theoretical arsenal of Marxism.

Perhaps the most important question posed by Trotsky is the nature of an international revolutionary programme. At the very beginning of the *Criticism* Trotsky points out:

"... not a single communist party can establish its programme by proceeding solely or mainly from conditions and tendencies of developments in its own country . . . On August 4 1914, the death knell sounded for national programmes for all time . . . An international programme is in no case the sum total of national programmes

or an amalgam of their common features.

The international programme must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts . . . the national orientation of the proletariat must and can flow only from a world orientation and not vice versa."

It is this conception which provides the basis for an offensive against the Stalinists' subordination of the Comintern's role to the needs of the parasitic bureaucracy of the USSR. It is through his understanding of the nature of world economy and the political relationship of forces produced by imperialism that Trotsky is able to expose the reactionary implications of 'socialism in one country' for the future of the workers' movement.

Trotsky was not content with repeating scholastic abstractions—'imperialism', 'socialism', etc. (something which came easily to Bukharin, the Draft Programme's author).

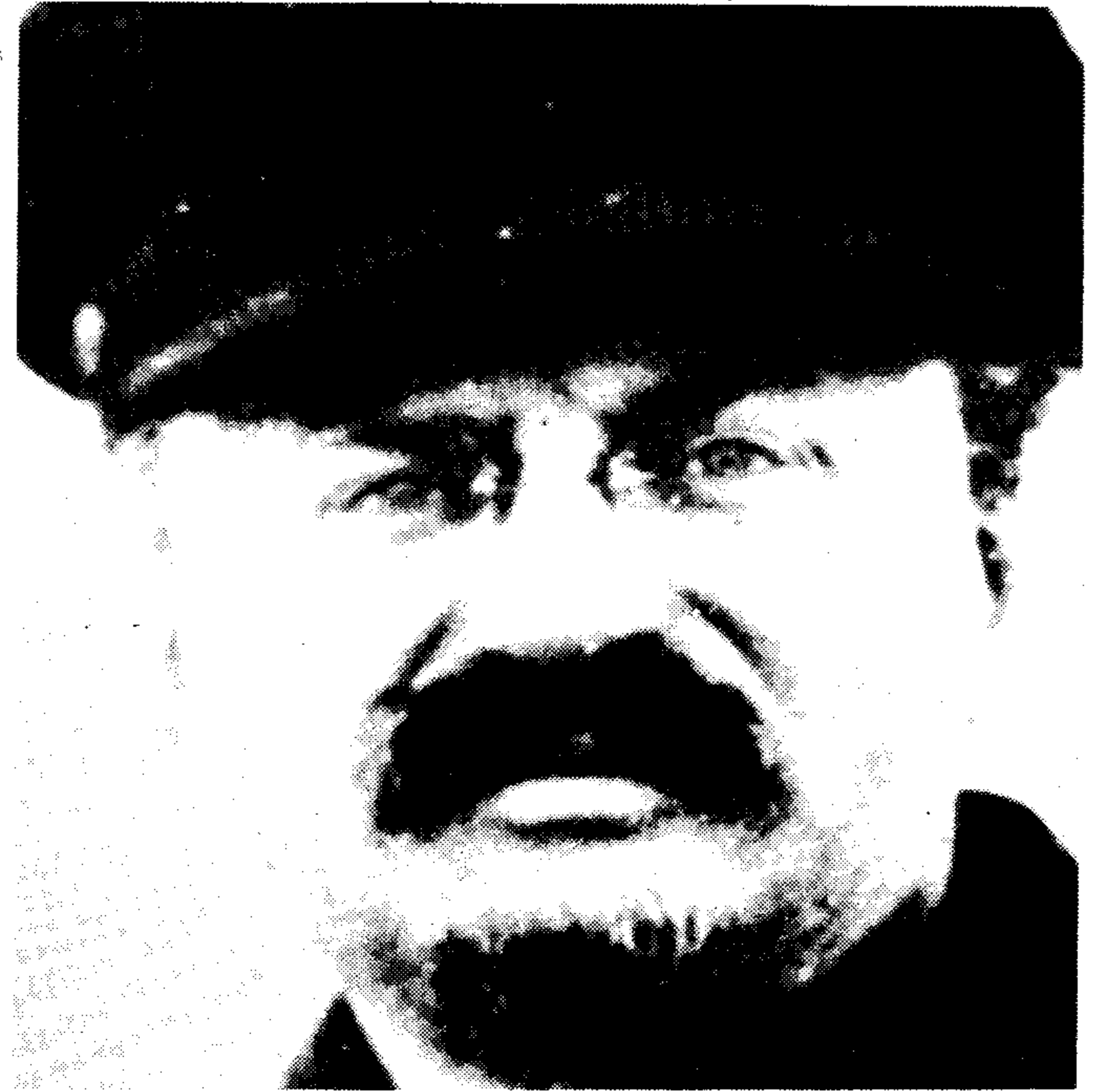
Rather he sought to invest in these terms a *specific content* that flowed from the actual stage of development. In particular he focuses upon the rise of US imperialism in the 1920s and the inter-imperialist antagonisms that flowed from it.

Continuous battle

Throughout the *Criticism* there is a continual battle to expose the political method of the Stalinist bureaucracy which relied entirely upon empty schemas and the pigeon-holing of reality in place of the Marxist method of studying living processes in all their many-sided forms.

But more than this, Trotsky was able to explain the outlook of the Stalinists as a reflection of the social position of the privileged stratum opposed to and increasingly remote from the proletariat growing up in the Soviet Union.

While the Stalinists branded functionaries who were only yesterday heroes as scapegoats



Trotsky

for their betrayals, only the Left Opposition was capable of explaining the *material roots* of the criminal errors of its political opponents.

In particular, appended to the *Criticism* in some editions of *The Third International After Lenin*, it is well worth reading the article *Who is heading the Comintern Today?* in which Trotsky demonstrates, through examining the political history of the leading functionaries—many being ex-Mensheviks or much worse—the transformation taking place among the top personnel of Soviet society.

To the 'theory' of socialism in one country Trotsky counterposes the basic elements of his theory of permanent revolution which, originally based upon an analysis of Russian conditions, he greatly enriched in light of the experience of China 1925-27.

The *Criticism* contains the first thorough balance sheet on the Stalinists' policy of liquidation into the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang. Though events in the highly complex turmoil of the Chinese revolution may have appeared remote even to revolutionary workers in the West at the time the betrayal perpetrated by Stalinism was of an historic nature.

Merciless criticism

The Menshevik notion of 'democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry', the idea of the Kuomintang as a 'two class party' and the notion of forming a 'Peasants' International' are all subjected to merciless criticism, as is every kind of reliance on the good intentions of other classes outside the proletariat in a revolution.

The question is particularly pertinent today since all the basic revisions of the Stalinists have, in one form or another, been repeated in recent years in Latin America and elsewhere, including by forces which pose as 'Trotskyist', in unprincipled alliances with petty bourgeois nationalist and populist forces.

In the *Criticism* can still be found the principled guidelines that should guide the relation of the proletariat to the national bourgeoisie in the work of preparing revolution in the backward countries. Trotsky quotes Lenin:

"The workers must open the eyes of the people to the fraud of the bourgeois politicians,

teach them not to place trust in promises and to rely on their own forces, on their own organisation, on their own unity and on their own weapons alone."

Against Stalin's slavish flattery of Chiang Kai-shek, and the radical pretensions of the latter, Trotsky patiently explained the need for the utmost clarity on the motives of the 'national', 'anti-imperialist' bourgeoisie.

"It will make you any promises you want! It will even send its delegates to Moscow . . . it will promise anything that will give it the opportunity (with our assistance) to dupe the workers and peasants."

Paid in blood

This in no sense meant that Trotsky and the Bolshevik-Leninists were always against every specific practical agreement that could be made, taking advantage of the contradictions which beset bourgeois nationalist forces:

"For example such cases as involve agreements with the student youth of the Kuomintang for the organisation of an anti-imperialist demonstration, or of obtaining the assistance from the Chinese merchants for strikers in a foreign concession . . . The sole condition . . . consists in not allowing either the organisations or the banners to become mixed directly or indirectly for a single day or a single hour."


The Chinese Communists had paid in blood for the policies of Stalinism—yet Trotsky was unable to stem the rising tide of Stalinism within the Comintern. Given the isolation of the Russian Revolution (as the years went by increasingly reinforced by Stalinism's own betrayal of the international revolution) the bureaucracy represented a powerful social and political agency of reaction.

In turn the workers of Germany, Spain and elsewhere would pay the gory price for the degeneration of the revolutionary instrument created by Lenin and Trotsky.

Trotsky's *Criticism* and the *Third International After Lenin* represents the high point of Marxist resistance to this process within the Communist Parties themselves. It is of invaluable assistance to those who seek to build a genuinely revolutionary International today.



Lenin



INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Only strike action will stop the cuts

"In every hospital and every local council our members will fight every inch of the way to defend their jobs and pay packets and to stop the public services being cut to shreds by the political vandals in government."

If left talk ever brought down governments then Thatcher and Joseph would be tearing up their plans for £4,000 million cuts in public spending to placate the 700,000 members of the National Union of Public Employees whose leadership issued this statement.

Left face

But of course the Tories know full well that Bernard Dix and Alan Fisher are merely the left face of the TUC and will in fact, like Len Murray, mount no determined fight against the attacks of the government.

Further reading of the four page leaflet sent by Bernard Dix, assistant general secretary of NUPE, reveals exactly what methods of diversion he has in mind to confuse and waste the energies of his membership.

Hospital workers are told to refuse to take on extra work or accept a change in working



Fisher

conditions. School dinner staff must carry on working at the usual pace in spite of the cuts—"even if classes are held up".

All members are urged to hold meetings at 'awkward' times to 'hurt the employers'.

Town Hall staff are encouraged not to provide meals for County Councillors or clean the Council Chambers.

All this is supposed to "force the employers to have second thoughts about making cuts."

But NUPE members know from last winter's Low Pay Campaign how determined the employers are to cut their living standards and working conditions.

They also know that the limited advice proposed by their union leaders is inadequate and designed to dissipate their energies.

This is the same leadership

which issued left statements on the £60 minimum wage and then refused to fight for it.

It was only in the Camden NUPE branch, which took all out strike action, rather than allow sections to become isolated and demoralised in divided, limited strikes where the £60 minimum wage and 35 hour working week demands were all-but won.

Throughout the whole of the rest of the country NUPE members have been forced to accept the sell-out deal of 9% and the miserly awards of the Clegg Commission.

The statement follows weeks of intense pressure from rank and file workers in public sector unions who have been trying to fight the cuts on a daily basis without an ounce of support or guidance from the leadership.

Resolutions have been passed by a number of branches throughout the London area calling for a delegate conference to organise a campaign of action against hospital closures.

These resolutions were met with stony silence from the London leadership.

All-out strike

NUPE members must learn the lessons from the "winter of discontent" and pass resolutions calling for all-out strike against health authority and local council cuts.

They must call also for NUPE to instigate trade union inquiries into the spending of these bodies, to reveal the profits made by private suppliers such as the drug companies and the money paid out in interest charges to the banks.

The NUPE statement will doubtless be followed by similar declarations from the other public sector unions. Public sector workers should not be taken in by left statements and verbal opposition. Every piece of action against the reduction in health and public services should be linked to demands that the leadership build a national campaign of all out indefinite strike action to stop the cuts.



Haringey cuts: 'No cover' is not enough!

Cuts in Haringey social services, education and housing, are hitting deeply at jobs and forcing women workers back into the home.

An across-the-board cut of 2.7% in every department—to be implemented immediately—was agreed by this Labour dominated Council on July 27.

Labour's readiness to see the 'necessity' of cuts means the axing of teaching jobs, no new nursery places and the slashing of repairs and maintenance on council buildings.

In social services, the cuts have hit three main areas, two of which aid the drive to force women back into the home.

Firstly the Council's three remaining playgroups are to be closed without notice, losing 60 places and facing ten workers with compulsory redeployment.

Secondly the home help service is to be massively slashed

—£25,000 off this year's budget alone.

This means that there will be no recruitment whatsoever to a service already overstretched and no additional hours to be worked.

Old people are now being put on a waiting list before essential services are provided, waiting weeks to have their washing and cleaning done and receiving only occasional visits for shopping.

This cut has in the main to be implemented by the NALGO members who are home help organisers. NALGO branch policy is not to cover for vacant posts.

Leaving posts vacant is one of the major manifestations of the cuts. The Council is increasing the vacancy factor to 12%.

"No cover" is interpreted rigidly by the branch—any post vacant, even if advertised is declared unfilled and not to be covered.

Clients of any social worker who leaves a post are to be referred to the chairman of social services committee who made the decision to cut.

Offices will shut on a rota basis when there are not the staff to keep them open, and clients will again be referred to the councillors who made the decision.

This policy is on the one hand weak and fragmenting and on the other difficult to police and maintain. There will be slippage and members—left without a strategy for fighting the cuts—will begin to cover for areas of work.

The massive assault on all the social services cannot be fought off by these piecemeal steps.

NALGO members—and members of all other unions hit by the cuts or expected to carry them out—must implement the 'no cover' policy but fight for a united policy of strike action to reverse the cuts. Workers' committees must be established to uncover and publicise their effects throughout the labour movement.

The fight must also be turned into the Labour Party for the removal of all Labour councillors who voted for the cuts and into the trade union leadership, fighting for a national policy of clear action against the cuts to replace their capitulation before the demands of the capitalist crisis.

St Stephen's strike

The St. Stephen's Hospital Defence Committee is preparing for a strike on 3 September in opposition to the series of ward closures in the hospital planned by the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Area Health Authority.

Although the action is limited to a token stoppage the defence committee has taken a significant and important step in beginning to mobilise health workers against the savage programme of cuts.

Stewards in other hospitals will be fighting over the next few days to spread the strike

onto an area basis. Health workers are beginning to realise that it is only strike action which will defend the local health service and a series of area wide stoppages against ward closures and other cuts should be prepared by local stewards' committees.

But token stoppages alone are not sufficient and hospital managements will have the full backing of the Tory government and the capitalist press in isolating and victimising health service militants.

All action must therefore be linked to demands that the public sector union leadership prepares a national all-out strike against the cuts.

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 crackdown 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 for anti-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!

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ITV moguls dig in

The lock-out by the TV companies was extended to thousands more workers last week as the commercial TV companies took steps to lay off journalists and NATTKE members.

The employers—sitting on massive profit figures have made no move towards increasing their 15% offer to the ACTT.

Union leaders had originally advised members to accept this offer but it was decisively rejected.

Workers in the companies are using the profitability of the firms as the cornerstone of their case.

Since 1975 shares in Yorkshire TV have risen by 1,580% and profits have gone up 150%.

But the technicians have also been pointing to the fact that their wages have failed to keep up with inflation.

The government figures show a 73% increase in the Retail Price Index since 1975 while technicians wages have risen by 46%.

The companies' attempts to tough it out mean that workers will be in for a long haul. It was the employers who co-ordinated the original suspensions, in breach of agreements, in the knowledge this could lead to a shut-down.

Committees

This poses the question for the strikers as to how the strike is to be kept solid.

Strike committees must organise to call regular mass meetings and to call meetings with other workers locked out.

The secondary row over the cost of living clause which the companies have refused to implement must be brought to the centre of the dispute along with the full 25% claim.

Union leaders are looking for a way off the hook. If the strikers are not to have their sacrifices rendered useless by them, they must ensure that day to day control is firmly under their grasp.

Talbot picket called off

Shop stewards at Talbot's Ryton plant last week voted overwhelmingly to call off their picket of the Management and Research plant at Whitley.

This picket had been put on the previous Wednesday following a march from Ryton of some 300-400 strikers.

The danger of this step back from stopping management going in to work will demoralise workers regularly involved in picketing.

There has been consider-

FIGHT BL GRADING

Developments are coming to a head in Leyland over the company's new grading structure.

The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed) have come out in support of the company's position of unilaterally enforcing the grading and they have persuaded the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) to support the company and reverse their previous opposition by 11 votes to 9.

The Confed argued that there was an adequate appeals procedure in which the NJNC would be the final stage.

Naturally the NJNC thought this was a good idea. The company has 50% of the seats on the NJNC and on the union side there are several full time officials and others who represent a handful of workers.

It is therefore virtually impossible to win an appeal as only one person on the union side has to vote with the company for it to be lost.

There is to be a senior stewards meetings of all unions on Thursday 31 August weighted heavily in favour of the skilled workers, all of whom are in the top grade and stand to get large back-pay lump sums.

This meeting will almost certainly accept the NJNC's position, leaving the company free to attempt to implement the deal within the next few weeks.

In the light of this a meeting of TGWU senior stewards representing 70% of the workforce last Wednesday voted to reject the company's position.

Although the senior stewards wrongly decided to attend the all union senior stewards meet-

ing next week they decided they would "reserve" their position if they were outvoted at that meeting and that they would ask the General Executive Council of the TGWU for "official support for any action taken."

This is a weak lead to the workforce but the way is now open for strikes, the first of which, wherever it happens, should be supported by all sections of workers opposed to the grading.

The grading is a crucial part of Edwardes plans to make Leyland workers pay for the company's crisis which is why the union leadership have been ramming it down workers' throats.

A fight against the structure involves a fight against the union leadership and a programme that will counter the inevitable threat of closure from the company.

Challenge ban OUT FOR 20pc AT BINGLEY

Picketing is continuing this week at two building sites at Wandsworth, South London, Turriffs on Garratt Lane and Croudace at Upper Tooting Park, as part of a campaign against the efforts of the local Tory council to run down the Direct Works department.

The Tories in Wandsworth are laying the ground in every way for national government policy. By cutting back on public building they hope to give more work to private contractors in the area but also to attack the conditions of building workers in the area which have been maintained by the presence there of a large, stable group of 800 employed by the council on full union conditions.

Tory policies will thus not only give "jobs for the boys" but will also increase the use of lump labour.

Since early this year the council has been refusing to tender for such obvious work as renovations to council property. A number of such sites

where private contractors were working were stopped for several months by picketing earlier this year.

The council responded with court injunctions against picketing which closely mirror the proposed laws of the national government.

The High Court injunction against picketing names Stalinist union full-time official Lou Lewis.

Although the UCATT Regional Committee correctly voted to defy the injunction, UCATT General Secretary Les Woods reversed this and insisted the issue be fought through the courts. All official backing was then withdrawn.

However around 200 trade unionists attended a mass picket on 21 August called by the Trades Council and the Direct Works Joint Shop Stewards Committee.

Further pickets are planned for 29 August and later.

Efforts must now be made to build support amongst Direct Labour workers themselves who are being held back by the attitude of their union leaders and action must be built up to close other sites in the area.

250 workers at Anderton International, Bingley, are on indefinite strike for a 20% pay claim.

Strike action was taken when, four months after the claim was submitted, the management proposed "not a firm offer but a broad idea of settlement for discussion". The figure involved was 10% on basic rates.

But, as Convenor Steve Davidson pointed out, the 20% claim would only keep living standards standing still.

Last year's wage claim took 20 weeks to settle after overtime bans and a work to rule were imposed.

Determined to avoid a repeat of this, the stewards opted for strike action. The strikers have received the support of local workers and collections have been taken—one at a recent meeting of Confed delegates.

Management are claiming that if they pay the claim in full it would add £220,000 to the wages bill.

However, Aurora Holdings, which owns Anderton International, paid out record dividends of £635,000 last year.

Sliding scale

If on the admission of the Convenor the 20% claim will merely maintain existing living standards there is clearly a need to fight for a sliding scale of wages linked to inflation as assessed by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

At the same time strikers should fight for the opening of the books of the company and of Aurora Holdings so that the workers can see for themselves the profits being made out of their labour and prepare to fight for the nationalisation without compensation under workers' management of the company.

Tory threat to more steel jobs



PHOTO: Labour Weekly

Corby steel workers march against closure. No strategy to defeat the massive lay-offs has been put forward. British Steel announced a pre-tax loss of £73 million in the first quarter of this financial year last week, making it likely that the Tories will demand yet more closures and making it impossible for 'protests' to save Corby.

Airline bid to break union

The management sacking of 47 Air India workers in Britain has led to an official strike by 400 of the workers at the booking offices and Heathrow.

The mass meeting last Friday heard the TGWU officials Ashwood and Collier explain that the dispute could be a long one as the bosses are refusing to consider the reinstatement of those sacked, which include 10 shop stewards, the convenor and the branch secretary.

This is a blatant attempt to break the union—as a statement put out by the strikers explains.

It is also part of an attempt to reduce the staff—one manager has boasted that he could run the operations just as efficiently with 150 people less.

To lay the ground for this reduction a major feature of this year's wage negotiations was a new flexibility of labour agreement which the TGWU went some way to meeting while insisting that they were consulted first.

Even this was not enough for this rapacious employer, and the 47 were dismissed—on trumped up charges of misconduct, in some cases—while the negotiations were continuing.

ACAS was called in but, needless to say, was unable to get any satisfaction for the workers.

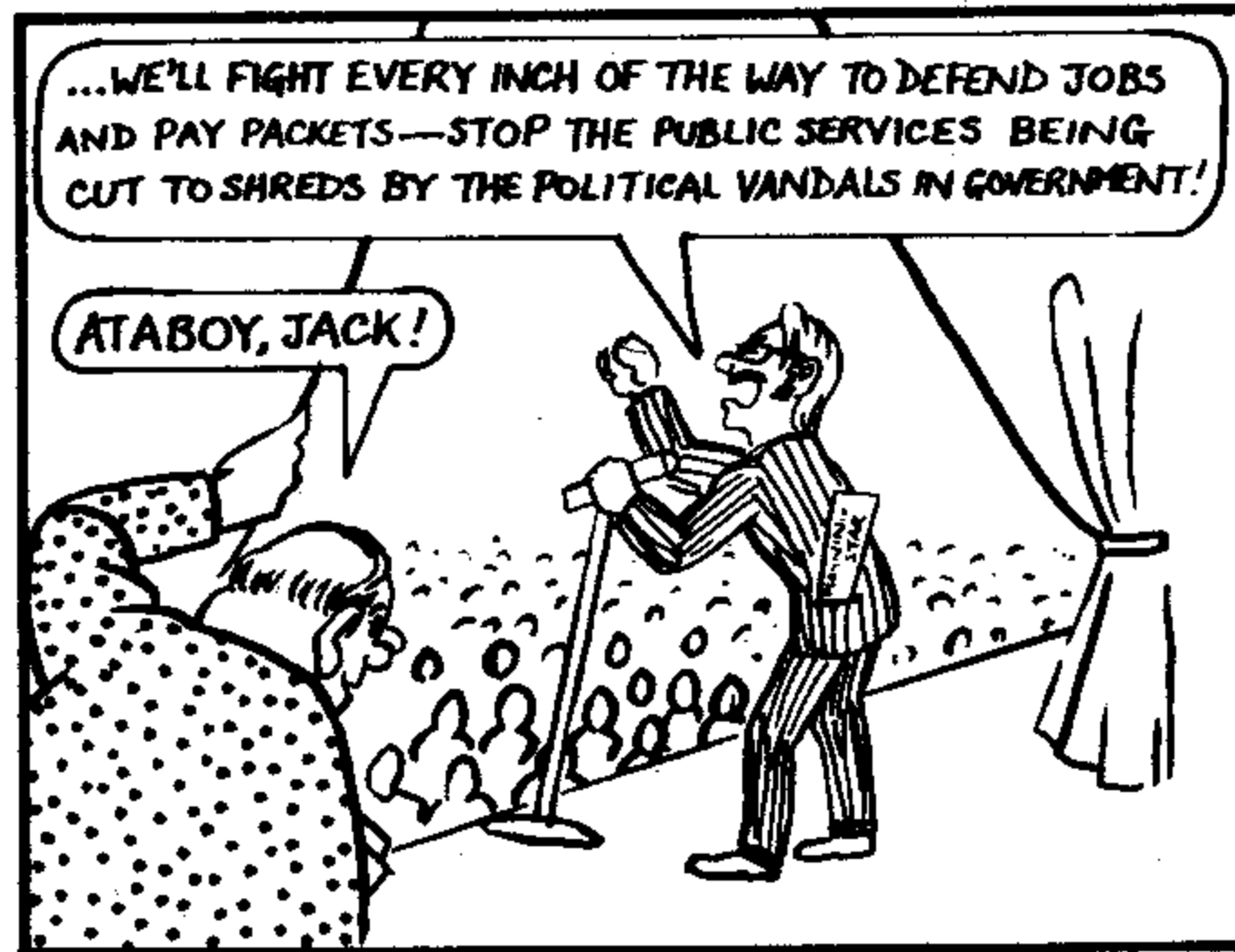
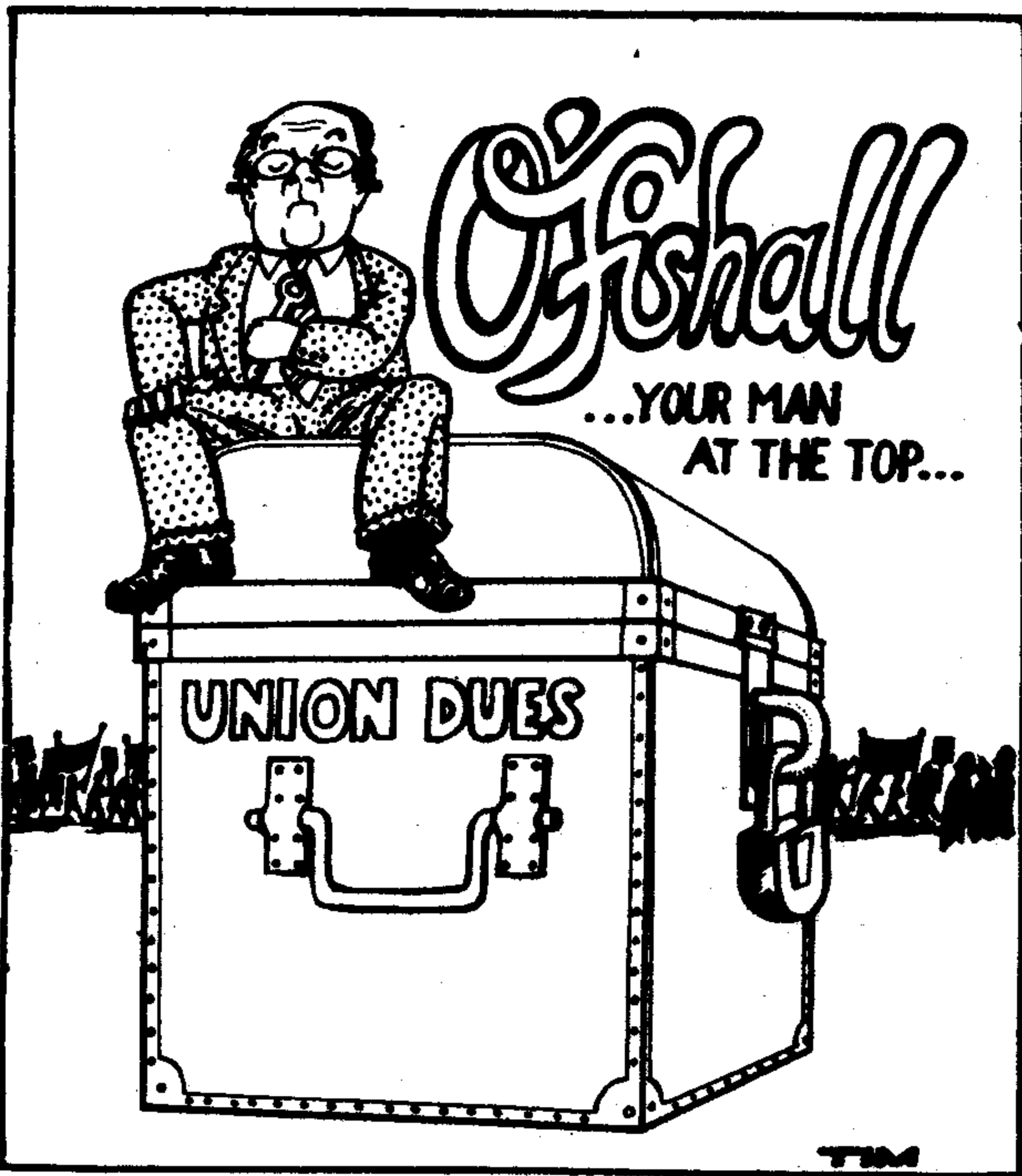
The members on strike have received a letter from the company threatening them with the sack if they don't return by 28 August.

Air India flights into and out of Heathrow have been halted since 17 August.

The JSSC has agreed to black all Air India cargo at Heathrow and telexes of support have come in from Air India workers in other countries.

The picket at the North Gate at Heathrow is to act as the information centre and the Bond Street offices are picketed everyday until 6 p.m.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to 12 Grosvenor Road, Hounslow, Middlesex or to the Southall TGWU offices.



SOCIALIST PRESS



LOBBY THE TUC!

FIGHT THE ANTI-UNION LAWS
Called by the Campaign for Democracy
in the Labour Movement
Wednesday 5 September, Winter Gdns, Blackpool

TUC CONFERENCE

STOP TALKS CALL ACTION!

All-out
strike
demand
grows

The TUC Concordat—which seeks to tie the working class in voluntary chains—is alive and well and will be paraded at Blackpool next week.

Under a smokescreen of angry language the TUC decided last week to drop from the agenda all resolutions which called for breaking off talks with the Tories.

Thus the crucial question facing the British working class in the immediate future—the attacks on basic trade union organisation and action—is not even to be discussed at its sharpest point, the point where the TUC is prepared to sit down and collaborate.

The TUC's own Concordat was reached with the Labour government as a means of trying to limit the effectiveness of last winter's strikes.



TUC lobby, Brighton 1978. The right to strike still the key question

It was largely ignored by the working class but was used by union officials to keep workers divided and was quoted as supporting evidence by

employers seeking High Court injunctions.

That same bureaucracy headed off organised opposition to the Concordat by declaring

that it had died with the Labour government.

Yet TUC general secretary, Len Murray, came out of talks with Prior announcing that it was not dead but sleeping. He threatened that if the Tories went ahead with their legal attacks then the TUC would withdraw their voluntary agreement.

In other words once the Tories have cast striking workers in chains of steel Murray will unlock his own fetters.

The Tories have taken the Concordat and added to it. They plan to:

*Outlaw supporters from picket lines—thus rendering pickets at small plants or with small sections of workers impotent.

*Outlaw 'secondary pickets', thus preventing essential action to shut off suppliers or plants which take blackleg labour.

*Remove all immunity from sympathising action.

*Remove some immunity from all strikers.

*Widen the uses of secret postal ballots so that union elections can be manipulated by the press.

*Restrict the closed shop to the point where it will be impossible to maintain it.

Passing laws is one thing. Enforcing them another. But the courts—spearheaded by Lord Denning—have been acting on these proposals for months.

In the lorry drivers' strike they granted an injunction to stop secondary pickets. They have backed this up with a similar decision against Wandsworth Building pickets (see page 11).

The response of the union leadership has been—no challenge.

SHIPYARD LEADERS VOTE FOR THE DOLE

With only a handful against, a union delegate conference of shipyard workers in Newcastle last week voted for an 'orderly transition' to the dole queues of Scotland and the North of England.

This was the response to British Shipbuilders' decision to close yards and scrap 6,000 jobs.

The words 'orderly transition' were those of Boiler-makers Union chief Chalmers, declaring his opposition not to the destruction of whole sections of the industry but only to the means of carrying it out.

His opposition merely to 'compulsory' redundancies and the imposition of a token overtime ban confirms his reformist politics to be as bankrupt as the shipbuilding industry whose

viability he staunchly defends. Certainly the employers are annoyed that the various sanctions decided on at the Confed conference are to be implemented. But they, like the union bureaucrats who proposed them, are well aware that such measures will not save a single threatened job.

Slump

Just as with steel (where Chalmers' co-thinkers have similarly ducked calling all-out action and supervised the industry's gradual run-down over several years), the capitalists in Britain are gripped by a huge international slump in these major sections of the economy.

While Confed leaders talk starry-eyed nonsense about a 'revival' in 1981, the drive towards rationalisation intensifies.

Yet key delegations in full support of the right-wing's line

included those led by prominent members of the Communist Party who are actually in the leadership of yards on the closure list.

Though their left reputation undeservedly gained during the UCS struggle against Heath, was based on the correct tactic of occupation, they show no sign of raising this demand against the latest attacks.

Instead it has been the Communist Party who have championed the one day protest strikes.

As with steel, seizure of workplaces in line for the axe must be accompanied by a campaign for elected rank and file trade union committees to open the books of the industry, its suppliers and bankers.

A programme of useful public works must be worked out to provide alternative employment as part of a struggle for a planned socialist economy.

FUND

With only a few days to go to the end of the month we are still well short of our target of £600. The last seven days has seen £91.43 arrive in our office bringing the current total to £432.09.

As reported last week we are having to raise our fund target to £750 a month in order to keep up with the effects of inflation on the cost of producing our paper.

It is crucial therefore, that in preparation for that harder task next month, a determined effort is made to raise well over the £600 target for this month.

Donations should be sent to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR
Oxford tote results
19 August, 9/12; 215; 26 August, 9/13, 140

LONDON

WORKERS SOCIALIST
LEAGUE
Public Meeting

DON'T LET TURKEY
BECOME ANOTHER
CHILE

Conway Hall
Tuesday September 4
7.30 p.m.

WORKERS SOCIALIST
LEAGUE
OXFORD

Public meeting
'How to fight the cuts'
Thursday September 6
8.00p.m.
OCCR, Princes St.
Cowley Road

WORKERS SOCIALIST
LEAGUE
LEEDS

Public meeting
'The Engineers' Strike:
The Way Forward'
Monday September 10
8.00 p.m.
Room A, Leeds Trades
Club, 21 Saville Mount