

SOCIALIST PRESS



MAY DAY

MARCH AND RALLY AGAINST THE CUTS

Assemble 1.00 p.m.
Malet Street, London WC1
Thursday May 1
March to Hyde Park for rally

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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

WHY DID EVANS SELL OUT AT LEYLAND?



Leyland workers march against closures

There have been few humiliating betrayals in recent years to match last week's capitulation of Moss Evans to Michael Edwardes.

Within 24 hours of the BL management threat to sack any carworkers still on strike after Wednesday April 23, Evans, the 'left' talking leader of the 2-million strong TGWU, was on his knees pleading for a settlement.

He emerged from the talks having given in to management on every front, and calling for an end to the strikes by 18,000 workers that were threatening to bring the whole of BL Cars to a halt.

Encouraged

The sell-out came after a week in which Evans, under massive pressure from his 47,000 members in BL, had actually encouraged strikes by promising official support to any plant or section that took action against Edwardes' 5%-with-strings pay package.

In a succession of militant statements, Evans went so far as to declare that even the dropping of management's 92-page book of "strings" would still leave the 5% pay offer as an issue in dispute.

Yet in the face of BL's threat of mass sackings he collapsed like a pricked balloon and emerged with a "deal" which:

*Accepted the unchanged package, and agreed that its conditions would become the "status quo" in any subsequent disputes.

*Agreed a ten day discussion period for the introduction of major changes, at the end of which each side would be free to pursue their own course of action—including management imposition of changes.

In exchange, Evans claimed, management had promised to



Evans sounding off with a 'left' speech

"work constructively" with the unions and to drop its threat to sack strikers on April 23.

Yet in fact Edwardes never withdrew the sacking threat: all that was agreed was that if a return to work took place before Wednesday there would be no sackings!

The question now being asked by thousands of workers is why Evans' militant speeches on the Tuesday led to abject surrender on the Thursday.

Leading the pack

Why did Evans—who appeared so different to Duffy in his fostering of resistance to the management package—wind up leading the pack of 11 union leaders who last week signed the deal and accepted the 92-page document?

The answer to this question is precisely that Labour and trade union leaders who seek simply to achieve reforms within the capitalist system are unable in a period of acute international slump and crisis to defend the independent interests of their members.

Throughout British industry the falling rate of profit is

driving employers onto the offensive against the working class.

Wholesale rationalisation, closure of unprofitable plant, speed-up and redundancies are being carried through at a break-neck rate in a bid to restore "viable" levels of profit at the expense of the workforce.

This process, already underway under the Labour government, has gathered pace under Thatcher's gang of bankers and asset strippers, who see the creation of a 2 million pool of unemployed as a useful means of disciplining and breaking the strength of the working class.

And prime target for this treatment has been BL, the only British car manufacturer.

The car industry internationally faces a major crisis as a result of the slump in world trade and fierce competition over the remaining markets.

Chrysler

The impending bankruptcy of Chrysler USA and the \$1 billion lost last year by Ford, along with massive lay-offs and closures in the US motor industry indicate the scale of the



Asset-strippers: Joseph and Edwardes

problem.

As such BL is both a test-bed for Tory strategy to tame and crush the trade unions, and a crucial element in their fight to restore the profitability of the British engineering industry as a whole.

Profit

Yet reformist leaders like Evans and Duffy start out from acceptance of the need for production to be based not on social need but on private profit.

They accept that the employers have the "right" to a profit—at the expense of the working class.

They will not even challenge the figures on which the employers base their blackmailing demands.

It is no accident that Evans emerged from his sell-out to Edwardes declaring that:

"We want to maintain a British motor manufacturer. We will do all we can provided we are consulted properly. We think we have saved BL Cars tonight."

From the documents shown him by BL management, Evans



declared himself convinced that there was "no more money available" to increase the 5% pay offer.

His words echoed those of the leadership of the Confed who last winter backed Edwardes' demand for 25,000 redundancies, and informed their scandalised members that they had "seen over the precipice" and that only through the sacrifice of thousands of jobs could any jobs be saved.

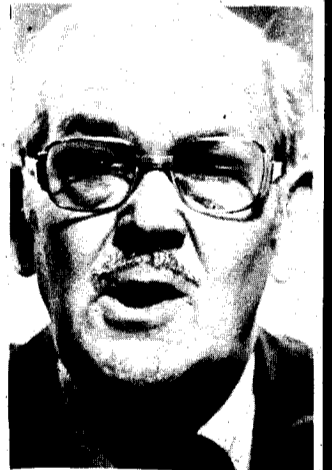
Yet the reality is that the capitalist crisis is an ongoing and insoluble crisis; the drive to speed-up and to rationalisation is continuous.

As recent years have proved, every sacrifice, every retreat, every concession to employers like Edwardes simply whets their appetite for more.

Opposition

The interests of the employers in increasing their profits stand in complete opposition to the interests of the working class in defence of jobs and living standards.

Yet the reformist Labour and trade union leaders



Duffy

continue to peddle the illusion of a "common", "national" interest in which management and workers are united.

Hence the TGWU Record for instance last week gave over a free page to an advert in favour of import controls—drawn up by BL management!

Collaboration

The reality is that far more British jobs have been lost from the collaboration between union leaders and British employers than have been wiped out by "foreign" competition.

Indeed it is only through the struggle against the anarchy and exploitation of the capitalist system both in Britain and internationally, and the fight for a planned socialist economy that the interests of the working class can be defended.

Evans like his fellow TUC bureaucrats has proved time and again that he stands firmly against such a fight.

Nor is it only in BL that he has opposed the mobilisation of the full strength of the working class in struggle against the Tory

Continued back page



INTERNATIONAL

MIDDLE EAST CAULDRON OF ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE

The effects of the liberation struggles in Palestine and the anti-imperialist ferment in Iran on the world balance of forces have been seen in developing violence in the entire Middle East region, and in the changes in international politics that come in their train.

The brutal murder on Friday last, 18 April, of privates Barrett and Smallhorne from the Irish army serving with the UN forces has served in some way to bring home the character of the forces at work in Southern Lebanon at the moment.

The fact that these men were not only unarmed, sexually assaulted and thrown into a ditch, but were also white Westerners has done something to increase the horror in certain quarters at what has been going on there. However, they have not in any way altered the daily occurrence of such murderous incidents.

'Christian militias'

The so-called 'Christian militias' of Major Saad Haddad which operate in the area are extreme racialists, and reactionary elements with attitudes openly adopted from European fascism.

These people who take on the very phrases and postures of the Spanish falange and the Nazi blackshirts are actually financed, trained and supplied by the Israelis. They could not exist otherwise.

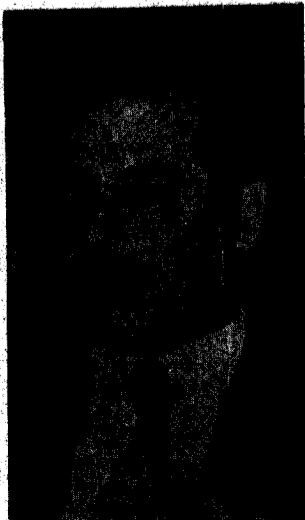
Such collaboration with fascism is of course not new for the Zionist movement.

At this point, however, it ties in with the desperate efforts of the regime of occupied Palestine to bolster itself against any pressure by the American imperialists and the Egyptian petty bourgeoisie to compromise with the Palestinians and the Arab bourgeoisie generally.

The Israeli invasion of South Lebanon on 9 April and the various murderous attacks on refugee camps and elsewhere are part and parcel of the efforts of the desperately weak Begin regime to expand the power of the Zionist state in the negotiations with the Egyptians and the US.

Jerusalem

Returning from his latest visit to the US on the same day as the murder of the Irish soldiers, Begin made it quite clear that he intends to hold onto the city of Jerusalem, grabbed in the war of 1967, and to all the other so-called 'occupied territories' taken at that time.



Iraqi hangman Hussein



Zionist leader Begin with Carter in New York

For Begin the policy of 'autonomy for the Palestinians' means setting up in the territories occupied in 1967 elective bodies with rather less power than English local councils.

However, at the moment the Zionist authorities refuse to even allow elections of mayors in the area. This is because they know very well that those elected would be the most vigorous opponents of their rule, and supporters of the Palestinian liberation movement.

Such attitudes are typical of the Zionist method of negotiation, particularly when they are under pressure from the imperialists to make concessions to the Arab bourgeoisie.

The Egyptian regime of Sadat, whose ideas about 'Palestinian autonomy' correspond more closely to the form of South African bantustan, is also

desperate for some concessions from Israel that might appear to show benefits for the Palestinians.

Not only has Sadat become the outcast of the Arab world; there are definite signs of growing internal opposition to his regime.

The Egyptian authorities within the last week have announced the breaking up of the umpteenth 'communist conspiracy' to overthrow them.

They have shot down students protesting against the presence of the Shah in the country, and handed down prison sentences to those involved 20 months ago in demonstrations against rising food prices.

For the United States, the stakes are of course much higher. With their apparent impotence in the face of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan

and the hostages crisis in Iran, they have to win support from some sections of the bourgeoisie in the Arab countries.

This they aim to do in part through concessions to the Palestinians—which they cannot easily wring from their Zionist proteges.

Despite the great propaganda value of the taunting of the might of American imperialism by means of the holding of the hostages, the confused and divided leaders of the Iranian Revolution have consistently shown the political limitations of their stand against imperialism.

At the end of March, they launched yet another bloody assault against the Kurdish part of Iran, in which dozens of Kurdish villagers are said to have been killed.

During April, a similarly reactionary and chauvinist campaign has been developed by the Iranian authorities on the basis of their traditional rivalries with Iraq.

The sharpening of the propaganda battle against Iraq is in part aimed to deny democratic rights to the Arab minority in Iran, and in part to bolster the disintegrating unity of the Iranian state itself by whipping up anti-foreign sentiments.

Ba'athist agents

Already a number of violent incidents in Tehran have been attributed to 'Baathist agents' and the General Secretary of the Islamic Republican Party, which has the largest number of seats in the forthcoming Iranian assembly, has provided the following analysis.

"The Bagdad regime, allied to Israel, is nothing but a puppet manipulated by the United States.

"The Baathists have always used revolutionary phrases to cover up their counter-revolutionary activities.

Already in the 50s and 60s

they supported American imperialism against Nasser and Arab nationalism. Today they are trying to provoke the overthrow of the Islamic republic.

Bagdad has become the centre of all the activities of the supporters of the Shah and their American allies."

The appeal of the Ayatollah Chirazi was clearer. He told anti-imperialist demonstrators that in the dispute with Iraq, Iranians should support 'the victory of the wishes of God over the forces of the devil.'

In Iraq, meanwhile, the reaction has not been any less chauvinist.

The Iraqi regime has its own war with the Kurdish minority and its own internal dissensions.

Recent attempts to assassinate vice-president Tariq Aziz have been routinely blamed on the Iranians, but they may well come from the methods regularly employed by the Baathist governmental clique to settle their own differences.

Meanwhile, the isolation of Iraq from the so-called 'Steadfastness Front' of Lybia, Syria, Algeria, South Yemen and the PLO has also caused problems for those who do not appear to be doing so much to aid the Palestinians.

Iraq's only response to the recent conference of the 'Steadfastness Front' and its decision to set up a special envoy in Syria has been to expel the Popular Democratic Front from Bagdad.

This section of the PLO, which claims adherence to 'Marxism-Leninism' used to work very closely with the Iraqi authorities.

Faced with these difficulties the Iraqi regime has built up an anti-Persian campaign which has definite racist undertones.

Not only have there been bellicose noises on the question of islands in the Gulf seized by the Shah in the early 70s. There have also been widespread expulsions from Iraq of many

thousands of citizens of Iranian origin.

Something of the spirit of the Iraqi campaign can be gathered from the statement of President Saddam Hussein on 5 April that the assassination attempts in Bagdad were part of the efforts by the Khomeini regime to avenge the Kaddishieh.

This battle (which took place in AD 663), was a Muslim victory against the Persians.

Similar chauvinist feelings have been built up by the arrest in Iraq of the Shi'ite Muslim leader Imman Mohammed al Bakr al Sadr.

Large demonstrations and strikes are reported from Lebanon on 15 April as a result of this arrest, and the consistent but as yet unfounded rumours that Imman al Sadr had been killed.

Considerable difficulties are faced by those who have decided to support one or other section of the anti-imperialist petty bourgeoisie.

If like Gerry Healy's *Newslines* you have uncritically supported all of them, the best way of dealing with the rivalries between them is to ignore them in your paper.

If, on the other hand, you are like the Soviet bureaucracy and can supply them with arms, you can lend your weight to whichever force seems the stronger—at this point the Iranians.

The anti-colonialist struggles of the Palestinians and the Kurds and the anti-imperialist mobilisation of the Iranian people continues to spare every imperialist and to upset the calculations of every bureaucrat.

It is only the fight to present the policies of revolutionary socialism and mobilise the working class in these battles that will eventually secure their success.

Free

Uruguay prisoners

URUGUAY (population 2½ million) holds 3-4,000 political prisoners in its jails. It has been estimated that one in fifty Uruguayans have passed through the dictatorship's prisons.

The Tory government in Britain has refused to grant visas to many prisoners and others in danger from the repression.

The Committee for Human Rights in Uruguay has called in particular for individuals, community groups, trade union branches, etc., to adopt prisoner Alma Rodriguez Vignant and press for her to be allowed into this country.

Jailed for seven years, Alma has been severely tortured.

Although British embassy staff told her in prison that the British government was doing all it could to secure her release, Timothy Raison, Home Office minister, said on March 10 that he had "reluctantly decided not to give her a visa".

The Uruguay Committee is calling for adoptions to be notified to Nicolas Ridley, minister responsible for Latin America, or to the Home Office.

Further details from the Committee for Human Rights in Uruguay, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London NW1 4JC or Latin American Solidarity Front, 107 Harehills Avenue, Leeds 7.

Black hole of Havana

"Good riddance to the loafers, the layabouts, the lumpen and the scum."

Havana in the last two weeks has echoed to that apolitical and hysterical cry from crowds which have been bureaucratically mobilised and demagogically aroused by Fidel Castro and the Cuban Stalinist leadership.

Another abusive epithet has frequently been added—"queer"—though, as one or two of the less uncivilised bureaucrats have conceded when challenged, "there are good homosexuals as well as bad".

The recipients of all this abuse are the 10,000 Cubans who for two weeks have picked themselves into a tiny area—the Peruvian embassy and its grounds—under reportedly barbaric hygienic conditions seeking the possibility of a way out of Cuba to the USA or any capitalist country in Latin America.

Bizarre

It is easier to explain why the 10,000 have sought to use the Latin American tradition of exile through another country's embassy than to explain why the Cuban leadership has allowed the bizarre event to develop.

The 10,000 are self-evidently enemies of the Castro regime.

Some are dispossessed petty-bourgeois layers, others workers tired of material shortages; 400 are reportedly ex-political prisoners recently released; and others are certainly sections of Cuban society persecuted by the authorities, a few no doubt wanted for criminal activities by the police.

Repression

They are reacting to a worsening economic situation and an intensification of police repression under a new minister of the interior, Ramiro Valdez.

The Castro bureaucracy has used them as a pretext for a series of hysterical mass mobilisations in which hatred is a substitute for politics.

The 'scum' and 'queers' in the embassy may in this way have their uses for Castro's hard-pressed bureaucracy.

But they nonetheless, whatever their political views, bear obvious witness to the failure of that bureaucracy over 20 years to eliminate widespread discontent—in spite of the fact that hundreds of thousands of people in a similar position have been allowed to leave since the revolution of 1959.

Remove guards

This explains why the bureaucracy continues to insist

that there are only 3,000 in the embassy as opposed to the 10,000 on which other observers agree.

But it does not explain the surprising decision to remove the embassy guards in the first

place which allowed the refugees to enter.

The situation suggests that Castro was surprised by the number of those who rushed to seize what they saw as a chance to leave.



Castro



INTERNATIONAL

Turkish workers fight French state racist law

A 24-day strike by Turkish and Kurdish workers in Paris has focussed widespread attention on the plight of illegal immigrants in France.

The seventeen hunger strikers—'travailleurs sans papiers' (literally 'workers without papers')—were protesting not only for the right to have work permits but also about the conditions of super-exploitation in the garment and tailoring industry which employs a high proportion of Paris's 8,000 Turkish community.

High fashion

The reality behind Parisian 'high fashion' and typical of the conditions which exist in the multitude of overcrowded, one-room sweatshops, are a working day of 15 hours and payment of 10 francs for articles which will be sold at 500 francs.

A background of declining markets and falling profits within the industry combine to intensify the employers' offensive.

The larger capitalists look for ways to force out of business those competitors which undercut their operations.

As they turn to the government to step-up its already routine harassment of immigrants, this has led internationally to fresh attacks on workers



SP leader Mitterrand visits the hunger strikers

in these smaller production units.

Though in East London's textile industry raids and deportations are becoming increasingly common, in Paris things are on a much bigger scale.

Within a sizeable immigrant population, the French state's

latest racist moves have been through the notorious Bonnet Laws passed in the middle of last year and named after the Minister of the Interior Christian Bonnet.

They are a familiar package for the intimidation of immigrants with particular emphasis on denying the right to political activity and giving sweeping powers for expulsion on 'security' grounds.

The system is policed by a vast back-up of regularly updated computerised files.

It was a French TV 'expose' of conditions in the capital's tailoring industry which led to the hunger strike beginning in a small church in mid-February.

Additionally, the decision was taken for the Turkish workers to join the Socialist Party-led CFDT trade union.

Harmless

With sections of the media latching on to what seemed a fairly harmless protest, publicity began to grow.

A measure of the Barre government's increasing embarrassment over the issue was the despatching to the vigil of Labour Minister Lionel Stoler, widely hated for his imposition and refinement of the Bonnet Laws.

Stoler's tactics were to defuse the struggle with offers

of work permits and documents to the 17 participants, and a promise of sympathetic consideration for other 'deserving cases'.

It was the throwing out of these proposals and the strikers' insistence on full rights for everyone affected that led to a major escalation of support.

As well as a Strike Committee, a supporters' group had been formed and this now mushroomed with dozens of organisations pledging assistance.

Trade union and press coverage boomed with reports on the

capitalise on this movement, the CFDT organised a public meeting in support.

Three thousand crammed into the hall, with a thousand more unable to get in.

The militant mood of the meeting was summed up by the slogans shouted—All or nothing! We will win, by force if we have to!

Thousands took to the streets in solidarity demonstrations through the Turkish areas of central Paris.

Within the strike itself, changes were taking place. The pro-Maoist forces pulled out to

enhanced by its main supporters within the community having well-paid posts as CGT bureaucrats.

But the strike's leadership problems did not prevent the rejection of a further government attempt to crush the action.

It was proposed that a working party enquiry should be established to be composed of government ministers, and representatives from the strike committee, the CFDT, the employers—and the Turkish ambassador to France!

Correctly seeing it as a diversion, the strikers refused to accept the dropping of their demands as a precondition and their subsequent boycott meant it never got off the ground.

Though by this time fatigue and exhaustion were making the hunger strike difficult to sustain, confirmation of the continuing support and growing political character of the movement it had generated came at a benefit rally called in solidarity with exiled Chileans.

Internationale

Again, thousands of Turkish workers and their families turned out and the evening ended with chants of Down with Pinochet! Venceremos! and singing of the Internationale.

On March 5 the strikers decided to call off their action. A statement from Stoler on the government's position appeared two weeks later.

The contents were predictable. Though written deliberately in ambiguous and evasive language, the message was clear—there would be no real concessions on the granting of work permits.

In line with the governments aims to 'reform' the industry, the letter referred repeatedly to the Labour Law and a host of other legislation.

Its stress on the need to strictly impose Health and Safety regulations was aimed obviously at disqualifying the vast majority of workers who have no alternative to their tenement room workshops.

Insisting on these provisions automatically excluded these workers from being given employment contracts by the bosses, yet having a contract was made an absolute condition of applying for a work permit!

Stoler's letter wound up by saying the problem had to be dealt with in a 'humanitarian' way.

Earlier indications of a tendency by sections of the workers leaders to compromise with the union bureaucracy were confirmed at the meeting called to consider the statement.

The workers had elected 35 shop stewards as their representatives and these were joined by the former strikers and top bureaucrats from the CFDT.

Although the meeting ended without any clear decisions, significantly only a minority argued strongly that it was a complete sell-out of their demands.

The struggle now is for a principled leadership within this group of workers.

Formerly virtually ignored, their turn to the CFDT has transformed that union's HACUITEX textile workers section from little more than an inactive rump into a potentially strong force of thousands.

But to take things any further demands a head-on collision with the reformist bureaucracy who aim to strangle the workers' independence.

This cannot effectively be done without a sharp fight amongst the Turkish workers themselves against the confused, petty-bourgeois forces who at this point make up their political leadership.



front pages of Turkey's daily papers.

The CFDT, which until then had kept its distance, began sending high-powered delegations of bureaucrats to oversee operations.

Careerist 'left' deputies from the Socialist Party fought to identify themselves with the strike, one even bringing his tearful wife and children along as well.

Not to be outdone, SP leader Mitterand himself paid a visit.

Bigger premises were found to cope with the new conditions. The Turkish community, formerly cowed by their illegality, now began to flood behind the hunger strikers demands.

Their new-found confidence ensured enthusiastic support for a campaign of mass leafletting of the city centre and Metro.

Seizing the opportunity to

begin their own hunger strike (a flop) and conflict and divisions began to appear.

Clashes in the Strike Committee and its support committee centred on moves to accommodate to and tail-end the CFDT bureaucracy.

Meanwhile the Communist Party-dominated union CGT increased its attempts to gain influence.

Just as in May 1968 it had initially dismissed the students' struggles as 'ultra leftist', so their first reaction to the Turks' protest was to brand it 'gauchist' and ignore it.

Desperate to make up for this bad miscalculation they even began to invoke the authority of DISK, the mass trade union in Turkey run by their Stalinist counterparts in that country.

The CP's credibility among Turkish emigres had not been

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Evening meetings on additional topics, films and social events.

The school will be attended by delegations from the organisations affiliated to the TILC and members of the WSL. A special invitation is being extended to supporters of the WSL to take part in the discussion and learn more about the WSL and the TILC.

Details are available from any WSL branch or from: WSL, 3M Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

Cost: £12 including accommodation for the eight days. A cheap meal will be provided at lunch time and there will be a pooled fare arrangement. Crèche facilities.



Demonstrators in support of hunger strike struggle

Students' union in conference

REFORMISM ON THE ROCKS

AT BLACKPOOL

With a display of leadership rarely seen since the demise of General Custer the NUS Left Alliance arrived at Blackpool bereft of policies but hell bent on enforcing control.

The motley assortment of Stalinists, right wing labourites and ageing "Young Liberals" who came together to form the Left Alliance sought from the beginning of the conference to commit NUS to the political equivalent of suspended animation.

Having duly taken all the sabbatical posts on the first day they then proceeded to railroad through on a card vote a motion which effectively allows them to

duck out of any campaigns not directly relating to "students' problems".

Their reasons for wanting such a blank cheque for retreat were obvious. Unfortunately for newly elected Stalinist President David Aaronovitch and his cronies, however, politics was already stalking the corridors outside the chandeliered hall ready to gatecrash their peaceful talking shop.

Pressure

With guest speakers booked from ZANU, the Chix strike, Friends of Blair Peach, Women Against Imperialism and the Jimmy Kelly Campaign, and mounting pressure emerging

from overseas students it was only a matter of time before the whole house of cards began to cave in.

On the fourth day, the inevitable happened, and the bankrupt reformists on the Executive found their blank cheque bouncing before their eyes.

After a graphic description of the vicious treatment meted out to Republican prisoners in Ireland from Liz Lagrue and Anne Marie Loughran of Women Against Imperialism, a move was made to hold a collection towards their campaign.

At this the NUS executive could stomach no more.

Any Pearmain denounced the whole campaign in defence of political prisoners as "an IRA conspiracy" and said, "We cannot allow ourselves to be associated with this."

In the ensuing uproar an unofficial collection went ahead in defiance of the platform and the Left Alliance, facing a split conference were left helpless.

That evening, at their caucus meeting, after a series of dreary apologies for their inability to build any base in the colleges, the Left Alliance split on the

question of overseas students fees.

Crumbled

Under intense pressure from Turkish students Aaronovitch argued that the Executive was right to remove all reference to action from the Emergency Motion on Overseas Students, and as his attacks on other students present became more open, the Alliance crumbled, unwilling to follow the logic of his bankrupt politics.

As a result, the overseas students motion was dropped on the final day due to "shortage of time".

But when Ireland was finally debated the Conference majority voted to condemn the oppression of Republican prisoners in Armagh, despite rabid attacks on the Republican movement from Tories and Left Alliance alike.

Jubilant

The conference jubilantly trumpeted its victory over the new leadership.

The exposure of the reform-

ist leadership was not, however, due to any principled stand by the left.

a political struggle against the present leadership.

And the 'Socialist Student Alliance' remained mutely on the side-lines, unable, despite the clear paralysis of the Left Alliance to organise any real struggle around an alternative programme.

The SWP's student group confined itself to another round of 'more militancy' speeches which offered no perspective for



Support Chix mass picket

The link between the struggle of unorganised workers, especially immigrants, and the fight against the Tory Employment Bill was made at a House of Commons lobby this week.

A coach load of Chix workers and their families made up the lobby though it was called by the Camden Committee for Community Relations as a "mass lobby".

Spirits are clearly high among the strikers who have been picketing the bubblegum factory in Slough for six months now.

At the meeting in the plush grand committee room striker Mohammed Yassim detailed the conditions which led to the strike—such as low wages of 95p an hour for the women, no sick pay nor pension scheme, etc.

Mohammed Anwar pointed out that if supportive pickets are outlawed in the Employment Bill, strikes such as at Chix would be impossible to sustain, especially where most strikers are women who are continually harassed by the bosses.

He assured the meeting, to applause, that they would continue to call mass pickets, in defiance of the law.

Prosecution

Also their picketing of premises, such as the cash and carry in Hayes and the Hollywood warehouse to stop the supplying of Chix and the storing of its products could also open them to prosecution under this Bill.

"You can't separate the Employment Bill from other attacks on the workers' movement" stated Jim Thakoordin of the GMWU Education Department.

He placed it in the context of the 1971 Immigration Act, the use of the SPG and the SUS

laws.

However, it had to be pointed out by a speaker from the floor that the Tories cannot be cajoled into changing the Employment Bill or of abandoning their other attacks.

The urgent task was to kick the government out, using May 14 as the first shot in this fight.

This was not to say that the struggles for unionisation would be resolved.

Betrayed

Under the last Labour government, for example, the major strike of 18 months for the union at Garners had been betrayed.

The TGWU leadership had sabotaged the struggle and even agreed with the police voluntarily to limit the number of pickets.

Joan Lester responded to this by saying that Labour should have brought in new laws after Grunwicks.

This completely missed the point. The real issue is the responsibility of the trade union and labour leadership to mobilise their membership to support weak, isolated sections to win the most basic right of all—to be in a union.

It is this which has led to defeat, not loopholes in the law.

The Chix strikers have learned some things from the past bitter struggles.

The employer is now very weak. Support the mass picket. Send money to the strike.

A victory now will give the biggest boost to the organisation of immigrant, low paid, unorganised workers into trade unions.

More information from and messages of support and donations to: M. Anwar, 271 Goodman Park, Slough.

AVENGE BLAIR PEACH: BRING DOWN TORIES!

A year ago six known thugs carried out an organised gang attack in West London, clubbing to death a young teacher—yet no arrest has yet been made.

The thugs were part of the police Special Patrol Group. Their attack was on anti-fascist demonstrators in Southall. The young teacher, murdered by a blow to the head from a weapon was Blair Peach.

Cover-up

The cover-up by the state has effectively shielded the murderer: and the police license to kill has been underlined in the outcome of the inquest into Merseyside man Jimmy Kelly and Tynesider Liddle Towers, both of whom died in custody after receiving savage violence at the hands of the police.

Meanwhile the Tory government has come to office, at once implementing its electoral pledges to increase spending on the police and army, and relying on these repressive forces to uphold their planned anti-union laws and racist legislation as well as to smash mass pickets and maintain existing harassment of working class youth.

One corner of the security curtain that shrouds the state's surveillance and phone tapping network has been lifted—revealing a central monitoring unit in London with apparatus to simultaneously 'bug' up to 10,000 telephones.

More than protest

Under these conditions the struggle to prevent a repetition of the murder of Blair Peach requires far more than even the

mass protest that will certainly be mobilised on April 27.

The Tory government have already shown themselves to be impervious to protest: they are driven on by the acute economic crisis of the British capitalist class. There is no way in which they will allow any weakening of the bodies of armed men that form the backbone of their power.

In supporting the April 27 demonstration the Workers Socialist League in no way endorses the vague protest politics of the 'Friends of Blair Peach' or the pacifist Anti Nazi League.

The fight against fascist violence and the struggle for the disbandment of the police and the standing army both point to the necessity to develop workers defence squads, based on and answerable to the labour movement.

Labour leaders

But at the same time the fight to end organised police violence demands mass working class action to bring down the Tories and drive out Labour's right wing leadership.

Labour's left wing-led National Executive, which is officially backing the April 27 march, has offered no challenge whatever to then Home Secretary Merlyn Rees—who has subsequently spoken out criticising Bristol police for not being more aggressive in their response to the recent mass clashes with youth and workers in the St Pauls area.

Only a leadership prepared to struggle for the independent mobilisation of the working class and a workers government can be expected to wage a serious struggle for the disband-



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

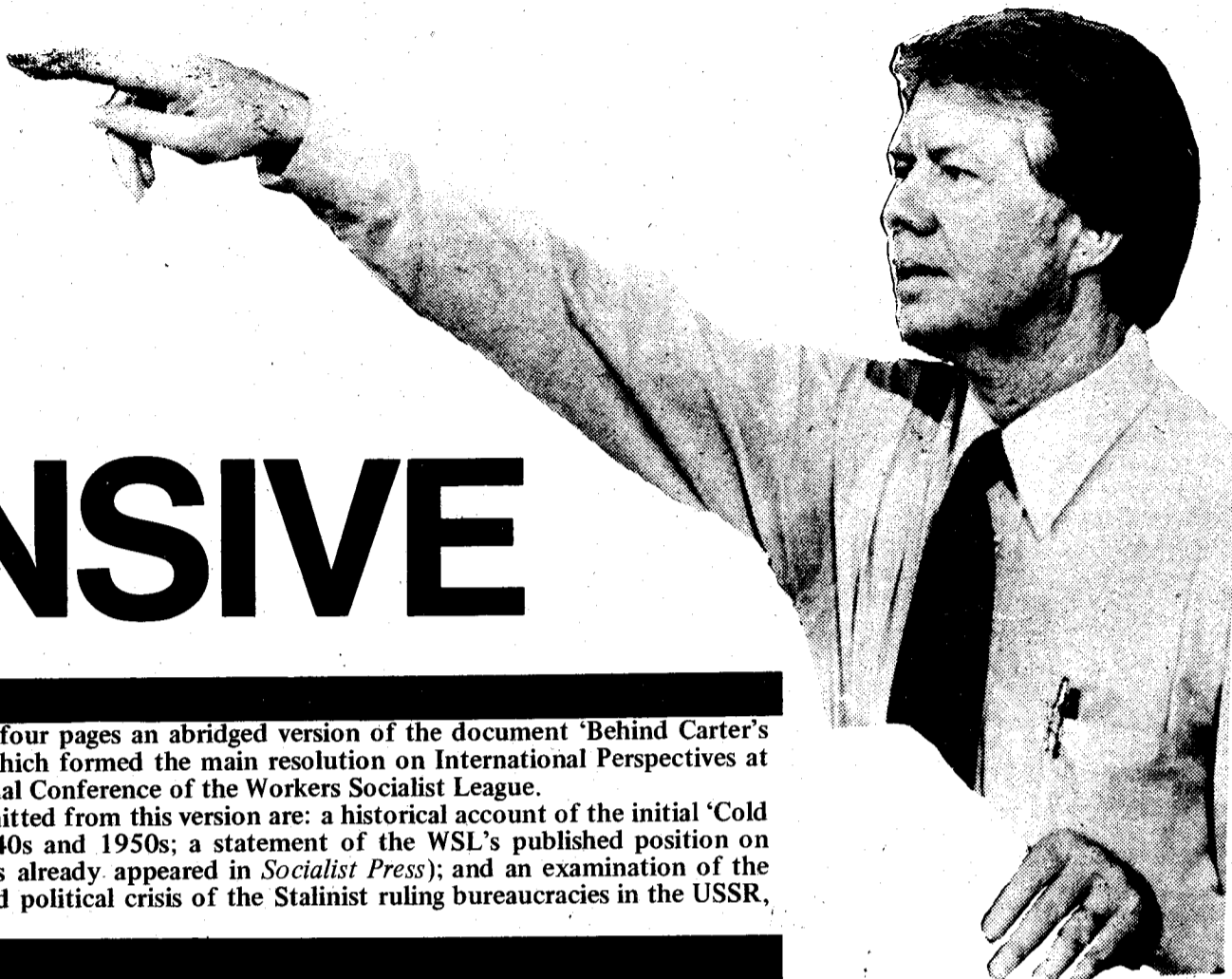
Police in action at Southall

ment of even a section of the police apparatus.

It is clear that Labour's right wing are opposed to such a fight: it is necessary in the

course of the struggle for workers to test out for themselves whether the 'left' talkers are prepared to put forward any alternative.

BEHIND CARTER'S COLD WAR OFFENSIVE



AN IMPORTANT POLICY SWITCH

The very series of events that have followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the very end of 1979 indicate a substantial shift of policy by the imperialists in their moves to repress the growing tide of revolutionary and national struggles.

Why has this shift taken place? (...)

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—which since as long ago as 1955 has been clearly in the grip of Soviet economic and military influence—came obviously neither as a surprise to the imperialists (whose intelligence networks must have been aware, well in advance, of preparations for such a major military operation) nor as a dramatic change in the established balance of forces.

But it *did* serve to underline unmistakably the relative political and military weakness of imperialism: and it offered the US imperialists in particular a pretext for launching a large-scale ideological offensive against the Soviet Union, as the back-drop to a major military build-up.

It was the dramatic and rapid worsening of the overall plight of imperialism in its struggle to contain the masses on a world scale, rather than the specific events in Afghanistan, which has caused a substantial reassessment by top military and political chiefs, and precipitated the latest "turn".

Indeed, though 1979 saw the emergence of mass struggles that toppled the Shah as a mainstay of imperialist strategy in the Gulf, and ousted Somoza, US imperialism's chosen despot in Nicaragua, the events of the past year must be understood in relation to the chain of events reaching back to the launching by Nixon and Kissinger of the policy of "detente" in the early 1970s, and even as far as the massive revolutionary upheavals of 1968.

The class battles of May-June 1968 in France and of 1968-9 in Italy, together with the mass mobilisation in Czechoslovakia that was crushed by the Stalinist invasion in 1968 served as a stern warning to both the imperialists and, importantly, to the Stalinist bureaucracies.

The break-up of the long post-war economic "boom" heralded also a disruption of the uneasy balance of class forces established on the basis of the Yalta, Potsdam and Tehran agreements, and reestablished in the wake of the Cuban revolution.

And the increased combativity of the proletariat both in advanced capitalist countries and in the deformed workers' states called for new measures to prevent an all-out political challenge in which revolution or

We reprint in these four pages an abridged version of the document 'Behind Carter's Cold War Offensive', which formed the main resolution on International Perspectives at the recent Fourth Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League.

Principal sections omitted from this version are: a historical account of the initial 'Cold War' period of the 1940s and 1950s; a statement of the WSL's published position on Afghanistan (which has already appeared in *Socialist Press*); and an examination of the mounting economic and political crisis of the Stalinist ruling bureaucracies in the USSR, Europe, Asia and Cuba.

political revolution would be posed.

IMPERIALIST RESPONSE TO 1968

For the imperialists, the first steps were towards increased repression of colonial liberation struggles, combined with legal and economic measures to cut working class living standards at home.

This attack was both driven on, and made more difficult by the mounting economic crisis, which ran on unchecked, leading by August 1971 to the devaluation of the dollar and the ending of its 27-year link to gold. (...)

In the underdeveloped economies, anti-imperialist struggles were met by the most savage military measures by puppet regimes—bringing the bloody war of liberation in Bangla Desh, and a vicious crack-down on the workers' movement by dictatorial regimes in Bolivia and Sri Lanka in 1971.

In Chile, the foot-dragging, anti-capitalist moves of the Allende "Popular Unity" coalition came under increasing imperialist onslaught in a campaign of conscious economic sabotage and reactionary mobilisation that was to lay the basis for the Pinochet coup in September 1973.

But it was in Vietnam and then Cambodia that the most savage and barbarous measures

were unleashed, in a last-ditch bid by imperialism to stem the growing tide of mass struggle in both the semi-colonial world and in the advanced capitalist countries.

Nixon's escalation of bombing raids, defoliation exercises, napalm attacks and chemical warfare, in addition to a further huge build-up of US occupying forces, proved beyond doubt the unspeakable barbarity of imperialism faced with a major threat to its control.

But it also proved the enormous resistance of the oppressed masses of Vietnam in their struggle for national liberation.

And, as the continued resistance of the NLF forces, combined with the sheer horror of the war served to destroy the morale of the US conscript army, so the devastating economic consequences of the war in the US itself made themselves unmistakably felt at home and abroad.

In these conditions the mass anti-war movement had a substantially increased impact.

Nixon was forced to look for alternative means of controlling the Vietnamese masses and the world proletariat.

And in this search he found common cause with the Stalinist bureaucracy in both the Kremlin and Peking, who likewise saw the Vietnam war as a threat to the existing balance of class forces.

STALINIST CRISIS

The period following the Czechoslovak invasion had proven to be a period of crisis for the Stalinist bureaucrats too.

Continuing unresolved economic and agricultural crisis brought the ever-present fear that working class discontent would erupt once more in anti-bureaucratic struggle.

In Poland this took place in the Gdansk uprising of December 1970.

But on a world scale, too, the Stalinists felt themselves, and the uneasy balance of class forces with imperialism on which their power and privilege rest, to be under threat from the growing militancy of mass anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggles. (...)

Within many mass Communist Parties, including those in Western Europe the spectre of revolutionary struggles prompted a more energetic turn by leading elements towards Popular Frontist politics designed to sap the independent strength of the working class.

Such a political turn, later to be further developed by Carrillo, Berlinguer and others, rationalised in the reactionary "theories" of Eurocommunism, led rapidly in Chile to the catastrophe of defeat at the hands of Pinochet.

In China too, the Maoist bureaucracy feared an escalation of class struggle in Asia.

They recognised instinctively that under conditions of political and economic instability and crisis, such struggles could flow over to mobilise the vast Chinese proletariat and peasantry in anti-bureaucratic struggles.

Accordingly they began their own moves towards establishing a form of "detente" with imperialism at the expense of the masses, and feted butcher Nixon in Peking in 1972—at the height of the US bombing raids on Hanoi and Haiphong.

In short, the weakening grip of imperialism in the early 1970s and the inability of even the most unbridled savagery to tame the struggles of the masses, coincided with a profound insecurity in the Stalinist bureaucracy.

This situation brought together these two pincodes of counter-revolution in a renewed attempt to stabilise the existing balance of forces.



Polish riots 1970

Thus began the period of "detente"—launched by Nixon's advances and 1972 visits to Moscow and Peking, and growing through the 1973 Helsinki "European Security Conference"—the task of which was to ensure the security of imperialist control—and the initial moves towards the Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT) Talks.

In the train of these more general overtures came a succession of trade deals offering fat profits to capitalist monopolies, and much needed commodities and technology to the Stalinist bureaucracy.

January 27 1973 saw the signing of the Paris cease-fire agreement, in which Nixon made the first moves towards withdrawing US armies from Vietnam, looking principally to the Stalinist leaders to restrain the struggles of the masses, and thus safeguard the puppet Thieu regime in the South. Indeed the agreement made no call for the withdrawal of the North Vietnamese troops.

Yet the profound instability of the Thieu regime itself—wracked by a runaway economic crisis and politically discredited by rampant corruption—left it no room for manoeuvre.

At the same time the NLF forces in the South, fighting for their survival, continued their heroic armed struggles against the massively superior fire power of the Saigon army,

whose morale plummeted daily. The dynamic of the Vietnamese struggle in the material conditions created by the 26 year war, made it next to impossible for any amount of round table horse-trading to hold South Vietnam in the imperialist orbit.

The moves to "detente" were in essence a recognition of this reality, and an attempt to *limit* the scope of the loss to imperialism. It at least enabled Nixon to withdraw the US army prior to the eventual defeat. And "detente" was a real attempt by the imperialists to seek a political accommodation with the Peking and Kremlin leaders in order to redefine and uphold peacefully coexisting "spheres of influence".

The eventual failure of their approach was due *not* to any cynical breach of agreement by the Stalinists but largely to the inexorable rise in the militancy of the international working class.

But there is no doubt that the dramatic blow struck to imperialism by the capture of Saigon by Stalinist-led forces in April 1975—and the subsequent victory of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, served to shift the balance of class forces on a world scale.

PORTUGAL

This effect was heightened





Cuban troops in Angola

by the blow struck to the stability and confidence of Western capitalism by the massive upsurge that followed the military overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal in April 1974.

The sheer scale and scope of the Portuguese events following the April 1974 overthrow of fascism brought back to the capitalists agonising memories of the French 1968 General Strike.

Portuguese workers once apparently firmly under the fascist jack-boot, were suddenly breaking down all kinds of cherished barriers—occupying factories, forming their own workplace committees, marching in their hundreds of thousands, publishing capitalist bank-accounts, forming joint committees with students and even with rank and file soldiers, and jointly patrolling the streets in armed squads to protect against fascists.

The bourgeoisie was terrified. They needed a political answer to this mass movement of the working class.

Eventually the answer to this dilemma was to be found in the reformist and Stalinist labour bureaucracy—but not until after the imperialists had begun seriously to question the commitment of the Stalinists to the preservation of capitalist stability in Portugal and West Europe as a whole.

Indeed, it looked on a number of occasions as if the Stalinists might be about to lose control of the Portuguese masses, particularly when, in November 1976 the CP resorted to the unorthodox tactic of an ultra-left move in order to sabotage the mass struggle.

But the commitment of the pro-Moscow CP to the preservation of the "peaceful co-existence" framework of the Helsinki accords was proved in practice.

Portugal demonstrated beyond doubt to Marxists, that,



Eritrean liberation fighters

no matter how "left" its rhetoric, no Communist Party offers workers any alternative or independent road.

But for the imperialists the Portuguese events showed once more the risks involved in placing reliance on the labour bureaucracy as a last ditch defence.

There remains in such a strategy the ever-present danger, should an alternative leadership be developed, that the Stalinists and reformists can be swept aside by the movement they are attempting to control and restrain.

AFRICA

1974 also marked a new stage in the weakening of imperialist control in Africa, as in Ethiopia a mass movement against the autocratic regime of Emperor Haile Selassie grew rapidly in scale and scope.

As the struggles mounted throughout the country the power of Selassie—a key ally of imperialism in the strategically vital Horn of Africa—visibly crumbled.

Yet US imperialism, still licking its wounds from the Vietnam defeat, and particularly reluctant to provoke the black masses of the USA by engaging in a military intervention in Africa, was forced simply to watch as Selassie was eventually ousted in September 1974, and the Armed Forces Coordinating Committee, known as the Dergue, came to power, talking of "socialism".

The petty-bourgeois leaders of the Dergue at once revealed their hostility to the mass movement of the workers and peasants—banning strikes and demonstrations and rounding up political activists. Yet the revolutionary tide that had created the conditions to topple Selassie remained as a massive pressure

on the young officers of the Dergue, and an obstacle to their instinctive moves to cement relations with imperialism.

The first three months of 1975 brought a succession of far-reaching nationalisations of banks, insurance and credit institutions, of companies owned by the royal family, of gold and silver mining, utilities, transport firms and other enterprises, and a sweeping land reform in the countryside.

These moves were a blow to the imperialists and inflicted material losses, particularly to US interests.

But they also took place from above, in an attempt to contain and control the masses—and the US imperialists at first attempted to reinforce the Dergue's control and buy their support, by doubling military aid and arranging to sell a package of \$150 million worth of arms, including tanks and jet fighters.

But the evident inability of the Dergue to control the anti-imperialist masses—and in particular its failure to contain national struggles by Eritrean and other peoples—brought in 1977 a switch of US policy. Aid and arms shipments came to a halt.

Attention was shifted to cultivating alternative allies—in particular the Somali dictatorship.

Dergue leader Mengistu promptly approached the Kremlin bureaucracy to make good this shortfall.

And the Kremlin leaders, readily seizing the chance of a military/diplomatic outpost in such a strategic position on the African continent as a means of compensating for the growing internal problems within the Warsaw Pact and the unpredictable line of the "Eurocommunist" CPs—at once obliged.

In consolidating their at first uneasy alliance with Mengistu the Kremlin leaders were able, by despatching Cuban troops and Russian "advisors", to combine their military-strategic objectives with tangible moves, alongside the Derg, to repress revolutionary struggles by the Eritrean and Ethiopian masses that threatened the balance of class forces throughout the African continent.

They secured this crucial bridgehead and base of operations without in any way coming into conflict with imperialism: rather the Stalinists moved into the vacuum left by the withdrawal of imperialist support.

ANGOLA AND AFTER

A rather different development occurred in Angola and Mozambique, where the direct imperialist withdrawal was the consequence of the Portuguese revolution of 1974 and where Stalinist-backed nationalist liberation forces stood ready for the drive to power.

But in Angola the presence of rival nationalist forces seemed to offer the imperialists and the South African regime an opportunity to prevent an outright defeat by intervening—under cover of the FNLA/UNITA forces—to install a predictably tame pro-imperialist government.

Such a solution held few attractions for the Stalinists. They would lose out on a possibly vital opportunity to establish a further strategic military/diplomatic outpost in Africa; and they knew that any attempt to impose such a government would prompt a prolonged civil war in Angola, which they would be called upon to support, and which might well radicalise the black African masses in more profound revolutionary struggles.

It was public knowledge that the post-Vietnam US imperialists were powerless to intervene militarily in Angola beyond the funnelling of CIA finance and clandestine operations; on the other hand the MPLA forces under Neto were poised, given a minimum of assistance, for victory.

In this situation Cuban troops were despatched to assist in the MPLA's final drive to power in Angola.

This intervention was motivated not to further the struggles of the Angolan masses (whose struggles against Neto have subsequently been repressed with the aid of Cuban troops) but for the self-preservation of the Stalinist bureaucracy on a world scale in its diplomatic and military balancing act with imperialism.

But the intervention had nevertheless a profound impact on anti-imperialist struggles throughout Africa.

The smouldering bush war in Zimbabwe was rekindled into the flame which has since forced dramatic political concessions from the white racist regime in a bid to stabilise bourgeois rule; and the mass black proletariat of South Africa has, since the Soweto events, begun to flex its muscles—to the alarm of the South African capitalists and world imperialism.

Yet the Stalinists have done everything in their power to contain such developments and to prop up the petty-bourgeois MPLA government—making no attempt to transform it into a Cuba-style deformed workers' state.

Peaceful co-existence remains the watchword of Stalinism in Africa. The squalid betrayals by the petty bourgeois Patriotic Front leaders in the Zimbabwe struggles must be seen in the context of Soviet, Cuban and East German influence on the guerrilla war—in which adequate supplies of arms and equipment have been consciously withheld in order to force a reactionary 'negotiated' settlement designed to leave Zimbabwe firmly in the imperialist orbit.

In South Africa, too, the Stalinist/ANC strategy of sporadic isolated guerrilla warfare linked to popular frontist alliances stands as a major barrier to the advance of the political independence of the black working class.

And in Zaire the mere empty imperialist threat of reprisals against the Stalinists should they assist the struggles against the corrupt Mobutu despotism brought immediate apologies and disavowals from Cuban and Kremlin leaders, who pledged



Attempting a carve-up through detente: Nixon and Brezhnev in

their support for 'stabilisation and the struggle against subversion'.

IMPERIALIST WEAKNESS CAUSES UNEASE

The military intervention in Zaire also spotlighted the massive problems faced by the imperialists in any challenge to Stalinism—particularly in the wake of the Vietnam defeat.

The US imperialists themselves had to sit on their hands, unable to send troops and were forced to do no more than supply cash and transport planes. The job thus fell to the second-string imperialist powers, France and Belgium.

These states themselves could not move until the Stalinist leaders of Cuba and the Soviet Union made it clear they would under no circumstances support or defend the rebel forces.

But even here, with the mobilisation of only a few hundred troops to intervene in Africa, thousands of French and Belgian workers took to the streets in protest.

And, even while the operation was taking place, the class struggle in France erupted into strikes on wages at naval dockyards and munitions plants, with riot police called in to break up the illegal mass meetings.

If all this happened with only a few soldiers committed to a brutal but short and small-scale military intervention, what chance have the imperialist nations got of carrying through the huge task of directly controlling events throughout the vast African continent by military force?

S.E. ASIA: ANOTHER WARNING TO CARTER

The growing unease of imperialist chiefs at the power of the Stalinist forces and their apparent readiness to use their own massive military machine to secure their political objectives was underlined at the very beginning of 1979 by the lightning-fast invasion of Kampuchea by the Vietnamese armed forces with Moscow's support.

Long-term hopes that the imperialists no doubt cherished of moving (perhaps through their growing links with the Chinese bureaucracy) towards a link-up with the barbaric Pol

Pot bureaucracy to threaten the gains of the Vietnamese revolution were rudely shattered.

Imperialist impotence in S.E. Asia was heavily underlined.

And despite Chinese moves to draw the fire of the Vietnamese forces through a punitive incursion into North Vietnam, the feared and hated Pol Pot leadership proved itself incapable of mounting substantial resistance to the invasion.

For the American warmongers the lesson was twofold.

On the one hand renewed efforts needed to be made to develop the anti-Soviet political and military links with the Chinese Stalinists as the only possible challenge to Soviet influence in S.E. Asia.

The Chinese bureaucracy—seeking massive economic assistance—were obviously wide open for such an approach.

On the other hand the S.E. Asian events demonstrated the imperialists' own military and political weakness, and increasingly unfavourable balance of forces within which they were forced to struggle to retain political control of the semi-colonial countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa.

1979 BODY BLOWS: NICARAGUA

But if things looked bleak in the already largely-lost corner of S.E. Asia, this was nothing to the body-blows suffered by imperialism in 1979 in Iran and in Nicaragua. Two chosen and groomed gendarmes of imperialism in crucial strategic zones—both armed to the teeth—were within a matter of months toppled by mass anti-imperialist struggles in which the US imperialists felt unable to intervene.

The political implications of each of these setbacks have been immediate and widespread, particularly at a point where the galloping world recession throws the entire capitalist and semi-colonial world into the most acute economic, political and social crisis.

Throughout Central and South America—from El Salvador to Panama, from Bolivia to Chile, from Brazil to Guatemala, the oppressed masses in struggle against Somoza's fellow US-backed puppet dictatorships have drawn strength from the Nicaraguan revolution—which was carried through without intervention



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though on the very doorstep of the American imperialists.

Unstable military and 'democratic' regimes are quaking throughout the sub-continent: there is alarming evidence of the renewed strength and combativity of the Chilean working class, of workers in Brazil, and the resurgence of mass struggles in Bolivia and Peru.

Despite the political shortcomings of the petty bourgeois Nicaraguan FSLN leadership, therefore, their humiliation of US imperialism has acted to both highlight and further develop the offensive of the oppressed masses.

But such a development will provoke little joy among the Stalinists of Moscow and Havana.

Though Sandinista forces have been trained at various points by the Castroites in Cuba there is no evidence that Castro provided more than the most token military or practical aid to the determined final offensive of the FSLN guerrillas against Somoza.

Indeed, Castro's attempts to secure the lifting of the prolonged US trade embargo on Cuba and to secure 'peaceful co-existence' with the oil-rich and right-wing Mexican government have been in no way assisted by the Nicaraguan revolution.

The development of a profound economic and political crisis in Cuba itself now makes it even more certain that the Castroite bureaucracy's main interest in the Nicaraguan revolution in the next period will be to help contain it within the limits of petty bourgeois nationalism, and to assist the FSLN to channel the energies and independence of the masses into Cuba-style—into bureaucratically dominated organisations.

Most of all they, together with the Moscow bureaucracy, will applaud the FSLN's explicit refusal to attempt to spread the revolution to the other countries of Central America.

Such a development would not only increase pressures towards political revolution in Cuba, but also disrupt the entire balance of class forces in the sub-continent.

Yet the imperialists can set

no store by such Stalinist treachery. After all, Moscow and Havana could not prevent the overthrow of the Shah or Somoza; can they prevent any similar overturns in El Salvador or elsewhere?

And since the imperialists cannot convince themselves that the answer is 'Yes', they are forced to consider measures which they feel can be employed to combat and defeat revolutionary and liberation struggles in Central and South America—in the Middle East, in Africa and in Asia.

1979 BODY BLOWS: IRAN

But if Nicaragua represents a major political blow to US imperialism in its own backyard, it is dwarfed in significance by the threat that would be posed to US and Western capitalism should a workers' and peasants' government emerge from the tumultuous struggles in Iran.

The balance of forces and the political situation throughout the Middle East have been completely transformed by the Iranian revolution.

It would be difficult to over-stress the geopolitical importance of this region. As the site of the world's largest currently exploitable oil reserves, the Gulf area is of crucial international economic importance.

But the military significance lies in its position at the very borders of the Soviet Union, with Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan flanking the southern underbelly of the degenerated workers' state.

Throughout this century, the Middle East has been an area of immense political turbulence which has constantly challenged the hold of imperialism.

Historic struggles against colonial rule, the military creation of the Zionist state by imperialism and the continuation of neo-colonial oppression and exploitation all have their living continuity in today's struggles of the Palestinians and Kurds to achieve self-determination for their peoples.

The overthrow of the Shah pitched this state of permanent tension into a new level of crisis, and inflicted a major defeat on imperialism while simultaneously dealing blows against the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies (in both Moscow and Peking).

The revolution brought problems to the rulers of every state in the region and objective

ly strengthened opposition to their power within a very wide spectrum.

In the Shah the imperialists lost an invaluable ally—the trusted captain of the principal regional fortress and police force and a reliable merchant of precious oil supplies.

The conditions of his overthrow were even more disturbing to the imperialists: whatever the success of the counter-revolutionary leadership of Islamic clergy and their petty-bourgeois allies, the undoubted anti-imperialist zeal of the mass mobilisations, and the organised participation of the proletariat through strike action offered an example to workers and peasants throughout the Middle East of the revolutionary power which lay in their hands.

This factor was no less threatening to the Stalinists, who had long before achieved a comfortable understanding with the Iranian dictatorship.

Mass mobilisations against tyranny and imperialism, haunted by the spectre of independent political leadership from the proletariat, alarmed the Kremlin bureaucracy quite as much as it did the feudal lords, petty bourgeois bureaucracies and military dictatorships of the region.

(...)

TURNING FROM DETENTE TO 'CONTAINMENT'

In this worsening world situation for imperialism Carter and the US imperialist war chiefs (with enthusiastic sideline applause from Thatcher) have embarked upon at least a partial reversal of the tactic of detente.

Instead, the Cold War term of 'containment' of revolution through an anti-Soviet political and military offensive is being increasingly used to describe US foreign policy.

And whoever wins the coming US elections, this policy is certain to be maintained.

As more and more evidence has exposed the critical weakness of the allies and gendarmes of imperialism in the semi-colonial countries, so the insecurity of the capitalist class has increased, and with it the pressure towards a new military build-up and aggressive policy to contain anti-imperialist movements.

The first move to such a response—at the time of the Zaire events in 1978—petered out.

Carter's tentative sabre-rattling had apparently yielded prompt results—since Zaire was in any event never a part of Soviet strategy in Africa, and therefore nothing was to be lost by their making a rapid statement to that effect.

But even while the SALT talks, trade deals and other aspects of 'detente' resumed their course, the US military lobby was beginning to pile on pressure for the introduction of new missile bases in Europe, for the building of the new MX missile system and for preparations to intervene in liberation struggles.

The fall of the Shah; the failure of Carter's half-hearted gunboat diplomacy to impress either the Iranian masses or the new Khomeini regime; and the potential threat to Western oil supplies and economic stability brought such pressures to a new peak.

Carter himself unveiled plans to compensate for the loss of Iran as a vital Gulf outpost through establishing a 150,000-strong tactical strike force for use in the Middle East or the Gulf—or, obviously, anywhere else in the world.

The SALT II agreement, drawn up amid fanfares was stalled in the US Congress, as imperialist warmongers pressed the campaign to persuade European governments to accept Cruise and Pershing missiles.

And as the occupation of the US Embassy in Iran embarrassingly tweaked the nose of the imperialist generals, the clamour for military action grew. Yet the political and practical obstacles to such a course still seemed all but insurmountable.

At the very point that the dilemma looked most desperate for Carter and imperialism, however, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan presented them with a custom-built excuse for an orgy of the most frenzied jingoism, anti-communism and militarism—in an offensive that as yet shows no signs of abating.

Indeed, the pretext of Afghanistan as a launch-pad for aggression has many advantages for the imperialists over the pretext of Zaire in 1978.

As an obvious direct invasion by the Red Army it can be pointed to as a clear example of 'Soviet expansionism' and aggression against a supposedly 'independent' nation.

At the same time the invasion—designed to crush 'Islamic' right wing guerrillas—has helped to drive a wedge between the Soviet bureaucracy and the 'left' Islamic nationalist leadership of Khomeini and Ban Bani Sadr in Iran.

It has even created conditions where imperialist propaganda can hope to sway the potentially anti-imperialist Muslim masses of the East against 'atheistic' communism in general and the Soviet Union in particular.

This is entirely unlike the Zaire events, in which imperialism ineptly wound up identifying itself embarrassingly with the hated Mobutu dictatorship, thus effectively turning Mobutu's many opponents towards the Stalinists as forces supposedly fighting for his overthrow!

And, again unlike the Zaire episode, the imperialists have this time been able to exploit the so-called 'Soviet threat' to break out of their isolation and take steps towards new anti-working class alliances with bonapartist and feudal regimes around the Gulf area.

The additional advantage is that a military build-up that is supposedly aimed directly at combatting a ruthless move by the Red Army towards world conquest also creates favourable conditions for McCarthyite witch-hunting of political opposition to such measures at home.

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN THE NEW TURN

All this is not to suggest that Carter and his fellow imperialists will be able to carry through such a switch of policy without major problems at home and abroad.

The first and foremost

problem is the fact that the Soviet invasion was not an entirely new development, but merely an indication of what had long been effectively the balance of forces both in Afghanistan and in Central Asia. No matter how much the imperialists might like to restore their prestige by administering a set back to the Soviet Union in this respect, there is no way they can hope to recapture Afghanistan, where even prior to the invasion their intervention had been limited to the surreptitious arming (with aged weapons) of the reactionary guerrilla bands of the Afghan landlords, drug traffickers and feudalists who masqueraded as 'Islamic' freedom fighters.

And while this was the state of play in Afghanistan, things are not much brighter for imperialism elsewhere.

The revolutionary and national struggles that the US strike force is likely to have to combat if the new turn is actually implemented rest solidly on a mass base of support—in many cases involving wide layers of the proletariat (El Salvador).

And the global nature of the capitalist crisis that is now fuelling anti-imperialist struggles in every continent means that the US warmongers must stand ready to intervene in several widely separated areas simultaneously, and to wage what in many cases will turn out to be prolonged, agonising colonial wars on the Vietnamese pattern.

Such wars would consume manpower, machinery and money in huge quantities—with no more certainty of ultimate success than in the Vietnam war itself, but with the certainty of an immediate recurrence of the immense social tensions that helped destroy the American war effort then.

Even Carter's talk of establishing a register preparatory to conscription has at once brought the re-emergence of the embryonic anti-war movement, with demonstrations in a number of US universities.

In addition, the immense financial cost of the new weaponry and other expenditure in the military build-up already mean the complete abandonment of many of the social reforms promised by Carter in the last election, and a further twist to double-digit inflation in the US itself.

There is little doubt that further moves towards military adventures at the expense of the American working class will (as during the Vietnam war) prompt mass struggles—and possibly even a break towards political independence—from the trade union movement.

The fact that the imperialist leaders seem little daunted by these problems and determined to press ahead with their new attempt to repress the movement of the masses is a further reflection of the fact that they are determined—no matter what the odds—to cling to their crisis-ridden system of exploitation and oppression.

Marxists must of course objectively recognise the successive setbacks inflicted on

imperialism by the mass struggle of the workers and peasants of the world; and we must consistently show how these victories reaffirm absolutely the revolutionary potential and power of the working class, and the necessity for a leadership capable of tapping that potential.

But there must be no illusions that, under pressure of such defeats, imperialism on a national or international scale will simply give up the ghost, or peacefully and gradually disappear from the scene. Any scenario which depicts a dwindling imperialism finally handing over power to the working class is a deadly, reformist illusion refuted by Marxism and refuted by the whole historic experience of the working class.

It is precisely in its hour of greatest weakness, when most threatened by the revolutionary movement of the masses and by its own internal crisis that imperialism reveals its most deadly characteristics, its most barbaric capacity and willingness to destroy the means of production and human beings—if need be by the thousand and the million in its struggle to retain power.

The only way in which the threat of such imperialist atrocities can be lifted is through the fight for social revolution in both the imperialist and semi-colonial countries, and for political revolution to unleash the revolutionary potential of the proletariat in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

(...)

LIMITS OF THE 'CARTER DOCTRINE'

In the 1980 Cold War there are no US troops being despatched Korea-style to fight the Red Army in Afghanistan; and there is of course no immediate Kennedy-style threat of a nuclear holocaust along the lines of the Cuba missile crisis.



Toppled: Somoza

But the moves taken by Carter do reflect a serious shift of policy and amount to a package of offensive moves against both the USSR and the world's working class.

The economic sanctions already taken include an embargo on grain sales and agricultural goods that could seriously disrupt Soviet agriculture; a suspension of licences for high technology exports aimed particularly at setting back Soviet oil production; drastic restrictions on Soviet fishing rights; and of course the sabotage of the summer Olympic Games, which will not simply create an acute embarrassment for the Kremlin bureaucrats, but is also an economic sanction—leaving them holding a huge bill for specially-built facilities, without the compensating tourist boom.

There have been limited moves by Carter's fellow imperialist leaders to back up these sanctions—in particular the Olympic boycott and the grain embargo.

It is on the question of restricting technological and other industrial trade that the ranks are most clearly split—with French, German, Japanese and even US capitalists reluctant to sacrifice lucrative



Anti-American demonstration in Tehran



guaranteed-profitable deals with the Soviet bureaucracy in a move that might see them squeezed out of the Russian market on a long-term basis.

And the military moves have also been fraught with complex problems.

The most friendly response to Carter's hard line has come from states that offer him almost as much embarrassment as assistance.

Whatever the difficulties, it seems clear that the US is determined to pull together its available supporters in a new and more aggressive anti-Soviet alignment designed to curb the rise of revolutionary struggles.

The present Cold War, however, has definite limits.

In particular, the relative strength of US imperialism, both economically in relation to its European and Japanese allies, and militarily in relation to the USSR has declined dramatically since the 1940s, 1950s and even the 1960s.

And the world capitalist economy, far from being set on course for a 'long boom' in which the inflationary effects of huge armament spending could be minimised within a framework of expansion, is headed into a profound recessionary crisis, in which national rivalries and tensions between the imperialist powers themselves are already rising to the surface in the form of protective measures and competitive devaluations.

In several cases major imperialist powers depend for a substantial area of their export revenue or imported supplies upon trade with the workers' states, and are obviously reluctant to gamble on the outcome of breaking such links.

At the same time the extent to which such a Cold War situation can be pressed along its present lines is limited by the extremely limited objectives of the Kremlin bureaucracy itself, which moved into Afghanistan for misguided defensive rather than aggressive reasons, and which is by no means embarked on a global policy of expansionism.

To maintain the momentum of his campaign of anti-Soviet hysteria, Carter needs to be able to point to continuing threats of such 'expansionism'—which are by no means likely to be easy to find in the coming period.

WHY THE INVASION?

It had been plain to observers for some time that the Soviet-backed Afghan regimes of both Taraki and then Amin were losing the struggle for control of the countryside against imperialist-backed 'Islamic' guerrillas—with less

than 50% in government hands at the time of the invasion.

This crisis of political control was worsened by factional strife between the two main elements of the Afghan CP, and the massive and rising popular hostility to Amin, who had deposed Moscow's man Taraki less than a year earlier.

With the threat of an imperialist-leaning regime eventually defeating the Amin government and installing itself in this vital strategic cross-roads nation and on the very doorstep of the USSR itself—at a time of acute instability in Iran and signs of unrest among sections of the USSR's own 30-million strong Muslim population—the Kremlin leaders weighed their options for restoring stability.

The already increasing signs of a hardening US foreign policy had made ratification of the SALT II treaty and any further moves to 'detente' unlikely.

And an imperialist military intervention in Iran could not be entirely ruled out—a move that would make conditions even worse in Afghanistan.

The Stalinist leaders moved therefore with customary bureaucratic/military measures to impose an authoritarian 'stability' on the peoples of Afghanistan—with the use of tanks, rockets, helicopter gunships and unlimited military manpower.

Another factor in the invasion may well have been the breakdown of talks with the Peking Stalinists which had been aimed at reducing tension on the USSR's Eastern borders. The Afghan/Chinese border is reputedly close to key Chinese missile sites.

But it seems clear that the Stalinist leaders were surprised by the scale of the imperialist response to their invasion.

Though Afghanistan was—according to the reactionary post-war carve-up of the world between imperialist and Stalinist leaders—theoretically in the imperialist sphere of influence, it had been in practice largely dominated by the Kremlin for over 25 years.

Moscow leaders appear to have genuinely approached the invasion as a routine bureaucratic policing exercise, though perhaps one that spelt out the status quo in slightly more concrete terms.

In circumstances other than the present acute and worsening political and economic crisis of imperialism, the Kremlin leaders may well have been right in their attitude that nothing very unusual had happened, and that no unexpected changes should arise from it.

WILL THE USSR TRY TO CONQUER IRAN?

It is clear that whatever

secondary strategic advantages the Soviet bureaucracy may have derived from the invasion of Afghanistan have only been obtained at considerable political, economic and military cost.

Tens of thousands of men, tens of millions of pounds from an already tightly stretched budget, scarce resources in food-stuffs, and tons of highly sophisticated military equipment have been committed to a possibly open-ended military undertaking in a country that has a whole history of repelling invaders from every quarter.

Should the invasion be followed up by moves to assimilate the terribly backward Afghan economy into the Soviet system, the borders that the USSR is obliged to defend would effectively be extended by thousands of miles. Yet if no such moves are made, the problem of maintaining any kind of stability in Afghanistan could well prove insuperable.

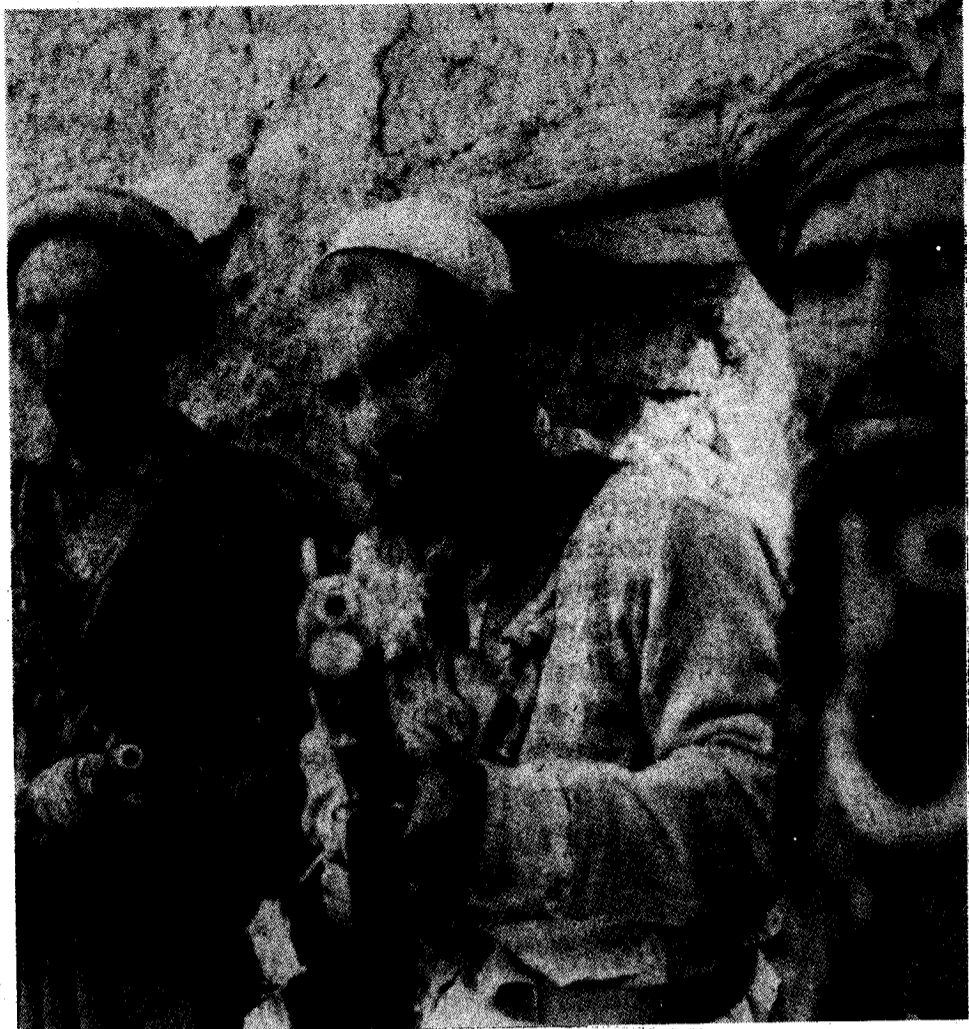


Brezhnev embracing Taraki only days before his overthrow

And in an attempt to forestall a prolonged radicalisation of Islamic reaction that might spread to the Muslim peoples within the USSR, the Moscow bureaucracy has risked an invasion that might well produce exactly that reaction and actually worsen its internal political problems.

We can only judge, therefore, that in such conditions the invasion of Afghanistan was not an aggressive, but a defensive, move of last resort for the Soviet bureaucracy, determined not to sacrifice control of a vital buffer state to imperialism.

But no such motives would explain a Soviet move into Iran. Iran has since World War II



Afghan right wing guerrillas

been explicitly and without reservation a part of the imperialist sphere of influence: it is a strategic outpost and a key oil state which the imperialists could not afford to allow to be captured by the Soviet Union.

Any attempt to do so would provoke an open military battle that would almost certainly develop towards a Third World War. The Stalinist bureaucrats recognise this reality and will under no conditions move militarily into Iran.

Indeed, far from exploiting the mass struggles in Iran, the Kremlin bureaucracy distinguished itself at the height of the demonstrations and strikes against the Shah by sending birthday greetings to the butcher 'king of kings' as he shot down workers and students in the streets.

As the Shah's control faltered and came to an end, the Kremlin leaders shifted their opportunist attentions to the reactionary Islamic leaders—a

—whatever the upheavals that erupt within the Iranian borders.

What is not so clearly excluded—though still unlikely—is that the Soviet bureaucracy from its new advanced position in Afghanistan might—in order to divert the energies of the Zia dictatorship—continue its traditional policy of support for the national liberation struggle of the Baluchi peoples.

The Baluchis appear to have drawn renewed strength from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Such a policy could eventually open the door to a Soviet-influenced breakaway Baluchistan—with the possibility of the much-feared Russian access to warm water ports on the Indian Ocean.

It is too early to predict what direction will be taken on this issue by a bureaucracy that is still plainly only just coming to grips with the new world posture of imperialism.

But we should not rule out an analysis of Soviet strategy that includes a willingness in certain favourable conditions to take advantage of imperialism's weakness, or to strike a bureaucratic/military blow in exchange for blows struck by imperialism.

What we must and do exclude is the prospect of the Stalinist bureaucracy unleashing or mobilising the revolutionary potential of the working class either in the deformed and degenerated workers' states or in the countries in the orbit of imperialism.

Cold War or no Cold War, the Stalinist bureaucrats recognise as surely as the imperialists that the most dangerous enemy of their parasitic power and privilege remains the working class.

STALINISM AND IMPERIALISM: THE NEXT PERIOD

We have tried to show the context in which the various limited moves in the 1970s by the Stalinist bureaucracy to extend its world influence have been taken under conditions of a retreat or defeats for imperialism.

It is, overall, a defensive context, in which the Kremlin leaders (and, in their own way, their Peking colleagues) have attempted to safeguard their own unstable and parasitic rule by preserving a global balance of forces with imperialism—and to this end simultaneously restraining the struggles of the working class.

(...)
As a political current and as a key material force in shaping the international class struggle, Stalinism completely retains its character as counter-revolutionary through and through. Insofar as the bureaucracy is

driven to carry through measures that conflict with imperialism, it does so in such a bureaucratic/military fashion as to impede or even set back the development of proletarian political consciousness.

It is for this reason that the unfolding class battles on a world scale raise again and again the crucial question of constructing Trotskyist parties to carry through the struggle for the overthrow of imperialism and the fight for political revolution to liberate the workers and peasants in the Stalinist-ruled states from the dictatorial repression of the parasitic bureaucracy.

Unlike those opportunist currents (as diverse as the International Spartacist Tendency and the US SWP) that pose as Trotskyists while they "Hail the Red Army", the Workers Socialist League attributes no progressive historic role to the Stalinist bureaucracy or its police-military apparatus, either within the deformed and degenerated workers' states or in the international class struggle.

We defend unconditionally—against all forms of imperialist attack—the nationalised property relations of the workers' states, which have their origins in the historic gains of the 1917 October Revolution, and the subsequent defensive expansion of the USSR in the post-war period.

We defend unconditionally all revolutionary and anti-imperialist movements in the semi-colonial countries—from Ireland to the Sahara; from Eritrea to El Salvador; from Palestine to Namibia—against imperialist repression.

But in neither case do we in any way ally ourselves with the reactionary politics of the Stalinist bureaucracies, or with the bourgeois and petty bourgeois nationalist forces that seek to restrain workers' struggles while exploiting the power of the masses for their own political objectives.

Our stance is first and foremost to assert, defend, extend and consciously develop the political independence and leading role of the proletariat in the struggle against imperialist oppression and Stalinist dictatorship.

To this end we have fought to develop—on the basis of the 1938 Transitional Programme—elements of a programme and perspective adequate to guide interventions into today's class struggle on a world scale.

Only such an approach can lay the basis for the building of a truly internationalist Marxist vanguard party as part of a reconstructed Fourth International.

Concluded

HOW SCURRILOUS CAN THEY GET?

1. WRP publishes burgled documents



WRP leader Healy

Early in December 1977 a highly sophisticated burglary was staged in Oxford.

Trade union files, an entire filing cabinet full of personal correspondence and other material belonging to Cowley shop steward Alan Thornett were stolen in a day-time burglary on his house. It amounted to about 2 cwt of

documents covering twenty years of trade union activity.

The raid took place at the very point where the right wing TGWU bureaucracy on a national level was preparing the ground to victimise Thornett and other Cowley militants, barring them from union office, or, hopefully, expelling them from the union.

The burglary deprived Thornett of a wealth of docu-

mentary material that would have assisted in defeating the frame-up disciplinary charges raised against him by the bureaucracy.

But also included among this material were political documents dating back to the period of the expulsion of Thornett and 200 other members from Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party in 1974 and the formation of the Workers Socialist League.

Following the raid WSL members have closely monitored the press and other material for evidence to the whereabouts of the files.

The fact that none of the stolen material has been published, or used in the subsequent TGWU witch-hunt against the 'Cowley 9' (which was successfully defeated by a national campaign), together with the detailed preparation that was clearly involved in the burglary, pointed clearly to this being the work of the 'dirty tricks' department of the state.

No clue

And, as reported in *Socialist Press* 84 (January 25 1978), Oxford CID not surprisingly failed to turn up the slightest clue as to the culprits.

Yet now—some 2½ years later—material from this burglary has at last begun to surface: not in the pages of the Tory press but in the pages of the so-called "Trotskyist" daily paper *Newsline*!

In a series of six articles of almost unparalleled dishonesty and slander that supposedly

characterise the Workers Socialist League, Healy's paper last week unashamedly reprinted a facsimile document that could *only* have been obtained from the material burgled from Thornett's files.

It is a letter dated 16 January 1976 to Thornett from Dr. G. Picton Davies of the Police College—inviting Thornett to take part in a TV

Ignored

The letter was ignored at the time. No copies of it were made and it was simply placed among other letters in Thornett's files. It was subsequently stolen in the raid.

Yet *Newsline* (April 15) reproduces the *original* letter—complete with Police College letterhead!

Newsline laughably claims that its documentary material from the series of articles was all obtained from "ex-members of Thornett's group." Yet no members or ex-members of the WSL would have possessed that letter: until December 1977 it was in Thornett's filing cabinet; and from then on it was in the hands of the extreme right wing or the state!

It is characteristic of the WRP that even in a non-political series of articles seeking solely to prove the WSL to be "provocateurs" manipulated behind the scenes by the police, by alleged KGB/FBI agents and by revisionist political currents, they themselves brazenly utilise material obtained by daylight

robbery!

To cover themselves, the *Newsline* hacks resorted on Friday to the crudest of double bluff manoeuvres. Under the headline "Thornett's provocation", they complained bitterly that:

"Thornett . . . is publicly claiming that documents and information used in these articles were stolen from his home in Oxford in a burglary.

This is a complete lie and a deliberate frame-up attempt [!].

The aim is to invoke the police, if he possibly can, in a raid (. . .)

We take this opportunity to warn all members of the WRP and the wider labour and trade union movement about the foul methods of the WSL organisation and to maintain their vigilance."

The Friday article goes on to pose the ludicrous hypothesis that the WSL has adopted a position that the WRP is "outside the labour movement", and that this is supposedly "to prepare WSL members for violence against WRP leaders and members".

Crisis

This desperate attempt to whip up the WRP's members and supporters into a subjective frenzy of hostility against the WSL and every other tendency on the left has its roots in the profound political crisis now facing the Healy leadership, and the growing impact of the political fight carried through by the WSL.

Two members of the newly-elected WSL National Commit-

tee are former leading SLL/WRP supporters who have been recruited to our ranks in the past year.

And new layers of WRP members and supporters, repelled by the movement's positions on the Middle East and the abstention from the British class struggle continue to look towards the WSL for a principled alternative.

Meantime the WRP's biggest ever slander campaign—designed to portray the late American SWP leader Joseph Hansen as an FBI/KGB "double agent"—has totally collapsed in the face of evidence from the newly-opened Trotsky archives.

Danger signal

But Healy's desperation is also a danger signal. The WRP's gangster leadership has shown itself ready in the past to use violence against political opponents, and to collaborate with the right wing TGWU bureaucracy in the witch-hunting of WSL members.

Their series of articles against the WSL seem timed to coincide with the crucial point of the long struggle by our comrades in British Leyland for action against Edwardes 5%-with-strings union-busting package—and place a welter of information in the hands of every right wing and management witch-hunter.

We leave it up to the objective reader, therefore, to assess who is engaged in a major provocation.

2. Sparts set up opponents for the sack

The continuing campaign by the Spartacist League to slander and discredit their opponents on the left and set them up for victimisation has taken a new turn at BL's Rover factories in Birmingham—where several Sparts have managed to obtain jobs.

This move towards "exemplary" trade union work", however has not led the Sparts to attempt to establish any basic support among Rover workers, or in the union bodies in the plant.

Rather it has been seen as offering a vantage point from which to launch vicious attacks on left wing opponents both in Rovers and elsewhere in BL.

Height of struggle

With this in view, the Spart carworkers attended last week's Birmingham meeting of the Leyland Action Committee—at the height of the struggle by militants to mobilise strike action against Edwardes' ultimatum.

There they denounced Pat Hickey, a deputy senior steward at the Rover SD1 plant on the Solihull site as a "scab".

They were quickly asked to leave the well-attended meeting by everyone else present, who knew of the pringpled role Hickey had played in the

struggle.

At Solihull there are three Rover plants on the same site. The Land Rover and Range Rover were the first to strike. The SD1 plant however voted narrowly *not* to strike, and to cross the picket lines set up by

the others.

Militant stewards from the SD1 decided to go in with them—both to avoid what would be inevitable victimisation if a mere handful took isolated action, and to fight on to reverse the



Spartists on the march

wrong decision that had been taken, and pull the SD1 plant out on strike.

They were *successful* in this struggle, and three days later the plant was out.

For engaging in this struggle the militants were branded as "scabs" by the Sparts.

But this was not the worst of it.

One SD1 militant got up in the meeting to declare that he had, as an individual, refused to cross the picket line—but had been completely *wrong* to take such a stand.

Not only should he have been inside fighting for strike action, but he had suddenly realised he was wide open to victimisation.

He was promptly answered by one Spart who proudly declared that *he* had not crossed the picket line, and had not been victimised.

The cynicism of this argument was at once exposed when the Spart was forced to admit that he had taken steps to cover himself by getting a sick note from his doctor!

In other words this granite-hard, programatically trained, iron-principled Spartacist had had the gall to stand on a factory gate haranguing SD1 militants as "scabs" for going in, and calling on them to risk the sack by staying outside—while having taken care of his *own* job by sending BL management a note saying that *he* was not on strike, but on sick leave!

Meanwhile the *real* fight for

strike action on the SD1 was being carried out *inside* the plant by the very stewards branded as "scabs" by the Sparts!

With their first excursion into trade union work during the steel strike having proved an unmitigated fiasco, and with their demoralised forces hated and despised by workers where-

ever they make an appearance, the Sparts have developed their latest ultra-syndicalist fetish over picket lines as a desperate bid for self-preservation.

These provocative positions—which could only lead to the wholesale sacking of the Sparts' political opponents—must be regarded as highly dangerous to the workers' movement.

The Battle for Trotskyism

Second edition of the opposition documents presented inside the WRP by the present leadership of the Workers Socialist League
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KLEINS PICKETED

It is now seven weeks since the workers who joined the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers at Klein Brothers, Liverpool Street, Salford, walked out.

Seventy, the majority of the machinists out of a total workforce of 120 joined the NUTGW and asked for recognition. When they were refused they walked out and have been picketing the factory every since. They have all been sacked.

Mr Klein, the boss, claims to be a socialist and to be exercising his democratic right to run his factory the way he pleases without any thought to the workers rights.

Won't talk

He won't talk to the union official who has taken the dispute to ACAS. Mr Klein has said he will not abide by the ACAS ruling if it doesn't suit him.

The strikers have no illusions that ACAS can help them.

Salford Trades Council is organising support for the picket lines and is collecting finance for the strikers.

The picket has stopped all lorries. The other day a driver with a load of laminates for delivery tried to cross the picket line. The convenor of the dockers was contacted and said he would prevent the firm's lorries being loaded.

The boss of the delivery firm then phoned Klein and instructed his driver not to deliver. The only van to cross the picket line now is the boss's van in which he ferries scab workers, cloth, finished articles and rubbish.

Blacking

The solution to the dispute lies in stepping up the picketing and stopping the bosses van. Strikers are asking for the company's goods to be blacked.

They make men's trousers and jackets under the trade name of Bendyk.

Donations are desperately required as none of the strikers, mostly women, are being paid.

Please send donations to Klein Brothers Dispute Fund, c/o John Catterall, "VOSCOP", 39 Fir Street, Cadishead, Manchester.

Campaigning against the cuts in Hammersmith

Recently a demonstration of nearly 400—mainly women and children—took place outside the West London Hospital in Hammersmith.

This was in protest against the proposed closure of the 60 bed maternity unit at the hospital.

Socialist Press interviewed one of the organisers of that demonstration, Val Gorter.

It had been planned to include an obstetrics unit in the new Charing Cross but this was not done.

A couple of years ago there was a plan to transfer the 60 beds to the Queen Charlottes but it had only 30 beds available and it is not directly under the control of the AHA but has its own board of governors.

By the end of 1979, no agreement had been reached and the discussions ended.

On 16 January notice was given of the proposed closure of the unit and 31 March was the last day for objections to be made—the closure is to be effective from January 1, 1981.

How did you get involved in the fight to save the beds?

I had my second child at the hospital. A few weeks ago I wrote to the local paper against the closure.

Some other mothers got in touch with me as a result of the letter.

We decided to organise a petition against the closure of the unit—and we have got thousands of signatures so far.

We then decided to have a demonstration outside the hospital followed by a protest march to the South Hammersmith Community Health Council to hand in the petition on 31 March.

How did you work to get such a good turn-out on the demonstration?

Well, everything has happened so quickly. We haven't set up a committee or organised ourselves.

A lot of work was done by phoning mothers, who phoned their friends.

We put up notices in mother and child clinics, contacted one o'clock clubs and persuaded the local paper to put in a notice advertising it.

Is there anything particular about this maternity unit?

Yes. In fact it was voted the equal best maternity unit in the country, along with the John Radcliffe in Oxford.

It uses what is known as the modified Leboyer method. It takes a more humanist approach to childbirth and treats it more as a family rather than a hospital affair.

The aim is to alleviate the traumas of childbirth. It is so popular that they have had to restrict the area from which it will receive patients.

In 1974 there were 6-700 births and in 1978 2,000.

Where would mothers go if this unit were closed?

We would have to go to Hammersmith, to the Westminster—or the Queen Charlotte Hospital which is too far away for women in this part of the borough.

How much money does the AHA estimate it will save?

Well they say it costs £710,000 plus £115,000 on the special baby unit at the Charing Cross which would have to close as well.

to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist movement fighting day in and day out to build such a principled leadership in the working class in Britain.

Internationally, we are affiliated to the newly-formed Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, which fights for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and the building of revolutionary parties in every country to lead the struggle against imperialism and against the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

We invite all readers of Socialist Press to seek more details of the WSL and its work, and to join us in the struggle for socialism.

Can you tell us something about the background to the proposed closure of the West London maternity unit?

The West London is the obstetrics unit of the Charing Cross Hospital which does not have one.

JOIN THE WSL!

With workers by the thousand taking to the streets to oppose Tory policies there is plainly no lack of militancy in the organised working class.

Yet the existing trade union bureaucrats and Labour leaders—whether right or 'left'—have no perspective to offer those workers prepared to fight in defence of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights.

These can only be defended through policies which start from the independent interests of the working class, which, as an international class, has nothing to gain and everything to lose from attempts to restore the profitability of their "own" employing class.

In a period where the contradictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale closure and destruction of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed which, in today's struggles fights

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

Send to WSL: BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

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They would run the West London as a geriatric unit at a cost of £500,000 so they aim to save about £300,000.

The Variety Club of Great Britain has offered the money to transfer the special baby unit to West London.

Are there other cuts being made in the NHS locally?

Yes, there has even been a 20% cut in the famous child development centre run by Dr. Jolly.

They have stopped micro-filming the medical records at the Charing Cross.

There is an AHA proposal to close the 18 bed psychiatric unit at Temple House; 79 beds were closed at St. Stephens last September as were 20 female plastic surgery beds at Roehampton.

Putney hospital has been "temporarily" closed. But the Chiswick Maternity Hospital closure years ago was also meant to be temporary—and it is still closed!

The Western Hospital is to be sold off. Perivale Maternity Hospital is also threatened with closure, along with three wards in the Hammersmith.

Scots teachers angry

Leaders of the Scottish teachers' union the EIS have been forced to recognise the mounting militancy of their membership as a series of walk-outs took place last week at the failure of the Clegg comparability board to make any recommendation for Scottish teachers' pay.

Spontaneous walk-outs began last Tuesday in 34 schools and spread into ½-day strikes throughout Scotland.

Teachers who have waited over a year for a settlement of their 1979 review were raising demands that EIS General Secretary John Pollock take action on both the timing of the Clegg award and the amount of

money involved.

Indeed it is clear that if there is no pledge from employers at negotiations on April 21 to pay half the Clegg award by the end of May, as originally agreed, then pressure on the EIS to call widespread industrial action will be almost irresistible.

Amount

But at the same time there is concern as to the amount of increase to be recommended by Clegg. Figures 'leaked' via the EIS suggest, for instance that first-year primary teachers may be awarded only a £597 increase.

These teachers have already received a £408 interim rise in advance of the Clegg inquiry: by the end of May, therefore, they

could find themselves actually owing the employers £94!

At the other end of the scale headmasters on up to £15,000 per year could expect to pick up a cool £2,800 per year increase!

While conflict continues over last year's claim, the 1980 review, due to be settled on April 1, is still deadlocked, with employers having offered only 13%—7% below the rate of inflation.

It is clear that Scottish teachers must demand that their leaders reject Clegg's spurious "investigations" and take up the fight for a £4,500 minimum salary, with flat rate percentage rises for all those on higher rates of pay—protected against inflation by cost-of-living clause providing increases in line with rising prices.

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NUJ vote to withdraw troops

Any hopes the NUI bureaucracy may have entertained that the union's Annual Delegate Meeting in Portrush could escape discussion on the Irish war of liberation were rudely dashed at the weekend.

Again and again the issue rose to the fore, and the union found itself committed to a

series of anti-imperialist policies on Ireland, all of which were carried by respectable majorities.

Resolutions were passed that:

*called for an end to censorship of news from Ireland;

*called for access by journalists to the republican prisoners engaged in the "blanket" protest in the 'H' Blocks of Long Kesh concentration camp to facilitate

a full investigation;

*called for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act;

*called for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

In addition the ADM specifically placed on record the fact that holding the conference in Portrush in the six counties in no way signified NUJ recognition of the Northern Ireland statelet.

And a resolution tabled by

the Oxford branch calling upon the NEC to organise a national conference open to the labour movement on media censorship of the Irish war was also carried despite opposition from the NEC.

But it was perhaps outside of the formalities of the order paper that the question of Ireland arose most sharply at the conference.

It turned out that the NUJ leadership had invited Councillor White, a local Official Unionist councillor and member of the Orange Order, to give a welcoming address to the conference.

Socialist Press supporters responded by handing out a leaflet condemning the invitation, and demanding that the union did not provide a platform for White's loyalist views.

A walkout planned by the left, flopped however, when the

large contingent of SWP members and supporters remained firmly in their seats—to hear White praise the "maligned" RUC and declare his view that holding the NUJ conference in Northern Ireland "proved" that things were "now" "normal".

Banner

After this, however, the remainder of the conference took place under a banner proclaiming for Troops Out Now, Self Determination for the Irish People, and Smash H Blocks. NUJ President Jake Ecclestone ruled that the banner could remain.

Attempts to victimise Oxford delegate Peter McIntyre for tearing down a banner in support of the RUC put up by two individuals from the Belfast branch proved unsuccessful.

But in the last two hours of



Ecclestone

the conference a majority was obtained for the removal of "all political banners" and the Troops Out banner was taken down.

A fuller report of the conference—which also saw a decision to withdraw the NUJ from the Press Council and a step towards the election of union officials—will appear in next week's *Socialist Press*.



Steelworkers on March 9 TUC demonstration

ALL OUT MAY 14!

Pressed on by their membership to take at least token action against the Tory government, a growing list of local and national union bodies are finding themselves forced to sanction or organise one-day strike action on May 14—the day Len Murray and the TUC first talked of as a day

of "lunchtime meetings".

In fighting for action on this TUC Day of Action *Socialist Press* supporters must stress the need for an all-out General Strike to defeat not only the anti-union Employment Bill but the Tory government itself.

Unions already in support of action are:

ASTMS, National Union of Railwaymen, GMWU, SOGAT, NUPE, NUT, Scottish TUC,

West of Scotland Shop Stewards, National Union of Journalists, Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades, National Union of Seamen, COHSE, TGWU National Committee of building, construction, and civil engineering group, vehicle building and automotive group and bus group, Yorkshire NUM, Tobacco Workers Union, FBW.

Elections for the CPSA President and National Executive Committee are taking place in the three weeks period between 11 April and 2 May.

The elections are being run according to a new system of individual voting in branch/workplace meetings.

Block vote

The election system replaces one under which a majority vote at branch meetings committed the whole branch block vote.

The new method of voting is more democratic and results from a rule change put forward

by the left and passed at last year's conference.

Each candidate is entitled to circulate a 500 word election address.

However, not content with a democratic internal procedure, the right-wing "moderate" group have seen fit to launch a full-scale anti-communist election campaign in the capitalist press.

They have been ably assisted in this by Bernard Levin in an article in *The Times* last week entitled "The civil way to run a union election".

Levin believes that the new system will bring a victory for Kate Losinska and the "moderates" who will then be able to bring in the reactionary system

of postal balloting favoured by the Thatcher government.

'More representative'

He also claims that the "moderates" are more representative of CPSA members than the present Broad Left NEC which he describes as "a coalition of Communists, Trotskyists, adherents of the Militant Tendency and fellow travellers".

Levin goes on to give his readers a check list of the 28 right wing candidates, and quotes minutes of a CPSA NEC meeting where the Broad Left voted against a right wing resolution that condemned both the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the treatment of Soviet dissident Sakharov.

The right wing have been given much publicity in the press but in their election addresses have said very little about their actual policies.

Losinska is in favour of giving "selective" support to the Tory Employment Bill and will accept government financing of union postal ballots.

She is also in favour of retaining the archaic Pay Research Unit and Whitleyism.

She is a member of the Christian Trade Union Movement and has been associated with the employer-backed TRUMID.

Court action

In 1976 she took the union to court to prevent publication of an article criticising her for an article in *Readers Digest* which attacked the CPSA.

In 1978 she gave interviews to the right wing press and stirred up a cynical witch-hunt against alleged vote-rigging (most of which proved to have been carried out by right-wing branches).

CPSA members must not be conned into voting for the "moderates" and their anti-union policies but should vote for the Broad Left despite their betrayals over the last year.

Clegg: NUT must reject calculated swindle

The size and distribution of the pay awards to teachers from the Clegg comparability commission have been shrewdly calculated.

Employers hope they are large enough to prevent an immediate outcry and demands for strike action.

But they are small enough to ensure that teachers remain relatively worse off, with the smallest increases for the most exploited layers of teachers and the largest (up to £3,147) for well-paid headmasters in large secondary schools.

Staging

Indeed no teacher on the bottom scales 1-4 receives more than a 19% increase as against an NUT claim of 38.5% to restore the relative values established under the Houghton award.

The staging of the Clegg increases—which are supposed to settle the 1979 pay claim—amounts to a crude manoeuvre to deprive teachers of money they are judged to have been entitled to: the delays have cost a teacher on average pay in excess of £1,000!

But of course the Clegg figures themselves are completely spurious. The protracted investigations into "com-

Swindle

parable" rates of pay wound up at first suggesting increases of up to 87% for the lowest paid teachers.

Such embarrassing figures were hastily scrapped and new sums done to produce the final recommendations.

Meanwhile the 1980 pay review is now due—with the NUT seeking a further 20% increase. The size of the Clegg award and the systematic attempts by the media to inflate its value (some reports suggesting increases of up to 41%) are clearly designed to minimise the chances of a fight on pay this year and pave the way for a wage-cutting settlement in the vicinity of the 13% figure won by local government white collar workers.

Spending cuts

At the same time, with government spending cuts and cash limits now biting in education, it suits the Tories well to divide resistance by creating the impression (both among teachers and among low paid industrial and manual workers) that professional staff are being



Tory minister Carlisle

well looked after as living standards in general are allowed to fall.

Teachers must demand that their leadership reject the Clegg findings and take up the fight on the 1980 review to establish a living minimum wage protected against inflation through regular increases to keep pace with the cost of living.

Tories duck fight on rail pay

Union officials and British Rail management both emerged exultant last week from pay talks in which a 20% deal emerged.

Leaders of the three rail unions—NUR, ASLEF and TSSA were delighted at getting so close to their initial target figure without even a hint of strike action or confrontation with the Tory government.

They hope that the size of the settlement will be sufficient to ease the pressure of militancy among the membership, particularly over the issue of jobs threatened by the cutbacks of the British Steel Corporation. It was this which above all prompted NUR leader Sid Weighell to warn in January of the danger that the steel strike might spread to general strike action.

Well pleased

Yet the employers, too, are well pleased. The 20% deal is barely adequate to compensate rail workers for galloping inflation, yet in exchange BR management have secured a commitment from union leaders to productivity concessions.

Weighell has publicly pledged that "the Board will get these changes", and a BR official told the *Financial Times* that he had never seen a productivity commitment drawn up so tightly.

ASLEF leader Ray Buckton



Weighell

abandoned his initial opposition to the productivity concessions, declaring that there was "no problem" with the deal.

The "problems" will of course be felt not in the plush offices of the union bureaucrats but among rank and file railwaymen whose jobs and conditions are now under fire.

It is with this in view that the Tory government has clearly connived at the 20% deal, which allows them to proceed with their strategy of picking off those sections of workers that seem most vulnerable, while placating powerful sectors such as the miners, power workers and water workers.

The months ahead will show railwaymen the real cost of this pay deal and the real face of Tory "concessions".

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE
Public Meeting
"The fight for jobs against the cuts"
Wednesday 30 April
8.00 p.m.
Kings Head,
Grangetown, Teesside

SOCIALIST PRESS



NUPE knives 'troops out' strike

The solid and united strike by 1,200 Protestant and Catholic NUPE members against British army occupation of the

Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast, foundered last week under pressure from pro-imperialist union bureaucrats and rabble-rousing loyalist politicians.

The strike was opposed from the outset by NUPE regional organiser John Coulthard—whose politics have included an attempt to launch a new six-county political party with UDA leader Glenn Barr.

It was also opposed by NUPE's National Executive which declared its commitment to the preservation of British imperialist rule by ordering their members back to work.

Pressurise

At the same time strike leader Brian Sullivan was accused of being a leading member of the IRA as part of a campaign to pressurise Protestant strikers into a return to work.

Paisley—with slavish backing from Gerry Fitt—raised publicly the allegation that the whole strike was "Provo orchestrated" while loyalist MP Robert Bradford branded the Protestant and Catholic pickets as "IRA communists".

Eventually the witch-hunting pressure on the Protestant strikers brought a break in their ranks and a drift back to work.

Recognising this, the strike leaders voted to call off the action but seek an ICTU inquiry.

This battle was lost: the troops remain in the RVH. But the—albeit brief—example of Protestant/Catholic unity in a struggle against British military rule points to the necessity for a principled revolutionary leadership to develop a programme of anti-imperialist and transitional demands in the struggle to mobilise the working class independently from their reactionary bureaucratic and loyalist leaders, drive out the British occupying army, and struggle for an Irish workers republic.

IMPERIALIST HANDS OFF IRAN!

Imperialist knees will be knocking like castanets as European ministers sit down in Luxembourg this week to discuss further moves alongside President Carter against the Iranian regime.

At stake is far more than the freeing of the 53 US hostages whose continued detention has become the symbolic focal point of conflict between the anti-imperialist movement in Iran and the US, Japanese and European capitalists.

Strategists not only in Europe but even in the US fear that overhasty or excessive moves to bring the Khomeini regime to heel could produce a long-term disruption of the already tense and unstable balance of forces in the Gulf and Middle East region.

Disintegration

In the US, top Carter advisor Brezezinski has warned that the complete isolation of Iran could lead—under the growing pressure of struggles by national minorities in Kurdistan, Baluchistan, Khuzestan, Turkestan and Azerbaijan—to a disintegration of Iran as a single state as created and preserved by imperialism.

This fear is accentuated by the evident failure of newly-elected President Abol Hassan Bani-Sadr to carry through his projected strengthening of the power of central government in Iran.

It was on Bani-Sadr that Carter had pinned his main hopes of achieving both a resolution of the hostage crisis, and of re-establishing economic and political links that have been disrupted in the turbulent events since the fall of the Shah

in February 1979.

But despite his election by a staggering 80% vote in the presidential elections, Bani-Sadr has proved utterly incapable of commanding the support of the Iranian masses for his reactionary plans—and thus unable to confront the students who continue to hold the hostages.

Elbow room

Now, after hanging back on action for nearly three months to allow Bani-Sadr the elbow room to bring the confrontation to an end, Carter has been forced to recognise his failure, and has been driven to his latest desperate measures.

He knows of course that his economic and diplomatic measures are hopelessly puny: this is why he is forced publicly to twist the arms of his European "allies" in a bid to press gang them into solidarity action while increasingly hinting at possible military action.

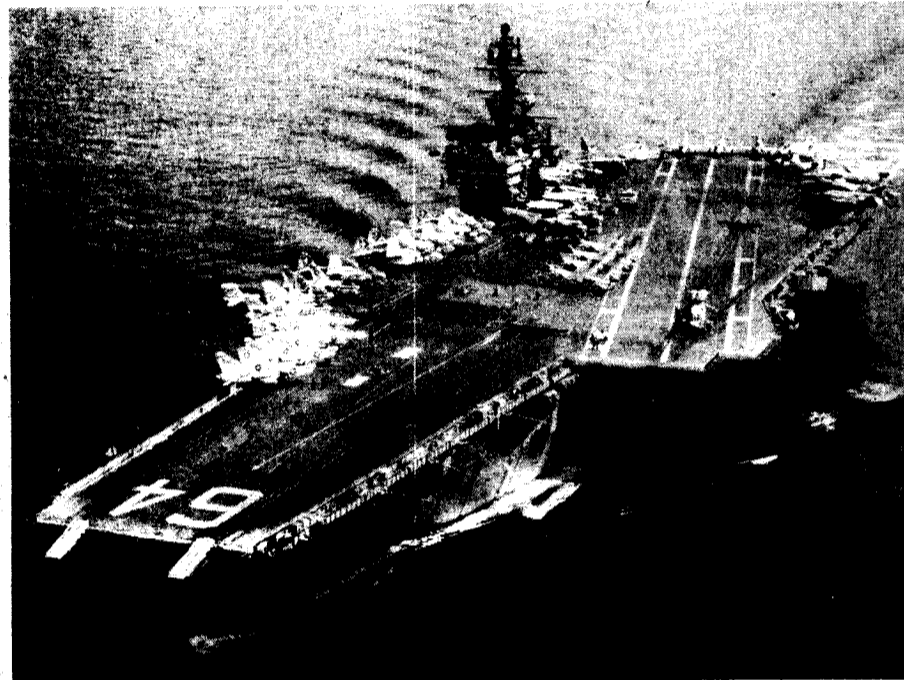
The European imperialists are reluctant to get involved because tactically they assess the situation with rather more objectivity than a US President in election year.

They recognise the danger that sanctions will drive the Iranian regime towards the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe: already there is talk of new oil contracts along these lines.

Contracts

At the same time France and Italy are frightened of losing major contracts in Iran, as are the Japanese.

However, it seems likely that the EEC leaders will come up with some kind of package of economic and political measures against Iran—if only in an



US warships in the Gulf

attempt to prevent Carter using military measures.

Such an outright imperialist attack on Iran—whether through a US naval blockade or the mining of Iranian ports—would create huge pressures on other Gulf states at present aligned with imperialism to fall in behind Iran's appeal for Islamic solidarity.

Even Saudi Arabia, whose increased oil production is a

major reason why the imperialists can hope to weather further sanctions on Iran, could be driven to oppose such a US intervention, which would raise embarrassing parallels with the Soviet move against Afghanistan.

Chauvinist

Yet Carter's efforts to stoke up a chauvinist frenzy in the US

as the prerequisite for possible military intervention have plainly had some effect—and he is now under pressure to take desperate action.

American youth have already demonstrated in their thousands against the war buildup: it is necessary for the labour movement in the US and every imperialist country to act firmly to block any military or economic offensive against Iran.

EVANS SELL OUT

From front page

FUND

The fight to get the Special Fund in on time seems to have hit the Monthly Fund rather badly with the result that we only have £258.50 towards our total of £750 and only a week to go to the end of the month.

So clearly an enormous effort is going to be needed by our readers and supporters if we are to achieve this fund target on time.

We cannot stress enough the importance of securing this fund in full every month if we are to be able to maintain Socialist Press in these days of 20% inflation.

Hardly a week goes by without some of our costs going up and our recent price increase only gave us a limited protection against inflation.

So send us a donation, and help us reach our target on time.

Our address is:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

government. Throughout the 14 week steel strike Evans turned a deaf ear to appeals for action to stop lorries crossing picket lines, and to growing calls for General Strike action.

For while independent action by the working class is the only means of defeating the employers' offensive, Evans knows full well that in such struggles his own bureaucratic control over the rank and file would be called into question.

Yet, paradoxically, even in knifing the Leyland struggle Evans has prompted a new level of political debate amongst thousands of workers who know they have been sold down the river, and are now forced to look for a leadership that is prepared to fight to defend their interests.

Revolutionary

This requires the construction of a revolutionary leadership committed to the fight to mobilise the full strength of the workers' movement in action to bring down the Tories, drive out the opponents of socialism that form the present Labour leadership, and carry through the

struggle for a workers government based on the nationalisation without compensation of the basic industries, banks and trusts, and the establishment of a planned socialist economy.

It is from this standpoint that the WSL fights in BL and throughout the workers' movement for policies of:

*Defend all jobs and conditions! No concessions to the bosses' profits crisis! Open the books of 'bankrupt' and other firms, their suppliers and bankers to elected trade union committees! Expose the anarchy of capitalism and the profiteering that feeds off "nationalised" industries!

*No sackings! For work-sharing on full pay under the control of elected workers' committees.

*Defend living standards! For pay claims to catch up with Tory price increases, protected against inflation through cost-of-living clauses based on a workers' price index!

*No closures! Occupy threatened plants; fight for national supporting strike and blacking action as part of the struggle for a General Strike to bring down the Tories!



Carter

DONT LET TURKEY BECOME ANOTHER CHILE

A Workers Socialist League Pamphlet

Price 30p including p&p
From WSL, BM Box 5277,
London WC1V 6XX



Hawley

As we go to press it is clear that, while Evans' betrayal at BL has effectively sabotaged the strikes then under way, Leyland workers are far from beaten.

In particular, though Rover workers at Solihull voted 4-1 on Monday to return to work, at the same time paint shop workers in Longbridge, who had not been involved in last week's struggles, walked out and picketed the plant in a dispute over the imposition of the 92 page document.

Even TGWU convenors (in a meeting skillfully timed to come after mass meeting votes for a return to work) felt obliged to make a belated gesture of opposition to the sell-out—particularly in the absence of either Evans or Grenville Hawley.

They adopted a resolution from Region 5 Secretary Brian Mathers describing the deal as "unrealistic", proposing further talks with management and calling for official strike action in the event of them breaking down, and calling on the TGWU Automotive Group to withdraw from the Confed.