

# SOCIALIST PRESS



Weekly paper of the Workers Socialist League \* No. 220 \* 22 October 1980 \* 20p

Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

## Demonstration No Cruise missiles!

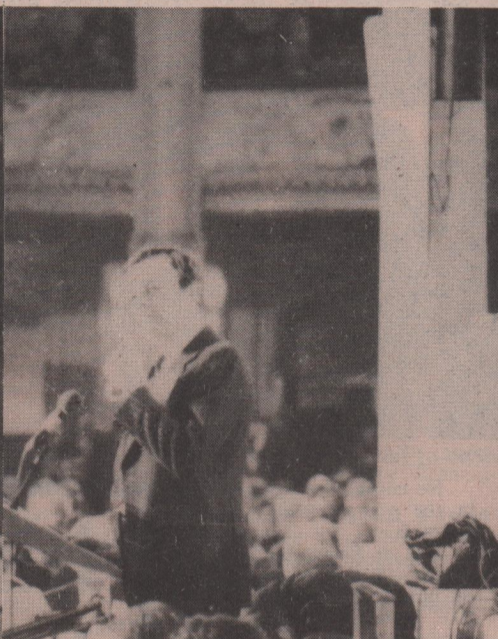
Assemble Speakers Corner  
12 am. Sunday 26 October  
No to imperialist war drive!  
Defend the Soviet Union!

# Labour leadership:

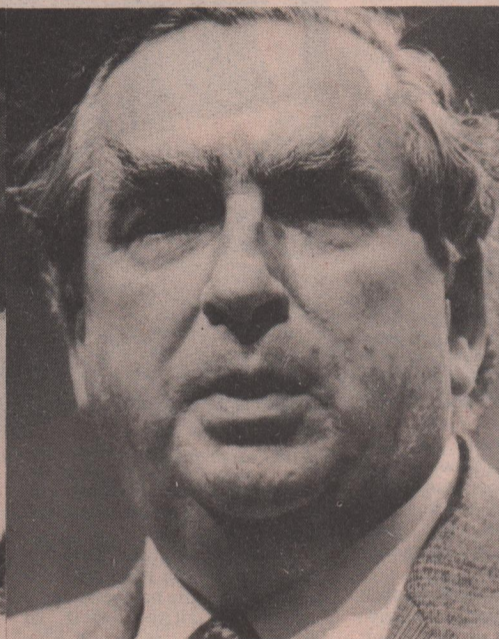
# NO TO PLP ELECTIONS



Foot,



Silkin



Healey



Shore

# LET RANK AND FILE



The shock waves generated by the moves towards democratic reforms within the Labour Party are still rocking the Labour Party.

The resignation of Callaghan has rightly been seen by thousands of Labour activists throughout the country as nothing more than a shabby manoeuvre by the right wing PLP leadership to cling on to control of the Party and frustrate the decisions of the Blackpool conference.

Callaghan hopes by his resignation to foist Denis Healey, co-author of all the reactionary policies of recent Labour governments, onto the Labour Party and the working class.

The plan is that Healey, closely identified with the military establishment, the Treasury and the IMF, be set up as leader of the PLP in a bid, with the aid of a few right wing union leaders, to railroad him through any future electoral college.

Every enemy of the labour movement, the unions and the working class, every Fleet Street hack and witch-hunter is cheering wildly for Healey.

This is not only because they support Healey's policies, but because they fear that the Blackpool reforms could throw up a leader who will no longer as in the past obediently take orders from the Treasury, NATO and Fleet Street.

The capitalist class have their overt faction now at work within the Labour Party. One symptom is the letter concocted by 62 right wing MPs who declared that:

"the system of election for

the Party leader in Parliament is a matter of clear principle".

These MPs are part of a large reactionary caucus who oppose any rank and file voice in the policies or leadership of the Labour Party.

They must be forced by their GMCs to repudiate this position or stand down.

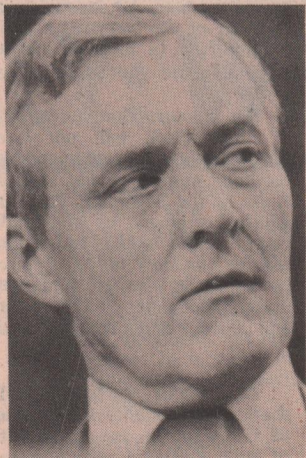
On the other hand some left MPs and GMCs have already correctly called for suspension of the standing orders of the PLP and opposed moves to go ahead with the election.

It is these forces who represent the voice of the Party rank and file and the decisions of the Blackpool conference.

Arthur Scargill is right to point out that:  
"It is my belief that constituents will not easily forgive any MP who goes against the wishes of the General Management Committee".

And it is in the GMCs, and in the trade union movement that Labour activists must raise with one voice the demand that this phony election be halted and the results it produces rejected by the whole labour movement.

The supposed 'choice' of candidates in the PLP elections



is a sick joke. All the spurious efforts of the press to award 'left' credentials to Shore and Silkin can easily be discarded.

Nor does the candidacy of Michael Foot alter this position. Foot long ago ensconced himself as the resident apologist for every rotten Callaghan policy—from wage controls to the Lib-Lab pact. He cannot be regarded as in any sense a 'left' candidate.

Foot could only take over in his capacity as Deputy leader until such time as the reforms initiated at Blackpool have been



Scargill

clarified.

This is why *Socialist Press* stands firmly against the planned PLP elections. We urge Labour activists to call on every MP who claims to support the Blackpool reforms—and in particular the 17 who signed the letter calling for a suspension of PLP standing orders—to boycott any leadership election within the PLP.

London Labour moves left—back page.

# Electoral College: cut out PLP!

The issue of just how an electoral college should be set up has begun to be discussed by Labour activists.

A meeting of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee on October 16, attended by delegates from the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, put forward the following basic conditions for an electoral college:

- 1) Annual elections.
- 2) Voting at annual conference, with representation through direct votes for every organisation and MP.
- 3) At least two thirds of the total vote to go to CLPs and trade unions, with the PLP vote not to exceed that of CLPs.
- 4) Recorded voting, details to be available to every affiliated organisation, without which accountability is impossible.
- 5) Full provision for casual vacancies.

Such policies represent a step towards democracy, but they can only be agreed if they are linked to a number of further policies.

The first of these must be abolition of all rights for the

PLP. Although it is not possible to alter the votes of the PLP on the leadership issue from 100% to zero at one step, it is essential that this should remain at the centre of any future campaign.

It is also essential that the writing of the manifesto be taken away from the leader, and placed under the control of the NEC. The 3-year rule on constitutional changes must again be challenged.

But in addition the setting up of an electoral college can only be seen as a step towards election by the Party conference.

This in turn calls for moves to democratise the processes whereby trade union delegations arrive at policy decisions. Meetings and conferences of political fund paying members should mandate delegations on key issues.

Only in this way can the union block vote system be brought under democratic control.

Such moves must be linked to the fight for policies of strike action against Tory cuts, defiance of the anti-union laws and full-scale mobilisation in defence of jobs and living standards.





INTERNATIONAL

# TURKEY: no confidence in generals' "impartial" stance

The Turkish junta, after a period of little mass resistance or mass struggles, is beginning to flex its muscles.

But it is doing so in a limited and particular way.

The "even-handed" approach necessary to appear "above" the struggle has been shown by the execution of a right winger and a left winger on October 9.

Subsequently, more from both "sides" have been sentenced to death.

But this is because the military dictatorship does not yet feel it has the strength to take on the working class directly.

It sees the immediate threat as coming from the fascist National Action Party led by Turkes.

For this reason, only four days after the initial hangings, Turkes and 28 NAP leaders were charged with "arming the people against each other for mass massacre", a charge carrying a minimum sentence of 20 years, while bourgeois political leaders Ecevit and Demirel were released.

Also released were right wing reactionary Erbakau (later re-arrested) and important leaders of the left wing trade union confederation DISK, who remain free.

The fear of provocative action from the right probably also dictated the shuffling of 37 generals between posts in the Army.

The junta, unable as yet itself to defeat the working class in open conflict, must shackle the forces that have been consciously striving towards civil war.

But the conflict with the working class must come.

Despite the "civilised" diplomatic activity with Greece and the four-hour negotiations with NATO Commander Rodgers, the policies that will determine the fate of the military dictatorship are those decided by the IMF bankers.

Evren and Co. cannot in reality stand above the imperialist crisis.

Attempts to direct workers' pension funds towards being used as capitalist credit, the further devaluation of the Turkish lira, and now further sweeping price rises, show that the reactionary economic policy of Ecevit/Demirel has been taken over bag and baggage by the generals.

An undefeated working class will not remain passive indefinitely. And at that point the imperialists and the Turkish bourgeoisie may think twice about the suppression of the



Police with machine guns at funeral of fascist terror victim before the coup

one sure defence of capitalism in its death throes, the mass fascist party.

Workers in Turkey must prepare now for the inevitable end of Evren's fragile balancing act.

The definitive defeat of fascism in the streets will only be achieved by workers' militias organised by a united front of workers' organisations.

No confidence can be placed in the military junta's present liberal face.

Just as Ecevit betrayed the workers he claimed to represent by introducing martial law and IMF policies at the behest of imperialism, so will Evren be forced to take on the working class, or be forcibly replaced by those who will.

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## LCR complain of violence

Text of an open letter alleging violence between Trotskyist forces, sent from the French LCR (section of the USFI) to the OCI (part of the Parity Commission).

Comrades,

On Tuesday 16 September, five militants of the LCR were violently attacked at the University of Nanterre by about ten militants of the OCI, led by Frederic Augendre and Raphael, leader of the OCI at Nanterre.

Our comrades were thrown to the ground and beaten. They had to be taken to hospital.

Several of them suffered concussion. This indescribable deed was accompanied by shouts of "kill them", "nazis", etc.

Among the beaten militants were comrade Francois Castaing, president of the administrative committee of UNEF in economics at Nanterre and comrade Laurent Zappi, a member of the National Bureau of the JCR (a member of the administrative commission of UNEF).

We are sure that the gravity of this attack will not have escaped your notice. The methods employed are, indeed, those of the Stalinists. They are wholly opposed to the traditions of the labour movement and so can only be condemned by all those who are struggling under the banner of Trotskyism and of the Fourth International.

In the past, we have already drawn your attention a number of times to the incompatibility of such methods, which smack more of gangsterism than of revolutionary politics, with the normal relationships that should exist within the labour movement.

That is why we demand that you instantly condemn the attack carried out by your militants and leaders at Nanterre.

Trotskyist greetings, comrades,  
For the Political Bureau of the LCR  
Alain Krivine

TROTSKYIST  
INTERNATIONAL  
LIAISON  
COMMITTEE

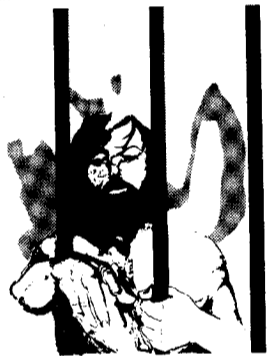


DISCUSSION  
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No. 2

Articles on Nicaragua,  
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## Irish hunger strike



is allowed to die, the blood will be on the hands not only of the Tories and the military chiefs but also those of the labour bureaucrats who have so long collaborated with imperialist repression.

A number of trade union and Labour leaders have now signed the petition launched by Charter 80 which supports the humanitarian demands of the prisoners, without declaring a position on the role of imperialism in Ireland.

Put to test

But such gestures of humanitarian concern must now be put to the test—and these leaders must now be called upon to take up the fight for tangible solidarity action in the British working class to support the struggles of the Irish prisoners of war.

*Socialist Press*, while deeply critical of the programme and methods of the republican movement upholds the right of all opponents of British imperialism in Ireland to take up arms in the struggle for national liberation: we support the demand of the republican prisoners to be recognised as Prisoners of War.

We regard this as an essential part of the fight for the immediate withdrawal of British troop troops to allow Irish people to determine their own future.

We call on our readers and supporters to play the fullest possible part in the solidarity actions that will be taking place in every locality, and the national demonstration called in London for December 7.

Resolutions

At the same time trade unionists, students and Labour Party members must urgently press resolutions through their branches and national organisations demanding the fullest possible support for the Irish prisoners in their struggle against a savage and intransigent Tory government.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

\*Friday October 24: demonstration to Brixton Prison marking 60th anniversary of Terence McSwiney's death on hunger strike. Assemble 6.30 outside Brixton Police Station. Called by RCT.

\*Organise or support activities taking place in your area, particularly in week of 27 October when hunger strike starts.

\*Support National Day of Action, Saturday 25 October with local picket protests.

\*Lobby Anti Nuke Missiles demo Sunday 26 October, Speakers Corner, 11 am.

\*Support 15 November British Withdrawal demo which will have prisoners there. Assemble 1 pm, Embankment.

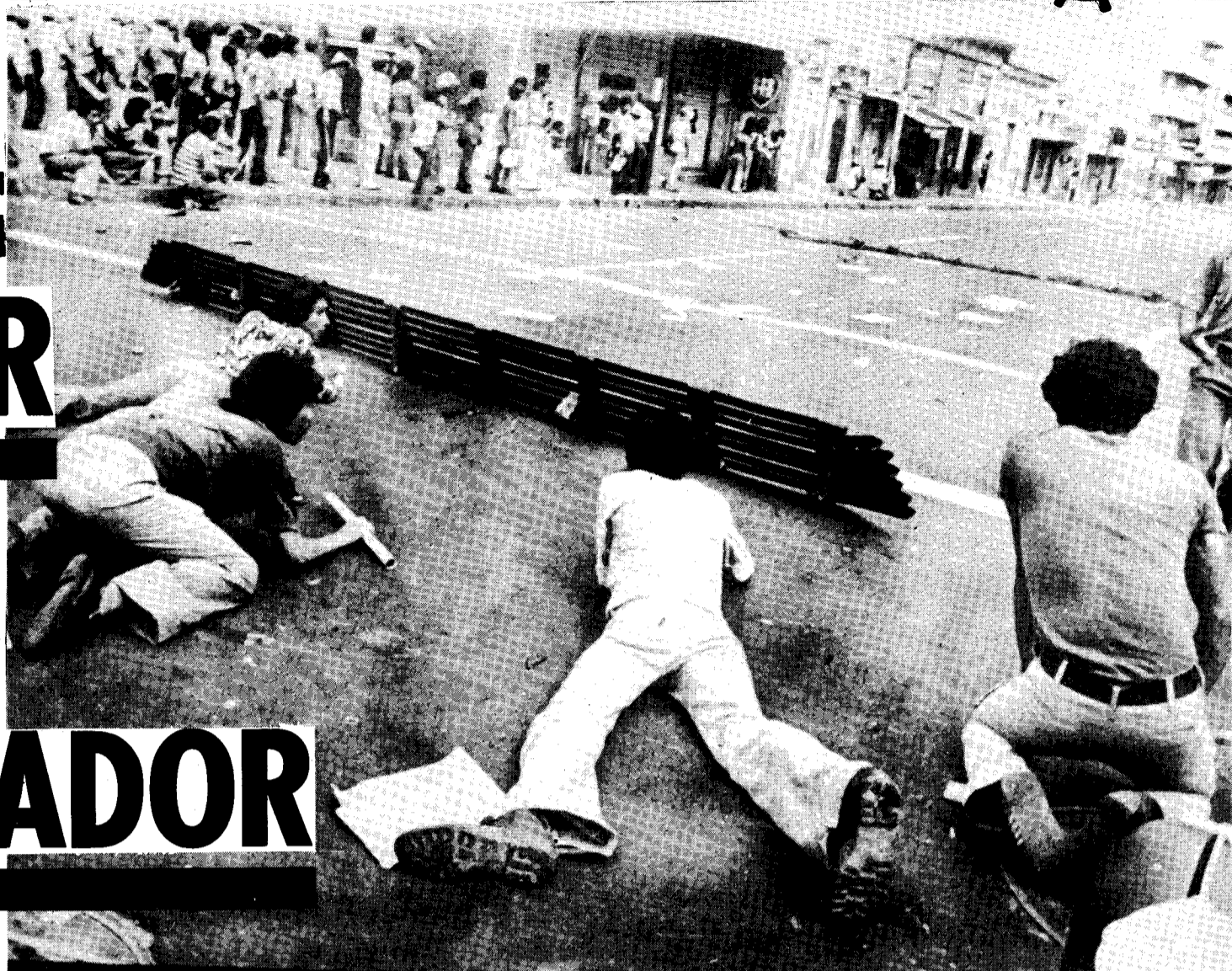
A Hunger Strike coordinating committee has been established and will meet on Sunday 26 October.

Details of the venue of this meeting and of other developments in the campaign can be obtained by phoning 01-267-2004.

While *Socialist Press* is lending its support to the conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement on November 15, we urge any readers who cannot attend that conference to attend the demonstration for Irish unity and a British withdrawal to be held in London that same day.

## INTERNATIONAL

# CRUCIAL TEST FOR LEFT IN EL SALVADOR



At the barricades in San Salvador

El Salvador continues to exist in an awful no-man's-land between outright military confrontation and the residual violence of everyday life in neo-colonial society.

Since January religious sources say over 7,000 people have died in the battle against the dictatorship—and yet the vast majority of these casualties are victims who never took up arms, workers and peasants who identify and organise with the left but have not embarked on armed struggle.

This is the result of the massive, US-backed 'counter-insurgency' campaign unleashed by the Junta this March under the guise of an 'agrarian reform'.

It is now generally agreed that the level of attrition has reached a critical point and that the FDR popular front opposition is at a strategic cross-roads but it appears to be holding back from a major military offensive.

There are a number of possible reasons for this.

## Harvests

First, Salvadorean society and politics are to a large degree structured around the schedule of harvests that take place in the autumn.

The large number of landless wage labourers that trek the countryside in this period are an important constituency for the mass organisations of the left, and to call for an uprising in the middle of the harvest, the only time of the year when hundreds of thousands of workers can earn any money, is considered suicidal.

By mid- to late-November, however, the peasantry will be once again without work and it is during this period of the year that it is traditionally most militant.

The second important reason for the lull in the left's offensive is the crisis inside the guerrilla high command—the DRU—caused by the departure of the FARN in September.

The orientation of the FARN, and its popular wing FAPU, has been towards an alliance with the 'progressive' junior officers led by Junta member Majano. There can be little doubt that this policy helped deprive the FDR general strike of 13-15 August of its full force.

This 'insurrectionary general strike' was called for a three day period, apparently denying its insurrectionary nature from the start.

But, nevertheless, it was far from the all-out failure proclaimed by the international bourgeois press.

About 70% of industrial and almost all agricultural production was paralysed.

The strike also saw the active participation of neighbourhood committees alongside workers' self-defence squads.

These forestalled the massacre that seemed likely when the military intervened in the major work centres, days before the stoppage was due.

## Gunpoint

All workers were threatened with redundancy if they came out and soldiers raided the bus terminals, forcing drivers to take the buses out onto the streets at gunpoint.

Nevertheless, very little production took place and shops were boycotted. The power workers' union STECEL, which belongs to FAPU, did not come out but simply worked to rule and this may have proved decisive in making the strike a strike rather than a call to arms.

STECEL held back until early September when it came out in apparent coordination with a coup attempt by Majano's forces on the 8th.

This failed and a new series of postings and promotions assured the 'right' wing of the military total supremacy.

Majano is now a spent force, even in his own terms, and many of the key military

positions are held by men ousted with dictator Romero last October.

*Socialist Press* has devoted considerable space to showing how the present programme and orientation of the left will not lead to the overthrow of capitalism in El Salvador.

It is now clear that the military struggle is extremely fierce—the army is certainly losing large numbers of men and cannot control several areas of the countryside—but the political as well as the military position of the FDR is putting the defeat of the Junta itself in doubt.

The activities of FAPU are nothing but the logical conclusion of the tendency of the other mass organisations to seek appeasement with 'moderate' elements of the bourgeoisie.

The effect has been to confuse the masses and head off the struggle. The attempt to copy Nicaragua is, in fact, proving a failure.

## Extended campaign

This by no means entails the end of the struggle. It simply indicates that it has acquired a different character—that of an extended campaign of attrition in which the left is able to build up its military strength and the right continue

to murder scores every day in a bloody tactical impasse.

Recently the remaining civilians in the Junta have announced 'elections' and a return to 'normalisation'.

This has been taken up with alacrity by the State Department and presented by the right as an indication of the eclipse of the left and the victory of the 'middle way'.

It is, though, the playing of a last card—the dictatorship is politically isolated and utterly dependent on Washington, which is now training 300 army officers in Panama to 'observe human rights while practicing counter-insurgency warfare'.

There can be little doubt that if Reagan wins the election the US intervention will take an increasingly open character and drop all pretence to defending the 'middle ground'.

In Salvador itself the right is now firmly back in control and awaiting the time to launch a huge counter-offensive.

Under these conditions we must deepen and extend our solidarity with the Salvadorean workers and peasants in their struggle to overthrow the dictatorship and at the same time make absolutely clear the role of imperialism and the need to break from the bourgeoisie and fight for a workers' and peasants' government.

There is no inexorable logic

by which Salvador will fall to popular forces just because Nicaragua did so.

There is no necessary point at which a barbaric dictatorship, without scruples and the slightest vestige of popular backing is defeated simply by virtue of its own barbarism.

Trotsky once argued vehemently against the Bolshevik military leader Frunze that there is no such thing as an inherent proletarian tendency to the offensive in military strategy.

This is true. In terms of tactics and strategy one has to take account of the balance of forces and material conditions, and we cannot presume to lecture the DRU in purely military terms.

But this is not the same as political mobilisation; there remains an ever-present requirement to work for the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class.

## Dictatorship

In El Salvador today this task is intrinsically bound up with the struggle to overthrow the dictatorship.

Thus, while we cannot call for an uprising on this day or that, we are obliged constantly to call for an insurrectionary mobilisation, the independence of the working class and the

ditching of the disastrous, second-hand Sandinista policy of 'Broad Alliances'.

# New!

Socialist Press Pamphlet containing analysis of the military coup by the Bolivian generals.



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# ITALY: WHO'S IN CHARGE?

**"Does Italy have any head of government? If so, how many and who is/are they?"**

That, today, would be a testing question in an exam in Italian politics—a subject beside which particle physics looks simplicity itself.

So what is the answer? Well, of course, in the best tradition of academic answers, it all depends on what you mean by 'head of government'.

If you mean the person who goes to work every morning in the Prime Minister's office and signs the letters, then it is still Francesco Cossiga. He was deposed in a parliamentary vote of confidence at the end of last month. But he remains as caretaker premier, without visible means of political support, paralysed and impotent.

If you mean the person who has been constitutionally nominated as Prime Minister by the head of state, President Pertini, then it is the Christian Democrat party leader Forlani

who is the head of government. Forlani has now formed a cabinet based on the same four-party coalition as the Cossiga government.

This is constructed, like Cossiga's government, in order to impose economic austerity on the masses of workers in a bid to alleviate Italy's growing economic crisis.

## Central Bank

Of course, there is one theory which says that Italy's real head of government in Italy is the head of the Central Bank.

And it is true that through its history of 40 governmental crises the Italian bourgeois state has developed to a very high degree the ability of the financial, military and other repressive sectors of the state to function in the absence of any stable government in Rome.

But that relative independence of the professional full-time state apparatus is completely insufficient to give the Italian capitalist class the power it now needs to draw the

teeth of the working class and try to resolve the economic crisis.

Whether it has two governments, one, or none, Italy is politically adrift.

The dangers of that became apparent during the last three weeks of total strike in Fiat's Turin factories against the crisis-torn company's plans to lay off 23,000 workers.

The strike has developed into a bitter conflict between the workers and the agents of capitalism in the unions.

Reactionary demonstrations of the "silent majority who want to work" have been organised and there have been provocative physical attacks on the Fiat pickets.

The courts issued a judgement giving police protection to any scab Fiat worker who wanted to cross the picket line.

Before this could be fully tested the union leaderships cooked up a compromise return to work formula. This failed to guarantee the thousands of jobs at stake but provided state funds to temporarily cover

about 90% of the laid off workers.

In presenting the deal to assemblies of workers, the leader of the Catholic trade union federation was greeted by angry jeers from workers and he had to flee from the mass meeting under a shower of missiles.

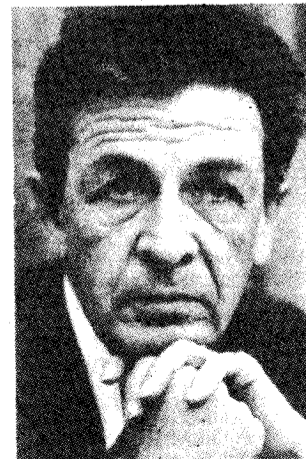
## Far from over

As we go to press it is still not certain if the employers and union leaders, backed by the remnants of Cossiga's discredited government, can force Fiat workers back to work.

Even if they do, the industrial crisis in Fiat is far from over.

And the same can be said for the government crisis. Forlani will soon seek a vote of confidence which there is no guarantee he will get.

The attitude of the Communist Party remains crucial to the short-term prospects. Party Secretary Berlinguer hinted that he may be willing to soften opposition to Forlani if



Berlinguer

he makes some paper concessions to the CP's "opposition" positions.

Certainly the CP's Stalinist leaders must be fearful of the militancy which was unleashed by the CP unions' militant stand in the early days of the Fiat strike.



# No joy for Thatcher backers

In the wake of the hysterical displays of support for the Thatcher strategy so unconvincingly stage-managed at the Tory conference, British employers seem set for a far more sombre conference.

The CBI's fourth annual conference is to begin on 9 November, and will confirm that anxiety over the state of the economy and the effects of Thatcher's policies now predominates over previous years' strident demands for more anti-union laws.

Indeed among the seven resolutions tabled under the heading 'industrial relations', the most significant come from engineering employers seeking not more action against the unions but a halt to further

changes in the law until there has been "time for proper and considered judgement on the need and scope for further action".

Elsewhere employers who have so loudly beat the drum in the past for "free enterprise" and an end to "government interference" in industry plead for the Tories to act to reduce import penetration, reduce interest rates and energy costs and even help create new jobs.

## U turn

The bosses from the CBI's hard-hit West Midlands Regional Council for instance call for Thatcher to do a 'U' turn by implementing an NEB-style investment programme:

"In order to prevent a serious contraction of the UK's

industrial base, this conference urges the government to use North Sea oil revenues to provide direct assistance to trade and industry."

Steel and ceramic manufacturers moan about high energy prices, and even Delta Metal expresses some qualms of disquiet in a motion that:

"supports the government's policy for controlling inflation, but is concerned that the action necessary to achieve this is causing major problems and damage in industry, as well as hardship amongst those who are losing their jobs".

Electrical and allied manufacturers show themselves worried that the Tory government which they and their fellow employers put in office is creating conditions for imports to wipe them out of existence. They argue that there is "a



Thatcher

strong case" for "selective" controls on Japanese imports.

Textile and pottery bosses, too, demand measures to protect them against overseas competition, as do CBI regional councils in the North West, Yorkshire and Humberside.

Indeed even the patriotism

of Tory industrial policy is tacitly called into question by an anguished demand from the CBI's Southern Region that:

"This Conference believes that the Confederation of British Industry should constantly remember that it is British".

But though rank and file employers—beset on all sides by the savage effects of Thatcher's monetarist policies—may be down in the mouth, they are still concerned with the best strategy to maximise exploitation.

# CBI PLAN TO WOO MORE TRADE UNION OFFICIALS

By Terry Smith

A new CBI handbook, *Trade Unions in a Changing World: The Challenge to Management*, has just been published, spelling out how crucial to employers is the cultivation of a pliable layer of trade union bureaucrats and tame shop stewards.

The CBI complains that while unions can be too powerful in their confrontations with management, the paradox is that:

"in relation to their own members they are often weak and ineffectual".

In an effort to remedy this, the CBI looks first and foremost to strengthening the hand of union officials, detaching them from any kind of accountability to the shop floor.

"If officials are to be restored to a substantial position of influence, they must

be more readily available to involve themselves in industrial relations matters at plant level. This in turn requires substantial increases in the number of officials, since industrial relations problems require immediate attention if control is not to be abdicated to the steward or to the workforce".

## Our money

But this will cost money: and the CBI is honest enough to admit that they think it should be *our* money that is used to provide them with an army of plain-clothed policemen:

"Undoubtedly the real level of members' subscriptions needs to rise to finance such an increase in numbers."

Nevertheless the bosses want to see a better calibre of collaborator making the grade in the union bureaucracy. And they

discuss the best way of achieving this: *incentives* for instance;

"Apart from increasing their number, the quality of officials needs to be improved. This is partly a matter of paying higher salaries and better fringe benefits to attract more able people to the job."

If you are wondering how your union could reasonably offer higher salaries or even more fringe benefits to its officials, just wait till you hear the rest of the CBI package.

"But job security too is important. For this reason, it would be preferable for unions to appoint all executive officials to salaried posts, rather than provide for their election for a fixed period only . . . The appointed official may feel freer to act in the interests of his members as he sees them than at their behest".

Never mind the niceties of democracy as occasionally argued so hypocritically in the Tory press. This would be simply an obstacle to the cultivation of a leadership suitable to the employers:

"It is argued, of course, that election is the best way of ensuring a close link between officials and members and that appointment would distance them even more than at present . . . The reduction in democracy, more apparent than real, would be more than outweighed by the increased authority of the officials no longer required to satisfy a fickle electorate and by the benefits of continuity and of experience."

The CBI also sings the praises of certain well-loved convenors who:

"can co-ordinate and may be more company-orientated than an official, although without the official's wider perspective".

## Out of hand

But they warn that some shop stewards courses run by the unions can get out of hand:

"Courses run by the TUC at local technical colleges or by unions at their own educational establishments necessarily are of less value to a steward than courses which include training in what he needs to know within his own particular workplace—and employers are increasingly concerned that such courses can become conflict-based by teaching stewards how to defeat management rather than solve problems".

The dilemma of whether or not to allow mass meetings to take decisions is also debated—there are of course pros and cons for management. Too much of a link between leading stewards and their mass membership may discourage the stewards from simply acquiescing to every management attack:

"There needs, of course, to be a balance struck between the benefits of such mass meetings and the problems involved. Above all, management must retain control of the frequency of such stoppages of work; cost needs to be considered, and on practical grounds communication in the first instance may have to be confined to stewards."

"There must be a balance between obtaining the views of

the membership on every issue and encouraging representatives to lead and influence. The problems of 'mandating' can inhibit stewards from taking the job in the first place".

Indeed the CBI point out the advantages of the "check-off" system of collecting union subscriptions from pay at source. Management stand to gain most by the way this weakens the links between shop stewards and members, they argue.

At the same time stewards should be wooed by the company—being offered guaranteed pay and the prospects of promotion so that they can be persuaded to stay on.

Yet the gathering recession has outpaced much of this homespun advice from the bosses' confederation: as

lay-offs have become the rule of thumb in manufacturing industry, many employers are seeking simply to *behead* the union organisation in their firms—by seeking out key militants and stewards as the first targets for voluntary redundancy.

For trade unionists the issue is not simply to combat the more subtle techniques for corrupting their leadership spelled out in the CBI handbook, but, more important, to adopt a fighting strategy to defend jobs, incorporating the *occupation* of threatened plants, the fight to *open the books* of the employers, and the struggle to mobilise full scale *supporting action* on a local and national level in the fight to bring down the job-slashing Tory government.

# TUC bootlickers sent packing

For the grovelling delegation of TUC leaders who crawled in to Downing St. for their much-hailed meeting with Thatcher last week week, there was nothing but Tory contempt.

Thatcher and Howe flatly rejected the miserable five-point lame-brained package of concessions sought by the TUC.

They had asked for a cut in interest rates; import controls to protect industries "threatened with extermination"; long-term planning for growth in "core industries"; the use of North Sea oil revenues to help industry; and restoration of public spending cuts.

With the exception of the final request—a ludicrous one to put to this Tory government—everyone of these policies has been tabled by sections of the CBI for their annual conference next month!

## Starting point

Far from fighting for the independent interests of the working class, the TUC has, like the CBI, made its starting

point the fight to restore the viability of British capitalism.

And far from mobilising the strength of the workers' movement to bring down the Tories, they tried in vain to use the fear of "uncontrollable social unrest" to scare the Tories into making concessions.

## Anger

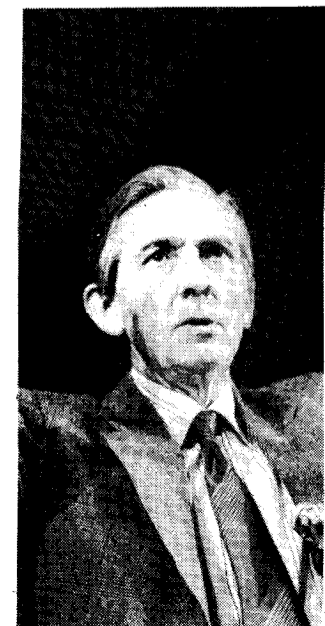
Alan Fisher, TUC president, warned that despite the craven collaboration of the TUC leaders with every Tory cut and closure, the frustration and despair of the unemployed "May soon turn to anger in a direct and forthright way unless the government changes its policies."

That, of course, is the last thing the TUC leaders want. They fear that the members would throw off the control not only of the Tories but of the parasitic bureaucracy itself.

The Tories recognise that the TUC leaders are frightened men: and this reinforces their contempt.

The construction of a principled socialist leadership in the labour movement and the

mobilisation of mass action against the Tory onslaught is vital to change this situation.



Len Murray

Makers of

Modern

Marxism

By Terry Eagleton

## STILL AVAILABLE

This Socialist Press pamphlet contains articles by Terry Eagleton on marxist theoreticians from the time of the Comintern to the present day—Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, Benjamin, Marcuse, Sartre and Althusser. Price 65p including P&P from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX



# 500 join fight to renovate Leicester's killer houses

200 angry tenants travelled to County Hall in Leicester last Monday evening after a mother and her three year old son died in a fire.

They occupied the building for 2½ hours until representatives from the Housing Department came to meet them.

## Sixth fire

Tenants are angry that this is the sixth fire in a year in steel built houses on the New Parks Estate.

In June after the fourth fire in three months tenants threatened a rent strike unless something was done immediately.

A year ago all the houses were re-wired by an outside contractor and many tenants complained that the work was cheap and shoddy, with wire sticking out of walls and sockets hanging off.

Labour-controlled Leicester City Council insist that the steel houses are safe—yet on each occasion the houses have burnt down in less than six minutes.

After the fifth fire in August workmen were sent round to insulate the houses. Three holes were drilled in the outside wall and insulation was inserted.

The house which burnt down on Monday had been insulated. As one resident posited: "It hasn't made much difference to us but all the birds in the area have fire-proof nests".

The workmen carrying out the job were horrified when a tenant told them the insulation was supposed to prevent a fire risk. They downed tools on Monday in protest.

## 'No fault'

Both the council and the fire prevention officer have insisted that there is no fault in the wiring or in the structure of the houses—and claim that the accidents are due to people.

Yet at a public meeting which 500 attended on Wednesday evening, council spokesmen claimed that these houses up to October 1979 had "better than

average fire record"—the average being one fire per 565 houses per year.

Yet of the 500 steel houses on the estate, no less than six have burned down in one single year.

Meanwhile in Hull, a tenants' action committee is stepping up the fight to force the council to renovate 150 steel houses.

## Not successful

The campaigners claim that Scunthorpe Council carried out such work on 500 houses—but despite a successful fight to stop the Hull Council from demolishing the hazardous buildings, they have not been successful in forcing them to carry out the renovation work—the cost of which is estimated at £6,500 per house.

It is estimated that there are some 40,000 of the steel houses in various areas of the country. They were built in 1943 with cheap materials—designed to last 15-17 years.

Now working class families are paying the heavy price of successive governments' refusal to provide adequate housing.



PHOTO: Leicester Mercury

Angry tenants invade County Hall

# SLUMP: PRESS GROPE FOR A SILVER LINING

Feel richer this month? Well, maybe you hadn't noticed, but "we"—the British capitalist economy—were in surplus on "our" payments last month to the tune of £444 million.

This, along with other (equally deceptive) pieces of information have been dutifully relayed by the press during the week in an effort to find a 'bright side' to the gloom and recession unleashed by Tory economic policies.

## Falling demand

The balance of payments surplus reflects a drop in the import of goods—which itself flows from falling demand in the recession-hit British market.

The import of cars, for instance, has dropped by 17% in volume in the last three months. Far from indicating the revival of the British car industry, it points to the fall in consumer spending as inflation and redundancies take their toll of working class living standards.

Imports overall slumped by 9% in September, and have fallen by 6% over the last three months.

But industry in Britain itself continues to decline. The weekly toll of sackings topped 14,000 again last week, and figures show that output in manufacturing industry has now fallen to below the levels of 1968.

## Surprised

Output in August was 10.7% below the average level of last year—and even that includes the increased strength of North Sea oil production as a compensation to the decline of other sectors.

Even the Thatcher government seems to have been surprised by the extent of the slump they have helped to unleash.

Chemicals, textiles, engineering, food, drink and tobacco industries are among the hardest hit in a generalised pattern of crisis and closures.

In this context the pathetic 0.4% drop in the retail price index hailed by the press and mass media last week can be seen more clearly for what it is: the fruits of mass unemployment and long term industrial devastation.

## 'Working'

Thatcher declared that the drop in the rate of inflation indicates that "government policies are working".

Yet the fact is that retail prices in the private sector are being held down through the workings of cut-throat competition which is squeezing the profit margins of manufacturers and retailers until the pips squeak.

Only so long as the slump continues and demand remains at rock bottom will prices be forced down in this way—at the expense of continual closures and bankruptcies of the weakest firms.

But at the slightest glimmer of an upturn in sales, shops and manufacturers will rush to restore their sagging profits by a

tidal wave of price increases that could well dwarf previous inflationary crises.

The monetarist strategy clung to so tenaciously by the Thatcher government is one which can therefore succeed in its long term goal of restoring profitability to the strongest sections of capitalists only at the expense of monumental devastation throughout manufacturing industry.

Chancellor Howe is still refusing to offer even a token concession to his growing body of big business critics in the form of a cut in interest rates.

## Growing

But last week he did point out that as they liquidate their investments in the crisis-torn British economy, British industrialists, bankers and speculators are stepping up their drive for investments overseas.

"Private sector capital flows are growing", he told a plump gathering of well-pleased bankers at their annual banquet.



Howe

## Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement CONFERENCE

"BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER"  
Saturday November 15 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.  
Digbeth Hall, Birmingham

Open to all labour movement bodies  
Credential £1 (unwaged 50p) from G. Webster  
169, Barclay Road, Smethwick, W. Midlands

### CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Public meeting  
'Kick out Callaghan's Gang'  
Friday 31 October  
7.30 pm.  
Len Fagg Hall  
71A St. Johns Rd  
Tunbridge Wells

### CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

Public meeting  
"Fighting the cuts in Camden"  
Wednesday 29 October  
7.30 pm.  
Friends House, Euston Rd  
Speakers include Sandra Plummer, delegate to the Labour Party conference (in personal capacity).



# STOP IMPERIALIST WAR

# DEFEND THE SOVIET

The overwhelming support within the workers' movement for a policy of unilateral disarmament and the growing hostility to the imperialist NATO alliance was reflected vividly in the speeches and votes of delegates at the last Labour Party conference.

A massive demonstration is expected on Saturday 26 October on a march called by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament against the new arms race.

The Tories are of course stepping up arms spending—with the decision to purchase four nuclear-armed Trident submarines from the US at a cost of over £5 billion.

But the frantic pace of the imperialist war-drive is being firmly set by the American government.

New US-controlled Cruise and Pershing missiles, targeted on the Soviet Union and East European workers' states are to be installed in European NATO countries in the next three years, dramatically increasing the 2-1 numerical superiority in Europe-based "tactical" nuclear warheads which NATO already enjoys over the forces of the Warsaw Pact.

## MX system

In addition, the US is planning over the next seven years to bring into service 3,400 more new Cruise missiles launched not from ground units but from B52 bombers—at a cost of \$4 billion.

Within the USA itself, Carter has given the go-ahead to the entirely new \$100 billion MX missile system, which will monopolise 22,000 square miles of desert land in the states of Nevada and Utah, and—they hope—provide the US imperialists with the awesome possibility of mounting a "first strike" against targets in the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile the budget allocated by Carter to military research, development, test and evaluation of new weaponry is a staggering \$16.5 billion for 1981.

The \$1.5 billion allotted to the MX missile alone is more than the *entire* research and development budgets for the US Departments of Labour, Education and Transportation together with the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Drug Administration and the Centre for Disease Control!

The objective of the imperialists in such colossal expenditure is not "Defence" in any conventional sense of the word.

## Offensive

They are seeking to achieve sufficient military superiority over the Soviet Union and the workers' states to ensure imperialist control of the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The bulk of the weaponry now being installed by the US imperialists is in fact *offensive* in nature. The Cruise and Pershing missiles stationed in Europe are designed not for the "defence" of Europe (which would be largely obliterated in the event of a nuclear conflict in which such "theatre" or "tactical" nuclear weapons were used) but defence of the USA itself.

Indeed alongside the deployment of new weapons has come

the emergence in the last few years of a new US military strategy.

In place of the "deterrent" ideas embodied in the old philosophy of "Mutual Assured Destruction" (MAD) has come a call for a "flexible" response, capable of waging a "limited" nuclear war between the USA and its subservient NATO allies on the one hand and the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations on the other.

In the summer of 1980 President Carter signed Presidential Directive 59 which gives effect to this shift by altering US nuclear targeting strategy.

More and more of the US nuclear arsenal will henceforth be aimed at specific Soviet military rather than economic targets—supposedly to allow the US President of the day (Reagan?!) to threaten selective and limited military action against the USSR short of all-out annihilation.

A key role in this new turn is played by the US weapons to be stationed in Europe.

But far from this increasing the "security" of European nations against the cynical imperialist spectre of a "Soviet invasion", the siting of such medium range weapons merely guarantees that in any military confrontation that were to erupt, the Soviet military authorities would have no choice but to launch their own missiles against European targets.

And while the American imperialists argue that a "flexible" approach to the use of nuclear weapons eliminates some of the fears of Mutual Assured Destruction, it must make a "limited" nuclear war more thinkable, and thus more likely to occur.

Indeed in Europe itself NATO is engaged at the command of its US chiefs, in "hardening" airfields and other military facilities against nuclear attack, and developing communications systems that would not be blacked out by nuclear explosions. They are preparing for a war which imperialist military chiefs increasingly feel

to be a distinct possibility.

As much as four years ago US Defence Secretary James Schlesinger pointed out that:

"We continue to deploy our own theatre nuclear forces in both Europe and Asia. In the case of Europe, we have three basic reasons for our deployments.

First the maintenance of theatre nuclear capabilities in NATO is essential to deterrence, as long as the Warsaw Pact deploys theatre nuclear forces of its own. They help to deter the use of nuclear weapons by the Pact and, along with our strategic nuclear and conventional forces, provide a general deterrent across the entire spectrum of possible aggression.

Second, should deterrence fail, our theatre nuclear capabilities provide a source of limited and controlled options other than the early use of US and allied strategic forces.

Third, in keeping with NATO's flexible responses strategy, we do not rule out the use of nuclear weapons by the United States and its allies if that should prove necessary to contain and repel a major conventional attack by the Warsaw Pact".

## Defending USA

For the US imperialists, therefore, European-based weapons are a part of defending not Europe, but the USA, without the "early use of US and allied strategic forces". And US chiefs do not even rule out a use of nuclear weapons to stem a hypothetical conventional attack in Europe.

But in fact American plans dating back to at least 1962 go much further than this, and include detailed proposals for the use of nuclear bombs to eliminate resources in "allied" or neutral countries that might be of value if they fell into the hands of Soviet forces.

Far from *defending* Europe, US planes would under conditions of a real military conflict be flying literally thousands of sorties dropping



nuclear bombs on cities and civilian targets in the capitalist countries of Western Europe and the Middle East!

Even W. German Chancellor Schmidt, a vigorous defender of US imperialism's war plans for Europe, has admitted that:

"effective defence of Europe would only be possible for a short time or in geographically limited area—and it would lead rapidly to the destruction of Europe... a war which, though regarded as a 'limited war' by the superpowers, would be no less than a war of annihilation for the countries of the battlefield".

## "Theatre"

In fact the use of Europe as an arena for a long-range confrontation between the US imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union dates back to the Cold War period of 1948, when the USA first stationed strategic nuclear bombers in Britain.

In the mid-1950s, NATO, under US command, began to deploy "theatre" nuclear weapons in Europe. From then until now NATO has had a numerical and generally a technical superiority over the forces of the Warsaw Pact.

The Soviet bureaucracy responded to this naked threat by developing its own "theatre" nuclear weapons alongside its development of strategic long-range missiles and bombers.

Since the early 1960s the USSR has had long-range missiles aimed at Western European targets.

The triple-warhead Soviet SS20 missiles (so frequently referred to by the imperialist warmongers as a "new" threat requiring the introduction of Cruise and Pershing 2 by

NATO) are simply more modern and mobile than their predecessors.

They are deployed not only against Europe in the West but against China in the East.

The difference is that while the SS20—with a maximum range of 4,000 miles—cannot hit targets in the USA, the new US Europe-based weapons are to be aimed at targets within the USSR, and thus constitute a major new threat to the deformed workers' states.

The fact is that while the imperialist powers have sought since the very first days of the Russian Revolution in 1917 to find ways of reversing the historic gains of that Revolution and restoring capitalist exploitation in the world's first workers' state, the Soviet bureaucracy that has emerged since the mid 1920s has attempted above all else to achieve "peaceful coexistence" with the imperialists.

Pursuing Stalin's utopian nationalist dream of building "socialism in one country"—albeit an economically backward country encircled by hostile and reactionary regimes—the Kremlin bureaucracy has time and again proved itself more than willing to sacrifice the interests and sabotage the revolutionary struggle of the working class in the hopes of currying favours with the imperialists.

## Alliances

In the wake of Hitler's victory over the German working class in 1933—a victory facilitated by the criminally sectarian policies of the mass German Communist Party under Stalin's directions—the Kremlin leaders increasingly sought

external stability in alliances with "democratic" imperialist regimes—especially French imperialism.

This produced a search for respectability which from 1934 onwards took the form of "Popular Front" alliances between the European CPs and "democratic" bourgeois parties.

This policy led to the sabotage by the Stalinists of mass strikes and occupations in France, and, more significantly, the defeat of the Spanish revolution at the hands of Franco's fascist forces.

Having failed to establish by such manoeuvres a stable diplomatic foothold with European bourgeois governments, Stalin took the logic of his Popular Front alliances with bourgeois parties a stage further—and in 1939 signed the notorious Stalin-Hitler Pact which supposedly secured the borders of the USSR against Nazi attack.

The folly of such methods of "defence" was demonstrated vividly in 1941 when Hitler unilaterally tore up the Pact and commenced the invasion of the Soviet Union!

The Red Army—deprived of its best leaders by Stalin's purges and completely unprepared for action was caught unawares.

Only after major setbacks and huge material and human losses was the invasion eventually turned back, the Nazi armies routed, and the Red Army able to drive the German imperialists out of not only the Soviet Union but a whole ring of Eastern European countries, reaching as far as Berlin.

Even then Stalin's main preoccupation in the discussions and deals with the imperialists in the final years of the war was not to carry Soviet influence further into Europe, but to re-



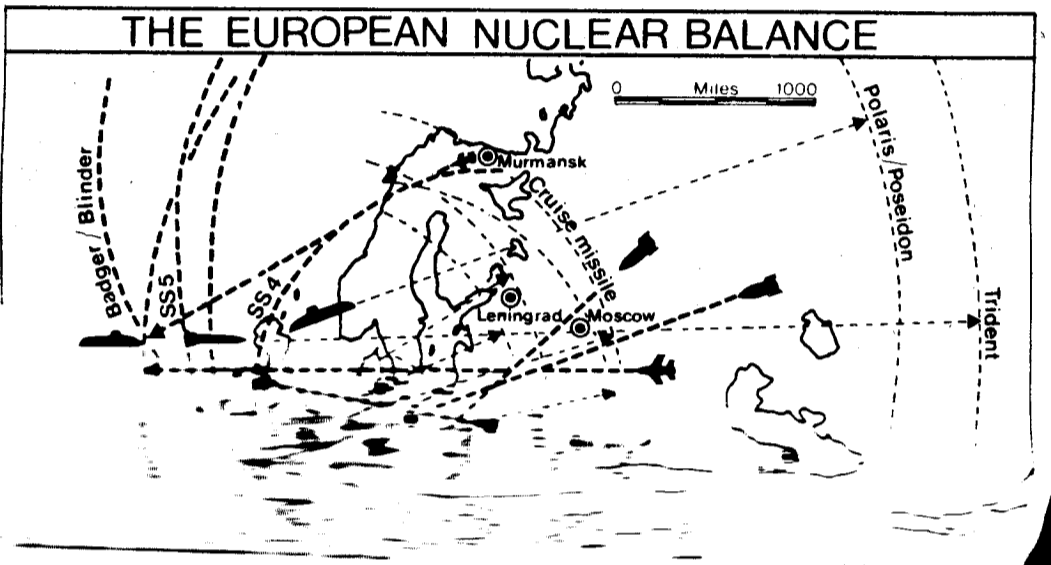
The Potsdam conference: Truman and Stalin—with Labourite Ernest Bevin back left



# DRIVE!

# UNION!

By  
**JOHN  
LISTER**



...the imperialists were still  
...to the existence  
...USSR and wished to  
...their military superior-  
...the Soviet Union.  
...as an attempt to  
...the Stalinist leaders  
...whatever to do  
...the Japanese—  
...already seeking terms  
...surrender—that the  
...took the decision to  
...the nuclear bombs on  
...and Nagasaki in  
...1945.

...deal of approval  
...Kremlin bureaucrats  
...seal of approval to the  
...of the Hiroshima  
...of August 6 1945 by  
...the "allies" in declaring  
...Japan three days later.  
...was in spite of the fact  
...USSR had three weeks  
...approached to act  
...in the moves to a  
...surrender.  
...Stalinist press in Britain  
...USA enthusiastically  
...both the bombing  
...declaration of war,  
...that:  
...intelligent people know  
...atomic bomb helped to  
...war and thus saved

...US imperialism would  
...be deploying the Bomb in  
...Europe—against the Soviet  
...Union!  
...Even in the 1950s the  
...Stalinists in Britain, as always  
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...Kremlin foreign policy, opposed  
...the struggle by socialists and  
...Trotskyists in the Labour Party  
...for a policy of unilateral nuclear  
...disarmament.  
...In 1957 a Trotskyist-backed  
...resolution calling for unilateral  
...disarmament was tabled by  
...Norwood CLP for the Labour  
...Party conference in Brighton. It  
...was attacked not only by  
...Gaitskell and the right wing, but  
...also by the former darling of the  
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...Yet Bevan's line came after  
...discussions in Moscow with  
...Kremlin leader Krushchev—who  
...explained that he did not want  
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...Britain.  
...European nuclear weapons  
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...and be used as bargaining  
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...Bevan came back to  
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...in terms reminiscent of William  
...Rogers and David Owen today  
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...Secretary could not go "naked  
...into the conference chamber".  
...The British CP obediently took  
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...eralists of being "sectarian".  
...The CP denounced the establish-

...CP General Secretary John  
...Gollan chose his Party's 1959  
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...*"Emphasis on the issue of  
...unilateral disarmament in a way  
...which has tended to slow up  
...the activities of the forces of  
...peace, at a time when utmost  
...unity is the need ...*  
...The real issue is what will  
...unite the greatest number of  
...people to get rid of the bomb.  
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...agreement on unilateral renun-  
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...condition of the fight for peace  
...only divides the movement.  
...It tends to divert attention  
...from the real issue—internat-  
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...In pursuing their goal of an  
...*"international agreement"* with  
...the imperialist leaders the  
...Stalinist parties began a cam-  
...paign of feting the then US  
...President General Eisenhower.  
...The French CP leader  
...Thorez publicly criticised those  
...Stalinist municipal and general  
...councillors who had failed to  
...obey a CP Political Bureau  
...instruction to attend a reception  
...for the imperialist war-chief in  
...Paris.  
...In Italy, too, the Stalinist  
...daily paper formally declared  
...that:  
...*"We Communists of Rome  
...salute Dwight Eisenhower and,*

...This leadership had fought  
...unsuccessfully—  
...Trotskyist banners off their  
...demonstrations and to avoid the  
...sharp class issues that they  
...raised.  
...But they welcomed the  
...arrival of the Communist Party,  
...with its global perspective of  
...class collaboration and peaceful  
...coexistence.  
...It was not the Stalinists but  
...Trotskyists organised round *The  
...Newsletter* who first raised the  
...demand on the TUC to lead  
...industrial action to halt nuclear  
...weapons.  
...A *Newsletter* pamphlet in  
...March 1958 was entitled "Black  
...the H Bomb and the Rocket  
...Bases". It called for action by  
...all unions concerned to stop  
...the construction of bombs and  
...bases.

...We do not agree with the  
...manipulation of E.P. Thompson  
...and the varied signatories to the  
...Appeal for European Nuclear  
...Disarmament (launched 28  
...April 1980), who seek to equate  
...the Soviet moves for self-  
...defence in Europe with the  
...aggressive moves of the US  
...imperialists, when they declare  
...that:  
...*"We do not wish to appor-  
...tion guilt between the political  
...and military leaders of both  
...East and West. Guilt lies  
...squarely on both parties ... We  
...ask the two superpowers to  
...withdraw all nuclear weapons  
...from European territory ... We  
...must commence to act as if a  
...united, neutral and pacific  
...Europe already exists. We must  
...learn to be loyal, not to 'East'  
...or 'West', but to each other ..."*  
...Workers must on the  
...contrary learn to be loyal not  
...to smooth-talking liberals who  
...approach the issue as simply one  
...of protest and propaganda, but  
...to their own independent class  
...interests.

...International gain  
...The proletariat, as an inter-  
...national class, must focus its  
...own struggles against its own  
...bourgeoisie in each country, and  
...fight to defend the nationalised  
...property relations of the Soviet  
...Union as an international gain  
...for the workers' movement.  
...And the working class of the  
...deformed workers' states must  
...fight in their own defence not  
...by the military/diplomatic  
...methods of their bureaucratic  
...leaders, but through the over-  
...throw of these leaders and the  
...struggle for world revolution.

### Campaign

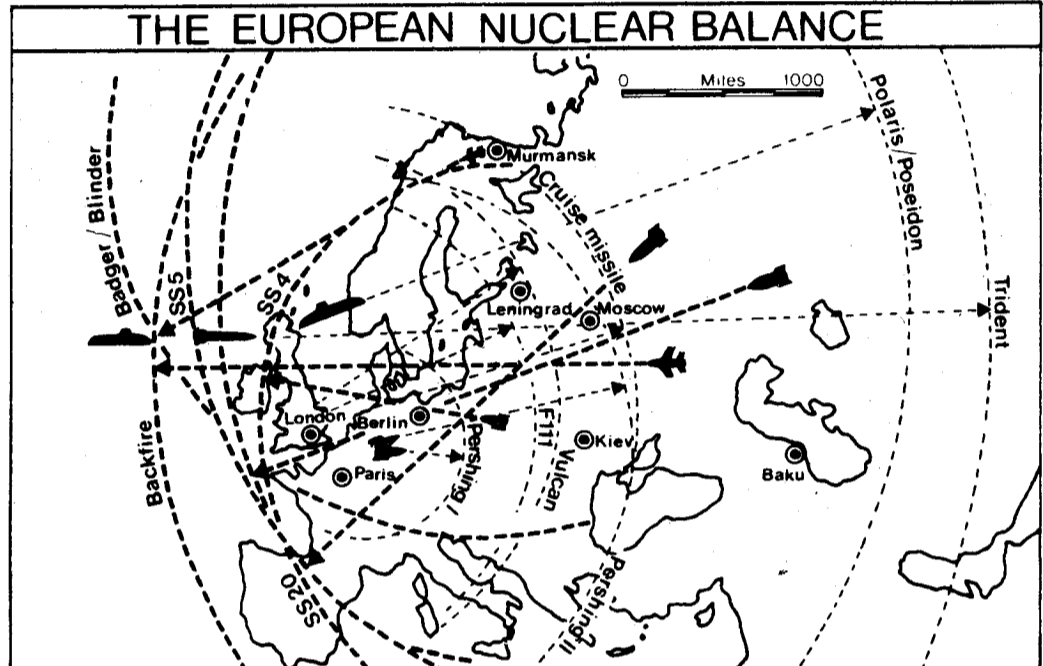
### Opposed

### International gain



# R DRIVE! UNION!

By  
**JOHN  
LISTER**



With grateful acknowledgements to the Guardian

establish a basis for peaceful coexistence between the deformed Soviet workers' state and the power of capitalism elsewhere.

At Yalta, Tehran and Potsdam Stalin agreed with the imperialist leaders on the carving up of the world into new "spheres of influence".

Stalin was willing to betray revolutionary struggles in France, Italy, Greece and Vietnam and even China (where in 1945 he signed a 30-year treaty with Chiang Kai Shek) in pursuit of his deal with imperialism.

But the imperialists were still not reconciled to the existence of the USSR and wished to establish their military superiority over the Soviet Union.

It was as an attempt to intimidate the Stalinist leaders—and nothing whatever to do with defeating the Japanese—who were already seeking terms of surrender—that the Americans took the decision to unleash the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.

**Seal of approval**

The Kremlin bureaucrats gave their seal of approval to the dropping of the Hiroshima bomb on August 6 1945 by joining the "allies" in declaring war on Japan three days later.

This was in spite of the fact that the USSR had three weeks earlier been approached to act as mediator in the moves to a Japanese surrender.

The Stalinist press in Britain and in the USA enthusiastically welcomed both the bombing and the declaration of war, claiming that:

"All intelligent people know that the atomic bomb helped to shorten the war and thus saved

millions of lives".

(Pamphlet: *Atomic Energy and Social Progress*)

Stalin himself according to US President Truman also endorsed the barbaric action against Hiroshima:

"All he said was that he was glad to hear it and hoped we would make "good use of it against the Japanese".

Within three years, of course, US imperialism would be deploying the Bomb in Europe—against the Soviet Union!

Even in the 1950s the Stalinists in Britain, as always responsive to the intrigues of Kremlin foreign policy, opposed the struggle by socialists and Trotskyists in the Labour Party for a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament.

In 1957 a Trotskyist-backed resolution calling for unilateral disarmament was tabled by Norwood CLP for the Labour Party conference in Brighton. It was attacked not only by Gaitskell and the right wing, but also by the former darling of the left, Aneurin Bevan.

Yet Bevan's line came after discussions in Moscow with Kremlin leader Khrushchev—who explained that he did not want a unilateralist policy adopted in Britain.

European nuclear weapons could counter-balance the USA and be used as bargaining counters, argued Khrushchev.

Bevan came back to denounce unilateralism as "an emotional spasm", and declare—in terms reminiscent of William Rodgers and David Owen today—that a British Foreign Secretary could not go "naked into the conference chamber".

The British CP obediently took up this line, accusing the unilateralists of being "sectarian". The CP denounced the establish-

ment of the CND in 1958 as a step that would "split" the peace movement.

In 1959 CP-influenced union delegations at the Labour Party conference voted against the scores of unilateralist motions.

A 1958 CP pamphlet *Close all US Bases* called not for unilateral disarmament, but for:

"A ban on the test, manufacture and use of nuclear weapons by intentional agreement".

CP General Secretary John Gollan chose his Party's 1959 Conference to wage an explicit attack on the unilateralists, for:

"Emphasis on the issue of unilateral disarmament in a way which has tended to slow up the activities of the forces of peace, at a time when utmost unity is the need..."

The real issue is what will unite the greatest number of people to get rid of the bomb. We think that every experience has shown that to make an agreement on unilateral renunciation of nuclear weapons a condition of the fight for peace only divides the movement.

It tends to divert attention from the real issue—international agreement".

In pursuing their goal of an "international agreement" with the imperialist leaders the Stalinist parties began a campaign of feting the then US President General Eisenhower.

The French CP leader Thorez publicly criticised those Stalinist municipal and general councillors who had failed to obey a CP Political Bureau instruction to attend a reception for the imperialist war-chief in Paris.

In Italy, too, the Stalinist daily paper formally declared that:

"We Communists of Rome salute Dwight Eisenhower and,

in the name of 250,000 elector electors... express our confidence and our determination that the great hopes for peace which were aroused in the hearts of all peoples, hopes created by the meeting between the President of the United States of America and the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union, shall not end in disappointment."

The May 1960 talks between Eisenhower and Khrushchev were in fact followed by a renewed lurch towards Cold War politics with the U2 spy plane scandal and tensions over Cuba.

In line with this situation and growing pressure from the Young Communist League, the CP swung round to support for the CND's Aldermaston marches—and supporting the CND's pacifist and left reformist leaders.

This leadership had fought—unsuccessfully—to keep Trotskyist banners off their demonstrations and to avoid the sharp class issues that they raised.

But they welcomed the arrival of the Communist Party, with its global perspective of class collaboration and peaceful coexistence.

It was not the Stalinists but Trotskyists organised round *The Newsletter* who first raised the demand on the TUC to lead industrial action to halt nuclear weapons.

A *Newsletter* pamphlet in March 1958 was entitled "Black the H Bomb and the Rocket Bases". It called for action by all unions concerned to stop the construction of bombs and bases.

**Campaign**

And it correctly demanded the Labour Party NEC mount an international campaign for working class action to force an end to the manufacture and testing of H Bombs, and to pledge itself to halt such tests and construction work the moment Labour was elected to office.

It is significant to note that while it was the Stalinists who tailored their policies to every twist and turn of the foreign policy of the Kremlin, it has

only ever been Trotskyists who have unambiguously fought within the CND and other anti-war movements for a principled defence of the Soviet Union.

The whole of the period since the Russian Revolution has confirmed that the war danger is one that stems from the contradictions and aggressive policies of imperialism in its search for ways to destroy the nationalised property relations of the workers' states.

Trotskyists, in defending every historic gain made by the working class, do not stand neutral in the face of such a threat.

We are in favour of the maximum defence of the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

We call for the unilateral nuclear disarmament not of the deformed workers' states which stand in the gravest danger but of the imperialist bourgeoisie in each country, which has shown by two world wars the extent of its barbarism in the pursuit of profit.

**Opposed**

It is the right and the duty of the workers' states to arm themselves with the most modern techniques and weapons for defence.

But of course the privileged bureaucratic caste that holds political power in the deformed workers' states stands fundamentally opposed to the development or use of the most powerful potential weapon: the mobilisation of the working masses in the imperialist and semi-colonial countries in revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of capitalism.

So long as the Soviet Union and deformed workers' states remain isolated enclaves of nationalised property relations in a hostile world dominated by finance capital, there will remain an ever-present threat of war—a war more horrible, more destructive and final than any previous experience.

The struggle against war is therefore bound up with the fight on a national and international level for a revolutionary leadership within the working class that can mobilise the

mass struggles necessary for the defeat of capitalism, and the overthrow of the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy in the Stalinist-ruled states.

Thus while Trotskyists of the Workers Socialist League will be participating in the mass demonstration of October 26 we will do so from our own independent standpoint, to argue in opposition to the pacifist leadership that has re-emerged with the resurrection of the CND.

We do not agree with the standpoint of E.P. Thompson and the varied signatories to the Appeal for European Nuclear Disarmament (launched 28 April 1980), who seek to equate the Soviet moves for self-defence in Europe with the aggressive moves of the US imperialists, when they declare that:

"We do not wish to apportion guilt between the political and military leaders of both East and West. Guilt lies squarely on both parties... We ask the two superpowers to withdraw all nuclear weapons from European territory... We must commence to act as if a united, neutral and pacific Europe already exists. We must learn to be loyal, not to 'East' or 'West', but to each other..."

Workers must on the contrary learn to be loyal not to smooth-talking liberals who approach the issue as simply one of protest and propaganda, but to their own independent class interests.

**International gain**

The proletariat, as an international class, must focus its main struggles against its own bourgeoisie in each country, and fight to defend the nationalised property relations of the Soviet Union as an international gain for the workers' movement.

And the working class of the deformed workers' states must fight in their own defence not by the military/diplomatic methods of their bureaucratic leaders, but through the overthrow of these leaders and the struggle for world revolution.





Trotskyists fought in vain for a united front of workers' parties to combat German fascism

# THE BIRTH OF FRENCH TROTSKYISM

In France, possibly even more than elsewhere, the 'bolshevism' of the Communist Party was the most doubtful.

The PCF was born out of the relatively late conversion of the old Socialist Party which, almost in its totality, revelled in the 'sacred union' and national chauvinism in 1914.

Marcel Cachin symbolises fairly well this relationship, which did not fail to worry Lenin himself.

A mere handful of militants around Rosmer and Monatte, together with Souvarine, defended proletarian internationalism to the bitter end.

Apart from Monatte, who did not join until 1923, they were all involved in the creation of the PCF, but very soon opposed the Stalinist line and were expelled.

Souvarine published in 1924 part of Trotsky's 'New Course'.

During the years 1925-29 several opposition groups were set up around a number of publications:

The 'Zinovievist' Treint with Girault and Barre published 'L'Unité Leniniste'.

Monatte and Martinet published 'La Révolution prolétarienne'.

Maurice Paz expressed himself in 'Contre le Courant'.

Naville and Fourier published 'Luttes des classes' and Barbusse the review 'Clarte'.

Trotsky had hoped for a unification of these groups but these hopes came to nothing. Souvarine split from Trotsky in 1929.

## La Verite

In September 1929 the first Trotskyist weekly 'La Verite', appeared, around which the Ligue Communiste was set up. The main leaders of the LC in the early years were Naville, Rosmer, Molinier and Frank. They were joined later by younger militants such as Rous, Craipeau and Roussel.

At the same time the 'Unified Opposition' was set up in the CGT (the PCF controlled union federation). Oppositionists such as Cornette, Engler and Collinet had some successes in

leading particular unions and branches.

However, in 1930 the Unified Opposition split with the 'syndicalists' seeking to distance themselves from the militants of the Ligue Communiste, whom they accused of wanting to take over the trade union movement.

In 1931 Collinet and Rosmer founded the group 'Gauche Communiste'.

In April 1933 a unification congress was held among the Trotskyist groups. The Bordigists refused to take part. The congress ended (in October that year!) in new splits.

The Ligue Communiste continued under Naville and Molinier. The Union Communiste was born, led by Collinet and Fourier.

Treint remained isolated. Souvarine stayed outside the congress, publishing 'La Critique Sociale', in collaboration with Simone Weil and others.

Trotsky recognised only the Ligue Communiste. It included only a few workers, and these had to undergo persecution in the factories at the hands of the Stalinists.

## Lacked means

The great mass of workers did not understand much of these 'quarrels': the PCF still carried the glory of the October revolution and workers in or sympathetic to the PCF could not bring themselves to believe what the Trotskyists were saying.

Further more, the opposition lacked the means and the militants to publicise its positions and to implant them in the workplaces. With only a few dozen members they struggled.

To reform the PCF and the Comintern. Until 1933 they continued to regard themselves as members of the Comintern, despite expulsions.

In the face of the fascist menace they proposed a workers' united front to struggle physically against the organisations of the extreme right.

During this period the PCF was following the Third Period line, believing that the situation was revolutionary and denounced the social democracy

as the twin brother of fascism.

In Germany this same policy led the proletariat to suicide and allowed Hitler to come to power. The German CP kept most of its strength for attacking the Socialist Party, going so far as to vote with the Nazis against them.

## Criminal policy

Moreover, according to Thaelmann, secretary of the CP, the fascist trees should not blind workers to the social fascist forest. In his view a seizure of power by the Nazis would in any case be short lived and could only accelerate the arrival of the revolution! In vain did Trotsky attack this criminal policy.

From 1933 onwards, when Hitler came to power, the Trotskyists had to modify their perspectives. The German workers' movement was destroyed and war was already inevitable.

It was necessary to focus on new tasks, the construction of new parties and a Fourth International.

In France, the fascist menace and the workers' response (February 1934) opened a feverish period which was to lead to the popular front in 1936.

Drawing out the lessons of the German and Austrian events, the Trotskyists analysed the collapse of bourgeois democracy and the political polarisation between the extreme right and the extreme left.

They proposed a workers' united front, the formulation of workers' militias, put forward the slogan of arming the workers, and elaborated a transitional programme.

**The Trotskyists and the SFIO: Entry and exit.**

But time was pressing. The Ligue Communiste was far too weak to implant its programme among the working masses. At this point (August 1934) they entered the SFIO.

Why the SFIO and not the PCF? Firstly, because it was possible there to develop their ideas openly, which the structures of the PCF would not permit.

Moreover the Stalinists were conducting a ferocious witch-hunt against them.

Secondly, because the SFIO was then the most important workers' party.

The ranks of the PCF had been depleted in the course of the notorious Third Period, when its adventurist policies had isolated it from the masses: it hardly comprised more than 30,000 members at this time.

(Officially it claimed much larger figures. However, it is certainly the case that the PCF had to await the turns of 1934, towards a policy of 'unity' and more so of 1936 to become a mass party).

The Bolshevik Leninists (as the Trotskyists called themselves) campaigned for their ideas within the SFIO. They met a favourable response from the left wing of the party (Pivert's Gauche Revolutionnaire) and won the leadership of the Seine federation of the Jeunesses Socialistes (Craipeau, Rous).

But this activity earned them the hostility of the SFIO bureaucracy. During this period the SFIO and the PCF were achieving a degree of cooperation.

## United front

The Trotskyists had long been alone in arguing for such cooperation, in the perspective for a workers' united front, and the workers' struggle for power.

The reformists and the Stalinists however had quite different preoccupations; the turn that they had just executed was with the aim of, at best a 'popular front' with a fraction of the bourgeoisie (the Radical Party) which excluded any revolutionary perspective, and even a sort of 'national front' sanctioned by the Laval-Stalin pact.

Stalin had turned the page on the Third Period and opened the page on alliance with the bourgeois democracies.

The PCF held out its hand not only to the SFIO but also to the Radical Party.

It voted for military credits to the Chamber of Deputies. Everything was heading towards a phase of social-patriotism (see

In this issue we begin an occasional series of articles on the history of the Trotskyist movement in France. This week we present the first part of a study of the movement from the beginnings of the crisis of the Comintern to the outbreak of the Second World War. It is based very largely on 'Les Enfants du Prophete' by Pierre Roussel, who was at the time he wrote the book associated with the group 'Socialisme ou Barbarie' which had links with the British Solidarity grouping.

Trotsky's 'Whither France?' and 'Letter to the workers of France' dated 10 June 1935).

In August 1937 the SFIO expelled the leaders of the JS of the Seine. Next it was the turn of the Bolshevik-Leninists.

**The crisis of the Trotskyists: 1935-36.**

The departure from the SFIO caused a crisis among the Trotskyists, which brewed for several months.

There were three groups, which in reality were two:

1. The Bolshevik-Leninists, led by Naville and supported by Trotsky. They published 'La Verite'.

2. The young socialist revolutionaries, led by Craipeau, Rous and Zeller, originating in the JS of the Seine. They published 'Revolutions' and were allied to the Bolshevik-Leninists.

3. The group led by Molinier and Frank, which published 'La Commune', and opposed the other 2 groups.

The political conflict was based on Trotsky's accusations that Frank and Molinier held 'centrist' positions which were those of the left wing of the SFIO led by Pivert.

There was also a conflict on the question of the paper. The Frank-Molinier group published a paper of its own, on a factional basis and financed directly by Molinier on the basis of dubious financial operations.

In addition, the group had organised the 'Groupes d'Action Revolutionnaire' (GAR) which had escaped from party control. Trotsky intervened in a decisive fashion, expelling Frank, Molinier and some others in December 1935.

They set up their own group and continued to publish 'La Commune'. They seemed to have a relatively proletarian base as a result of their earlier work in the GAR.

Their group took the name Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI).

A few months later there was an attempt at reunification of the two groups.

Out of the short lived fusion of the GBL, JSR and PCI the Parti Ouvrier Internationaliste (POI) was born.

A new journal, 'Lutte Ouvriere' replaced 'La Verite' and 'La Commune'. The POI was barely formed before it encountered repression by the Popular Front government.

It was accused of having fermented the massive factory occupation movement. Some weeks later Thorez (CP leader) having explained to the workers that "One must know how to end a strike", in his turn denounced the "Trotskyist agitators and provocateurs" who pushed the workers to continue the strikes in the hope that the strike movement would break down, in an adventure harmful to the working class.

Unfortunately for them and for the working class the Trotskyists had no such influence. Certainly their analyses and slogans were clear and correct, being derived from Trotsky's 'Whither France?' and related documents.

But the weakness of their efforts, and their lack of implantation in the class, combined with the widespread illusions in Blum and Thorez which the workers harboured, reduced them to, in Deutscher's phrase 'Prophets disarmed'. All their efforts were to no avail, the miscarriage of the revolution was inevitable.

Witch-hunts by the government and the lies and persecutions of the Stalinists had failed to weld together the factions composing the POI.

The same arguments which led to the earlier split continued to rage.

The 'Molinier Affair' continued to give rise to mistrust and polemics.

The internal life of the POI was composed of vicious disputes, factional cabals and bureaucratic procedures. Molinier was regarded as a dangerous crook by Trotsky and the majority of the POI leadership, and he was expelled.

Frank followed close behind him. The former PCI was reconstituted and 'La Commune' reappeared. The split was complete.

Continued next week



# Scots conference calls for action on jobs

The recent conference to fight unemployment organised by the Central Region Federation of Trades Councils and held in Falkirk was an outstanding success.

Attended by over 100 delegates, representing 15 trade unions, three trades councils and several local Labour Parties, the conference unanimously adopted a fighting programme (see below).

A motion was also passed approving the calling of a demonstration to protest against unemployment in the Central Region.

The main theme of the conference was that there was no future in trying to change Thatcher's policies—the only course of action left is to bring this government down.

This position was even echoed by Harry Ewing, local Labour MP. Ewing forcefully pointed out that a spate of recent closures and redundancies in the Central Region could in no way be blamed upon foreign imports coming on to the British market.

## Redundancies

He cited such local instances as the redundancies at Glynwed and the Carron Company, laying the blame for a drop in demand for consumer durables at the door of the Tory imposed cuts in house building and renovations.

Ewing also highlighted a leaked government document proposing reductions in unemployment and sickness benefits

by 5% and an end to all exemptions on prescription charges.

(The militancy of Ewing's speech stands in marked contrast to his position on the leadership election struggle within the Labour Party where he, along with another twelve Scottish Labour MPs, has publicly lined up with the right wing in the Party).

## Indifference

Bill Sneddon, Secretary of the Federation, speaking in the morning, warmly praised the youth and trade unionists who had demonstrated at the Tory Party Conference the previous Friday.

He especially drew attention to the "fascist style" methods of the huge force of police defending the Tories.

The callous indifference or open hostility of the Tories, he said, has to be seen in the context of 11,000 unemployed in the Central Region, 9.3% of the workforce, with virtually no jobs available in the highly industrialised Falkirk-Grange-mouth area.

He also called upon trade unionists to give maximum support to the campaign to keep open Callendar Park Teacher Training College, now under threat of closure.

After Sneddon's speech, there were many contributions from the audience, several drawing upon bitter experiences of struggles against redundancies in the area.

Jim Newlands, EETPU member, commended to the conference the establishment of

a centre for the unemployed, supported by the labour movement in the area and used as a focal point for information and the organisation of resistance.

Moving the resolution and programme of action in the afternoon, Rowland Sheret of the TGWU explained the relevance and urgent necessity of each of the points in the programme, contrasting the fighting resolve of the conference with the likely outcome of the STUC-organised convention in December which will open its doors to nationalists, churches and assorted reactionary bodies.

As against this position, John Hendry, Assistant Secretary of the STUC speaking at the close of the conference, sought to defend the record of the trade union leadership on unemployment and to the further dismay of a large body of the audience, proceeded to call for the imposition of selective import controls.

## "Unity"

He also managed, under the guise of a call for "unity", to defend the record of the last Labour Government and thereby the present right wing within the Party.

No doubt if Hendry had not timed himself to be the last speaker, he would have faced some very sharp criticisms.

The conference marked a major step forward in the fight against unemployment in the Central Region.

The next step must be the implementation of its decisions through the establishment of



sub-committees of the affiliated trades councils with the remit of mobilising for a permanent centre for the unemployed in the area and a maximum turnout on the November 29 demonstration in Liverpool.

Other trades councils should consider following the lead given by Central Region and set about organising similar conferences in their own areas.

A priority in this must surely now be Ayrshire with the recently announced closure of the ICI plant at Ardeer with 750 sackings and the ongoing struggle for jobs at Ayrshire Marine Construction at Hunterston.

Programme of Action adopted by the Conference.

### 1. Organise the Unemployed.

Ensure that the unemployed do not leave their trade union. Set up unemployed branches in each trade union. Wherever possible District Committees should consider having recruitment campaigns to bring the unemployed who may have already dropped out of trade union membership, and consider recruiting those unemployed young people who may never have a chance to join a trade union.

Obviously the feasibility of doing this will vary according to the nature of the trade union concerned. The trades councils should allow observer status to organisations of the unemployed.

A similar policy of maintaining union membership should be adopted for retired members wherever possible. Branches of the Scottish Old Age Pensioners Association should be encouraged to attend the trades council meetings as observers.

2. United action to fight redundancies. A co-ordinated response from trade unionists in the area is needed to fight redundancies. Where a branch is threatened with redundancies and decides to take action to fight them, then we must ensure they are not isolated. Every step must be taken to give support action from all sections of the trade union and labour movement. The Federation of Trades Councils should be given the responsibility of co-ordinating this effort.

3. No cuts in local authority services.

We call on local authority representatives to refuse to implement the Tory cuts and for the trade union movement to pledge its support to the councillors in this struggle. We urge Labour controlled local authorities in Scotland to unite together in a campaign to refuse to implement the Tory government's policies. This would mean not just maintaining services but tackling the question of rent and rates rises which will result from the government's economic policies.

4. Defend living standards. Taking a cut in wages will not help unemployment, if anything it will reduce demand and make the situation worse. The crisis is a crisis of the capitalist system. Campaign against any hidden incomes policy and fight for wages increases which give full cover for the increase in the cost of living. Full support is needed from trade unionists to resist the Tory attempts to cut unemployment and social security benefits, against Tory attempts to cut the value of the old age pension and child benefits.

5. Open the books. When companies run into trouble it is trade unionists who are asked to make the sacrifices when the employers call for redundancies and for wage increases to be kept below the rate of inflation. No consideration is given to the social havoc created in local communities by these measures. Demand that companies open their books and prove the state of their finances. Find out why they are in trouble. Then we can put forward our answers to the crisis.

6. Fight back against the redundancies. The flood of redundancies has been so great, as one industry after another has collapsed that it has demoralised many trade unionists. A fight back has to be started. No more redundancies. Work sharing with no loss of pay should be demanded.

7. Work sharing and retraining: Fighting for a shorter working week, longer holidays and an earlier retirement age helps protect jobs and leads to an improvement in lifestyles if they are coupled with no loss of earnings and an improvement in leisure facilities. Similarly with overtime working. New technology makes these demands doubly important but they have also to be linked to manpower and retraining agreements where there is the introduction of new technology.

8. For an alternative economic programme for the labour movement. This crisis is a crisis of the capitalist system and as such can only be solved by changing the system or allowing greater unemployment and a drastic cut in living standards. The Tories have chosen the latter path and any change can only take place after the Tory government is removed. Then it is a question of replacing them with a government which is prepared to change the system. We call upon affiliated branches to fight to ensure the development of such an alternative economic programme.

## OCCUPATION HALTS NEW YORK HOSPITAL CLOSURE

reprinted from Labor News



Police wade into Harlem hospital occupiers

After nearly a ten day occupation and an attack by dozens of police, New York Democrat Carey said he would find the funds to prevent the shutdown of the Sydenham Hospital in Harlem, New York. The occupation which was supported by hundreds of

workers and youth including AFS-CME Local 429 and many other unions had massive support.

Democratic mayor Koch along with most of the capitalists were stunned by Carey's cave in. The Wall Street Journal lamented that the politicians had

caved into charges of racism by the community and pressure politics. This could set a "bad" example of how to stop the cutbacks the Journal worried.

The struggle to keep the hospital open in the black community of Harlem has been going on for over five

years and the city budget cuts have been used as a pretext to completely close the facility but for now it is not to be.

### Shows the way

This important victory shows the way to stop the

closures in every area from hospitals, schools and firehouses. The rank and file of the municipal workers unions which actively backed the occupation should now demand that their unions fight for this as a policy in every area of New York.





# League tells workers to occupy firms

LABOUR councillors and trade union leaders have been slammed for their "futile" responses to the latest jobs cuts in Winsford, including the closure of the Metal Box factory which will put 500 on the dole.

A meeting of trade unionists, factory convenors and shop stewards in Winsford last week condemned the "lack of effective action" by councillors and some union leaders and launched their own proposals to fight redundancies.

Next week thousands of leaflets, backed by the Workers Socialist League, will be circulated throughout Winsford factories spelling out their proposed course of action.

Included in the plans is the occupation of all firms threatened with redundancies to show bosses that the factories are not going to be thrown on to the scrap heap and to stop the stripping of plant and machinery.

Demands for the opening of the firms' books to elected workers committees to reveal the need to nationalise the whole branch of industry. Information in the books should then be used to formulate employment on workers' needs, not on profits.

Worksharing on full pay and a sliding scale of hours with available work distributed between the whole of the population needing work.

Workers' councils of action to defeat united employers.

Mr. Dave Murphy, spokesman for the group, said: "The traditional Labour figureheads have adopted defeatist policies and futile exercises like writing to a Tory M.P., Sir Nicholas Bonsor, who will have no sympathy with them.

"We are issuing an open letter to trade union leaders listing our demands for them to stand up and fight and to ask them what are their policies for the defence of jobs. "We believe that shopfloor workers will see our demands and ask their leaders what are they going to do to defend jobs and livelihoods."

"The traditional trade union leaders are incapable of providing the solution so we are doing it for them," he said.

*From last week's 'Winsford Chronicle'.  
What more can we say?*

### MERSEYSIDE FACTORY CLOSURES

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**DAY SCHOOL**  
on Latin America called by Stirling & District Chile Solidarity Committee

Sunday 26 October  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Cowane Centre  
Cowane St., Stirling  
50p

# PRESTON CUTS PROTEST

A successful lobby of County Hall, Preston was organised by the School Meals Campaign in Lancashire last Tuesday (14th) morning.

The demonstration was held to coincide with a Lancashire County Council Education General Purposes Sub-committee meeting to discuss proposals to cut back a further £1 million from this year's education budget.

The Conservative controlled County Council have dogmatically adhered to national government directives to attack education and social services.

In their enthusiasm to attack the living standards of workers and to inflict further hardship on low income families, this despotic Council have even made cut backs over and above those demanded by the Thatcher administration!

**Support**

Although the central issue of the campaign is directed towards defending the school meals service, the organisers have continually stressed the need to defend other areas of educational spending at the same time.

The campaign has received support from school meals staff, teachers, parents, trade unionists, district and county councillors, trades councils, Accrington MP Arthur Davidson

and NUPE General Secretary Alan Fisher.

Many areas of Lancashire have been reached by the campaign and support comes from Blackburn, Chorley, The Fylde, Hyndburn, Blackpool, Darwen, Preston and Great Harwood.

The long list of cuts (accepted by the General Purposes Sub-committee (which incidentally includes a loss of a further 40 teaching posts) does not include any further erosion of the already depleted school meals service.

The work of the campaign over the last few weeks no doubt contributed to this and shows that jobs and services can be successfully defended.

However, the major political lesson to be drawn from this is highlighted by the fact that the cut back proposals were accepted.

Struggles to defend services, jobs and living standards just cannot be carried out in isolation.

Apparent victories in one area of struggle are detracted from when the attack on workers is simply transferred to other sectors. It is essential that councils of action are built to defeat all attacks, that there is mutual support and that the private and public sector struggles are also linked.

It is only by the mass independent action of workers and the unwaged that a successful defence of working class interests can be carried out.



Fisher

# 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 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.

**Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.**

Name .....

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.....

.....

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



# BIRMETALS: 27 Lambeth Labour WEEK JOB FIGHT votes to sell

300 workers from Birmetals Ltd and their supporters last Friday marched through Birmingham in the pouring rain to a rally at Digbeth Civic Hall.

The protest march was to gain support in the city and to publicise their case.

There were a number of trade union bodies represented—particularly TGWU, and a large collection was raised.

The latter was especially important in view of the significance of the conspiracy against the 900 Birmetals workers who since April 25 have been laid off and then sacked.

During this period they have received no unemployment benefit, no social security for dependents, no strike pay and no redundancy money.

In 27 weeks they have had to rely solely on donations.

Even after they won a test case for unemployment benefit, the Inspectors Offices tabled an appeal against the ruling—thus stopping payment!

The company, part of the Birmid Qualcast group, which has other factories in the Midlands, has got around the necessity to pay redundancy payments in the closure of the factory.

They have done this by provoking a dispute and then sacking everybody. The dispute was over the refusal of the company to negotiate a pay review.

Twelve workers went on strike, every other worker was then asked to fill their jobs. When they refused the other workers were first laid off, and then sacked.

The company has now applied to use the land for house building.

There were a number of speakers at the Digbeth rally including the local Labour MP Peter Archer who—forgetting the bitter disputes under Labour—said that this could only happen in the particular climate created by this Tory government.

But Archer suggested no form of action.

Derek Robinson, whose own case most speakers said prepared the way for the Birmetals attack, also spoke.

He said that what was necessary was for the strike to be made official by all the unions, and that it should be escalated throughout Birmid Qualcast.

He also said that a delegation

from BL Longbridge was stopped from going on the demonstration—under the threat of the sack by management!

Bill Jordan, AUEW Divisional Organiser, announced from the platform that the action had now—after 27 weeks!—been made official by his union.

But the AUEW will only be paying money up to the point of a successful claim at the

The unanimous decision of officials representing all 17 unions in the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions to accept a miserable 8% pay increase on behalf of 2 million workers is a major sell-out.

The decision has already given new heart to the Tories as they prepare to drive down workers' living standards still further this winter.

Though the vote was unanimous, the other 16 unions selected AUEW President Terry Duffy as the front man to publicise their betrayal.

AUEW members should lobby the next National Committee of their union which is due to endorse the deal—demanding it be rejected.

Department of Employment appeal—because of a "legal technicality".

He argued that the dispute was about the legal question: "We are looking at getting redundancy pay".

To look at getting the jobs back, he said is an "idle dream". Des Morgan, the convenor,

called for support for a mass demonstration and picket this Friday October 24 at the factory gates.

He said we must "show we are not going to accept the Employment Bill".

Mick Brightman from the Gardners occupation brought the solidarity of that strike committee.

Throughout the meeting not a single speaker attacked the trade union leaderships.

That a strike can go on for six months before being made official, and that the only direction given to those workers by their officials is towards seeking redundancy pay, is a disgrace.

The AUEW leadership has scandalously accepted 8.2% increase for engineering workers at a time of 17% inflation, arguing that "the main question" is saving jobs!

But then they help to sabotage the fight for jobs at a major plant!

Action must be organised both inside and outside Birמידs against the management.

The TGWU for example, which has members sacked, has the power to bring this firm to a halt.

But the only real basis for getting those in work to support the struggle is around the defence of the threatened jobs.

The factory should be re-opened—and all available work throughout the group shared on full pay.

The mass picket on Friday should be fully supported and all finance sent to:

Bro. J.A. Glasford, Secretary for Dispute Committee, 78, Longbridge Lane, Longbridge, Birmingham B31 2TW.

Just two weeks before hosting the November 1 labour movement conference 'Local Government in Crisis', Lambeth Labour Council together with its leader Ted Knight have decided they have 'no option' but to implement Tory policy and sell off council houses.

This ungainly retreat is defended on the grounds that if the council doesn't sell the houses, then the government will intervene and do so directly over the heads of councillors.

## Reject BL pay offer!

At talks between Leyland management and the National Joint Negotiating Committee, the company made a "final offer" of 6.8% and 8.2% on overtime and shift premiums.

This means a further 60p on top of the £5.40 offer to production workers.

The offer is extremely contentious to a workforce that has received only 5% at each of the last two wage reviews.

This means a total of only 16.8% over three years.

An indication of the feeling on BL wages was given last week when a mass meeting at the Cowley Assembly Plant and a stewards' meeting at the Body Plant both voted unanimously to reject the original 6.1% offer.

Even the highly bureaucratic JNC has rejected the new offer, and have called a senior stewards meeting next Monday to consider what to do.

But this is only four days away from the settlement date, meaning that mass meetings to take action—if they are called!—will only be a day or so before that date.

The most important question will be the position taken by the union leaderships.

If they leave the decision up to individual plants instead of calling out all BL workers—or if they call only limited action—then they know this to be a recipe for defeat.

The opportunities are there to link up with miners, water workers and others whose review date is in November.

Yet only a few weeks ago Knight drew a rousing ovation from the Labour Party conference when he moved a resolution calling on the NEC to co-ordinate action including industrial action to halt the cuts.

In his speech and in fringe meetings at the conference he made it clear that he was calling in effect for general strike action to defeat the Tories.

And he repeatedly (and not uncorrectly) rounded upon trade union leaders, attacking their abject refusal to mount action in defence of jobs and vital social services.

Councillors could not carry the fight alone, he argued.

Yet in Lambeth it is now 150 NALGO members in the housing department who are leading the fight against the Tory destruction of council housing—by refusing to implement the council's decision to sell.

### Newcastle

Like their colleagues in Labour-run Newcastle, the NALGO members are refusing to send out forms or give information on house sales—though applications are being logged.

It is this kind of action, significantly arising from the ranks rather than the leadership of the union, which offers a lead to the thousands of workers throughout the country

who are frustrated beyond belief at the refusal of their trade union leaders and the bulk of Labour councillors to lift a finger against the cuts.

The Lambeth conference on November 1 promises to be a large affair, drawing delegates from a wide spectrum of trade union and Labour Party bodies.

But if it is to be any more than a talk shop it must set its face firmly against the kind of compromises carried out by the Lambeth councillors, and declare all-out war on the Tory government.

### Rejected

Every cut in service, every closure, every redundancy must be opposed: rate and rent rises—widely used by councils like Lambeth last year as a way round the Tory cuts—must be rejected, and a full scale fight waged for general strike action to bring down the Thatcher government.

Amendments to the draft resolution designed to spell out such a policy have been tabled by Leicester AUEW 16 branch, and supported by Socialist Organiser, Socialist Press and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

We urge delegates to the Lambeth conference to support these amendments and step up the fight in their areas for action to defeat the Tories.

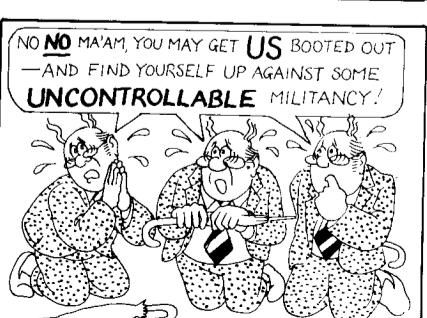
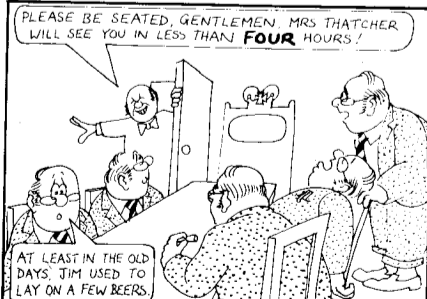
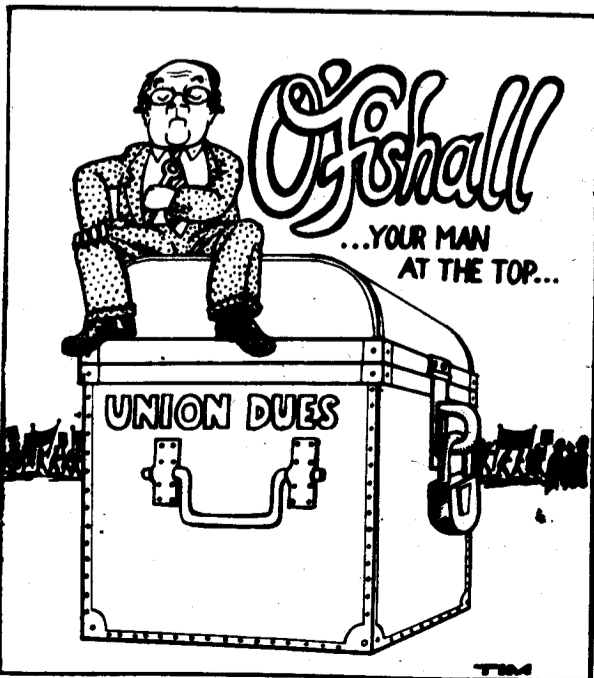
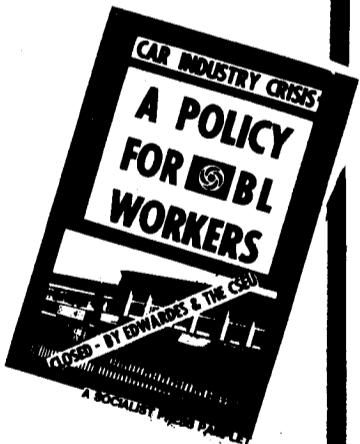


Ted Knight (left) on Lambeth anti-cuts protest

## Out now!

Bringing together recent material published in Socialist Press, this new pamphlet details the crisis in BL, the collaboration of the union leadership with Edwardes on the future of BL and explains how BL management are manoeuvring on this year's pay review.

Price 42p including p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.





# SOCIALIST PRESS



## STOP TORIES

## TO STOP

## CRUISE!



While they continue to press for a massive further build-up in the nuclear armory of US imperialism, both President Carter and Ronald Reagan are this week hypocritically parading disguised as apostles of 'peace' and detente.

Even while installing new and lethal long range Cruise and Pershing missiles in European NATO countries, Carter has sought electoral support by reviving the idea of endorsing the second Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT 2).

### NATO Alliance

At the same time the new military junta installed in Turkey with the blessing of US imperialism has agreed conditions for the readmission of Greece to the anti-Soviet NATO alliance.

Wherever you look, aggressive preparations are being made by the imperialist countries in order to strengthen their position in relation to the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

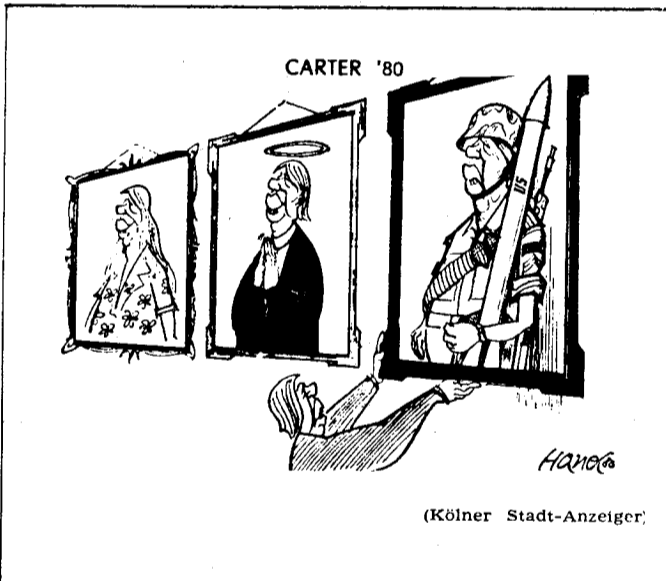
But this war drive is not intended directly as a threat to attack or invade Eastern Europe and the USSR: rather it is a part of the struggle by the imperialists to maintain or restore its control over the semi-colonial countries and nationalist regimes in Central and Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

To intimidate and if necessary crush anti-imperialist struggles in these parts of the world by overwhelming military force is the only option left for a world capitalist class whose insoluble economic crisis means starvation and abject misery for countless millions of oppressed workers and peasants.

### Working class

And the war drive is also part and parcel of the attacks on the working class in the imperialist countries themselves. In the USA Carter is to spend \$100 billion on the new MX missile system while slashing back spending on education, hospitals and social security.

And in Britain, too, Thatcher's £5,000 million plan to buy four Trident submarines



means still further cuts in health and social services.

But it is not only the cost of the new war moves that represents an attack on the working class: the recent Operation Square Leg made it clear that in attacking the deformed workers' states the British capitalist class intends also to impose dictatorial military rule over any British survivors of the nuclear holocaust.

The main tasks of the armed forces would not be to fight any external "enemy", but to repress and contain the British working class, while the bosses and their clique of generals and administrators live safely in their secret bunkers.

### World War 2

Just as in World War Two the British imperialists imposed dictatorial laws against the unions while supposedly fighting "fascism", so today Thatcher and leading imperialist chiefs plan to crush the workers' movement in the name of opposing Soviet "totalitarianism".

They are driven increasingly towards such a position by the logic of the capitalist crisis. So great is the overproduction that has developed in the anarchy of capitalist development that only a wholesale destruction of the productive forces of capitalism on a world scale can offer the surviving sections of capitalists the prospect of restored and

assured profitability in the longer term.

The Thatcher government's monetarist policies—traumatic as they seem for workers and for weaker sections of capitalists—fall short of the devastation needed to restore 'healthy' profits.

Yet the fact is that for the overwhelming majority of mankind there is no crisis of "over-

production". On the contrary there is simply grinding poverty and a chronic lack of the most basic necessities of life. It is the capitalist system, based on production not for need but for profit, that is unable to utilise and expand the productive forces.

To end the war danger; to defend and extend the productive potential developed under capitalism; to end the appalling poverty and deprivation in the underdeveloped economies, capitalism must be overthrown.

In Britain this means that those marching against nuclear weapons on October 26 must join forces with those sections of workers fighting the Tory spending cuts, the tens of thousands faced with redundancies and closures, and the millions suffering a fall in living standards, in mass struggle to bring down the Thatcher government.

No amount of "pressure" will stop this Tory government acting as an imperialist government: the task of every anti-war campaigner now is to fight in every way possible to defeat Thatcher and carry forward the fight against Labour's leading clique for a workers' government based on a planned socialist economy.

## FUND: STILL SLOW

With another £100 to add to the £64 that came in the previous week our Special Fund continues to come in too slowly. Fortunately a collection of £120.00 at a national aggregate meeting of the Workers Socialist League has helped to push us further towards our target.

However, we really must achieve a higher weekly income on this fund if we are to meet the target of the first £1,000 by November 15 and the remaining £500 by the beginning of December.

Inflation may be 'only' 15.9% but we are facing continual increases in our costs which just have to be met. That is why we are asking our readers and supporters to consider giving just one day's pay towards our fund. If you have not sent us a donation yet, why not send us a day's pay today. It is an investment in the struggle to mobilise working class action to bring down the Thatcher government and create the conditions to deal with the treacherous Labour and trade union leaders.

Our address is:

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

# IRISH POWs LAUNCH HUNGER STRIKE

In a few days' time—on October 27—republican prisoners of war in the 'H' Blocks of Long Kesh prison in the North of Ireland will go on hunger strike "to the bitter climax of death if necessary".

This desperate action flows from the prisoners' four year struggle for the restoration of political status.

This was stripped from them in 1976 by the Labour government, in a bid to portray republican militants as "criminals" for taking up arms against British imperialist oppression.

Though arrested by special forces, subjected to especially savage interrogation procedures, kept for months on end on special remand (as an undeclared form of internment), arraigned before special, no-jury courts, and sentenced to jail in the very special horror of Long Kesh, the British imperialists insist that these men (and the women prisoners of Armagh Jail) are simply common "criminals".

At present there are some 450 republican prisoners in Long Kesh. Many of them have been engaged for as much as four years in the courageous 'blanket' protest, in which they have refused to wear prison clothing or do prison work—and have been forced to remain clad only in a blanket in freezing, filthy cells.

### Appeal

For years the prisoners have appealed to the British labour movement for support to their struggle.

Yet almost unanimously the trade union and Labour leaders who so readily join protests against atrocities in Chile, South Africa and other distant parts have remained deaf and blind to the barbarism of their own ruling class in nearby Ireland.

Driven to desperation, the prisoners have now embarked on what could rapidly prove a final show of defiance and plea for help.

If any of the hunger strikers  
Cont'd page 2, col 5

## London LP move left

Further signs of the move to the left in the Labour Party were shown at the Special Conference held by London Labour Party at the weekend.

The decision was made to put forward a manifesto for the next GLC elections defying the Tories' spending cuts and expanding services.

The statement which was passed declares that:

"Mass opposition to Tory policies led by a Labour GLC could become the focal point of a national campaign, involving

other Labour councils against the cuts, for an immediate General Election and the election of a Labour government".

Although it is insufficient to omit any specific demand for strike action, and to limit the fight to an electoral strategy, this statement provides a good starting point for a struggle by local government workers and others aimed at defeating the Tories.

It also allows scope to avoid the incorrect strategy of fighting the cuts by increasing the rates.

The declaration does this by including the perspective of calling on a future Labour government to nationalise the banks, and to annul local authority debts without compensation.

"This", says the agreed GLC manifesto "would free local authorities from the burden of debt charges and allow a state bank to grant interest-free loans to fund local services and developments".

The adoption of policies such as these by a delegate conference shows the feeling of the rank and file and the possibilities opened up when the vice-like grip of the Callaghan leadership is prised loose.

Such policies must be extended and fought for in practice.

They must be linked to demands for strike action and for local authorities themselves to repudiate debts as the focal point of the mobilisation of millions of workers for the defeat of the Tory government.