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Inside:
BM routed—p.5
Stalinism in Cowley p.6-7
Lee Jeans—p.8
Poland

WILL FOOT FOUNDER WITH HEALEY?

In a foolhardy and fraudulent move, Michael Foot last week attempted to protect Dennis Healey from the strong challenge mounted by Tony Benn and from the hostility of Labour's rank and file.

Like a panic-stricken mountaineer in a hare-brained rescue bid, he lashed himself to the falling body of Dennis Healey.

But the upshot of this gamble could be that a defeat for Healey as Deputy Leader brings Foot, too, crashing from his unstable position as Party leader.

Indeed the whole "challenge" thrown down by Foot is a transparent fraud.

Could win

On the one hand Foot knows full well that Benn could win against Healey, and by doing so tilt the whole political balance within the Labour Party and the trade union movement.

On the other hand he also knows that for Benn to run against Foot would be simply a propaganda exercise, conducted without the slightest prospect of victory, and thus guaranteed to leave the present right wing domination of the Party intact.

Of course on a certain level Foot's argument is valid. In challenging the record of the Shadow Cabinet, which has mounted no serious fight to implement Party Conference policies, Benn is in reality challenging not simply Healey but also Party leader Foot.

The fact that the one-time "left"-talking Foot has become little other than a tattered dummy on the knee of Healey and the right wing is plain for all to see. Any attempt to distinguish between them is pointless.

Foot's ill-judged efforts to shield Healey from Benn's attack simply confirm this view.

Sharpest form

But it is Benn's campaign for the Deputy Leadership which has brought out this link in its sharpest, most unmistakable form. Even while proclaiming his continued support for Foot, Benn has succeeded—perhaps more than he ever wanted to succeed!—in exposing him as an agent of the right wing.

It is doubtful indeed whether Foot's last-ditch manoeuvre will shake any of the potential support for Benn.

Within the trade unions, opinion is already largely polarised between right and



left wing candidates—with nonentity John Silkin's candidacy serving only to increase Healey's chances.

It is on the outcome of the manoeuvres of right wing union bureaucrats in the big unions, and not at all on the swaying of rank and file support, that the political future of both Healey and Foot now hangs.

Conferences vital

Healey can already count on 2 million trade union votes—nearly half of them from the AUEW. Benn on the other hand can so far reckon on only around one million votes, having secured support from ASTMS, ASLEF, SOGAT, TASS, FTAT and the Bakers Union and support from the NUPE leadership in a ballot of their members.

This is why the two big union conferences in the next few weeks are vital. It would be a major reverse for the right wing were Benn to secure the backing of the GMWU (in conference this week): but there must be a real chance of Benn's rank and file supporters overturning the union's Executive to secure support at the TGWU conference on June 22-26.

Were they to do so, Benn could then hope to win the backing of the NUM and

definitively squash Silkin's red-herring candidacy.

As the pro-Healey lobby (embracing the whole of Labour's right wing and the Tory press) are reinforced in their anti-Benn campaign by former and fake "lefts" such as Foot, Neil Kinnock and TGWU deputy leader Alex Kitson, the issues at stake in this deputy leadership contest become clearer than ever.

In extending our critical support to Benn, and campaigning for CLPs, MPs and trade unions to be mandated to support his campaign we are not defending his inadequate and confused policies: we are lending our support to the struggle by Labour's rank and file to cleanse the Party's leadership of lackeys of the IMF, NATO and the EEC.

In striking a blow against the Healey/Foot leadership, the election of Benn would underline the growing demand for party democracy, accountability and a genuine alternative to the right wing politics of the last Labour government.

And in the fight to oust Healey a new leadership can and must be built in the left wing of the labour movement, equipped to offer a worked out alternative to the politics of class collaboration and piecemeal reform.

VICTORY TO THE HUNGER STRIKES!

The June 13 demonstration in support of the H Block hunger strikers is an important focus for the growing move towards solidarity with the Irish struggle.

It has taken the trauma of the deaths of four brave republican prisoners on hunger strike in Long Kesh: it has taken years of patient political work by a handful of anti-imperialists in the teeth of a barrage of imperialist propaganda, but at long last there are signs that important sections of the British labour movement are beginning to respond to the struggle of their Irish brothers and sisters.

Bobby Sands' election as MP in Fermanagh/S. Tyrone—with more votes cast for

him than Margaret Thatcher got in Tory Finchley—coupled with the sacrifice of his death and the colossal turn-out on his funeral in Belfast appear finally to have touched an apparently ossified nerve in the British working class.

Whether or not they agree with the politics and tactics of the IRA, more and more workers are recognising that Sands, his fellow hunger strikers, and other republican prisoners are not—as the press depicts them—simply isolated "criminals", but prisoners of war, with huge popular support captured in the course of their struggle against an occupying army.

The explosion of anger of black youth against continual state harassment in Brixton also brought home to

**Demonstrate
Saturday 13 June**

**SUPPORT THE IRISH PRISONERS'
FIVE DEMANDS!
STOP THE DEATHS!**

**Assemble 1.30 p.m. at Finsbury Park
March to Hyde Park**

**Called by the H Block/Armagh
Committee**

SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS FORCE BACK FIRESTONE BOSSSES

Fight for solidarity with BL strike!

Militant united action by black workers in the South African motor industry has won a major victory against the capitalists and their strike-breaking weapons of mass victimisations.

Last week, management at Firestone Tyre factory in Port Elizabeth were forced to reinstate immediately some of the 160 workers they had sacked in February after a strike, and to promise to take back the rest.

This victory was won by substantial blacking and mass strike action by workers at Fords, General Motors and Firestone itself.

Breakthrough

It is a major breakthrough for the whole workers' movement in the face of a class enemy that uses the vicious weapons of mass unemployment and police terror against workers fighting for their needs and interests.

This forced retreat for the capitalists came at the same time as their apartheid state was using its army to try to crush a mobilisation of black youth in Johannesburg.

Workers at Fords and GM had taken blacking action in April against Firestone tyres, in response to a call by the 160 victimised workers for support in their struggle for reinstatement.

This solidarity action was extended into a strike by



BL Landrovers in action against Soweto blacks

about 2,000 workers at these plants on May 20. Then on May 21 they were joined in united strike action by the 1500-strong workforce at Firestone.

In the face of united and determined class action which was crippling profits and threatening to escalate through wider sections of the black working class, Firestone bosses were forced to back down.

The task facing workers must now be to make sure

that management is forced to stick to its agreement to reinstate every victimised worker.

The Firestone struggle has shown the way forward to united class action in defence of any group of workers under attack. It is a fighting example of class solidarity to workers in South Africa and internationally.

Every mobilisation of black workers in South Africa is confronted with the

rising trend of victimisation by capitalists and their apartheid state. Every group of workers in struggle needs to be able to draw on the support and strength of their class brothers and sisters—in South Africa, Britain and in other countries.

The Firestone struggle has shown the strongest forms of independent class action for building support and solidarity. It has shown the weapons that are already in the hands of workers.

At the present time, there are crucial struggles being fought in South Africa that can be greatly strengthened by supporting action from the British labour movement.

500 striking workers at Rowntree-MacKintosh's subsidiary Wilson-Rowntree in East London are fighting for reinstatement and recognition of their union.

And at BL's wholly-owned subsidiary in Cape Town workers are resisting the attempts of BL management to crush their strike for decent wages and against victimisation.

2,500 BL workers struck on May 14 to reject a miserable wage offer. They were all sacked for refusing to obey a return-to-work command from management on May 20.

possible blacking action in support of the South African workers.

Convenors are directed to investigate all links between their plant and the South African plants, to assess what blacking action can be taken against supplies and to report back to the next Combine Committee meeting.

Clear lead

The campaign being taken up in BL gives a clear and solid lead to solidarity action in support of other struggles. In particular the same fight must be taken up with Rowntree-MacKintosh workers and in their unions, for action in support of Wilson-Rowntree workers in South Africa.

In October 1980 workers at the Wilson-Rowntree factory in East London were reprimanded for fixing a machine. It was said they had done fitters' work.

In February 1981 three workers were asked to perform the same type of work. They refused, knowing from the previous incident that unless they got written permission from the foreman they could be sacked.

They also asked to be paid for doing the fitters' work, (the rate for the job).

The foreman refused to give them written authorisation so they downed tools and were instantly dismissed. (They were not even sacked through the proper procedure).

Committee

Within weeks, workers from other departments protested by downing tools until such time as these three workers were reinstated. They also were sacked.

The workers' committee, democratically elected by 90% of those that have joined the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU), negotiated with management but to no avail.

Management only recognises the unrepresentative registered Sweet Workers Union which has apartheid built into its constitution.

Consequently management is afraid of SAAWU because it truly represents the workers interests.

After fruitless negotiations the rest of the workers downed tools and were dismissed. Management has now sacked 500 striking workers.

Pool of labour

Thousands of people are unemployed in the Eastern Cape and Wilson-Rowntrees has been able to draw replacements from this pool of labour.

All but one of the workers committee members are in jail where they have been on hunger strike.

Management is working with the Ciskei Security Police to break the SAAWU's strength.

SAAWU has called a boycott of all Wilson-Rowntree products.

This boycott is being supported in Cape Town by workers, students and many community organisations, as well as in other urban areas.

Back in the UK the majority of workers in Rowntree-MacKintosh are members of the TGWU, GMWU and USDAW.

These unions are in collaboration with Rowntree Mackintosh through a Joint Negotiating Council (JNC).

It is believed that on May 18 the National Officers of these three unions had secret talks with Rowntrees chairman on the situation in South Africa.

The shop stewards' delegates on this JNC had no knowledge of this until now. Confirmation of these secret talks is being sought. Only a Rowntree workers strike in the UK will win this one.

Speeches

The union of the South African workers has already appealed in February to the TUC for support. But workers in Britain who saw this reported on TV have heard nothing from TUC leaders as to what they are doing to mobilise action.

These leaders are happy to make rousing speeches against apartheid in general, but act to block class action in support of specific struggles by black workers against capitalists and their apartheid state. They are the same leaders who are holding back struggles in Britain around jobs, wages, social services and democratic rights.

*The TGWU 5/60 Branch representing the entire membership in BL's Body Plant, meeting on Sunday passed a resolution of solidarity and calling for blacking action.

Poland: new danger

From back page

TASS said the Forum's analysis is based on "Marxist-Leninist positions". Neues Deutschland says the Forum was the only political group which had correctly assessed the present situation in Poland.

The Czech press has said that the Forum represented the "healthy core" of the Polish CP, and according to the *Morning Star*, went on to attack certain public figures in Poland for advocating "Trotskyite principles".

Even previously reserved "an leadership has weighed in with a defence of the Forum.

Solidarity has declared that the statements were a permit for Soviet intervention and likened the way the situation was assessed to that in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The real reason for these attacks on the Polish working class is the continuing development of their anti-bureaucratic struggle, which

cannot be stopped by the bureaucracy or their church allies.

This week the Roman Catholic church called on Solidarity not to engage in any more strikes for 30 days as a mark of respect for the dead Polish Primate.

But the Solidarity leadership voted by 22-13 to go ahead with a two hour warning strike in four northern provinces over the fact that the police who beat up trade union leaders in Bydgoszcz have still not been brought to justice.

This strike will take place just as the two month moratorium on strikes ends. It was decided to have a warning strike instead of a general strike but the pressure is on for more extended action.

Exhausted

A Central Committee meeting of the Party has now been convened to discuss the warning strike and the next moves and deputy premier Rakovsky has said that the ability of the government to compromise has now been exhausted.

Meanwhile four members of the anti-communist Confederation of Independent Poland have been released

from jail pending their trial on June 15.

Even the release of these reactionaries is a blow to the bureaucracy because it challenges their right to imprison people simply for their political views and not for actions against the workers' state.

Workers' court

If they have carried out such acts, then they should be brought before an independent workers' court.

The fact that there are now no unions outside of Solidarity and the collapse of the so-called official unions has been underlined by the fact that it is Lech Walesa and a Solidarity delegation that is representing Poland at the annual ILO conference in Geneva.

For years leaders of the official unions have been attending, representing no-one but themselves.

Walesa has shown his political weakness in his statements at the conference.

Although he has said it is not the workers' struggles that have created the economic crisis in Poland, he has suggested that Solidarity may limit wage demands because of that crisis.



Polish strikers

Mitterand wobbles in high wire act

Our French Correspondent Ernie Stubbins looks at the run up to the National Assembly elections

Divergence of style and policy are already beginning to show up within the ranks of Mitterand's 'government of all tendencies' within the Parti Socialiste.

While it is still too early for public disagreements to have been voiced among ministers, and while they will try to keep quiet about possible discords before the elections, there is no doubt that Mitterand's attempt to build a government out of all the different types of 'socialist' is not going to last too long.

The first reason is that the legislative elections will give a clearer picture of the mood of the people, and therefore allow Mitterand and his Prime Minister Mauroy to lean more strongly in one direction or another.

But the second reason is that the range of views and styles which they have tried to accommodate within the government is simply too broad, and cannot lead to the development of a coherent approach—and if there is one thing the French electorate loathes above all else it is incoherence.

Divisions

In this week's developments, we begin to see the divisions opening up between the energetic reforming zeal of the 'left' of the party, as shown by the package of social measures announced on Thursday, and the openly right wing militarism shown by the new defence minister Charles Hernu in his opposition to the spread of the campaign for soldiers' rights.

The social measures enacted by the Conseil des Ministres includes a 10% rise



Mitterand

in the value of the statutory minimum wage (SMIC) to take effect from 1 June.

After taking account of the 3.3% increase in prices over the last three months, this will leave the lowest paid some 6. % better off.

Such a major lift in the SMIC is certain to trigger a wave of wage demands to maintain differentials, and the bosses are already expressing concern about this 'knock on' effect.

The government is maintaining a cautious approach to this aspect of the wages question, and has not yet promised any further review of the SMIC, but has reminded the country of its 'long

term' intention to bring about some degree of catching up between the bottom and the middle of the national wage scales.

Firms will be partly compensated for the extra cost of the SMIC increase by a reduction in the level of social security contribution required of them in the case of the lower paid workers.

Other measures included in the social package are an

increase of 20% in the minimum pension, to 1700 francs per month and 25% increases in a range of family allowances, allowances to the handicapped, and rent allowances.

The last case will come as a disappointment to many low paid workers who were expecting increases of up to 50%.

Further announcements

are promised for June 10 (expected to include a scheme to create 40,000 new public sector jobs and for June 17 (on reducing the cost of credit to small and medium sized firms, and an index linked savings measure).

Weekly meetings

This programme of announcements makes clever use of the system of weekly meetings of ministers each followed by press conferences, which is the way things are usually done in France, in the run up to the legislative elections.

At the same time the new ministers of housing and education have been making public statements about their own plans and programmes for improved conditions.

But as quickly as they try to peddle the image of the Parti Socialiste as a forward looking and reforming organisation, defence minister Hernu drives furiously in the opposite direction.

In a televised interview on Tuesday he stated that it was 'inconceivable' that there should exist soldiers' committees in the French army, and that they would have to be dissolved where ever they were found.

Army committees

'Inconceivable' or not, these committees exist, and not just in the French army but in several European armies.

In fact the committees have gone out of their way to avoid embarrassing the left parties in their campaign against Giscard.

They actually cancelled their planned European Congress, which was due to have taken place in Paris between the two rounds of the Presidential election.

The Parti Socialiste's programme declares itself in opposition to what it calls 'anarchic' soldiers' committees, by which it means organisations created by the soldiers themselves to represent their interests.

But it was in support of a series of democratic reforms of the present system of 'Regimental Committees' which include a minority of representatives from the ranks, and who are in any case selected by the commanders.

The PS programme promised a system of unit committees to be elected by secret ballot, Hernu seems to be in no hurry to implement this promise.

It is unlikely that the soldiers' movement will let the PS off this particular hook. Already there are fierce arguments raging about the right of officers and commanders to censor electoral literature sent to the barracks and living quarters of the soldiers.

Troubled conscience

It is certain that this issue will continue to trouble the conscience of the PS up to the last day of the election campaign and into the life of the next Assembly.

Hernu also announced the resumption of the series of nuclear weapons tests on the pacific atoll of Mururoa,

suspended since 25 May.

The decisions involved in the suspension and resumption are likely to remain shrouded in secrecy for some time yet.

There has certainly been opposition from several pacific states, notably New Zealand, to the carrying out of previous series of tests, and the suggestion has been widely circulated that the most recent series of tests have involved a neutron bomb prototype.

Obviously any public admission of the existence of a neutron bomb testing programme would have important electoral consequences, and the whole matter is being dealt with cautiously.

It was only after a private discussion with Mitterand himself that Hernu felt able to announce the resumption of the test series.

Tendencies

For Mitterand, balancing the conflicting tendencies within the PS continues to be a major headache, as the controversy over the appointment of Regis Debray to his secretariat shows.

However, this is nothing compared to the problems he is likely to encounter in the course of the election campaign.

In next week's *Socialist Press* we hope to have full details of the electoral pact concluded between the PS and the French Communist Party, designed to switch votes in the second round to the most successful left candidate from the first round.

At the time of writing it seems that Mitterand has succeeded in concluding such a pact without extending any promise of government positions to Communist Party members but it is highly unlikely that this can lead to a stable formation of government.

Almost certainly there has been some secret deal arranged with Marchais to the effect that the PCF will have some form of recognition of its contribution to the vote, but that the extent of this will depend on how far the election result shows a swing to the left in the country as a whole.

Break from past

All this wheeling and dealing is of course part of the fabric of French political life. It should not blind us to the need for a serious break with the kind of political tradition which has held back the French working class since the war.

The demand now must continue to be for a joint government of the PS and the French Communist Party but without the bourgeois 'left radicals' of the MRG. Workers must demand that such a government of their mass parties govern directly in the interests of the working class and peasants.

Without this fundamental realignment it is only a matter of time until Mitterand's balancing skill fails him and leaves the country to fall back into the hands of the right wing.

Irish workers go to the polls

By the time this issue of *Socialist Press* is on sale voting will be almost over in the Irish elections on Thursday June 11.

Twelve candidates are standing on a platform designed to make the question of the British imperialist presence in the North the main issue in the election.

The four Long Kesh hunger strikers, four other Long Kesh prisoners of war, and Mairead Farrell from Armagh women's gaol are all standing as candidates with the backing of a campaign mounted by the National H Block/Armagh Committee.

In addition H Block campaigner Vincent Doherty is standing against Prime Minister on behalf of the Trotskyist Peoples Democracy group.

Paddy Healy of the Trotskyist League for a Workers

Republic and also a prominent member of the National H Block Committee is standing as a 'Trade Unionist against H Block' candidate in Dublin North East.

And Scan Kelleher, son of veteran republican leader Tom Kelleher, is standing on behalf of the H Block action group in Cork South West.

The Irish preferential vote system, together with multi-seat constituencies, offers Irish workers the opportunity to vote both for H Block and other candidates.

While it is not clear if they can repeat the success of Bobby Sands, they are nevertheless likely to attract a substantial vote.

The H Block Committee has issued criteria by which to judge other candidates—all of which revolve solely around the prisoners and the links between the bourgeois Free State and the British

repression in the North.

But there are other issues which will also be weighed in the minds of working class voters in Ireland—not least the immediate question of jobs and living standards.

With the Irish Labour Party standing for the first time in ages for election without any prior commitment to a coalition with the right wing opposition party Fine Gael, it is likely that many trade unionists will lend their electoral support to the party sponsored by their unions.

Such support needs to be followed through by a sustained fight against the politics of coalition and class collaboration.

In any event, no matter how 'radical' the verbal stance of Haughey's Fianna Fail or Blaney's Independent Fianna Fail on the national question it must be clear that such parties of the bourgeoisie offer no independent way forward to the working class or those fighting for the removal of British troops from the North and a united Irish workers' republic.

NEW!

Socialist Press pamphlet on Southern Africa

Price 60p (including postage) from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

Heseltine seeks dictatorial powers to impose cuts

By John Lister



Thousands more jobs and vital public services provided by local authorities throughout the country face the axe as a result of the latest Tory spending cuts.

Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine has announced that £450 million in government grants are to be withheld from English councils unless they submit new cuts in their spending by the end of this month.

This means in reality a cut of £900 million in the budget of local government. And in case councils try to dodge the necessity for actual cutbacks by imposing supplementary rate demands, Heseltine is planning to force through new legislation to give him dictatorial power to limit rate rises.

In Scotland seven local councils already face an ultimatum: either they impose swingeing Tory cuts or face a loss of £63 million in grants.

£53 million of this is to come from just one council—Lothian, Scotland's second largest regional council—where Labour has a majority of one.

Lothian council leader Phyllis Heriot has said that to make cuts of this huge

order would mean the loss of up to 6,000 jobs in the region and "decimate" vital services.

The council has clung in recent years to the policy of preserving local services by raising the rates. This year's rate increase was 50%. Now Heseltine is demanding that £53 million be handed back to the ratepayers.

The continued inability of Heseltine to impose his strategy of spending cuts on local authorities has been an ongoing embarrassment to the Thatcher government.

His new fangled "block grant" system has fallen flat on its face. Indeed many of the councils which face penalties under the latest cuts in grant are Tory-controlled county councils which have tirelessly hacked at budgets for education and social services, but balked at the full savagery of the government's latest cash limits.

Heseltine is in fact demanding that councils prune spending this year to 5.6% below the volume of expenditure three years ago in 1978/79.

Yet with unemployment and poverty having rapidly increased in the last three years, the numbers in need of social services have also increased.

None of this worries

Heseltine a millionaire or the wealthy capitalists, speculators and landowners who staff the Tory cabinet.

Depressed profits

For them, the only guiding light is their mission—to drive up the depressed rate of profit of British industry.

To do this, they reason, they need to minimise the tax burden on employers at local as well as national level—by cutting or holding down increases in rates.

To do this, they must in turn slash services to the sick and the elderly, to youth in schools and colleges and to the whole working class community.

This is in effect what Heseltine's number two, Tom King, meant last week when he complained that the Tories had been forced into their attack on the powers of local councils.

"I see a risk not from our actions, but from a remorseless march of circumstance."

The Tories have never made any secret of their starting point—private profit. But the problem faced by the working class has been that Labour and trade union leaders, too, either openly or tacitly accept the same starting point.

The Wilson/Callaghan

Labour government began the wholesale offensive on the public services precisely because it accepted that the profits of private industry had to be preserved and improved—if necessary at the expense of the working class.

Elected by workers looking for anti-capitalist policies, the Labour government instead took its instructions from the bankers of the IMF.

But the same attitude is also prevalent among Labour councillors. While they have mouthed opposition to the Tory cuts, Labour councils have almost without exception pulled back from preparing any serious confrontation with the government—and imposed cuts, generally coupled with hefty rate and rent increases, which fall on the shoulders of their working class supporters.

And in this stand they have had the support of public sector union bureaucrats who have stood back with folded arms as their members have been made redundant or "naturally wasted".

This is why a serious struggle against the latest Tory attack on local government is inseparable from the fight for a new leadership within the labour movement

that will make its starting point not the problems of the capitalist class or the acceptance of Tory dictates, but the defence of the jobs, living standards and hard-won rights of the working class.

In several areas strong "Labour Left" groupings emerged in the course of last winter's struggles against the cuts. These groupings must renew the offensive against the right wing in Labour councils and the unions.

Heseltine and King are arrogantly talking of the new legislation meaning "the end of local government as we know it."

Let's make the fight on the issue bring the end of local government as we know it—and the start of the struggle for accountable labour movement representation! And let's fight for mass local action leading to all out general strike action to bring down the Tory government!

*No cuts! No rate/rent increases!

*Defend jobs and public services—for strike action, no-cover action and occupations to stop cuts and closures!

*Labour councils must take a stand! Prepare mass action to bring down the Tories!



Heseltine vilified by cuts demonstrators

Fighting for Labour solidarity with Irish prisoners

Leicester

Don Concannon must be seriously looking over his shoulders these days.

His reactionary visit to Bobby Sands' death bed to declare his support for Tory repression in Ireland far from expressing the mood of the Labour Party now looks more like the bitter rantings of a petty bureaucrat who sees he has lost control.

Symptomatic of this are the moves in Leicester in both local unions and the Labour Party. Ireland has in the past month, become the sharp edge of discussion.

Signature

First, following South constituency MP Jim Marshall's signing of the early day motion regretting Sands' death the General Management Committee issued a press statement supporting Marshall's action and the campaign for political status and also held a minute's silence for Sands.

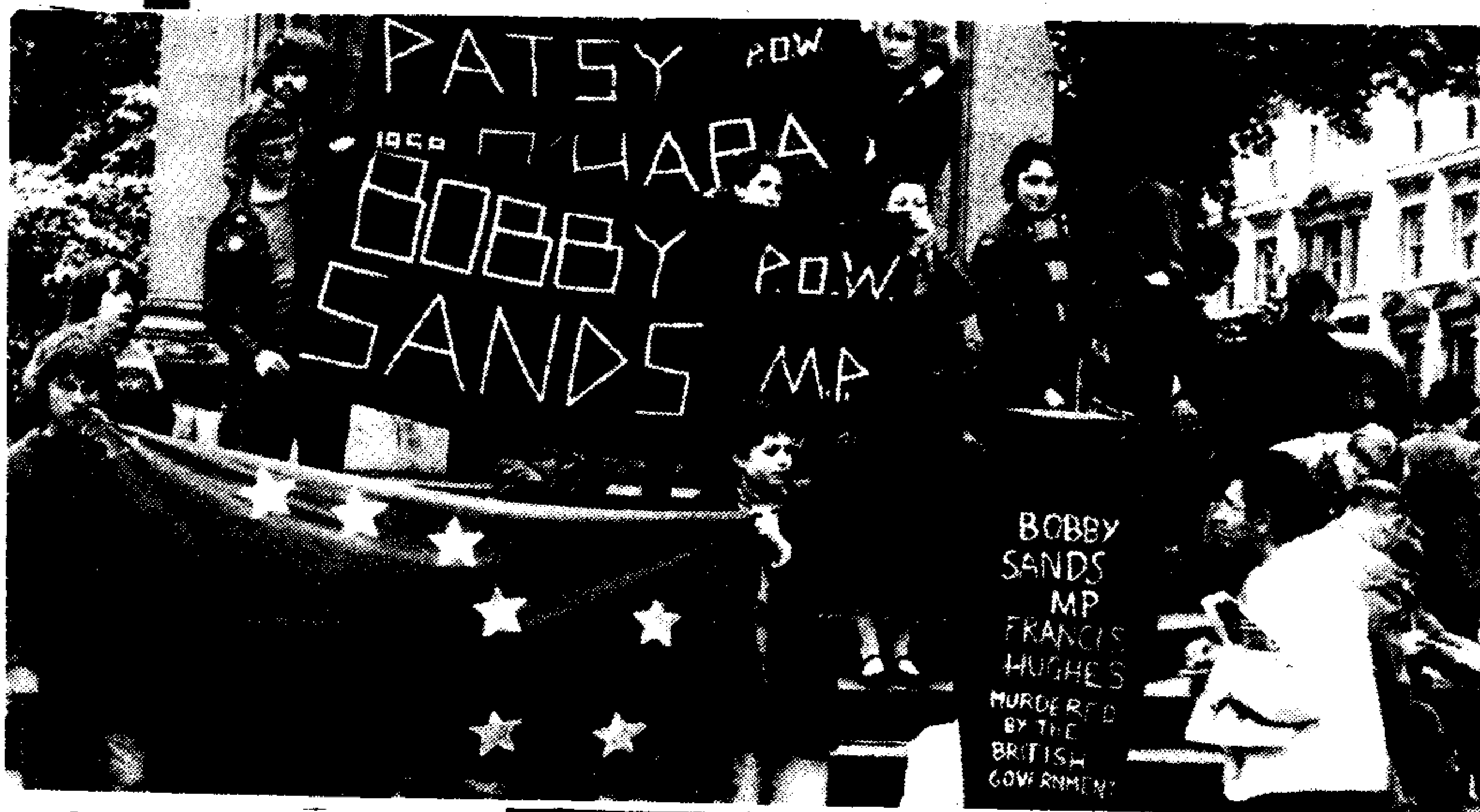
Then, during the selection meetings for a candidate to replace Social Democrat Tom Bradley in East constituency, City Council Labour Group leader Pete Soulsby declared himself, at an SEA meeting, in favour of political status and troops out and called for an end to bipartisanship.

The local Tory rag, *Leicester Mercury*—owned by the *Daily Mail*—was hysterical with rage. But worse was to come. Last week, against the wishes of all its officers, the local Trades Council re-affirmed its support not only for political status, but also for troops out, Irish self determination and the scrapping of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

All this against a background of open witch-hunting in which Paul Hoare, Trades Council President— with typical impartiality—advised delegates that since no union nationally supported such policies no delegate should really be able to vote in favour of the four demands. When delegates from NUPE, AUEW, UCATT, APEX and TASS proceeded to lambast this craven covering up for army repression in Ireland, and to win the vote, the officers responded in truly "representative" fashion.

"Concern"

The *Leicester Mercury* was allowed to print a statement from Brian Prangle, Trades Council Secretary, expressing concern at this democratic vote and urging unions to carefully investi-



Oxford campaigners mount vigil for dead hunger strikers.

gate how their delegates had voted. Such statements are an obvious cue for right wing inspired witch-hunts of Irish militants and the left on Ireland.

Union branches

The left must respond by building the newly established local Labour Committee on Ireland, stepping up the campaign to win union branches and Labour Party wards to the four demands, and by countering the witch-hunters by asking now "who do they speak for?" The elected delegates who established Trades Council policy or the embattled right wing rump in the labour movement who want to bureaucratically defend imperialist domination in Ireland.

Leeds

In Leeds, Chapel Allerton ward of the Labour Party at a well-attended meeting voted by nearly 2-1 to endorse a resolution which:

*Opposed Michael Foot's criticisms of Bobby Sands;

*Called for political status to be granted to all republican prisoners sentenced by the Diplock Courts;

*Supports those MPs who have broken and campaigned for a break in the bi-partisan policy on Ireland;

*Calls for a policy of troops out of Ireland.

The motion was selected as the ward's resolution to go forward to the GMC of

North East Leeds CLP for submission to the Labour Party conference.

An alternative motion on Ireland sponsored by supporters of the Militant tendency received only 4 votes.

In Leeds as a whole there is comparatively strong support for the 'H' Block struggle. A demonstration through the city called by local 'H' Block campaigners attracted 450 people.

This support must be taken into the organised labour movement, and in particular consolidated within the Labour Party by the building of a local branch of the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Coventry

The campaign around the Irish war is beginning to have an impact in the Coventry labour movement.

The last meeting of Coventry South West CLP adopted a resolution which included a call to break Labour's bi-partisan policy, for the sacking of Concannon and for support of the five demands of the hunger strikers.

Encouragement

This should give great encouragement to those who have felt themselves isolated from labour movement support in the campaign so far.

Passing resolutions is of course only the first step in any campaign, and efforts must be made to find ways of putting flesh on the South West CLP policy—support for the July 4 demonstration in Concannon's constituency for example.

While it would be correct to point out that many people who vote to support the five demands in labour movement organisations do so from a variety of standpoints, one thing is becoming clearer every day. Many, many trade unionists and socialists are heartily sickened by the sycophantic support given to the Tories by the Labour leadership.

The road is opening daily for Ireland to become a seriously discussed issue within the Coventry labour movement.

And that road has been forced open by the deter-

mination of the H Block hunger strikers.

Whatever one's attitude to the Republican movement you can't get away from the fact that people branded as "sadistic", "mindless" murderers are prepared to die for their five demands, that 30,000 people were prepared to vote Bobby Sands into Parliament, and 100,000 were prepared to show where they stood by attending his funeral.

This is making many people rethink their whole attitude to the Irish struggle.

We should not be surprised that as the case of the hunger strikers begins to get a hearing and a response, that forces fundamentally opposed to the Irish freedom fighters will win temporary victories.

One case in point is Coventry NALGO, which has condemned the support given to the local Ad Hoc Hunger Strike Action Committee by the Trades Council.

Branch officials have announced that they are monitoring the activities of the Trades Council and the NALGO delegates on it might argue for disaffiliation at the December AGM.

It is understood that similar moves are to be expected in other unions locally.

But if the issues are carefully spelt out and a serious fight is waged, whatever small defeats are inflicted by the right wing will do them no good.

The labour movement in the city is beginning to discuss the Irish war.

Long term gloom for unemployed

By Terry Smith

Every time a Tory economic spokesman speaks of light at the end of the tunnel there appears to be another fall of rock.

Last week in fact there were two such major land-slips. Firstly three economic surveys were published, each of which underlined the certainty of continuing mass unemployment in Britain over the next few years.

And secondly the pound plunged abruptly in the foreign exchange markets, dropping below the \$2 mark for the first time in 18 months.

The fall in the value of the pound has a wide range of embarrassing implications for the government—and for those in the CBI who have moaned and groaned continuously that only the artificially high value of the pound was keeping British industry out of world markets.

The last six months has seen the pound fall by 20% against the dollar: in the last few days of last week alone it fell 6%. Yet this is greeted with no enthusiasm by many sections of employers.

They now argue that sterling has fallen in value too fast to give them the opportunity to exploit the relatively lower prices of British goods in export markets.

It takes time to win new orders—and to turn those orders into finished goods.

Others complain that the fall has been largely against the dollar and not so much against European currencies. This means that imports of raw materials for industry have increased in cost, while the scope for increased sales has been strictly limited.

Oil and chemical firms in particular have complained that this imbalance, combined with the falling price of North Sea oil will squeeze their profits.

Other bosses are worried that with the fall in oil prices and with the glut of oil leading to reduced production, the British balance of payments will lurch into deficit—further weakening the pound and forcing a new round of seige-economy measures.

Indeed there is already speculation that the scale and speed of the most recent drop in the value of sterling will force the Thatcher government to scrap further proposed cuts in Minimum Lending Rate—or even increase it again, with ruinous repercussions in

industry. Elsewhere other employers—and workers who remember previous falls in the value of sterling—are looking anxiously towards the prospect of a new round of price inflation as imported goods and raw materials become more and more expensive, giving a new boost to the cost of living.

Why, then, did the pound fall?

The world bankers appear to have responded to a combination of a weakening in North Sea oil prices (BNOC is now cutting its price by \$2 a barrel), a continued and apparently never-ending slump in the British home economy, and the fall in British interest rates compared to those in Europe and

the USA.

For Thatcher there is now the agonising dilemma of whether or not to take steps to raise once again the value of sterling by promoting a new round of recession at home: for workers there is only the prospect on the one hand of more inflation, and on the other of more closures, redundancies and speed-up on the shop floor.

This Hobson's choice for workers under capitalism is also illustrated by the latest forecast of the National Institute of Economic and Scientific Research.

It predicts a drop in output of 2.5% this year, meaning a growth in adult unemployment from the present 2½ million to 3 million by the end of 1982.

NIESR forecasts next to no increase in output next year, and points out that employment has fallen much further in the current recession than in the last similar downturn in 1975—but that productivity has fallen relatively far less.

In other words production is being established on a less labour-intensive basis as employers ram through new plans for speed-up and new technology: and as a result any future increase in output is likely to provide jobs for relatively far less additional workers.

The NIESR predicts an average fall in living standards of 1½% during 1981, and no improvement in 1982.

In other words whatever way the Tory government

(or any government committed to capitalist policies) sets out to meet the current crisis, the plight of the working class and particularly the unemployed—can only worsen.

Only the most tenacious action to defend jobs and living standards and prepare generalised strike action to bring down the Tories can create conditions for a genuine alternative.

And within the labour movement there must be a fight for socialist policies of nationalisation of basic industries and banks without compensation under workers' management as the essential basis for a workers' plan to meet the crisis and establish a crash programme of public works to create 3 million jobs.



Peoples Marchers in London:

What the TUC plans next, see page 11

BM Nazis routed in Oxford

British Movement plans to launch an "anti-IRA" march in Oxfordshire were thwarted by the largest anti-fascist turnout the county has ever seen.

Fascists from Rugby, Peterborough and other towns had travelled to Oxford by train and minibus. But even after picking up support from a handful of local fascists their numbers never rose above 40.

Black youth

In contrast about 700 anti-fascists turned out to meet them—including for the first time in the town large numbers of black youth.

A small group of fascists were chased from the town centre and did their friends no favours at all by leading the group of 60 to 70 chasing them to the pub where they were getting up the courage to march.

There, at the Old Gate House, the startled landlord—who thought he had some quiet, nice strangers in his pub—barricaded the doors as he saw large numbers of West Indian



youth approaching.

But such was the anger of the anti-fascists that the pub door was torn off its

hinges and rocks were hurled through the windows.

The fascists fled into the cellars and upstairs but

several were caught and given severe beatings. The anti-fascists left but two were arrested between the pub and the centre of town.

One black youth now faces two charges of carrying offensive weapons and two of assaulting police. A white man faces charges of actual bodily harm, threatening behaviour and carrying an offensive weapon.

The real offensive weapons were found after the fascists had fled. Placards had been stacked in a road near the pub with British Movement slogans.

The fascists had tried to cash in on local anti-IRA feeling in the weeks following the burial of an Abingdon soldier, killed by an IRA landmine.

'Red stronghold'

But one of the fascists from Peterborough told a reporter that they had chosen Oxford because it "was a red stronghold". He said he had escaped a beating in the pub by hiding upstairs "because we don't believe in violence".

The anti-fascist mobilisation now provides the base to build a united front between black youth and the trade unions in the town.

But it also showed alarm-

ing weaknesses. The demonstration was hijacked by the ANL who provided speaking equipment for the rally and who negotiated endlessly with the police.

A march only took place when a growing mutiny in the ranks threatened to march with or without permission.

These tactics meant that the main body of the demonstration never came

into contact with the fascists.

If they had been dealt with earlier they would not have taken refuge in a pub, a landlord would not now be counting the cost of putting his pub back together and most important of all there need have been no arrests.

If the British Movement return they will need to be met by better organised and better led forces.

Brixton-picket Scarman cover-up!

On June 15 Lord Justice Scarman is descending on Brixton to start the Tories' inquiry into the events of April 11 and 12.

Scarman's task will not be to expose the thuggery and racism of the Metropolitan police. Nor will he be investigating youth unemployment in the area, or the awful housing conditions that a high proportion of Brixton people have to endure.

In fact Scarman is not at all interested in why riots broke out in Brixton over that weekend. His inquiry was set up by the Tories for their own purposes: to whitewash the role of the police and to

look for more efficient means of controlling and policing multi-racial poor areas such as Brixton.

Anyone who was on the streets at the time of the uprising and gives evidence about the brutality of the police is bound to be harassed and persecuted afterwards, in spite of Scarman's guarantee of "immunity from prosecution".

So far about 400 people have been arrested on charges arising from the riot—many of these as a result of the countless house raids that have taken place in the area since April 12.

Houses have been smashed open, and personal possessions seized on the pretext of looking for looters.

None of the black or gay organisations in Brixton are likely to give evidence to Scarman. The people who suffer from the worst police repression can see through such cover-ups.

Unfortunately the same cannot be said of the white dominated Labour Parties: Lambeth council Labour Group has already agreed to submit evidence and is supported in this by the two Labour Parties that cover the area.

Boycott

The Trades Council, however, has agreed to boycott the inquiry, despite the TUC's decision to participate.

In response to the Scar-

man inquiry, a picket has been organised to protest at its arrival and point to the real purpose behind it.

In order to make the protest as effective and big as possible a united leaflet has been written by 13 left wing groups and gay organisations.

The leaflet calls for all charges arising from the riot to be dropped and for a complete boycott of the Scarman cover-up.

It is hoped that some of the black organisations would also sign the leaflet and support the picket.

PICKET SCARMAN
June 15, 10 a.m.
Lambeth Town Hall
Brixton

National conference

WE'VE HAD THE MARCH—NOW LET'S ORGANISE!

Organised by Leicester Unemployed Workers Union

SATURDAY 27 JUNE 10.30—5.00pm
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Sessions on Organising the Unemployed and The Fight for Jobs

Accommodation available on the Friday and Saturday night

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Further details 52 Wyville Row, Leicester or phone 0533 857828

The real record of the Go

The author of this review started work in the Cowley Assembly Plant in May 1959. In September of the same year I joined the Communist Party. I began to be active in the trade union movement and became a shop steward.

Soon afterwards I was discussing with the TGWU branch secretary Tony Bradley. Since anti-communism was much stronger in those days I decided to tell him that I intended to become much more active in the branch and that I was a member of the Communist Party.

His reaction took me completely by surprise. He said he had no political prejudice against the Communist Party, but in the vast majority of strikes which had taken place in the factory, the best known CP member in the plant, Arthur Exell, came into work.

Never out

I found this view to be expressed even more strongly by the Works Convenor Bob Fryer who organised and led the paint shop where Arthur Exell worked.

He said that in successive strikes in the 1950s (and this certainly proved to be the case in the 1960s) they had never been able to get Arthur Exell out.

Today, *The Politics of the Production Line—Autobiography of an Oxford Car Worker*, published by the History Workshop and written by Arthur Exell is being presented by the Communist Party as an authoritative account of the CP's principled history in the Oxford car plants.

This makes it important that the book is reviewed and the record put straight. Unfortunately much of the book is of little relevance except to those who wish to cultivate romantic notions about factory life or enjoy earthy accounts of life on the production line.

This will no doubt make it standard reading for the inhabitants of Ruskin College and students of the WEA. But there is a more serious side.

Radiators

Arthur Exell started work at the Radiators plant in North Oxford—supplying components for assembly at Cowley—in November 1929 after coming from South Wales on the hunger marches.

He joined the CP in 1934.

He gives interesting accounts of the work of the CP both in the Radiators factory and in the town.

He describes the victimisation of CP members for attempting to become shop stewards and a rent strike organised on the Florence Park estate (with the help of students from the colleges—notably two young students by the names of Dick Crossman and Patrick Gordon Walker). Arthur Exell and several CP organisers were evicted as a result of the strike.

Painfully slow

Exell's account shows how hard it was to organise a union against employers who took their lead from William Morris, the leading employer in Oxford and fanatically anti-union.

Union recognition in the Radiators plant was therefore painfully slow. By 1934

ALAN THORNETT reviews *Politics of the Production Line—an Autobiography of an Oxford Carworker*, by Arthur Exell, published by the 'History Workshop Journal', price £1.45.



Churchill and Attlee 1946: CP supported continuation of National Government!

there were only four union members in the plant—all members of the CP.

In most cases CP membership came first, since joining the union could well mean the sack. Active Labour Party members did not join the union at that time.

The outbreak of war brought changes. The plant was turned over to war production and workers from traditionally unionised areas were moved in.

The Essential Works Order which meant that workers could not leave their job also meant that employers could not sack them. It became easier to organise.

Another factor however was more significant—that was CP policy towards the war (although Exell appears to be confused about the exact period).

From his account the Oxford CP—well to the right of national policy—appears to have given full support for the war effort right from 1939, which had dramatic effects in the factories.

Collaboration

When Churchill's government brought in a system of Joint Works Production Committees (JWPC's) to help the war effort the CP were completely behind it.

The Committees were class collaboration bodies similar to the more recent exercises in 'Workers' Participation', but with far more power.

In Radiators, Arthur Exell became the Secretary of the JWPC and set about making the factory more efficient.

From his account he settled enthusiastically into his new role. "Absenteeism was terrible" he explains: "One of the things we promised was that we would see to it that people came to work".

But this could only be done effectively, he says, if the workers were in a union: "If they weren't in the union we had no control over them."

The anti-union manage-

ment was quick to catch on. After all, they had a fortune to make out of war contracts. Suddenly they wanted everyone into the union.

Exell explains: "That was when Mr Donol, the works manager, sent for me and said 'look, I'll give you full permission, you've got all the time you like, get ever woman into the union. Go and talk to them and get them in.'"

The result was 100% trade unionism—but at what a price! The JWPC was literally the policeman of the plant with Arthur Exell holding the truncheon. He explains how it worked:

"This one certain girl did lose a lot of time. So we had her in front of our committee, and our committee was the trade unionists in the factory and the management. We had to talk to her and told her of the necessity of doing the work properly or else she would have to take the punishment which the government [the Churchill government! AT] had authorised us to give."

The punishment first of all would be suspension, but the chance of imprisonment was in the document. I don't remember any case where they were, but it was there for us to use our judgement on it."

Exell retains a reactionary, patronising attitude to women. But this is worse. These were women being conscripted into industry for the first time and required to work under the most appalling conditions—which Exell himself describes.

Threaten workers

But even using the union apparatus to threaten workers with prison did not satisfy the appetite of the Radiators CP branch in their support of the imperialist war effort. Exell explains:

"The Communist Party factory group then made another outstanding offer to the management. We were prepared to form a shock brigade, which meant that the management could call on anyone of us to do any

job in the factory, in any place at any time.

We had big coloured posters put up in the factory stating the facts and our names. The scheme was used but unfortunately the management used it to give us the jobs that others wouldn't do. But we proved our case."

Presumably the case was proven that the CP was totally servile to the management. But even that was not enough for Arthur Exell!

While visiting his parents in Liverpool Exell attended a meeting addressed by Stafford Cripps. He explained the activities of the JWPC and Cripps was very impressed.

He awarded the Radiators plant an additional contract.

Unfortunately management considered it was more than the factory could cope with and turned the contract down.

Bottleneck

But Arthur Exell was not prepared to settle for this. A meeting of the JWPC was called and they sorted the problem out:

"The trouble was caused by a bottleneck. Men lost hours of their time through waiting at the test for leaks to be repaired and so I suggested that a second set of testing tanks be installed much nearer to the main section.

I am pleased to say that management acknowledged my suggestion and must have told Cripps, for I received a letter from him thanking me for my endeavours."

In 1941 came the German invasion of the Soviet Union. If recruitment to the CP had been slow up to that point there was now a dramatic change.

Membership of the Radiators CP branch rose almost overnight from 4 to 50. By the end of the war they had 150.

Management gave permission for a CP branch library of over 500 books to be kept—appropriately enough—in the foreman's office!



The last of war production side by side with the first peace-time cars

Exell comments:

"They couldn't grumble at us, because we worked, really produced, which is what a foreman likes."

He goes on:

"The library was fantastic, we didn't know how to cope with it. 200-300 people borrowed books... They were in series: the Little Lenin library and the Little Stalin library."

They sold hundreds of copies of Soviet Weekly in the canteen and 2-300 Daily Workers a day in the factory.

It seems that not all the party members were able to accept this relationship with the management, but dissidents got little sympathy from the party.

Exell recalls Pat Mills—who was still in the Oxford CP in my day—arriving at the Rads.

"The most remarkable fellow in our branch was Pat Mills. He was a character on his own... he was drafted into Radiators. And he was always laughing at everything: he said 'well, that's one thing, they can't sack me now—I'm under the Essential Works Order'. They sacked him within a couple of days! Yes he was sacked. I think they said he was being awkward. Maybe he was [original emphasis] trying to be very awkward there—you know, it's very silly to be awkward: you go there to do a job. If you can get away with trying to push the party line, all right. But if you were trying to put over propaganda and it was detrimental to the production that wasn't a good thing."!!!

As soon as the war was over, all this collaboration had little impression on the hard-nosed motor bosses. No sooner had the victory celebrations died down and the Essential Works Order been lifted than they began the

wholesale sacking of the militants at the Rads and including the convenor—apparently without resistance.

Exell explains:

"This meant the firms came back into their own, and the first thing they did was to remove all the trade union militants within their power... I wasn't touched just then because I had long service having started in the '20s, so I at once took the convenor's job."

Two years later in the January of 1947, management moved again.

"Things went on improving until the fuel crisis. The country was still staggering from the aftermath of the war, no coal stocks, and transport still in chaos, and then this terrific snowstorm: 22 January 1947, that was the day everything closed down, right the way throughout Oxford, including the factory. On 23 January a car arrived at the house driven by the chauffeur from Radiators asking me to go to the factory for an interview with the general manager.

I went there as convenor and insisted that the chairman of the Stewards Committee should also be there, as I never believed in interviews on your own.

So Billy Brooks was sent for—a very sincere Salvation Army man. We sat and listened to what was going to happen.

We couldn't argue but we wanted to know about the restarting of the place, and how we would be informed.

They talked quite freely and it sounded common sense—little did I know that they were going to use the great upheaval to get rid of me.

Anyway they said the men would be sent for,

starting with the boilermen, electricians, and maintenance men, and then start building up production and we all would return as time went on.

So back to the dole, where I was able to tell most of the men from Radiators what was planned. A fortnight went by and there was no change in the weather but Cowley had sent for a lot of their men.

Soon the maintenance men were sent for, and then I found they were recalling men from my own department with less service than I had.

I kept chasing the management and there was lots of correspondence and lots of excuses, saying that I would be sent for as soon as they could fit me in.

I kept going to the AEU District Committee too, and reporting to them.

I was told to be patient, but that wasn't my idea of a trade union—the convenor being outside and all the men inside. I said, 'Look, it's about time you had an interview with the management of Radiators, because I think they've got no intention of having me back!'

And they used to pooh-pooh the idea, the union people did. But it was true. They never intended having me back. When we had the final, the real, meeting with the management and Longworth, who was the divisional organiser, they said, 'Well, we have come to the conclusion, Mr Longworth, that he is a communist agitator, and we don't want that sort of thing in the factory,' and that's when Longworth said, 'And I don't blame you either'. So that was it. That was the final blow. Out I went."

Having been sacked after years of collaboration with the management, Exell even

Communist Party at Cowley



Blackleg rides towards his fellows after breaking through Cowley pickets in 1956

posed a strike in his defence!
 "I remember there was a couple of party members who did get around, you know, and try to organise a strike. But I couldn't see a strike doing any good when the union was against me."
 Arthur Exell's account of the war period is very interesting for what it shows of the long history of class collaboration of the Oxford plant, but it shows an incredible ignorance on Exell's part of the official CP line or of what was going on in the world as a whole.
 He never attempts to deal with political terms with the CP. And none of the major world events—like the Moscow Trials or the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact feature in his description of the pre-war period. At the end of the war the CP's initial support for Churchill's national government goes by without mention.
 During the war it is all a long story of "keep your back to the grindstone."
 Yet Exell must have known that elsewhere in the country workers were striking for wages and conditions and that the CP was trying to fight against militant resistance in order to persuade workers to back imperialist war effort.

Continuity

He justifies selling his job by saying "I am always appreciative of anything the working class can get from their employers." Principles we can assume, don't come into it.
 To say that his account of the 28 years in the Morris plant is highly selective would give it credibility it doesn't deserve.
 He actually managed to reduce those 28 years to four pages of his 76 page book and unbelievably doesn't even mention Bob Fryer who has been the TGWU convenor and dominant personality of the plant since 1959 (with a break from June 1974 to December 1979).

Distortion

Exell even fails to mention the major AUEW convenors outside his CP/Broad Left "everyday tale of country folk".
 To achieve this distortion he concentrates almost exclusively on the period of the 1950s—where he was at least active in the shop stewards' movement although he managed to separate this from any kind of militant role within the plant.
 He was active on—or at least attended meetings of—the early AUEW-dominated Joint Shop Stewards Committee (the AUEW were by far the majority union at that time) and was a right wing body which had failed to organise the still largely non-union plant.
 Under pressure from the Midlands CP branches Exell was also active in the early combine committee set up throughout the Nuffield factories and later broadened to other car combines.
 He still attended when I began to go to the meetings

in the early 1960s.
 In 1956 (he wrongly dates it as 1953) he took part in an official strike against selective redundancy which was led by stewards from the minority TGWU.
 The TGWU, under the local leadership of people like Bob Fryer and Tony Bradley were fighting to bring a new, more militant, brand of trade unionism into the plant.
 Management responded by sacking the TGWU convenor Frank Horsman. The AUEW opposed the strike but Exell claims to have supported it as an individual.
 The strike was a catalyst for the development of the TGWU, who were soon to become the majority union.
 Significantly, Arthur Exell never mentions a strike he ever led, which is not surprising, since as far as I have been able to establish he never led anything in Cowley.
 Immediately after the 1956 strike a meeting was called to begin a unionisation drive in the plant.
 It was spearheaded by the paintshop where Bob Fryer was the TGWU shop steward. Exell was an AUEW steward in the same shop.
 A series of strikes dramatically improved pay—and 100% trade union membership was achieved along with the first £20 wage packet.
 Arthur Exell was one of the few in the paint shop who consistently refused to support those strikes. He played no role in the struggle to unionise the rest of the plant (which was organised late by motor industry standards), which proceeded under very bitter conditions, up to its final achievement in 1966.
 This culminated in the period of the infamous "Cowley Noose Trial"—used by the Tories as the basis of

their 1966 election campaign.
 The successful unionisation struggle resulted in a very militant period in the plant during the second half of the 1960s. There were over 1,000 strikes in the plant between 1965 and 1970.

Irrelevance

Arthur Exell was not involved in a single one of them. During that whole turbulent period he was an irrelevance on the plant, rarely attending stewards meetings even in his own section.
 But perhaps the clearest indication of what Arthur Exell really saw as the "politics of the production line" is contained in the penultimate paragraph of his book.
 I was gratified, when I left, he says: "to see a fine, strong trade union movement had been left behind me."
 He is speaking of 1975. This was one year after the back of a very militant shop floor movement had been broken in the events following my victimisation as Deputy Convenor of the TGWU and the strike resulting from it in April/May 1974.
 Although I was successfully defended, Jack Jones, then General Secretary of the TGWU moved in and removed Bob Fryer from office.

"Clean-up"

Reg Parsons became the convenor and the ultra right were put in control.
 Jack Jones was acting in line with the commitment the TGWU had made with the Labour government to "clean up" the union and

control the militant plants. BL placed massive financial resources at the disposal of local management to back the move.
 For 3½ years they pursued their openly proclaimed policy of "smashing Trotskyism" and driving those who had organised the plant and built the union out of the union and out of the industry.
 To achieve this they systematically smashed up everything which had been built.
 They broke up the giant 5/55 TGWU branch of which I was chairman and the JSSC of which I was chairman.

Victimisation

They organised the victimisation of militants—driving many of them to despair and then to redundancy.
 Throughout this period the right wing were selecting

CP members for appointed full time trade union positions in the plant knowing that they could be relied upon to uncompromisingly fight the militants and support the management.

Voted out

Although Parsons was voted out in 1977 and the old leadership re-elected, damage was done to the structure of the shopfloor movement which has still by no means been repaired.
 Arthur Exell reflects the CP in that period. CP members were the most loyal supporters of the right wing in every single move they made.
 When I was sentenced by the TGWU to expulsion from the union and thereby faced the prospect of being sacked from the plant as a non-unionist, and Bob Fryer sentenced to be

banned from all office for life, the CP were the only stewards to vote against a motion from the TGWU stewards committee to resist these victimisations to the full.
 Arthur Exell's book is not so much an "autobiography of an Oxford car-worker" as a cover up of the CP in Cowley.
 Ironically the publishing of Exell's book coincides with the ending of the role of the CP in the Cowley Assembly Plant—at least for the foreseeable future.
 All five of their active members have now followed Exell's lead and taken voluntary redundancy.

Veteran

Ron Jones, Exell's fellow veteran in the paint shop went 2 years ago. Two more left the factory for the greener pastures of Ruskin College. And the remaining two—Mick Soanes and Tony Gallagher—both very leading CP members in the area—went VR last week.
 Ironically enough, Gallagher had until that time been prominent on the committee organising the Peoples March for Jobs!
 Those of us whom Arthur Exell did not have time to mention (or maybe he could not bring himself to pronounce our names) are still there. And unlike Exell and his ilk, if we can survive a few problems (like the current management offensive; the collapse of the car markets; the rundown of BL and periodic attacks from trade union bureaucrats) we will be there for a long time yet.



Bob Fryer: his fight receives no mention

Lee Jeans: the days of

Socialist Press interviews Cathy Robertson (20) and Lorraine Mooney of the Lee Jeans occupation stewards committee.

How long have you worked at the factory?

Lorraine: Four years. It was my third job.

Cathy: 3½ years. It was my first job. Being my first, it took me long enough to learn the skill of it and I want to keep it.

What were the wages and conditions like?

Lorraine: The basic wage was £49—anything else you had to get by bonus.

Cathy: Before they made us redundant they offered us 7.4%—which would have given us a basic of £55. As it was the first since 1979 we weren't too happy about that. We rejected it three times.

What action did you prepare?

We had planned a one-day strike every single week till they'd give in. They wanted us to work and were giving us loads of overtime, of course we now know why.

What happened when you heard about the closure?

Cathy: When it came to our break at 3 pm we were told there was a meeting we should all be at, at 4 o'clock in the canteen. We usually finish at 4.30 and we were told management were refusing to pay the half hour.

When it came to 4 o'clock our district officer of the NUTGW, John Howard, came in and told us:

"I've got a bit of bad news for you".

Then in comes the company head man from Ireland Robert Charters. He says we would like to wish you a happy New Year—but we're sorry lassies it's not going to be a very good one for you.

The company's had a 25% cut in orders, then there's the problem with exports because of the strong pound, plus all the government grants are up in Greenock so we're closing



Lorraine Mooney (left) and Cathy Robertson



Inside the Lee Jeans occupation: some beautiful jumpers have been knitted!

this place down and moving the work from Greenock.
Lorraine: That's why they'd given us so much bloody overtime so we'd get all the stock completed before the closure and they could clear the factory!

What happened then?

Cathy: Well the union official went back in after we'd heard the good news—and put every kind of proposition to the management. He begged them: he said we'd all go on a shorter week, even a one-day week and take the other four off the dole—but the company wouldn't listen.

"No, it's got to be closed" was all they'd say.

Management said they wanted ten minutes alone without the union.

Instead they took two

hours—they hadn't realised that after their ten minutes were up we decided to barricade them in!

We then all got into groups and blocked every emergency exit to the factory.

They'd left the keys lying around while they were talking, including the one front door key. So somebody jumped out the window with it, drove down and got a duplicate cut and replaced the original. It staggered them when we could get in and out with keys

Earlier on in the afternoon we had discussed an occupation if it came to closure—we sorted ourselves into three shifts. The first shift would work from 8 at night to 8 in the morning and so on. You see we knew we'd have to be in there 24

hours. Everyone agreed and we got a solid vote.

Did the union official suggest any of this? Did he heck!

Why did you get such a united response on occupation?

Lorraine: There's nothing else in Greenock to turn to—unemployment is 16%.

We all felt we'd got a job here, so what do we want to sell it for?

The days of selling jobs are over!

Cathy: There's no way me and my kid sister can lose our jobs there. My father's unemployed, he's sick as

well, paying £4 every time he needs his tablets.

My mother works, but she only gets £18 a week and the rent alone is £13.80. If we lost our jobs we'd get damn all.

Most of the women's husbands in the factory are unemployed. They back them all the way—they want the women to get in and fight.

There's no way we'd take money for our jobs.

You cannot sell your job in Greenock—nor anywhere—not if they offered us thousands instead of the £60 they have offered in redundancy money for four years.

Lorraine: In the ninth week of the occupation they offered an extra £100.

We said stuff it—next time you come to talk to us you talk jobs and don't mention your money.

What are you getting paid now from the union?

Cathy: £5 a week strike pay—that's generous of them isn't it, considering we all pay out 48p a week union dues?

What's the other support like?

Lorraine: Brilliant—right from the start. The first night we were in the factory for 32 hours. We had fantastic support.

The men came straight away from the shipyards—the stewards—and organised to get us beds in.

Cathy: Beds and food came from everywhere—the boys jumped to it and ordered fish suppers.

240 fish suppers had to come over the factory roof and in the back door—there wasn't enough left in the canteen to feed us all.

Now we've got it organ-

ised.
Lorraine: Yes the fruit and veg shop sends in stuff every day for free. He was the factory's daily delivery—the company told him he'd never get a contract again for helping us.

He said he didn't care—these girls were showing everyone up in Greenock for the magnificent fight.

The shipyard workers have each put a £1 a week levy for us—the miners as well have a weekly levy.

The Scottish TUC have promised to back us to the hilt.

The day it was supposed to close on 30 April we had a meeting outside the management's office—it was great—with the miners, dockers, workers from all over Greenock—they all came to picket in case they put us out.

Desperate SNP demagogues turn to adventurist tactics

By Duncan McVicar

In a desperate effort to recoup their declining fortunes, as manifested in recent opinion polls and poorly attended demonstrations against unemployment, the Scottish National Party at their conference in Aberdeen have launched into the politics of adventurism.

By voting for a policy of "civil disobedience" as a means of protest against high levels of unemployment in Scotland, the Nationalists are obviously straining to edge back into the public vision.

The British ruling class are no doubt quaking in their shoes at the prospect of occupations of the previously intended Scottish Assembly building in Edinburgh

and job centres throughout the country.

This new turn is not entirely unexpected considering the collapse of electoral support for the SNP from 35% in 1977 to 17.5% in 1979 and lower still since then.

Dismayed at their failure to profit from working class hatred of the Tories and divisions within the Labour ranks, they are now seeking to regain a popular base with the tactics of "non-violent direct action".

Most of the credit for this new stance must go to the leftist 79 Group which has found a tribune in arch opportunist and petty demagogue James Sillars.

Having broken with the Labour Party, Sillars tried unsuccessfully to build himself a power base through the ill fated Socialist Labour Party, on the demise of

which he switched allegiance to the SNP.

There, together with George Reid, Stephen Maxwell and Margo Macdonald (now his wife) Sillars has sought to give the SNP a more leftist orientation.

The success he has had in this springs largely from the disenchantment within the ranks of the Party with the old guard leadership of Gordon Wilson, exuding middle class respectability, and Donald Stewart, spouting Presbyterian morality.

Sillars's success in challenging the established leadership is proven by his election to the post of executive vice-chairman where he will play a key role in the formulation of policy and tactics.

The fact that the policies of the group he represents are a vacuous hotch-potch of decentralisation, social distri-

butionism and a complete failure to tackle the central problem of the power of the multinationals within the context of the Scottish economy will not hinder Sillars and his ilk from exploiting any available opening to establish a populist party, nor from exerting a disorientating influence upon the Scottish working class.

Whatever the weaknesses in the policies of the SNP, it would be misleading to suggest that they will be unable to build a base of popular support in the present political and economic climate.

In so far as they do so, it will be by default of the established trade union and Labour Party leadership in Scotland and their refusal to mount a meaningful campaign against the policies of the Thatcher government. Speakers at the SNP

Conference could correctly lambast the STUC for their refusal to organise a challenge on the question of unemployment.

The cancellation of the planned march against youth unemployment and the betrayal of the workers in dispute at Ayrshire Marine Construction at Hunterston are glaring examples of this refusal to fight.

Retreats

Alongside this we have witnessed Labour controlled councils, with a few honourable exceptions, implementing the Tory cuts without even a blush of shame. The further these retreats proceed, the more they will give heart to the Nationalists now seeking a way into the urban working class of the Central Lowlands.

Exploiting a genuine sentiment among Scottish people for a greater measure of devolution of power, they seek to falsely equate this with the struggle for national independence in "Zimbabwe, India and Ireland".

The sentiment in Scotland is not of the same order as in the independence struggles of these countries cited, and those who make this equation are harbouring a disastrous illusion. Certainly socialists must take cognisance of and grapple with the phenomenon of the "new nationalism" which have emerged in the advanced capitalist states in the seventies, but that can only be done in conjunction with an unrelenting exposure of the dead end politics of the populist nationalist movements, such as the SNP.

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selling jobs are over!



Wraps over disused machinery

the beginning they've not done much. We all know now they're not as good as they're made out to be.

It took six weeks to get it official and they said we had to have a vote from the Irish workers first.

Cathy: We had a battle to get Ellen Monaghan, the convenor, to speak at our annual conference. The General Secretary turned up 18 weeks after we occupied.

He said he was just passing by!

We told him we wanted more than him just passing by. He got quite a knocking—we told him it was money from our jobs that was keeping him where he was.

None of the union leaders thought we'd stick it, they've got a real fight now they'll have to listen.

They also say we've got to keep politics out of it. What they mean is other people's politics, not their own!

But everything we do, every move we make is political.

The factories are being closed because of politics. The officials in the union wouldn't agree to organise blacking, they just didn't want us to.

So we told them we'd organise it ourselves.

We went to the dockers' unions, to the ports all over the country, London, Liverpool, Grangemouth.

We got a great response from the dockers. They've given us a 100% backing.

The dockers could see that VF would not be worried about us sitting in because though they could sell the stock and the plant they could leave that a while.

But they don't like their products not getting into Britain to sell, so no profits can be made over here.

It's profits they're worried about.

What about the attempts you made to open the books?

Cathy: Well their excuse for closing us down was that they're bankrupt—but we

don't take their word on anything; we knew they had no proof.

When we occupied we got hold of some important company files but we couldn't get the accounts. They were desperate to get the files back but they wouldn't hand the books over.

So we couldn't prove they weren't bankrupt. We know they're just using up government grants. When the grant is up in Londonderry they'll just dump the Irish workers too.

VF has had free rent for five years in Greenock!

Lorraine: We keep trying to tell the Irish workers that it's the same fight—that we're both up against a company that doesn't give two fingers for us, our jobs or our families.

Cathy: We want them to black, but the women in Derry are so afraid that the management will lay them off. They say they can't afford to be sacked—it's difficult to give them the encouragement that they've got rights and should stick

to them, stand up and fight for them.

All we want to do is worksharing with them but they won't have any of it.

Isn't that understandable? They can't afford to take a cut in wages.

Lorraine: Well we can't afford to lose our jobs. Ellen Monaghan has tried to show it's one and the same battle.

Is there much chance of a court order?

Cathy: We don't know, the company has said it will leave the factory open till August but we don't know what'll happen then.

Is there a chance of getting strike action from the other NUTGW members nationally if you're touched?

Cathy: I don't think so. They'll just not get the encouragement from the leaders and their own not going to do it on their own.

Lorraine: We're not going to be moved from that factory.

Cathy: No we don't care if they send in the police—we'll not move—we'll all chain ourselves to the machines.

The miners and the shipyard workers won't let the police or any of them through.

We can't let them chuck us out. Everybody's watching us to see if we're going to win. We're not going to give up this fight.

We owe it to the people, to our kids to everyone who's supporting us. We also owe it to Ellen Monaghan. Without her there'd have never been such a fight. She lost 5 pounds in weight in the first month of the occupation. We all adore her for what she has done.

She'll never live it down. She's been a shop steward for ten years and has fought the company all the way for everything that's going.

She'll never listen to the company's problems, she doesn't want to hear—it's us and our rights she cares about.

She's not thinking of herself, she's got her two children working at the factory. She says she'd happily be a housewife but there's no way she'll give up fighting until those jobs are saved for the kids of the future.



Donations and messages of support should be sent to Ellen Monaghan, 55 Cambridge Road, Greenock.

An anti-Soviet fairy tale

PETER McINTYRE reviews 'The Spike', published in paperback by Futura.

It is not every first novelist who can boast a former CIA director amongst admirers on the book cover.

But then Robert Moss, founder member of NAFF and author of a highly authoritative weekly intelligence column in the *Daily Telegraph* is no ordinary author.

His *Telegraph* column presents the world through the eyes of Western intelligence sources with whom his contacts are many and good.

But the weekly spine chilling stories of nefarious deeds by dastardly Cubans and scheming Bulgars lacks mass appeal.

So Moss has turned for collaboration on a more popular venture to Armand de Borchgrave, chief foreign correspondent of *Newsweek* and a political soul mate.

Their novel, *Spike*, is formula written. There are paragraphs of perfunctory sex every ten pages in which men do things to women; baffling 'action' passages in

which great and sudden violence is done to men; and a large number of 'tense psychological' moments in which good old Americans confront their destinies.

But if the package is different, the paranoia is the same. The world is divided into two parts—those (diminishing) areas lovingly protected by the CIA/FBI—and that (growing) expanse where nothing moves except through the machinery of the KGB.

KGB plot

It follows from this that every setback for US imperialism since the war has been a KGB plot and every wet liberal, anti-war student or radical journalist a fool or (more likely) a knave.

It is journalists who are the main targets for Moss and Borchgrave in *Spike*.

It is the story of a young radical reporter, Bob Hockney, who writes America out of the Vietnam war almost single handedly and then—horrified at find-

ing he has been a KGB dupe—sets out to blow the lid off American liberalism.

To put it another way—the book cover puts it—*The Story So Explosive* it Can Only Be Told as Fiction!

Dastardly

Richard Helms, former director of the CIA, puts it still another way. According to Helms it poses the questions 'Can the Soviets destroy the West without firing a shot?'

With a message so dastardly as this there is little scope for character. The figures who flit across the pages of their book are so flat and uninteresting that cardboard is an inadequate description: cardboard has more dimensions.

Nevertheless Moss and Borchgrave plagiarise liberally from life. Their fictional traitors are made to serve not just as symbols but to suggest living people.

One of the most despised characters is a man called Phil Kreps—a CIA agent who

blows the whistle on US involvement in the Chilean coup. He has Cuban connections.

He is a ringer for the CIA's real whistle blower Philip Agee, right down to the Cuban connection and the Amsterdam refuge.

Why such a crude smear? It stems no doubt from a kind of desperation.

History has not been kind to Moss and Borchgrave. It has not unfolded a picture they want. Someone must be responsible, and writing their book has made it so. The whole ghastly mess can be blamed on someone's plot.

Neat trick

But such an approach has problems, since it would be difficult to attract legal attention. The dynamic duo have therefore adopted a neat trick. Agee actually appears as a one line reference in the book. And if Agee appears as himself, then Kreps cannot be representing him.

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INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Laurence Scott workers sit tight

It is now six weeks since the 650 workers at Laurence Scott and Electromotors, Manchester, occupied their factory to prevent its closure.

A mass meeting of all seven unions on April 24 voted 3-2 to take over the factory and since then over 500 have taken part in the sit-in.

The company, which manufactures spark-free electric motors for use in mines and submarines, was taken over in October last year by Mining Supplies of Doncaster with an assurance that the Manchester factory would be kept open.

By early April the unions were told that closure would take place on July 10.

Kept secret

It later transpired that the decision to close LSE had been taken as early as February 10 as a result of the NCB's 30% cut in purchase of mining machinery but had been kept secret in order to claim six months of government subsidies.

Mining Supplies' owner, Arthur Snipe, in a "personal" letter to each LSE worker, threatened that unless normal working was resumed by May 5, the workforce would be regarded as having broken their contract of employment and would receive no redundancy pay!

Meanwhile Snipe maintained his life-style at his estate at Barnby Manor near Newark, on his salary of £25,640 (up 33% last year!) plus £100,000 made from his shareholdings in 1980

out of Mining Supplies' profits from the NCB and the Admiralty.

"Losses"

Arthur Snipe's more recent communications with the occupation have dwelt on the "losses" the factory had been making and the lack of orders, but it was clear from the accounts in the factory that his arguments were inconsistent and the stewards are sure that the factory was purposely run-down prior to closure.

These suspicions would no doubt be confirmed if the stewards were to examine all of Arthur Snipe's accounts and show how much profit had been extracted from the NCB—the main purchaser of electric motors from LSE.

The workers have rejected Snipe's 10-point plan for keeping LSE Manchester open, which included a clause that only ten employees would be engaged to keep the factory open.

Pledge support

The workers in the other Laurence Scott factories in Norwich and Blantyre have pledged support and are blacking work previously destined for Manchester.

The NUM are blacking Laurence Scott motors, a member of the occupation committee is going to

Barnsley next week to meet Arthur Scargill and the Yorks NUM, and a substantial cheque has been received from South Wales miners.

The occupation is well organised with shifts of pickets manning the padlocked gates and they are determined to win. They need donations and messages of support.

Please send to: JSSC, c/o George Fryer, 20 Roundcross, Romilly, Cheshire SK6 4LL.

MERSEYSIDE FACTORY CLOSURES

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Banners and pickets outside Headington Hill Hall

Pickets sour Maxwell junket

Nearly 70 pickets from Oxford and from London (mainly NUJ members) joined a protest last Saturday outside the offices of Pergamon Press.

Millionaire "socialist" Robert Maxwell was throwing a luncheon party for 350 guests to celebrate his successful takeover of the BPC corporation—a takeover which has already cost thousands of print union jobs.

Marquee

Golden chairs and a piano were carted in to the marquee in the grounds. And a band apparently composed largely of child labour—was chauffeured in to lend a desperate air of jollity.

Pickets including members of the BPC NUJ chapel shouted slogans demanding the reinstatement of the 9 NUJ members who were sacked at Pergamon for taking strike action in pursuit of a house agreement.

They shouted in vain: only a handful of the selected scabs and bootlickers even slowed down their flashy cars long enough to hear.

Leaflets explaining the

dispute had to be thrust through the windows of moving Rovers. Diana Dors cruised through in a blue Rolls Royce. If you can tell a man by his friends, Robert Maxwell is not a nice guy.

Boycott

An ambulance was in attendance, presumably in case any of the guests suffered from a premature knife between the shoulder blades.

The only success in persuading guests to turn back had taken place before the picket began. Strikers had secured the agreement of Oxford's Lord Mayor, veteran Labourite Henry Nimmo, to boycott the proceedings rather than cross a picket line.

His rejection of the invitation caused Maxwell some damaging publicity: but Maxwell's publicity machine has been going sadly in other respects, too.

Fuelling anger

His latest "press release"—sent out primarily to labour movement bodies in a bid to forestall further support for the strike has succeeded only in fuelling anger against Maxwell and boosting sympathy for the

strikers—now in their 15th week of picketing.

Nor has it been better received in the few newspapers to whom it has been sent. Apparently it went straight into the waste-bin at the *Daily Telegraph* while the *Sunday Telegraph* carried a report which reinforced the strikers' case.

Meanwhile a 4-person delegation from Oxford CLP headed by chairperson Tom Richardson is to visit Maxwell in an attempt to persuade this "socialist" to negotiate with the trade unionists involved.

"New chapel"

And a pathetic attempt to infiltrate a gang of senior managers into the NUJ through the establishment of a "new chapel" of scabs fell flat on its face last week amid front page publicity in

the local press.

But the strikers still urgently need print union solidarity—particularly from the NGA—and financial and moral support from the whole labour movement.

Messages and donations to the Strike Committee, 5 Union Street, Oxford.

*Oxford NUJ branch voted last week to write letters of complaint to Soviet Weekly NUJ Chapel, the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Morning Star, protesting at the fact that Soviet Prime Minister Tikhonov held talks with strike-breaker Maxwell last month.



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Longbridge: new sell-out
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BL: STRUGGLE GROWS AGAINST LATEST CLOSURE PLAN

By Bill Peters

Edwardes out! Thatcher out! were the main slogans of a militant 3,000 strong demonstration which marched through Solihull last Friday.

They were demonstrating about BL's plans to close the Rover SD1 plant in Solihull and to transfer to Cowley with a loss of 2,300 jobs.

The entire manual and staff labour force from the SD1 joined the demonstration. With them were shop stewards and militants from the Land Rover and Range Rover plant and sections of workers from other industries in Solihull.

The demonstration, which ended with a rally

outside the offices of the Tory controlled council, was a clear demonstration of the militant mood of the workforce.

It shows that the conditions are now developing for an all-out fight against BL management over the current round of closures which include not only the SD1 but the Wellingborough foundry and the parts depot in Cardiff.

Mick Clark, the TGWU convenor of the SD1 gave a full report to the BL Combine Committee—which met last Saturday.

He said the plant had been built only five years ago at a cost of £140 million (which at today's prices is an investment almost equal to the recent Mini Metro invest-

ment). He said that the first stage of the rundown will be when the TR7 ceases production in September this year. This will mean compulsory redundancies in August.

"Lulled"

He said "many of us admit that we supported Edwardes in the past". The problem was that Edwardes had "lulled most of us" in 1977 and had then won the ballot for his survival plan.

(He was referring to the joint meeting of plant directors and convenors held in January 1978 at which Edwardes introduced himself and his plans for BL and got a standing ovation led

by Derek Robinson. Bob Fryer from Cowley who opposed the whole procedure was then dismissed as a "lunatic" by Eddie McGarry—who has now taken voluntary redundancy).

Clark called for a public inquiry into the Edwardes plan and for a further ballot in BL, which he assessed that Edwardes would now lose.

Pat Hickey, deputy TGWU senior steward at the SD1, made a strong statement to the committee.

He said that support was building up, but eventually the only effective action will be an occupation of the plant. "Then we will have to fight".

He said that the SD1



Edwardes

were calling a Birmingham-wide mass demonstration on Saturday August 1 and were inviting other factories to join in.

He said plans were laid to try to press the national officers of the unions into support for the struggle and a lobby of the National Automotive Committee of the TGWU was being organised for June 18 at Smith Square in London.

He went on to support the call for a public inquiry into the Edwardes plan, an inquiry which he considered should be based on the labour movement.

Stressing the problem of getting the support of the National Officers, one delegate from Leyland Vehicles reminded the meeting that when Edwardes balloted the workforce on his "survival plan" the CSEU had taken full page adverts in the national press to advise BL workers to vote in favour of the Edwardes proposals!

Nothing had happened since then to suggest that they had changed their position, he said.

Outside of the SD1 the problems of the struggle were obvious. No delegates

from the Wellingborough foundry even attended the meeting (having called at the previous meeting for higher redundancy payments) and the senior stewards for the 500 workers remaining in the Canley plant said they were "lucky" because they would be getting the work from the Cardiff plant after it closed down.

All out attack

In contrast, Bob Fryer from Cowley Assembly again assured the meeting that no Rover work would be touched in Cowley Assembly whilst workers at Solihull continued to resist the closure.

A delegate from Jaguar Browns Lane reported on the all-out attack on the trade union movement at the plant.

He said there was a new plan for a further 1050 redundancies—which he assumes will be compulsory.

Management methods are fear and intimidation. They are saying that if the redundancies are not accepted they will close the whole plant.

He said resistance is now developing on the tracks, where management is imposing a track speed increase of 25% on the workforce.

The Combine Committee then decided to call a motor industry conference for Saturday August 8 in Birmingham to generate support against the closures.

This is an important initiative and comes at a time when crucial decisions will have to be taken inside the SD1 on direct action to defend the jobs.

The conference should receive the full support of the trade union movement in the car and component

industry.

A further important decision was also taken by the Combine Committee.

Delegates voted on a proposal from Cowley Assembly to organise a conference of BL workers and shop stewards on victimisation and the attack on the shop stewards movement within the Corporation.

No date has yet been fixed but it will provide an important opportunity to examine in detail the victimisations—such as the Longbridge 8 at the beginning of the year—and lay the basis for strengthening and revitalising the shop stewards' movement in the confrontation.

*BL workers: lobby National Committee on June 18!

*Full support for the Birmingham demonstration!

*Mobilise for the Motor Industry conference on 8 August!

*Black all movement of work, machines or material from the affected plants!

THE COMBINE committee heard speakers from the South African TUC and from the Anti-Apartheid Movement speaking on the mass sacking of BL workers in South Africa.

A resolution was passed pledging solidarity with the victimised workforce and urging BL convenors to check if material was going to South Africa from their plant and organising blacking action where possible.

TUC sits on People's March

The Peoples March attracted the support of literally hundreds of thousands of workers who saw it as a lead in the fight against unemployment.

But it has failed to shift the mood of lethargy and indifference to unemployment which has prevailed in the TUC as the jobless total has climbed over the 2½ million mark.

Last week TUC leaders decided that they would not formally wind up the campaign launched by the march.

But they intend to place themselves firmly in the driving seat of future activ-

ities in order to keep out socialists who might seek to introduce calls for genuine action.

The only concrete proposal to emerge from a top-level discussion last week on the next steps was the call for a lobby of parliament by young unemployed and school leavers in the autumn.

Official TUC protest is therefore remaining stubbornly in the well-worn rut of six-monthly protests to let off steam, interspersed with systematic betrayals of day-to-day struggles against closures, cuts or redundancies.

Meanwhile the Tories

look on in almost open amusement and delight as the frustration of workers and youth is channelled into the most futile succession of lobbies, petitions and marches.

The fight against unemployment must be pursued on two fronts.

On the one hand, the unemployed must be organised in unions—the forthcoming conference in Leicester (June 27—see page 5) is an important contribution to this fight.

On the other hand, the fight needs to be pressed home for occupations and supporting strike and black-



ing action to defend all jobs and prevent plant and public sector closures.

In neither fight will a lead be given from the TUC: a new leadership must be built within the labour movement to press home the struggle for jobs.

Mobilise against Coventry race attacks

Within the last fortnight the fascists have gone on the offensive both physically and ideologically in Coventry.

On Thursday June 4 they attacked three Asians and stabbed one of them seriously as they were leaving a pub in a predominantly black area.

This recent assault, conducted by racist skinheads shows that organised fascists are at work in Coventry and have chosen it as the target area in the Midlands.

Following the gigantic and highly successful demonstration held in Coventry on Saturday May 23 the New National Front has applied to the council to hold a demonstration on the same day as The Specials and other bands are due to play for the anti-fascist struggle in Coventry.

The NNF organiser Alan Stewart has declared the march in the name of "law

and order" and has stated: "NNF marches have always been conducted with the highest standard of dress and behaviour in mind. In view of the police decision to allow recent highly provocative and offensive demonstrations to proceed we envisage no problems with our application".

The Labour leader of Coventry City Council has called for the march to be banned while the Tories are demanding a blanket ban.

No answer

The history of the anti-fascist struggle tells us that state bans are no answer to the fascist onslaught. The fascists are always protected by the police whenever they march, unmolested, while it is the labour movement and the anti-fascists who are crippled and paralysed by state legislation.

It is no accident that renewed calls for the amendment of the Public Order Act occur at a time when

youth and workers in Britain and internationally are at the forefront of the struggle.

If the NNF were to march in Coventry without police protection they would be physically taken on and smashed by the united efforts of the militant black community and the labour movement.

The Coventry Committee Against Racism intends to organise a counter-demonstration wherever the fascists march on 20 June, at the same time as ensuring that the Specials concert is defended.

It must be seen as an attempt to unite black and white youth behind the anti-fascist struggle.

It is a real public opportunity for actively exposing the lies of the fascists and to show that they have nothing to offer white youth.

The last attack by the fascists now urgently points to the need for the labour movement to act.

The black community and all labour movement bodies are at risk. They are not dealing with just undisciplined gangs of skinheads. Defence squads must be built to crush these attacks wherever they occur.

Already sections of the labour movement have come forward with the call to launch a labour movement inquiry into the arrests that took place on the massive demonstration on May 23.

This should be seen as the first step towards setting up independent organisations of the labour movement. But it is in the workplace, the Labour Party wards and trade union branches that the fight must be sharply waged against racist terror.

*No to police/state bans!
*Organise to drive the fascists out of Coventry!

*Build black and white labour movement defence squads!

IRELAND: TUC LINE REJECTED

The issue of Ireland dominated the Annual Conference of Trades Councils held last weekend in Southport.

In his opening address to the conference Len Murray made a strong attack on the motion from the Greater London Association of Trades Councils which called for an end to emergency powers legislation, for a Bill of Rights, the restoration of special category status and a commitment on withdrawal of British troops.

The motion was inadequate as it did not include a call for troops out now. But it met opposition from Murray and the TUC General Council because it did call for special category status.

Murray's main argument was that the resolution, if passed, would antagonise the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions who had refused to take a position on political status.

To pass the resolution, he claimed, would be to side with sectarianism "and would imperil the lives of our colleagues".

Because of Murray's intervention and the amount of interest this generated in the debate on Ireland, the motion was brought to the top of the agenda for the last day of the conference.

Though the mover of the motion, Tom Durkin, from Brent Trades Council said that he was not seeking confrontation with the TUC, it was obvious that the motion did challenge bipartisan policy on Ireland.

The debate itself was very good with a minority of speeches against the resolution and none of the usual witch-hunting.

Dave Hallsworth from Tameside Trades Council attacked the Northern Ireland Committee of the ICTU as being unrepresentative of the Catholic minority and spoke of the enormous support for political status and troops out in the six counties.

Mick Jarmaine of Leicester Trades Council said that many trades councils, including his own had a policy in favour of political status and troops out now.

Mike Walsh of the International Department of the TUC in his reply to the

debate defended the record of the Northern Ireland Committee which had been attacked by several speakers.

His reply was unconvincing. He was heckled when he said:

"There is a representative of the NIC on the police authority. They're fighting for repeal of emergency powers, they are fighting to reduce remand periods, they are making progress."

The resolution when put to the vote was passed by a substantial majority.

There is no doubt that this is a major blow to the TUC, who now will have to review its bipartisan policy on Ireland.

The passing of the resolution is the beginning of a positive debate on Ireland in the British labour movement.

Many of the trades councils and county associations of trades councils represented at the conference are now planning to organise local and regional conferences on Ireland.

And it will no longer be possible for the TUC to witch-hunt and disaffiliate trades councils like Tameside who oppose TUC policy on Ireland.

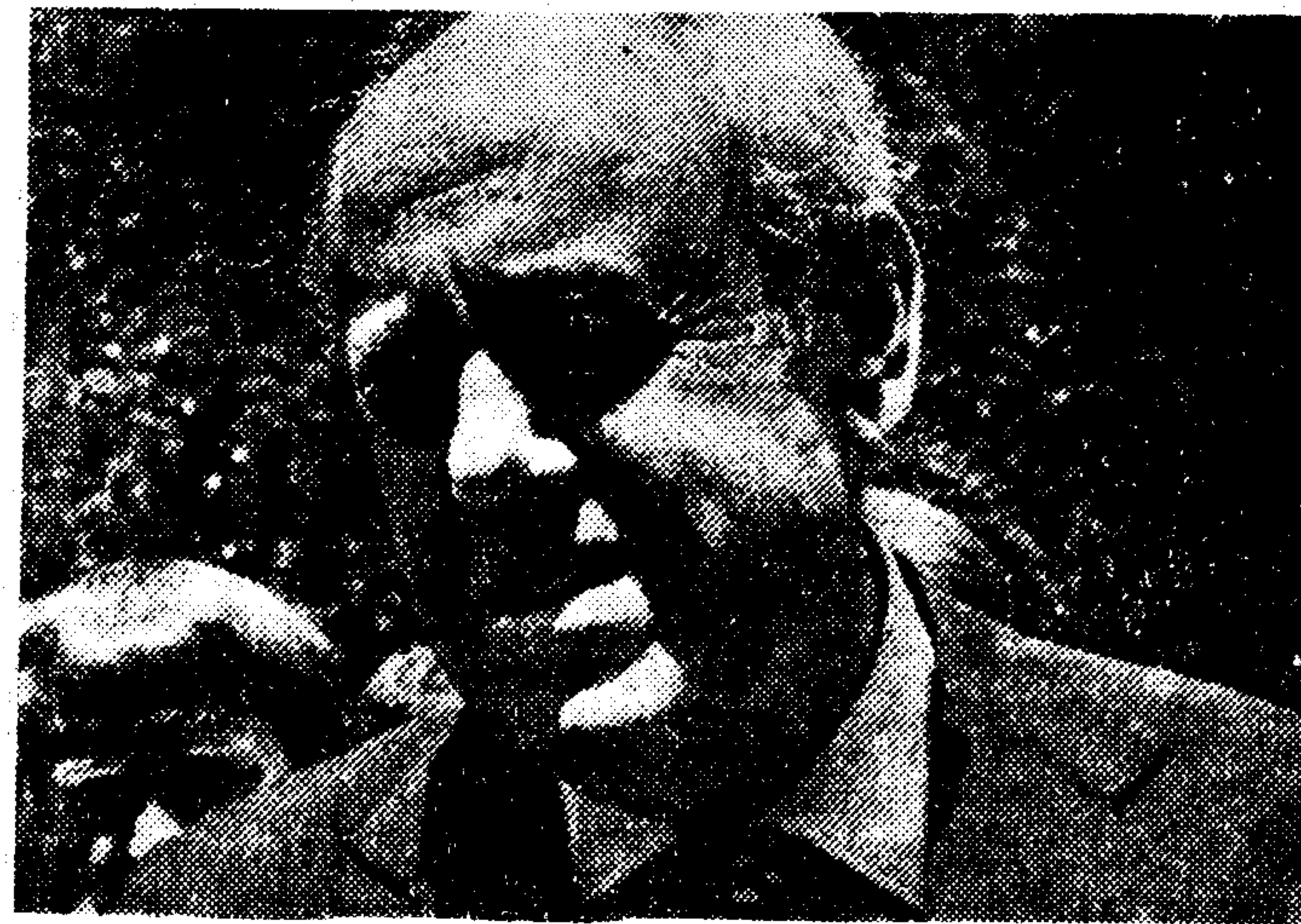
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**New
clash
coming
in
Poland**

CIVIL SERVICE UNIONS FACE GRUNGH DECISION



Civil Service Minister Soames

A body called the Katowice Forum has issued a statement which has provoked a wave of support from the Soviet and East European bureaucracies and strong attacks from within Poland.

The Forum has attacked the present leadership within Poland for losing control within the country. It has attacked the leadership of Solidarity and it talks about the emergence of "anti-socialist forces in Poland", saying that the party must not serve the working class but "direct it".

The Forum is under the chairmanship of the new "worker" member of the Political Bureau, Gerard Gabrys.

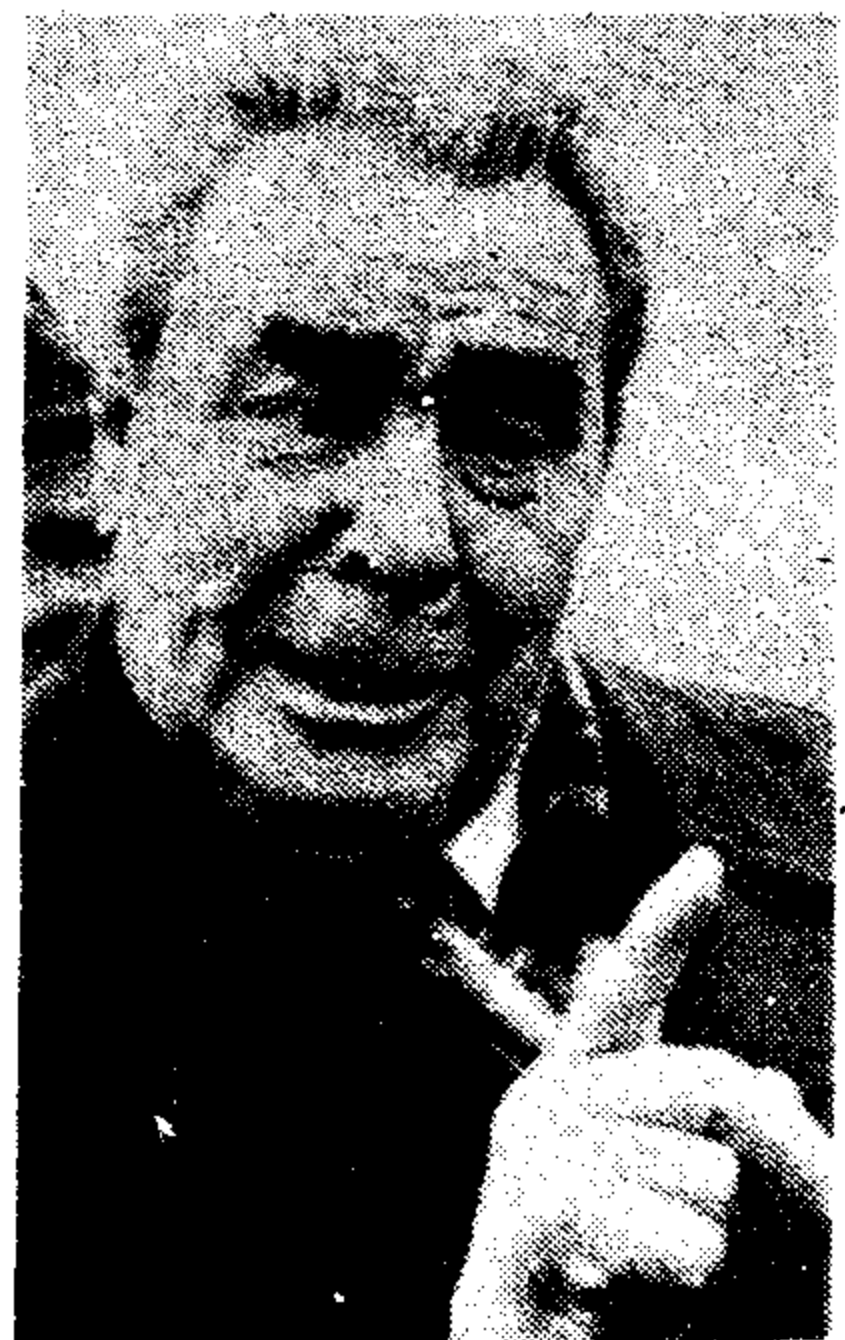
Ninety out of ninety-seven of the Katowice delegates to the forthcoming Communist Party Congress have disassociated themselves from the Forum's statements.

Condemned

And since even the Political Bureau of the CP has condemned the documents, the Forum has decided to stop meeting.

But none of this has stopped the press of the other East European states latching onto it in order to attack the developments in Poland.

The Kremlin news agency
Cont'd p.2, col. 1



Brezhnev

Leaders of the nine civil service unions spent nearly the whole of last week attempting to persuade the government to provide some sort of bait by which they could sell out the 1981 pay claim.

That they were unsuccessful is clearly due more to Thatcher's intransigence than to any desire by the Council for Civil Service Unions (CCSU) to stick to the 15% and £10 underpinning claim.

Having been denied any room to manoeuvre, the CPSA executive (leading the largest union the CCSU) along with the SCPS leadership is set to recommend an

all-out strike to the membership, though it has not conducted any campaign for such a policy and was opposed to the escalation of the action a mere two weeks ago.

Historic decision

Now in the fourteenth week of sustaining a campaign of selective action which has hit government revenue, ports, airports and defence establishments, civil service workers are faced with a historic decision.

To back down now would represent the most crushing blow. It would open the door to massive job cuts, imposition of new technology, wholesale victimisations and the overnight

collapse of the gains made by civil service workers through increasing union strength over the last ten years.

Faced with such prospects the fight to implement the demand for all out strike action must be paramount.

However, workers in the DHSS and the Department of Employment must organise union-based control over emergency payments to beneficiaries.

At the moment it seems clear that the most militant areas are poised to take unofficial action by refusing to make emergency payments to claimants.

Suspensions

This will certainly lead to new waves of suspensions by

management, which will in turn provoke walk outs in offices which are implementing emergency procedures.

In DHSS and DE sections CPSA branches must link up with SCPS branches to organise emergency payments under their own control.

Full support

Obviously this has to be done on the basis of full support for the pay campaign. If there is more than a minimal level of scabbing or a refusal by those in work to pay the strike levy then unofficial action is the only alternative for members striving to bring the dispute to a head.

There are signs that the

Labour Party Parliamentary leadership is beginning to wake up to the fact that for the last three months civil service workers have been taking on the government.

Individual lefts like Dennis Skinner have spoken up in the past, but this week-end saw an official statement from the opposition.

The Labour leadership has missed an important opportunity to win over whole sections of the rank and file by its silence on the pay battle.

Boost

The fight to affiliate the CPSA to the Labour Party could have been given an enormous boost during the

dispute. The next week will be one of crucial significance in testing out the effects of the further intensification, and in demonstrating the way the union bureaucrats will turn to maintain control over members who will not put up with the present impasse any longer.

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VICTORY TO THE HUNGER STRIKES!

FROM FRONT PAGE

many trade unionists and socialists that the repression by British state forces against the Catholic population of Northern Ireland is not qualitatively but quantitatively different from repression here.

Capitalist rule

The troops in the six counties are no more "protecting" the Catholic minority than the cops in Brixton "protect" black youth against racism. They are there to preserve the stability of capitalist rule by stemming the resistance of the most oppressed sections of society.

These truths have begun

to sink home and created now conditions to campaign in support of the prisoners.

But there is much more still to do.

While it is important to break the "bipartisan" policy by which Labour and TUC leaders support the Tory line in Ireland, we must go further, and fight within the unions and the Labour Party for active solidarity with the Irish struggle.

This means stepping up the fight for the prisoners' five demands, and at the same time demanding the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

We must show that those who point to the deaths of soldiers as a reason for

punitive actions against Irish prisoners of war are in fact simply prolonging the war, increasing the death toll and feeding Thatcher's war machine.

Amidst today's mass unemployment the labour movement must mount an active campaign against army recruitment, in concert with the fight to pull British troops out of Ireland.

Responsibility

The valour of the hunger strikers has brought the Irish war to the forefront of British politics. It is now our responsibility to build a movement strong enough to secure the prisoners' demands.



Direct ruler Atkins

*Victory to the hunger strikers! POW status now!
*Troops out of Ireland now!
*Self determination for the Irish people!
*Don't join Thatcher's army: Join a union!

FUND

**Don't let us
fall short!**

After a poor showing in May the June fund has now got off to a bad start with only £95.23 coming in during the first eight days of the month.

To meet our target of £850 a month we need to collect over £200 a week to ensure that we don't fall short.

Our Special Fund still shows little sign of moving: only £30 was received during the last week and we are still only half way to our target of £2,500 with six weeks to go to the closing date.

We urgently need a response from all our readers and supporters if we are going to start these two funds moving and get the money rolling in.

Send us a donation today:

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