

SOCIALIST PRESS



Imperialists plan
Middle East war
Centre pages

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Pemberton



Kitson

TGWU LEADERS GAG VOTE ON

BENN

The contest for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party is a battle between the advocates of democratic control and accountability and the die hard defenders of bureaucratic arrogance. Nothing could more clearly have confirmed this than the events last week at the TGWU's Biennial De-legate Conference.

The leading bureaucrats on the platform had plainly given some kind of promise to Michael Foot that—come what may—the Conference would not vote on Tony Benn's candidacy.

But they knew from the outset that they could not hope to secure majority support for their attempts to exclude delegates at the union's highest policy-making body from the decision on how to cast the TGWU's 1.25 million votes in October. So in order to secure the result they wanted, the bureaucrats had to ride roughshod over the Conference, manipulating the agenda, and brushing aside all objections.

An Executive motion was withdrawn to ensure that amendments calling for a vote to Benn were simply ruled out of order by the Union's dictatorial Standing Orders Committee. It was plain that in order to secure a debate on the issues, delegates had to force the reference back to the agenda. This could not take place until Thursday.

Meanwhile evidence of the mass support for Benn and the left continued to

emerge.

Healey—Deputy Leader of the Labour Party—addressed a feeble fringe meeting of 28 plus a vocal dozen left wingers attending to heckle. The meeting called to support Benn—the challenger—drew, in contrast, an enthusiastic crowd of over 300 delegates, with standing ovations for the platform which included Ian Mikardo, Dennis Skinner and Sidney Bidwell.

In the conference itself, references to support for Benn by speakers at the rostrum drew a strong response.

Cowley delegate Bob Fryer was accused of simply "seeking popularity" by Chairman Stan Pemberton when he devoted half his contribution to backing Benn.

In addition the platform found itself twice defeated from the left as the conference voted down a motion in favour of "industrial democracy", and then on Wednesday voted to back a policy of occupations and supporting strikes to fight the cuts.

It was from this position of weakness that the TGWU bureaucracy was forced on Thursday to brazen out its attempt to

gag the conference and fly in the face of the clear mood of the membership.

From the chair Stan Pemberton ruled in favour of the Standing Orders report that since amendments had been tabled calling for support to Benn, there was no basis for an emergency resolution.

Faced with this barefaced bureaucratic manipulation, the only option was to challenge the chair.

Cowley delegate Alan Thornett did so; but with the issue having extended beyond the question of Benn to embrace the authority of the existing leadership, only a few delegates were prepared to support this challenge.

'Broad Left' and Communist Party supporters who had—after some debate—voted unanimously on the first evening to back a challenge to the ruling on Benn, crumbled when it came to the crunch.

A delighted TGWU bureaucracy openly gloated at the success of its manoeuvres. There was immediate talk of the possibility that the union's 43-person Labour conference delegation might vote for John Silkin—whose name had not been so much as mentioned all week?



Healey

A blow had certainly been struck at the Benn campaign—checking its momentum—at a point where the TGWU vote could have influenced the NUM and other unions.

But it has been done at tremendous cost to the prestige of the TGWU leadership within the union's own ranks.

Once again the Benn campaign has brought out the conflict between the leftward moving rank and file and the conservative right and "left" wing bureaucrats who sit at the heads of the unions and form a major obstacle

both to class action against the Tory government and the fight for alternative socialist policies in the Labour Party.

Alex Kitson as chairman of the Labour Party will no doubt be warmly thanked by Foot for his valiant efforts to secure Benn's defeat; but as the pressure builds up within the working class Kitson and his bureaucratic colleagues will find themselves in increasingly hot water.

Bid to hide
support for
prisoners

TORIES IMPOSE ELECTION GAG

The grossly misnamed "Representation of the People Bill" was given its third and final reading in the Commons last Friday by a majority of 108 votes.

The Bill which prevents convicted prisoners serving more than 12 months from standing for Parliament was amended to prevent political prisoners born in Northern Ireland but serving sentences in the Republic from standing.

refusing to meet the prisoners' five demands.

The task of forcing the Tories to back down cannot and must not be left to the hunger strikers and their supporters in the six counties.

Every socialist, every trade union militant in Britain must support the fight against the hunger strikers.

Resolutions must be tabled in trade union and Labour Party branches demanding that the Labour Party break from its bi-partisan stand with the Tories and instead back the struggle for political status and for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland.

One important way of advancing this campaign is through the building of the Labour Committee on Ireland to mobilise the growing opposition within the Labour Party at Foot and Concannon's connivance with the Tories.

Meanwhile as an eighth prisoner in the H Blocks of Long Kesh joins the hunger strike, the condition of Joe McDonnell—52 days on hunger strike as we go to press—is deteriorating rapidly. He is unable to leave his bed and suffers from dizzy spells and blurred vision.

The previous four hunger strikers survived between 59 and 66 days so Joe McDonnell has only a few days to live unless the British government can be forced to back down from their intransigent stand in

Labour Committee on Ireland

DEMONSTRATION

Sack Concannon!
Break Bipartisanship!
Support the Hunger Strikers!

SATURDAY 4 JULY

Assemble 2.00 p.m.

Mansfield BR Station

Bring your Labour Party and Trade Union banners

"The torture chamber of Latin America"

Because of its military government, which has suppressed the working class in a manner that is barbaric even by South American standards, Uruguay has been called the 'torture chamber of Latin America'.

However at one time it was stable, prosperous and with a comprehensive welfare system.

The existence of these conditions was dependent on Uruguay's exports, and when the market for these was reduced the economy went into sharp decline.

This was not helped by a 'flight of capital' from the country.

Polarisation

Class harmony gave way to class polarisation and when workers mobilised to defend their living standards the government sent in troops to break strikes.

The excuse for this repression of workers was the activities of the Tupamaros guerrilla group, despite the fact that they had little working class base.

In response to widespread labour unrest, the present military government intervened in 1973 and since then has carried out a campaign of systematic repression against the working

class similar to that of Pinochet or Videla.

All political parties are illegal or "in recess", and hundreds of members of left wing parties have disappeared or been murdered.

This figure is even worse when once considers that Uruguay's population is only three million.

Reprisals

At present, resistance is minimal and is always met with swift reprisals. The National Confederation of Workers (CNT) has been made illegal and its leaders imprisoned.

Many thousands of trade unionists have been arrested and tortured. The government has attempted to replace independent working class organisations with 'yellow' trade unions controlled by the state, but on its own admission has met with little success.

A new labour code was drawn up in 1979. Its main aim was 'the replacement of the concept of class struggle and the national disunity it implies with cooperation between capital and labour'.

The code, which also banned trade unionists from political activity, was condemned by the ILO and rejected by Uruguay's militant bank workers.

Despite their apparently secure position, the

Uruguayan generals are conscious that they are in an isolated position and have no significant support from any section of society.

They therefore propose to make way for a civilian government that will not threaten their interests.

This plan, called the Chronogram involves elections this year and a new constitution.

It also means a restricted role for the two traditional political parties, the Colorados and the Blancos (who are so fractionalised that they have no ideological cohesion).

The Chronogram will mean only minimal liberalisation, and in fact will only serve to legitimise existing oppression (all left wing parties will still be illegal).

It has, however, given the USA an excuse to resume arms sales to Uruguay on the pretext of a "return to democracy", and Uruguay may well be a partner in a possible US-backed South Atlantic Alliance with South Africa and Argentina.

The military coup of 1973 was a major defeat for the Uruguayan working class and there has only been slight resistance from independent working class organisations who can only exist in exile or in secret.

Although the struggle of Uruguay's working class is often overlooked in favour



of similar struggles in the region, their fight is the same fight as in Chile and Argentina.

The defeat of the military regime will take a long time, but can only be achieved by Uruguay's working class, supported by international working class solidarity.

Recognition for black SA union

Black trade unionists at Colgate-Palmolive in South Africa have forced management to recognise their union.

After an overwhelming vote by Colgate workers for a strike to back their demands, the employers dropped their insistence that the Chemical Industrial Workers' Union should apply for admission to a government-sponsored industrial council.

Victory

A detailed recognition agreement is now to be negotiated with the union, which is affiliated to the Federation of South African Trades Unions.

The firm's industrial relations manager admitted that: "The move towards in-plant bargaining is a move one cannot easily reverse in the short term."

This victory will no doubt further the determination of South Africa's black working class to defeat the

wave of victimisations and other attacks on their shop floor organisation and consolidate the strength of their independent unions.

KREMLIN STEPS UP PRESSURE ON POLAND

Soviet leader Gromyko is to visit Poland before the July Party Congress. This is yet another move to pressurise Polish Communist Party members into supporting the existing Stalinist bureaucracy.

The visit follows a series of Soviet newspaper articles referring to a supposed West German plan to snatch a part of Poland.

Similar articles have appeared in Hungary as well

as statements from the CC of the Hungarian CP about the "counter-revolutionary" developments.

And the Czech CP leadership has sent a letter to the Polish party similar to that sent two weeks ago by the Soviet leadership.

They are clearly hoping to influence the elections that are taking place to the Congress where the pro-Moscow elements around Grabski are battling it out with the 'reformist' elements.

In the background to all

the verbal threats the Soviet bureaucracy is still considering invasion, weighing up the changes taking place in the CP.

In Poznan, a demonstration of 150,000 took place on Sunday to mark the 25th anniversary of the suppression of food riots in which 74 people were killed and soldiers who refused to fire on them executed.

Today's mass movement, which is profoundly affecting developments in the previously reliable Communist Party is what disturbs the Soviet bureaucracy.

At the demonstration Lech Walesa said that the "mistake" of the workers in 1956 was to go out on the streets. He spoke of "tactical

mistakes" and reiterated his strong support for Party leader Kania and the necessity for "strong government".

Walesa is wrong. It is not "tactical mistakes" which prompt Soviet retaliation but the very existence of a mass movement of workers independent of the bureaucrats.

The challenge to the state's right to shoot down food rioters is a challenge that threatens all the Eastern European bureaucracies.

It poses the necessity for the working class to organise its own defence militias and to extend the appeal for class solidarity to workers in the other deformed workers' states.

Iranian students in grave danger

As the bombing of the Islamic Republican Party in Iran brings a renewed threat of a wholesale pogrom of left wing and secular forces, six Iranian opponents of Islamic reaction face charges in Britain which could mean their deportation.

The Muslim Students Society of Manchester had been holding a peaceful picket of the Iranian

Manchester consulate every day since June 15, opposing the wave of repression in Iran and the persecution of former President Bani-Sadr.

On June 25 as pickets dispersed they were followed by some 40 supporters of the consulate—armed with sticks, chains and screwdrivers. A fight broke out in the University in which eventually six pickets

and two of their assailants were arrested.

Three pickets are charged with fighting and three with causing bodily harm. All six face the danger of deportation and summary execution. The British labour movement must act to defend the pickets and demand their release.

Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Summer School 1981 JULY 19-26

"The Crisis of Imperialism and Stalinism"

Seven days of lectures and discussions on basic questions of Marxism and the fight to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International, ending with the Fusion Conference of the British WSL and ICL.

A series of more basic lectures and discussions will be held simultaneously with the main lectures.

There will also be films, fringe meetings on various topics, an Irish evening and other more informal activities as well as a grand social on Saturday evening.

Total cost, including transport by approved means, is £22 for the week. Further details can be obtained from the Workers Socialist League, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.



Spanish leaders keep their heads down

"Todos al suelo!" (Everyone on the ground!) was the order issued to the Spanish members of parliament by Lt-Colonel Tejero when he invaded the Cortes at the start of the attempted military coup d'etat on February 23.

And, politically speaking, that's where they have stayed ever since.

Ever since the coup attempt, Spain's 'democratic' politicians, whether of the right wing government party, the Centre Democratic Union, or the opposition Socialist and Communist Parties have reacted to the coup by making one concession after another to reaction and to the military.

Despite revelations of the wide extent of the plot made by the Spanish bourgeois press still only 33 military and Guardia Civil (paramilitary police) officers are under arrest. And they are allowed to hold political court and make public political statements from their places of detention.

Everywhere in the country the powers of the military, armed police and civil guard have been strengthened, especially in the Basque country which is under virtual military occupation.

The bank siege in Barcelona four weeks ago was one



The Barcelona bank siege

example among many of the way in which fascist and right wing military and police forces are on the rampage in Spain.

The government's official explanation of the siege as non-political work of criminals is universally regarded as laughable.

In the face of government weakness and the abject surrender of the opposition workers' parties,

Spain has become more than ever the fief of the Francoist armed forces and police to behave as they please.

It is against that context that the arrests of last week must be seen. Three officers were arrested for being implicated in a new military plot—one of them was, along with Col. Tejero, part of a previous much publicised plot, Operation Galaxy.

And three Civil Guards

were arrested in Almeira and charged with manslaughter.

This was in connection with a case which has become a national scandal. Three youths were killed when, according to the Civil Guard, the car they were travelling in went off the road after their arrest for suspected terrorism. It was, said the police authorities, a tragic accident.

A later autopsy showed

that the youths had been tortured and had died from bullet wounds in the head and chest. When arrested they were on their way to their first communion.

Although the Civil Guards indicted for their 'manslaughter' are the first to be arrested on criminal charges for many years, this move is not a decisive step against the criminal activities of the police and military.

'Social Contract'

Because it pales into insignificance in the face of the rapidly growing examples of 'manslaughter' such as happened in Almeira.

The UCD government has lost all ability to control this. And the opposition though it has been forced into public protest at the Almeira case, maintains its sycophantic position about the institutions of the Spanish state, including the army and the monarchy.

And in the economic sphere the two main unions have just signed a new 'social contract' with government accepting in effect major wage cuts as a solution to the growing economic crisis.

Inflation is expected to be at least 12% and is now running at 16%. In the Social Contract the unions (Communist and Socialist) accept a limit on wage increases for the next year of 9-11%.

In exchange they get the

vaguest of promises from the government to create more jobs.

But in fact in the last year officially registered unemployment has gone up to over 1.7 million which makes it at 13.5% one of the highest rates in Western Europe.

Unable to answer any of the economic problems, the government led by Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo tries to present itself as the defender and extender of democratic rights.

The only achievement it can point to however is the law passed last week, against Catholic Church opposition, permitting divorce, completely banned by Franco.

The law however has produced a significant split in the UCD itself and almost certainly brings to an end even the apparently reforming intentions of the government. It has no intention for example of legalising abortion which remains completely illegal in Spain.

Paralysed

The 'democratic' politicians who dropped to the floor of the Cortes on February 23 have become paralysed long before they have brought even bourgeois democratic rights to Spain.

And around them the power of the military and

police and fascists is growing and so are the economic problems.

Only a courageous and decisive lead from the workers' organisations could avert the trend towards military dictatorship and a renewal of full blooded Francoist rule.

But the Socialists, the largest opposition party, are now hardly distinguishable from the UCD in their official policies. They merely promise to do the same things (prosecute 'terrorists', investigate the coup and pursue economic austerity) with more energy than the UCD.

Events in France do not appear to have made the Socialist leader Felipe Gonzalez want to become even the Spanish Mitterand. He appears more set on being the Spanish Dennis Healey.



Gonzalez

ITALY: THE IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS

It looks as if the impossible, the unthinkable in politics—the solution the most powerful political figures said they would never accept—is about to take place in Italy.

There now looks very little to stop Giovanni Spadolini, leader of the minuscule Republican Party, a non-Catholic bourgeois party, becoming Prime Minister of Italy's forty-first post-war government.

Last weekend's regional election results for the large municipal councils had the effect in the topsy turvy world of Italian politics of strengthening Spadolini's chances of surviving a vote of confidence in the parliament.

Impasse

This is because the Republican Party got about 2.5% of the vote. No, that's not a misprint but an expression of the terrible impasse of political leadership in the Italian bourgeoisie.

It leads at present to the law: the smaller is your party the more likely you are to become Prime Minister.

The Republicans,

although tiny, experienced the electoral advance in last week's poll which was common to all the parties which have been in alliance with the Christian Democrats in recent Italian 'Centre Left' governments.

Advances

But by far the main gainer in the polls was the Socialist Party which made striking advances against the Christian Democrats almost everywhere and even in some places against the Communist Party, though in most places the Communist Party held onto their share of the poll and even increased it a little compared with the parliamentary elections in 1979.

Everywhere the Christian Democrats, Italy's majority right wing party tainted by innumerable scandals and by its record in office were the losers.

At this low ebb in their fortunes, therefore, even the Christian Democrats who had previously regarded it as unthinkable are at the moment forced to accept that there shall be a non-Christian Democrat Premier.

And they prefer someone like Spadolini whose party can never expect to be a major electoral threat to the overwhelmingly ambitious

Bettino Craxi, leader of the Socialist Party who is clearly hoping to become the Italian Mitterand and whom for that reason the Christian Democrats fear.

And so for the same reasons do the Communists. The Italian CP nominally is in opposition to the recent Centre Left governments.

They are demanding to be let into government themselves and will make use of the French precedent to strengthen this demand.

Everyone in Italy remembers that the Italian Communist Party were excluded from the post-war national coalition government at the start of the Cold War in 1948 just as the French Communist Party were. And now the French Communists—much nearer to Moscow than their Italian counterparts—are back in government.

Relative strength

But the Italian CP also knows that, pioneer of Eurocommunism as it is, there is not at present much chance of its being brought into an Italian government because of its relative strength compared with the French CP.

While the French CP has joined Mitterand's administration after a major elec-



toral setback and is thus forced to take a back seat, the Italian CP has shown that, despite Socialist advances, it is still capable of getting two to three times as many votes in elections as the Italian Socialist Party. It would therefore have a front seat in any government it became part of.

So, until the bourgeoisie decide that they cannot avoid this solution—and CP leader Berlinguer feels that moment may not be far away—the Communists are content to influence the

composition of the Centre Left governments through varying their degrees of 'opposition'.

And there is no doubt that they, like the Christian Democrats, have advised the Socialist President Pertini that Spadolini is a much more acceptable Prime Minister than the ambitious Craxi.

So, for all these powerful if convoluted political reasons, barring another scandal it looks as if Spadolini is about to have his hour

in Italian history.

The hour, however, could easily be cut to a minute, because the major parties—the Communists and the Christian Democrats—though they both want Spadolini to be Premier today, both just as much want him to fail quite soon.

And so, of course, does Craxi who more than anyone is in a position to precipitate Italy into new general elections, especially now that he knows that his party may gain something from them.

Well, one of the great certainties of Italian politics is that Spadolini will fail. Even so close to the Vatican there is a limit to political miracles.

The question is not whether Spadolini's government even if it takes office will fail, nor really when it will fail but how it will fail—what scandal or policy failure will bring it down and which of the three larger parties this will benefit?

The certainty of its failure in the relatively short run comes not basically from all these party political manoeuvres but from the growing failure of Italian capitalism to solve the country's deepening economic and social crisis.

After a mini-boom in the economy in early 1980 a very severe recession has now set in. Next month it is almost certain that the unemployment figure will rise above the 2 million mark even on official figures.

This represents almost one in ten of the workforce

and in some areas of the South the figure is very much higher than this, especially among the youth.

The bourgeoisie's only solution to the crisis, as everywhere else, is more austerity and cutbacks and an attack on the limited sliding scale of wages won by working class struggle.

And there are growing signs that by parliamentary democratic forms of government they cannot control the social and political reactions which their policies provoke.

The Italian CP hopes that in the end it will be called in to help. Last week's elections, however, produced two signs that this plan may be going awry before it has even been put into operation at a national level.

One was the rate of abstentions which, at 20%, was very high for Italy, illustrating a growing disillusion with politicians of any shade.

The second was the result in Naples, a city of astronomical levels of unemployment and homelessness where in recent months a militant mass movement of homeless and jobless people have clashed continually with the Communist Party dominated local council.

It was here that the Communist Party suffered major electoral setbacks. The bourgeoisie will be wondering whether the Italian Communists will be such good policemen after all.

Perhaps their plain clothes disguise is already too obvious.

Unemployed take first steps towards national union

With the TUC'S reformist blind alley of the Peoples March well behind them, the unemployed began the steps towards a united national organisation last Saturday.

The national conference called by Leicester Unemployed Workers Union on the theme "We've had the march, now let's organise" drew 125 delegates from groups of unemployed and unemployed centres throughout the country.

Tee-shirts

In all, groups from 32 towns were represented ranging from Edinburgh, Newcastle, Rochdale, Liverpool and Hull in the North to Coventry, Telford, Nuneaton and Gloucester in the Midlands, with a large number of groups attending from London and the South East.

Not surprisingly a number of delegates were still wearing the tee-shirts they'd worn on the Peoples March.

The central discussion of the conference was on how to build a national organisation of the unemployed and what the aims of such an organisation should be.

Delegate after delegate took the microphone to denounce the failure of the trade union leaders to take up any serious fight against

Tory policies and against unemployment.

As Scott Reeve, one of the London delegates, pointed out:

"We are totally opposed to the TUC guidelines. We hope to have an unemployed workers' centre in our area in the next two months, but run totally by the unemployed themselves.

"We don't want that centre run in a passive way. We want it run in a militant-minded way—the unemployed fighting for their rights, fighting for improved state benefits, fighting against redundancies."

This view was echoed by Chris Erswal from the Tuebrook unemployed workers centre in Liverpool.

There, they were organising a labour movement inquiry into the needs for

public services, calling for an expansion of the direct labour workforce, and for a major programme of useful public works.

The main resolution at the conference, which was (in amended form) adopted overwhelmingly, called for the immediate establishment of a delegate-based national steering committee of unemployed workers' groups.

It spelled out the need for all local groups to fight for democratic control of TUC centres by the unemployed themselves, and the need for the unemployed to take up the fight against job losses by supporting workers' occupations, picket lines, etc.

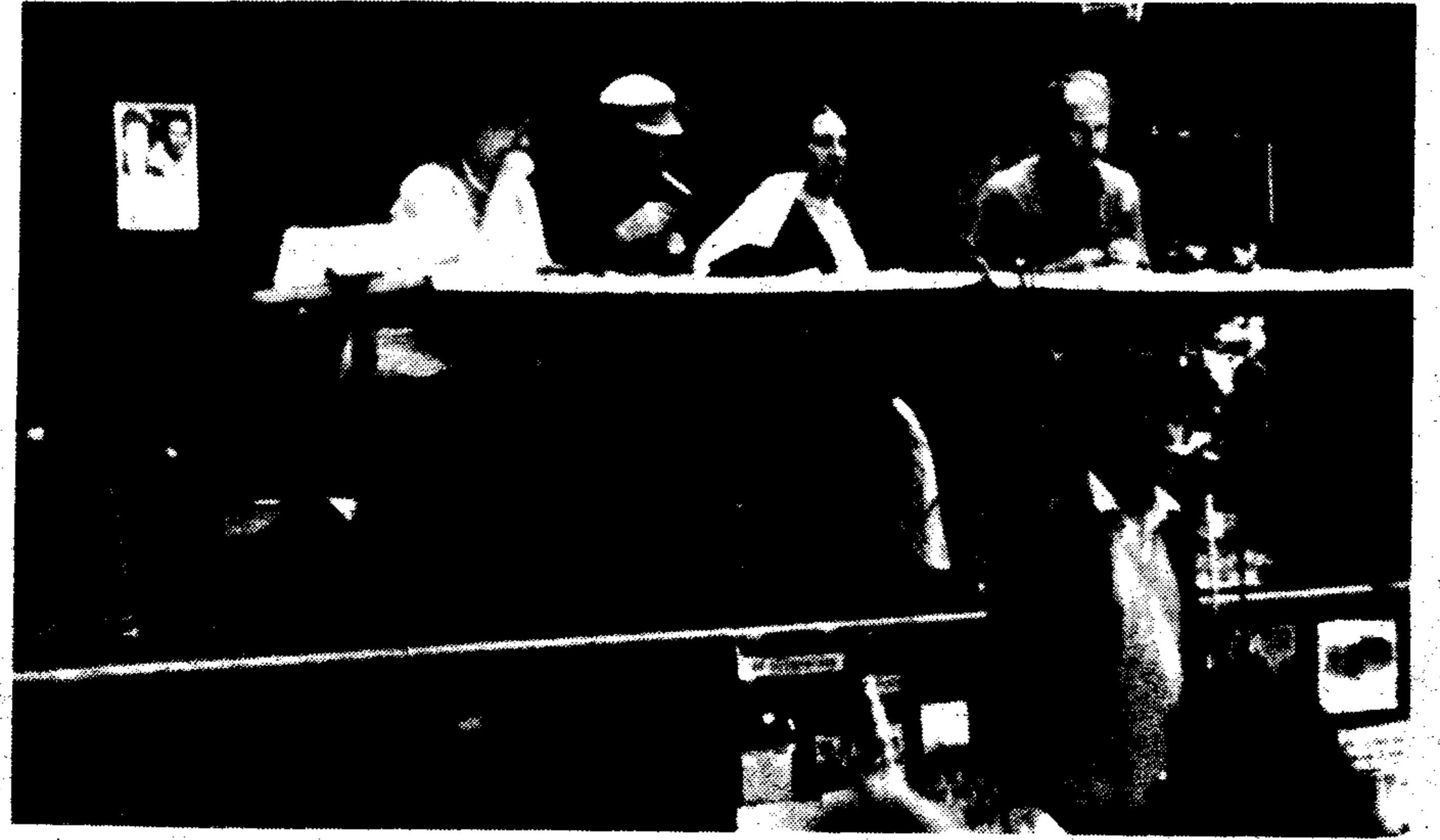
A statement of aims was also adopted, which drew out the need for the unemployed to actively fight

racialism and also the phoney "job creation" schemes.

This was also adopted overwhelmingly.

Perhaps the most important decision of the conference however was to prepare for a national conference in the autumn at which a complete national structure could be adopted as the launching point for a national Unemployed Workers Union.

Trade unionists throughout the country should immediately raise resolutions in their branches supporting these important developments amongst the unemployed and demanding that the TUC and Trades Councils give full rights to Unemployed Workers Union branches.



Fighting for Irish solidarity

Leeds North East CLP has set the pace in passing an anti-imperialist motion on Ireland for debate at this year's Labour Party conference.

Carried by 20 votes to 5, the motion was forwarded as the constituency's resolution to the conference as a result of

the casting vote of the Party chairperson after a tied vote with another motion.

It reads: "This conference deplores Michael Foot's statement in the House of Commons on the death of Bobby Sands and his slavish following

of Tory bi-partisan policy on Northern Ireland.

Conference endorses and supports the efforts being made by Labour MPs to break the bi-partisan policy by fighting for political status for prisoners convicted by the Special Diplock

Courts, and the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland."

*In Oxford, Socialist Press supporters leafletting to publicise a Workers Socialist League public meeting on the H Block struggle were harassed by police last week.

Works police at BL's Cowley Assembly plant called the cops in a bid to exploit the hostility of some carworkers to the leaflet, which argued the case for supporting the hunger strikers and for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

Despite the fact that they knew no crime was being committed, police insisted on taking the names and addresses of the militants giving out the leaflets.

GAINS IN FIGHT AGAINST RACISTS

The anti-fascist struggle in Coventry has made gains inside the labour movement over the last ten days.

Coventry Trades Council, following a discussion on the need for the labour movement to act, has set up an elected sub-committee to investigate and initiate ways in which the fight against racism can be taken up on the shop floor.

As a start the secretary

has agreed to send out a statement to shop stewards, covenors and District Committees to note the recent racist attacks and murders, the growth of fascist activity and the need to take a class stand on these issues.

The National Union of Teachers has also set up a sub-committee which sent out a questionnaire to all members in schools to assess the increase of racist violence, abuse, graffiti and fascist literature and organ-

isations within Coventry schools.

The NUT sub-committee adopted a policy of banning fascist and racist literature and has agreed to liaise with other labour movement bodies that are actively taking up the anti-racist struggle.

Earlsdon and Whoberly ward Labour Parties last week held a joint public meeting to discuss ways of fighting racism in their areas. The 70-strong meeting

stood in a minute's silence in memory of Dr. A Dharry who died three weeks after being stabbed outside a chip shop in Earlsdon.

The encouraging turn-out followed mass leafletting of the area calling on local people to stand firm against racism.

A genuine discussion followed after hearing an Asian speaker recount his experiences of an attempt to murder him and the meeting established a committee of volunteers to discuss the formation of street committees to combat racism.

The above initiatives must be seen as attempts to build an effective class response to the fascists and must be broadened out inside the entire labour movement.

FASCISTS INJURE SOCIALIST

On 18 June Sheila Malone was viciously attacked by fascists in The Other Bookshop where she works.

The fascists who were in the shop ostensibly to buy badges suddenly pulled out a cosh and hit Sheila on the head, fracturing her skull and leaving her lying in a pool of blood.

Behind them they left a message: "SS Deathshead. NSDAP. Death to IRA lovers and all Communist

scum. God Save the Queen. Heil Hitler.

A cassette which they also left behind stated that all socialists could be considered likely targets for such attacks.

Even the police have stated that the attack was politically motivated by extreme right wing elements.

Although Sheila Malone is to undergo an operation for her injuries she is for-

tunately expected to make a full recovery.

Messages of sympathy and get-well cards can be sent to Sheila c/o The Other Bookshop, 328 Upper Street, London N1.

The Other Bookshop has launched a £500 fund to improve security and provide Sheila with a convalescent holiday.

Anyone wishing to contribute can send a donation to the same address.

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Brixton cop's main concern was 'extremists'

Swamp 81 the police operation which resulted in several days of rioting in Brixton last April was the most intensive stop-and-search operation mounted by police in Lambeth.

Figures given to the Scarman Inquiry last week showed that 1,000 people were stopped and ques-

tioned by police in five days, compared to an average of 500-700 stops per month in earlier police operations in the area.

Police spokesmen also admitted under questioning not only that on previous occasions the petty criminals they were out to catch had merely moved to neighbouring Southwark,

but that this type of police operation created its own crimes. Annoyance at the constant harassment had led to five people being arrested for obstructing the police and three—one of them a 47 year old housewife—for assaulting the police.

Earlier in the week the police admitted that they had made no attempt to investigate the many complaints of plain clothes police involved in the riot carrying an assortment of iron bars and coshes.

And the former chief of Lambeth police, Commander Leonard Adams, admitted that for him "political extremism" was a "main concern". He went on to say that he regarded Ted Knight, leader of Lambeth Council as a political extremist.

What emerged clearly from the questioning of Adams was that the main concern of the police was political "extremists" of the left rather than the right. While the police are clearly being given a rough ride in the Inquiry by counsel for local community groups, it is by no means certain that this will be reflected in the final report which Scarman will draw up.



Campaign grows to remove Glasgow right wing MP

The virulence with which Tories and right wing Labourites view the campaign for more democracy in the Labour Party and in particular the process of reselection of Parliamentary candidates is perhaps nowhere more clearly manifested than in Pollok CLP, on the south side of Glasgow.

Over the past fortnight we have witnessed a vicious press campaign against those

in the CLP engaged in the campaign to oust sitting MP James White who has long been at odds with his CLP on a wide range of issues, that is Davie Dick, the Secretary of the CLP and a well known supporter of 'Militant'.

A wholly legitimate campaign to remove White has been both vilified by the media as a "Trotskyist plot" and attacked by local right wing Labourites using rather dubious methods.

In Pollokshields, Strathbungo ward right wing local businessman Bashir Maan

admitted that he had "packed" a recent branch meeting with members who were either long dormant or hastily recruited so as to remove from office a supporter of Dick.

"Dirty tricks"

We can expect that such "dirty tricks" will grow in number as the reselection process unfolds.

There are two further complications involved in this local tussle. One is in the shape of the consequences of the report of the Boundary

Commissioners which, if accepted in its present form, will lead to a carve up of the present Pollok constituency.

One effect of this will be the creation of a new constituency called Glasgow South which will be undeniably a safe Tory seat, embracing, as it will, a swathe of owner-occupier territory, with pockets of well-heeled people.

Constituency

Alongside this will stand another new constituency, Glasgow South West. Who-

ever wins in Pollok will then very likely have to slug it out with Bruce Millan, the present incumbent in the Craigton constituency, for the candidacy for that new seat.

The proposed creation of Glasgow South has already raised cries in the Labour ranks of "gerrymandering" and there are fears that objections to the proposals of the Commissioners will have problems in surfacing in the period stipulated for objections to be forwarded, that being mainly during the summer months when

Labour Party branches do not meet.

A further complication may also arise in the shape of other claims to the candidature. There are widespread rumours that there may be challenges both by a prominent figure in the LCC and by right wingers who are prepared to put forward another candidate and so ditch White

Recruitment

As the broad left in Pollok are well aware, the right wing cannot be

defeated solely through arguments in branch meetings.

That debate must go alongside the recruitment to the party of new forces seeking for a means to fight the Tories.

Whatever the outcome of the immediate contest, its most substantial achievement will be in terms of transforming the Labour movement on the south side of Glasgow.

Labour women fight for voice to be heard

The 57th National Conference of Labour Women was held in Buxton and was attended by over 300 delegates.

These delegates were faced with a wide range of resolutions which for the most part were concerned with safe appeals to both this Tory government and the forthcoming Labour government to try if possible to do something.

Many resolutions called for (among other things) help for the disabled and elderly, opposition to prescription charges, an end to the use of the controversial contraceptive drug Depo Provera.

As one might expect, all such resolutions, with the absence of any clear fighting programme, were passed very much on the nod, not even receiving opposition from the committee on the platform.

Throughout the conference it was clear to the delegates that the collection of women on the platform running events were doing their best to put the lid on any real militancy, and it was this fact that made the composite resolutions on the agenda concerned with women's organisation so important.

At present the National Women's Committee is elected on an obscure regional basis that ensures that the majority of women have no say in the election at all.

The composites called for a change in this system, the main changes being a call for the National Conference of Labour Women to elect the committee and furthermore, for the Women's Conference to have the power to send five resolutions to the Annual Labour Party conference.

The platform opposed each of these composites and advised the floor to vote against them, and since the summing up from the committee was much longer than the contributions from the floor and had the final say, the effect was that each of these resolutions was narrowly lost.

March

Interestingly enough in this section of the debate came a resolution calling on the National Committee of Labour Women to initiate

the first steps towards setting up a Women's Right to Work march in the autumn (in conjunction with the TUC and other groupings of women).

Although this resolution was passed with a large majority it did not go through without opposition, for the trade union delegates objected violently to a line in the composite that said that up until now nothing had been done to highlight the problem of women's unemployment.

The trade union delegates thought this untrue as their union had once sent out a letter!

One of the highlights of the conference came in the discussion on housing when the delegates were faced with the first resolution that actually called for an immediate fighting programme.

Amendment

It was tabled as an amendment by Tower Hamlets Women's Section, amending a rather weak resolution that simply expressed opposition to council house sales.

Tower Hamlets pointed to the need for direct action, including strike action, to defend council houses from being sold off. The resolution also opposed increases in rents and heating costs and called for tenants to have much more say in the running of things—including a right to open the books of the council.

This resolution produced a very close vote which the chairperson claimed had been clearly lost. A card vote was called for, producing the astonishing result of a tie vote at 154 to 154. Hence the amendment fell.

During the conference it was clear that a process of selection had successfully pushed some important resolutions off the agenda and that this was a deliberate ploy by the committee to resist debate on the more controversial issues.

In a challenge to this approach, Audrey Wise leapt to her feet and took the microphone, demanding that her resolution on the role of the district auditor was tabled for debate.

Loud applause

This received loud applause from the delegates, whose confidence in the

platform was now diminishing fast. Equally there was a lot of support for moving reference back in order to hear the emergency resolution on the issue of the deputy leadership.

After finally suspending standing orders, Audrey Wise's resolution was passed unanimously. It called for support for the Labour

councillors of Camden who are facing heavy surcharges due to their decision to implement a £60 minimum wage during NUPE's dispute these were elected onto a committee of six. This will fuel the fight next year to make the conference a fighting conference where a real programme for action can be mapped out having real

status in the labour movement.

It may surprise readers to hear that at present there is absolutely no official record of the resolutions passed at the Women's Conference.

Until the fight for democracy is won, the conference will remain an important talking ground but not much more.

PRESS GANG

Queen at the crossroads

Uproar has broken out at the BBC after shock news that the Queen—the star of their longest running soap opera—has been given the chop!

Elizabeth Mountbatten who has played the Queen at coronations, civic functions and seventeen course dinners for more than 25 years—is to make way for new blood.

A spokesman for State



Enterprises said: "All good things come to an end. She no longer figures in our plans."

Now other leading members of the cast—including the Queen Mother who is said to have been senile for some years—are afraid that their job may go too.

Recent statements by the comedy star of the show 'prince' Philip about needing more leisure time are thought to have been taken to heart by the producers.

The palace coup has been engineered by the man who plays the Queen's son, Prince Charles. With the backing of a new non-speaking heroine, Lady Diana, he has engineered to top the ratings this summer with a spectacular procession through London.

The shake-up is being presented as a simple change of script but amongst people in the know this is widely derided. Behind the tight smile of the Corgi Queen, behind the happy-go-lucky days out at the races, behind the feasting, dancing and dressing up in funny clothes, lies the often concealed truth that Queen Elizabeth herself owns a large chunk of the BBC through a front organisation known as "Great Britain".

She is now said to bitterly regret the decision she

took nearly thirty years ago to give large chunks of her shares to her son. "It was my one moment where sentiment ruled my head", she said yesterday speaking in tears at her draughty home a stone's throw from Victoria Station. "Honestly, I could crown myself."

A meeting of the cast was held last night and afterwards members of what they still like to call the "Royal Family" emerged tight lipped.

A spokesman for the company was more forthcoming. "Things were beginning to slip. They are still fantastic on the ratings of course but we have to keep ahead of events. If we can't give the public what we think they ought to want we could end up with a bloody republic. Coronation Street is an ever present menace."

Middle class

The Queen was accused by some of her critics of being too middle class. With her taste in small dogs and plain head scarves she was thought to present too little of an alternative to Margaret Thatcher, whose plunge through the ratings has been one of the most spectacular disasters of any TV show

this decade.

In contrast to this the producers have been grooming Lady Diana for stardom. They have not yet tried her out in a speaking role but so far £10 million has been spent on wardrobes and hairdos.

Programme script writers have been working on a secret project whereby she adopts a Vietnamese boat child and brings him up (girls have been ruled out) herself aided only by a nanny and four live-in nurses.

Inability

It is hoped in this way to distract attention from Prince Charles, whose contract still has 50 years to run but whose wooden acting style and inability to remember any lines are a constant embarrassment.

Later at a secret hideout to get away from the phones the chief script writer said: "It is not unusual for heads to roll from time to time, but we've never had a reaction like this. It is however our view that once this all blows over nobody will remember the Queen's name in six months."

Viewers have already been given a signal of

possible disaster in a recent episode when a young fanatic, crossed in love, emptied a revolver at the Queen. She was saved in that episode when an army sergeant headed the bullets away from her without sustaining injury.

'Students'

In the most recent episode a group of sinister German 'students' have been caught camping out in the Queen's garden. So far their explanation that they thought it was a park has been accepted but there is widespread speculation that this could be the beginning of a story line in which the Queen will meet a very grisly end.

Meanwhile there are some cynics who say the whole thing is a put-up job to get some life back into what is—despite a fortune spent on special effects—just a dreary story of a hum-drum family with too much money and nothing to offer.



IMPERIALISTS PREPARE MIDDLE EAST

We reprint on these pages the text of a statement 'Mobilise against the war provocation of the Begin government' adopted by the Palestine Workers League on 15 May 1981.

The Workers League is a section of the Fourth Internationalist Tendency.

While we have some political differences with the FIT we are in broad agreement with the politics of this statement.

After the grand show of the American-Israeli-Egyptian "peace", the region is in the severest war danger since 1978. The bankrupt Begin regime is preparing this war in a hope to camouflage the economic and political bankruptcy of the Zionist bourgeoisie.

These announcements should only warn us about the catastrophe they are preparing: in order to change the situation in the region, to strike a death blow to the neighbouring countries—the bourgeois regime is ready to undertake any adventure.

But the regional relations of forces are very different from those of 1967, and a war today could turn out to be not simply a campaign of occupations and murder against the Arab masses, but also cost a heavy price for the Jewish masses.



1. The Cause of the War—Israeli Expansionist Policy.

If a war breaks out now, it will be the outcome of the Israeli policy of occupation and expansion: more generally, it will be the continuation of the policy of occupation and expropriation against the Palestinian people, and immediately, it will be the result of the policy of "Natural Borders" and the attempts to annex parts of Lebanon.

Israeli intervention in Lebanon began before the civil war in this country in 1975-76. Actually, the Israeli heavy bombardments and raids on Lebanon were some of the factors leading to this war.

After the civil war, the then "Ma'arach" (1) government in Israel took advantage of the situation to implement its annexation policy in the traditional Israeli manner.

In order to "defend the boundary areas", another area was actually annexed—under the camouflage of Major Haddad's mercenaries and limitless bombardments and destruction, and continuous driving-away of most of the Palestinians and Shi'ite inhabitants of this area.

The next step after this annexation was, of course, the need to defend the new boundary, and herein the need for another war. This policy has already brought the "Litani Operation", known everywhere for the atrocities and looting carried out. But this operation solved nothing, and today the same policy threatens to produce an overall war.

On the contrary, it is aimed at preventing any ending of the massacre in Lebanon, because only unceasing sectarian conflicts in Lebanon enable Israel to continue its intervention, bombardments, raids and annexations.

The head of the Israeli Northern Command, General Ben-Gal, known for his statement that the "Arabs are a cancer in the body of the State of Israel", stated recently that Israel will continue to control Southern Lebanon also without Major Haddad.

Begin publicly announces that the cause of the war is to guarantee Israeli air supremacy... over the skies of

stabilise "autonomy" of their own in Northern Lebanon.

In this campaign, most of the Phalangists' battles were aimed precisely at the Christian inhabitants in Lebanon—to liquidate their opponents among the supporters of Shamun and Faranjie—and finally their attempt to crush the Syrian Popular Party (of which most members are Christian).

In that period the Phalangists occupied the area of Snin mountain and the city of Zahle. The Syrian army, which took these areas out of the hands of the Left in 1976, actually pretended not to notice the Phalangists' expansion till recently, seeing in them partners for its efforts to reconstruct the bourgeois regime in Lebanon.

But lately the Syrian army has launched an attack against the Phalangists—a limited attack which brought toward the end of April contacts in Damascus and Beirut concerning a new agreement on the reconstruction of Lebanon.

The Israeli attack on 28 April of this year during which two Syrian helicopters were shot down on Snin mountain came after reports of this agreement; it was an attempt to prevent the Phalangists from changing their policy and renewing their links with Syria.

This Israeli intervention was denounced by all parties in Lebanon—including the Phalangist leaders.

The Israeli intervention in Lebanon is not aimed at "defending the Christians".

On the contrary, it is aimed at preventing any ending of the massacre in Lebanon, because only unceasing sectarian conflicts in Lebanon enable Israel to continue its intervention, bombardments, raids and annexations.

The head of the Israeli Northern Command, General Ben-Gal, known for his statement that the "Arabs are a cancer in the body of the State of Israel", stated recently that Israel will continue to control Southern Lebanon also without Major Haddad.

Begin publicly announces that the cause of the war is to guarantee Israeli air supremacy... over the skies of

all Lebanon! Our slogan which will discharge the present tension and prevent war is simple:

***Israel out of Lebanon!**

2. US Imperialism encourages Israel.

Begin's hardened line is a direct result of American support. The new Reagan administration pursued a policy of international aggressiveness in order to get out of the political and economic crisis of US imperialism.

But until now, Reagan has not gained any success: the bloodbath conducted by the Salvadorian dictatorship did not bring it popular support; in Poland, the movement of the masses is advancing despite Reagan's threats of a new world war; and in France, in the heart of Europe, a socialist President is elected with the support of the Communist Party.

In the Middle East, Reagan is expecting a quick gain. Here the Syrian regime and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation were isolated as the only ones still connected with Moscow, while all the Oil bourgeoisies and Sadat are openly turning to the West.

Here is the Israeli bourgeoisie, unhesitatingly willing to sacrifice its soldiers in a new military adventure—and seeks only a green light.

Reagan wants a quick and easy victory based on the blood of the Arab and Jewish masses. The American "mediator", special envoy Philip Habib, came in order to give the American ultimatums to Syria, and to try and get the fruits of its surrender.

The Arab and Jewish masses should come out against the war, weapons and blood spilt to please the imperialist speculators.

***Down with imperialist intervention in the Middle East!**

3. Opposition to war amongst the Jewish masses.

For the first time in the history of wars in the country, the opposition to war among the Jewish

masses takes on a political and mass expression.

This is an important phenomenon, an outcome of the crisis of the Israeli state which began in the 1973 war, and proves that this crisis can have a positive outcome.

The Peres-style bourgeois opposition is unwilling to crack the national front, and it is dragging after Begin's statements (as is Peres' announcement that the "presence of the missiles in Lebanon is an intollerable situation", and that he supports Begin on this issue).

But while Begin sees the war as the sole chance to save his government, in elections, "Ma'arach" fears the outcome of an Israeli war declared in opposition to the wishes of the majority of the Jewish masses.

War was always the most powerful weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie, not only against the Arabs but also in order to intimidate the Jewish workers and inhabitants of poor neighbourhoods, and to prevent any struggle or attempt for independent working class organisation.

Profits

Behind the "security" slogan, the industrialists, contractors, weapons speculators and the colony-settlers have always made their fittest profits. But the misery, unemployment and inflation—fruits of the "security" and easy profits policy—have a lack of confidence among the workers in all the bourgeois parties.

The present war plans are an important test: will the workers forget again that the bourgeoisie is the real enemy and go to pour their blood in wars of occupation?

The bourgeois opposition promises that if the thunder of war is heard it will withdraw all its objections. If we want to prevent this war, if we want to prevent many more years of slavery and wars, we should say to Begin and his friends: if you dare and declare this criminal war—all the workers, Jewish and Arab, will come out against you.

Only the independent working class organisation, only the unity of Arab and Jewish workers, can prevent

the present war and pose the way to peace!

4. The Palestinian people—the first victim. Palestinian national liberation—condition for peace.

Since the formation of the state of Israel each government has pursued the same policy towards the Palestinian masses: expropriation, oppression, racial discrimination, mass expulsion and occupation.

The Camp David agreements attempted to establish a pro-imperialist alliance between Israel and Egypt—through preventing a solution of the Palestinian problem by the plans for "autonomy".

But the occupation and oppression are breeding resistance. Since 1967, the Palestinians have taken their fate into their own hands, and come out in struggle both from outside and under Israeli rule. This resistance took on a political mass character.

In the West Bank, despite the occupation, there have been general strikes and mass demonstrations—and since the 1976 Land Day (2), the Palestinian masses inside the "green line" (3) have also joined these struggles.

The Begin government's Iron Fist policy for the oppression of the Palestinian masses was operated both in Lebanon and in the territories occupied in 1967 and

inside the "green line".

This policy under the Israeli regime includes the destruction of houses, house arrest of political activists, the granting of legitimacy and support to the Israeli colony-settlers and their provocations; and recently the ban on the Nazareth convention of the "Arab Population Congress" and the outlawing of the "National Coordination Committee".

Against the Iron Fist policy—there should be counterposed plans for realising the full Palestinian national liberation, as a way to solve the Jewish-Arab conflict and establish peace:

***Down with the occupation!**
***For the withdrawal of the Israeli army from all the Arab areas and towns!**
***For the right of return for Palestinian refugees!**
***For a constituent assembly of all the inhabitants of the country, including the Palestinian refugees, which will establish the co-existence in a unified democratic Palestine!**

nothing compared to the Israeli bombings from the air, land and sea on the Palestinians and villagers in Southern Lebanon.

The Palestinians are in Lebanon against their will as refugees, since their return to their land is prevented by the Israeli occupation.

Mass expulsion

It was this mass expulsion, beginning in 1948, that turned the Palestinians into a factor of a struggle and ferment and it is this mass expulsion which is the origin of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

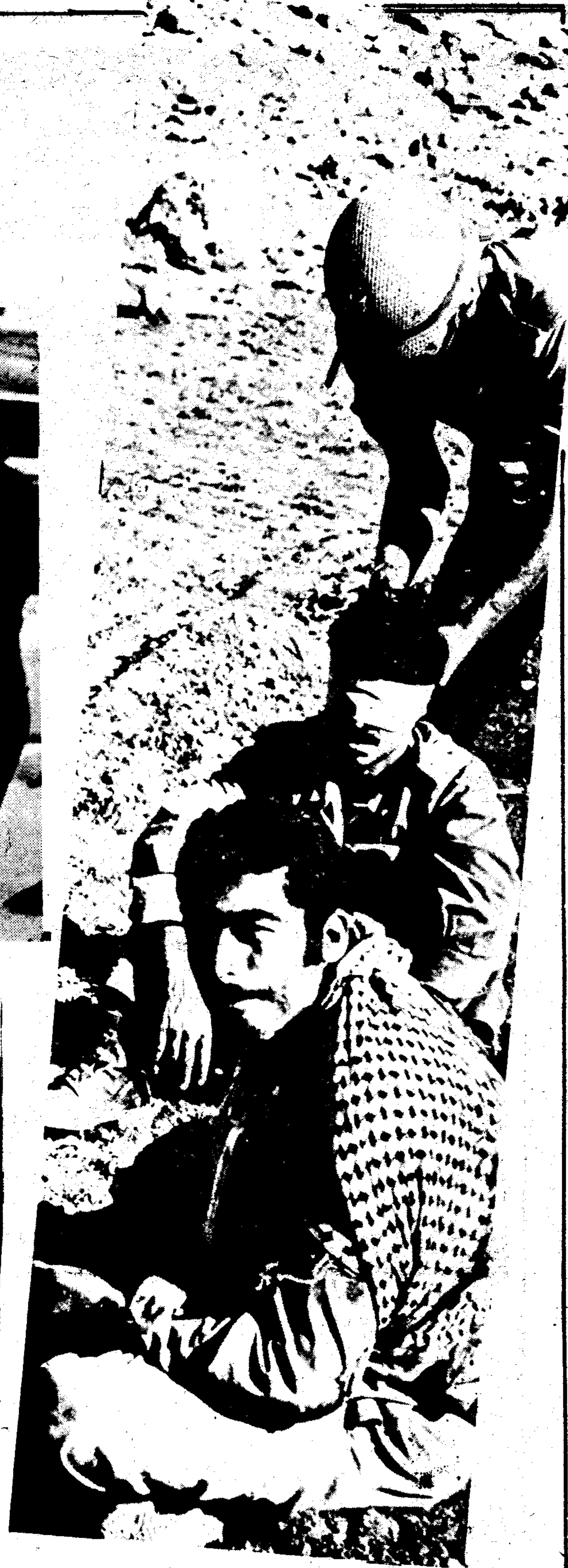
Since then, the Palestinian masses have won the support of the majority of the Arab masses, and actively formed an alliance with the masses in Lebanon.

The Israeli invasion of Lebanon, in trying to establish there a government of the fascist Phalangists, will only increase the mobilisation of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses against the Phalangists.

The more favourable Israeli military strength to win in the first round, but the resistance to the occupation in the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip and as the standing of the masses in Lebanon after the massacre in the civil war have proved for more than ten years—the struggle of a whole people cannot be defeated.

Thus, Israeli policy wholly based on military strength and mounted

FOR WAR IN



oppression, has reached a blind alley until now, and won't win any political gain even if winning in the military sense.

The Syrian forces entered Lebanon in 1976 in order to prevent a revolutionary victory of the Palestinian and Left militias in the civil war. It was the Syrian forces which saved the Phalangists from being totally crushed at that time.

This was a continuation of President Assad's policy of ousting the left wing of the Ba'ath Arab nationalist party in 1970 and improving his relations with imperialism.

But the Assad regime, in the name of the Syrian bourgeoisie, tried to play a double-game and to preserve a certain independence for its country, while relying upon military and political support from the Soviet Union.

Pressures

After the revolution danger in Lebanon had passed, imperialism and Israel turned to further pressures on the Syrian bourgeoisie. Israel encouraged the Phalangists to attack the Syrian soldiers in Lebanon, and inside Syria the "Moslem Brotherhood" organisation opened a terror campaign against the regime.

Assad rose to power by means of a coup against the Ba'ath left wing after the latter refrained from defending the Palestinians against

the killer Hussein in September 1970.

Now he fears his own fall to a right wing coup, if he is defeated by Israel in Lebanon.

Repression

But the Assad regime, which until now has relied more and more upon internal repression, cannot pose the real answer to the Israeli and imperialist attack on Syria and Lebanon.

This answer can be given only by the Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese masses—in alliance for revolutionary defence through a general mobilisation, the establishment of workers' and poor peasants' militias, distribution of weapons, and establishing a government based on the masses of workers and poor peasants.

The Israeli threat against Syria was made possible by Syria's isolation in the Arab East. This is a result of the strengthening of the oil bourgeoisies, from Saudi Arabia to Iraq, who are now pursuing an open imperialist policy.

Only now have the oil states withdrawn their support to the maintenance of the Syrian army in Lebanon, after at first supporting its entry into Lebanon against the Left and the Palestinians.

Swift reaction

But an overall Israeli attack on Syria will bring a swift reaction among the Arab masses in the whole

region. The Arab regimes can in such a case try and avoid the masses' anger by anti-Israeli and anti-imperialist demagoguery, and even by a limited action.

The foundations of the position of imperialism in the region, apparently strengthened much in the oil decade, rest on sand under which the proletarian revolution is moving.

Any attempt by imperialism to change the equilibrium in its favour will bring the reaction of the masses in Syria, Lebanon and in the whole Arab East.

6. Lebanon—the only solution is in working class victory.

Five years after the Syrian intervention in Lebanon, five years after the Tel-a-Za'atar massacre and



the defeat of the revolution in this country, Lebanon has still not approached its reconstruction as a bourgeois state.

The unceasing bloodbath in this country is the bitter fruit of the legacy of French imperialism. The state constitution rests on a sectarian and undemocratic basis, guaranteeing the supremacy of the Maronite minority in the government.

Today, the Phalangist fascist remnants of what was left of the supremacy of the Maronite bankers, try to establish a Christian ghetto in which they will continue their rule.

They are realising this policy by means of force—using terror and murder against the majority of Christians. They cannot continue this without Israel pouring endless weapons and "support" onto the fire.

Nor has the Syrian plan for the reconstruction of the bourgeois state in Lebanon by agreement between fragments of the feudal bourgeoisie in Lebanon advanced very far.

The Lebanese bourgeoisie is torn between the sects and the feudal families. Now, when the inter-sectarian balance is disrupted, the bourgeoisie can reach only temporary "cease fires".

The bourgeoisie cannot pose any new elements on a democratic basis for its rule, on the basis of general and local elections for a constituent assembly.

It is also incapable of stabilising a national army or ruling through a military-

police dictatorship, like the other bourgeoisies of the region.

Economically, the Lebanese bourgeoisie had existed as a co-ordinating financial centre between the West and the gulf states—but it lost this role due to the civil war on the one hand, and the development of the gulf states, on the other.

Lebanon and the whole region have paid a high price for the failure of the revolution of the workers and poor peasants in 1976. Only a revolutionary victory can save the masses in Lebanon from continuing to be the scapegoats for all the regional conflicts.

Only a working class regime in Lebanon will be able to convene a democratic constituent assembly and to abolish the sectarian structure which has bred all the civil wars.

Only a unity of the workers and the poor peasants, on the basis of their class interests for the sharing of lands, for workers' control in the factories and the economy, can pose a way forward, to unite the masses in Lebanon on a non-sectarian basis and establish new, socialist foundations for the country's economy.

7. The immediate task—mobilisation against the war.

The unwillingness among the Jewish masses for a new war on the one hand, and the fear of the reaction of

the Syrian and Lebanese masses and the Palestinian masses in Lebanon, in the region under Israeli rule on the other hand—all these are causing Begin and US imperialism to postpone the war. This war can still be prevented if we make it clear for its initiators that the political price they will have to pay for it will be high.

The way to prevent the war here is to open the broadest struggle, under one slogan:

*No to the war provocation of Begin's government!

Mobilise

But this will not suffice. The masses of workers and inhabitants of the poor neighbourhoods should prepare themselves to mobilise against the very regime which initiated all the wars and is preparing another disaster.

Independent working class organisation, the alliance between Arab and Jewish workers—this is the only way to mobilise against the system which has led to wars.

Working class unity will pose the plan which will prevent imperialism in future from using the Jewish masses for war against the peoples of the region.

*Down with the war government!

*Down with all the parties of the bourgeoisie!

*For a government of the Jewish and Arab workers!

*For the full Palestinian national liberation!

*The alliance between the Arab and Jewish workers will remove imperialism and its allies in the region and will establish peace!

*The first task on the way to peace, in order to remove the most immediate danger of war is Israel, Hands Off Lebanon!

15.5.81

NOTES

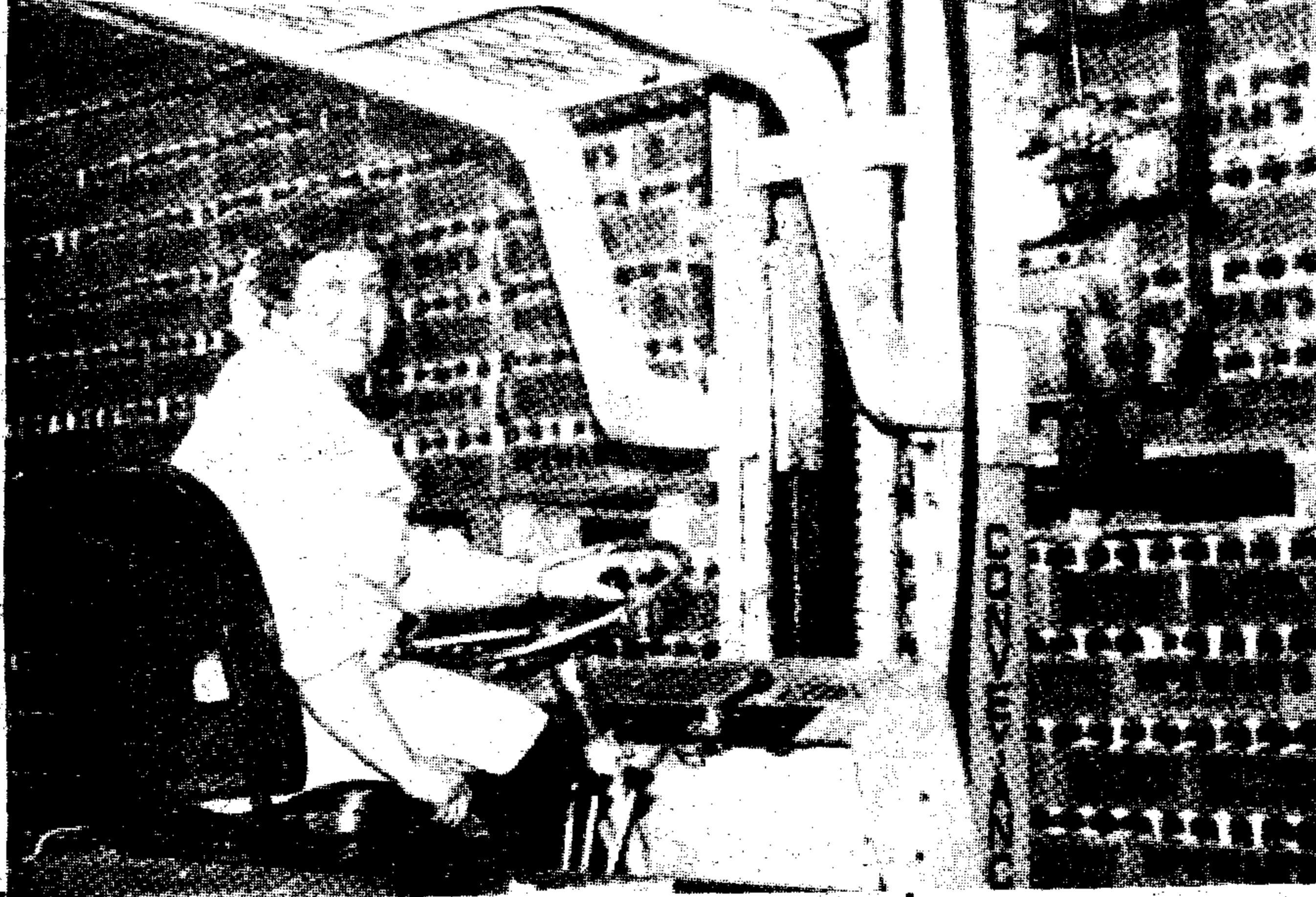
1) The "Ma'arach" is one of the two largest Zionist bourgeois parties in Israel. Although calling itself a "Labour Party" and affiliating to the Second International, it is the central bourgeois party, having a key role in the formation of the Zionist state.

2) The "Land Day" was called as a day of mass struggle against mounting expropriation of Arab lands according to the Zionist "Judaisation of Galilee" plan.

Mass demonstrations were held all over Palestine, involving clashes with the Zionist army, during which six demonstrators were shot dead. Since then, every March 30 is a day of mass demonstrations and rallies against the expropriations of Arab lands and oppression of the Palestinian people.

3) The "Green Line" is a term used to separate those parts of Palestine which were occupied by the Zionists in 1948 and constitute "the State of Israel" from those parts occupied by Israel in 1967 (West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai Desert and Golan Heights).

TGWU—some steps forward, some steps back



'No' to worker participation

A blow against advocates of "workers' participation" and the Labour pipedream of "planning agreements" was struck by TGWU delegates last week.

A composite resolution advocating these policies was thrown out despite receiving the support of the platform.

The most telling attack on the policy came from Talbot convenor Eddy McCluskey.

He has been secretary of the planning committee drawing up a five-year agreement with Chrysler management—only to discover that the firm had been sold while the negotiations were in progress!

A delegate from the now closed Linwood plant in later discussions gave an even more graphic account of the same sudden sale. The planning committee had been actually in session, he said, when somebody came in and announced that the firm had been sold to "PSA".

Nobody had known what "PSA" was—and someone had been sent off to find out!

Other delegates pitched into the attack on participation and phoney "worker director" positions which tie the unions to implementing the policies of management.

One Region 3 delegate correctly stressed that "there is only one control that I'm interested in, and that's

workers' control!"

The conference decision is a blow against further Ryder-style "participation" schemes: but it must be followed up by determined opposition to other, less overt moves towards class collaboration by TGWU officials.

The missing voice -350,000 women

The 350,000 women members of the TGWU may as well not have existed for all the attention given to their problems by the union's 1981 Biennial Conference.

During the whole five days the only women who appeared on the platform were the menial helpers handing cups of tea or paper work to the leading male bureaucrats.

Even the Union's "token" woman national officer Marie Patterson was mysteriously absent from view.

Irate

Days before, at the Labour Party Women's Conference, Patterson had led the attack on a resolution calling for a demonstration for a woman's right to work.

She was particularly irate at suggestions that the unions had done nothing to highlight the problem of women's unemployment.

No discussion

Yet the TGWU conference witnessed a whole debate on unemployment in which the growing numbers of women out of work was not so much as mentioned. And the conference closed early at mid-day on Friday having held no discussion whatever on the fight for women's rights.

So much for the glossy TGWU "Women's Handbook" published last July, which had called for committees to be set up "either nationally and by each region" to "develop programmes to encourage women's participation"!

1981 saw women less represented at Conference—while the right wing women

delegates who arrived at the rostrum to speak did nothing to combat the prevailing climate of sexism from the largely older white male conference.

The only challenge came from Cowley delegate Alan Thornett. He objected to the platform's proposal to wind up the conference early after there had been no discussion on the problems either of women or of the union's large black membership in the fight against racial discrimination and abuse.

Symptom

The lack of resolutions on these questions were a symptom of the problem, he stressed: the union's Executive had an obligation in such a case to at least make a statement on the work it had carried out.

No statement was forthcoming.

Split vote on sliding scale

A resolution calling for wage claims to incorporate cost of living clauses to provide increases linked to inflation came within an ace of being carried for the second conference

The motion—from Cowley 5/293 Branch was

moved by Alan Thornett and seconded by a delegate from Region 6.

Support was enthusiastic and a show of hands brought an even split in the conference before Stan Pemberton declared the motion lost.

This was a near repetition of the events of the 1979 Biennial Conference, at which a similar motion moved by Thornett appeared at first to secure a majority. Pemberton's attempts to declare the motion lost were countered by demands for tellers to be brought in to count the vote.

But as right wing hand raisers were chivvied out of bars and tea rooms the end result was that it was lost 348-437.

The policy has clearly continued to gain ground since then in the TGWU as workers confronted by runaway inflation recognise the need for a policy to defend their living standards.

Rank and file trade unionists should continue to press for such cost-of-living clauses to be incorporated in plant-level and combine claims in the coming pay round.

The conference voted overwhelmingly to uphold its position of opposing all forms of wage controls.

While this does not herald any new willingness of the leadership to champion struggles against the employers or the government it does pose major problems for the Labour leaders in preparing a new "social contract".

Behind the 'left' face

The Conference also voted for motions supported by the platform calling for withdrawal from the Common Market and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

But such routine leftism from the leadership was not combined with any break from support for British imperialism in Ireland, or any break from nationalist calls for import controls to protect "British" employers against "foreign" competition.

The 'debate' on Ireland was as curtailed and reactionary as any in recent years. Demands that the promised 'statement' from the union's Executive be circulated in advance were brushed aside.

In the event Acting General Secretary Alex Kitson delivered an almost empty and largely reaction-

ary speech extolling trade unionism as the solution to the war in Ireland.

He was followed by three or four speakers supporting British imperialist rule in the six counties. No resolutions were put to the vote—and the issue of Ireland was swept under the TGWU carpet for another two scandalous years.

An extremely unpleasant debate on import controls echoed with racist jibes against "Japs" and "Frogs", while the vicious attacks on jobs, wages and conditions by British employers faded conveniently into the sidelines.

The call for protectionist measures to "defend jobs" is increasingly used as a substitute for any strategy whatever for mass action by the unions to challenge attacks on jobs in the workplace.

Mathers reply on Ansell's sell-out

Region 5 Secretary Brian Mathers was stung into publishing a leaflet in reply to a damning account of his sell-out of the Ansell's brewery strike given out at the conference.



The exposure, entitled 'The Strike Mathers Broke' was unsigned, and was emphatically disowned by the Ansell's Branch Secretary.

But he jumped to his feet to declare that Mathers 500-word reply was a complete distortion of the facts.

In any event Mathers was unable to offer any substantive reply to the statement that his intervention resulted in a "settlement" including: "700 jobs lost. An ex gratia payment of £1,000 for the first two years of service and £100 a year thereafter. 300 jobs with approximately £50 wage cut, far worse working conditions, and, so far, no representation or agreement. Re-engagement not reinstatement."

He offered no reply to claims that pickets had been

told not to operate outside Birmingham, or that TGWU drivers had been told by Mathers to cross picket lines in order to avoid the threat of legal action. He did not deny organising a secret ballot using company envelopes and the company's addressograph.

Evasive

Nor did he deny that the settlement had been concluded by himself and divisional officer Doug Fairbairn over the heads of the workforce, with no strikers' representatives involved in the talks.

Indeed his evasive reply simply confirms the truth of these charges.

But the TGWU is not responding to demands from angry strikers for an independent inquiry based out-

side Region 5 to investigate Mathers' handling of the dispute.

Suspicion

Instead, Region 5 itself is to conduct an inquiry into the strike. Mathers' long record as a witch-hunter of militants within Region 5 must give grounds for suspicion that the main victims of this so-called inquiry will be his outspoken critics from the strike committee.

Militants concerned at the Ansell's sell out and what appear the beginnings of a new cover-up and witch-hunt in Region 5 should fight for resolutions protesting at the lack of any independent inquiry into Mathers' conduct.

PROBLEMS FACING U.S. MILITARY BUILD UP

Ronald Reagan's frenzied anti-communist war drive may scare the daylights out of you: but behind the apparently impregnable might of US militarism are a number of embarrassing weaknesses and contradictions.

A recent five-part series of programmes on CBS television in the USA exposed some of the problems encountered by military chiefs in posing a credible threat to the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact.

At the same time it uncovered the horrors implicit in the ruthless preparations of US imperialism to combat the struggles of the international working class.

Confusion

The CBS series "The Defence of the United States" filmed US troops on manoeuvres in West Germany in what was described as an "integrated battlefield"—where conventional weapons are used alongside chemical shells, nuclear shells and tactical nuclear missiles.

One General, Niles Fulwyler, was asked whether the confusion that was evident even in these set-piece war games did not mean that in a real encounter his own troops might not wind up dead through radiation from tactical nuclear weapons.

"Well, Harry, that's a real problem", came the reply.

In a nuclear war in Europe, Fulwyler went on, the USA would have to accept the possibility that "entire units" would be wiped out.

"Reinforcements would then become a huge problem", he admitted.

The fact is that, just like imperialist chiefs in the slaughter of the First and Second World Wars and every bloody encounter, the US top brass have nothing but contempt for the rank and file soldiers they calmly hurl into the horrors of the battlefield.

The CBS series revealed that the protective equipment handed out to front line troops is virtually useless.

One veteran pointed out that the masks on the suits they were wearing would be "melted onto the faces" of the soldiers if they were in range of nuclear explosions.

A General complained that the anti-radiation suits are not designed to take into account "bodily functions". A soldier taken short in a radiation zone would sooner or later have to take the suit off—with lethal results!

Incompetence

The General said that he hoped that the anti-contamination gear worn by Warsaw Pact troops was as poor in quality as that given to American soldiers.

Other interviews revealed an astounding level of incompetence among tank crews and commanders during a simulated nuclear explosion.

In another instalment the US army was described as "The world's largest remedial reading course". American viewers heard that



in order to attract sufficient recruits the minimum standard set for reading ability had been lowered to that of an average 13-14 year old school child.

Complex

The paradox of recruiting from the most underprivileged and oppressed layers of the unemployed thrown up by the American capitalist crisis was underlined by the emphasis on the increasingly complex—often computerised—equipment being procured as part of the military build-up.

An army survey in 1978 showed that 21% of US tank gunners in Europe didn't know where to aim when using the tank's battle sights, while 90% of the nuclear weapons maintenance "specialists" failed a basic skills test.

And the programmes disclosed that American armed forces in Europe are the last to finish in most NATO exercises.

It is not only the troops and the commanders that exhibit a startling range of shortcomings: it is increasingly clear that the contradictions of US capitalism are affecting the quality of the formidable arsenal of weapons and delivery systems purchased by the limitless Reagan arms budget.

The first Trident submarine, for instance (the bedrock of Thatcher's war plans in Britain) has still not yet been delivered to the US

Navy. It is already two years late and \$280 million over budget, and is not expected to be completed until December.

Defective components have been a major cause of the delays—as the various wings of the US engineering industry seek their cut of the huge profits from the arms drive. The manufacturers—General Dynamics' subsidiary Electric Boat—submitted 8,000 complaints about government supplied parts in 1979-80 alone.

In the aircraft industry, an increase in military orders has taken up the slack caused by the recession in civil airlines—but intensified the drive to maximise profits by bumping up the price of materials and components.

Failures

The giant new Chrysler M-1 tank—to cost \$2.5 million—has been rushed into production despite a long and humiliating series of failures in the most elementary tests. Its shortcomings include a tendency to lose its caterpillar tracks on rough ground, gearbox failures, a refusal to start in cold weather, repeated failures of the turret to rotate and the gun to operate.

Meanwhile the Reagan administration faces the crunch decision on whether or not to proceed with the colossal extravaganza of its \$56 billion MX-missile system (a huge underground complex of 200 mobile

intercontinental missiles rotating between 4,600 silos on 8,000 miles of road in Utah and Nevada).

It has run into stiff opposition not only from anti-war campaigners and from the wealthy 4.5 million strong (and reliably right wing) Utah-based Mormon Church, but from practical analysts who query if sufficient water can be obtained to pour the cement for the project and from military sceptics who point out that the concealed missiles emit no less than 30 tell-tale electronic, metallic and mechanised "signatures" which would enable them to be detected and destroyed.

As if this were not

enough problems, the rivalry of various sections of the US military and the sales promotion efforts of its capitalist suppliers have produced a series of bizarre planning errors.

The Army for instance has specified that it wants 7,000 of the new M-1 tank. Yet the tank has been designed specifically for use in Europe—whereas the military emphasis has now shifted to the Persian Gulf.

The M-1 is so big and heavy it can only be flown one at a time even in the Army's biggest transport plane the C-5A Galaxy.

There are only 77 C-5As—meaning that it would

require the whole fleet to fly a shuttle service to airlift simply a tank squad to the Persian Gulf.

The new generation of US fighter aircraft needs a mountain of support equipment to keep it in the air—posing huge logistical problems for the Americans' new Middle East strategies.

But over and above these problems it seems increasingly certain that if Reagan is to meet the growing clamour of military chiefs for more men to run the new weaponry he will have to reintroduce the draft.

At least 200,000 extra troops would be needed to provide the staff demanded by admirals, generals and

airforce chiefs.

Reagan has firmly pledged not to introduce the draft. But he may find he has little alternative.

Contradiction

This will increase the growing contradiction between the imperialist war drive and the growing anti-war movement among American youth and trade unionists.

And as the colossal economic costs of Reagan's military spending spree come home to the American working class, the prospects for the building of a mass anti-war movement can only improve.

Labour NEC 'no' to war plans

In a further move arising from the growing anti-war feeling within the labour movement, Labour's National Executive has issued an Advice Note to councils on Civil Defence.

Drawing attention to the fact that as part of its anti-Soviet military build-up the Thatcher government is calling on local authorities to increase their efforts on "home defence planning" the statement declares that: "The Government's proposals are a fraudulent waste of scarce resources—resources

which could be much better used in expenditure on education, housing and peacetime emergency planning, such as improving the fire service."

It points out that: "Civil Defence" in the sense of protecting the civilian population from the effects of nuclear war does not exist. The government's plans are in fact more concerned with 'Home Defence' designed to protect a small government and military elite."

In reply to the Tory

propaganda, the Labour statement insists that:

"The only effective civil defence is to ensure that Britain is not involved in a nuclear war, and to oppose all nuclear weapons and nuclear war preparations by Britain or any other country."

It reveals that over 60 Labour-controlled councils have so far made the gesture of declaring their areas "nuclear-free zones", opposing the manufacture, deployment or positioning of nuclear weapons.

And it suggests that Labour councils make facilities (including school halls and other facilities for film shows and public meetings) available, to "educate the public about the dangers and effects of nuclear war"

Anti-war campaigners should press for the implementation of this advice by all Labour-controlled councils, and ensure that the fullest possible use is made of public meetings and council publicity machines to campaign against the Thatcher war-drive.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

NGA key to Camden Journal setback

Journalists from the Camden Journal in London are waiting to hear how many of them still have jobs with the group that shut their paper six months ago—Courier Press Holdings.

An 'arbitrator' has been called in to decide how many of the eleven journalists employed at the Camden Journal should be given jobs elsewhere in the group, which publishes local papers in London, the Midlands and Wales.

Jobless

What is certain is that most of the journalists who have been on strike since four days before Christmas, will be left jobless and that the Camden Journal is defunct.

This end to the long and painful strike which has been waged by the NUJ against Stanley Clarke, the chairman of Courier Press, is being hailed by many of those who fought it as a victory.

Clarke had sworn that plans to axe the paper and all the jobs were non-negotiable. He had consistently turned his face against any means of buying off the strike through token concessions.

His acceptance of arbitration and an offer to take two strikers back anyway (as well as reinstating other he had 'sacked' for taking supporting action) has been seen as a climb-down from his arrogant attitude.

Glimpse

That it certainly is. But the climbdown is not a victory for the union, which had set out to defend all the jobs and prevent the paper closing.

Rather it is a tantalising glimpse of what such a victory might have been. The fact that Clarke made concessions as soon as he was faced with the prospect of sympathetic strike action by the NGA showed what united strike action by journalists and printers would have meant at an earlier stage and on the full demands.

Unique

The Camden Journal was unique in the provincial press. It had a small staff and a small circulation. But it had a 100% closed shop and an editor who was determined to keep it that way.

The result was a paper which often expressed support for the trade unions, particularly during the winter of discontent.

This attitude combined with large and mounting losses brought the closure decision from Clarke who announced it—with immed-



Demonstration in support of Camden strikers

iate effect—four days before Christmas.

Victimisation played a large part in his calculations as was evidenced by the red scare propaganda he and some scab journalists distributed freely to journalists in the rest of the group.

Support

The response of the members at Camden was to fight and they were given immediate support by colleagues on other North London Newspapers publications.

After two months they were joined on strike by NUJ members at Nuneaton, Rugby, Leamington and Haverfordwest in Wales.

Members in all these centres came out because they saw that the only way to defend their own interests was to defeat Clarke on his first attack. The unity of journalists was sometimes fragile and was achieved at

great cost.

What was criminal was that while those members struggled to stop the closure, the NGA leadership refused to support the struggle.

NUJ leaders who had backed their own members' action, nevertheless balked at confronting Tony Dubbins, who was acting for the NGA.

A highly successful lobby of the NGA National Council which helped win limited support, took place against the advice of the NUJ leadership.

Whip hand

The NGA leadership knows it has the whip hand when dealing with the NUJ. Dubbins fixed a meeting between Clarke and the NUJ at which he acted as joint chair and broker with the Newspaper Society.

When this failed to produce an expected token shift

from Clarke, Dubbins gave three weeks (!) notice of strike action in Nuneaton.

As the time was running out, Clarke called for a meeting and offered arbitration. Dubbins immediately told the NUJ that was enough for him, and threats of strike action were withdrawn.

Faced with no way forward, the NUJ chapel voted to accept arbitration. The last gesture of defiance was for North London journalists to stay out until the arbitrator reported.

Even before the dust settles on the dispute the NGA and NUJ are talking about amalgamation within a year. Such talk is hogwash.

The fight in both unions is for class solidarity; for support in action on picket lines as a precondition for serious unity talks.

Anything less is an insult to the self sacrifice of the members who actually fight for wages and jobs.

Union leaders follow up from Peoples March

GROVELLING TO DATSUN!

Yes—for those who doubted it, the trade union leaders have followed upon the example they set during their series of speeches to the Peoples March for Jobs.

During the March they expressed their moral outrage at unemployment and lined up with local businessmen, Liberals, bishops and rank and file clergymen in a cross-class appeal to the Tories to "change course".

Having reflected long and hard on the next steps, the Northern Region TUC has now come up with the perfect answer to unemployment: if workers would only give up their trade union rights and hard won conditions, perhaps they could persuade the employers to take them on!

Groveling

This is exactly the offer made by TGWU and AUEW officials in beseeching the giant Nissan car firm to allocate its new Datsun plant to one of three sites in the North East.

They have offered to break down completely the traditional job demarcation established elsewhere in the car industry and engineering.

They have even offered one joint union—or two, if Nissan management prefer it that way.

They offered the "best possible" industrial relations. Their groveling did not go

unnoticed. As one CBI spokesman said afterwards:

"It's clear Datsun could ask for anything, and if they weren't offered the right conditions they would just take their factory somewhere else."

Prostration

These are precisely the kind of conditions the CBI has looked to the Thatcher government to create. The prostration of the Northern TUC leaders stems from the 200,000 unemployed in the region, and the prospect of securing 5,000 extra jobs.

Sooner than defend the jobs of their existing mem-

bers by mounting occupations and strike action against closures and redundancies, union leaders are turning now to negotiating away in advance the conditions of workers in a factory yet to be built!

Are there no lengths to which these spineless bureaucrats will refuse to go in their avoidance of a fight with the employers?

It appears not. The only way workers can hope to defend their interests or mobilise independently against unemployment is through the building of a new leadership in the labour movement.



Duffy—behind AUEW groveling to Nissan

Tories scuttle docks jobs

Tory sceptics—except those with naval dockyard constituencies—were delighted.

The Thatcher government had managed to cut defence spending while retaining an even more lethal nuclear force, and thrusting the main burden of cuts onto the Defence Ministry's civilian workforce.

15-20,000 civilian jobs face the axe, with the closure of the Chatham naval base and dockyards, the rundown of the Portsmouth dockyards, and a cut in administration.

Strategy

Meanwhile the Trident submarine missile programme will remain intact as the focal point of an imperialist military strategy based almost exclusively on nuclear weaponry.

New deadly technology in the death industry is even phasing out rank and file soldiers, sailors and aircrew with a cut of 10,000 in the Navy, 7,000 in the army and 2,500 in the RAF.

Socialists hold no brief for the defence of jobs in the armed forces.

We do not argue for the continuation of arms contracts or the completion of warships.

Public works

We argue for a workers' government which will end military spending by British imperialism, disband the standing army, and arm the working class to defend Britain against imperialist attack, while giving material assistance to anti-capitalist struggles around the world.

But we do not remain indifferent to mass redundancies of workers employed by the Defence Ministry—which in Medway will push unemployment to 17% and bring a disaster to the workforce in Portsmouth.

Our call for a cut in arms spending runs alongside a call for a programme of useful public works to create jobs not only for workers redeployed from defence contracts but also for some of the 3 million unemployed thrown on the scrap heap by

this bankrupt and bloody social system.

A very different attitude was expressed by Communist Party member Ken Gill, General Secretary of TASS.

Attacking the Tory decision to order the American version of the Harrier jump-jet, he launched into a vigorous nationalist tirade that would have pleased any Tory backwoodsman.

"Instead of ordering the British plane which would have kept vital design teams intact and retained Britain's independent manufacturing capacity, the government has sold our birthright (!) to the Americans."

Morning Star, June 26

Nationalism

Gill's brazen nationalism and his acceptance of the arms trade must be firmly rejected by the workers' movement.

Jobs must be defended through redeployment and public works, not through protectionist measures to prop up "British" death merchants in opposition to their "foreign" rivals.



Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

Lee Jeans: why the occupation is the only way to win

After 22 weeks of occupation in which they scarcely put a foot wrong, the 170 women fighting the closure of the Lee Jeans factory in Greenock seem likely to make a major error.

They have come under increasing pressure to transform their sit-in strike into the establishment of a workers' cooperative, competing for a slice of the declining market for jeans and textiles.

The attempts of councillors and STUC bureaucrats to steer the women down this blind alley have now been reinforced by the offer from the boss of Dickie Dirts jeans supermarkets to place a regular

order for jeans from the factory.

Convenor Ellen Monaghan has said: "It is like a dream come true."

Talks are being sought between union representatives and the factory's owners, Vanity Fare, on the future of its machinery.

Management seem almost certain to press in exchange for the lifting of the blacking of their goods that has now been imposed throughout European docks and already held up some consignments.

They would look for advantageous terms to sell the necessary machinery and the factory to the workers—who until now

have simply taken it over and held on to it.

They would then cheerfully continue with their plans to shift production from Greenock to another plant in Ireland.

Employers in Scotland and elsewhere in the textile industry seeking to close factories and continue the never-ending tide of redundancies would in turn breathe a sigh of relief that the Lee Jeans struggle—a beacon in the fight for jobs—was at an end.

What is the alternative? The occupation has already achieved national prominence. It has secured regular material support from Scottish ship-

yard workers, backing from a wide range of unions, and the promise of mass pickets to defend the plant against any attempt to evict the occupation.

It is now backed by dockworkers' blacking action, which will have a cumulative effect. Blacking by transport drivers can also be fought for, along with action by USDAW members in the main textile warehouses and distribution points to tie up all movement of Vanity Fare goods.

◇ ◇

Initial attempts at picketing on retail stores have shown that such pickets can have an impact on Lee Jeans sales—and even force stores to take stocks off display. An appeal to the labour movement in every town to organise such pickets would produce a response that would rapidly slash sales of VF jeans.

Such action, combined with the occupation of the plant and its £1 million worth of stocks could begin seriously to squeeze the employers where it really hurts—on their balance books.

◇ ◇

Nor are the Lee Jeans women the only ones facing this situation. Throughout the textile industry short time working, redundancies and closures are rife. Union leaders have so far offered no perspective for a fight.

A national conference called around the Lee Jeans occupation to fight for a concerted programme of industrial action to defend textile jobs could reverse this tide of retreats, and give a lead to sit-ins and supporting strikes in a host of threatened factories.

Such action could then begin to spread to supplier firms, transport firms and wholesalers where jobs are equally threatened by the recession in the trade and the decimation of the workforce through new technology.

From one initial focus it



July 18: debate on policies to fight Tories

Leading trade union members of the Communist Party—including Mick McGahey, Ken Gill, and Kevin Halpin of the old Stalinist 'front' body the Liaison Committee for Defence of Trade Unions—have lent their support to the July 18 Conference called by the Labour Coordinating Committee.

Billed as a conference on "Trade Unions and Socialism", it is the LCC's attempt to capitalise on the current mobilised in the unions around Tony Benn's candidacy in the Labour Party and to secure an industrial base.

For the CP it is a des-

pairing attempt to clutch onto the leftward-moving currents in the unions who have marginalised the old, bureaucratic "Broad Left" formations and exposed many veteran CPers as open allies of the right wing.

The conference sets itself the task of building "a mass movement able to take on and reverse, ultimately driving from office, the Tories."

We are in favour of building such a movement and keen to debate with the new forces attracted towards this initiative—though we remain sceptical of the LCC's abilities to lead the movement and hostile to its much-vaunted "alternative economic strategy".

We urge readers who can

do so to attend the conference—at Central Hall, Westminster—as delegates, and to fight against the LCC policies of import controls, expansion of the National Enterprise Board and planning agreements.

Instead talk in recent LCC literature of occupations and strike action to combat cuts and closures must be developed into an explicit policy and a basis for mass action.

Credentials (£2.50) are available (3 per trade union or Labour Party body, 10 per regional or national body) from the LCC (Trade Union Conference), 9 Poland Street, London W1.

CIVIL SERVANTS —LAST CHANCE

This week sees a final opportunity for the civil service unions to move to an all-out strike against the government's unacceptable 7% pay offer.

On Thursday the National Council of Civil Service Unions will meet to decide on the next phase of the pay campaign, in the light of membership response to the pleas for massive increases in the levy to sustain the present selective action.

Members are now paying between £1.25 and £10 per week in order to keep up the selective strikes (in addition to the pay lost through walk-outs, protest meetings etc.)

After Thursday's meeting the best outcome at this

stage would be for the four biggest and most militant unions, the CPSA, THE SCPS, the IRSE and the CSU, to declare for all out action.

The price of unity with the other unions, representing the higher paid civil servants, is now too high.

Moreover, if the all-out call is delayed even longer, then the resolve of the membership will be seriously weakened.

Particularly in the CPSA there is increasing awareness of the bankruptcy of continued selective action (bankruptcy being an appropriate choice of word in every sense).

In the meantime the government has gone onto the offensive by suspend-

ing a further 148 tax collectors-in-charge (office managers).

This reflects Thatcher's increasing anger at having to borrow so heavily to offset the huge loss to government revenue.

However it is clear that the Tories will borrow and scrape for as long as is necessary to defeat the unions.

Only all out action can win now. At the same time rank and file members must begin the process of kicking out all those union leaders who have been exposed during the campaign and replace them with a fighting leader ship politically equipped to defeat the Tories.

Cooley in danger

A demonstration in London protesting at the sacking of Mike Cooley by Lucas took place last Friday.

The demonstration was made up of delegates from a wide range of factories in the Lucas group. TASS members at the Willesden factory where Cooley worked have been on strike since he was sacked.

The strikers were due to meet as we went to press to decide on their next course of action.

Meanwhile, manual workers in the group are having a 5% WAGE INCREASE FORCED THROUGH, STARTING IN Birmingham.

Although stewards recommended a vote for strike action in response to the offer, a mass meeting rejected the call.

Strong Pergamon picket

A mass picket called last Monday in support of the 9 NUJ members sacked by Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press for taking strike action 15 weeks ago drew wide support from the local labour movement.

Among the banners displayed by over 80 pickets were those of the FBU, AUEW-TASS CPSU, all Oxford NUJ chapels, Oxford City Labour Party and NUJ members at Maxwell's recent acquisition, BPC.

NGA members came under particular pressure as they crossed the picket line. Action by the union would force Maxwell to reinstate the strikers and negotiate with the NUJ chapel.

Another mass picket has been called for Monday 20 July.

on short time; Farners are on a three-day week. Blue Bell, too, is on short time. Others have closed. Wherever you look it is clear that only a drastic change in the whole basis of the industry can save jobs and restore full pay packets.

This is why we urge Lee Jeans workers to reject the siren voices luring them towards an inevitably doomed and diversionary cooperative.

Demand more financial and industrial support from your union! Appeal to other textile unions and the whole labour movement to help organise a fight back for jobs in the industry!

Stand firm against the Tory offensive! Demand a national labour movement picket on Lee Jeans stockists and retailers!

*Defend all jobs! For work sharing on full pay! *For mass action to bring down the Tories!

*Nationalise the textile industry without compensation under workers' control.

*Nationalise the banks and major industries: For a planned socialist economy to create new jobs for the unemployed!

Levi Jeans plants are

SOCIALIST PRESS ★



**FUND:
time
running
short**

Cuts: biggest union votes for occupations

19 July is the deadline for the Special Fund and we're still £1,000 short.

So if we are going to make it to our target of £2,500 it is going to require a major effort on the part of our readers and supporters.

So let's not delay any longer. Send us a donation today and help us complete our fund on time.

Our address is Socialist Press Fund, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

The 2 million strong TGWU is now officially committed to full-scale action to halt Tory cuts in the public services.

At the union's Biennial Conference last week a resolution was passed which:

*Supports direct action against the cuts.

*Pledges that workers who take action and occupy to defend jobs and services will be backed by a TGWU call for supporting strike action.

*Pledges TGWU support for Labour councils which refuse to implement cuts, and refuse to raise rates or pay interest debts to the banks.

The resolution was strongly opposed from the platform, which had drawn up an agenda with no section on the cuts. But it was even more strongly supported by conference delegates sick to the teeth of

Tory cuts.

Moving the resolution on behalf of the Cowley 5/293 Branch, Alan Thornett was able to draw on the lessons of debates at the two conferences convened last winter by Lambeth council on the crisis facing local government.

He stressed the necessity for class action and for councils to defy the Thatcher government if the cuts are to be defeated.

From the platform Alex Kitson trotted out the tired old example of the Clay Cross councillors to "prove" that resistance is useless.

Thornett in reply stressed that the Clay Cross stand was correct; but councillors were left isolated by the unions and the Labour Party.

His motion offered a basis to ensure that never again could the same betrayal take place.

The vote on a show of hands at first appeared close. In the chair, Stan Pemberton called for tellers to count those for and against. But this was delayed, and in the event he was obliged to declare the vote carried.

This decision gives a mandate for action for every trade unionist in the public sector. Press for direct action to halt the cuts—and demand all out TGWU support!



Thornett

The staff at St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, started a 'work-in' on Thursday 25 June. This occupation is the first in a major acute and general hospital, and should rapidly become a national focus of the fight against cuts and closures.

The workers at the London hospital took the decision to occupy at a 250-strong mass meeting last Wednesday. The work-in is supported by all the unions in the hospital, who have been campaigning against the threat of closure for several years.

The local community in

the deprived area of Paddington which the hospital serves are completely behind the action. Earlier this year a petition with 20,000 signatures was presented to the Minister of Health.

However, showing the case for keeping the hospital open, and demonstrating the support of the local community were, predictably, not enough to remove the threat of closure.

Health Minister Vaughan is expected to make a decision shortly on the hospital authorities' plan to close 109 acute medical and surgical beds and 11 rehabilitation and rheumatology beds—6 wards and one-third of the total beds in all.

The other proposal is to restrict the casualty service to the 'walking wounded'. This will mean all ambulance cases will be transferred to other hospitals, further away.

The decision to occupy was taken prior to Vaughan's verdict on the hospital, because it was becoming obvious to the staff that the management were already acting on the assumption that the ward closures were a foregone conclusion.

New porters were being taken on on 6 months' contracts. According to Deputy District Administrator Barbara Young this was to show loyalty to older members of staff. In other words, since the hospital was to be run down, it would be easy to get rid of newer members of staff.

We must apologise to readers for the fact that the lay-out of Socialist Press this week is not up to its usual standard.

This is due to the fact that our typesetter broke down suddenly, forcing us to use unfamiliar equipment and finish production of the paper against a very tight deadline.

We hope that IBU permitting we will be back in normal next week for our final issues.

Domestics were not being replaced and were having their work loads increased.

The occupation started with a mass picket at 2 o'clock on Thursday. Picketing is continuing between 8 am and 8 pm every day, in order to publicise the occupation and to prevent any removal of equipment of patients.

Sonny Jones, TGWU Senior Steward explained that 'all grades are helping to organise the occupation'. GLC leader Ken Livingstone paid a visit to the picket line on the first day, declared his own support and pledged himself to work in the GLC for support for the action.

The Ambulance Service have said they will continue to bring patients to the casualty department regardless of any government decision to restrict it.

National support has to be organised in the labour movement to make this occupation successful.

As the Occupation Committee declared in their first public statement, 'the sole object of the work-in' is to keep the hospital open, to continue to provide a proper hospital service to the local community and to save the jobs of hospital workers'.

The possibility of success in campaigns against closures was demonstrated by the recent Area Health Authority decision to keep Paddington Green Hospital.

This hospital was threatened with closure at the same time as St. Mary's Harrow Road.

The authorities posed both closures in terms of a 'rationalisation' of hospital facilities in the area.

A massive campaign involving all sections of staff and the local community has persuaded the AHA to save the closure of Paddington Green until the completion of a new hospital on the site of St. Mary's, Broad Street, in 1988.

Communists—Mitterand's insurance against workers' militancy

The massive victory of the Socialist Party in the second round of the French elections means that they could rule on their own.

Instead, not only has Mitterand brought the capitalist politicians of the Left Radicals into his government but he has also gone out of his way to give ministerial positions to the Communist Party.

Why have the CP been brought into the government? While it is true that CP supporters were told to vote for the SP in the second round of the election, that deal was reciprocated by SP support for CP candidates where they were the front runner.

In reality it is clear that the CP has been included in

the government as an insurance policy.

In other words, when Mitterand's government carries out anti-working class actions it will be able to use the Communist Party's influence in the working class to stop any resistance.

Not only does the CP control the major union, the CGT, but it has the majority support on 1,813 municipalities.

The agreement for the inclusion of the four ministers was specifically on the basis of "governmental solidarity" (or what Harold Wilson used to call "collective cabinet responsibility").

This means that the Socialist leaders will only be able to do what Mitterand

agrees to—and that they will have to support anything he does.

Just to make sure that this will be adhered to by the whole CP, the Socialist Party chiefs themselves insisted that one of the four ministers had to be no less a figure than Charles Fiterman deputy leader of the Stalinist party.

CP leaders have proudly referred to the fact that two of their ministerial positions are the same as they held in De Gaulle's 1945 coalition government.

They do not refer to the fact that they were chucked out of those posts in 1947—when De Gaulle no longer had any use for them (or rather when the United States insisted that they be chucked out).

The joint declaration, specifically endorsed by the

SP's General Council and the CP Central Committee, included (amongst general platitudes about improving the lot of the working class) the following key paragraph:

"By virtue of these principles, they affirm the right of the Afghan people to choose their own regime and government and declare themselves for the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and the ending of all foreign interference."

This is in direct contradiction to the present policy of the French CP.

It is obviously included to show how much the Stalinists will drop their own policies in order to stay in Mitterand's government.

By this statement they are already showing how

much they will be used.

When Trotskyists fight for an SP-CP government they not only insist on the exclusion of the bourgeois Radicals but demand certain actions and policies of such a government.

This is in order both to push forward the struggles of the working class and to expose the reformists and Stalinists in action.

Even in the formation of the government the French CP is showing that they want a CP-SP government for the influential positions it offers and not to assist the working class.

Similarly in their cynical use of the CP and its influence in the unions, the SP leaders show they are aware that they would have to confront the working class in order to restore and run the French capitalist system.



Marchais