

SOCIALIST PRESS



Weekly paper of the Workers Socialist League * No. 103 * June 7, 1978 * 15p

Centre pages

Whose side is
the WRP on?

UGT conference report p.3
Gay rights p.9
Convenor reinstated p.11



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Callaghan

The turn by the US administration and NATO chiefs towards direct military intervention to safeguard imperialist interests in Africa is imposing severe strains on their collaborationist 'detente' policy with the Soviet Union.

And it poses a threat to the whole international workers movement.

Plans are now being discussed by American, British, French, German and Belgian governments to coordinate policy on Africa, with the French energetically fighting for the establishment of a permanent pan-African strike force.

Demonstration

As these capitalist leaders met in Paris, the first major demonstration against French imperialism's role in Africa—called by the French Communist Party—took place on Monday night.

Workers in the NATO countries must take up the fight not only to stop these plans, but to destroy the whole reactionary NATO set-up which now raises the possibility of plunging the world into a new war.

The capitalist politicians and their military advisors have taken the decision to use every means at their disposal to repress the national liberation and anti-dictatorial struggles that are now convulsing crucial areas in the African continent.

Assistance

In doing so they have also decided that they will challenge the right of the Soviet bloc and Cuba to give material aid and military assistance to such struggles.

Implicit in this challenge is the danger of direct confrontation between imperialism and the workers states.

The capitalist class has adopted this stance not from a position of strength

FORCE NATO TROOPS OUT OF AFRICA!

European workers must act now!



Carter

but as a desperate gamble in the hope of easing their economic and political crisis.

Only last week a meeting of the economic policy committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) exposed once again that even in the most deep-going crisis since the war, the anarchy of the capitalist system prevents any planned or unified economic approach by the various governments.

As stagnation, inflation, mass unemployment and

inter-capitalist competition combine to create huge dislocation in the capitalist economy, the last thing the imperialist powers can afford is the possible loss of the super-profits they extract from the exploitation of the colonial and semi-colonial states of Africa.

Militant struggles

Yet they see reactionary pro-imperialist regimes throughout the continent being rocked by the militant struggles of African workers and peasants, and forced to preserve their control through the most vicious military repression.

Tied to the purse strings of imperialist finance capital these regimes have been unable to create any substantial popular base of support, and remain vulnerable to revolutionary struggle.

Twice in fifteen months the corrupt CIA-backed Mobutu regime in the vast mineral-rich state of Zaire has tottered on the verge of defeat in front of the merest handful of rebels.

Only the swift and brutal intervention of French and Belgian troops against the rebels last month saved Mobutu once more—and brought to the forefront the issue of a long term imperialist force in Africa.

Now US planes are ferrying 1,500 Moroccan regular troops as a first step in a long term plan to prop up Mobutu.

But while imperialists are concerned to repress liberation struggles they are also perturbed at the way in which those involved in such struggles turn almost automatically to the Soviet Union and Cuba for assistance.

Failure

The Kremlin's lack of confidence that it can any longer command the loyalty of the mass so-called "Euro-communist" parties of Europe in a conflict with imperialism, and the abject failure of Soviet diplomacy in the Middle East both seem to be factors that have encouraged the Stalinist bureaucracy to a more



French troops in Kolwezi

active involvement in Africa in the recent period.

True to form, the parasite Kremlin clique that feeds off the gains of the October Revolution has not attempted in any way to defend itself by encouraging independent revolutionary struggle by the African masses.

Instead it has sought out political relationships in strategic areas with forces

that will prove both dependable opponents of independent working class action—the Derg military dictatorship in Ethiopia, and the 'left' nationalist regimes in Angola and Mozambique.

But in order to establish its anti-imperialist credentials in Africa the Stalinist bureaucracy has also given a

Continued on Page 2



What is this scene? And what is its connection to a twelve month struggle that ended last week in complete victory? For the full story of a unique struggle against victimisation by union officials and management, see Industrial News, page 11.



INTERNATIONAL

Vorster's 'liberalisation' fraud

The South African government last week published three bills which it is hoped will head off the struggle by the black masses against the racist state.

The bills provide for 99-year leases to be granted to qualified urban blacks who are living outside the tribal homelands; for the replacement of the hated pass books by travel documents issued by the homeland government; and for the replacement, by the word 'black', of the term Bantu in all government legislation.

New passports

The new 'travel documents' set to replace pass books will contain all the details contained in the pass books but will be issued by homeland governments instead of white civil servants.

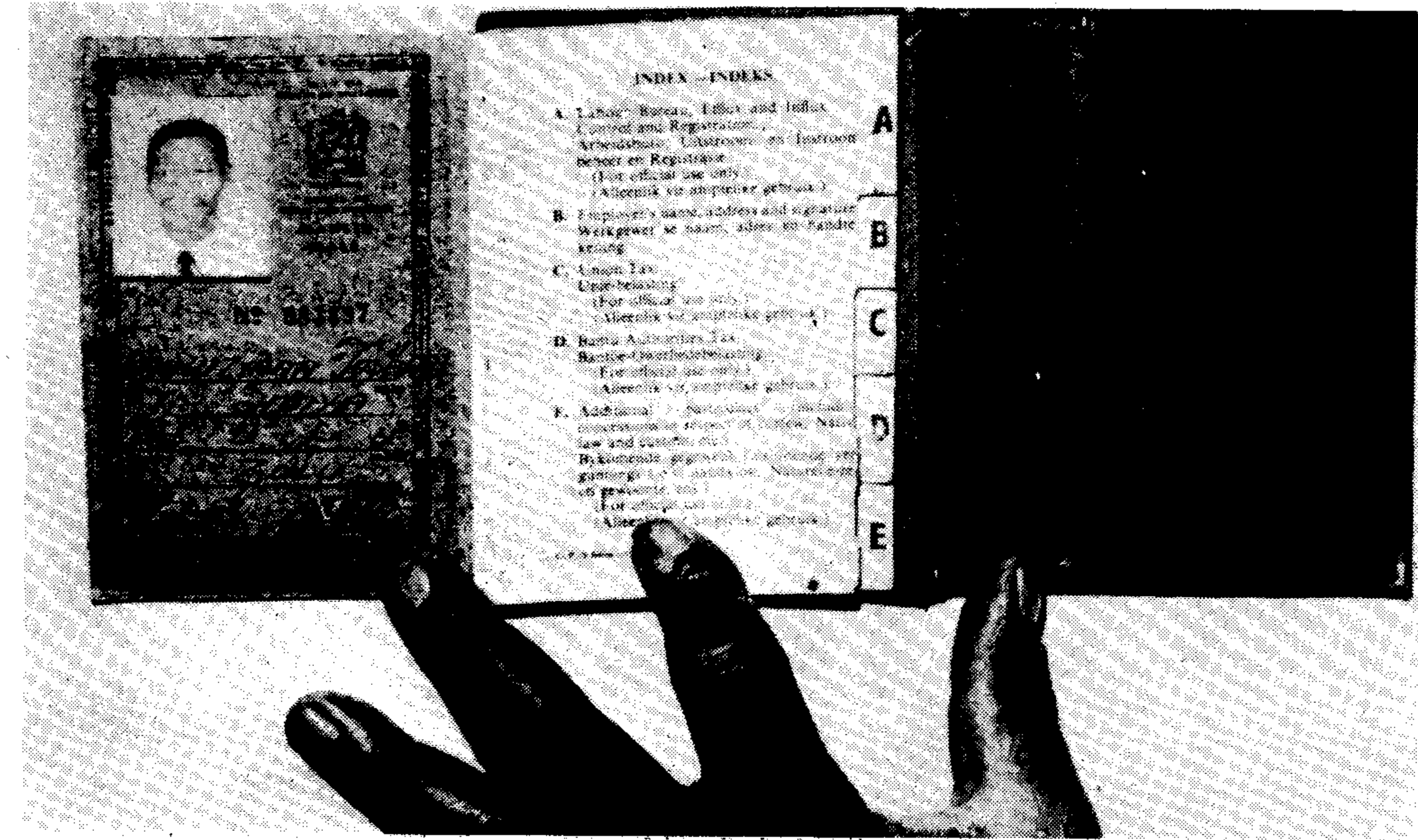
Despite the fact that blacks are to be allowed freedom from arrest for not carrying papers within a distance of 5km., the maximum penalty for a travel offence is increased from one to three months.

Limited

The lease-hold reform has been limited because the South African government still maintains that full freehold property rights will only be available in the future "independent" black states.

But the purpose of the "relaxation" of controls on blacks is quite clear. As a joint statement from the Urban Foundation (an employers' federation) and the Association of Building Societies states:

"... it is a most significant step towards meaningful home ownership which would entrench free enter-



A pass book

prise values among blacks and generally achieve greater stability in our urban areas".

Cracking down

As the imperialist stranglehold over Southern Africa begins to weaken, Vorster's regime is cracking down on any expression of independent action by black workers, while at the same

time encouraging the co-optation of the black petty-bourgeoisie.

By cracking down on the masses Vorster hopes to cut off the pressure being applied on black collaborators like Bhutelezi.

A revolutionary leadership in South Africa will have to be built in conflict with those within the black population who are prepared to collaborate with

the Vorster regime. The "reforms" are directed primarily towards those forces.

AMONG the squads of imperialist troops dispatched to prop up the hated Mobutu regime in Zaire trod an alien figure - Chinese Foreign Minister Huang Hua, who flew in especially to declare Peking support for the tottering despot.

Force out NATO troops . . . from front page



Mobutu embraces French President Giscard

certain amount of military and financial aid to national liberation struggles—while ensuring, as in the case of the Patriotic Front guerrillas in Zimbabwe—that such assistance is not on sufficient a scale to enable a serious all-out struggle to take place.

Whatever their motives in doing so, insofar as the Stalinists give material support to these liberation struggles they are objectively helping to weaken imperialist and counter-revolutionary force, which must be combatted politically at each point.

This is why in those areas where diplomatic manoeuvres by the Kremlin mean that they provide open or tacit support to reactionary regimes (as in Ethiopia), such actions must be condemned by the whole workers' movement.

conscious counter-revolutionary force, which must be combatted politically at each point.

This is why in those areas where diplomatic manoeuvres by the Kremlin mean that they provide open or tacit support to reactionary regimes (as in Ethiopia), such actions must be condemned by the whole workers' movement.

No decision

Despite the ferocity of the barrage of anti-Communist propaganda and the fact that the press does not mean that any conscious decision has been made to go for a confrontation with the workers' states.

Indeed there remains considerable division among

the imperialists themselves as how best to cling on to control in Africa.

The echo of the humiliating defeat of US imperialism in Vietnam, and the consequent inability to send US troops to fight the MPLA in Angola still rings in the ears of many bourgeois leaders.

Even now in Chad beleaguered French troops are suffering heavy losses at the hands of the lightly armed FROLINAT forces, while in the Sahara Polisario guerrillas continue to hold the Moroccan and Mauritanian armies at bay.

Collaboration

With this in mind those like Callaghan who seek to attack the working class through class collaboration rather than class confrontation, have been urging a more subtle approach—through massive "aid" programmes to provide economic rather than overt military backing to dictators like Mobutu.

That leaders of the British Labour Party should be actively assisting to plot new moves to repress the African masses highlights the political problems and tasks faced by the working class in the imperialist nations—particularly those in Europe.

The international obligation of the European workers' movement is to take action to stop these moves dead in their tracks.

Yet not one mass workers' party has even talked of such action. French and Belgian troops are at this moment gunning down African civilians, while a larger number are still engaged in the support of South African apartheid.

Belated protest

Only the French CP—clearly stung by feeling within their own movement

—has belatedly called a protest demonstration against "Giscardian intervention" in Africa.

We must support demonstrations whilst showing how the CP leadership is making sure action is limited only to protest.

Strike action

The French Communist Party controls the major CGT trade union confederation: it is within its power to call strike action to force the withdrawal of French troops.

But, sooner than give any lead to independent working class action these Stalinists confine themselves to vague gestures.

In Britain too the labour movement can and must be mobilised to protect the world working class from a

further attack at the hands of our "Labour" politicians.

The fight must be taken up at once:

*Remove the pro-imperialist Callaghan-Healey leadership.

*Withdraw Britain from NATO and all alliances with imperialist forces.

*Withdraw all British troops from Ireland and other countries.

*The trade unions must block all supplies and arms shipments to these imperialist armies.

*Unconditional defence of the workers states against imperialist attack.

*For strike action against intervention by NATO and its stooges in Africa.

*Build Trotskyist parties in every country to combat Stalinism and reformism!

*Full labour movement support to those engaged in anti-imperialist struggles in Africa.

French pay sit-ins

A wave of unofficial pay strikes throughout the Renault combine in France has brought swift retaliatory lock-out action from management.

The strikes—ranging from brief sectional stoppages to more widescale strikes and occupations at the plants at Flins and at Cleon, near Rouen—are in pursuit of demands well in excess of the incomes policy laid down by the government.

Strikers are calling for a minimum wage of 3,000 francs (£360) per month; a 40-hour week; a fifth week's paid holiday, and retirement at 60.

Management have responded by breaking off talks with union officials and locking out all 16,000 workers at the Flins plant, where 400 press shop workers have been on strike, and sat in over the weekend.

And Renault have applied for court injunctions to force out occupying strikers.

The attitude of Stalinist union leaders has been consciously to refrain from giving the call for all-out strike action while remaining ready to move in and head off the struggles should they develop.

The Communist Party daily *l'Humanite*, last week carried generally sympathetic interviews with strikers at Flins and Cleon, describing workers erecting tents on the grass of the factory and bringing in televisions to watch the World Cup during the occupation.

These struggles could give a lead to other sections of French workers who face a sharp new upward move in consumer prices as a result of government policies.

A concerted struggle on wages would force the newly re-elected government under Prime Minister Barre to act in defence of its incomes policy if it is to succeed in forcing the French working class to shoulder the burden of the crisis of French capitalism.



Workers march through the Renault factory at Flins



INTERNATIONAL

Jones supervises

Spanish

apprentices

The first resolution passed at the UGT's first legal congress since 1932 "reaffirms" that the 90-year-old trade union federation, whose history and present are closely bound up with the Socialist Party (PSOE), is "of the working class, revolutionary, autonomous, free, democratic, unitary, internationalist and in support of workers' control."

Nothing revolutionary, however, was visible in their four-day conference in Barcelona, the town where the UGT was founded by Pablo Iglesias.

And it was not much easier to find anything democratic, unitary or internationalist.

In fact, despite an intentionally confusing tendency for leadership resolutions to begin with phrases like "looking at unemployment from a Marxist viewpoint", it was hard to find much difference in spirit between the Congress of the reborn UGT and the annual British TUC conference.

Same techniques

From Scarborough to Seville, from Brighton to Barcelona, reformist trade union bureaucrats perform their treacherous role with much the same techniques.

It was not at all incongruous, therefore that the familiar face in the fourth row was not a dream it was indeed the real Jack Jones.

Though more expensively dressed than the majority of delegates Jones looked very much at home.

He knew that, though the language might be different, he was among friends who took their task of holding back the strength of the working class as seriously as he did.

Nicolas Redondo, who was reelected without serious opposition as the UGT's General Secretary, is still, however, unable to act with quite the same arrogance as a Jack Jones even if he is learning fast.

For Redondo is a trade union leader in a movement whose structure is still in a state of rapid change.

Massive growth

Within Franco's Spain the UGT was all but destroyed after the end of the civil war.

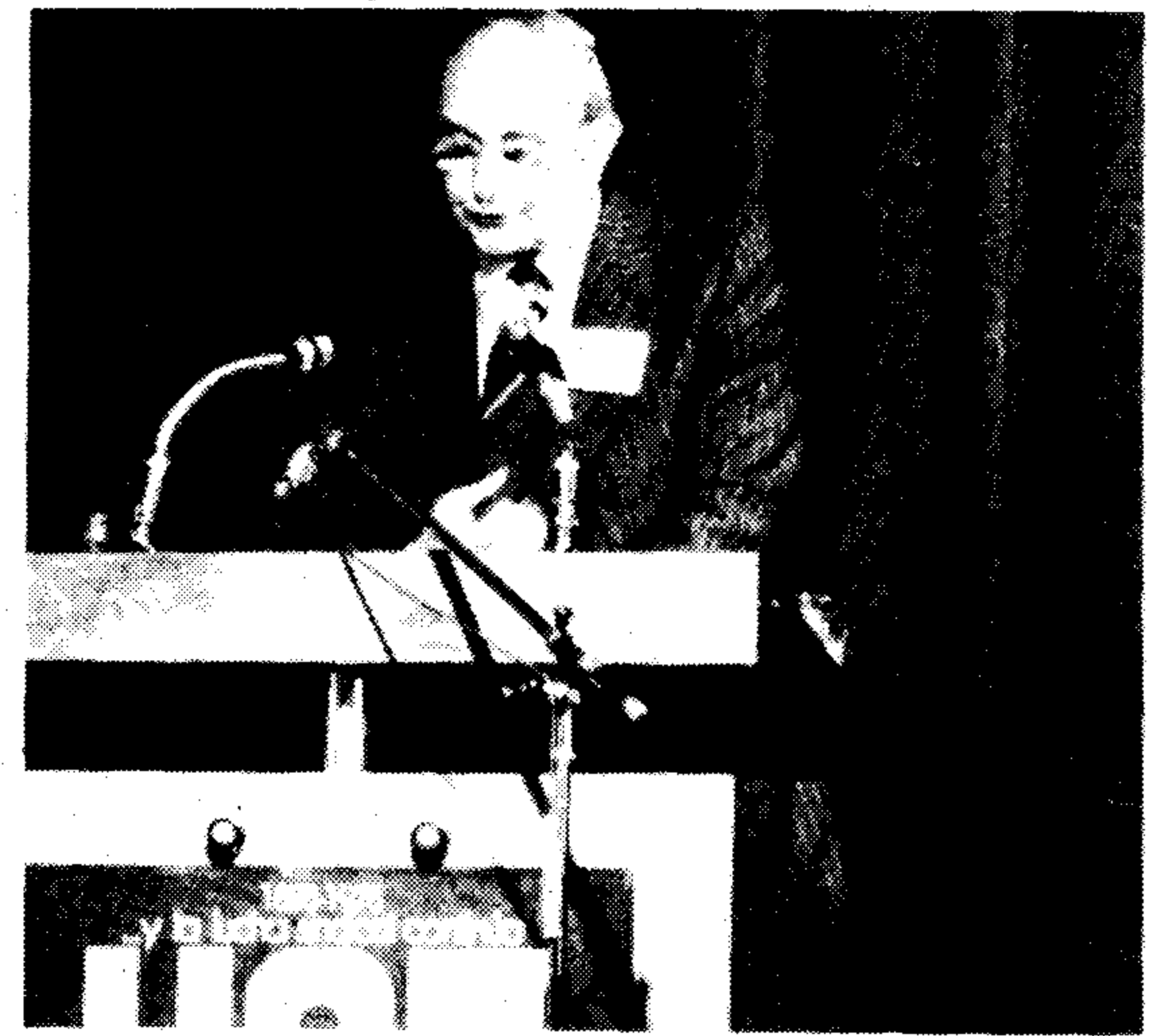
It was not until the 1960s that there was a serious growth of working class organisation.

In this movement the increasingly Stalinist dominated Workers' Commissions were the most important organisations.

Out of these the Spanish

Spanish apprentices

On the spot report from Enrique Alvares



In place of 'Auld Lang Syne'—the Internationale



Redondo

CP has been attempting to build "trade unions of a new kind" in which local bureaucrats would base themselves on occasional mass meetings of all workers rather than face a constant struggle with an active membership of a union in which members would have constitutional rights.

The UGT arrived late in this development but its extremely rapid growth since 1975 reflects not only the desire of workers to rebuild one of the historic unions of the Spanish working class but also a wish to join a union in which, at least in theory they had democratic rights as members.

This manifest desire is forcing the Workers'

Commissions also to start looking more like a trade union of the old type though it has not yet got as far as holding national congresses.

At the time of its illegal but just tolerated Thirtieth Congress in 1976 the UGT claimed 15,000 members (the same number as it had in 1899). Today it has over 2 million (twice as many as it had in 1932)

Manoeuvres

If these members expected even some formal representation at the UGT Congress, then tens of thousands of them were disappointed.

The weeks before the Congress were marked by a series of unscrupulous manoeuvres by the bureaucracy to disenfranchise the "dissident" sections of the union and prevent the growing discontent with the policies of the union leadership from coming to the surface in the form of a serious challenge at the Congress.

The most blatant and scandalous case took place in the Basque province of Navarra.

There left wing militants in the UGT put forward a resolution for the UGT Congress demanding working class independence, no social pacts, and a socialist government with socialist policies.

The local bureaucracy once it was evident that this resolution would get majority support gave it hypocritical support but only to gain time for a massive witchhunt and bureaucratic attack.

The attack was led by Isaias Herrero (later elected as Organisation Secretary the No. 2 post, at the Congress), Jesus Mancho and Jose Maria Zufiaur—also members of the UGT National Executive.

Congress dissolved

Jack Jones and the witch-hunting TGWU leadership would have been proud of them. In the first place they dissolved the local Congress in Pamplona (which has 50% of the Navarra province membership) on the pretext that not all members had received a letter summoning them to the Congress.

At the same time 12 members (including elected local Committee members) were expelled altogether.

When the Pamplona members called another congress, the bureaucracy summoned a provincial Congress at exactly the same time at a meeting place kept a secret from most of the membership.

Other dissident union locals were prevented from voting by the device of the bureaucracy refusing to receive their subscriptions and so "invalidating" their membership.

As a result of this shameful procedure the final positions of the Navarra delegation to the UGT national Congress were decided by about 25% of those who had a constitutional right to representation.

Prevented

The one delegate who tried to raise the question on the floor of the Congress was bureaucratically prevented from doing so.

This was certainly the most flagrant instance of a method which is nonetheless being increasingly practised throughout Spain not only in the UGT but equally

in the PSOE and the Young Socialists.

It made the political outcome of the Congress a certainty.

Amendments to the Executive resolutions, opposing social pacts, or wages were predictably rejected by what became the standard majority for the Executive in all Congress votes—about 87%.

The signs of opposition to the class collaborationist policies of the UGT leadership, however continually rose to the surface before they could be bureaucratically stifled.

Forced to agree

And in order to hold this opposition in check, the bureaucracy was nonetheless forced to agree to a number of policies which it has no intention whatever of carrying out.

For instance the resolution passed on wages includes: "an adjustment of wages every three months in line with the increase in a cost of living index to be compiled under the control of the trade unions."

On jobs the UGT is nominally committed to: "control by workers through the trade union branches of all redundancies related to the economic crisis."

"Factories intending to close in response to the crisis should, if they are worthwhile for the interests of the community, be nationalised without compensation and come under the control of the INI (the Francoist version of the British National Enterprise Board)."

These are not "left" policies. In some ways they are extremely right wing insofar as they involve strengthening the Francoist INI (National Industrial Institute).

But the ideas of even a limited sliding scale of wages based on a price index under union control or of any kind of nationalisation without compensation are not ones which would be voluntarily put about by the UGT leaders.

Buried

They are policies which will frighten the capitalist class and for that reason they will be buried by Redondo and the obedient Executive as soon as it is decent to do so.

The UGT also at the Congress "reaffirmed" its rejection of the reactionary Moncloa Pact signed by the CP, the PSOE and the capitalist parties last year.

Under this pact workers are forced to take real wage cuts and allow unlimited redundancies to "solve" the economic crisis "in exchange" for meaningless promises by the Francoist government that it will end unemployment.

The UGT however has been and remains opposed to the Moncloa Pact in the same sense that the TUC General Council "opposes"

incomes policy!

Redondo is on the PSOE Executive and he got the Congress to let him stay there.

Conditional

But in referring to the possibility of a PSOE government, Redondo said: "Logically this should be to the benefit of the working class. But our support of a socialist government would be critical and conditional support because our confidence in the possibility of social transformation through a future PSOE government does not, however, imply that the UGT would give a blank cheque to the policy of our brother party."

At the end of the congress Felipe Gonzalez fresh from participating in ceremonies in honour of Spain's armed forces, and looking more than ever like a clothing advertisement from a colour supplement, replied to Redondo.

The UGT, he said, is and always has been, "Our union." When there is a PSOE government he said, it would need the support of the UGT or it could not succeed.

What he meant was that he intended to take no responsibility for the failure of such a government to answer the needs of the working class.

It would, he implied, be the fault of the working class itself.

Resentful

Redondo was evidently resentful of Gonzalez' proprietorial attitude to the UGT and ostentatiously refrained from applauding during Gonzalez' speech.

But this is the tension not of principle but of rival bureaucrats; both made it perfectly clear that they thought one of the main tasks of the Spanish "Socialists" was to destroy the left wing of both the PSOE and the UGT.

As Gonzalez put it: "The PSOE could receive a majority, popular mandate which obliges it to assume the tasks of government."

What disturbs me for when that occasion arises—is the maximalist positions inside the PSOE and the UGT, which are often no more than excuses on the part of comrades who will not admit that they are afraid of taking on that task."

Gonzalez has accumulated popular support in the name of "socialism". He is now giving warning that when he becomes Prime Minister he does not want to be under any pressure to follow Socialist policies.

In this he can expect all possible help from Nicolas Redondo and the leaders of the UGT who last week showed themselves to have graduated in record time from clandestine opponents of fascist laws to open agents of the capitalist class in the workers' movement.



Gonzalez

STRIKES KEY TO CUTS

FIGHT!

This week has seen an important development for the Oxford City Nursery Campaign in its attempt to raise the question of strike action against the cuts in the local county branch of NUPE.

The Executive of that branch met to consider a resolution from the Blackbird Leys section of NUPE schools staff that strike action be called to force the County Council to reopen the South Oxford nursery class—the class which was occupied by parents and children for 6 weeks before being evicted by bailiffs and police at the end of April.

The meeting agreed to ask stewards across the county to call meetings of their members to discuss the cuts and take decisions on strike action.

Secretary

These meetings are to be addressed by either branch secretary Eric Millar or Anne-Marie Sweeney of the Nursery Campaign who is standing as Vice Chairman of the branch in the current elections.

This is a big step forward for the fight against the cuts in Oxfordshire, since previously many of these members were never informed even of their quarterly branch meetings.

WSL members of the Oxford City Nursery Campaign took their perspective of strike action by the public sector unions into the Fightback workshop on hospital closures held in Birmingham on Saturday.

This workshop was attended

by some 30 hospital workers, coming from several Birmingham hospitals, brought together by the BACHCCS cuts campaign, from Hull, Sheffield and South Wales, as well as the London hospital campaigns, and Oxford.

There was a reluctance by the meeting to clearly root the attacks on the health service in the crisis of the capitalist system and to pin responsibility clearly on the Lib-Lab government.

This resulted in many campaigns in a lack of class perspective and lack of policies such as strike action which will clear away the dominance of bourgeois forces such as hospital consultants and local dignitaries.

The speakers from Cardiff Trades Council who said that whilst they had fought off 2 closures they were pessimistic about keeping the workers interested to fight the third, had an ideal opportunity to raise the political nature of the cuts and the betrayal of the Labour government with those workers—since the local MP is Callaghan himself!

Cathy Ambrose of the Selly Oak Hospital in Birmingham described the correct orientation of their campaign towards Trades Council support and reported her confidence that the industrial unions can be

counted on for protest strike action.

The problem, she claimed, was the hospital workers themselves, who "would not strike". But she admitted that since the BACHSS campaign was set up some 18 months ago, no resolution for strike action had been put through the branches.

As she correctly pointed out, since the 80,000 demonstration in November 1976, union officials, particularly in NUPE, have been let off the hook.

The BACHSS campaign has certainly played a key role in this in Birmingham and this position must be reversed.

Candy Unwin from the EGA campaign reported on last Tuesday's decisions by the 4 unions concerned.

The meeting agreed to support their calls for action on July 19th and their conference on July 1st.

The meeting also supported the stand taken by members of the Emergency Bed Service who have been suspended for referring patients to the EGA, and will raise it in organisations and particularly in branches of COHSE, the union to which the EGA workers belong.

A motion proposed by a Communist Party member from the Birmingham Accident Hospital NUPE branch suggested that Fightback should



80,000 marched in November 1976—but NUPE leaders have been let off the hook

call a mass lobby of the 1978 TUC Conference calling for a commitment from all affiliated trade unions to support hospital workers fighting the cuts.

A WSL member proposed amendments which placed the responsibility for the cuts on the Lib-Lab government and which sought to place demands on union officials to call strike action to stop the cuts.

A further amendment calling for the trade unions to set up committees of trade unionists and other NHS consumers to investigate health service spending was accepted by the proposer, but he adamantly rejected the others.

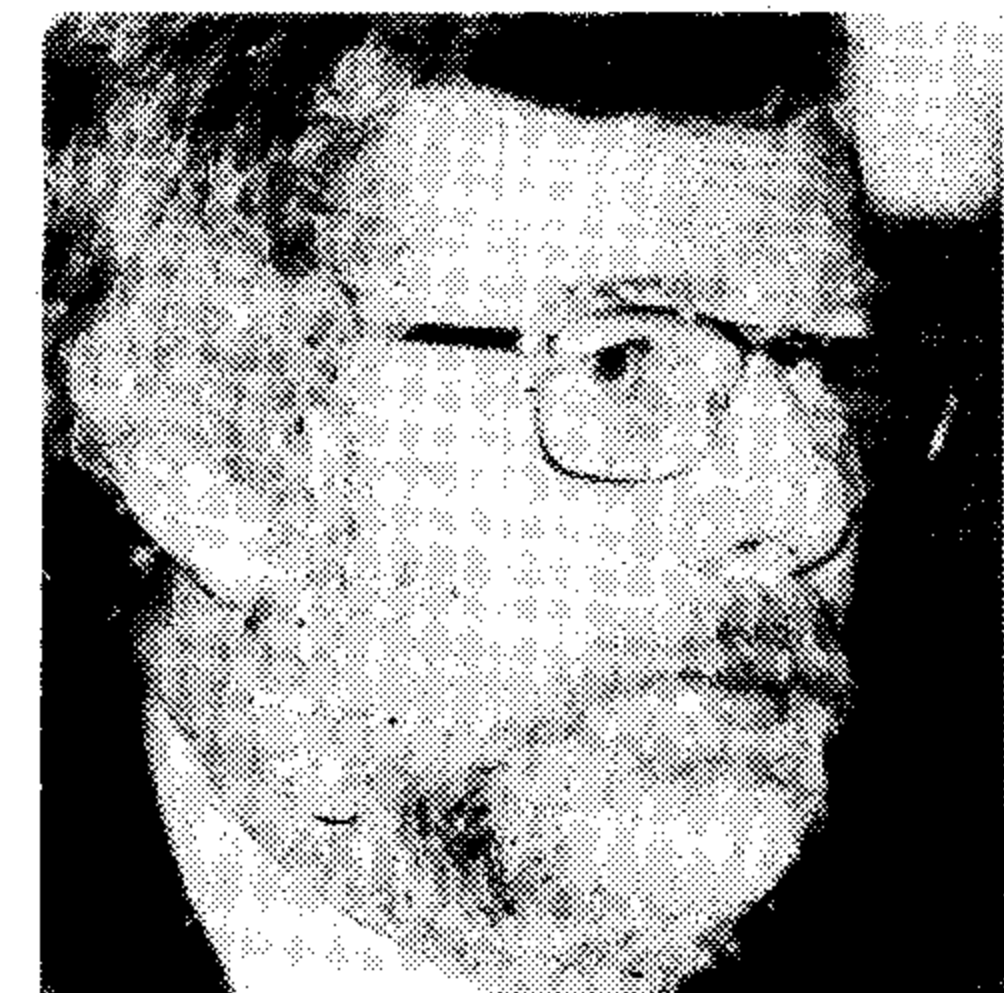
The amendments received support from half the meeting but, falling short of a majority, fell.

Keen interest in suppressed Marxist text

There was a brisk response by *Socialist Press* readers to the cut-price pre-publication offer on the new book *'Communists' Against Revolution*—to be published by Folrose Books on June 14.

The book deals with the post-war role of Stalinism and defends Trotsky's method of analysis and the Transitional Programme against those who have thrown aside or attempted to revise them in the light of post-war events.

It makes widely available the hitherto suppressed 1964 essay by Tim Wohlforth *The Theory of Structural Assimilation* together with a critical analysis by Adam Westoby which develops supplements and corrects certain aspects of Wohlforth's work.



Wohlforth

A campaign on these issues—demanding the complete repeal of the Official Secrets Act as part of the fight to expose the role of the capitalist state and its plans for armed repression of the working class—must be taken up in the workers movement.

The WSL and *Socialist Press* have repeatedly suggested that the best vehicle for such a fight would be for the ABC campaign to call a labour movement delegate conference on the issue timed to coincide with the trial in London, and to call on all union branches and Labour Parties—not simply the NUJ—to participate.

Only in this way the groundwork can be laid for implementation of solidarity strike action by journalists and others to force the dropping of the charges against Aubrey, Berry and Campbell.

At a time when the sections of the revisionist "United" Secretariat of the Fourth International are once more sinking to new depths of accommodation to Stalinism (see page 9), the publication of this material and the stimulus it offers to a thorough discussion on Stalinism is crucial to the fight for the continuity of the Trotskyist programme.

Copies of *'Communists' Against Revolution* are still available, and may be ordered through bookshops or direct from Folrose Books.

A full length review will appear in next week's *Socialist Press*.

LABOUR MOVEMENT CAMPAIGN NEEDED TO DEFEND ABC

The campaign to defend journalists Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, and former soldier John Berry from charges under the Official Secrets Act now faces a crucial period.

Last weekend saw some 350 demonstrators turn out on a 'picnic' in Cheltenham, which included a march to GCHQ—headquarters of top secret Signals Intelligence unit SIGINT.

But aside from highlighting the whereabouts of this building and naming the hitherto unnamed 'Colonel A', the ABC Campaign leaders—predominantly pacifists and 'left' liberals—were unable to offer any way forward from this protest action.

It is now only three months until the trial begins in London—and still no clear call has come from the Campaign as to how the issue of the Official Secrets Act, and the threat of 14-year jail sentences that hangs over the heads of all three of its present victims, should be taken more widely into the labour movement.

Letters

We have heard that National Union of Journalists General Secretary Ken Ashton has sent a letter to other union General Secretaries asking them to send letters to branches asking for general support for the

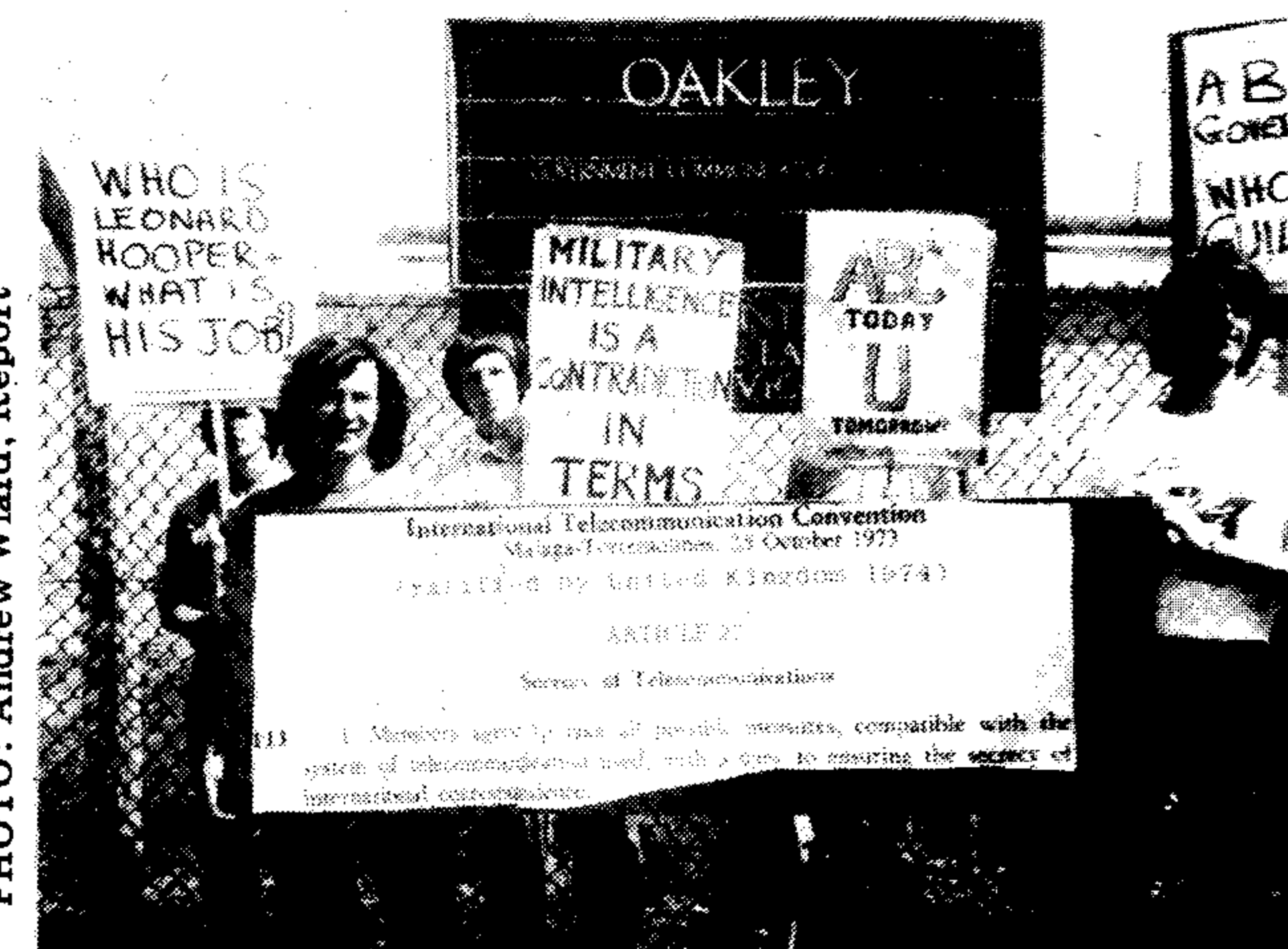


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Aubrey and Berry on the picnic last weekend

ABC campaign, but no specific calls have been issued.

But such vague and delayed moves, restricted to the topmost levels of the trade union bureaucracy, are completely inadequate to prepare the kind of action—including strike action by journalists—that will be necessary to defend Aubrey, Berry and Campbell.

These three have been charged not simply under the general section 2 of the Official Secrets Act (which covers anything from details of hospital waiting lists through to 'confidential' material at the highest level) but also the 'spying clause' in section 1—though not even the prosecution are alleging that any of the three are involved in spying!

The reason for this is simple: the Lib-Lab government has already tabled

proposals to amend section 2 of the Act—in such a way that Aubrey/Berry/Campbell could well slip through the net.

But the top military and civil service officials that control 'security' matters are determined to cling on to every aspect of legislation that preserves their 'right' to continue clandestine operations in defence of the British capitalist class at home and abroad.

Scapegoat

Aubrey, Berry and Campbell are the scapegoats being used to 'prove' the need to retain section 1 of the Act.

The Labour manifesto at the last election included a pledge to repeal the Official Secrets Act and replace it with 'freedom of information' legislation.

But once in the position



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Rees

of actually administering British capitalism, the reformist politicians immediately took over responsibility for preserving and strengthening its most reactionary legislation and institutions of class rule

MARXIST STUDENT



Issue No. 6, May 1978.

Available from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR, Price 10p plus 9p postage.

Published June 15

'Communists' Against Revolution deals with the most important aspects of the development of Stalinism on a world scale since 1945.

It brings together in one volume the until now unobtainable 1964 essay by Tim Wohlforth *The Theory of Structural Assimilation* with a critical commentary by Adam Westoby.

This 166 page book is vital reading for those who wish to defend the method and principles of Trotskyism against the varied revisionist currents that have challenged the very essence of the *Transitional Programme*. £1.75 plus 20p p&p

Order from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5



Prisoners fight back

The Prisoners Aid Committee has called a rally in London on July 9 to further their campaign against the savage treatment meted out to Irish Republican prisoners in Northern Ireland under the watchful eye of Labour Ministers.

This campaign is linked to the continuing struggle by over 300 Republican prisoners in Long Kesh and other jails who are still refusing to wear prison clothing or do prison work.

A new booklet, *The Castle-reagh File*, detailing torture at the Castlereagh interrogation centre in Belfast also spells out the actions of the British imperialist forces against those suspected of republican sympathies.

One recent victim, trade union activist Brian McGuire, was murdered in his cell at Castlereagh on May 10 after prolonged interrogation.

As this crime was revealed, 1,000 joined a spontaneous march down the Falls Road, followed next day by strike action by 2,000 workers, who marched to a protest rally at Transport House — only to be confronted by hundreds of troops and police.

The Prisoners Aid Committee centres on two demands:

* POW status for Republican prisoners as guaranteed by the Geneva Convention.

* Support for the war of liberation leading to British withdrawal and an amnesty.

While these demands are not sufficient for a campaign on the Irish struggle as a whole, they must be supported, and the British labour movement mobilised to support the July 9 rally, to be held in Hyde Park at 2.30.

The Greater London Council is instituting a policy of maintaining special blocks of flats, in the Spitalfields area of Tower Hamlets, for Bengalis only.

They will only be moving Bengalis into them, and will be offering to move any of the present white tenants out.

The reason for this policy according to the Council's Director of Housing is because of 'physical attacks on Bengalis in areas of East London away from Spitalfields.'

'They need to live in a mainly Bengali area to obtain the protection which a large group of their people can provide.'

'Realistic'

This policy is backed as 'realistic' by the Labour leader of the ILEA, Sir Ashley Bramall. Labour's housing development spokesman Ken Livingstone has described how some Bengali families had been physically stopped from taking up residence in other estates which were mainly white.

The Council had backed down from moving them he because it would have need to use the police to force them in, and they couldn't be guaranteed protection by the police afterwards.

Tony Judge, Chairman of the Housing Management Committee, also defended the decision, saying:

'Over the years these people have been subject to growing abuse and persecution amounting to pretty widespread physical violence.'

They have felt unable to help themselves and I was

getting increasingly worried about their setting up self-help groups to defend themselves.'

This last sentence says it all. Rejecting any call on the labour and trade union movement to organise workers defence squads to protect black workers, Labour councillors join hands with the Tories in conceding to the racials.

Unemployment

Having implemented the policies of mass unemployment, housing cutbacks and immigration controls that have fuelled the racials, these reactionary councillors have agreed to the racist plan of excluding black workers from 'white' estates and driving them into ghettos.

This segregation is now official council policy!

But playing up to the racials won't solve anything, because, encouraged by this success, the racials and fascists will go on to turn their policy into one of wholesale pogroms against the new ghetto areas.

There must be a fight in the labour movement to oppose the reactionary ghetto policy and to kick out those labour councillors who support it.

At the same time, workers defence squads, set up through the trade unions, should be fought for to protect the immigrant community.



Birmingham march against racials

Reformist party cannot be reformed: Letter and reply

Liverpool
4/5/78

Dear Comrade Editor,
Reading through *Socialist Press* No. 97 several points occurred to me.

Firstly, I agree with your aim of turning unemployed youth towards the trade unions.

However it seems to me that the situation at present is that a) some unions rule books do not allow the unemployed to join or to remain members, and b) in

those unions whose rule books do allow unemployed membership those unemployed who attempt to join are fobbed off or discouraged by local bureaucrats.

It appears to me that a

useful step would be for *Socialist Press* to publish the names of those unions whose rule books do allow for the unemployed to join, plus, if space allowed quoting the relevant rule or its number in the rule book.

This would then enable WSL supporters and others to guide unemployed youth contacts towards those particular unions.

In the, quite likely, event of youth being refused admission by local bureaucrats one could approach contacts and branches of that union in the area to mount a campaign on the question.

While of course being of the opinion that all trade unionists should fight in their unions against bans on unemployed members, the approach I have just put forward appears to me to be a practical short term approach to the question.

While the result of this strategy would be that unemployed youth would be concentrated in particular unions, I would consider that a blow against a particular trade union bureaucracy weakens the bureaucracy in general.

Another point that caught my eye was in your article on the Communist Manifesto where you refer to 'the inevitability of the proletariat's complete victory'.

However, it is my view that this is far from inevitable.

To us looking back today it is incredible that the German proletariat in the 1930's did not take Trotsky's advice on fighting fascism, but the fact remains that they didn't.

What is to stop such situ-

ations being repeated indefinitely?

Thirdly, I am unclear as to your attitude on the Labour Party. John Plant appears to think that building a 'new leadership' in the Labour Party is both desirable and possible.

The implication is that *Socialist Press* agrees with this. I would appreciate a further explanation of your attitude to the Labour Party.

Yours fraternally,
F. Davis.

We reply:

Our orientation towards the unionisation of youth means that in those cases where youth have a trade or are made unemployed they should fight for admission or retain membership in the appropriate union.

Those youth who are denied a job from school and have no trade should fight for admission to the general unions—most obviously the TGWU, where recruitment of unemployed is provided for under rule.

The obstacles placed by officials in the way of recruiting unemployed—particularly unemployed youth—mean that the unionisation of youth must be approached as a campaign, enlisting the support of employed union members in the struggle against the union bureaucracy.

A conscious leadership developed in such struggles is the only way the power of the officials can effectively be challenged. And the

fight for a Trotskyist party as the organisation for such a leadership is the only way the historic crisis of working class leadership can be resolved.

When our article stated that the proletariat's victory is 'inevitable' it was based on our firm conviction that it is possible to construct Trotskyist revolutionary parties to lead workers in the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

This is the task the Workers Socialist League has undertaken. We do not believe that the Labour Party or any social democratic party can be transformed into a revolutionary party through a change of its leadership.

But we do believe that a fight waged for a consistent socialist programme within the ranks of the Labour Party can expose the treachery of the right wing and the spineless inadequacy of the 'left' talkers, and in this way demonstrate to the best layers of workers in the Labour Party that they must break from reformism and build a revolutionary party.

Such a fight sometimes means proposing new leaders, on a programme which can sharpen the fight with the official leadership.

As Marxists, we already know that the Labour Party as a reformist party can never solve the problems of the working class.

Our task—carried through by our propaganda and agitation within the mass organisations of the labour movement—is to prove this in practice to the vast number of militants who do not yet agree with us.

PRESS GANG

The BBC radio commentator settled himself in his seat and prepared for ninety minutes hard slog on the Scotland/Peru match. His warming up patter bounced off the satellites and into thousands of radio sets.

'The atmosphere in Cordoba is so relaxed, so calm. Even the soldiers on duty outside the ground with fixed bayonets look almost inconspicuous.'

Whether that statement (or the long close-up TV shots of General Videla at the opening of the 1978 World Cup in Argentina) came into the official BBC category of political reporting, it is difficult to say—if so, it would have been the first football commentary to be vetted by the BBC hierarchy.

For all political reports about the regime in Argentina have been put into a special status by the BBC—with an instruction that they have all to be "referred upwards" for approval.

It says something both about the BBC and about British imperialism that the only other country about which reports are automatically referred upwards is Northern Ireland.

The BBC's reporting is not in itself in a special category. The Press response to the World Cup

has been everything that could have been predicted.

There is only one standard by which the military junta is being judged and that is its ability to provide the arena for the multi million pound business exercise, and to defend it.

There was more press criticism in Britain about the Argentine regime two months ago when the main stadium grass was found to be scorched black, than if every game was opened with a public hanging and the half time entertainment was provided by a firing squad.

To the starry-eyed sports writers, such entertainment would be part of the spectacle and to criticise it would be "bringing politics into sport".

The BBC's monitoring of its reports does however indicate a determination that no journalist will carry out the threat of the fake lefts in the NUJ to turn the World Cup into an opportunity to expose the regime.

The decision to impose special censorship was exposed by the *Guardian* diary writer, Peter Hillmore, early in May.

There was a stunned silence for a time from the BBC and then a blank denial from the director of news and current affairs at the BBC, Dick Francis, that the director general (Ian Trethowan) had ever issued such an instruction.

Hillmore has exposed this lie in its turn. In his diary column of June 2, he quotes from the minutes of a current affairs group of senior executives of the BBC of May 16 that Francis himself had instructed his staff to refer Argentinian stories upwards so that their reports would remain "unrestricted".

The BBC has admitted these minutes to be genuine, but complained that the meeting was "badly minuted" (presumably forgetting to ensure that the minutes were referred upwards for approval first).

Hillmore himself, despite having exposed the elaborate censorship system imposed by the BBC, refuses to draw any conclusions from it, referring only to "problems for the news media", and pooh-poohing any notion that the BBC might be applying non-journalistic standards.

If his conclusions were true, the exposure he published would not be of any interest.

Not that it has proved of any interest to other newspapers, to the BBC itself or to commercial radio and television. The truth about the BBC censorship system has remained a downpage, low-key sensation in one paper.

Presumably the others "referred it upwards" and, by applying normal journalistic standards, spiked it. It was after all just a professional foul.

PHOTO: Dave Evans, IFL

WHOSE SIDE IS THE W.R.P. ON?

'Public' meetings held by the Workers Revolutionary Party are unusual occasions.

Guards on the doors rigorously vet those wishing to attend to ensure that political opponents—and in particular members of the Workers Socialist League—are excluded.

At recent meetings, *Newsline* photographers have been stationed outside, taking pictures of anyone turned away at the door.

The WRP has not disclosed its purpose in taking such photographs, which could in certain instances be used if they fell into the hands of employers, union bureaucrats, immigration authorities or the police.

Open letter

Three years ago, shortly after the formation of the Workers Socialist League, we had occasion to issue an open letter to the WRP complaining about the publication of pictures of WSL members whom they knew to be liable to attack from such quarters.

But in recent months WRP photographers have boasted their willingness to repeat the same behaviour.

All this has not gone unnoticed—and at one WRP meeting during the Lambeth by-election two people inside the meeting asked why the WRP refused to discuss questions raised by the WSL and a third asked why everybody was being photographed.

Opportunist

Why indeed? The reason lies in the inability of the WRP leadership to defend their opportunist political positions, or their abysmal record in the few areas of practical work in which they are involved in the labour movement.

When we have devoted space in our own press to analysing the revisions of Marxist principle and Trotskyist politics undertaken by the WRP leaders, there have been some who criticised us.

They argued that the WRP is a spent force, incapable of further intervention in the workers' movement, and able to deal with opponents only by the most gross and incredible lies and slanders.

The use of terms such as "agents of the Stalinists", of the imperialists, the Zionists, the police, "provocateurs" or—if all else fails—"unqualified supporters of the Callaghan government" has certainly become a hallmark of the hollow polemical articles from the WRP in recent years.

Continuity

But that is simply one side of the WRP. We must remember that the main WRP leadership were the ones who at one stage fought for the continuity of the Trotskyist movement, and at a later point made the first serious turn by the post-war Trotskyist movement into the British working class.

This history means that this leadership and its apparatus—however squalid its theory and practice today—can still serve as a pole of attraction for certain layers of youth, workers and petty bourgeois forces.

Few of these people are told anything of the history of the WRP—and fewer still are told the truth. And to ensure that those who are in a position to explain the degeneration of the WRP are kept away from this membership, the WRP leadership have from the outset whipped up a frenzy of lies and distortions about the Workers Socialist League.

Principles

The WSL traces its roots back to a group of WRP members around Alan Thornett who in 1974 took up a fight to turn the WRP back to the principles and the method of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.

This brought the full weight of bureaucratic repression down upon the opposition.

Thornett and 200 others were expelled from the WRP in December 1974 by General Secretary Gerry Healy.

And to cover up this suppression of democratic centralism they were accused of "capitulating to Social Democracy".

Bureaucracy

Thornett in particular was said to be on his way into the bureaucracy of the TGWU.

In spite of continued



Healy

unprecedented attacks on Thornett over the past 3½ years by both British Leyland's NEB-controlled management and the TGWU officials led by Jack Jones, Healy has doggedly maintained this position.

Now with the recent bureaucratic attempts to expel Thornett from the TGWU and victimise eight other Cowley stewards along with him, Healy has been forced to try to answer this contradiction.

This contortion takes the form of a two-page article in the WRP daily paper, *Newsline* (May 13).

Healy advances the notion that Thornett is not being attacked for what he has done over the past 3½ years but because management are still bitter over the defeat inflicted on them four years ago in 1974 when Thornett's shop steward's card was successfully defended under the leadership of the WRP!

This ridiculous analysis could be treated with the contempt it deserves, were it not for the fact that the article goes on, using the argument to argue that the victimisation is all a plot by Leyland to get rid of the

WRP in Cowley (which hardly exists anyway), and develops a much more sinister line.

The WRP article actually gives direct support to the TGWU officials and the management in their attacks on Alan Thornett, by lyingly accusing him of 'indiscipline' and 'adventurism' in the struggle.

Healy's argument on these issues fits in exactly with the line of argument of the TGWU officials.

Dossier

It also coincides with management's line of attack in the shape of an 18-page dossier on Thornett, designed as the basis for a further witch-hunt should there be a strike in his defence.

The *Newsline* puts it this way:

"They [management] sought to clear out all political opposition and to use the adventurism and indiscipline of the Thornett group not only to strike at the revisionist organisation they founded—the WSL—but to clear out all WRP influence from Cowley as well".

"Adventurism" and "indiscipline" are the precise charges laid against Alan Thornett and the Cowley 9 by TGWU officials and by British Leyland management.

Conclusion

The conclusion of the 18 page dossier puts it this way:

"Once again I must emphasise the serious nature of this matter and I trust you will investigate the whole issue on an urgent basis and inform us of your organisation's intent to enforce discipline into your organisation on this plant".

Healy's allegation puts the WRP back on the reactionary course adopted two



months ago when *Newsline* described some of the Cowley 9 as "grotesque adventurers" who had "opened the door" to the attacks of the bureaucracy.

No evidence

Since there was and is no evidence to back up the allegation of 'adventurism' and 'provocations' by Thornett—or the Workers Socialist League, the WRP attempt to use distortion to create the impression of wild, individual activities.

Newsline readers are told that last October convenor Parsons decided to exclude "Thornett" and WRP members" from plant-wide TGWU stewards' meetings.

But WRP member Tom White was *not* excluded by Parsons—who sees him as no threat. Thornett *alone* was excluded. And such a move has to be fought.

Thornett's section of transport drivers stopped work, and 100 of them marched on the stewards' meeting, demanding a reversal of Parson's position.

"Group"

Newsline would have us believe that "Thornett and his group" (the WSL?) "gate-crashed" Parsons' meetings. The phrase is carefully chosen to minimise the massive support for the action and the impact that it had.

But the falsification does not stop here. *Newsline* is determined to make it seem as if Thornett's actions were responsible for 'opening the door' to the TGWU witch-hunt.

The WRP article therefore gives details of the management's instructions to TGWU District Secretary Buckle to 'enforce discipline into your organisation'.

And it goes on:

"The blackmail worked. North had his wish granted. Following a series of 'unauthorised' (read 'management provoked') stoppages and meetings



Transport drivers lobbying the TGWU inquiry on the Cowley 9

Leyland's story echoed by Newsline slanders

One of the letters from the dossier compiled by British Leyland management to back their case for refusing recognition to Alan Thornett as Deputy Convenor in the Cowley Assembly Plant.

"It is clear from this that the difference between Jones and Thornett is marginal and that both work on the same assumption that the Labour government can be forced by pressure to carry out far-reaching and progressive reforms."

Mike Banda, in Whither Thornett May 1975.

"Dear Brother Thornett, ... The Oxford District Committee have recommended that you be expelled from the Union."

Brian Mathers, TGWU Region 5 Secretary, Feb. 6, 1978.

organised by Thornett in retaliation against the company's adamant refusal to recognise him as senior steward, the union acted.

In November ... The WRP is caught here with its fingers in the till while short-changing its readers.

The senior steward elections that saw Thornett elected as deputy convenor did not take place until December! How, then, could any stoppages have been held to force his recognition in October?

Unsupported

But the essence of the case for the WRP is to prove that the TGWU victimisation was 'provoked' by Thornett.

This is why they include the unsupported management assertion that the stoppages and meetings were "organised by Thornett".



TGWU Region 5 Secretary Brian Mathers

In their anxiety to "prove" that Thornett organised these meetings, Leyland management laboriously produced an 18-page dossier.

Now they and the TGWU officials can simply produce the Newsline article—produced without a shred of evidence or any first-hand knowledge—to corroborate their story!

It is disgraceful that a

Mr. D. J. Buckle
District Secretary
TGWU
Transport House
43, Cowley Road,
Oxford.

Dear Mr. Buckle,

Cowley Assembly Plant has, once again, suffered stoppages of work because of strife within the T&GWU in the Plant. Unless the matter between the two sides is settled we can forecast more stoppages caused by intra-union differences. The issue seems to be one which falls within the broad description of internal "trade union affairs".

The series of stoppages during the dayshift and night-shift of Tuesday 25 October which leads me to write to you is:

1. Stoppage in Transport on Dayshift.

The sequences of events was:
a) Your Senior Steward, Mr. Parsons, obtained a facility from the Company for a meeting of T&GWU Stewards plant-wide in the South Side Canteen at 7.30am on Tuesday 25 October.
b) Mr. Parsons determined to exclude Mr. Thornett from the meeting informing the Company of his decision. Subsequently he requested typing and photocopying facilities to inform Mr. Thornett of his exclusion in writing. The letter sent to Mr. Thornett is attached.

c) Two Transport Department Supervisors saw Mr. Thornett at 2.15pm on Monday 24 October and informed him that he would be required to remain on his job as the Company had been informed that his release was

not requested for the Tuesday meeting.

d) On Tuesday 25 October 7.10 am—Messrs. Trinder and Blakely, T&GWU Stewards informed Transport Supervision that "There will be a stoppage of work as Mr. Parsons will not allow Mr. Thornett to attend the 7.30 meeting".

7.15 am—Transport and Supervision informed by Messrs. Trinder and Thornett of a stoppage of work. The AUEW steward reported that his members were in support.

7.20 am—Mr. Parsons was told of the stoppage by IR Department and Mr. Paintin was deputised to deal with it so that Mr. Parsons could start his 7.30 meeting. Mr. Paintin failed to gain control in Transport and Mr. Thornett and members gate crashed the South Side Canteen meeting at 7.35 am.

7.30 am—Mr. Parsons began his meeting and after interruption by Transport at 7.35 am attempted to explain his reasoning for excluding Mr. Thornett but closed the meeting at 8.05 am having failed to control it.

8.20 am—Transport members returned to their shop.
8.25 am—Messrs. Thornett and Blakely and Buckingham informed supervision that a return to work would be recommended and work resumed at 8.30 am.

8.25 am—Mr. Parsons reported back the IR Manager and later provided management with a statement signed by himself and seven other Stewards (attached).

2. Stoppage of Maxi Production on Dayshift.
Brief facts are:

a) Work stopped on Section 2 at 11.20 for 30 minutes. It should be particularly noted that no "call" for a Senior Steward was made prior to the stoppage occurring which is part of our code of conduct for the avoidance of disputes. The stoppage involved 17 men. The T&GWU Steward for the section is Mr. Simpkins.

b) Deputies Paintin and Crookford (AUEW) identified the stoppage as a protest against the disbanding of the 7.30 Stewards meeting without conclusions of its business. A return to work was achieved when Mr. Paintin relayed a promise from Mr. Parsons to see all Maxi Stewards after the lunch break.

3. Stoppage of Production on Day Shift.

Brief facts are:

a) Work stopped on Section 2 at 2.23 pm for 12 minutes. It should be particularly noted that once again no "call" for a Senior Steward was made prior to the stoppage occurring. The stoppage involved 13 men. The T&GWU Steward for the section is Mr. Harford.

b) Deputies Paintin and Moss (AUEW) were sent to the stoppage but on arrival work recommenced. However, they identified that the stoppage had been a pressure tactic to force Mr. Parsons to reconvene the Stewards' meeting before the ballot took place.

4. Two Stoppages in Transport on Nightshift.

Brief facts are:

a) 8.00pm—a group of 22 transport drivers including Mr. Blakely marched to the IR Department to see Mr. Parsons

to obtain explanations why Mr. Thornett had not been allowed to attend the Stewards meeting. This was despite Mr. Blakely's involvement on the day shift. Mr. Parsons met them briefly in North Works and reaffirmed his intent to exclude Mr. Thornett from future stewards meetings. He instructed them to return to work at 8.45 pm. Work was eventually restarted at 9.30 pm.

b) 10.00pm—Mr. Parsons met North Side T&GWU Stewards in R Block.

c) 10.30pm—QT Stewards joined the meeting by authorisation.

d) 10.15pm—Transport drivers including Mr. Blakely left their place of work and gate crashed Mr. Parsons' meeting at 10.35pm. The Stewards at the meeting made it clear that they wished to have the meeting continue without Transport present. Transport left and resumed work at 10.45 pm.

The series of stoppages is a very clear indication that stewards and members in your organisation do not accept the fundamental principle that disputes which are internal to a Union or between two or more Unions and to which the Company is in no way a party shall be determined in accordance with union procedures and shall not be the subject of industrial or other coercive action by any employees in the factory.

I cannot emphasise too strongly that these stoppages indicate that despite all joint efforts since 1974 industrial relations are again threatened by divisive action within the

T&GWU. The Drivers' statement that they will attend every meeting from which Mr. Thornett is barred looks ill for the future if Mr. Parsons continues with his policy. Because of this I must inform you that the Company will not be granting facilities during working hours for T&GWU Stewards' meeting on a plant basis if named individuals are to be excluded. It is clear that any further meetings on this basis would lead to a repetition of anarchy and losses of production which we have just experienced.

The above limitation on plant-wide stewards meetings will only be reviewed when we have your organisation's formal assurance that stewards and members will conduct themselves in a reasonable manner and are prepared to honour basic principles of conduct jointly agreed between the Trade Unions and British Leyland in the British Leyland Procedure Agreement.

Once again I must emphasise the serious nature of this matter and I trust that you will investigate the whole issue on an urgent basis and inform us of your organisation's intent to enforce discipline into your organisation on this Plant.

Yours sincerely
W.D. North
Cowley Assembly Plant,
Plant Director

27 October 1977

so-called "Trotskyist" organisation can lay itself open to use as a tool by management and the labour bureaucracy.

The transport drivers' march on Parsons' October 25 stewards meeting took place not before, but five days after TGWU bureaucrats had taken the decision to prepare the victimisation of the Cowley 9.

The unexpected arrival of 100 workers in the stewards' meeting—as Parsons has since admitted—in fact played a major, even decisive, role in exposing Parsons in front of the stewards, and ensuring his defeat in the December election.

Had Parsons won that election, the victimisations would have been carried through before Christmas.

Courageous

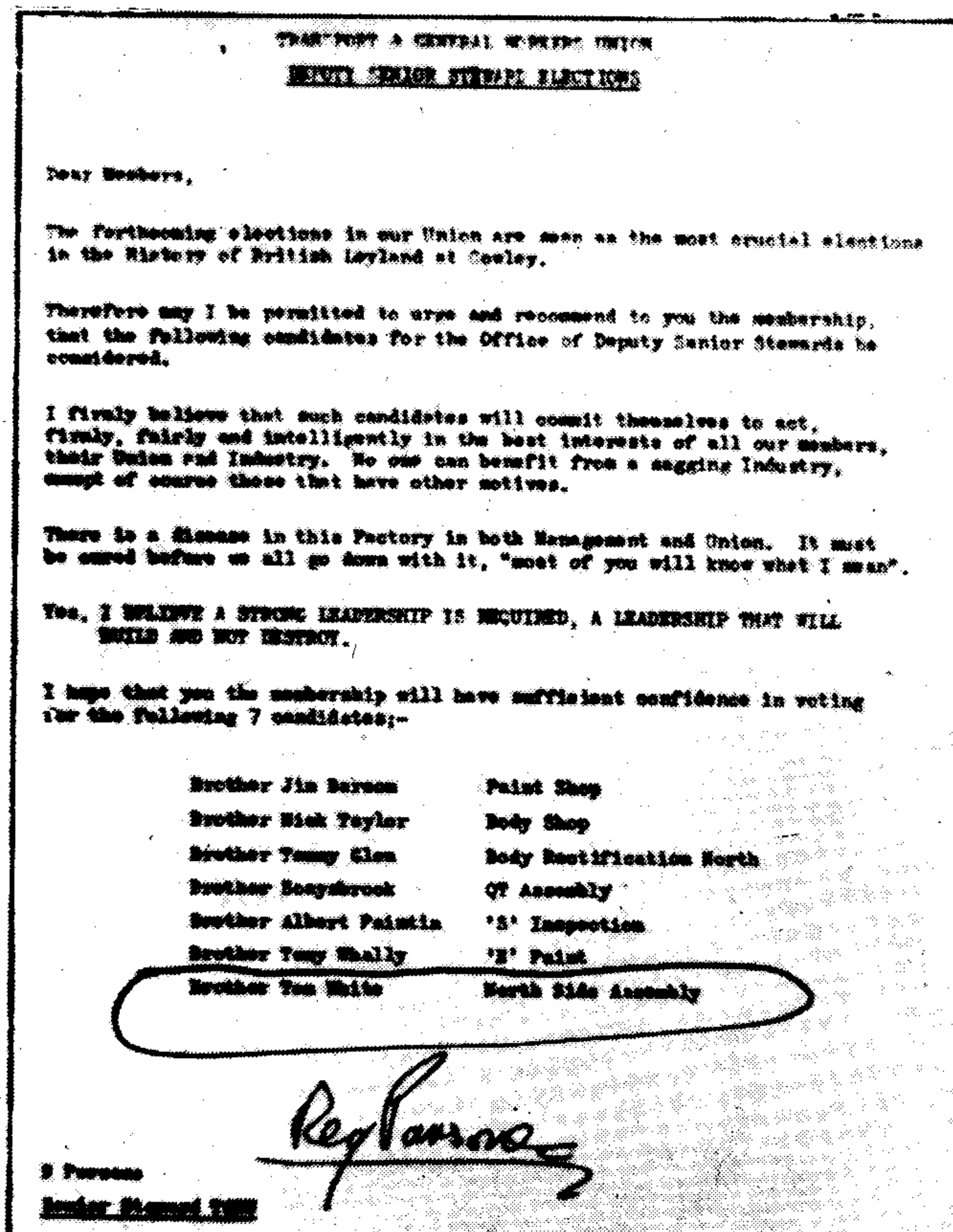
Far from exposing the Cowley 9 to victimisation, the courageous action of the Transport drivers was the biggest single factor in defending the Cowley 9—among whom is WRP member Tom White!

Healy and the WRP of course wish to minimise the important defeat inflicted on the TGWU bureaucracy by the left in the Cowley plant—the dominant force in which is the WSL.

In their anxiety to do so they in fact carried out the only "adventure" that has taken place in this struggle.

Charges

Distribution of internal union information is one of the charges raised against the Cowley 9. Fortunately the documents became widely circulated before this investigation got under way.



White's name on Parson's approved list for the December 1975 Deputy Convenor elections.

The Newsline chose to publish sections from the Leyland dossier which at that time was still confidential. This adventure led to an investigation by TGWU officials soon after the WRP article appeared—in an effort to implicate convenor Bob Fryer in the leak.

Popular vote

For Trotskyists to be elected by popular vote after years of unprecedented witch-hunting vindicates the fight for the programme pursued in the Cowley plant by the WSL and puts the squalid record of the WRP to shame.

Indeed if Healy wants to commission lengthy Newsline articles on Cowley he should begin by answering a few basic questions—such as why the WRP has failed to rebuild its forces in Cowley after driving out its cadre in 1974.

Another question arises when the Newsline article correctly describes "participation" as:

"This reactionary scheme deliberately introduced by the Labour government and sanctified by Industry Secretary Anthony Wedgwood Benn and the 'lefts' in 1976, has enabled the trade union officials in the big unions in Leyland to



Tom White

arrogate to themselves all manner of powers. It has given them a vested interest in containing militancy on the shop floors."

But Healy and WRP leaders well know that Tom White—their only member on the plant at the time when participation was introduced, went on to the participation committee—until he found it too unpopular to continue!

That early betrayal by White was an accurate foretaste of his complete-refusal to give a lead in any of the struggles that have taken place on the plant in the past four years. Why doesn't the WRP try accounting for White's record in the struggle for the Transitional Programme?

Defence campaign

Why are the WRP leaders unable to cite any struggle anywhere in which WRP members fought for transitional demands?

And, most obvious of all,

where does the WRP stand on the Cowley 9 defence campaign, which has attracted support from hundreds of militants and stewards right across the TGWU?

Why was it that the WRP opposed this campaign and the national conference it called, while proposing no alternative form of action to defend the Cowley 9?

Slanders

It is their inability to answer such questions honestly in front of their members and the working class that forces the WRP to its campaigns of slander and lies in the workers movement.

A further article next week will look at the WRP's opportunist policy on international questions—in particular Palestine and the Middle East.



The Vorster government

CAPITALISM KILLED BIKO



IN REVIEW

No. 46—*Steve Biko* by Hilda Bernstein, published by International Defence and Aid Fund at £1.50. Reviewed by Ann Evans

Steve Biko was the 46th person known to have died mysteriously in the hands of the South African security police since detention without trial was legalised in 1963.

All the other deaths in detention (including two which have occurred since Biko's death) happened quietly, with only the slightest mention in either the South African or European capitalist press.

Yet Biko's death reverberated throughout the liberal press, with calls for an inquiry coming even from an outraged *London Times*.

The South African authorities decided to hold a very public "inquest" into the circumstances surrounding Biko's death.

The inquiry was covered by the world and domestic press. This contrasts sharply with some of the "explanations" given for the deaths of the earlier prisoners.

Undisclosed

No. 46—*Steve Biko* includes a list of details of the other 45 dead prisoners. The only information on No. 13 (given to the South African parliament on 28 January 1969) was that on an undisclosed date:

"an unidentified man died at an undisclosed time of an undisclosed cause at an undisclosed place".

Others apparently "slipped on a piece of soap and fatally injured himself" or "slipped down the stairs".

The decision to hold such a public hearing in the case of Biko was partly an attempt by Kruger, Minister of Police and his accomplices to silence suggestions at home and abroad that the South African justice system wasn't all that it could be.

The inquest failed pathetically to convince even the capitalist press that the judicial process was fair or the Security Police humane and gentle.

Kruger had to forcibly silence domestic critics, first by expelling Biko's friend, liberal newspaper editor Donald Woods and by closing down the black paper *The World* and then by introducing stringent new

censorship laws. The authorities were able to use the inquest for another purpose however. It was a method of putting Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness movement, of which he was the founder and spiritual leader, on trial.

For the benefit of the conservative whites, it proved the Security Police and the



PHOTO: PHOTO: Mike Kahn, IFL

Donald Woods were well equipped to deal with "terrorists" like Biko.

After his death the police produced documents which "proved" that he had been inciting crowds to violence, and advocating acts of terrorism against whites—allegations which they had been quite unable even to try and substantiate during his life-time.

In fact, the image of Biko as "terrorist" could not be further from the truth.

The Black Consciousness movement had been founded on twin principles; firstly an assertion of black national identity which transcended tribal divisions and excluded whites; and secondly, the doctrine of non-violent resistance, derived from the movements of Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

These positions, however, as events have shown, are contradictory.

Bernstein makes the point that any assertion of black pride or unity amongst blacks is bound to hit violently against the institutions of apartheid.

The 1976 events in Soweto where the school students were inspired by the Black People's Convention (the organised expression of Black Consciousness) to refuse to go to schools where they were taught in the language of their oppressors, brought the force of the state, with all the violence of its institutionalised racism, down upon them.

Any peaceful protest in South Africa is immediately met with the violence of the state, and the teaching of "non-violence" can only be utopian.

Dangers

The South African regime recognised the dangers to its stability posed by the Black People's Convention, and therefore took steps to get rid of its most prominent leader.

Biko had been "banned" (a form of house arrest where the prisoner is unable to speak or be quoted publicly or to meet with more than one person at a time) since February 1973.

This did not prevent him from becoming an internationally respected figure.

As Bernstein points out in No. 46, his "non-violence" helped him to get the support of white liberals.

It was this support that made Biko's death different to that of the other murdered prisoners—he was known throughout the world.

The Biko inquest raises interesting questions about the role of the judiciary in a capitalist state—not just that of South Africa, but in liberal democracies as well.

South Africa represents a form of capitalism, stripped of the liberal facade of bourgeois democracy, where the institutions are clearly seen to be the instruments of white capitalist rule.

Account

It is obvious from reading Bernstein's account of the inquest, (which is largely composed of actual transcripts) that the whole charade was a means of legitimising the Security Police.

In a country like Britain, renowned for its equitable legal system the class nature of



Crowds at Biko's funeral

"justice" is obscured by the myth of "equality before the law".

Hilda Bernstein does not investigate the wider significance of the Biko inquest in this way.

Her account is aimed towards those liberals in Britain who will be morally outraged that the South African legal system is not like the good old British one.

Above the law

The most shocking aspect of the inquiry, both for Bernstein and the Biko family lawyer Sidney Kentridge, is the admission by Colonel Goosen, head of the interrogation team, that the Security Police are above the law. The cross examination went like this:

"Kentridge: What right did you have to keep a man in chains for 48 hours?"

Goosen: I have the full power to do it. Prisoners could attempt suicide or escape.

Kentridge: Let's have an honest answer—where did you get your

power? Goosen: It is my power. Kentridge: Are you people above the law?

Goosen: I have full powers to ensure a man's safety. Kentridge: I am asking for the statute.

Goosen: We don't work under statutes.

This admission, of something that was obvious already, is made much of in Bernstein's conclusions, as she analyses the role of the South African courts in controlling the police.

She points out with surprise that the legal system in South Africa is completely enmeshed in the repressive apparatus of the regime:

"The courts in South Africa are a part of that closed circuit of power that maintains white supremacy".

However, even while seeing this, she still assumes that an "independent judiciary" is a possibility, failing to realise that any judiciary is not independent but just one aspect of the institution of class rule.

She defines an "independent judiciary" as:

"... one that functions where the rule of law exists and protects human rights".

This misses the essential point that where it is necessary for capitalist rule to infringe human rights the judiciary will simply collaborate.

The introduction in Britain of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the prosecution of Aubrey Berry and Campbell and the papers that published the name of Colonel "B" all show that the courts are actually used to violate civil liberties and are in no sense independent

Deficiencies

No. 46—*Steve Biko* is fascinating reading despite its political deficiencies. It reveals the methods of the Security Police, as Biko's story begins to unfold in the answers—or non-answers—to the lawyers' questions.

It is also full of small points that reveal the callousness of the police and their determined violence—such as one Freudian slip where Goosen refers to his interrogation team as "my assaulting team".

It may not be essential reading for socialists—but if you have any acquaintances who think the South African regime "is not that bad" then refer them to this book.

'TROTSKYISTS' GREET SPANISH STALINIST

The Barcelona bull ring was overflowing on May 29 as over 25,000 people, mostly supporters of the Spanish Communist Party and its Catalan subsidiary the PSUC, attended a celebration of "Eurocommunism".

Apart from the leaders of the PSUC (including Gregorio Lopez Raimundo) the platform included enemy No. 1 of Leninism Santiago Carrillo, Dolores Ibarruri (President of the Spanish CP) and the General Secretary of the Italian CP, Enrico Berlinguer.

Record

It would be hard to find in half a dozen people such a concentrated record of counter-revolution and treachery towards the working class.

Lopez Raimundo, Ibarruri ("La Passionaria") and Carrillo were all leading members of the Spanish Communist Party when, in conjunction with the Soviet secret police, it waged a campaign of extermination against Trotskyists and against the POUM during

RALLY

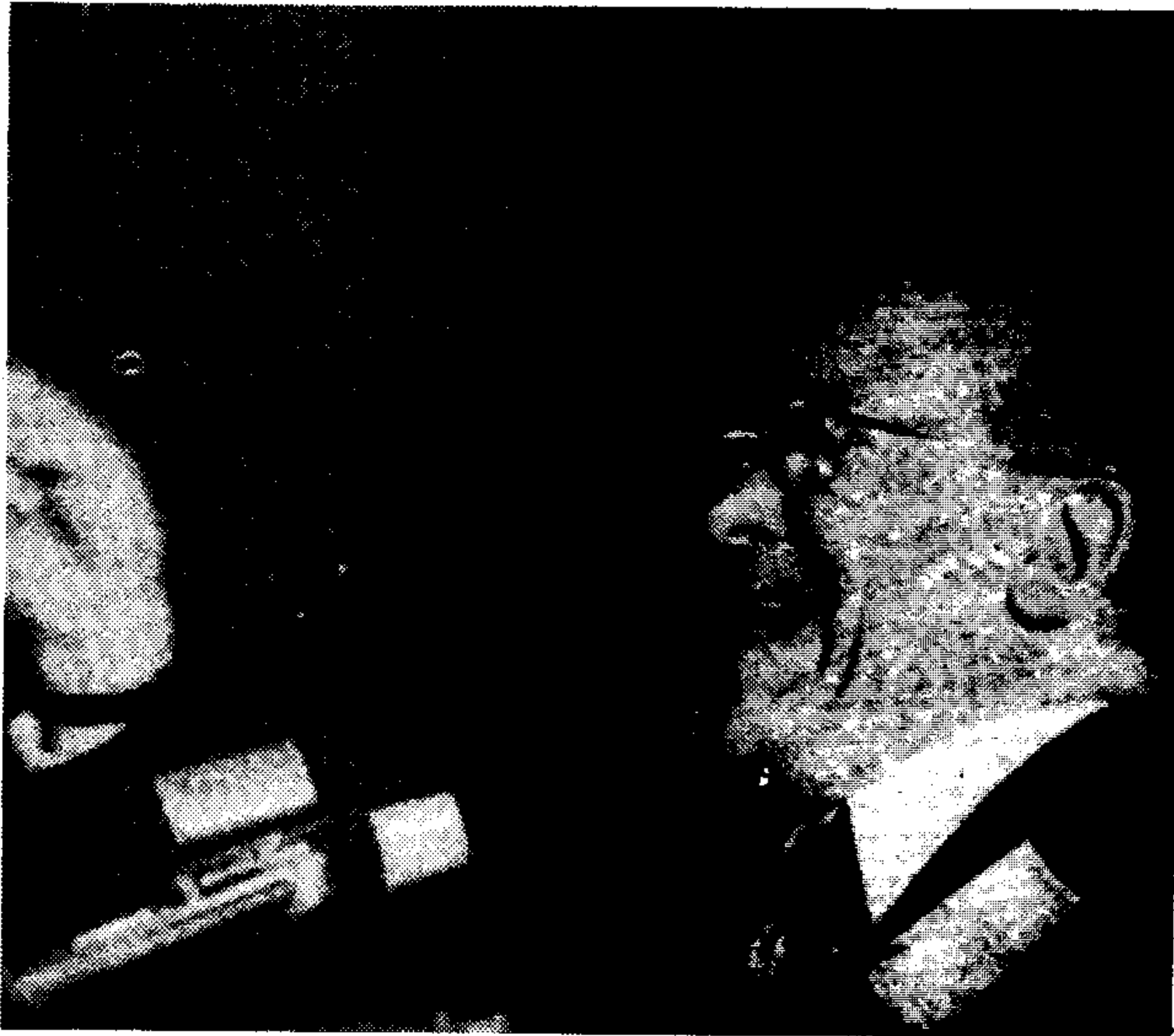
the Spanish Civil War.

In recent years they have presided over the Spanish CP's policy of systematic class collaboration, at first with the bourgeois "opposition" to Franco and now with the Francoists of the Union of the Democratic Centre in their new "democratic" disguise.

Every time that major confrontations have developed between the militant Spanish working class and the forces of capitalism represented by the francoist state, these leaders and their associates have been in the vanguard of efforts to demobilise the struggle before there was any real danger of a threat to capitalist rule.

Faithful

The purpose of the Barcelona rally was a gathering of the "Eurocommunist" faithful at which Berlinguer, dolefully, and Carrillo, more aggressively than



Carrillo

usual, could do their best to show that all their collaboration in the end was part of a strategy to build socialism.

Nothing they said was any surprise even if it is always a shock to hear such naked justifications of class treachery from those who profess to lead the working class.

Berlinguer lamented the death of Italian capitalist politician Moro and justified his party's support for

strong state measures against "terrorism" in Italy.

He expressed pride in having become part of the recognised parliamentary majority.

Supported

And he made it clear that he supported Carrillo's concept of "Eurocommunism".

"Eurocommunism", said Carrillo, was definitely not an attempt to form a new

international.

Each Communist Party had to plough its own furrow.

Carrillo himself had just come from one of his most shameful efforts to date to cement his alliance with his "own" bourgeoisie.

The previous day he had participated in the annual homage to the flag (the Francoist monarchist flag) and the armed forces (the Francoist armed forces).

This he justified by saying that it was important that the people and the army should be as close as possible because the army are "our sons and our fathers".

Dead Tory

Carrillo joined in the lamentation for dead Tory Aldo Moro and equated the Red Brigades with fascism.

He justified the Moncloa pact which, he said, would have solved the economic crisis if the agreements had been followed by the government and by the PSOE.

The only way out of unemployment was a policy of "consensus".

But the CP would not agree to extend the Moncloa agreements for a further year. What was needed was a serious, agreed, economic plan for three years.

And for that Spain required, said Carrillo, what Catalonia already had in embryo, a government of "democratic concentration" which for him extends to the hard line Francoist Popular Alliance.

The 'enemies of democracy' had been reduced to a tiny handful.

The great "Eurocommunist" rally of Barcelona therefore had an unambiguously and predictably reactionary objective.

Sister to IMG

That, however, was not the analysis of Spanish "Trotskyists" of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR).

A sister party of the British International Marxist Group, the LCR is probably the largest national section of the "United" Secretariat of the Fourth International and certainly one of its two most important sections in Europe.

The LCR's attitude to the rally was a continuation of the slavish adaptation to Carrillo which it demonstrated in its message to and comments on the recent CP Congress (See *Socialist Press* 100).

These "Trotskyists" did not denounce the politically reactionary nature of the rally.

Message

They sent a message of support which was ironically announced by Gregorio Lopez Raimundo, an active member in the 1930s of the party which eagerly and bloodily persecuted those Trotskyists whom the LCR regards as its predecessors.

Such an action as the LCR's can do nothing but bring comfort to the Stalinist leaders.

From Enrique Alvares in Barcelona

Gay rights and political revolution

Letter and reply



Stalin reversed Bolshevik measures to legalise homosexuality

Dear SP,
On Wednesday 10 May, your newspaper had an article 'Our policies for gay rights', which detailed the oppressive backlash towards gay rights in capitalist countries.

However, it forgot to mention that in the USA, we are allowed to fight back against the oppressive attitudes of Anita Bryant. In this country, despite attacks and restrictions, we can still fight Mary Whitehouse and the national

press. The same also goes for Canada.

But in so-called Marxist/Socialist Societies we are not even allowed to exist.

In Russia, anybody advocating gay rights would be put in a mental ward. In Cuba, Castro is actually enforcing the measures Anita Bryant would like taken against gays. China still uses the old left-wing bullshit of being a perfect Marxist state in which it has rid itself of the decadent capitalist disease known as homosexuality.

So just come off it! Your article is just a devious means of using gay rights to attack—quite rightly—political fascism in capitalist countries. But what about the sexual fascism practised in the 'socialist' countries I have named?

When are you going to write an article on the totally non-existent gay rights in Cuba, Russia and China?

As a member of the gay community I would like the whole truth about gay oppression, not convenient selections to hide the back-handed game Socialist countries have also played.

Yours sincerely

Norton Evans

(We apologise for any errors in transcription, but the handwriting of this letter proved difficult to decipher.)

Socialist Press replies;

Before taking up the main point of this letter, we have to clear up the areas of confusion which its writer has created.

Our article was not in any sense a 'devious means' of attacking 'political fascism'. In a 'straight-forward' way, the article set out our policy on how to fight for gay rights.

More importantly, far from placing this fight solely in the context of fascism, we concentrated on the struggle for gay rights within bourgeois democracies.

Fascist regimes have undertaken what has probably been the most vicious repression and the most ruthless persecution of homosexuality in recent centuries.

Not fascist

But as the article showed, these tendencies have been strongly present in even the most 'democratic' of bourgeois states, and are undoubtedly on the increase at present.

For all their violently reactionary positions, neither Mary Whitehouse nor Anita Bryant is a fascist. This is not just a verbal quibble—if we do not correctly analyse the forces we are fighting, then our own strength is weakened. In the same way, we

reject the description of the oppression of homosexuality in Cuba, China and the Soviet Union as 'sexual fascism'.

Before we can take up the fight against this oppression, we need to understand why it is imposed by the Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed workers' states.

Abolished

In presenting the skeleton of such an analysis, we have to begin in December 1917, when the Bolsheviks abolished those sections of the Tsarist penal code dealing with homosexuality, along with all other legal restrictions on free and equal sexual relations.

But this advance was reversed, along with many other secondary gains of the October Revolution, as the Stalinist bureaucracy consolidated its hold.

In March 1934, a new federal statute was introduced against homosexuality, now characterised as an aspect of the 'degeneracy of the fascist bourgeoisie'.

The penalties of this law were far more severe than those of the Tsarist legislation, and as a crime, homosexuality was now placed on a level previously reserved for major crimes against the state.

This attack, and the mass arrests of gays which

preceded it, cannot be seen in isolation.

They formed a part of Stalin's moves to restore the family, and this, as Trotsky analysed in *The Revolution Betrayed* was an essential area of the bureaucracy's strategy.

The family not only acted as the major agent in the oppression of women. It also served to provide the subjection of youth, and faithfully preserved the image of a hierarchical society.

In these, and many other ways, the family could assist Stalin to destroy workers' democracy in the Soviet Union.

The progressive legislation of the October Revolution was either 'revised' in a reactionary direction, or negated altogether. Since that period, the oppression of women and gay men has been continued with varying intensity in the Soviet Union and the other deformed workers states which were to develop.

Especially in Cuba, attacks on gays have certainly rivalled the atrocities committed by the fascist dictatorships.

It is clearly possible that the fight for gay rights could become a significant part of the struggle against the bureaucratic betrayals of socialist revolution.

But the specific form of this fight will be

conditioned by the major direction of political struggle in these countries.

The task of revolutionaries in the deformed workers' states is the fight to develop a political revolution to overthrow the parasitic bureaucracy.

This task is very different in content from the struggle for social revolution in the capitalist states, which means that the fight for gay rights will not follow an identical pattern in Britain and China.

But gays are not faced with the option of either democratic rights in bourgeois society, or repression in the deformed workers' states.

Although concessions can be wrung from the bourgeoisie, and need to be fought for, capitalism is congenitally incapable of ending sexual oppression.

The family can be abolished and replaced only in the course of the development towards socialism, and the material basis for that historic advance can be achieved only by the revolutionary overturning of capitalist property relations.

The Workers Socialist League gives its full support to the fight for gay rights as an integral component of the proletariat's struggle for socialist revolution, both against imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracies.



Cuban leader Castro

NALGO pay debacle

Most union conferences are noted for their clarion calls for a better life and good things for all.

The NATFHE conference for teachers in further and higher education in Bournemouth was no exception.

Delegates dragged themselves away from the beach, hotel swimming pools and 5-course meals to study an order-paper filled with good intent.

Few in number however were resolutions which made demands on the union to take action.

Yet in the salary debate the Executive received some rebuff and a commitment was made to action.

Conference had again rejected incomes policy, which was safe enough; it had done so yet the wages settlement of 9.6% was comfortably within government norms, at the expense principally of those at the bottom of the salary scales.

Not content with the same "much regretted" sell-out this year, Conference resolved that an interim claim should be submitted (thus breaking the 12-month rule).

Amendments to accept incomes policy and productivity dealing were overwhelmingly rejected.

The Executive were not happy with this and were less happy with the resolution passed calling for industrial action to back up the demand for a merger of pay scales.

The main motion passed on wages demanded a return to real levels of income as of 1975.

Nobody made the point that only by a sliding scale of wages keeping pace with real inflation would this be achieved.

The resolution from outer London was couched so obscurely and made no reference to the need for wages to be permanently compensated against inflation as determined by workers' and housewives' committees.

The second major issue of Conference was the anti-racialist debate. The main motion from East Anglia, Western and Outer London called for a campaign by the union against quota systems for overseas students, immigration controls and the use of college premises by racialist organisations.

Amendments from the National Executive and others aimed to weaken the motion by focussing always on the use of the courts to stop fascist activity by "strengthening of 1976 race relations act"—anything rather than for the union itself to act!

Only policies tackling the capitalist crisis which provide the breeding ground of fascism coupled with working class defence against fascist attack strengthen the working class and not the state.



NALGO leader Drain

'broad left' opposition built by the Stalinists is incapable of leading the members against the bureaucracy.

Revolutionaries and militants in NALGO must recognise that the joint opposition built since the Hamilton House conference last February has actually headed them off from implanting a clear programme.

The final demonstration of this is the way that the 50 sponsoring branches were prohibited from strengthening the main resolution by moving amendments.

The task of building an independent proletarian opposition on a Trotskyist programme in NALGO can not be put off any longer.

The debacle of the June 2nd NALGO special pay conference points up not only the bankruptcy of the present leadership but also the complete inability of the opposition groupings (dominated by Stalinists and the SWP) to mount any serious challenge to them.

Following a meeting in London last February, which launched the campaign, 56 branches sent in requisitioning resolutions for the special conference.

This in itself shows that the determination of NALGO members to defend living standards has not faded away.

This resolution on which the campaign was based was drawn up by the CP-dominated branches in mid-Scotland.

No clear demand

While correctly opposing pay control in the public sector through cash limits and direct intervention, and also rejecting the Basnett plans for permanent trade union collaboration with Government pay limits, it failed to put forward a clear demand of its own as to the level of wage claim that should be made.

It called instead for NALGO negotiators to ignore the 10% rule, and to settle for not less than the current rate of increase in the private sector.

Pay claims by comparison rather than by independent action are of course one of the main strands of the Basnett plan.

An even more significant weakness in the main resolution was its failure to demand industrial action to achieve its objectives.

Weakness

General Secretary Drain and the rest of the NEC were not slow to seize on this weakness, claiming that the movers believed, as he did, that the members would not be willing to take action over pay.

This line of argument in fact hits the Stalinists at their weakest point. They of course are dedicated to holding back exactly the kind of action necessary to smash wage control.

They could not therefore argue that the membership would fight, unless they went on to explain why they had not called for that fight to be organised.

Even if there were to be industrial action, said Bill Gill, it could not be won. He went on to attack the firemen, teachers and others for taking or threatening industrial action 'against the public'.

The downward trajectory was to continue. A particu-

larly cynical rationalisation was peddled by right wing speakers from the floor, to the effect that the reductions in living standards for British workers had been to the benefit of workers in the 'third world' and should be supported by 'true socialists'.

The coup de grace was prepared by Mike Blick of Camden branch.

He argued that it would have no effect to pass resolutions on pay claims because the union's negotiators could deliver nothing that the employers would not grant.

As if on cue, a stooge

from the audience moved the question be put and the NEC's wrecking amendment was carried by 350,000 to 188,000.

Indignity was heaped on defeat when the NEC demolished a call that would bind them not to settle for less than 10% and consolidation.

After making the usual plea of the bankrupt bureaucrat ('we must have leeway to negotiate'), Jack Bradburn, the chairman of Local Government Committee assured the conference that he would only accept a reasonable offer.

The main lesson to be learned is that the kind of

Garners' - put officials on the spot!

During one four hour spell of the picketing on Garners Haymarket restaurant last weekend, no more than two determined scabs crossed the line to go in.

Morale among strikers remains high, and the response to the picketing by potential customers has improved, with devastating impact on Garners finances and the pay packets of the scab workforce, as the strike enters its 20th week.

Conference

Thursday June 22nd will see a recall conference to discuss supporting action for the recognition struggle - to which labour movement organisations are invited to send 3 delegates.

The conference has been sponsored by SE Region TUC, the Greater London Association of Trades Councils, TGWU Region 1 Committee, and the Garners Strike Committee, and will be held at 7.30 pm at Transport House, Smith Square.

But the union bureaucrats have shown no enthusiasm for mobilising delegations to attend the conference, which they know could provide a basis to extend the fight for strike committee demands of secondary blacking of Garners suppliers, and £36 per week strike pay.

Sabotage

Region 1 bureaucrats who have spent the 8 weeks since the first conference on Garners sabotaging and evading these demands are not keen to be called upon to account for their actions.

It is for this reason that the WSL says it is essential for the strike committee to demand that these "leaders" - National Organiser Ron Todd, Executive member

Brian Nicholson, Catering Officer George Abraham and SE Region TUC secretary Jack Dromey appear on the platform to answer criticism of their conduct in the dispute.

The strike committee

must ensure the most representative and substantial turn-out - and circulate all TGWU branches calling on them to send delegates.

Those who argue against such a course do no more than protect the bureau-

crats whose stranglehold on the strike and refusal to implement full secondary blacking has allowed the dispute to drag on for 19 weeks.

TROTSKYISM TODAY ★

STILL AVAILABLE

"TROTSKYISM TODAY"

Quarterly theoretical journal of the Workers Socialist League.

Issue No. 2 includes article on the history of the Fourth International.

Available from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

Price 50p plus 12p p&p

SOCIALIST PRESS ★

5 issues	£1.10
10 issues	£2.20
25 issues	£5.50
50 issues	£10.00

I would like to receive ... issues. I enclose the sum of £.....

Name

Address

Send to: Socialist Press, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

Subscribe!

The Workers Socialist League

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to construct a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally and for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL fights at every step against the existing leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party - now firmly harnessed to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party in an unspoken coalition arrangement.

Against their policies of class collaboration we put forward instead a programme which points to the independent class interests of the working class, its need to organise independently to overthrow capitalism, destroy its repressive state machinery and establish a socialist planned economy.

Only in this way can workers resolve today's problems of tumbling living standards, mass unemployment, slashed social services, racial, national and sexual oppression.

For more details on the WSL and its work, fill in the form below.

Name

Address

Trade Union/Occupation

Send to WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

INDUSTRIAL NEWS



Part of the huge stockpile of vehicles at Oakley airfield

A piece of trade union history has been written by Oxford car delivery drivers.

After being sacked for a year (31 May 1977-31 May 1978) their convenor, Brian Preston, returned to work last Monday fully reinstated following an unprecedented settlement.

The settlement terms include full reinstatement as convenor, a year's back pay, his £297 solicitor's bill paid by the management, three weeks paid holiday for the year he was sacked and £25 out of pocket expenses for such things as telephone calls he has had to make in connection with his sacking.

Three week strike

The settlement resulted from the three week strike last month of all 350 Oxford area car transporter drivers.

The strike had brought Leyland's Cowley Complex to the brink of closure and caused the stockpiling of 30,000 cars on airfields around Oxfordshire.

It ended with the inter-

Convenor reinstated one year later

vention of acting TGWU Region 5 Secretary Bill Lapworth who intervened at the request of strikers because of the unflinchingly pro-management position maintained by the TGWU local witch-hunter, District Secretary, David Buckle.

Lapworth persuaded the drivers at a mass meeting to return to work and accept arbitration, giving the impression that reinstatement would be a near certainty from the arbitration process.

In fact arbitration never took place.

Wrangling over the form it should take resulted in the possibility of the resum-

ption of the strike, and management hastily settled direct with the union.

With 30,000 cars still on the airfields following the strike (the available transporter fleet is only capable of clearing Cowley's 5,000 per week production, and is unable to clear the backlog) the effects on Leyland if a further strike had occurred would have been catastrophic.

In many ways the course of the strike over the past year has been as unique as its conclusion, taking more the form of a battle against David Buckle than a fight against Cartransport management.

Preston was victimised

following allegations that he defrauded Cartransport management of a day's pay whilst he was conducting wage negotiations in London.

After a meeting with Buckle, management claimed that Preston had received money from both the company and the TGWU for that day.

In fact the total money he received was less than he would have earned for a normal day's work.

The first strike in his defence, by Cartransport workers, only lasted 10 days in May 1977.

Buckle then obtained the decision to return to work by means of a secret ballot—having at first lost the vote on a show of hands.

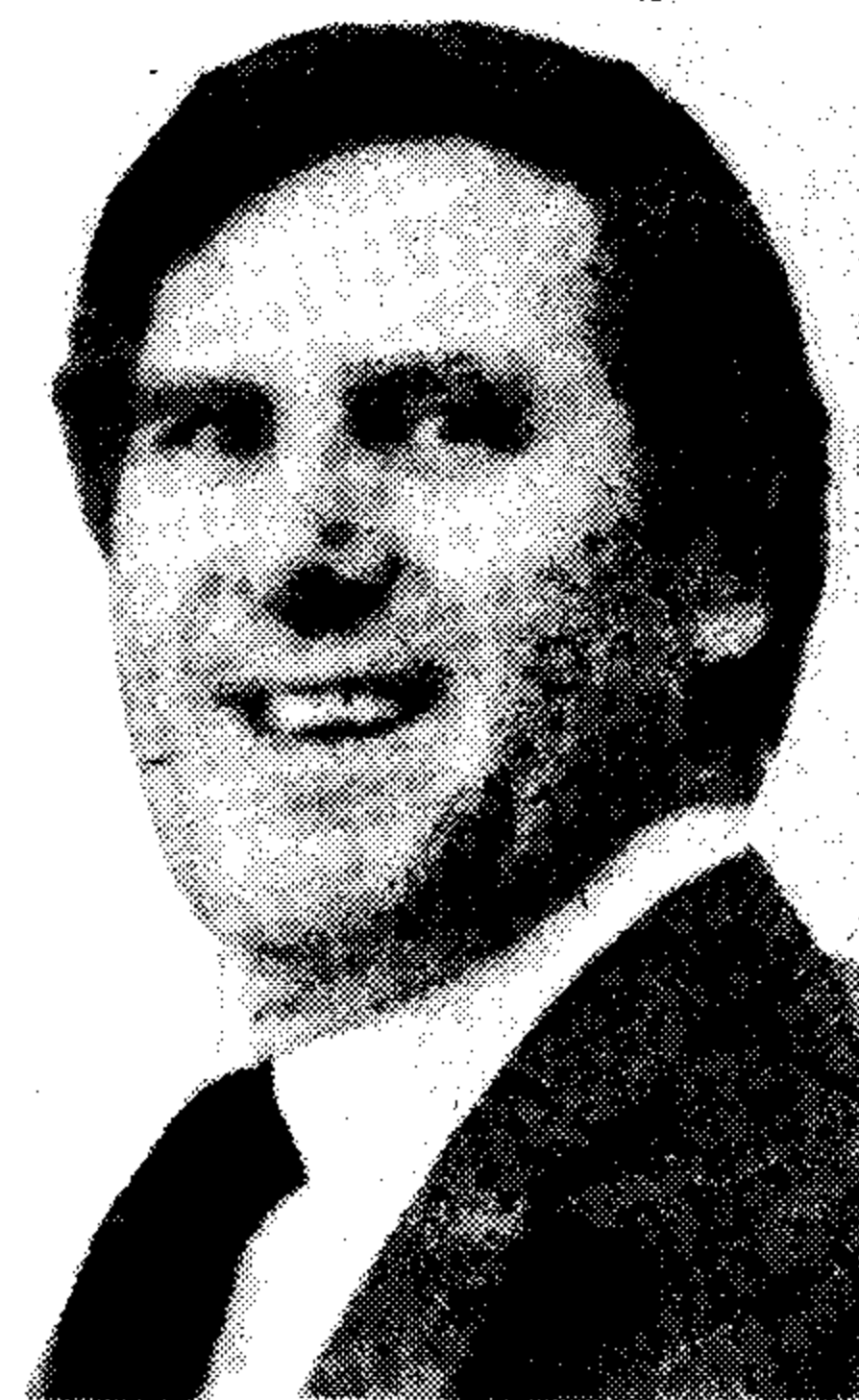
When the full branch (which covers workers from all 12 Oxford car delivery companies) met, Buckle successfully headed off calls for strike action.

Instead, the meeting accepted the Company's threat to prosecute Preston, declaring that if the prosecution was unsuccessful, the branch would take action.

Buckle, who is not just a JP but also chairman of the local magistrates, utilised this decision to the full.

No prosecution ever took place; but with amazing regularity a letter suggesting a date for a court hearing would arrive from management (via Buckle) each time the branch met to consider further action in defence of Preston.

Thus on June 16, 1977 (just as a meeting was taking place) management sent a letter saying the following:



Buckle

"Although we have so far not taken court proceedings against Mr. Preston we are advised that we have firm grounds to take such action".

On June 28—again as pressure was mounting from the drivers—a further letter:

"I felt I should advise you that as a consequence of the branch decision regarding the dismissal of Mr. Preston we have today commenced legal proceedings against our ex-employee".

On July 14: "I regret to inform you that in fact a writ for prosecution has been issued".

And on July 28, as the Cartransport drivers were to meet to discuss further strike action another letter arrived!

"We have now instituted legal proceedings".

Each of these letters was false. They were simply designed to cash in to the full on the decision of the branch.

At the end of September again as the branch was considering action, it was announced that a police investigation would be undertaken by the CID.

During this investigation, two of the managers who sacked Preston were themselves dismissed when a fraud squad investigation was instituted into discrepancies involving £2 million!

Now the possibility of a prosecution by Cartransport had evaporated the argument Buckle used when the branch pressed for action had switched to: "don't take action whilst a police investigation is in progress".

The "police investigation" actually lasted for seven months—into a supposed fraud involving at most £8.40!

The investigation eventually concluded on April 18, 1978 (presumably it could not go on forever). The result was that "no proceedings would be instituted."

The response of the branch was to call a mass meeting which decided to take indefinite strike action until Preston was reinstated and fully reimbursed.

Buckle turned up at the second mass meeting four days later.

Buckle told the meeting that in his opinion the decision not to prosecute did not necessarily mean that Preston was innocent!

"It could be that they had insufficient evidence to proceed", said this chairman of Oxford magistrates.

Buckle also told the meeting he could not support the strike because Preston "was not lily-white in the matter".

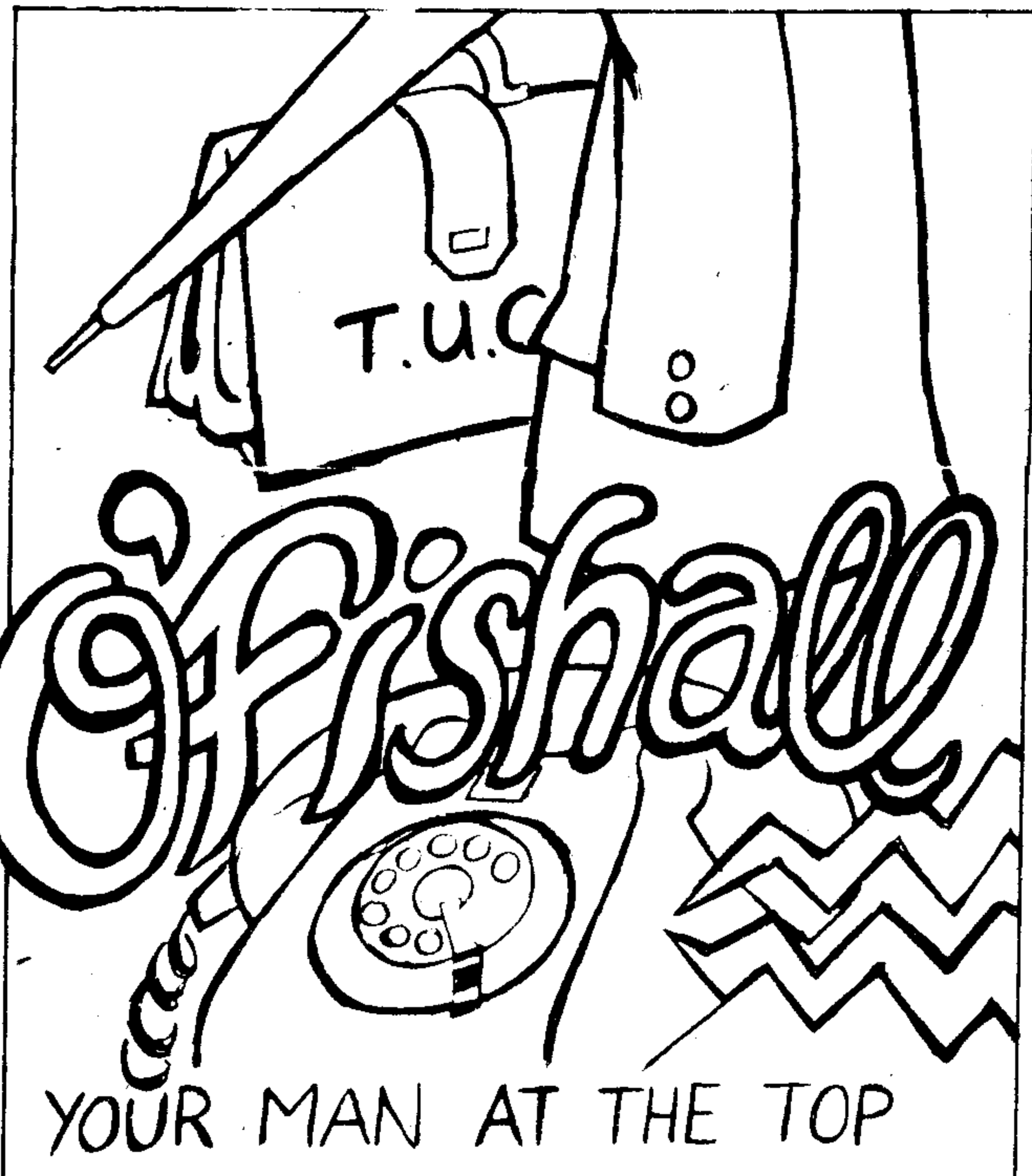
The meeting, however, flatly rejected his pleading to return to work and voted to continue the action.

These statements, and the previous 12 months history led to Buckle completely losing control of the next mass meeting. This is what led to the intervention of the TGWU Regional officials.

The reinstatement of a sacked convenor is difficult under the best conditions, but to achieve it after a year on the stones is rare indeed.

The victory is a tribute to the magnificent strength of the transporter drivers who refused to allow the passage of time and the treachery of Buckle to wear down their determination to support Preston.

And in striking a blow in defence of trade unionism in the car transport industry in Oxford they have struck a similar blow against the reactionary witch-hunting officials in the TGWU District Office; which can only strengthen the fight by all trade unionists in Cowley.



THE C.P. ARE EASY ENOUGH TO HANDLE...JUST LOOK AT THE LAST SPECIAL PAY CONFERENCE!..



SOCIALIST PRESS



STEP UP FIGHT TO OUST LABOUR'S TORIES

Every opportunist, every defender of this government's record of strike-breaking, wage-cutting and social service wrecking will attempt to portray the increased Labour vote in the Hamilton by-election as a vote for their reactionary policies. But they will be drastically and dangerously wrong.

The support for Labour came in spite of and in no way because of Labour's record in attacking the working class.

It came as a class response by workers, seeking to defend their rights and living standards through their traditional organisations.

And it highlights the necessity to step up the fight in every area to drive out those sections of the Labour leadership that defend the anti-socialist Lib-Lab coalition and who stand openly aligned with the interests of the employers and British imperialism against the requirements of the working class.

Abstentions

Unless this fight is taken up, thousands of workers who have been driven into demoralisation and apathy by four years of Labour betrayals will abstain at the next General Election—opening the door for a further reactionary Lib-Lab coalition, or a Tory victory.

There is no doubt that a firm fight taken up now within the trade union and Labour movement for a socialist programme on which to fight the next election would attract the best and most class conscious sections of workers.

The swing from the Scottish Nationalists to Labour at Hamilton marks an increasing awareness within the working class of the danger of the return of a Tory government with policies even to the right of those pursued by the hated Heath cabinet.

Ally with Tories

The Scottish Nationalists (who held a party convention during the actual campaign at Hamilton, and whose leading spokesman Margo MacDonald was the candidate) were clearly and correctly identified by workers as a capitalist party which would ally with Tory attacks on jobs, living standards, social services and the nationalised industries.

But while these questions are easily understood, the task remains of establishing an alternative to the capitalist policies pursued by successive Labour governments.

However much workers hate and despite Thatcher, the bitter memories of Labour's military

scabbing on the firemen's strike: the hospital closures, the education cuts, the continuing huge unemployment figures, the handouts to private capitalists, the historic cuts in workers' living standards, the immigration laws, and the vicious repression of the Irish working class, all stand as obstacles to a Labour victory.

The coalitionist Callaghan leadership that has imposed these policies on the labour movement must be driven from office. We call on all readers and supporters to join with us in the fight for trade union branches and Labour GMCs to take steps to ensure that the Labour Party conference is recalled prior to the General Election, and the Callaghan Healey coalition cabinet removed.

Demand

To any 'lefts' that show the slightest sign of such a fight we extend both critical support and the demand that they press further and fight for a socialist programme based on the

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report



Healey

abolition of wage controls, restoration of all cuts in social service spending, a crash programme of public works to create new jobs, and nationalisation of the banks and major industries.

In this way we can demonstrate that the 'lefts' are incapable of seriously challenging the right wing or solving in Parliamentary fashion the problems faced by the working class.

In these fights within the mass organisations of the working class important steps can be taken towards the construction of the revolutionary party that alone can resolve the problems of the working class through the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a planned, socialist economy.

Ford pay fraud

Ford stewards from throughout the combine met on Sunday 4 June and formulated a claim to be put to union officials for their October review.

Last year's claim was used by Moss Evans to get off the hook on wage control, and it is clear that this year's claim is also of the same nature.



Evans

Last year Moss Evans declared that he was going to break the 10% limit at Fords.

When the stewards formulated an inadequate

15% claim with fringe benefits, Evans was able to preserve a 'left' face by getting a deal marginally above the 10% norm (12%) and saying at the same time he had got near the original claim.

Last year's claim contained a cost of living clause, but the stewards took up no fight for it—allowing Evans to drop it when the company offered cost of living clauses in exchange for pay reviews only every two years.

This year the stewards are putting forward a claim of £20 and a 35-hour week.

Of course if this were won it would smash any government policy for phase four, but once again the stewards are making the mistake of linking their claim to Fords gigantic profits.

Membership

The financial state of the company must play no part in formulating workers pay claims; it is the financial state of the membership that matters.

A 12% deal last year still left Ford workers far behind their 1974 pay levels in terms of the real value of

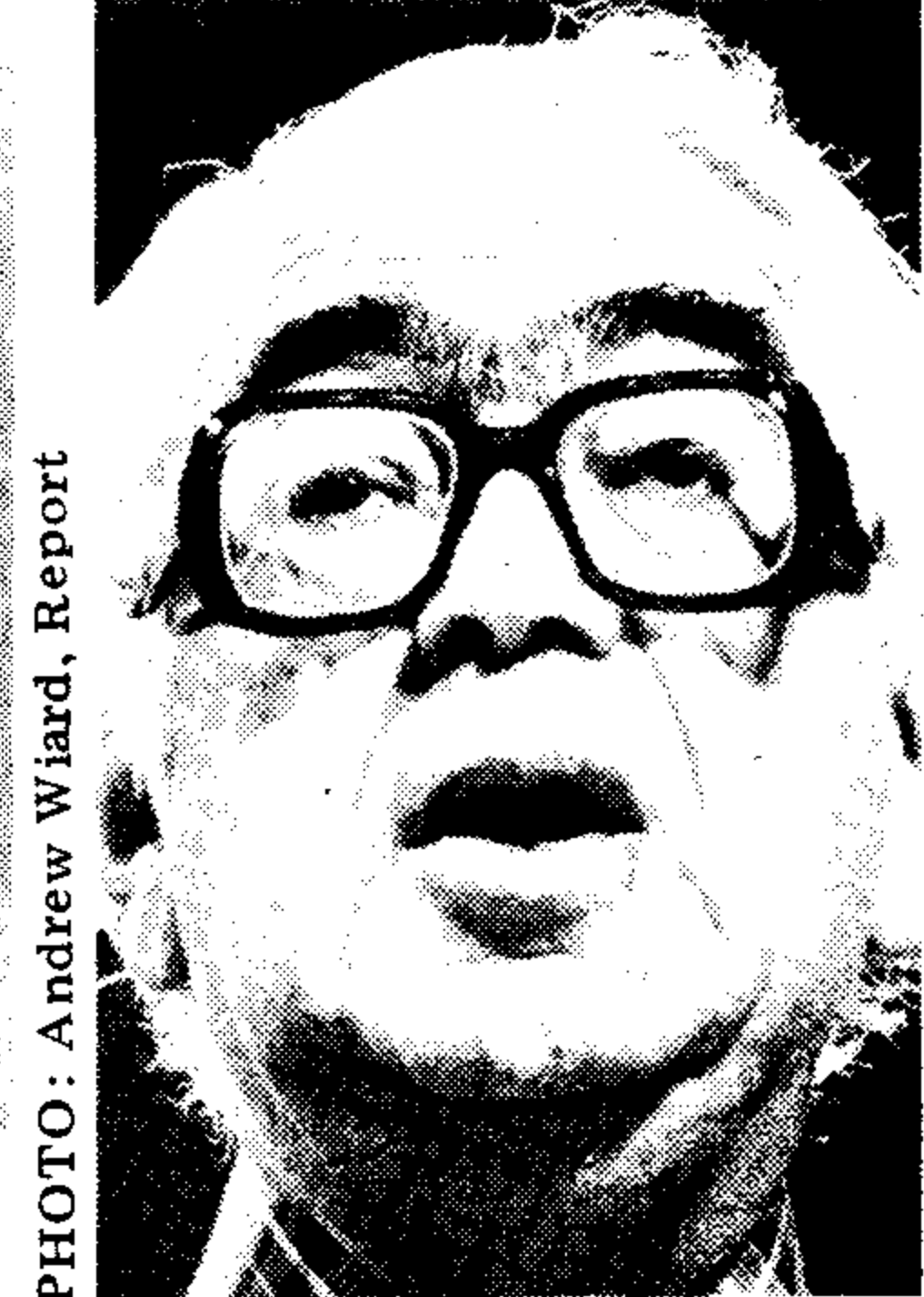


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Mikardo

Another SWP march

The Socialist Workers Party have launched yet another right to work march which started in Liverpool on 30 May and is due to arrive in London on 13 June.

It is clear that yet again

their wages.

So this year's claim should have central to it catching up demands and a cost of living clause based on inflation figures worked out by elected committees of workers and housewives.

The claim should restore what Ford workers have lost since 1974 and nothing less—with the additional demand of a 35-hour week.

SAVE HOSTEL

ST. MONICA'S Hostel for homeless women and children has been occupied since 1 May to prevent its closure.

The occupation is demanding that the hostel is taken over by the Housing Department for the use of homeless women and children; that staffing levels are increased and that NALGO rates are paid; an end to the policy of forcing homeless people into "hard to let" housing, i.e. slums.

In order to win the demands of this occupation, it is vital to extend the fight into the trade union movement and Labour Party to force a commitment to defend the occupation against all the manoeuvres of the city council.

ONLY STRIKES CAN SAVE EGA!

The fight to save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital is beginning to gain impetus in the trade union movement while the dangers to the threatened hospital become more acute.

Last week a team of plain-clothes policemen were seen looking round the hospital, inspecting all exits and windows, perhaps in preparation for another Hounslow-type raid.

A lead in the fight against closure has been given by EGA workers and stewards themselves.

In a meeting last Wednesday, members of NUPE, COHSE, ASTMS and NALGO in the hospital pledged to stop the removal of patients and equipment.

The determination of workers to fight for the EGA was reflected at a conference of all NUPE branch secretaries and chairmen in the London Division on Monday evening.

The resolution proposed by the Divisional Council and adopted by the conference included the call for "rolling one day strike action" through London boroughs in defence of the

EGA. However, many speakers from the floor including representatives of the threatened St. Nicholas Hospital, St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the Divisional Council itself spoke of the inadequacy of one-day strikes and argued for indefinite strike action as the only way to save the EGA.

Despite the militancy shown from the floor a member of the NUPE NEC calmly announced from the platform that it was "very unlikely" that the EC would give support to strike action.

The strongest attack on this scandalous betrayal came from Arthur Churchley, an EGA steward, who stated that now he was expected to go back to his members and inform them that the EC was not prepared to support strike action.

If this was truly the attitude of the NEC, he went on, then it showed that their opinion of the 2-year struggle by EGA workers was that it was a complete waste of time.

An exemplary stand has been taken by COHSE members in the London Emergency Bed Service.

On the same day that Ennals announced the July 21 closure date, the EBS were instructed not to refer any more patients to the EGA—despite the huge shortage of available hospital beds.

Despite the pressure of threatened disciplinary charges, and with no support whatsoever from the COHSE leadership, the EBS branch have defiantly continued to refer patients to the EGA.

COHSE branches must pass resolutions supporting this action and call on the leadership to give full backing to these members.

On June 10, EGA stewards have called a conference of stewards in the London Health Service, supported by CLASH (Confederation of London Area Stewards in the Health Service).

At this conference a decisive call must be put out for strike action in London hospitals in defence of the EGA, and this call should be linked to clear demands that the Union leadership takes the leading role in this action, so that the strength of the Trade Union Movement is fully mobilised in defence of the EGA and the Health Service generally.

FUND

A much better week for the Special Fund with a total of £101.03 collected last week.

This brings us over the £1,000 mark to a present total of £1062.20 towards our target of £2,000.

We have only seven weeks to raise the outstanding £950 so not a moment should be lost in organising fund raising activities to ensure that we reach our target by the last week in July.

All donations should be sent to:
Socialist Press Special Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

London

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

A Public Meeting to launch the book 'Communists' Against Revolution

Speakers include Adam Westoby and Socialist Press editor John Lister.
Thursday 15 June
Earl Russell
Pancras Road, Kings X
7.30pm