



As Zionists blitz camps

DEFEND PALESTINIAN REVOLUTIONARIES!



Palestinians protesting in Beirut against the Sadat peace talks

The savage racialism and the utterly reactionary nature of the predatory Zionist regime in Israel has been clearly revealed by its 14 March invasion of Southern Lebanon, which marks a sharp new turn in the Middle East situation.

The full-scale invasion is said by the capitalist and pro-Zionist press to be in 'retaliation' for the Fatah commando raid on 11 March which killed 32 Israelis and 7 commandos.

The 'retaliation' story however is obviously nothing but the flimsiest pretext for a huge military operation which has been planned long in advance.

Detonator

As the mission began, Israeli defence minister Weizman was quite open about its real motive.

"It is true that the carnage of 11 March served as a

detonator, but an object is to mop up for once and for all the concentrations of terrorists in the South Lebanon who had received important reinforcements in recent months".

The Zionists need to settle matters in Southern Lebanon because this is the only area now left from which the Palestinian liberation forces can operate next to their borders.

Fascist forces

The Zionists' friends in the Arab world, like Hussein in Jordan and Sadat in Egypt have long since prevented Palestinians from using their territory as a base, after bloody battles and many protests.

The Lebanese government, aided by fascist forces and Syrian troops also tried to drive out the Palestinians last year in the most bloody civil war of all.

However, with the support of Lebanese socialists, the Palestinians have remained in South Lebanon, a thorn in the flesh of the Zionists.

Even before the commando raid tensions had been building up in South Lebanon, with fascist and right wing Lebanese militia men crossing the border into Israel, returning with artillery and bombarding Palestinian refugee camps.

Invasion

This set the scene for last Tuesday's full-scale invasion by 30,000 heavily armed troops, huge amounts of artillery and the most sophisticated fighter planes dropping cluster bombs on civilian targets.

Latest reports describe Zionist troops as far as the Litani river, north of Tyre.

The Zionist butchers have destroyed every village and settlement in the border area except those supporting the fascist Falange.

Refugees have been bombed and shelled from air, sea and land as they fled from the area in taxis, broken down lorries or any transport they could find.

There is no doubt that while 'liberal' bourgeois throughout the world may blench at these 'excesses' of Zionism as they have with each new grab of territory, in the end class interests dictate

that they will always support the "legitimate" state power of the Zionist colonialists

The capitalist class must accept all this because the extreme right wing Begin regime is central to their strategy for dividing and suppressing the working class and peasantry of the Middle East—not least the Israeli working class which even as war broke out was engaged in a massive strike wave spurred on by galloping inflation.

Spectre

Begin offers nothing to Jewish workers

To resolve their problems those workers must turn their guns not on the Palestinians in South Lebanon but on Begin and the Zionist exploiters.

The spectre of the independent mobilisation of the Palestinian and Arab working masses also terrifies the Arab bourgeoisie. This is why they have remained deaf to the pleas of PLO leader Arafat for assistance.

As socialists and opponents of all racialism and colonial exploitation we unconditionally support the Palestinian liberation fighters in their justified struggle against Zionism and all its bourgeois allies in the Arab world and internationally.

Incapable

Every kind of moral, political and financial help must be given to them.

But we do not consider it principled to give uncritical support to the means used by the Palestinians to pursue this struggle or to the particular leaderships thrown up at this stage.

The PLO policy of calling on the bourgeois Arab leaders—including even Sadat—is not the way in which Zionism and its allies will be defeated.

These leaders are incapable of waging the Palestinian revolution. The central appeal must be to the Arab masses throughout the Middle East to overthrow these reactionary regimes and come to the aid of the Palestinians.

Leadership

Nor can the PLO leadership be said to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people, since no Trotskyist believes that such a leadership—however much support it has—can carry out the tasks of the Palestinian national revolution.

Such tasks require the destruction of the racist state of Israel, and carry over into the struggle for social revolution throughout the Middle East, to create a secular Palestine in which religious and racial discrimination is ended.

Conference called to fight witch-hunt

The campaign to defend the nine Cowley militants against a McCarthyite witch-hunt by TGWU officials is proceeding.

Sponsors of a national conference for TGWU members to be held on April 8 in Oxford have now produced two leaflets, one of which appeals for additional support and carries the names of 90 leading TGWU members.

These sponsors—including several senior stewards as well as branch secretaries, branch chairmen, officers of stewards committees and prominent shop stewards—indicate a broad response to the victimisation.

Strong representation

Support has come from a range of industries, with the docks and the car industry to the fore, and with strong representation from TGWU Region 5—the Regional Finance and General Purposes Committee of which is carrying out the witch-hunt.

We understand that TGWU members are circulating this material to most branches in Region 5 and to union committees in most areas.

Meanwhile employers gave further evidence of the motive for the witch-hunt of Trotskyists and militants as Leyland management stepped up their offensive last week.

Incentives

All Leyland workers received a joint management/union document on the Job Evaluation Scheme which contains moves towards introducing job comparability.

The objective is to drive down all working conditions to a common level, in exchange for meagre 'parity' wage payments.

The second string to management's bow is an incentives plan designed to use the union apparatus to speed up the workforce.

Opposition

Leyland senior stewards have in theory opposed this but they agreed to put it to a company-

wide ballot with explanatory information produced jointly with management—giving a strong chance of acceptance.

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee at the Cowley Assembly Plant however has called for opposition to the ballot, and for plants to decide individually at mass meetings.

This is the leadership the TGWU bureaucracy want to destroy in Cowley by expulsion from the union or by banning key militants from office.

The conference to fight the witch-hunt will be held at 1pm on April 8 and is open to TGWU members only.

Delegations

We urge all our supporters to fight for delegations to attend this conference, for union bodies to condemn the witch-hunt and to build the campaign to force the officials to drop the trumped up charges.



Under threat of expulsion—Alan Thornett

GIANT UNION HELD IN CHAINS

West Germany's 'socialist' Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, has now openly given his support to the powerful forces ranged against the strikes by print and metal workers.



Schmidt

In a television appearance he pleaded for a re-opening of the negotiations which had already dragged on for months before the intransigence of employers and the militancy of rank-and-file members pressured the union bureaucrats to withdraw.

Now the very same pressures are frustrating their strenuous efforts to contain and suffocate the strikes.

With 2½ million members, IG-Metall (the metal workers' union) is the world's largest trade union.

Yet only 60,000 workers have been called out on strike—all from selected factories in one region, North

Wuerttemberg-North Baden. This is despite the huge mandate Loderer and his companions in bureaucracy received from members in this region and North Rhine-Westphalia.

Already employers have responded with the threat of a general lockout from Monday.

It is not so much the relatively trifling disagree-

ments over the wage claim that have provoked this determined resistance.

Workers are also demanding security of jobs and protection of manning levels before they will agree to the introduction of new technology. This is precisely the central question in the print-workers' struggle.

During the long boom, and the first years of the current crisis, the working class in West Germany enjoyed a relatively privileged economic status.

Now, the West German capitalists need to force through a wide-ranging attack on workers to preserve their profits.

It is their ability to introduce this 'rationalisation' which is being disrupted in these two strikes that hold a crucial significance for every worker in the German Federal Republic.

US miners force back coal bosses

Reports on President Carter's attempt to force US coal miners back to work through use of the strike-breaking Taft-Hartley laws indicate that only about 100 of the 160,000 who have been on strike for over 100 days have heeded court injunctions and returned to the pits.

This disastrous failure to coerce the United Mine Workers union back to work has undoubtedly played a major role in forcing further concessions from the coal bosses—some of the most hard-bitten wealthy and reactionary employers in the USA.

The new proposed contract submitted last week by the bosses abandons earlier attempts to incorporate disciplinary measures against unofficial strikes.

Narrowly endorsed

It also reduces the amount payable by miners for health care from a proposed \$700 maximum to a proposed \$200 maximum.

The wage increase remains 31% over three years and some concessions are made on levelling up pension payments for retired miners.

The new proposals were narrowly endorsed by the UMW's Bargaining Council by 22 votes to 17.

These bureaucrats were no doubt anxiously looking over their shoulders at their militant members who in a ballot earlier this month voted 2-1 to throw out an earlier proposed contract that the Bargaining Council had endorsed.

Gives up rights

And yet once again, by attempting at all costs to defuse the longest-running coal strike in US history UMW bureaucrats have put their names to a contract that gives up substantial rights to the employers.

Under the proposed deal, miners would lose control of the health and welfare funds that have guaranteed them a unique free health service since 1947. They would begin to pay for a

privately-run service.

And the employers would give the go-ahead to introducing divisive 'incentive' schemes on the basis of majority support in an area.

Labour party

These provisions must be rejected and all unions called to join the miners in a general strike to defeat any moves to enforce the Taft-Hartley court injunctions.

But whichever way the res goes, one thing is certain: millions of organised workers in the USA who have witnessed a substantial defeat on the coal bosses and on the Carter government will learn substantial lessons for the next struggles on pay and jobs.

The task for Trotskyists in the United States is to draw the political lessons from this struggle—pointing to the necessity for the building of a mass working class political party to repeal all anti-union laws and fight for a social programme of nationalisation of major industry.

The haunting of Soares

Mario Soares, the Socialist Party leader who heads Portugal's new coalition government with the right wing Democratic and Social Centre, is a haunted man.

One of the lesser spectres which bedevils him is a press interview given to a British journalist at the end of February in which against a background of virulent anti-Communism Soares gave a graphic picture of the economic damage which his government's austerity measures would inevitably wreak.

Despite repeated denials of the content of the interview by Soares, it has been widely publicised and has increased the bitterness felt by the working class against Soares and his clique at the head of the Socialist Party.

Liquidation

The new right wing coalition and the intensified anti-working class austerity measures has put the finish to a process which has been underway for the last two years—the breaking of links between the treacherous Soares leadership and the masses of workers, some of whom two years ago still looked to the Socialist Party for leadership.

Soares and his clique have presided over the virtual liquidation of the Socialist Party as a mass workers' party.

Local branches of the party do not meet. The party organises no mass actions even of the most diversionary character.

Soares and his henchmen are a leadership without a base.

This is why in the government crisis of December and January, the Socialist government, well aware that it had lost the confidence of the working class, turned for assistance to the right wing capitalist party, the CDS.

Unity of purpose

Soares and his fellow traitors now see their role as hanging onto power with the CDS for as long as they can stick it out, until they are forced into holding elections in which they would inevitab-

ly reject Soares' charge that this was a 'historic error'.

The error would have been, CP leader Alvaro Cunhal said last week, to let in such a government with the support of the CP.

'The CP's vote against the Government', he went on demagogically, 'was the only correct vote for a party which is proud to be the party of the working class, of all working people, the party of agrarian reform and of the small and medium farmers, the party which always has been and will always remain faithful to its undertaking to

Demagogy

These bodies have, of course, been making a lot of noise about the new government.

In the vote of confidence in parliament for the 'second constitutional government' the CP voted against.

It rejects Soares' charge that this was a 'historic error'.

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defend its interests, aspirations and objectives whatever the circumstances may be'.

Ever since April 1974 the Portuguese CP has shown itself expert at posing in this way as the champion of workers while in reality betraying every one of its struggles.

And Cunhal made it clear later in his speech what CP 'opposition' really meant.

'The government has a dangerous political composition and a bad programme. We will fight against this governmental formula and against the policy which it has announced in its programme. But we don't take up—we never have taken up—an attitude of systematic opposition. As always we will judge concretely every decision and act of the government.'

This makes it clear that there is not a shred of principle involved in the CP's opposition to the coalition.

Only two months ago the CP was itself supporting a broad national coalition government.

The CP's 'opposition' is designed to head-off the growing resistance of the Portuguese working class and peasantry to the pro-landlord government.

The CP is obliged to offer

some semblance of opposition because in their relationship with the mass of workers and peasants they are afraid of sharing the same fate as Mario Soares.

Their problem was highlighted two weeks ago by important strikes in the public services.

On March 10, 300,000 public service workers, nurses, and teachers all staged a one-day strike.

Despite the lame attempt of pro-government newspapers to label the strike a failure, it was very widely followed and has had a profound impact.

Called around a series of demands on wages and conditions this was the first national strike in the public service since April 1974 and it symbolises the frustration and anger felt by all Portuguese workers at the anti-working class policies of the government.

In many other sectors of the Portuguese labour force new struggles have been breaking out.

The disastrous condition of Portuguese capitalism means that Soares cannot hold out any material reforms to appease this rising tide of protest.

Soares is haunted now by more than his own words—he is haunted by the working class which he still professes to lead.



Iranian hunger strikers protest against conditions of political prisoners

Fascists bomb students

Six students died and 44 were left wounded last week as fascist gangs staged a bomb attack on Istanbul University.

Immediately afterwards the university was occupied by thousands of students, who were joined by thousands of workers in mass funeral demonstrations in Istanbul and Ankara.

Restricted protest

Abdullah Basturk, leader of the 'left' wing trade union confederation DISK has condemned this latest fascist atrocity—but has restricted

His main message was to call on the bourgeois state to take 'measures' against the fascist party.

Collaboration

Basturk's refusal to mobilise workers in independent struggle against the fascists has been supported by all the reformist and Stalinist parties.

Their calls for bourgeois Prime Minister Ecevit to take action are a clear continuation of their line of Popular Front class collaboration.

Ecevit's response, predictably, was to do no more than

enforced by the army if necessary.

Behind the fascist attacks are the preparations of the big capitalists for a major confrontation with the working class as the only way out of their desperate economic crisis, which has already led to a 32.5% currency devaluation, price increases and cuts in state spending.

The devaluation, combined with legislation demanding importers pay an extra 30% to the central bank has hit companies hard.

Defence squads

Ecevit is now planning a

oil on credit.

But the latest provocations in Turkey show that the sharpening crisis demands the establishment of workers defence squads to wage armed resistance against the fascists.

The Stalinist and reformist parties must be forced to break from Ecevit. The demand must be for them to form a workers and peasants government independent of the bourgeoisie and its parties.





ANGOLA-THE WAR STILL GOES ON

Two and a half years after its declaration of independence from Portugal, the Cuban-backed MPLA Government in Angola is still engaged in a war against pro-imperialist forces.

In the south of the country the right wing Unita organisation, supported by the South African racists, continues to control some remote areas of the country and, through guerilla operations, are still holding down large numbers of Angolan and Cuban troops.

Recent reports also claim that the military control of the Neto government is also still threatened in the territory of Cabinda.

Separated

This small enclave of territory on the coast north of the Congo estuary is separated from the rest of Angolan territory.

During the civil war which preceded Angola's independence, the MPLA fought in Cabinda against two Cabinda separatist groups both going under the name of the Front

for the Liberation of the Cabinda Enclave (FLEC).

Nowadays there is only one FLEC group left and it is harboured and given assistance by the right wing regime of President Mobutu in Zaire and possibly also by Mobutu's more distant imperialist patrons in Washington, Brussels, Paris and London.

Oil reserves

Mobutu and the imperialists have a number of interests in Cabinda. For one thing the Cabinda enclave gives Angola the control of both sides of Zaire's crucial narrow exit to the sea through the Congo estuary.

But the main interest of Cabinda, and the reason that the FLEC can continue to count on imperialist support, is its reserves of oil, among the richest in sub-Saharan Africa.

When the oilfields of Cabinda are in full production they are expected to produce a quarter of a million barrels (worth four million dollars) a day.

The Portuguese colonial administration in the early

1970s allowed the American Gulf Oil Company to begin the exploitation of this oil.

During the independence and civil wars Gulf was forced to close down its operation.

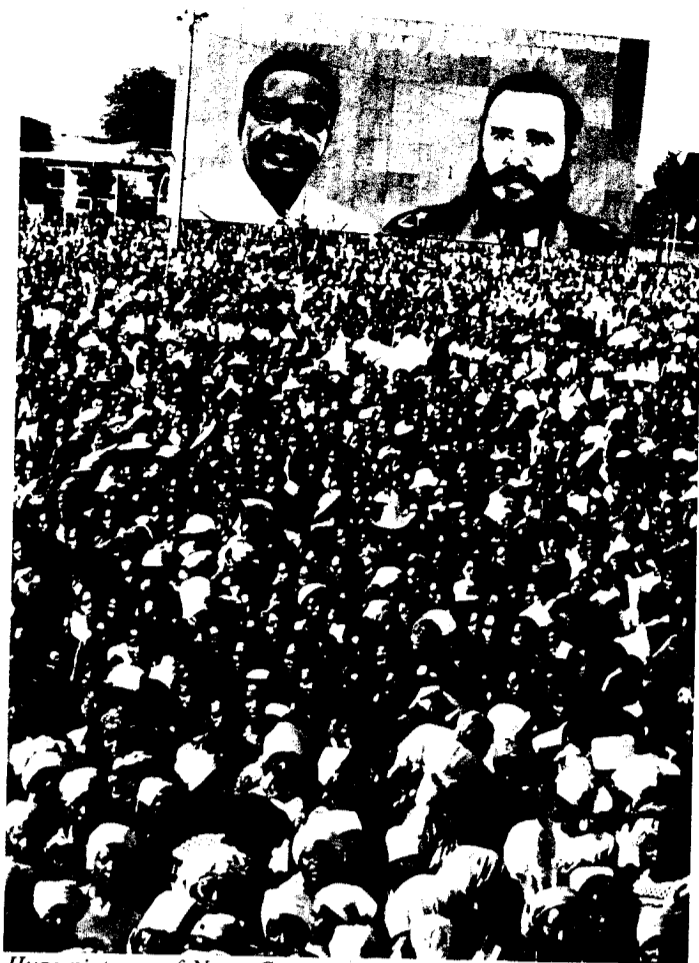
After independence, however, the "socialist" government of the MPLA welcomed back Gulf, though it claims that it intends at length to nationalise the American Company.

This "nationalisation", however, is one which will give full compensation to Gulf and probably allow the company to retain a share of ownership and profits and all its management prerogatives.

Nonetheless Gulf, and the French Elf Company which also has some exploration concessions in Cabinda, are probably still fearful enough of their future to find it worthwhile to continue to finance the FLEC as they reportedly have in the past.

Executions

The MPLA says that the FLEC now scarcely exists and that the whole of Cabinda is securely under government



Huge pictures of Neto, Castro above Angolan rally

control.

The FLEC, however, claimed two weeks ago to have captured and executed 136 Cuban soldiers captured in Cabinda.

Unprecedented

The FLEC statement said that the executions took place after contacts between the FLEC and the liberation movements in Eritrea, and were in protest against the sending of Cuban soldiers from Angola to Ethiopia to support the forces of the Mengistu regime.

Apart from the FLEC statements, there has been no independent corroboration of this report nor any information as to whether the Eritrean liberation movements either knew about or supported the executions.

Whether or not the claim is true, the fact that it was made at all highlights the unprecedented role which Cuba is now playing in Africa, in particular in Angola and Ethiopia.

Imperialist sources claim that there are now 25,000 Cubans in Mozambique and 10,000 in Ethiopia.

Even if these figures are exaggerated, it is clear from other evidence that the exaggeration is not very great.

In both Angola and Ethiopia the Cuban presence is largely a military one. And in both cases it seems that the Cuban military presence has saved the very lives of the self-styled "socialist" regimes of these countries.

In Angola too, the Cuban presence involves a massive programme of technical assistance which in many cases involves the dominance of the Cuban advisors in the bureaucratic state apparatus.

Such an operation on this scale is historically unprecedented. It is crucial to the Kremlin's strategy of gaining influence in, and controlling the revolutionary potential of the African continent.

The alliance of the Kremlin Stalinists with Havana has given them, in situations like Africa, an enormously expanded flexibility in pursuing a policy to slowly redraw the lines of demarcation between imperialism and Stalinism.

The imperialists have stood back, powerless to prevent this—but at the same time, perhaps, at least half conscious that Soviet/Cuban support for nominally left regimes like that of Neto in Angola or Mengistu in Ethiopia has been in the last year a powerful obstacle to the socialist revolution in Africa.

CPs join forces to stab freedom struggles

Other tactics in the Kremlin bureaucracy's global strategy of counter-revolution are proceeding even while the Stalinists ponder how best to fulfil their designs in Ethiopia.

They have now signed a major trade deal, which they have long craved, with the reactionary regime of King Hassan II in Morocco.

Central to this is an agreement on the exploitation of the world's richest phosphate deposits in Morocco and the Western Sahara.

For two years the Saharoui have been fighting under the leadership of the Polisario Front against Moroccan and Mauritanian troops that have occupied and divided the region.

Soviet support for the Saharoui liberation struggles has been confined in the past to guarded expressions backing their right to self-determination, so this latest action will make little material difference to the situation.

Token gesture

The move is a predictable, cynical addition to what has become a long, contorted trail of twists and turns from the Stalinist leaders on the war in the Sahara.

Along with their fellow-traitors in the social democracy, the Communist Parties in France and Spain have offered verbal support to the Polisario.

For this token gesture, they have been abused as 'colonialists' by Ali Yata—who is none other than the secretary-general of the Moroccan CP.

Yata's argument against Marchais and Carrillo is that they carry on the traditions of imperialism by allowing their vision to be restricted by the arbitrary political frontiers imposed on Africa by the European colonialists.

This family bickering within the Stalinist ranks may soon come to an end, thanks to the unlikely intervention of the Spanish foreign minister.

During an exchange on the Sahara in the Spanish parliament, Oreja read out to Carrillo a declaration from the Polisario in support of the liberation forces in the Canary Islands.

Repudiated

Characteristically, the Spanish Stalinists have entirely repudiated this struggle for self-determination.

Keen to recognise any opportunity of breaking any association with revolutionary struggles, Carrillo quickly said that if this was true, the CP would obviously have to re-consider its support for the Polisario Front.

The fight of the Saharoui has always been carried through with virtually no international support.

These latest moves only clarify this failure of revolutionary solidarity, and reveal the bankruptcy of the bureaucratic leaders of the workers movement.

The question that does remain unanswered is...



Cuban troops on manoeuvre

Racists put their tame critics on display



Buthelezi

The South African government responded to the international trade union week of solidarity by placing adverts in various papers which attempted to show that the black masses in South Africa don't support dis-

most useful apologists for continued capitalism, 'peacefully reformed', were wheeled out for the job.

Lucy Mvubelo, a long-time trade union bureaucrat who supports the liberation struggle provided it is peacefully negotiated.

Pride of place

J.N. Reddy, a capitalist functionary of apartheid who wants to reform South African capitalism so that black capitalists like himself can be more equal partners of white capitalists.

Chief Gatsha Buthelezi was given pride of place with half the page devoted to his picture and statements.

No sooner did the advertisement appear than Buthelezi was demanding his name and picture be withdrawn.

Socialist Press has continually exposed the collaborationist role played by Buthelezi in the white-

outspoken and regular critic of South African government policies" (to quote the South African government advertisement).

On occasion these enemies of the working class take time out of their usual activities—such as strike breaking, running businesses, administering institutions of apartheid, conniving with 'progressive' white capitalists and imperialists—to show their concern for the welfare of black workers.

'Protect the welfare of the black worker by increasing capitalist investment' they say. The answer to capitalist unemployment, exploitation and oppression lies in the "expansion of capitalism" not its destruction.

Only solution

Unemployment, exploitation and oppression are the inevitable consequences of capitalism in South Africa.

lies in the struggle for socialism. Central to this struggle will be the building of independent organisations of the working class—in communities, factories and schools, and the construction of a revolutionary party to lead that struggle through a programme of democratic and transitional demands. It must involve the preparation of the working class for an armed struggle to seize power, expropriate capital and destroy capitalism.

Workers in Britain attempting to show solidarity with the South African workers should reject the disinvestment campaigns.

As we have pointed out, campaigns based on boycotting 'bad' capitalists in favour of 'good' ones or putting

extraction of maximum profits, can act to obstruct real acts of solidarity.

Revolutionaries, unlike the Stalinists and reformists do not approach the class struggle by seeking 'progressive' sections of capitalists to pressurise, nor do they pose the question of what capital should or should not do.

Our task is to seek every opportunity to develop the independent struggle and forces of the working class.

Among other blacking actions we call on workers in the printing industry to black all advertisements from the South African government and its agencies.

To guard against obstruction of this blacking we demand the opening of the

CLEAR LINE NEEDED ON LIB-LAB COALITION

There is widespread confusion on the left on the question of the Lib-Lab coalition deal. This confusion has been assiduously cultivated by defenders of the Callaghan-Healey leadership and also by those who pull back from any serious fight against them.

For this reason we have decided to publish and reply to this reader's letter.

Dear Comrades,

I would be pleased if you could clarify some questions which arise from reading your paper. You talk of the Lib-Lab pact being equivalent to transforming the Labour government into a "coalition government".

This seems to me to be obviously wrong. Where are the ministers from the capitalist parties?

The policy of the Labour government is counter-revolutionary, with or without the support of the Liberals.

Certainly, acceptance of the pact has created a dangerous precedent which the right wing will utilise, at a later date, when they want a real coalition.

However, I believe your use of the term to be unscientific, theoretically confusing, and downright dangerous. This confusion is evident in the pages of your paper.

You talk for the most part of breaking the pact (or "breaking the coalition" as you prefer it), yet on other occasions other formulations appear - e.g. the September 30 *Socialist Press* talks of the need of the firemen to "get rid of" the "coalition government".

Further, in your issue of January 11 you report the defeat of a WRP motion (at the conference in support of the firemen called by Liverpool Trades Council) calling for a "campaign to bring down the conspiratorial coalition government".

You say nothing whatsoever in opposition to this motion. Does this mean you supported it? Are you for kicking out this government, yes or no?

If this were a coalition government, then that would impose certain obligations on Marxists, who stand for the complete independence of working class organisations from the bourgeois state and bourgeois parties.

We would have to come out unequivocally for the overthrow of the present government.

If you believe this government is a coalition, then why do you not come out without hesitation for its being kicked out of office?

Ludicrous

The answer seems to me to lie in the fact that it would be ludicrous to demand the overthrow of this Labour government simply to call for the return of . . . a Labour government!

Such a position would be subject to both contempt and ridicule in the labour movement. At the present time there is no other governmental alternative for the workers' movement except a Labour government. This means we are obliged to centre our attack on breaking the Lib-Lab agreement, by both a political campaign against it, and by struggling to smash the 10% limit.

It would be the most criminal irresponsibility for Marxists to call for the overthrow of a Labour government when there was no other governmental possibility save for a Tory government.

Having made the mistake of designating this government as a "coalition government", you appear to be caught in the horns of a dilemma.

If you are to be consistent, and fight to kick out the government, then you obviously could not simply demand the return of a Labour government (otherwise all that would be necessary would be to break the pact).

Consequently you would be pointed in the direction of demanding a Labour government carry out a different programme to the one it is - a socialist programme?

The danger signs are there. At the time of the Labour Party conference you demanded of the left

MPs that they fight for the adoption of a 'socialist programme' (i.e. a Marxist programme).

This is an opportunist call for it demands of a wing of counter-revolutionary social democracy that it carry out a programme which only Marxists can carry out.

This adapts to the belief of reformist workers that socialism can be achieved through Parliament, by the Labour Party.

If you do not really mean that you are fighting for the overthrow of the present government, then it is inconsistent with the term "coalition", in which case I would suggest that if you do not "overthrow" this conception, you will find that the logic of such a position will drive you along the road travelled by the WRP.

Fraternally,
John Ford
(Thames Polytechnic)

Socialist Press replies:

Our reader manages to pack a number of confused points into one letter. We will try to answer each in turn.

We have consistently termed the Lib-Lab deal - struck last March in the wake of the Leyland toolmakers' strike - as an undeclared coalition in which the Labour leaders undertake to implement nothing more than Liberal policy will allow.

In return for sufficient parliamentary support to enable them to force through a third phase of wage control, the Labour leaders conceded to the Liberals an arrangement by which Liberal politicians are consulted *more* on policy questions than any body within the labour movement.

Unscientific

Because of the relative balance of parliamentary forces and the necessity to head off working class resistance by retaining the fiction that a "Labour government" remains in office, the Labour leaders themselves fulfil the role of capitalist ministers.

But, as Liberal leader Steel has time and again pointed out, there is *no* prospect of this coalition implementing even vaguely socialist policies.

It is no longer remotely subject to pressure from the labour movement. The Liberals vet every decision, every policy, before it is even raised in parliament.

In our view, it is unscientific to describe such an arrangement as a 'Labour government'.

And it is essential to focus

£60,000 for Labour's white elephant

It is not only political bankruptcy that stares the Labour Party in the face, if the report in Labour's 'Press Service' bulletin is to be believed.

Apparently work has now begun on the Party bureaucrats' dream - a new headquarters, on the Walworth Road, near the Elephant and Castle.

The Party's complete inability to satisfy the demands or answer the problems of its



Atkinson

working class supporters could, they hope, be better concealed in a grand building.

All but the front facade of a Georgian Terrace is to be demolished to provide the basis of a new office building - just as all but the facade of socialism was long ago demolished within the Party to create sufficient elbow room for Labour's crypto-Tory leaders to continue their betrayals.

Labour Party members seem to be recognising this.

Despite a fanfare of publicity for a 'Pound a Brick' appeal, and constant reminders in the Party's paper *Labour Weekly* that the building project is to cost £1.6 million the money is not exactly flooding in to Party offices.

Anguished pleas

Anguished pleas from Tribune Party Treasurer Norman Atkinson have now been supplemented by a renewed plea from General Secretary Ron Hayward.

He has pointed out that only £60,000 has so far been collected. This is a mere 3.75% of the required total!

With work already under way clearing the site, the Labour bureaucracy could well find themselves with a big space near the Elephant - but no Castle!



London Labour Party conference

continuously on the betrayal committed by those 'lefts' who, by their Parliamentary votes actually facilitate this coalition arrangement.

Isolated error

Our policy, flowing naturally from this analysis, is that in order to fight for the socialist policies necessary to defend jobs, wages and living standards, workers must fight to *break* the Lib-Lab coalition, and for Labour to take the power.

The phrase "get rid" of the coalition government is clearly an error - and obviously an isolated one, since it is the only instance quoted between September 30 and January 11!

Our heavily-edited report of the Liverpool Trades Council conference originally contained two paragraphs making clear our position in opposition to both the WRP's call for a campaign to "bring down" the coalition and to the refusal of the platform to acknowledge that the Lib-Lab deal is a coalition.

Political independence

We are *not* for "bringing down" but for *breaking* this coalition in order to assert the political independence of the working class from the capitalist Liberal Party, and to create the conditions to expose the Labour leaders, right and 'left' wing alike, in office.

The WRP's ultimatum demand

in fact diverts from the struggle to expose the reformist leaders, and is a simple continuation of their call to 'bring down' the Labour government.

It is not necessarily true that Marxists are obliged to call for the overthrow of a coalition government embracing workers parties.

This was not the position that Trotsky took in relation to the French Popular Front in 1936, for example (see centre pages for a more detailed account).

Oust bourgeoisie

The central question is to assert the political independence of the working class.

The main thrust of our work is therefore to oust the bourgeoisie from the coalition - in order to sharpen all the political questions within the working class movement.

This is completely in line with the line of Trotsky's Transitional Programme which advocates systematically addressing the reformist leaders with the demand "Break with the bourgeoisie, take the power!"

Demands

Our reader then moves on to discuss the question of demands on the Labour government. We insist that it is necessary to place demands on a Labour government - not because we believe that such a government can ever

satisfy workers' requirements, but because we can see that wider layers of workers believe it.

Only in the struggle for their existing leaders to act on their behalf and seeing their refusal to do so will such workers come to recognise the need for revolutionary leadership.

Our demand that those MPs who proclaim themselves opponents of Callaghan-Healey fight for socialist policies in opposition to the government's capitalist programme is therefore a part of the fight to expose the impotence of these fake 'lefts'.

Following the Labour Party conference we have consistently referred to their refusal to fight the right wing in that conference

Buffeted

The sharpest way of demonstrating to workers that Labour cannot introduce socialism is to ensure that a majority Labour government is forced into power in its own name, and that it is buffeted on all sides by the demands and problems of the working class - problems which it cannot solve, and demands which as a government tied to capitalism it cannot fulfil.

In such a situation a revolutionary alternative boldly put forward can attract the most conscious layers of workers and open the road to revolutionary struggle.

Our policy is directed towards such a perspective.



PHOTO: John Sturrock (Report)



Callaghan



Background to Gallacher's ultra-leftism - crowds raise the Red Flag in Glasgow, 1919.

IN DEFENCE OF A REVOLUTIONARY ORIENTATION

Against sectarian abstention

Part two of an analysis of the struggle against sectarian revisions of Marxism which resulted in the split of 22 members of the Workers Socialist League last month. By John Lister

"How many times have we met a smug centrist who reckons himself a "realist" merely because he gets out to swim without any ideological baggage whatever and is tossed by every vagrant current. He is unable to understand that principles are not dead but a life line for a revolutionary swimmer.

"The sectarian, on the other hand, generally does not want to go swimming at all, in order not to test his principles. He sits on the shores and reads lectures on morality to the flood of the class struggle. But sometimes a desperate sectarian leaps headlong into the water, seizes hold of the centrist and helps him drown. So it was; so it will be."

Trotsky Writings (1935-36) p26.

sectarianism—the refusal to carry the fight for the revolutionary programme in any way into the mass movement of the working class is not a weakness but a middle class element in the revolutionary movement, any more than is opportunism.

Proletarian

Left Wing Communism, Lenin's Infantile Disorder, Lenin criticised against sectarian tendencies among proletarian elements, new to the Communist movement, including militant Scottish trade unionists around Gallacher in 1924.

Gallacher had stated that it was impermissible to give support whatever to the Labour Party parliamentarians if it would simply put power into the hands of the "hopelessly reactionary" Henderson, Clynes, MacDonald and Snowden.

He pointed out that the Labour Party's letter: "... excellently expresses the temper and point of view of the young Communists, or rank-and-file workers who are only just coming to the Communist movement. This temper is gratifying and commendable, we must learn to support it and to support it, for it is the only way to expect the victory of the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other country for that matter.



Henderson

the proletarian revolution in Great Britain, or in any other country for that matter.

People who can give expression to this temper of the masses, who can rouse such a temper (which is very often dormant, unrealised and unaroused) among the masses, must be valued and every assistance must be given them.

And at the same time we must openly and frankly tell them that temper alone is not enough to lead the masses in a great revolutionary struggle..."

Lenin stressed that politics

is a science, and that this means objectively analysing the balance of forces and state of consciousness of:

"all the forces, groups, parties, classes and masses operating in the given country".

He insisted that: "... policy should not be determined only by the desires and views, by the degree of class consciousness and the readiness for battle of only one group or party".

Lenin went on to confront Gallacher's ultra-leftism head-on, by insisting on the need to force the Labour traitors to take the power in order to expose them to the masses:

"That the Hendersons, the Clynes, the MacDonalds and the Snowdens are hopelessly reactionary is true... But it by no means follows that to support them is treachery to the revolution, but rather that in the interests of the revolution the working class revolutionaries should give these gentlemen a certain amount of parliamentary support." (Left Wing Communism, pp.79-81)

Of course the only similarity between Gallacher, a proletarian mass-fighter, and the petty bourgeois opposition that emerged within the Workers Socialist League, working in liaison with the "international Spartacist tendency" is that both shared a similar confusion on the necessity to convince the masses of the need for revolution in the course of their experiences in the class struggle, and a common inability to distinguish between principles and tactics.

One-sided

In each case the confusion flows from a one-sided, subjective assessment of the class



Trotsky

struggle.

The petty bourgeois tendency regurgitated many of the discredited positions of the "Left Communists", so tellingly refuted by Lenin 60 years ago.

Unlike the "Left Communists", however, they reflected not the strength of the most determined layers of the working class, but a characteristic petty bourgeois quailing before the difficult task of constructing a revolutionary cadre within the mass workers' organisations.

Imagination

While Gallacher and other proletarian forces that adopted ultra-left positions had arrived at their views through their experience of a mass sentiment amongst advanced, militant layers of the working class, this is not the case with petty bourgeois sectarians.

They arrive at their ultra-left dogmatism as a result of their own fevered imagination and unending abstract discussion. And they are reinforced in these false positions by their very separation from

For them ideas are the point of departure and the conclusion—while for the Marxist:

"dialectical materialism... takes experience as its point of departure and always returns to it".

Again and again the sectarians' arguments against the leadership of the Workers Socialist League boiled down to no more than an attempt to substitute their own subjective wishes, feelings and frustrations for the struggle to win the mass of workers to an understanding of their bureaucratic leaders.

This led the sectarians to denounce the WSL's tactic of using critical support for fake 'left' Labour MPs and trade union leaders in order to expose them in practice. Their opposition document claimed that:

"The central strategy of the leadership with relation to the existing leaders of the working class is summed up by the phrase "Make the Lefts Fight". The slogan derives from an ill-formed conception that the Labour Party will not be able to

seen by the [WSL] leadership as in some way representing the proletariat and the bourgeoisie respectively. Hence the "critical" support given to the 'lefts'."

(Opposition document, 'In Defence of the Revolutionary Programme')

This passage contains one deliberate falsification and also epitomises the inability of the petty bourgeois sectarians to understand the necessity to raise workers in practice to a revolutionary level of consciousness.

Tactic

'Make the Lefts Fight' is not of course a strategy. Not a single aspect of the WSL's programme presupposes or suggests that any left-talking bureaucrat, either now or in the future, will necessarily wage a fight against the right wing.

Rather it is a tactical means of mobilising workers in such a way as to enable them to learn the objective role played by their 'left-wing' leaders.

It is not the WSL leaders that believe that the Labour Party "falls into two quite distinct wings"—it is the working class.

Workers demonstrate time and again by their votes for Labour's National Executive and the completely different response that workers in struggle give to 'left' MPs that they regard the 'lefts' as, however inadequately, representing their interests against the open right wing agents of capital.

If workers are to break from these long-cherished illusions and recognise the need for a revolutionary leadership, then they will need to see the treacherous role of the 'lefts' revealed in practice.

Refusal

To focus workers' attention on the refusal of these 'lefts' to wage the slightest fight against the policies of the Lib-Lab coalition or against the right wing Labour leaders through the slogan 'Make the Lefts Fight' is an essential part of this educational work.

Urging workers to demand that their leaders put their 'left' talk into practice, support workers in struggle, and wage a fight against the open right wing, enables revolutionaries to expose every retreat and betrayal, and counterpose the necessity for a revolutionary programme and a new leadership.

But the sectarians caricatured this approach as serving only:

"to lend our authority to the 'left wing' credentials of the thoroughly rotten counter-revolutionary parliamentary cretins in the Tribune group and this serves to tie the political development of the working class to a wing of social democracy".

Such a statement shows how the sectarians completely fail to come to grips with the real problems within the workers movement.

The most pernicious force actually binding the working class to 'left' reformism at the present time is the Stalinists of the Communist Party.

Assist Stalinists

The Stalinists tie workers to social democracy precisely by arguing that the 'lefts' are fighting the right wing—and by opposing any attempt to put real demands on them.

The sectarians, from their ultra-left standpoint actually assist the Stalinists in this task of protecting the Eric Heffer and Dennis Skinner—by arguing that for us to put demands on these talkers creates illusions.

They advocate that instead we turn to attacking through a campaign of derogatory attacks to expose the



Lenin insisted that the mood of an advanced group of workers could not substitute for mobilising the class as a whole.

were unable, throughout the 11-week discussion in the Workers Socialist League, to produce so much as one practical instance of the WSL in any way capitulating to left reformism. Their allegations proved as empty as their arguments.

Equally characteristic was the fact that the sectarians disdained to offer the WSL or the working class any alternative means of demonstrating, in the course of living struggles, the bankruptcy of those leaders that workers falsely believe are an 'alternative' to Callaghan or to the TUC right wing.

The problem of tactical orientation is "solved" for the sectarian by avoiding any real intervention at all, and by simply levelling the accusation of "opportunism" against those forces that take the question seriously.



Heffer - protected by those who oppose raising demands to expose him.

"The sectarian sees an enemy in everyone who attempts to explain to him that an active participation in the workers' movement demands a constant study of objective conditions, and not haughty bulldozing from the sectarian rostrum".

Trotsky, *Writings* 1935-6, p.26.

In doing so, the sectarian turns his back on the invaluable heritage of experience from Lenin and from Trotsky, who both insisted that revolutionaries must remain sensitive to divisions and shading within reformist and centrist organisations.

"The petty bourgeois democrats (including the Mensheviks) inevitably vacillate between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, between bourgeois democracy and the Soviet system, between reformism and revolutionism, between love-for-the-workers and fear of the proletarian dictatorship, etc.

The proper tactics for the Communists must be to utilise these vacillations, not to ignore them; and utilising them calls for concessions to those elements which are turning towards the proletariat—whenever and to the extent that they turn towards

fighting those who turn towards the bourgeoisie . . .

This is a long process, and the hasty "decision"—"No compromises, no manoeuvres"—can only injure the work of strengthening the influence of the revolutionary proletariat and enlarging its forces".

(*Left Wing Communism*, p.73)

Lenin in this passage would almost seem to stand well to the right of the Workers Socialist League, which while insistently directing demands towards 'left' MPs and trade union leaders, has made no concessions whatever in their direction.

Guide to action

But in illustrating the content of Marx and Engels' dictum that our theory is not a dogma but a *guide to action* Lenin squarely confronts the method of wooden abstractions and empty denunciations peddled by today's petty bourgeois "left communists".

The inability of the sectarians to distinguish between strategy and tactics, and their refusal to involve themselves in the day to day struggles of the working class also characterised their position on electoral tactics in relation to the Lib-Lab coalition government.

"The coalition with the Liberals is equivalent to a Popular Front. Labour Party candidates in this period stand as representatives of a bourgeois political formation, the coalition, and thus to extend even the most critical support to them is a breach of principle".

The real history of Trotskyism on the question of the Popular Front consists of a merciless exposure of the class collaboration of the Popular Front combined with the development of slogans and tactics designed to drive a wedge between the masses and their reactionary leaders.

For the fake "Trotskyist" faction, willing mouthpieces for any idiotic formula dreamed up by Spartacist discussion circles, this was not enough.

New 'principle'

They decided to discover a new "principle"—that any call on workers to vote for workers' parties involved in a coalition bloc is nothing less than support for Popular Frontism!

They went on to lecture the WSL for its "Menshevism" for our position of calling on workers to vote Labour against the Tories while we continue our fight to oust the coalitionist leaders, to break the Lib-Lab deal, and to establish a programme of socialist policies.

They compared the WSL policy to that of the counter-revolutionary Spanish POUM, which actually signed the

programme and participated in a bourgeois government which attacked the Spanish proletariat!

Unabashed

Not one of these ridiculous allegations was withdrawn, nor were the sectarians in the least abashed when confronted at the WSL conference with proof that the French Trotskyists, working under Trotsky's close supervision, had called for votes to the Communist Party and Socialist Party in the 1930s.

[Indeed, one of the leaders of the "Trotskyist Faction" recently spoke at two meetings organised by the French Spartacists, arguing for no vote for the Communist Party or the Socialist Party in the second round of the French elections on the grounds that they were part of a Popular Front formation].

In the 1936 elections the call went out for a vote for the workers' parties, but no vote for the bourgeois Radicals with whom these parties had blocked in a Popular Front.

This tactic was designed to place the reformists and Stalinists in a position to take the power alone, and thus expose their refusal to break from collaboration with the bourgeoisie.

Popular Front

In the event, of course, the Trotskyists' call for a break from the Radicals was not heeded.

The parties of the Popular Front won 378 out of 598 seats in the Chamber of Deputies—with a marked

advance for the workers parties, and a significant fall in support for their bourgeois partners, the Radicals.

Socialist Party leader Leon Blum became premier of a Popular Front government, while workers staged a massive wave of strikes, and the fascists and employers plotted a counter-attack.

Tactical approach

But under Trotsky's direction, the French Trotskyists did not call for the newly elected government to be brought down.

Instead, Trotsky concentrated the attention of the French section on the tactical approach necessary to advance the fight for working class independence and the revolutionary programme:

"We and the People's Front have common enemies. That is why we are ready to fight them alongside the regular groups of the People's Front government, without taking the least responsibility for this government, or posing as the "protectors" of Leon Blum. (. . .)

"We must not conceal from the masses that the [Popular Front's] programme is unattainable in the framework of capitalism or that the attainable parts of the programme would always be sabotaged by the Radicals.

"When we say, 'The moment has not yet come for a frontal attack on the Blum government', we do not mean that we have to protect it, but only that we must attack it from the side—its right side, the Radicals.

"We must distinguish and personalise our criticisms of

the government by striking the heaviest blows at the Radical ministers and by explaining to the Socialist and Communist workers that it is Daladier, Delbos, Rucard, etc. who sabotage and cannot but sabotage everything that is progressive in the government programme. (. . .)

"The Radicals are the line of least resistance for the revolutionary critique. By concentrating your fire against the Radical ministers, with really concrete examples you will easily get the ear of the Communist and Socialist workers. (. . .)

"At any rate, our slogan cannot be "Down with the Blum government!" but "Drive the bourgeois Radicals out of the Blum government!" That is where the slight difference of meaning lies. It is extremely important for this period, but it does not at all mean that we "protect" the Blum government".

(*Crisis of the French Section*, p.163).

The example of France in 1936 is not put forward here as a rigid pattern to be slavishly followed.

Method

Quite clearly there were fundamental differences in the political situation then as compared to the conditions of the Lib-Lab coalition in Britain in 1978.

But by examining the real record of the Trotskyist movement we are able to learn the method of approach applied by Trotsky—the way in which the fight for revolutionary leadership is related to a tactical intervention in the living struggles of the working class.

The task is not simply to demonstrate through propaganda that revolutionaries understand the Popular Front—but rather to mobilise workers to break that class collaborationist alliance and take a crucial step towards political independence.

The WSL continues to apply similar tactics today. We proudly defend the history of Trotskyism against the petty bourgeois sectarian bankrupts who would brand it as "Menshevik" and a "capitulation" to class collaboration.

Evidence ignored

Throughout the discussion however, "trivial" matters like evidence, facts and the established positions of the Trotskyist movement were casually brushed aside by the disciples of the Spartacists.

They had scented the prospect of a way out of routine work, and an escape from patient attention to the

day-to-day struggles of "backward" workers.

The most ridiculous arguments were consumed with gusto and retailed in all solemnity.

"Pseudonym"

Perhaps the clearest expression of the "Trotskyist" faction's contempt for the established positions of the Communist movement was their insistence that the WSL should take up and incorporate into all propaganda the demand for a "workers' government" as "a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat".

This ludicrous proposal—handed down by the Spartacists to their gullible offspring without a shred of support in the documents or the practice of the Marxist movement—was doggedly defended by them throughout the 11 weeks of the pre-conference discussion, in the face of a mountain of evidence to prove that no leading Communist had ever attempted to use the workers government slogan simply in that way.

But the absurdity of the argument was further exposed when the sectarians combined their call for the dictatorship of the proletariat with opposition to the WSL's fight for workers committees—price committees, open the books committees and Councils of Action.

Divorced

Their abstract demand for a proletarian government, divorced from even a call for building the workers organisations on which such a government must be based, does not even make sense as propaganda.

Abstract or incomprehensible propaganda does no more in practice than sow confusion and strengthen illusions in the "common sense" arguments of reformist and centrist forces.

Sectarian propaganda of this kind therefore can be seen as a clear reflection of the penetration of bourgeois ideology into the revolutionary movement, serving in practice only to reinforce the grip of the bourgeoisie's bureaucratic agents in the mass organisations of the working class.

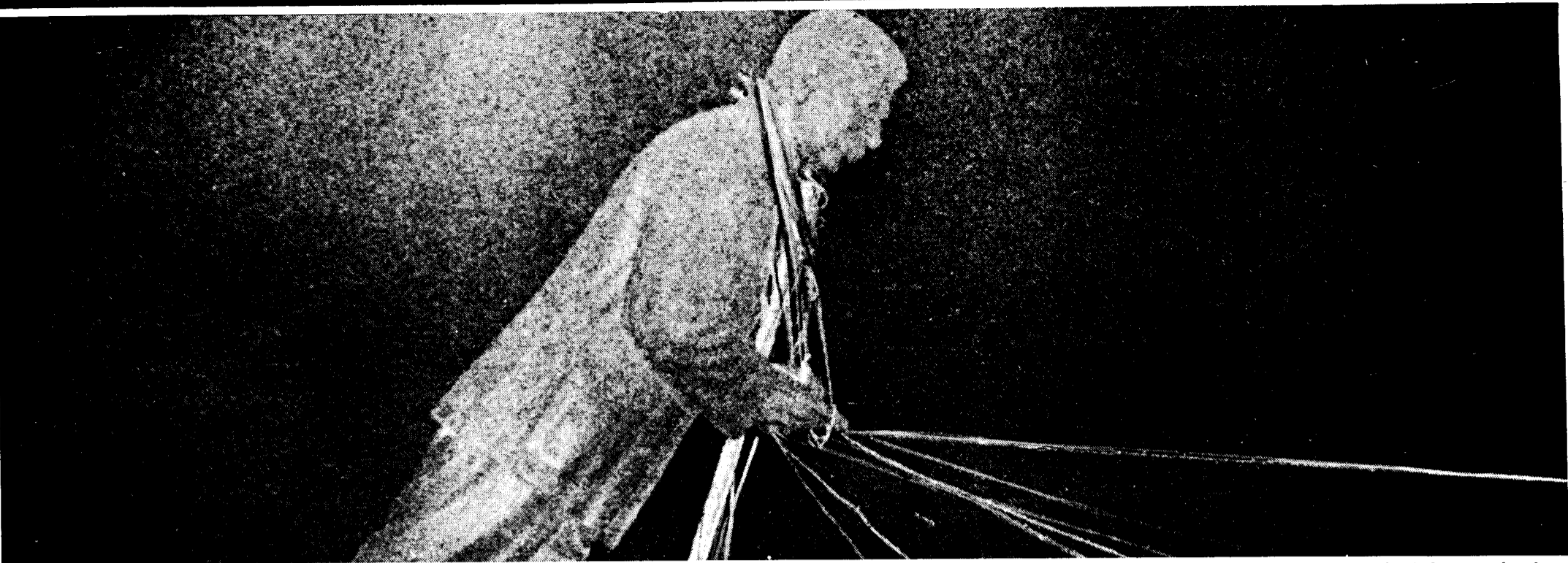
NEXT WEEK:

International questions and the politics of the Spartacist tendency.

(Final Part)



French Popular Front leaders, 1936. Trotsky did not call for immediate action to bring down the Lib-Lab coalition.



Budapest 1956—Stalin's statue pulled down by eager hands.

MOURNING STALIN

By Paul Stein

"Rabbi, is it possible to build socialism in one country?"
The Rabbi frowned, scratched his head, and thought very hard for a long time. Finally he replied:
"Yes, my son. It is just possible. But then, unfortunately, you would have to go and live somewhere else."

Hungarian cautionary tale.

Do 'you get a sense of unreality, don't you need a lifeline of sensibility to hang on to?' asked the fund-raising column of the 'Morning Star' ('incorporating the 'Daily Worker') on Monday 6 March.

Reading the rest of that edition, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Joseph Stalin, you easily could have done.

A very short factual despatch from the paper's Moscow correspondent reported that the anniversary 'passed unnoticed here yesterday. No national paper mentioned it'.

For its part, the *Morning Star* is not usually one to pass over important anniversaries. But on the political significance of Stalin and his life it offered—very prudently—not one breath of comment of its own.

'Classified'

It was left to one individual advertiser to pay for an insertion in the *In Memoriam* column:

"Stalin J.V. In memory of Uncle Joe, defender of Socialism . . ."

With fine political judgement the *Morning Star's* editors squeezed his advert into the 'classified' section, between the bankruptcy notices and the 'Situations Vacant'.

The leaders of the British Communist Party seem to have forgotten their promises of the time.

On March 7, 1953, they headlined the vow of the CPSU Central Committee that:

"The immortal name of Stalin will live for ever in the hearts of the Soviet people and of all progressive mankind".

British Party leader Harry Pollitt headed his tribute "Eternal Glory to Stalin!"

and a grief we have not the language at our command to describe" Pollitt pledged his party and its newspaper never to forget Stalin:

" . . . whose miracles in Communist construction are of a character that even Marx would never have dared to believe possible".

Daily Worker, March 7, 1953.

"Long live the immortal memory", proclaimed the solemn lead article of the same issue, "of the greatest working-class leader, genius and creative thinker that the world has ever known!"



Hungarian Stalinist secret police gunned down, 1956

Not to be outdone, the leaders of the other main Stalinist parties delivered similar judgements.

For the French CP: "We have lost Comrade Stalin, but Stalinism will live and last eternally".

Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Italian CP, announced in the Rome Chamber of Deputies:

"My soul is in anguish today at the death of my teacher, my companion and my friend. Our century will bear the name of Stalin".

For almost a whole week the illness and death of Stalin

banner headlines: "Moscow mourns deathless leader in spirit of deeper unity"—"A Great Servant of Mankind who belongs to the Ages" (this the effort of Andrew Rothstein, the Party's specialist in falsifying Soviet history)—"Such a man cannot die"—"Stalin policy will go on—building of a happy life for the people".

'Deathless leader'

It would be possible, but tedious, to multiply such examples almost indefinitely. Similar articles saturated

Specialist

It is instructive today, to look back at a few of the claims made by Stalin's choir-boys—and at the reality behind those claims.

Mr Monty Johnstone is nowadays one of the Com-

eticians', a specialist in 'critiques' of Trotskyism and a suave apologist for the more 'regrettable' aspects of 'the cult of personality'.

In the early 1950's, though (having earlier spent a brief period inside the Trotskyist movement), he was a leading propagandist for the Young Communist League.

His obituary of Stalin in their paper *Challenge* (March 14, 1953) claimed (among many other exaggerations) that "People of every race and colour are today mourning the death of their greatest leader, teacher and comrade".

One group who may have found some solace in their sorrow were the Jews of Eastern Europe.

Jews indicted

In the last years of Stalin's life he carried out a series of murderous purges in Eastern Europe, in which Jews were explicitly singled out for victimisation.

At the end of 1952 the Jewish former General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, Rudolf Slansky, was framed, 'tried' and hanged in Prague on charges which included 'Trotskyism', 'Titoism', 'fascism', 'zionism' and conspiracy with western intelligence services.

Of the thirteen who were tried with Slansky (all were convicted and eleven were executed), ten were also Jews and were described as such in the official indictment!

The trial, based on 'confessions' extracted under torture, was a clear, racialist frame-up, and has been admitted to be fraudulent by the Czech authorities.

Yet Johnstone wrote that: "These people unwillingly confessed their crimes in the face of the irrefutable testimony of facts, documents and other evidential evidence of witnesses . . . Yet, in this trial—as in all the similar trials in Eastern Europe—the British press,

without bothering to study the evidence, has said that they are not guilty".

(Monty Johnstone writes of men who sell their friends' [sic!], in *Challenge* of 10 January, 1953).

A few weeks later *Challenge* felt forced to run a front-page article headlined 'There is no Jew-baiting in Russia'.

Suppressed

Is it possible that (as they claim) Johnstone and his fellow CP propagandists were innocently misled? Hardly.

When the former Bulgarian vice-premier Traicho Kostov was tried on similar charges in December 1949 he repudiated his written 'confession' in open court.

He was immediately silenced and the trial adjourned for him to 're-read' his confession in the privacy of his cell.

This 'fact' was wholly suppressed in the massive coverage in the Bulgarian press.

And the *Daily Worker* had more important things to do in pursuit of 'democracy' and 'socialism' than ask the obvious, if awkward, questions.

Personal courage

Briskly approving Kostov's execution, its correspondents pressed on, during December 1949, with reporting the Bulgarian general election ('97% for Fatherland Front!') the universal rejoicing that apparently erupted throughout Bulgaria on Stalin's seventieth birthday (21 December, 1949) and the 'Bulgaria Today' exhibition off Bond Street:

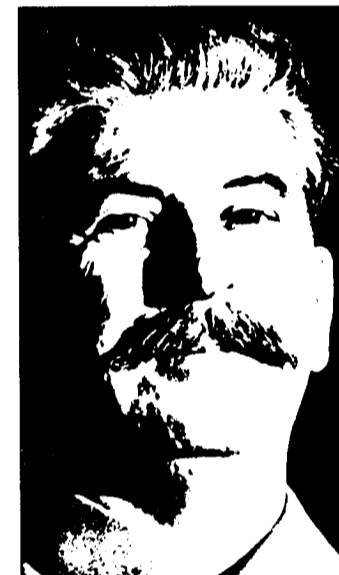
"Happy Bulgarians! . . . Socialism is now growing there so fast that you can almost see it unfurl—like one of those speeded-up films of a sprouting seed!"

Kostov was, in fact, a man of considerable personal courage.

He had led illegal Com-

munist work (and suffered police torture for it, as a result of which he was permanently crippled) before and during the war.

His treatment by the Stalinist press, which unanimously accepted as good coin the 'recantation' he was alleged to have made just before his execution (and which was admitted, in 1956, to be a forger) made it certain beyond any doubt that all those Stalinist publicists, like Monty Johnstone, who obediently swung with every shift of the political wind from Moscow, could only be



Stalin

writing dishonestly.

As well as daily dishonesty the Stalinist publicists of western Europe also resorted to the most shameless chauvinism.

A famous libel case in France in 1950 centred on the issue of whether there was any illegal political imprisonment in the Soviet Union.

Labour camps

The Communist Party maintained there was none; Jean-Paul Sartre estimated (accurately enough) that there were perhaps ten million people detained in





Slansky

labour camps, and added the comment that one citizen in twenty in a prison camp could scarcely be called socialist.

A key witness in the case was Alex Weissberg—an Austrian, Jewish physicist and Communist who had fled to the Soviet Union after the Nazis took power, and became head of the Kharkov Institute of Physics.

In the late 1930's, during the great purges, he was arrested and quite falsely accused of Trotskyism.

'Goodwill'

Then, in 1940, during the period of the Stalin-Hitler pact, he was one of those many German and Austrian Communists handed over to the Gestapo as a sign of 'goodwill' to Germany!

Weissberg, by a miracle, survived the war, and was prepared to testify. His evidence, naturally, promised to be extremely damaging to the Stalinists.

Thus, when he entered the witness box, one of the leading Stalinists in the case interrupted with a protest. His grounds? He objected to the fact that, in a French court, a German ('Boche') should be allowed to give evidence in German against the USSR!

French Stalinists took the 'national honour' of France very seriously, just as do all the 'Eurocommunist' parties of Western Europe today.

The 'Eurocommunists' are also eager, now, to obliterate their own Stalinist history.

According to the official myth 'Stalinism' was ended in 1956, with Khrushchev's 'secret speech' at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

Khrushchev's 'revelations' revealed only the tip of an iceberg of repression that the Trotskyist movement had known and fought against for decades.

His 'secret speech', however, was accepted only reluctantly and formally by the leaders of British Stalinism, who feared the repercussions of his 'thaw'.

They gave unhesitating support to Khrushchev in 1956, however, when he showed himself most completely the disciple of Stalin: in his war to crush the Hungarian revolution.

The fighting in Hungary began when the political police fired on a mass demon-

stration—of Communists, workers and students—demanding the full rehabilitation of Rajk and other Communist leaders killed in Stalin's purges.

'Justification'

It ended in November after Khrushchev's tanks launched an artillery battle against the workers of Budapest, killing twenty thousand of them before the Red Army regained control of the capital.

The official 'justification'—accepted then and now by the British Communist Party—was that the Hungarian revolution was the work of... fascists!

In December 1956 *Challenge* (to which Mr. Monty Johnstone was still a prominent contributor) carried a major feature 'explaining' the Hungarian events.

It was by James Klugmann a seasoned campaigner in Stalin's day against "Tito-Trotsky-Fascists", and the man now officially in charge of telling the truth about the Party in its own 'history'.

Verdict

Klugmann's article was headed 'It stopped Fascism and gave People chance of Free Choice'.

For their part, the Hungarian workers had already delivered their verdict on Klugmann's lying diagnosis.

In November the workers of Czepele, Budapest's main industrial suburb painted their defiant, sarcastic response to the Stalinist shells on the walls of their factories: 'The forty thousand aristocrats and fascists of Czepele strike on!'

Their feelings, like so many others from Eastern Europe and the 'Soviet Motherland', were never reported in the *Daily Worker*.

In journalism, as in other matters, Stalin's spirit lives on in the CPGB. Reflecting the interests of a narrow, reactionary caste of bureaucrats, the politics of Stalinism form an organised system of cringing, lying and hypocrisy.

It is this spirit that allows the *Morning Star's* journalist to reach the ludicrous conclusion that, because *Pravda* has not mentioned it, the anniversary of Stalin's death has 'passed unnoticed' in Moscow.



Johnstone

Deakinism and the TGWU witchhunters

By Di Parkin

Last week's article looked at the early days of witch-hunting inside the TGWU.

It was in the early 1950s however, under General Secretary Arthur Deakin that witch-hunting by the union had its heyday.

To understand why communists should have been barred from office and expelled from the union at that time, it is necessary to look beyond the mere confines of the TGWU.

Communists are witch-hunted because they represent a threat to the bureaucracy's attempts to coerce and hold down the working class.

Today communists (though no longer members of the Communist Party) and militants who have opposed the TGWU's complicity in government incomes policy and plans for speed up, pose a threat to the bureaucracy's collaboration with the ruling class.

It is for this reason that they are now singled out for attack.

Opposed strikes

Equally in the late 1940s it was those who opposed wage-freezes and class collaboration who were attacked.

The Communist Party had not, prior to 1947, been singled out for attack precisely because it had not waged any fight likely to disturb the bureaucracy.

During the war period, the Communist Party had supported the Coalition National Government and had been mainly concerned to boost production.

The CP had been opposed to strikes throughout the war, and continued this position in the immediate post war period.

But as 1947 saw the imperialist powers consolidating an anti-Soviet alliance and laying the basis of the 'Cold War', Moscow began to swing the Communist Parties towards a 'left wing' policy.

The Cominform was established in October to co-ordinate the activities of the European CPs.

And in December 1947, in an important speech, the ever obedient Harry Pollitt—the



Deakin

General Secretary of the British CP—announced that:

"We were late in appreciating the full scale of the drift to the right in the Labour Government and clung to traditional formulas and approaches after it had revealed itself as an instrument of the imperialist camp".

Still supporting the drive for productivity, he went on:

"In our anxiety for increased production we have sometimes done far too little in the fight for wages and conditions and on occasions have placed ourselves in a position where we seemed to be holding back the struggle."

He argued for the need to expose social democracy and finally in terms so appropriate for the CP today, declared that:

"Our main danger today is an underestimation of the strength of the working class and its

readiness to fight back for the achievements of its demands and its solution of the crisis".

The Communist Party therefore turned to mass work in the factories and became for the first time since the 1930s an obstacle to the continued collaboration of trade union leaders and Labour government.

Witch-hunting

In direct response to this Morgan Phillips, Secretary of the Labour Party sent a witch-hunting letter to all affiliated organisations:

"Now is the time to go all out in a great campaign against the Communist Party intrigue and infiltration inside the Labour movement".

This was a signal for Deakin and other bureaucrats to begin

to move against Communist Party militants.

Deakin declared that: **"The Communist Party stands indicted as the declared enemy of the British working class"**.

This, he claimed, was because it encouraged people

"to believe that they can only make progress by being in a constant state of conflict with the employers".

(A far cry from CP policy today!).

Deakin of course stood for collaboration and wage freeze.

CP members

At this time nine of the 34 members of the Executive Council of the TGWU were members of the CPGB including the busmen Papworth and Jones who were again, despite their being purged in 1938, in a commanding position on the Central London Bus Committee.

The CP also held key positions in the London docks.

Deakin moved inside the TGWU against the background of cold war and anti-communism, which had already led to civil servants being dismissed in Britain for membership of the CP and to a blacklist against the CP in private firms such as John Lewis's store.

Imperialist agent

In 1948 and 1949 the TUC published two pamphlets on the Communist Party in the unions called *Defend Democracy* and *The Tactic of Disruption* in which they argued that:

"Communists acting as the abject and slavish agents of forces working incessantly to intensify social misery and to create conditions of chaos and instability", were disrupting the trade union.

Supporting this view, Deakin acted to break up the World Federation of Trade Unions which contained representatives from the workers' states.

Deakin was President of the Federation and, acting entirely as the "abject and slavish agent" of imperialism withdrew Britain from the World Federation by walking out of an International Conference in January 1949.

(Walking out of meetings is now used by the right wing as an excuse for witch-hunts).

'Honoured'

For this and other attacks on communism, Deakin was made a Companion of Honour.

Once the atmosphere of anti-communist hysteria had been worked up Deakin was able to get the 1949 Biennial Delegate Conference of the TGWU to pass the motion that:

"no member of the Party shall be eligible to hold office within the Union" by 426 to 208 votes.

Deakin however, did not have things all his way and next week's article will detail the resistance to the witch-hunting.

IN REVIEW

Johnny Burne reviews "Only a Game?" by Eamon Dunphy. Published by Kestrel Books in a hardback edition at £2.50

"Deep down in all of us there resides this spirit of rebellion, but if we all rebelled, if we all took up the cudgels in support of a complete revolution of the present order of things, there would be only one result—CHAOS".

This quotation could well have been taken from any Fleet Street hack's ritual attacks on the independent movement of the working class.

In fact it comes from the Millwall Football Club's programme one week after Eamon Dunphy's departure from that club.

Dunphy, now retired, was a gifted midfielder player, a competitive, skillful craftsman who regularly played international football for Eire.

His skills and dedication should have ensured him a long career in the First Division but he was quickly recognised by the autocratic soccer establishment as a "militant" and a "trouble-maker", a man prepared to agitate uncompromisingly for a footballers' trade union in opposition to the bureaucratically-

imposed Professional Footballers' Association (PFA).

Dunphy was clearly something of a political 'loner', an isolated individual working from a basis of socialist convictions but without the support of a group to give coherent direction to his principled struggles.

The strengths and weaknesses of his book all stem from this.

Only a Game? is a straightforward diary of his last three months at Millwall, where he stayed for eight years.

Apart from a brief period with Manchester United early in his career he was always propping up struggling clubs like York, Charlton, Reading and Millwall.

This experience sharpened his awareness of the class nature of the battles within the sport—the role of the directors, the position of ex-players who become managers and coaches, and the exploitation of young 'apprentice' professionals.

Success with feet or with fists has long been one of the mythological escape routes offered by capitalism to working class youth.

It has become part of bourgeois ideology. The hungry fighter is the best business proposition.

Foul play off the field

Dunphy attacks this attitude with subjective but penetrating class consciousness which sets this book far above the usual horrendous ghost-written pap that passes for football literature:

"You rarely get through to people in football if you start talking about this kind of thing.

People say, 'Yes, but they know what they are doing when they come into it'. But do they? At fifteen, I didn't know what I was doing when I went into it. You come from a working class home with no future except as factory fodder. No real education and no choices open to you".

The development of sport under capitalism has tended to follow a clearly defined historical pattern.

Put crudely, a proletarian form of relaxation is rapidly assimilated by the bourgeoisie and transformed into a commercial enterprise.

In some sports this process is so thorough that eventually the players themselves are largely recruited from the middle-classes (e.g. rugby and cricket).

Football has become the most lucrative sport of all in Britain

to maintain its recruitment and audience drawn from the working class.

The financial rewards for the few who 'make it' are great for ten or twelve years, but this superficial gloss conceals the fundamental conflicts embodied in the system as a whole.

Dunphy's book provides some vital insights into those conflicts. It is significant that *Only a Game?* should have Millwall's "Den" as its background.

Recent press hysteria about crowd trouble and violence at the ground ignored the fact that the Den was first closed in 1930 after persistent trouble and has been closed three times since.

Last year it emerged that the National Front were recruiting Millwall fans in some numbers.

Capital has traditionally provided forms of institutionalised and ritualised violence to soak up the undirected anger and frustration of those already brutalised by inadequate housing, education and unemployment.

That such violence is now centred round football is no accident for, as Eamon Dunphy's book shows, class conflict is inherent in the whole structure of

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Garners strikers elect committee



PHOTO: John Smith, IFL

Strikers at Boddingtons breweries in Manchester voting to continue their strike.

A major step forward in the seven-week union recognition strike at Garners Steak Houses was taken on Sunday when a 7-man strike committee was elected.

This offers a real opportunity to fight the treachery of union officials. Even in the midst of national press and TV coverage TGWU bureaucrats continued last week with their preparations to sell out the strike.

Behind-scenes talks

It is also rumoured that behind the scenes talks have started between top union officials and Garners boss

Margolis towards an agreement along the lines proposed by TGWU official Abraham.

Determination

He had offered, in an interview with the Tory press, to call off the strike immediately if the employers would only recognise the outcome of an ACAS inquiry.

Abraham speaks for himself and not the strikers. They have declared their determination to fight if necessary for 1-2 years for their demands, and that they refuse to return to work without union recognition.

Their lead is prompting a wide response. Other catering workers are approaching Garners pickets asking for

TGWU membership forms. But union bureaucrats are hostile to these moves towards unionisation by low-paid and oppressed sections of workers.

They know that behind the fight for union rights are a flood of demands on wages, job security and working conditions which can only inconvenience and embarrass union officials.

Sell out

Last week's meeting between the TUC Catering Committee and selected MPs was clearly designed to discuss how to head off such struggles and derail any action that might threaten the Lib-Lab coalition government.

The objective of the officials is to prevent any unity between Garner strikers and other sections of catering workers. By isolating the strike they hope to create the best conditions for a sell-out.

Black supplies

The new strike committee must now follow through the fight for the Region 1 Committee to implement the following policies:

- *No talks, no return, until the bosses recognise the union!
- *Mass picketing to be organised every Saturday.
- *Black all suppliers, supplies and maintenance.
- *A regional levy to finance the strike.

All messages of support and donations to the strike fund should be sent to: TGWU room 84, 12-13, Henrietta Street, London WC2.

EVERY JOB SOLD MEANS A WORKER ON THE DOLE!

Thousands of jobs in the steel industry are being auctioned off by union leaders at a time of mass unemployment in an effort to make the working class shoulder the cost of the industry's £520 million annual losses.

Following the agreement for the early closure of plants at Hartlepool and East Moors, Cardiff, BSC is now offering well-publicised cash handouts for steelworkers in Ebbw Vale if they will depart quietly for the dole queues.

Collaboration

Saddled with a union leadership that is dedicated to collaboration with British Steel Corporation management, and involved at the highest level in "worker participation", steelworkers have been offered no real alternative to management's "voluntary" redundancy plans.

While press reports were orchestrated to maximise the figures involved for long service workers in the pay-out no leadership has emerged among the threatened steelworkers that is prepared to spell out the realities of the situation—that every job sold by an older worker today is a job snatched from youth and the unemployed in the future.

No concessions

The starting point for a principled leadership in the steel unions has to be the defence of all jobs—no concessions to the profits crisis of British capitalism or the international recession.

While shipyards, the car industry, the railways and a host of other industries slash production and attack their workforce in an effort to safeguard their profitability, of course there is less and less work in a shrinking capitalist market.

There is no answer in making concessions to management: after every wave of "voluntary" redundancies the diminished number remaining in work face speed up and further rounds of wage control, while the employers draw up new plans for cutbacks.

by challenging the 'right' of the employer to impose redundancies—insisting that the dwindling amount of work available to be shared between the whole workforce at no loss of pay.

Open the books

This must be combined by the election of trade union committees to open the books of the employers and uncover the facts behind the cutbacks, to enable a real fight to take place.

How much of British Steel's £520 million 'losses' finds its way into the outstretched palms of the private

suppliers, manufacturers, bankers and hauliers?

How much more steel production could be utilised if a socialist programme of useful public works was launched?

It is by challenging the employers' offensive from such a standpoint, and pointing to the necessity for a socialist solution that steelworkers can take steps to strike a blow in defence of their own jobs and those of countless thousands more workers in other industries.

Break the coalition

They must fight through their unions and the Labour

Party to break the anti-socialist Lib-Lab coalition, and for a programme that includes nationalisation of major industry and the banks without compensation under workers' management.

Meanwhile every job must be retained, and attempts at compulsory redundancy must be fought by occupation.

The slightest concession given to management at this point will not only allow jobs to be savagely attacked, but also open the door for an all-round onslaught on conditions.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Bill Sirs

FEEBLE PAY CLAIM HIDES WILL TO FIGHT

As the Easter school holidays begin, the teachers' pay dispute remains unresolved.

Despite the limited nature of the industrial action being taken—withdrawal from voluntary activities—support has grown rapidly.

Contrary to the wishes of the reactionary teachers union leaders—who have always opposed developments like the National Union of School Students—the closing of schools at lunchtime in certain areas has also sparked off a wave of radicalisation among youth.

Frustrations

Demonstrations have taken place in many areas, particularly in Birmingham, and despite the attempts of the capitalist press to turn this against teachers, the movement expresses the real frustrations of school students which increasingly spread into militant action.

Youth in Birmingham who marched to the Town Hall raised demands calling on the authorities to meet the teachers' claim. In London, the Inner

has called on the NUT Executive to call a one day national strike in support of the claim.

The same move has taken place in other associations, such as Enfield.

The mood of teachers has been strengthened by the resignation of Sir Astley Bramall from the management panel which judges pay awards.

Readiness

But the central lesson of the present move is the readiness of present teachers, not noted for wages militancy, to go forward when even the slightest hint of a lead is given.

The NUT bureaucrats have only recommended action, whereas the NAS/UWT has instructed its members.

But both groups are ready to settle for the mere offer of an extra 1% and not in the least ready to break the 10% limit.

They are concerned only with a certain limited protest which they can use to present as a fight over salaries.

The readiness of teachers to follow this lead gives a slight indication of the response that could have been



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Meeting during Dundee day of action against the cuts

a serious struggle had been offered.

The NUT conference which starts this weekend in Blackpool must resolve to reject all forms of wage control in the future and to base next year's claim on full restoration of the value of the Houghton award plus cost of living rises based on trade union figures.

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ONLY STRIKES WILL STOP HEALTH CUTS

Reject bosses' inquiries

London firemen welcomed back four of their number last week who had been marked down for the axe by fire brigade chiefs.

The four were among six firemen suspended after the courts convicted them of petty theft during the Fire Brigades Union strike. The charges included one of stealing a roll of sticky tape.

But the reinstatement is far from a victory. Two strikers have been effectively sacked—they resigned during the management conducted inquiry.

When the sackings were first threatened soon after the end of the pay strike, only the full weight of London FBU bureaucrats prevented the firemen walking out again in support of the victimised members.

Since then the FBU has allowed Chief Officers to decide the fate of the six. Rank and file pressure deterred the management sub-committee from going through with the four extra sackings, giving the membership a partial victory.

None of the FBU members would have lost their jobs if independent class action in their defence had not been blocked. Trade unionists in the fire service must place no faith in management committees.

A public meeting called by BACHCCS (Birmingham Action Committee Against Hospital Closures and Cuts in Services) was attended by approximately 100 trade unionists in Birmingham on March 8 to discuss hospital closures proposed by the Area Health Authority.

On the platform were a shop steward from Lucas's, a representative from a Community Health Council, a representative from the Hounslow Occupation Committee and a local NUPE official.

The original plan proposed by the AHA which entailed closure of 14 hospitals has now been modified and some of the hospitals have now been at least temporarily relieved.

Pressure

This decision is undoubtedly due in part to the pressure of BACHCCS which showed its wide base of support in a lobby of the AHA in February.

The AHA are still insisting on the closure of at least some of the remaining hospitals including at the top of the list a small geriatric hospital called Romsley Hill.

The meeting went on to discuss future plans for the campaign and a number of proposals were offered by attending delegates.

WSL members argued that

the way forward for a campaign should be to hold a workers inquiry into the health service locally.

Workers inquiry

Such an inquiry must start from the basic premise that the health service be run for the needs of the working class and not on the pitiful finances supplied by the Lib-Lab coalition determined to slash public services.

This suggestion is to be taken up by a BACHCCS

and a steering group has been established which is to organise a workers' enquiry into the financing of the health service.

In the short term the workers in hospitals threatened with imminent closure are being organised to prevent a repetition of Hounslow.

Workers at Romsley have already decided to occupy should the AHA decide to move against them.

This action must be effectively backed up by a pledge

from officials for supportive strike action in the health service and the building of support from industrial workers throughout the area.

Strength

The AHA will certainly not change their attitude towards closures by the persuasive tactics employed so far by BACHCCS but only by the strength of the organised working class movement in Birmingham.

Shop staff prevent sacking

A lightning strike by women working in Oxford's Mothercare store has ended in complete victory after only a few hours with the reinstatement of a victimised union member and has given an important boost to unionise many other workers in similar establishments.

The Mothercare retail chain is typical of many such companies in its dependence on women workers, many part-time, and had formerly been able to rely on tried and trusted methods for getting rid of "awkward" individuals.

Phoney "counselling", disciplinary sessions on trumped up charges and persistent harassment has meant that sackings are commonplace and the chances of resistance nil.

In this case, following such management moves against a number of the staff, an approach was made to USDAW, the shopworkers' union, with the result that a group took the decision to join.

Walked out

At the same time advice was sought from supporters of the local Student-Trade Union Liaison Committee, a body prominent in the marathon hotels unionisation struggles.

So, when the anticipated sacking took place last Thursday, the basis had been laid for the planning of an effective response.

A meeting of the workforce was organised for first thing the following morning, where the remainder agreed to join the union.

They elected a shop-steward and voted unanimously for strike action unless management conceded reinstatement within an hour.

Despite panicked appeals from management for them to extend their deadline until the arrival of senior management, when no assurance had been received, the women walked out.

Once in dispute a second approach was made to the union office. Though they had been told earlier in the morning that everyone was "too busy" until the following week, this time, on hearing of the strike, the area full-time official appeared within half an hour!

Faced with a solid and effective picket line and an increasingly determined membership, the USDAW bureaucrat's desire to add their scalps to his collection of sell-out mementoes was considerably reduced and in subsequent negotiations the company agreed in full to the strikers' demands.

As in catering and elsewhere, the unionisation of shop workers brings into the organised ranks of the working class important new forces.

The immediate task they face is the struggle to challenge the arch-class collaborators in Lord Allen's super-bureaucratic fortress and begin the fight for revolutionary leadership in the shopworkers' union.



Bethnal Green Hospital campaign pickets the Area Health Authority

STRIKERS 'HANG' MANAGER

Workers in a Birmingham drink warehouse faced the sack this week after a month long strike in defence of two sacked workers.

They responded to the sacking threat by stringing up an effigy of the manager of the Castle Vale wine and spirits depot they have shut for the past five weeks.

One of the dismissed men—Keith Bradley—is the son of 'Fox and Goose' pub with no beer TGWU official Ken Bradley.

TGWU officials have co-operated in the dismissal of Keith Bradley and a second worker. 37 of their fellow workers have refused to accept this collaboration.

Blind alley protests

Nearly 150 people attended a meeting last Thursday in Bethnal Green, East London, called on defence of the local hospital which faces closure.

Conspicuously absent from the speakers on the platform were any leaders of health service unions.

Alan Fisher, leader of NUPE, did not even bother to answer an invitation.

Unfortunately he would have had little to fear from the majority of contributions.

No mention

Whilst decisions have been taken to campaign in the unions for a pledge of area-wide strike action in the event of any attempt to close Bethnal Green, no mention of this was made.

Speaker after speaker turned the issue away from the fight to mobilise the working class in struggle through the unions, and replaced it with a festival of protest politics.

Dangerous illusion

Not a single new proposal for action was put forward that was in any way different from the petitions, protest lobbies and letter-writing mooted at the last (much larger) public meeting.

A representative from Hounslow Hospital described the vicious scab violence used by Area Health Authorities to destroy medical facilities.

But still there was talk of sufficient protest being able to 'embarrass' the AHA.

This dangerous illusion was strengthened by the presentation of the Elizabeth

Garrett Anderson Hospital in North London as having been 'saved' by a dogged work-in and 'embarrassing' protest.

In fact the EGA's fate is still in doubt—and if it is saved it could be at the expense of other cutbacks.

The struggle to defend the NHS as a whole requires socialist policies and the mobilisation of the labour movement behind them.

As a speaker from the Workers Socialist League pointed out this fight must begin with a battle against the present union leaders for occupations and strike action to defend hospitals, and impose a system of health service spending linked to inflation as assessed by trade union committees.

Conscious fight

This struggle requires a

conscious fight against the capitalist class and its Lib-Lab coalition government, not the sugary illusions of protest politics which lead so many hospital workers into a blind alley.

The meeting heard Mr Beasley, leader of the local Labour council announce that after months of silence his group had finally come out in favour of Bethnal Green hospital.

He hastened to point out, however, that in his esteemed opinion, the matter would be settled only by 'reasoned argument' with the authorities.

That the chairman—leading SWP member David Widgery—called this scandalous rubbish "an important step forward", puts in a nutshell the huge crisis of leadership that confronts health workers.



...YOUR MAN AT THE TOP'S FIGHT TO STAY ON YOUR BACK.





Italian police after a bombing incident

BENN GIVES BLESSING TO CALLAGHAN

With production in British industry still below the levels of the Tory three-day week, and almost daily announcements of factory closures and redundancies in every part of the country, the impact of the Lib-Lab government's anti-socialist policies is being widely felt.

On Merseyside alone closures and sackings by Meccano, British Leyland, Birds Eye, GEC, Lucas

Aerospace, Lucas Industries, Booth Concrete, Courtaulds and Cammell Laird have put over 7,000 jobs under the axe in an area where 11.3% of the workforce is already unemployed.

Still militant

The quick succession of announced Liverpool cutbacks seems as much designed to discipline, demoralise and weaken a still militant section of the working class as to rationalise capitalist industry in the area.

But these redundancies are just a part of the all-round attack on manning levels being waged by employers in every industry—from the railways to the shipyards from car components to food manufacture.

This is the price being paid by the working class for fulfilment of the Callaghan government's plan to restore the profitability of private industry through stepping up the exploitation of the working class.

And while individual 'left' Labour MPs, particularly from Merseyside, have raised isolated whimpers in protest against aspects of this conscious policy, they have continued to troop loyally into the Parliamentary lobbies to vote support for the reactionary Lib-Lab alliance that is implementing the attacks.

Early election

Now, with talk of an early election being bandied about in the Tory press, this "left-wing" grovelling to Callaghan will no doubt intensify.

The first signs have already appeared. Moth-eaten "left" coalition minister Tony Benn declared to a rally of supposedly left-wing 'Tribune' supporters last Friday that he and his co-thinkers would work all-out for the return of a Labour government under Callaghan.

"Let no one suppose that the policy debates inside the party, which will continue through the drafting of the manifesto and into the next Parliament, indicate any hesitation in working flat-out for electoral victory under Jim Callaghan".

By explicitly rejecting any intention of replacing Callaghan, Benn is merely stating openly the position tacitly held by the whole Labour 'left'.

Sick joke

His talk of a "debate" on the manifesto is no more than a sick joke, since Benn knew when he spoke that Callaghan had cynically suppressed policy papers on the budget drawn up by the Party's National Executive—with the clear objective of preventing any discussion on alternative proposals for either the budget or the manifesto for the next election!

So while NEC member and Merseyside MP Eric Heffer twitters on harmlessly in Taunton about the need to fight the effects of "a greedy, selfish, capitalist society" and calls for a minister to be made responsible for unemployment on Merseyside, Callaghan is ruthlessly trampling even the puniest opposition.

Only a socialist programme centred on nationalisation of the major industries and the banks without compensation and under workers management can provide the planned programme of useful public works needed to end unemployment.

Inability

But the prerequisite for such a programme is to break the Lib-Lab coalition deal that is the capitalist class' guarantee against socialism, and to remove the reactionary Callaghan-Healey leadership.

Benn and his fellow 'lefts' have time and again shown their refusal and their inability to conduct such a fight.

In demanding that they take a stand now against Callaghan, workers must not in any way rely on them conducting such a fight.

Redundancies and closures must be fought in each case by factory occupation and the demand for work-sharing on full pay.

[See further article, p.10]

ITALY IN NEW CRISIS

The moment that was supposed to mark the end of Italy's latest government crisis, has dramatically become the occasion for a new political upheaval.

Aldo Moro was being escorted by his bodyguards to the parliament to join the Communist and Socialist Parties in voting confidence in Giulio Andreotti's new administration when he was kidnapped and his bodyguards shot dead.

Responsibility for this cunningly executed coup has been claimed, like many other recent dramatic terrorist attacks, by the "Red Brigades".

Moro is not just any Italian ex-prime minister.

Architect

He is the main architect of the strategy of "Centre-Left" governments through which, from 1963 onwards, the Christian Democratic party has tried to head-off the offensive of the Italian working class.

Moro was Prime Minister in five different governments and has occupied almost all the major government posts.

He remains as one of the chief suspects for being "Antelope", the code name of the senior minister implicated in the Lockheed bribes scandal but never publicly identified.

But such is the level of corruption of Christian Democratic politicians in Italy that these suspicions have not stopped him being at present President of the Christian Democratic Party and the most likely candidate to become President of Italy in the elections to be held in six months time.

Threat to kill

In capturing Moro the "Red Brigades" have, as they themselves claim, "carried the attack to the heart of the state".

Moro's chances of becoming President now look pretty slender as his captors have threatened to kill him if the state authorities do not release the 14 alleged leaders of the "Red Brigades" now on trial in Turin.

In kidnapping Moro, the "Red Brigades" say they are

CP backs repression

striking a blow against "imperialist capitalism" and in favour of the socialist revolution.

Some of their captured alleged members have said that the group's strategy is to provoke a fascist coup in order to provoke the workers movement to break from the reformism of the Communist Party.

Socialist Press totally condemns this dangerous perspective which we assume to come from deeply misguided sections of the ultra-left—though the possibility of right-wing provocations cannot be ruled out.



But it is not the left but the terrorists of the right—the fascist bands and sections of the state apparatus—who carry responsibility for the mounting atmosphere of physical terror which dominates Italy.

Violence, arbitrary arrest and harassment are to be expected against any left wing or labour movement militant in Italy from a repressive state apparatus which is riddled with fascists.

Against these attacks, the Stalinist Communist Party has consistently sabotaged any efforts to build independent workers' defence.

It has done the opposite. It has been the most bellicose advocate of intensifying the repression by the bourgeois state apparatus.

The CP leadership is now being consulted by the state authorities about how to deal with the crisis following Moro's capture.

While the CP members of parliament rushed to vote their support for Andreotti's new anti-working class austerity programme, the party organised a joint demonstration in favour of "democracy" with the Christian Democrats.

It was with pride and not shame that the *Morning Star* reported the scandalous fact that:

"for the first time for 30 years... there were there together with the red flags of the Communist and Socialist parties and the trade unions thousands of white flags with the shields of the Christian Democrats".

Total betrayal

At the same time in a grotesque prostitution of the strike weapon, the CP-led unions joined in organising token protest stoppages of work in the factories—though organised in such a way that they would not affect production or the bosses' profits.

The calling of strikes in support of repression by the bourgeois state is appropriately one of the first acts of the CP in its new role as an acknowledged party of the governmental majority.

It is an expression of the party's total betrayal of the class it claims to lead.

Party theoretician Napolitano once again made this explicit when he said last week:

"We do not want a Communist Italy; we want a democratic and progressive Italy".

That, as he knows, is a euphemism for the Italy of exploitation, corruption and repression—Andreotti's Italy, Moro's Italy, capitalist Italy, the CP's Italy.



CP leader Berlinguer (left)

French Popular Front defeated

As we go to press, all but four of the results have been declared in the second round of the French General Election.

It is quite clear that the bourgeois parties have maintained a substantial majority of some 90 seats.

This is a sizeable drop in their former parliamentary power, but does not reflect the full extent of the gains made by the workers' parties.

The French electoral system exaggerates small majorities in a percentage of total votes cast to give a "working" majority in Parliament.

CP blamed

The Communist Party has been blamed for these results by Robert Fabre, leader of the "left" Radicals.

Fabre also announced that his bourgeois party was now withdrawing from the Union of the Left.

Both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, the other two components of this Popular Front formation have gained 14 seats apiece. But this is a far cry from

their confident predictions during the election campaign that the "left" would win a historic victory.

Assessment

In the event, the party which made the largest gain was the UDF—a loose coalition bundled together in support of President Giscard d'Estaing.

Their progress largely compensated for the big losses of Chirac's Gaullist grouping, the RPR.

The next edition of *Socialist Press* will carry a full assessment of the French elections and their significance for the international workers' movement.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Public Meeting
Thursday April 6, 1978
7.30pm at Mitre Hotel
Dale Street
Liverpool

"Fight redundancies, fight closures—Our policy to defend jobs"