

SOCIALIST PRESS



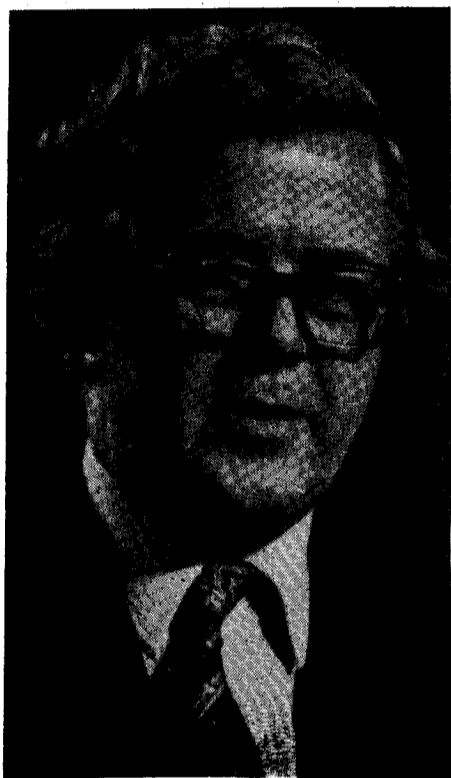
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NAMIBIA IN STRUGGLE

Centre pages

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Letting prices rip—Howe

Government figures last week confirmed that the cost of living is now racing up at the rate of 22p in the pound per year. This confirms the threat now facing every working class family.

Living standards are being slashed by Tory policies. Wages are lagging far behind a runaway rise in prices.

Even the ludicrously high government figure for the increase in average earnings—which they claim is now 20%—falls far behind the price explosion when income tax is taken into account.

But who is actually getting this 20% increase? Only a handful of powerful unions—miners, railwaymen, water workers and power workers—achieved pay rises of anything near 20%.

On the other hand millions of workers in the public services and manufacturing industry have received far smaller increases—ranging from 5% (British Leyland) to an average 12-15% before tax.

BUDGET INCREASES

Meanwhile two successive Tory budgets have deliberately driven up the cost of living, through hikes in VAT, duty on drink, tobacco and petrol, and huge spending cuts that have forced increased public service charges.

In the last month alone Chancellor Howe's efforts bore fruit in the form of increases in rates, rents, water charges, house repairs and maintenance, drinks, cigarettes, meat, electricity, gas, tube fares, bus fares, and vehicle licence fees.

Food prices, reflecting the Tories' commitment to the Common Market, continue to rise. Next month will see a further increase in the price of bread and petrol.

And of course it is not only wage earners who shoulder the brunt of this surge in prices: Howe's last budget also decreed that state benefits will increase by 5% less than the rate of inflation, and effectively cut the real value of child benefits.

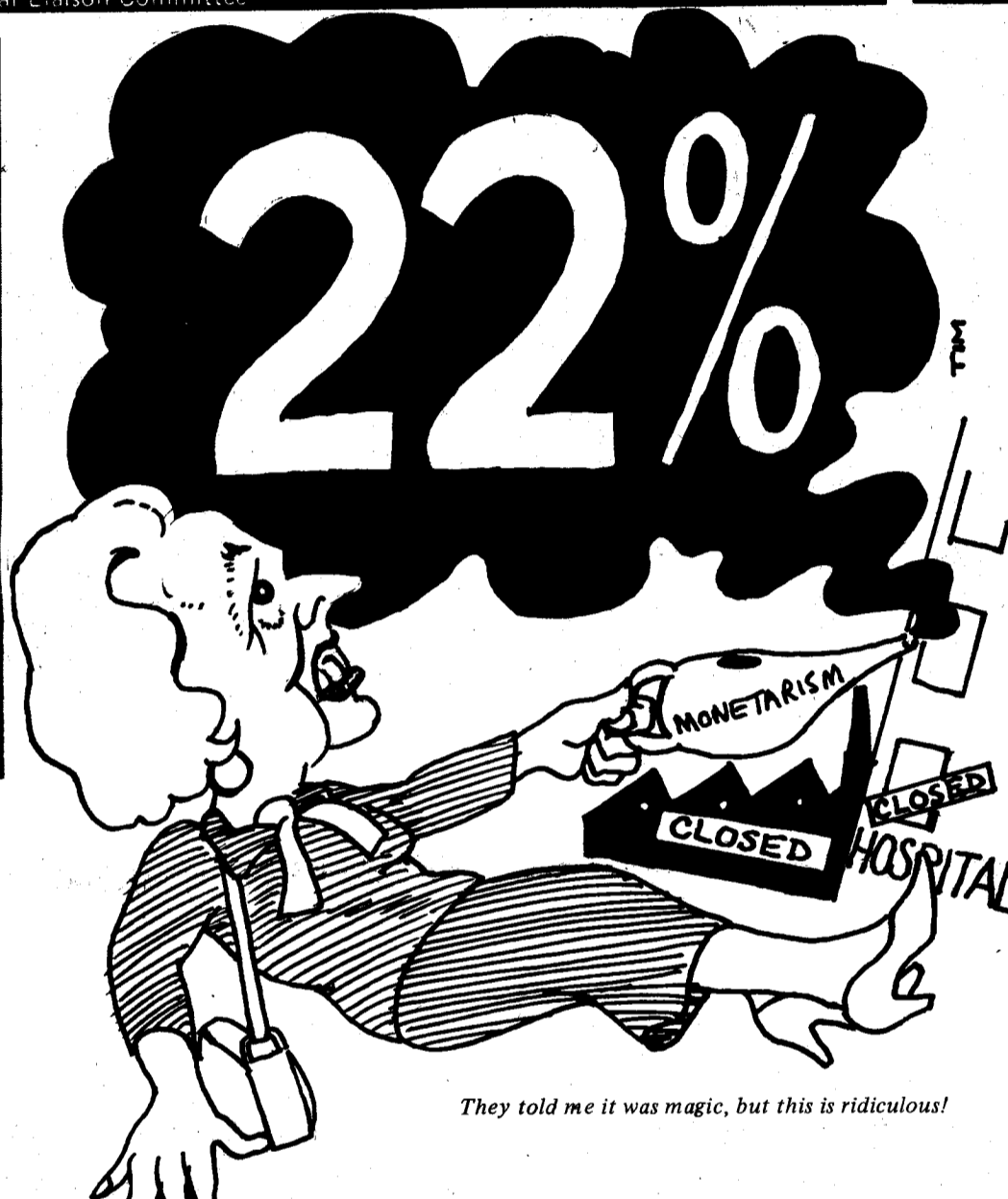
This situation is no accidental oversight by the Thatcher government. From the outset it has shown itself determined to foist the full burden of the economic crisis onto the backs of the working class—with tax cuts for the rich, wage increases for the police, and bonanza profits for the banks coupled with closures, cuts, and plunging living standards for the workers.

The Tories have clung tenaciously to their monetarist policies, which attempt to control inflation through restricting the cash available to industry and the public sector.

CLOSURES

This policy has brought sky-high interest rates, a decline of production, a wave of closures and the threat of ruin to many weaker employers.

But with the government itself busily eroding the value of money by jacking up the prices of a whole range of basic goods and services, and with continued increases in oil prices on a world scale, such policies have simply increased



They told me it was magic, but this is ridiculous!

TORIES BOOST PRICES!

unemployment.

In such a situation wage increases are no more than a belated attempt by workers to defend their living standards against inflation—they are in no way the cause of rising prices.

Yet the Tory government are not the only ones trying to claim that the present inflation rate is the result of "excessive wage demands".

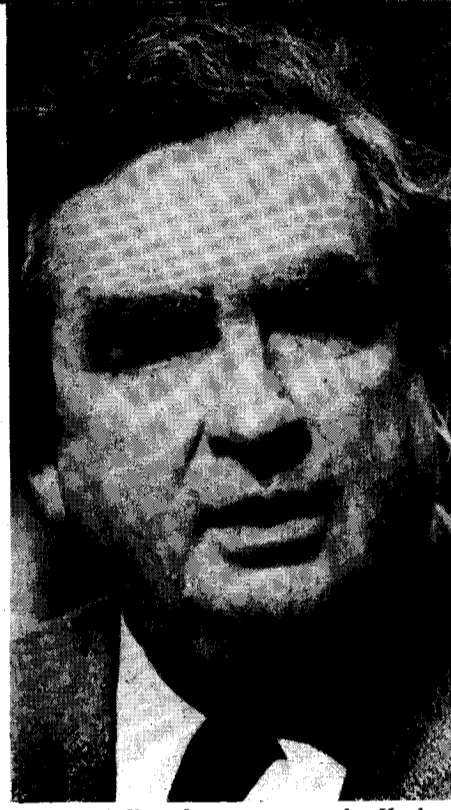
The Labour Shadow Cabinet—whose four years of wage controls helped inflict a historic cut in workers' living standards and pave the way for the return of the Tories—chose last Thursday to issue an appeal to the Tories to reintroduce wage controls.

Not only Dennis Healey but also one-time 'left' winger Michael Foot have joined the chorus blaming the working class for the 22% inflation—and reaffirmed that if reelected they would once again impose rigid wage controls!

There is little doubt that many TUC leaders, in their repeated appeals to Thatcher to "open the doors of Downing Street" and to make a "U-turn" would also favour a turn towards wage controls.

Frightened beyond belief by the growing power and militancy of their members, the union leaders would secretly welcome the opportunity to declare it "illegal" to fight for a living wage—as they did when Heath introduced state control of wages.

Yet for all the treachery and cowardice of their leaders, whose first priority is to preserve the profits and "viability" of the employers, the working class shows no signs of meekly accepting the Tory attacks. Union conferences and negotiating committees will undoubtedly face a wave of demands for wage increases in excess of 20%.



Calling for wage controls—Healey

But such demands fall short of the needs of the working class. They take no account of the impact of taxation on workers' living standards; and in seeking to compensate for inflation through once-a-year payments they ensure that wage levels trail continuously behind price increases.

Indeed it is vital that the workers movement make its own assessment of the scale and pace of inflation as it affects working class families. Trade union bodies should elect price committees comprising workers, housewives, claimants, and sympathetic expert assistance with the task of compiling an ongoing working class cost-of-living index as the basis for catching up pay claims.

But the same figures will also show the necessity for a continuous rise in wages on a quarterly or monthly basis to keep pace with runaway inflation.

The demand for every wage agreement to include a cost-of-living clause specifying such increases must be inserted into every claim.

PLUNGE

Employers will of course argue that they could not possibly afford to pay such increases. But the reality is that throughout the present crisis workers' leaders have started out from what the employers could or could not afford; the result has been a catastrophic leap in unemployment, in poverty and homelessness and a disastrous plunge in living standards and social services.

There have already been too many sacrifices to the present bankrupt and decaying capitalist system. If employers cannot offer workers a decent wage or a steady job, it proves that there must be full-scale class action to bring down this vicious Tory government, remove the wage-cutting Labour leadership, and establish a workers government that will nationalise the banks and basic industry and control inflation through establishing a planned, socialist economy.



Monetarist gurus Lawson and Biffen

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



INTERNATIONAL

As generals get six months for coup bid Fascist threat grows in Spain

Ever since the belated death of Franco in 1975 there have been daily indications, often of a dramatic kind, that his political heirs inside the Spanish state remained very much alive.

There have been 5 years of elaborate collaboration between the "democratic" sections of Franco's political elite (organised in Adolfo Suarez' Democratic Centre Union) and the leaders of the major workers' parties to set up bourgeois parliamentary democracy in Spain.

Success

The exercise has been a considerable success in the sense that Spain's "peaceful transition from Francoism to democracy" has been officially accepted from Washington to Moscow and Peking and by the leaders of workers' organisations everywhere.

Also large sections of the political left in Spain, including Trotskyist parties such as the LCR, have accepted that the Spanish state has indeed undergone a qualitative democratic change.

Of course the present state system is significantly different from Franco's dictatorship in that like all bourgeois democratic states it rests partly on the systematic collaboration of the apparatuses of the main workers' organisations with capitalist state power.

Also like all other bourgeois democratic states, capitalist state power rests ultimately on the armed might of the repressive state apparatus—the army and the police.

But in most bourgeois demo-



cracies, despite the daily use of that apparatus, despite the immense political power and influence of its high officials, it is constrained by the bourgeoisie's definitive though not unconditional decision to base its rule primarily on the political control of the oppressed classes, granting them various degrees of legal rights.

In Spain today that situation is less clear cut.

Caution

The 'democratic' bourgeoisie have approached their demo-

cratisation plans with caution and uncertainty and have never made the definitive steps which were made, for example, by the Italian and German bourgeoisies after the defeat of their Nazi and fascist regimes.

Attacks

This is reflected in the Spanish laws which still involve more fundamental attacks on political and personal freedoms than do those of most West European states.

But more than anything else it is reflected in the nature of

the army and the police.

These are in essence exactly in the form that Franco left them—still even dominated by the personnel he appointed.

And they retain many legal powers which are preserved directly from the Franco era and which are not even nominally sanctioned by the Cortes (parliament).

In particular the military can conduct trials and imprison civilians in their own courts without recourse to the main legal system of the country. This was done in the case of the "Els Joglars" theatre group in 1978.

3 months jail

It has become evident recently in any case that the civil courts are themselves still manned by Franco appointees and in close liaison with the military.

Over the last two weeks the civil courts have summarily acquitted Franco's daughter of a smuggling charge and they have sentenced the editor of *El Pais*—the country's most prestigious bourgeois daily newspaper—to three months in jail for criticising two years ago the treatment of the Els Joglars group and other restrictions on the freedom of expression in Spain.

Since the trial *El Pais* has revealed the existence of a massive plot by the state secret services to frame the editor as a KGB agent.

At the same time a military court, after hearing the most rapid and superficial evidence, has sentenced two officers involved in the "Operation Galaxy" attempted military coup two years ago to a derisory six-month sentence—the minimum for the offence.

It is almost certain that the trial was rushed through in order to protect senior officers still in their posts who were implicated in the attempt.

These events led even the French bourgeois paper *Le Monde* to conclude on May 15 that "The political situation in Spain is worsening. Facts are accumulating which show that the police and the magistrature have hardly changed since Francoism."

In addition to the examples of Francoism within the state *Le Monde* also reported a sharp recent increase in fascist demonstrations and attacks against workers and left wing political militants.

On May 1 a demonstrator was knifed to death. One person was shot dead and a number wounded in a recent fascist attack on a cafe. And students of the Madrid law faculty were set upon with chains and iron bars.



CP leader Carrillo

The new Interior Minister Juan Jose Rason laughably dismissed these events as "unfortunate acts of emotion and passion".

But there is growing evidence that they are carefully planned and coordinated by forces within the state apparatus.

This series of alarming developments produced last week the most heated debate of the present Spanish parliament.

Face-lift

Socialist and Communist Party MPs were not surprisingly furious. Such obvious evidence of the unreformed nature of so much of the Spanish state apparatus exposes the criminal role that has been played in recent years by the reformists and Stalinists themselves.

At the head of the labour movement they have collaborated with the bourgeoisie in giving a "democratic" face-lift to a state which is still Francoist in so many fundamental respects.

The reformist and Stalinist leaders, for all their fury in the Cortes, still stand as mortal enemies of the needed establishment of independent working class self-defence organisations against the growing peril of fascism in Spain.

PERU

As we go to press results of the Peruvian elections are still awaited. A full background article will appear in next week's *Socialist Press*.

Bourgeois law under attack

From the streets of St Pauls in Bristol to the streets of Copenhagen; from the streets of Holland to the streets of Switzerland; in Paris, Miami and Seoul, Korea, the pressures of the economic and social crisis of capitalism is producing repeated riots—violent explosions of working class anger that challenge the 'norms' of bourgeois legality.

France

A thirty year old unemployed man was killed in Paris on May 13 when police charged a group of students demonstrating on the campus of the University of Paris-Jussieu in the Latin Quarter of Paris.

The trouble began at about 4 p.m. after a dozen or so students had overturned a bus in the rue Linne and set it alight.

Soon after the police entered the university campus from three sides to be met with a hail of missiles and causing general panic. Paris-Jussieu is not one of the universities on strike and most of the students were working normally.

The young man who died, Alain Begrand, was killed when a roof he had climbed onto to escape the police gave way. He died of a fractured skull. But even Begrand's death was not enough to stop the orgy of police violence with baton charges continuing.

Later in the evening a demonstration of 3,000 people marched in protest against the police repression, more missiles were thrown and a car was set on fire. In all, eight people were arrested.

In the provinces demonstrations and other forms of protest from students in sympathy with those in Paris were immediate.

In Caen, for instance, there was a demonstration through the middle of the town after which about 200 students went off to the University Rector's Offices and smashed windows. A desk was also burned.

New impetus

These incidents come at the end of several months of struggle on the campuses over restrictions on immigration and overseas students enrolment

Recently the struggles appeared to have reached a new height with moves coming from Grenoble to co-ordinate the actions of the students towards a general strike on the campuses.

In the last week, however, the prospects for a continuation, let alone expansion of the struggles, have begun to look bleak.

Nevertheless, whatever the outcome of the present militancy it has given new impetus to the movement towards the formation of a centralised student body.

In Paris, at the University of Nanterre, a few weeks ago, some

600 delegates participated in an important congress called to discuss the setting up of a centralised union of students.

This was the first meeting of its kind since the students' organisations were broken up by the state in the aftermath of the 1968 struggles.

But 13 May is not only important because of Begrand's death.

The same day was also the occasion of generalised strike action by the French trade union movement in protest at proposed changes to social security benefits.

The strike action was called

by the main, Stalinist-led trade union, the CGT, but was supported by the CFTD and others.

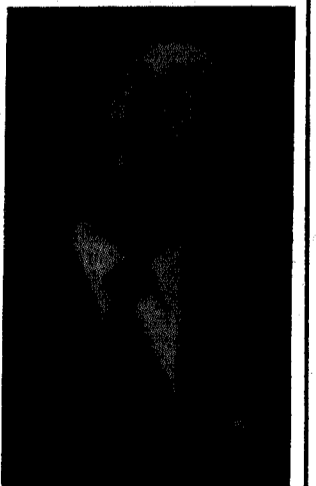
Though there were apparently fewer on strike, the effect of the strike was much bigger than the TUC day of action in Britain with transport heavily hit, power cuts affecting large sections of industry and newspapers failing to appear.

Unlike the British press, the media fully listed the scale of the action.

The division of the left which was so marked on the 1 May demonstrations—with the Communist Party and the

Socialist Party organising different marches—appeared less evident during the 13 May strike.

As the Giscard regime presses home its attacks on the whole working class, the necessity for united class action to defend jobs, wages and living standards becomes increasingly clear—as does the necessity for a revolutionary leadership to spearhead such a struggle and spell out the necessary demands on which to mobilise workers in the fight for a workers government.



Giscard

Korea

The South Korean dictatorship reinforced its martial law restrictions last weekend and arrested opposition politicians in the wake of massive riots in the capital, Seoul.

Crowds of over 50,000 battled it out with riot police, after student leaders spelled out demands for a package of democratic demands.

As police lost control a police bus was commandeered

and driven straight at their lines—killing one policeman and injuring many more.

Now the country's security chief General Chon Too Hwan has arrested 18 student leaders, the opposition leader and others.

Any respite gained by such measures seems certain to be temporary and Korea is now firmly added to the list of headaches facing US President Carter.

Miami

The black ghetto areas of Miami erupted in riots last week in the wake of the decision of an all-white jury to acquit four policemen who had clubbed to death a black insurance salesman.

The National Guard was called into the city to seal off a 20-mile area after black workers and youth had driven police out of some areas, and set fire to police cars. Seventeen people were killed

and over 100 injured in the riots, in which racist whites added their gratuitous violence to that meted out to blacks, Hispanics and Orientals by the forces of the state.

Unemployment sharply on the increase in the US and 18% inflation, tensions in the black ghetto areas not just in Miami but in every city must now be reaching breaking point.

INTERNATIONAL



Danish riots in defence of kids' playground

More Kindergardens! Less police!

These were the slogans under which the inhabitants of Norrebro—one of the slum areas of Copenhagen—waged pitched battles with the police for nearly a week.

The point of conflict was an adventure playground known as "The Builder", set up by local people some years ago on a building site.

Most of the kindergardens in the area use "the Builder" as an open-air playground because they do not have such facilities themselves. One of the few alternative open spaces is a churchyard!

There have been four different plans for developing the area—one from the bourgeoisie, one from the Social Democrats, one from the Danish Communist Party and a joint plan submitted by the Left Socialists and the Socialist People's Party. Only the last of these proposed keeping "the Builder".

The Communist Party quickly abandoned their plan and lent support for the Social Democrats, who proposed to scrap the playground. The local inhabitants' opinions were not heard.

The city council tried a variety of moves to force the closure of "the Builder". Every

one was rejected by the local population because they meant abandoning other promised facilities.

Eventually the Communist Party proposed closing a sandpit playground for small children and moving "the Builder" to that site—the "Kapelvej solution". This was at once opposed as a cynical move to split the resistance.

The council then attempted to demolish half of "the Builder". They were countered by trade unions who promised local people that their members would not work under police protection.

But officials of the Stalinist-led union arrived on the site



Copenhagen protestors

AN ON THE SPOT REPORT BY JACK JOHNSON

MAY DAY USED FOR ARMY REHEARSAL

May Day proved to be a dress rehearsal for the imposition of a military/fascist regime in Turkey.

The biggest military operation against the labour movement in recent history was staged, along with 5,000 arrests and the banning of demonstrations in over 30 cities.

Towns such as Istanbul were actually occupied by thousands of troops with armoured cars and roadblocks from April 29 to May 4.

Among the thousands arrested was the entire leadership of the left wing trade union confederation DISK and various other union leaders.

State forces allowed only one May Day demonstration—in Mersin. But even there they imposed a ban on any flags other than the Turkish national flag; banned the singing of the "Internationale" and banned the carrying of pictures of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The DISK leaders played a key role in this—organising no resistance, and failing even to issue an appeal until April 28, when they called a one-day General Strike for April 30 in protest against the May Day repression.

DISK leaders also failed to challenge the ban on demonstrations—effectively retreating without a fight.

There was no serious fight to implement the General Strike call, and action was chiefly restricted to ½-day bus strikes in areas controlled by "left wing" members of the opposition bourgeois party the RPP—who were less likely to impose massive victimisations on strikers.

Meanwhile RPP leader Ecevit lent his full support to the moves by the right wing Demirel government and the military to crush the May Day demonstrations.

He issued a special appeal to all workers and especially to working class RPP supporters not to join May Day marches behind "red flags"! Ecevit also attacked the "irresponsible" strike call from DISK.

Ecevit's latest opportunist shift to anticommunism seems related to the deal being struck between the RPP and the ultra-right wing National Salvation Party, whereby the NSP will back an RPP candidate in the presidential elections.

Despite this obstruction the march, convened by DISK, attracted 50,000 militants—and other small marches took place in and outside cities where they had been banned.

In clashes between militants and state forces several workers were killed—though in general the government was successful in suppressing the traditional May Day demonstrations while preparing the ground for further attacks.

While Ecevit—the "democratic" darling of the Turkish Communist Party and the reformist bureaucracy—flirts with the vicious enemies of the working class, the fascists and extreme right wing seized on the opportunities presented by the anti-communist witch-hunt to launch their own counter demonstrations and a big rally under the slogan "Respect the Turkish flag".

Once again the bitter experience of the Turkish workers movement underlines the fact that democratic and trade union rights can be defended not through blocs between workers organisations

and "democratic" bourgeois politicians and parties but only through the struggle for revolutionary programme and leadership.

In Turkey this means fighting for a united front of working class organisations against fascist attacks, and for action to bring down the Demirel regime and establish a workers' and peasants' government.



Demirel

three hours after most of the play houses and playthings had been moved.

As soon as the police left, local people promptly moved everything back. A 24-hour watch was installed on the playground, and reinforcements drafted in to restore it to its original state.

While the CP and Social Democrats desperately attempted to press the compromise "Kapelvej solution", the Social Democratic chief burgomaster gave orders for the complete demolition of "the Builder".

A large squad of police and bulldozers moved in on April 29. It took them from 9 am to 6 pm to clear the area—as local residents blockaded the main streets, puncturing the tyres of buses that tried to pass and using them as roadblocks, while barricades were built round "the Builder".

Driven back

The police were driven back several times. Even after clearing the area they were unable to

stop thousands of angry workers storming nearby building sites and seizing materials to rebuild the destroyed playhouses and apparatus.

By midnight "the Builder" had been reconstructed—and so had the barricades!

This situation remained during May Day and for several days afterwards.

Wait and see

When the police once more attacked the barricades, the Left Socialists, who had been in the leadership of the struggle advocated a "wait and see" policy—but failed to stop the resistance of local workers.

Though the police succeeded in smashing the barricades it took them two days to demolish "the Builder".

In the aftermath of these battles an extraordinary meeting of the town council was besieged by an angry 10,000-strong demonstration—a sure sign that both Social Democrats and Stalinists must have sacrificed a great deal of support in this working class area of Copenhagen.

Union chief on Chrysler board

"Business unionism"—the term used to describe the extremes of class collaboration reached by US union leaders—took on a new layer of meaning last week.

United Auto Workers union leader Douglas Fraser became a director of the crisis-ridden Chrysler Corporation.

Fraser is supposedly on the board to represent the interests of his 150,000 members in Chrysler who, as a result of the latest plans to save the Corporation from bankruptcy, are expected to own 15% of the shares by 1984.

But he has already struck up a close personal friendship with Chrysler boss Lee Iacocca, and his readiness to hand over some £200 million in members' wage entitlements and \$200 million in union pension funds to save America's third largest producer augurs badly for UAW members in the next period.

Indeed Chrysler is far from out of the crisis brought on by the rocketing price of oil, the international economic crisis and Carter's recessionary policies.

The elaborate scheme to provide \$1.5 billion in federal cash to bail out the flagging firm eventually cleared through the US Congress—only to be thrown into objections from C... .. anguished and weary bankers.

Headed by the French Credit Lyonnais, a group of banks have refused to accept the terms of the federal deal, which threatens to saddle them with a bundle of unwanted Chrysler shares in 1983, in place of the cash settlement which they would prefer.

Their objections could still scuttle the whole leaking ship.

Meanwhile, with Fraser beside Iacocca at the helm, the firm continues to throw workers overboard in the struggle to stay afloat: the latest closures to be announced include a truck assembly plant in Missouri, an engine plant in Canada and Chrysler's main large-car producing plant.

Trotsky study group launched

The formation of a 'Group for the Study of Leon Trotsky and the Revolutionary Movement' has been announced.

A great deal of material has recently become available for the study of the development of the Trotskyist movement in Britain. New material has appeared in the American-published *Writings of Leon Trotsky* for the 30s and in the *Ecrits* being brought out by the Institut Leon Trotsky in France.

The newly available 'closed' archive of Trotsky in the University of Harvard will reveal a little more on the development of the British movement, and much more on the working of the Fourth International in its

early period, as well as the movement in Germany, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union.

Here in Britain, work on the history of the Trotskyist movement, based in particular on the materials now held in Warwick and Hull universities has only just begun.

The leaflet announcing the formation of the group puts it as follows. 'Introductory studies of these materials, which have already been done throw much light on traditional conceptions of the left in Britain. They tend, also, to correct the belief that Trotskyist activity has to be written off, as having been, at best, a waste of time.'

It has already been possible to show that there was a revolutionary alternative to the

popular front policies of the Stalinists and centrists in the 1930s, that there was real opposition to imperialist war after 1939, that there was a struggle for revolutionary policies in the working class during the boom after 1945.

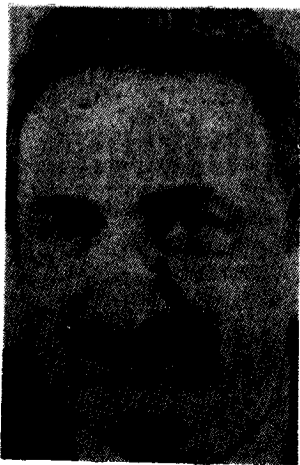
A proper study of this history will not only help to rescue traditions that have often been deliberately buried. It will also serve to cast light on the current problems of building a revolutionary movement in Britain and internationally.

It is for these reasons that the Group has been set up. It proposed to hold an inaugural conference in London in September 1980 based on research into the history of the Left in Britain and the participa-

tion of Trotskyists in it.'

A journal entitled *Historical Studies of Leon Trotsky and the Revolutionary Movement* is also due to appear early in 1981, which will be the fiftieth anniversary of the work that led to the formation of the British section of the International Left Opposition.

Those interested in participating in this work and joining the group (annual subscription £5, students and unwaged £1) are invited to contact John Archer, 65 Dunbar Road, London N22 5BG (01-889 7637), convenor of the Provisional Steering Committee.



Ecevit

Conference to draw lessons of steel & BL betrayals

The steel strike and the management offensive in British Leyland have important implications for the whole of the working class in the struggle against cuts, closures, and in defence of living standards.

These two issues illustrate the scale of the crisis of leadership that now confronts the working class. And this same crisis of leadership was confirmed when, having fought to isolate the steel strike for fourteen weeks, the TUC leaders called their "day of action" on May 14 to defuse the anger and militancy building up within the working class. With no official call for strike action on the day, the field was left open for the media to witch-hunt those who took action, and to minimise the scale of the response—in which, despite the TUC, hundreds of thousands of workers took part in protest strikes and demonstrations.

The case for BL and BSC workers to fight the Tory offensive together was overwhelming. Together they could have won: divided they would lose. Yet the union leaders were absolutely determined to prevent such a united fight. Even after BL workers had voted to strike their leaders refused to call them out. When Edwards saw this weakness he promptly announced that he would impose the pay package on April 8.

But no sooner was the strike call belatedly made by BL union leaders than the steel union chiefs rushed to accept the hastily-convened inquiry's report, and sell out the strike before BL came out. The very day of the steel sell-out saw a national dock delegate conference vote for a national strike in defence of dockers suspended for blacking scab steel shipments.

Even more blatant was the TUC sabotage of the General Strike called by the Welsh

The Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement is to hold a one-day national conference in Digbeth Hall, Birmingham on Saturday July 5.

Open to delegates and individual observers from trade union and labour movement organisations, the conference is designed to provide a forum to discuss the political situation confronting the working class in its struggle against the Tory government.

We reprint here an abbreviated version of the campaign leaflet for the conference to which *Socialist Press* extends full support. Further details and credentials (£1) are obtainable from CDLM Secretary Godfrey Webster, 169 Barclay Road, Warley, West Midlands.

TUC. Workers will now pay the price for this treachery as in Wales, the NE Coast and elsewhere steel unions negotiate redundancies and closures that could have been defeated.

The TUC leaders know that the steel workers had already developed beyond their official leaders—and could easily have joined councils of action alongside other sections in joint action which could have moved rapidly in a revolutionary direction. They know that this would spell defeat not only for the Tory leaders, whose privileged positions rest on the continued existence of capitalism.

This is why these leaders confine the working class to protest politics which they know cannot stop the Tories. This is why they have not lifted a finger in practical action to stop the cuts in health, education, welfare or the civil service. Yet the readiness of workers to fight was confirmed once again by the strikes on May 14—the largest strike action since 1926, carried through in

the teeth of a media witch-hunt.

An alternative leadership must be built to unleash this strength and mobilise it in action against the Tories. This requires a programme of policies which fundamentally challenge the capitalist system and the logic of restoring "viability" at the expense of the working class. Workers are not taken an inch further forward by nationalist capitalist solutions such as the call for import controls—now the platform for every fake left in the labour movement. Leaders who start from the 'viability' of the industry or a supposed common interest between British workers and British employers can only betray at the end of the day.

Only policies which start from the independent interests of the working class can answer today's problems. The CDLM conference on July 5 will set out to discuss such a programme in the light of the lessons of the betrayals in steel and BL and the fight yet to come throughout the public sector and in the forthcoming wage round as inflation climbs to 22%.



Bill Sims with Welsh TUC leader George Wright

PRESS GANG



The *Daily Express* was in some ways the most eloquent of all the Fleet Street papers in its assessment on the Day of Action. It failed to appear not just on the day itself, but the following day also.

The press, that had soared so high on the wings of distortion as to christen Murray 'Lenin' Murray, was justly the employers' body that took the biggest hammering on the Day of Action—with the whole of Fleet Street closed.

The main purpose of the witch-hunt has not actually been the day of action itself—it has been the growing call from workers in struggle for direct political strikes to bring down the Thatcher Government.

The Day of Action did not promise this and did not deliver it. While we draw the lessons from the TUC's half hearted call and its determined efforts to bottle up the anger of

workers against the Tories, the Tory press saw the day as an opportunity to attack the concept of political strikes.

The number of workers who struck during the day of action was as high or higher than can have been expected, given that no major union really fought for strike action on that day and that several instructed their members to stay at work.

The *Daily Mail* tagged it "TUC's Day of Disaster" and the *Sun* declared "Its a flop".

Bureaucracy

The *Mirror*, a paper in open support of the Labour bureaucracy, tried to mitigate its criticism.

"It was the wrong strike at the wrong time for the wrong reasons... Union leaders may be out of touch with their 12 million members, but they are the only leaders the members have got. The unions are an essential part of our society. There's no profit in seeing them

humiliated, defeated and defamed".

The *Daily Mail* thought otherwise. John Edwards sharpened his pen for a personal assault on Murray that ended

"On Saturday 250,000 had been in the streets of West Ham down the road from Mayesbrook Park to see a soccer team come home with the FA Cup.

"The biggest event in TUC history for 50 years had pulled 600 out to see the man who was at the head of it".

The *Sun* ran two editorials—one attacking Murray and the other defending their 'reporters' who hounded his holiday.

The lessons that the *Sun* tried to drive home was "Workers do not believe in industrial action for political ends," (though presumably the *Sun's* journalists do believe in witch-hunts for political ends).

If there was one sweet moment of revenge for the working class it was the brick wall of fact that the press ran into. On the Day of Action they did not publish.

St Georges fight axe

Over 40 delegates attended a conference called by the St Georges Hospital Support Committee in London on May 17.

St Georges is due for complete closure on June 30 when the expensive site is to be sold off to a private medical concern.

The union Branch and Support Committee have put up a long and principled fight against the closure, but now the deadline is drawing near and 40 workers have recently been given redundancy notices.

The conference put forward a resolution designed to fight the final stages of the closure.

*A staff meeting to be

called inside the hospital to re-establish opposition to the closure.

*A picket on the hospital beginning from early June.

*Resolutions through union branches and divisions calling for a mass picket and day of strike action on June 30.



BL traitor Evans

Despite massive competition, Ealing's Tory Council is already well on the way to establishing itself as the most reactionary in the country.

The latest in its long stream of attacks on the working class came just before the TUC's day of action, when the Council tried to get an injunction to prevent a rally taking place in Southall park.

The rally was planned to be the culmination of local activities which had included strikes, lobbies and marches in the Ealing,

Hounslow and Hillingdon areas.

Some time before the event the organiser, Jack Dromey, wrote to the Council to let them know what was planned.

The Council took three weeks to reply that the rally would be in breach of a by-law banning political meetings in the park. They only went to the courts the day before the event was to take place.

The injunction they sought would have banned Dromey and six officers of Ealing NALGO from organising the rally.

Actually NALGO had nothing to do with organising

the rally but have been actively opposing the Council's cuts. This apparently was good enough for the Council to name them.

It was merely because of the Council's delay that the judges, who included the notorious Denning, found themselves unable to grant the injunction.

Unlawful

They did, however, say that it would be "unlawful" for the rally to take place or for local MP Syd Bidwell to address it. Despite this the event went ahead as planned and was

attended by thousands of local trade unionists and others.

Apart from Bidwell, speakers included Stalinist George Guy from the TUC's General Council, who spoke of the need for political action by trades unions.

Free speech

Ealing is the Council which claims that free speech is an "inviolate right". At least that is what they said when the fascist NF wanted to hold a meeting in Southall Town Hall last April.

Defence of the fascists led directly to the police riot in which Blair Peach was killed. Clearly for these Tories the

right to free speech depends very much on who wants to do the speaking.

The fascists get police protection and the workers movement gets the courts used against them.

The working class are going to have to fight for free speech and every other democratic right.

Postscript. Local workers may well wonder who is going to foot the bill for the court case at a time when Ealing is suffering the worst education cuts in the country and every other area of public spending is being ruthlessly slashed.

DON'T LET TURKEY BECOME ANOTHER CHILE

A Workers Socialist League Pamphlet

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New twist in Heslin case?

A further chapter has unfolded in the ongoing saga of moves by Oxford witch-hunters to expel Socialist Press supporter Ted Heslin from the Labour Party.

Heslin was expelled in January 1979—and appealed soon afterwards against the

decision. Since then the bureaucratic machinery of the Labour Party has creaked into action with a series of inquiries, hearings and contradictory decisions.

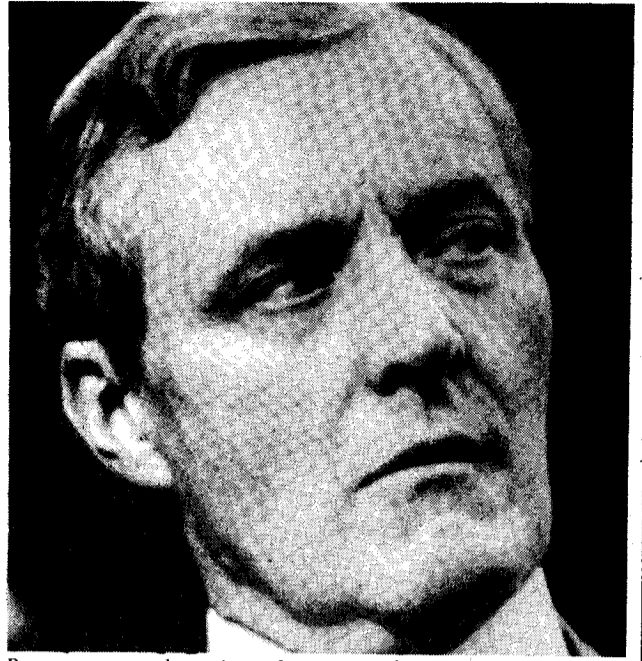
On May 8, Heslin was called to a meeting at the House of Commons of a Sub-Committee of the Party's Organisation Committee, chaired by Eric Heffer.

On the basis of the report back from this interview, the Organisation Committee has, according to the latest leaks to the Tory press, voted to recommend that the NEC refuse to endorse Heslin's expulsion, and instead 'reprimand' him for his actions.

None of this information has of course been communicated to Heslin, who, 17

months after his expulsion remains still uncertain as to his status.

His supporters in Oxford have called for a lobby of the next Labour NEC meeting, to be held on Wednesday May 28, and of the Party's Special Conference in Wembley on May 31, to press the case for his full reinstatement.



Benn: proposed reprimand, not expulsion

Heslin's statement answers witch-hunters

It is nearly 16 months since I was expelled by Oxford City Labour Party. Since my appeal against that decision, my membership has become a pawn in the hands of those who want to see the Labour Party purged of members uncompromising in their fight for socialist policies.

I have been left in a state of limbo while a series of back-door deals, manoeuvres and intrigues decide my fate. Instead of a debate on 'policies', there has been a campaign, including use of the Tory press, based on sneers and innuendoes.

I protest against this and consider it an outrage that my membership for the Labour Party should have been kicked around for so long when it is crystal clear that I have committed no breach of the party's constitution and have based myself purely and simply on the political rights of the working class.

For a large part of that 16 months (including two elections) Oxford City Labour Party GC has spent more time discussing my expulsion and bans on other socialists than it



Sub-committee members Hayward, Heffer and Maynard

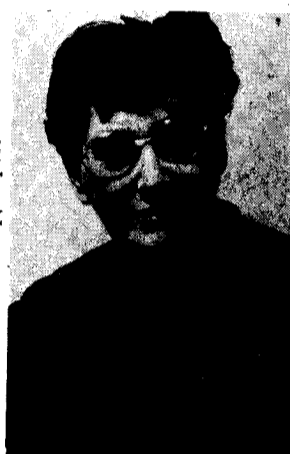
has devoted to debate on how to fight the Tories.

It talks about fighting the Tories, but in practice has been fighting socialists. Of course a large proportion of the GC and the local party want to do no such thing and are sickened by the whole business.

But key influential members of the local party are so committed to this witch hunt that all other considerations become secondary to framing me up.



PHOTO: Peter Harrop, Report



I have always seen the issue as one of what policies and programme the Labour Party should have. I realise not everyone agrees with me, but what I have the right to demand is that I am allowed to fight for my views.

The allegations of infiltration (whatever that means—because it doesn't apply to Tories) have specifically been made to turn the party away from that vital debate over policies and towards witch hunts.

It is no accident that moves to expel me came after a resolution from my union branch calling for a special conference of the party to remove Callaghan and Healey from its leadership.

This resolution was debated, put to the vote and heavily defeated. In the debate some rightwingers refused to discuss the issues and instead devoted their whole contributions to attacking the Workers Socialist League and saying I was a spokesman for

the WSL.

Is the question of who leads the Labour Party and on what policies to be removed from Labour Party agendas?

My record in the Labour Party is outlined in my appeal. No-one has ever accused me, nor could ever accuse me, of not having worked to get Labour elected or of failing to carry out Labour Party work (I continued to canvas for Labour even after my expulsion).

The McCarthyite witch hunt is illustrated by events since the Organisation Committee recommended that my expulsion be upheld.

I was encouraged by the January NEC vote to reject this and recommend my reinstatement. Why hasn't that recommendation been carried out?

Simply because Oxford City witch-hunters have been working overtime behind the scenes to use their influence to stop it!

All this talk of new evidence is nonsense. It is a second bite at the cherry that they want.

Bill Conboy, Chairman of Oxford City Labour Party, even told the GC a pack of lies about the letter he had sent (without authority) to the NEC claiming it was

simply seeking clarification.

Throughout this period, the press has been used to 'plant' stories about what is happening. It is a scandal that I have had to learn more about what is happening to me from the pages of the local press than I have been told by the Labour Party.

This Sub-Committee has the chance to put a stop to this witch-hunt and others like them. I am not too hopeful of that.

At the time of writing this, I still have not been shown the new 'evidence' against me (which I am assured is one of the rules of natural justice) and I was told that I could not have a witness with me, which is a right even anti-union employers concede.

I appeal to this Sub-Committee to recommend the NEC to reinstate me.

If my policies are as bad as the right wing say they are, then presumably the membership of the Labour Party will reject them.

Maybe they are scared that the membership might start to look more closely at them and start liking what it sees.

E. Heslin

Tory crackdown exploits

PTA

Repression against opponents of British imperialism in Ireland is being stepped up. And central to the crackdown is the so-called "Prevention of Terrorism" Act (PTA)—the legislation forced through Parliament by the Labour Government.

In the six years it has been in operation the PTA has been used to detain over 4,600 mainly Irish workers—80% of them at docks and airports.

In January-April 1980 alone 117 people were held under the PTA.

Few PTA detainees are ever brought to trial—91% are released without charge after being held for up to seven days and subjected to ill-treatment and interrogation.

This routine harassment of Irish people has now been extended to increased police attacks on protesters opposing the use of the PTA.

In Luton, in particular, police in April launched a violent attack on pickets demanding the release of Provisional Sinn Fein members Jim Reilly and Gerry MacLochlain—arresting five supporters of the

RCG publication *Hands off Ireland*, four of whom were detained overnight and charged.

Since then, MacLochlain and Reilly have been charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions'—though this has not as yet been backed up by so much as a scrap of evidence in court.

Every possible obstruction has been raised by police and Luton magistrates to prevent and delay these two defendants obtaining bail.

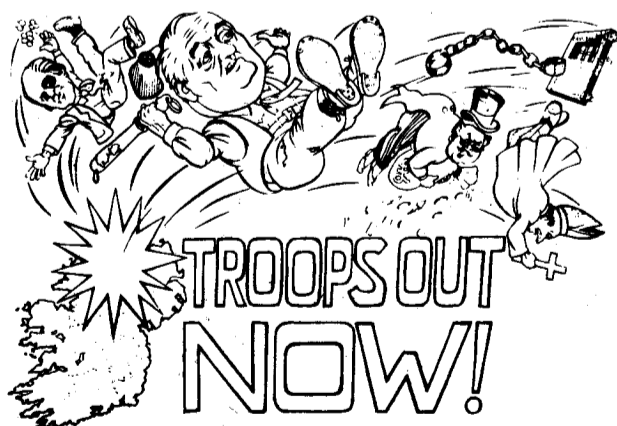
Actor

Meanwhile another victim of the crackdown on Irish people was the Irish actor and puppeteer Eugene Lambert, arrested at the end of April.

Falsely charged with desertion from the British army 34 years ago, he was thrown into a filthy cell incommunicado for several hours—denied access to relatives or a solicitor, and denied food.

Taken into court handcuffed between two other prisoners, he was not even allowed a shave or the use of a comb before appearing in the dock. He was eventually released on the astronomical bail of £20,000.

The intensified harassment of Irish people and opponents



IRELAND

of the imperialist occupation of the six counties is of course in part a reflection of the Tory moves to strengthen the state apparatus in general as part of their offensive against the working class.

But it is also a response to the growing strength of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland itself.

The confidence of the police in carrying through such attacks is enhanced by the almost complete refusal of trade union

and Labour leaders to challenge these abuses of basic democratic rights.

Not only did Labour ministers force through the PTA in the first place, but Labour spokesmen on Ireland make it a point of principle to uphold their "bi-partisan" support for Tory policy on Ireland which commits them in advance to support the repressive measures whereby imperialist rule is upheld.

And, with a few noteworthy

exceptions—generally when one of their own members is involved—union leaders, too, have stood back and allowed the PTA to be used against Irish workers.

This is equally true of the National Union of Students, which on May 7 yet again cancelled a demonstration in protest against the PTA.

Mandate

The NUS after a spate of detentions of conference delegates from Northern Ireland, had at first been mandated to call a demonstration against the PTA by a vote of the November 1979 conference.

That march was cancelled ten days before it was due to take place. The second march was cancelled at the very last minute, after arrangements for it had been sabotaged by the NUS leadership, and a mere 60 students were left stranded in the eleventh-hour cancellation.

Among the other unions formally committed to opposition to the PTA is the National Union of Journalists.

The fight must be redoubled throughout the Labour movement for a principled policy of opposition to the PTA. The Labour Party must be forced to support the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and to support the release of all political prisoners. The Labour Party must be forced to support the release of all political prisoners. The Labour Party must be forced to support the release of all political prisoners.

to determine their own future.

And the unions must be forced to take up the fight against the implementation of the PTA and to force Labour MPs to struggle for its outright repeal.

Insofar as it offers an arena for the discussion of such issues, the June 14 Conference "Voices for withdrawal", organised by the Committee for withdrawal from Ireland should be supported by Labour movement bodies, even though it is called without any commitment to an anti-imperialist policy or even condemnation of British repression in Ireland.

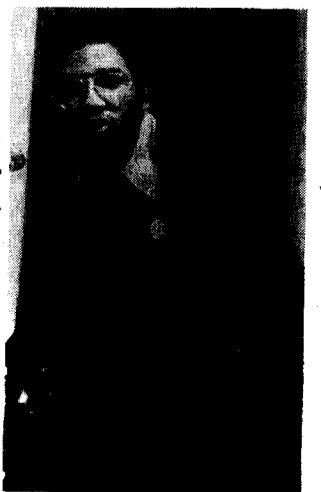


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

THE SOCIALIST PRESS, 100, FLEET STREET, LONDON EC4A 3DF

NAMIBIA STRUGGLES TO APARTHEID STRAT

In the struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression, the working class throughout Southern Africa is time and again held back by a crisis of revolutionary leadership. The treacherous policies of the existing reformist, Stalinist and nationalist leaderships have been recently spotlighted by the experience of the working class in Zimbabwe. In the context of the developing mass struggle in Southern Africa Jim Farnham looks at the perspectives for the workers' struggle for power in Namibia.

The deepening crisis of capitalism forces increasingly vicious attacks on the already miserable living standards of the oppressed masses.

But in the drive for profits at the expense of the working masses, imperialism is confronted worldwide by a rising tide of struggle, as new ranks of workers and poor peasants are continually thrust into struggle against capitalist attacks.

During the last period of struggle in Southern Africa, as elsewhere, the tremendous build-up of combativity in an undefeated working class continually threatens to erupt in spontaneous mass struggles only to founder time and again in a crisis of leadership.

Central to the development of struggle in Southern Africa in the current period is the reemergence of open mass struggles in the mighty black working class in South Africa.

In the spontaneous mass mobilisation of 1976/7 around Soweto, black workers in struggle forged a fighting unity and level of political independence that decisively outflanked their petty bourgeois nationalist and Stalinist leaders.

But the mobilised strength of the working class ran up against the limits of spontaneous development and against state repression, allowing a clique of reformists and opportunists to appropriate the leadership of the movement.

Exploited

The erosion of the class independence and unity that had been built in struggle was exploited by the state to launch a repressive assault, leading to the demobilisation of the movement.

A period of political stalemate set in, with the working class lacking the leadership and programme to move forward towards victory, and the state unable to secure a defeat.

But the balance of class forces in the region is shifting more in favour of the working class, as a reemerging workers' offensive sends its first shock waves through the imperialist camp.

In Zimbabwe, the intense rural guerrilla war coupled with the threat of possible mobilisations of the urban proletariat and combined with the ominous movement of the working class in South Africa, spurred imperialism into a deal with the petty bourgeois nationalists of ZANU



Cannery workers on the beach at Walvis Bay

and ZAPU, in a desperate bid to shore up the stability of the capitalist state.

The imperialist Lancaster House plan created the conditions for the reformists to consolidate a position in the working class, and to form a popular frontist government.

Not resolved

Yet the Lancaster House plan in no way resolved the balance of forces in Zimbabwe in imperialism's favour, and the militancy in the working class is bound to rise as Mugabe proves unable to fulfil the needs for which he was so assertively voted into power.

In Namibia, the spontaneous reaction to Mugabe's governmental victory is widespread enthusiasm for the apparent victory of the anti-imperialist struggle.

This view will no doubt be peddled by SWAPO leaders, seeking to bolster the popular frontist illusions they have already managed to sow.

But the important political effect of this mass response will be to reinforce the levels of combativity building up in Namibia.

In the last period of struggle, the working class in Namibia has faced a sustained offensive by the South African state and its agents.

Elections

This set in with the internal elections force-organised by the South African government in December 1978, which brought the puppet DTA regime to

power under the wing of the South African colonial administrator.

This offensive importantly strengthened the position of the South African state, which has been able to exploit the political confusion and stagnation following from the treacherous policies of the petty bourgeois nationalist SWAPO leadership.

In the course of 1979 the South African armed forces in Namibia were strengthened by an increase in troops to an estimated 70,000 and by wide-ranging extension of martial law

powers.

SA soldiers are needed to help paramilitary police control the working masses, to contain the guerrilla war in the north, and to launch massive raids into Angola and Zambia, hitting SWAPO military and refugee camps, and local military and economic targets.

The size of the armed state forces in relation to a total black population of little over 1 million, points to the underlying strength of mass resistance to the systematic imperialist and South African oppression and

plunder in Namibia.

An estimated 15,000 militants are being held in concentration camps in Namibia.

In one police/army raid alone, over 2500 arrests were made last June in the largest working class ghetto, Katutura (outside the white capital of Windhoek).

Under cover of the DTA regime, extreme right wing terror squads have emerged—one of these armed gangs wrecked SWAPO's internal headquarters in Windhoek last May.

The repressive campaign

launched by state and right wing terror forces has effectively smashed SWAPO's internal organisation.

But the South African state and its agents have in no way been able to carry this through to a defeat of the working class.

The balance of forces remains unresolved in Namibia, but now it is the working class that has seized the initiative.

Already during the capitalist offensive, Namibian workers and militants have shown a clear willingness to take up the fight against the attacks.

This combat-readiness came to the fore in a wave of strike actions by thousands of mine-workers in early 1979, and in mass displays of militant solidarity such as the SWAPO rally in Katutura at the height of the state-led offensive.

But in turning to SWAPO for leadership in struggles against repression and around wage and other demands, workers were offered no way forward.

Illusion

The petty bourgeois nationalist leadership of SWAPO could offer only the paralysing illusion of salvation by the guerrilla army and the United Nations.

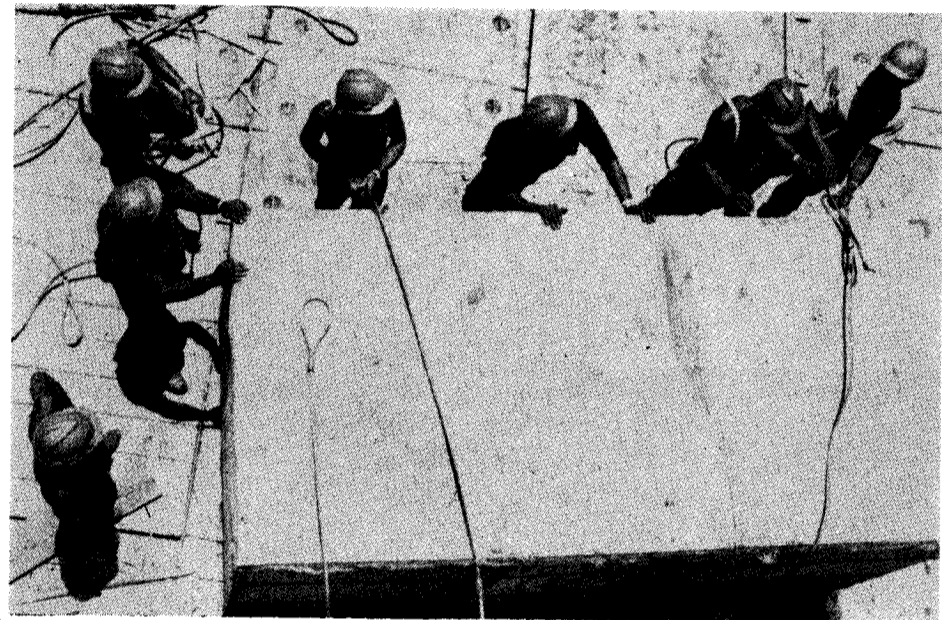
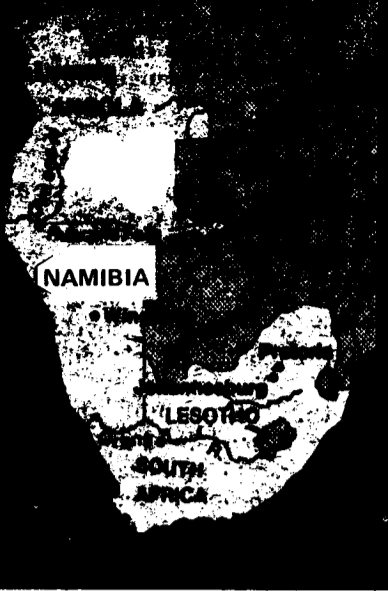
Central to the strategy of the SWAPO leadership is a reformist combination of guerrillaism (the development of a military capacity in sectarian isolation from the day to day struggles of workers as a means of pressuring reforms in the capitalist state) and class collaboration.

Militant socialist rhetoric serves to submerge the independent class interests of workers

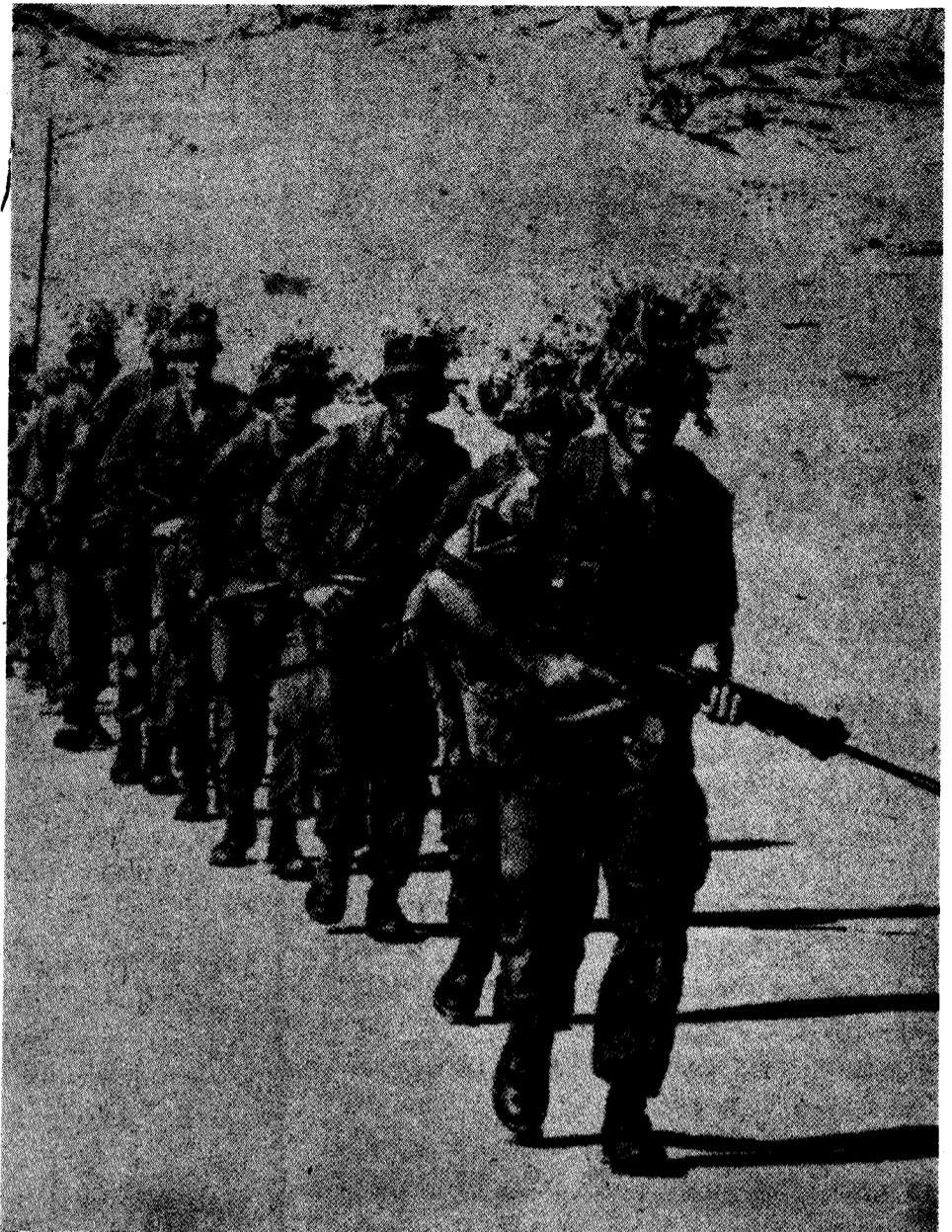


Police at a SWAPO rally, December 1978

THREAT REGISTS



Walvis Bay dockers at work



South African troops on patrol near the Angolan border

in an "anti-imperialist" alliance under petty bourgeois leadership. The strength of the working class has been exploited—in the absence of a revolutionary Marxist leadership—to promote the ambitions of reformists. The SWAPO leadership's hostility towards mobilisations of workers other than those which can be controlled and exploited; the inability of guerrillism to provide any defence of workers and militants against state and extreme right wing terror; and the political confusion and stagnation sown by leaders shackled to imperialism—mean that the only thing which stands between the working class and potential disaster is its undefeated strength. In conditions of a developing movement of struggle, workers will be looking for ways of taking the struggle forward without the organised leadership of SWAPO which has been smashed inside Namibia. Trotskyists in Namibia must seek to win these forces to the fight to build the independent strength of the working class.

of the current version of the UN plan for Namibian "independence". The essence of the imperialist-inspired UN plan is to secure capitalist stability in Namibia. The South African government has delayed its agreement to the UN proposals, while seeking to establish stability itself. The imperialist powers, in recognising the need for new measures, have backed the South African government's modifications to the plan and its own direct actions.

Pressure

The pressure of a gathering advance of the working class in Southern Africa narrows the options open to imperialism. The current development of struggle, which throws into question the ability of Stalinist and reformist forces to control the working class, shifts imperialism towards an increasingly direct reliance on the repressive strength of its most powerful ally in the region—the South African state.

The relatively firm social base on which the apartheid-capitalist state rests, and its economic and military power, make it the key policeman and promoter of imperialist interests in the region.

The current version of the UN plan allows for the setting up of a 100-kilometre wide Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) across the length of the Namibia/Angola border.

The DMZ, originally proposed by now-dead Angolan "Marxist" leader Neto, is to be patrolled by troops from a 7,500-strong UN force, to ensure that SWAPO fighters remain confined to bases in Angola and Zambia during a transition period before UN elections.

Troops

South African troops are to be reduced to 1500 in two bases—but the crucial elements of the capitalist state apparatus (police, courts, etc) together with the black Namibian army units and the white Namibian paratrooper unit (drawn from the 100,000-strong white population) which South Africa has set up, will remain during transition.

The growing instability of the bourgeois nationalist Frontline regimes in the face of

their inability to meet the demands of an increasingly militant working class, has tightened their dependence on imperialism.

The South African regime has exploited this instability, using military raids into Zambia and particularly Angola (where South Africa supports the anti-MPLA forces of UNITA, led by the imperialist puppet Savimbi) as an extra weight in the pressure on SWAPO to yield further to imperialism.

The counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy has joined with the Frontline regimes (particularly in Angola, where the bulk of SWAPO forces are based and where 19000 Cuban troops provide a crucial prop to the MPLA) in strengthening the bureaucratic grip of SWAPO leader Nujoma.

So long as SWAPO fighters are removed from the only base from which to effectively challenge the SWAPO bureaucracy—the working class—this grip can only tighten.

This carries the underlying

danger of SWAPO guerrillas being used in the future against the working class in the interests of the reformists—or today, against militants challenging the treacherous policies of the leadership.

From carefully measured leaks to the bourgeois media after a recent round of secret diplomacy in Southern Africa and in London (where South Africa's colonial administrator Viljoen met Carrington and Labour's Shore), South Africa is clearly pressing for more modifications to the UN plan, with imperialist connivance.

Ambitions

Under pressure from imperialism SWAPO in its weakened position is set to succumb further—even to the point of sacrificing key parts of its reformist ambitions.

The imperialist powers and the South African government will lose no time in seeking to exploit the weakening of the

SWAPO bureaucracy by attempting to split it and win elements to an obedient internal grouping.

These rotten manoeuvres in the corridors of secret diplomacy confirm yet again the political bankruptcy of SWAPO's leadership.

The resolution of the unstable balance of forces in favour of the interests of workers in Namibia demands carrying through a political struggle against the SWAPO bureaucracy.

The stored-up militancy in the undefeated proletariat is ready to burst out in mass struggles—in which the task of revolutionary Marxists will be to fight for the mobilisation of workers independently of the reformists and around demands that express their independent class interests and build their political independence.

In the face of decaying imperialism's frenzied efforts to secure conditions of capitalist stability through attacks on the working class and all anti-

imperialist forces, the immediate task facing revolutionaries is the defence of the working class. That defence can only be carried through and secured by the fight to take the struggle forward, by developing the independent leadership, organisation and programme to mobilise workers in the struggle to defeat South African colonialism and overthrow capitalism.

Paralysis

Only the fight to build the Trotskyist party in Namibia, section of a reconstructed Fourth International, can defend the strength of the working class against Stalinist/reformist paralysis and capitalist attack, and build it towards the dictatorship of the proletariat.

*Build the independent organisations of the working class in the ghettos and workplaces to mobilise the oppressed masses around their independent class interests, and against South African/imperialist plans.

*Build the armed struggle as part of the defence and mobilisation of the working masses. For militants with military training to help build a workers' militia.

*Fight for a revolutionary programme of democratic and transitional demands, including:

- 1) For a Constituent Assembly tied to the destruction of the state machine—police, army, courts, labour bureaux, tribal rule structures. For the building of independent organs of control by the working masses over democratically elected delegates.
 - 2) For a massive programme of public works and services in the towns and countryside under workers' control.
 - 3) For a living wage tied to a sliding scale, as determined by workers' committees. For work sharing on full pay under workers' control.
 - 4) Nationalise the land under the control of committees of agricultural workers and poor peasants.
 - 5) Expropriate the banks, mines, factories and large farms without compensation, under workers control.
- *Break all collaboration with imperialism and its agents. No secret diplomacy.
*For the development of a programme of genuine aid and solidarity for the anti-imperialist struggle to be taken up by the international workers' movement.



SWAPO supporters march in Windhoek, December 1978

HEALY'S LATEST FRAME-UP EXPOSED

It's wonderful what you can do with a lively and scurrilous imagination, a handful of stolen documents and the fine art of innuendo.

Anyone who doubts the scope that such raw materials offer for the production of a work of destructive fiction should study the six-part series "Thornett's Weasels" that filled no less than fourteen pages of the Workers Revolutionary Party's daily *Newsline* at the beginning of April.

The anonymous "Newsline investigation" is a further extension of the WRP's now obsessive theory of the post-war history of the Trotskyist movement as a history of police/FBI/CIA/KGB/GPU conspiracies against the WRP, in which politics play only an incidental role.

Thus the *Newsline* series sets out not to challenge the political positions of the Workers Socialist League; indeed it only refers to our positions in the most absurdly falsified form.

Wall off

Rather its objective is to wall off WRP members and sympathisers from discussion with us, by portraying the WSL as a bunch of police provocateurs, intriguers, schemers, liars and thugs.

The series has therefore the character not of a serious polemic but of a catalogue of increasingly grotesque and slan-

derous allegations.

Many of these are hoary old lies shamelessly re-hashed even though long since rebutted.

Others have been especially fabricated for the occasion, with the aid of material stolen in a raid on Alan Thornett's house in 1977 and now clearly furnished to the WRP by the extreme right wing or the forces of the state.

Crisis

We intend in this article simply to expose the falsity of the allegations raised by *Newsline*. A subsequent article will look in more detail at the more important question of why the WRP, as a result of its own ongoing political crisis, has felt obliged to unleash such a tirade of lies at this point in time.

The articles, incoherent, inconsistent and rambling though they are, raise essentially six inter-related allegations against the founders of the Workers Socialist League:

- 1) That we have consistently lied about our expulsion from the WRP in 1974, and falsified the numerical size of the WSL.
- 2) That we condone violence within our movement.
- 3) That we have liquidated into Social Democracy and anti-communism.
- 4) That in our struggle for the Trotskyist programme within the WRP we were working for the Bulletin (Blick-Jenkins) Group—then the British section of the 'International' headed by the

French OCI.

5) That we are on the point of fusion with an array of revisionist groups.

6) That we were also working with Joseph Hansen, the late American SWP leader and alleged FBI/GPU "double agent"; and that this made the WSL part of an elaborate series of police provocations against the WRP.

Needless to say none of these charges has any validity in fact—as a brief answer to each can demonstrate.

1) The *Newsline* "investigation" claims that a mere 59 WRP members were expelled at the time of Alan Thornett being purged from the party for his political differences.

Yet this fails to square with the fact that three whole sub-districts of the WRP's biggest Region outside London were expelled en bloc by a bureaucratic sweep of Healy's pen.

Using a technique tried and tested by a line of bureaucrats from Joseph Stalin to Jack Jones, the WRP leadership "reorganised" the branches in the Oxford, Swindon and Reading sub-districts.

The Oxford sub-district alone comprised at that point (on standard WRP reckoning), in excess of 100 members: only three of these complied with Healy's demand that they sign a declaration supporting Thornett's expulsion.

Handful

The Swindon sub-district contained in excess of 30 WRP members: a tiny handful of them stayed with Healy. In Reading a 50-strong sub-district including branches in Reading, Basingstoke and Bracknell was reduced to a skeleton crew of Healy stalwarts.

Elsewhere, as part of the same purge, (and documented in the WSL account of the split, *The Battle for Trotskyism*) WRP members were expelled in London and Yorkshire for allegedly supporting Thornett. The total easily amounts to the 200 claimed by Thornett at the time.

Nobody ever claimed that all 200 joined the Workers Socialist League when it was formed a week later.

Many of them—having been for some years loyal WRP members—were appalled at what they saw as the bureaucratic degeneration of Trotskyism itself, and were alienated from revolutionary politics. They became casualties of Healy's degeneration.

No figures

In fact less than half of the 200 expelled members came together to form the WSL. They were subsequently joined by a few former SLL/WRP members who had left the movement prior to the split.

The WSL has of course never published any membership figures, let alone falsified ones. Suffice it to say that the *Newsline* "investigators" fall far short of the mark with their fanciful guess that we have only 70 members.



Vanessa Redgrave endorsing WRP sectarian line on Labour government

But let us add a couple of questions for the WRP. In 1972 and 1973 the SLL staged a highly successful Right to Work march—with a rally of 7,000 in Wembley Pool; and a Pageant of working class history attended by 10,000 workers and youth. The WRP itself was launched in 1973 with over 3,000 members.

Unobtainable

Where have they all gone? Why is *Newsline* almost unobtainable even in former WRP strongholds? What is the current membership of the WRP? And—more important—what have these members actually done in the class struggle since 1974? We have answered the *Newsline*'s challenge: we await the WRP reply to ours.

2. The *Newsline* claims that allegations of violence subsequently made by dissident Reading WSL members against the WSL leadership were proven and subjected to a cover-up.

This is a complete *Newsline* fabrication: the allegations—as the "investigators" must know from their hoard of stolen documents—were shown to be both baseless and factually motivated by elements who wished to break up the Workers Socialist League and dissolve its forces into the Labour Party.

3) The "investigation" repeats the tawdry old claim that the Thornett opposition represented an adaptation to Social Democracy.

The only "evidence" ever produced to substantiate this absurd claim is a fabricated quotation allegedly uttered by Thornett and subsequently produced in what were described as "minutes" of the WRP Central Committee.

"The working class will be attracted to the reforms of the Labour government... The Labour government will come into conflict with the ruling class... Workers will support the Labour government's reform programme."

(See WRP Control Commission interim report, reprinted in *The Battle for Trotskyism* p. 153).

Parody

The "quote" is in fact not Thornett's at all, but a parody of his position by Healy's hatchet-man Cliff Slaughter.

This is obviously why the WRP to this day has not found a single quotation either in Thornett's two WRP internal documents or in the pages of nearly 200 issues of *Socialist Press* to support their claim that his positions or those of the WSL capitulate to Social Democracy.

Indeed so much are *Socialist Press* politics a capitulation to Social Democracy that Oxford Socialist Press supporter Ted Heslin has been subjected to a

national witch-hunt in an endeavour to expel him from the Labour Party, while WSL members and supporters in the unions have repeatedly been subjected to witch-hunts and victimisations at the hands of the bureaucracy as well as management.

4) The allegation that Thornett and his supporters within the WRP were acting as "agents" of the French OCI and the "Blick-Jenkins Group" serves a double purpose for the WRP.

On the one hand it is designed to suggest that the whole opposition was simply a sinister plot—and thus divert attention from the political questions that Thornett raised in opposition to the WRP leadership.

Bankrupt

On the other hand, by falsely linking the founders of the WSL to the bankrupt politics of the "Blick-Jenkins" Group, the WRP can further develop its allegation that we represented a capitulation to social democracy.

What is their evidence for such a claim? It consists entirely of material produced by the Bulletin Group and its supporters!

The Bulletin Group's extravagant claim that the were "responsible for crystallising the Thornett tendency" is accepted as good coin by Healy, as is their claim that "substantial sections" of the opposition documents were written by a leading member of the Bulletin Group.

The fact is that in the period prior to the struggle within the WRP the Bulletin Group had produced a number of documents raising legitimate criticism of the methods and positions of the Healy leadership, focussing in particular on the ultra-left sectarianism of the WRP, its liquidationist "mass recruitment" campaign in the February 1974 election, and on Healy's abandonment of the method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme.

Conclusion

Though the Bulletin Group drew from these, formally correct criticisms a liquidationist conclusion—that revolutionaries should abandon their face and simply enter the Labour Party—the points raised could not be brushed aside.

In conflict with the line of both the WRP and the Bulletin Group, Thornett and the founders of the WSL struggled for a return to the method of Lenin and Trotsky.

As the two documents were compiled—comprising material written by Alan Thornett, John

Lister, Tony Richardson and others—they drew also for two sections on quotations and material produced by the Bulletin Group—specifically in the section on the question of workers control of production (composed in the first document almost exclusively, of quotations) and the section on Healy's use of the term "corporatist" to describe reformist leaders.

It has suited the Bulletin Group at the time and since the split to suggest that they played the key role in the struggle: they even persuaded some early WSL members that this was the case—and on this basis organised to wreck WSL branches in Reading and Swindon.

But the reality was very different; the political differences between the founders of the WSL and the Bulletin Group/OCI were sharp from the very outset.

As the WRP well knows from its collection of stolen documents, the very first WSL Internal Bulletin—published only weeks after the WSL was founded—contained a scathing attack on the politics of the OCI written during the split itself by John Lister.

And indeed *Newsline* itself unblushingly carries a quotation from Tim Horrocks, a Bulletin Group supporter who split from the WSL.

Complaint

In the quote he denounced the WSL leadership for refusing to collaborate with the OCI, and complains that WSL leaders regarded the level of agreement with the OCI as "a couple of positions in a thousand!"

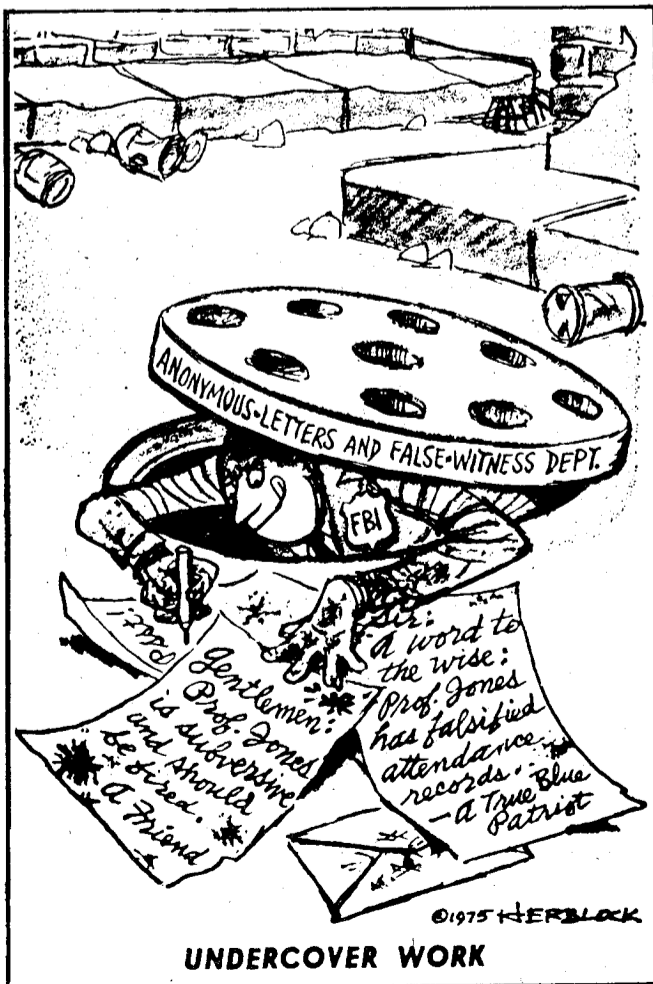
The facts speak for themselves: the supporters of the Bulletin Group/OCI line of liquidationist "deep entry" into the Labour Party were politically fought within the WSL: a lengthy critique of their positions was written by John Lister and Tony Richardson.

Sooner than argue their positions openly, the OCI supporters walked out of the movement. *Everyone* of the positions of the Bulletin Group quoted in the *Newsline* series and falsely linked to the politics of the WSL is taken from the period after this split had taken place!

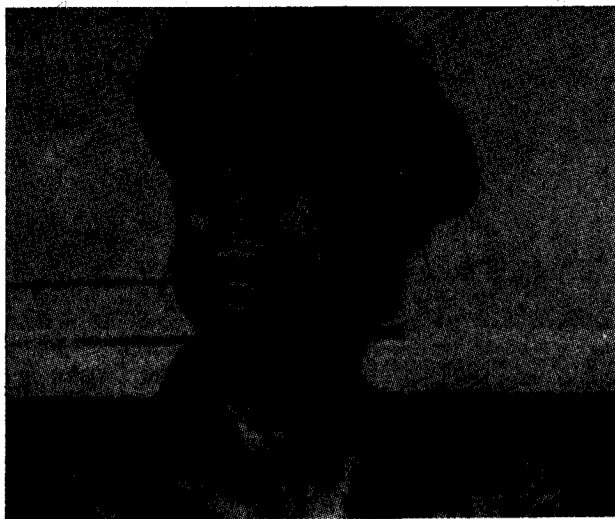
On these questions, therefore, the WSL has no case to answer: the positions attacked are not and never have been ours!

5) A consistent thread running through the unsavoury verbiage of the *Newsline* articles is the suggestion that the WSL leadership spends its entire time searching for other organisations to liquidate into.

In the fevered and paranoid view of Healyism, in which the world is largely populated by



Under Hansen's leadership SWP exposed FBI provocations



WRP chosen ally: Gaddafi



WRP chosen ally: Iraqi dictators Bakr and Hussein



Healy

various categories of provocateurs, spies and agents, to go so far as to hold a political discussion with an opposing political tendency is obviously tantamount to a "capitulation" and, more than likely, —a manoeuvre against the WRP!

"Negotiations"

Thus every exchange and discussion that the WSL has engaged in is regarded as a "negotiation" or an "intrigue" to be catalogued in a list of allegations.

"Thornett has been involved with the French OCI group, the Chartists, Hansen's SWP in the United States, the Pabloite IMG, the Moreno (Bolshevik) faction of the IMG and small groups of Labour 'entrists' . . ."

"Sometimes he has held talks with two and three groups at the same time [!] and each set of talks behind the other one's back. In every single case, the membership have been kept in the dark."

But as every WSL member knows, the *Newsline's* list of groups with whom we have discussed is incomplete. We have and continue to meet far more groups both in Britain and internationally.

As a movement that fights seriously and consistently for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International we regard it as our duty to seek to maximise political debate and discussion with other organisations within the world Trotskyist movement.

There can be no progress in this fight unless steps are taken to clarify what differences exist: whether they involve tactical or principled questions; and whether there is sufficient common ground to make further discussion productive.

The WRP approach is, of course, the cavalier one of simply branding every rival organisation as "spies" or "provocateurs".

The WSL has fought since its formation for a more serious political attitude to the struggle for Trotskyism in Britain and internationally.

Documents

In every major instance of discussions between us and other organisations documentary material has been circulated in our Internal Bulletin and reports made to national aggregates.

One prime example of this—of which the WRP obviously remains blissfully ignorant—was the decision of the WSL to send an observer to a conference of Moreno's Bolshevik Faction in Bogota, Columbia in 1978.

The visit was prefaced and followed by extensive documentary material to WSL members

attempting a full political assessment of the BF and the forces it represents.

But since the bulk of the WRP's material came from files stolen in December 1977, the *Newsline* investigators know nothing of this trip or the subsequent discussions in the WSL.

Indeed they offer nothing but hearsay and gossip based on wildly inaccurate information from 1977 onwards.

We would contrast our position on discussions with other groups with the conspiratorial nature of international work within the WRP.

What do WRP members really know for instance of the political liaison between the Healy leadership and the anti-communist Iraqi and Libyan dictatorships?

Has the membership a clear picture of the links between the WRP and the PLO leadership? Were members consulted over these links—or did they only subsequently discover them through the pages of *Newsline*?

Of course the *Newsline* series is designed precisely to protect the WRP leadership from criticism on such matters—and hence skirts round the WRP's own shady practice.

Showpiece

Yet what is clearly designed to be the showpiece in *Newsline's* allegations of WSL fusion-mongering—the claim that we "capitulated" to the IMG—proves to be an unmitigated failure.

Since the alleged events were only last year, the WRP leaders cannot even utilise their hoard of stolen documents, and are forced to fabricate their story from snippets of gossip. As a result they falsely claim that last summer the WSL:

"... agreed to 'submerge political differences' with the IMG (and the SWP also) [!] in the Cowley factory and to work together with them.

"... agreed to withdraw from all public discussion of the WSL document on revisionism [!] entitled 'The Poisoned Well'.

"... agreed to suspend criticism of the Pabloites in *Socialist Press* for the open-ended duration of the talks."

In reality there are no IMG members in the Cowley factory; the Poisoned Well was republished and widely sold throughout 1979 and circulated to IMG members; and *Socialist Press* in the 17 weeks between July and November 1979 carried no less than 13 centrespread articles slamming the political positions of the IMG and the USFI!

Such facts of course make no impact on the *Newsline's* hard-headed "investigators".

6) But the most sinister and grotesque line peddled in the *Newsline* series is that which

attempts to reinforce and extend the WRP's five year slander campaign against Joseph Hansen to embrace the WSL.

The object of this is to buttress the sagging anti-Hansen campaign and foster the notion that the WSL is a hardened grouping of police provocateurs.

Double agent

We have as a movement consistently rejected the assertions in *Newsline* and *Workers Press* that Healy's "investigations" had 'proven' Hansen to be an FBI/GPU double agent.

We have also opposed attempts from this spurious premise to extend the scope of the WRP's police allegations to Hansen's wide circle of contacts and supporters—with all of whom, needless to say, the WSL has profound political disagreements.

Now the *Newsline* series has furnished further proof that the Healy "investigators" will not shrink in the least from inventing completely fictitious "evidence" to support their foul allegations against their political opponents.

Their whole attempt to link up the WSL with Hansen revolves around a secret meeting in London in December 1974, in which, according to *Newsline*:

"Hansen and his two accomplices Jack Barnes and Mary Alice Waters held private talks with Blick, Jenkins and Mrs Betty Hamilton of the OCI, and Thornett and Richardson.

They planned Thornett's 'coming out' and ways to maximise the damage to the WRP (...)

Not only was the London meeting kept secret from the WSL and does not even rate a mention in the 'Battle for Trotskyism', but the American delegation did not even inform their own fraternal organisation in Britain, Tariq Ali's IMG."

(emphasis added) There is of course a good reason why nobody was told of this meeting. IT NEVER HAPPENED! It is a complete fabrication of the WRP's school of spy fiction writers.

It is of course possible that Hansen met Blick, Jenkins, Hamilton and any number of others: but there was no meeting between him and WSL leaders (who in any event had all been expelled from the WRP by December 4 1974, and were thus in no position to "come out" with any positions within the Party—with or without Hansen's assistance!)

Inconsistent

The *Newsline*, however, easily straddles this embarrassing inconsistency—blandly admitting in the very next column that:

"Hansen flew into London in the days immediately following the expulsion of those belonging to Thornett's anti-party group".

Some planning! What kind of masterspy would arrive to hatch his boldest-ever plot against Healy only after his potential 'agents' had been booted out?

But as the whole series shows, WRP "investigators" are troubled neither by facts nor by logic.

The link with Hansen was an essential component of their case: so a link needed to be created.

Fabricated

This is not the first WRP attempt to fabricate a link between WSL leaders and Hansen. Last year, *Newsline* went so far as to accuse *Socialist Press* editor John Lister of working with Hansen and "therefore" being an "Attorney of the FBI!"

The WRP's case had only one snag: Lister was not only not connected to the FBI, but had never so much as met, spoken with or received communication from Hansen in any shape or form!

Unruffled, the WRP's "theoretical" journal *Labour Review* pronounced that one of the Party's outstanding achievements in the preceding five years had been to:

"expose the late J. Hansen, a close collaborator of John Lister [!] as an FBI agent."

[Vol. 11, No. 12, p.719] With this kind of cavalier disregard for objective reality the WRP's mountain of investigations are exposed for what they are: a brazen frame-up of Healy's political opponents.

Innuendo

The frame-up is a no-holds-barred affair. Over and above the fake link with Hansen, every possible form of innuendo, every available scrap of stolen material is thrown into the *Newsline* narrative to create the impression that the WSL is a police conspiracy.

The reader is told that the "Blick-Jenkins" group's tactics were "the most cynical type of provocation worthy of Scotland Yard itself"; the WRP's opponents are bracketed together as "agent-led groups"; and a stolen letter to Thornett from the Police College asking him to participate in a training film—which Thornett obviously refused—is paraded to "prove" that "the police considered that Thornett was ripe for such an open approach", that "The invitation reflects a highly conscious appraisal of Thornett and his group by the top theorists of the police force", and that "If

Thornett and (Tariq) Ali ever do consummate a merger they can supply the police force with regular speaking engagements."

But the sheer ignorance and



Tariq Ali

malevolence of the WRP "investigation" reach their high point in the final instalment, which revolves around a resolution which *Newsline* states was "passed by a WSL aggregate in October 1979".

The *Newsline* hacks complain that:

"This one-and-a-half page resolution has never been published in the Thornett press or anywhere else by the WSL."

What sinister reason is there for this? Simply the fact that the resolution, "The WRP/IC: a scab current in the workers' movement", though tabled for discussion, has never been put to the vote by the WSL. It is therefore not WSL policy!

In fact the WSL Fourth Annual Conference last month, after some controversy, explicitly rejected its conclusion, and adopted the contentious position that:

"While recognising the downward trend of the WRP, we still maintain that they remain inside the world Trotskyist movement. Their bankrupt maximalist demands and opportunist deviations are part of the crisis of the fragmented Fourth International—of which we are a part."

Political assessment

Sooner than examine or challenge the political assessments of the WRP's positions contained in the 1½ page resolution, however—which show clearly why it is now a matter of debate whether or not the WRP can be regarded as in any sense a Trotskyist party—the WRP proceeds to falsify it, and draw dark conclusions as to its motives.

"Is the resolution designed to prepare WSL members for violence against WRP leaders and members? Is the Thornett group getting in first before the foul deeds are done by saying that the WRP is 'outside the workers' movement' . . . ?

"This is clearly where the police military conspirators would like to quarantine the WRP so they can carry out a policy of provocations and assassinations."

But worse! Perhaps the WSL was not acting alone: perhaps this was another move to gang up with Hansen's "network" against the WRP?

"Thornett and Lister wanted to arrive with their secret resolution branding the WRP as 'outside the bounds of Trotskyism' and the workers movement and therefore make our party 'fair game' for every kind of physical attack . . .

"the suppressed resolution is destined for use as ammunition by the capitalist state.

"They were like hit-men with a contract in their back pocket looking for a sponsor."

This final absurd charge rings with particular irony at a time when the best known "hit men" around are Libyan gunmen implementing the public threat of the WRP's chosen ally Colonel Gaddafi to physically eliminate his political opponents!

Frenzy

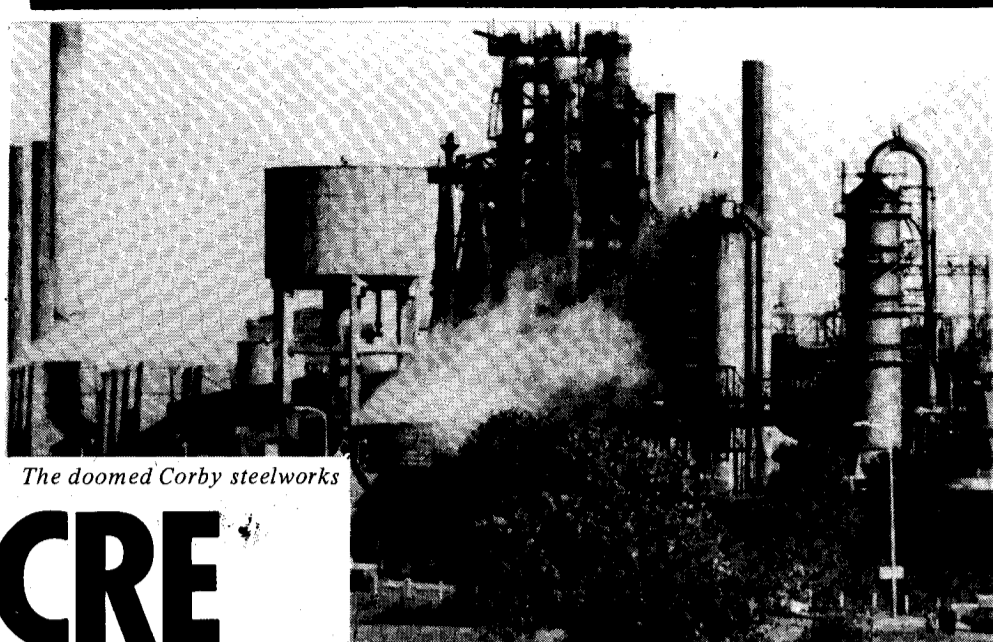
But behind the paranoia and hysteria; behind the fanciful schemas and barrage of hollow invective, the real danger is that the WRP leaders are attempting to stave off the growing crisis in their own movement by whipping up a wholly irrational frenzy of hatred in which every other left group and in particular the WSL is regarded as no more than a bunch of police agents.

The frantic barrage of mudslinging in the *Newsline* is not written to convince any objective reader: it is a desperate attempt to wall off WRP members and supporters from the principled political challenge to Healy's politics posed by the Workers Socialist League.

We can rest assured that *Newsline's* minute circulation will not reach substantial layers of serious workers. But we will not simply allow such slanders and lies against our movement to go unchallenged.

We call on those WRP members who have not completely surrendered their capacity for independent political thought to examine the record and practice of their leadership, and to make a break towards the Trotskyist politics of the Workers Socialist League.

By John Lister



The doomed Corby steelworks

JOBS MASSACRE

The monumental slump that is under way as a result of the Tories' monetarist strategy for starving British industry into profitability has brought yet another crop of redundancies and closures.

Among the foremost victims are workers in the car and components industries, in which there is a growing world-wide crisis.

BL Chairman Michael Edwards warned last week that even more jobs are to go, on top of his planned 25,000 cutback in the Leyland workforce.

And in the Tories' other prime target for attack, BSC, union leaders formally committed to opposing redundancies have negotiated the axing of 6,000 jobs at Port Talbot, which is to be run down to half production.

Further sackings have been agreed at BSC's plant in Cleve-

land, and are almost agreed at Llanwern in South Wales. Another steel plant in Warrington is also to close.

These sackings go a long way towards BSC's target of 52,000 redundancies, and are accompanied by the other prong of the Tory offensive—bonus schemes offering extra cash for accepting increased workload and a slashed workforce.

Meanwhile in the car component industry, Lucas is planning 2,800 sackings; Wilmot Breeden is negotiating the loss of 300 jobs at the two Birmingham plants, and GKN Sankey is cutting 638 jobs with the closure of its Cable St. Wolverhampton plant and cuts at Telford.

Textile bosses too, are pressing home their attack on jobs in the bid to restore profitability. Courtaulds last week announced two new factory closures, with a loss of 670 jobs, on top of recent plans for over 1200 sackings in Lancashire and in Northern

Ireland.

This spate of cutbacks and closures spells disaster for the working class. It must be resisted through a determined policy of occupation, supported by strikes and blacking action.

The demand must be for the defence of all jobs through a programme of work sharing on full pay under the control of elected trade union committees.

In the fight for this policy

workers must demand that the employers' books be opened to trade union committees to expose the anarchy and profiteering that lies at the root of the current wave of redundancies, and underline the necessity for the nationalisation of basic industry and the banks, without compensation under workers' management.

NUPE branch fights for real rises

London NW Ambulance Branch has passed the following resolution on the union's pay policy:

"A pay increase minimum of £75 to be added to the basic weekly wage—this to cancel out the present union policy of percentage increases. This settlement shall be protected against inflation in between annual wage reviews. The index linking will be carried out by an elected union committee. In the event of the full claim not being met, the Executive Committee will call an all-out national strike of all its sections with elected union committees controlling emergency supplies and services".

Support

We strongly urge you to support this resolution. After striking three times against the 5% wage limit, members of our branch were bitterly frustrated

by the chronic disorganisation of the low pay strikes.

Since then we have found that the whole question of pay negotiations has been taken out of the membership's hands.

If it is passed this resolution will:

- *Commit the union to a real increase in our basic wage, an end to percentage increases and a minimum wage claim will do away with many of the problems of differentials.

- *Establish a clear policy for winning the claim, avoiding the confusion of "selective action" and showing that we mean business.

- *Protect our wages inbetween annual increases.

A policy such as this will build on the enormous strength which we showed during the battle against the 5% limit.

Help us to pass this resolution, and, if it falls, help us prepare for a victory at next years conference.

Signed by London NW Ambulance Branch

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Details are available from any WSL branch or from: WSL, 9M Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

Cost: £12 including accommodation for the eight days. A cheap meal will be provided at lunch time and there will be a pooled fare arrangement. Creche facilities.

JOIN THE WSL!

With workers by the thousand taking to the streets to oppose Tory policies there is plainly no lack of militancy in the organised working class.

Yet the existing trade union bureaucrats and Labour leaders—whether right or 'left'—have no perspective to offer those workers prepared to fight in defence of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights.

These can only be defended through policies which start from the independent interests of the working class, which, as an international class, has nothing to gain and everything to lose from attempts to restore the profitability of their "own" employing class.

In a period where the contradictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale closure and destruction of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed which, in today's struggles fights

to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist movement fighting day in and day out to build such a principled leadership in the working class in Britain.

Internationally, we are affiliated to the newly-formed Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, which fights for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and the building of revolutionary parties in every country to lead the struggle against imperialism and against the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

We invite all readers of Socialist Press to seek more details of the WSL and its work, and to join us in the struggle for socialism.

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Labour movement bulletin on Ireland with background articles on witch-hunts in Oxford and Tameside. 25p including p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277 London WC1V 6XX.



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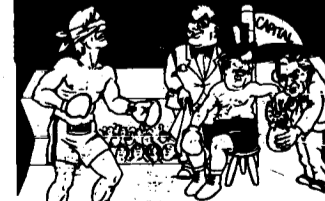
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No daylight for civil service jobs

As the CPSA conference met last week Thatcher announced a further 75,000 cut in civil service jobs making a total reduction of 102,000 jobs since the Tories came to power.

With the right wing 'Daylight' group led by Kate Losinska gaining control of the Presidency and the NEC it is clear that there will be no fight against these cuts and no implementation of the many militant motions passed at the conference.

The right wing will move rapidly to introduce postal balloting and referenda to sack left wing full time officers and drive the left out of the union.

For the first time in CPSA elections had been carried out by individual voting in branch meetings resulting from a rule change put forward by the left wing at the 1979 conference.

The Militant tendency and Tribune supporters in CPSA blame the left wing Campaign for Union Democracy for the electoral defeat and maintain that it was a mistake to ditch the block vote system.

Though the Tory press did influence the election the Broad Left were defeated because of their appalling record on the cuts and suspensions, their failure to campaign against the pay settlement and their inability to organise at grass-

roots level.

Though the right won the elections they were not so successful in the actual conference debate.

On pay a resolution was passed calling for a one-day special pay conference to consider alternatives to the Pay Research system.

Conference voted in favour of the election of full time officers despite the fact that there had been a concerted campaign against it by the right wing and the CPSA Headquarters APEX branch.

Industrial action

A motion was passed calling for industrial action in support of Phil Cordell, Branch Secretary of the Department of Employment Brixton branch and an SWP supporter, who had been sacked for taking a half-day off to attend the anti-Corrie demonstration in February.

It is clear however, that it will be difficult to get the new NEC to initiate action in his defence and SWP member Mike McGrath didn't help by proposing selective strike action, saying "Nobody's suggesting that everyone should go out on indefinite strike".

The Militant and the CP managed to put through a resolution endorsing the action of the Broad Left NEC over cuts,

though resolutions which called for action over closures were not heard.

The standing orders committee also ensured that there was no time to discuss opposition to Tory proposals to stop payment of Supplementary Benefits to strikers families.

Resolutions on the Social Security No. 2 Bill, abortion, immigration controls and the Prevention of Terrorism Act were not heard.

A resolution on Ireland put forward by the Militant supporting the Better Life for All Campaign was passed in the face of witch-hunting hysteria against the Provisional IRA.

In the debate it was difficult to distinguish Militant speakers from the extreme right wing.

On race, an NEC resolution was passed supporting ethnic monitoring in the civil service.

Losinska refused to eject a National Front member who was a conference delegate despite the protests of many delegates.

Conference did succeed in ejecting Civil Service management who had been invited by the NEC as observers.

It is necessary to mount a campaign in CPSA to get rid of the right wing leadership. It is also essential to fight in the Broad Left against the Tribunites, Stalinists and Militant who pose no threat to the right wing.

St Mary's fight closure

May 14 saw further action by health workers and supporters from West Paddington and Kensington fighting cuts at St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road.

The TUC Day of Action was also the AHA's day to decide on the closure of 127 acute beds at the hospital and the closure

of a casualty department in the evenings and at weekends.

In the event the AHA postponed its decision on the cuts. But, undeterred, some 500 workers including striking teachers, took part in the demonstration. A mass meeting at the other St Mary's Hospital, in Praed Street, had voted for strike action in support.

Also on the demonstration was a contingent that had marched from St. Charles Hospital, Ladbroke Grove.

At a lively pavement meeting trade union and community speakers were supported by two AHA members who opposed the cuts—while others going in were given a noisy reception.

NUPE secretary sacked

The NUPE Branch Secretary at Selly Oak Hospital was sacked last week by the South Birmingham District Health Authority.

The reason given was his frequent absence from work on trade union duties, and, for good measure, the unspecified allegation of 'persistent mis-

conduct" was thrown in as well.

Immediately Cummings was sacked the NUPE members at Selly Oak walked out, and by the weekend 300 members from five different hospitals in the branch were also out.

At a mass meeting on Monday May 19 the strike for Jock Cummings' reinstatement was made official.

A shop steward from another hospital, a member of COHSE, observing the mass meeting was nearly assaulted by outraged NUPE members.

For not only is COHSE not supporting the strike, but it is attempting to persuade faint-hearted NUPE members to transfer to their union!

Scots teachers strike

The decision of the National Executive of the Educational Institute of Scotland to launch a series of indefinite 3-day-per-week strikes in 100 selected schools marks a major step forward in the campaign for a 20% wage increase for Scottish teachers.

After a year of mounting frustration and bitterness over

the handling of the 1979 wage claim by the Clegg Commission, the membership are in a militant mood.

A one-day strike call on Tuesday last met with a massive response from the membership, shutting schools throughout the country.

Meeting closed

A demonstration of 3,000 teachers through the streets of

Glasgow ended in a rally at Glasgow Green.

The event was organised by the Glasgow Teachers Action Committee who handed over the arrangements to the local association.

Whilst there was nothing in itself wrong with such a move, the outcome was that they were not granted in return the right to have a speaker on the platform.

As it turned out, after a 10 minute speech from the President of the union, Rose Galt, the meeting was closed—much to the annoyance of many members who wanted a speech from a member of the Action Committee.

The original management offer of 13% has been changed to the completely unacceptable proposition of 14% conditional on teachers working an extra five hours per week.

Such an offer was bound to lead to a breakdown of negotiations.

There is now talk from the management side of an increased offer on the basis of a 2 1/2% cut in the teaching force.

This would mean a loss of 1,000 to 2,000 jobs.

All talk of this being the "wrong time of the year" and "teachers having no industrial muscle" must be combatted. If teachers lose out this time, we begin on the slippery slope back again to low wages and worse conditions.

Teachers must confidently turn to the labour and trade union movement, especially the public sector unions, for support.

NALGO have a similar wage claim in right now and face the same employers.

*Make the strike solid through picketing of schools on strike!

*No retreat of the 20% claim!

*No acceptance of any strings!

*For strikes on an area basis immediately!

LINK NURSERY STRUGGLES!

Since the Tories took office a large number of nursery campaigns have sprung up all over the country to defend the threatened provision for the under fives.

Many of these drew from the experience of the Oxford City Nursery Campaign and its occupation of the South Oxford Nursery Class, closed through the cuts of the last Labour government.

The May 17 Nurseries Action Conference called through the Save Our Nurseries Campaign in Nottingham was an extremely important initiative in bringing these fighting campaigns together to discuss the nuts and bolts of how we fight the cuts in nursery provision.

In this it was completely opposite to conferences called by, for example, SE Region TUC on provision for the under fives and also to the TUC Report on the under fives.

Both of these, like so many similar discussions on nurseries concentrated on why we need nurseries, the benefits to

children and why we must educate 'the community' etc. on these needs.

They both totally ignored the question of how we are to fight to achieve the expansion of this grossly inadequate state service and the central question of how we now defend it from annihilation.

Same experience

The majority of the sixty delegates and observers who attended the Nottingham conference were actively involved in struggles and shared the same experience in defending their local nurseries against either closure or cuts in staffing.

There were strong delegations from the Nottingham, Leicester, Birmingham and Oxford campaigns and in particular from the Wandsworth Nightingale Lane Nursery occupation.

The conference felt that this was a very real basis for the start of a national nursery campaign that focussed on the necessary action and policies to defend facilities and demand expansion.

An organising committee

was set up to discuss the immediate production of a booklet, coordinating the various campaigns, and setting out much needed information culled from joint experience on such questions as how to establish a campaign, how to plan an occupation, getting trade union support for these plans, how to fight for strike action to defend threatened occupations and how to use community action to bring pressure to bear on the labour movement.

Other important questions which would be covered would include avoiding demoralisation if and when numbers of campaigners fall.

On the question of where the money for nurseries is to come from, all the campaigns stated their absolute opposition to saving nurseries at the expense of other services being cut instead.

All were agreed that the money must not be found by cutting services, increasing rates or rents but by investigating council spending and seeing what was going in profit to private suppliers and to the banks as interest rates are

allowed to soar.

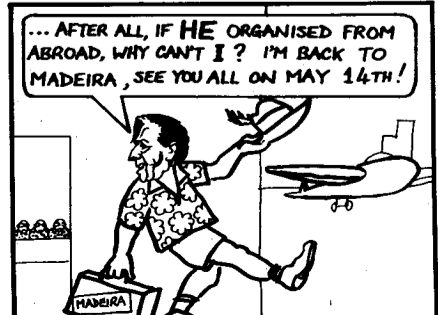
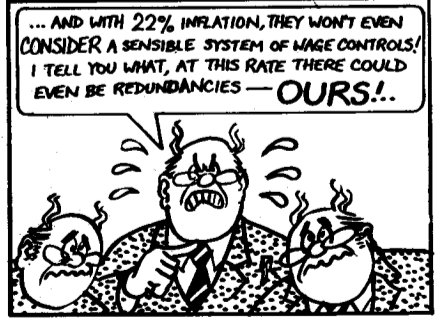
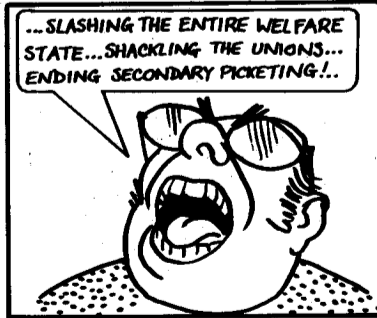
The most bitter common experience that the campaigners shared was in the role of the trade union leaders.

Time and again it was pointed out how they had let campaigns down, given paper resolutions of support but refused to follow it up with anything other than more speeches or deals cooked up with local authorities selling out campaigns and dressed up as 'realistic compromises'.

Noticeably the trade union bureaucracy boycotted the conference—with the exception of Nottingham NUPE official John McGuigan.

McGuigan, who had himself called on the people of Nottingham to get down on their knees and pray for the education of their children threatened by cuts, predictably defended the role of the union bureaucracy by blaming the union membership for being unwilling to fight.

It was pointed out that not one single union had organised any action against nursery cuts apart from Nottingham NUT's strikes in defence of suspended teacher Eileen Crosbie—and



SOCIALIST PRESS



FUND

We are still chasing £397.30 to complete our May Fund and we have only got twelve days in which to find it! We simply cannot afford to fall short of our target this month so we are asking all our readers and supporters to think seriously about making a contribution to this fund which is vital for maintaining Socialist Press and the work of the Workers Socialist League.

Contributions should be sent to:
Socialist Press Fund, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

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19 May, 1st-56; 2nd-53.

DAY OF DECEIT!



Pensioners join march in Oxford

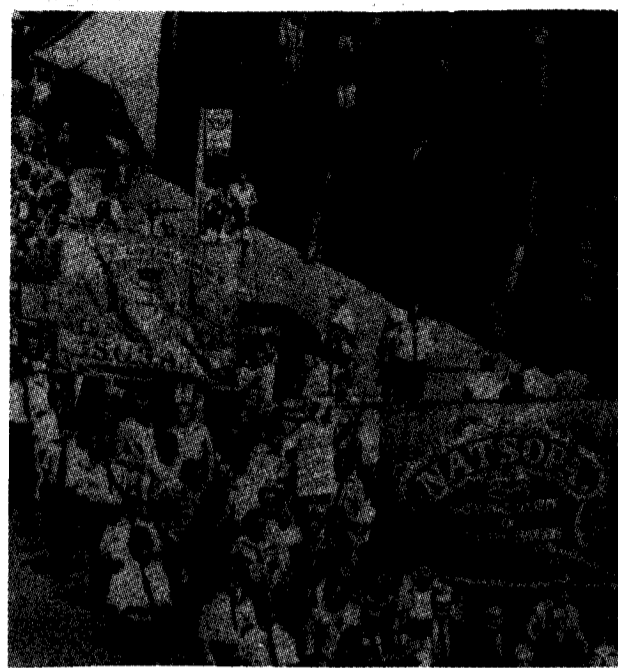
May 14—designed by the TUC as a day of weak-kneed lunch-time meetings and badge wearing—proved to be a day of mass strike action, with more than 250,000 workers participating in a total of 130 demonstrations throughout the country.

In this respect the day can be seen as a substantial failure for:

*The government—whose vicious anti-working class policies, far from beating workers into submission have triggered a rising tide of militancy throughout the labour movement.

*The employers—who wound up paying out wages to those workers who clocked in, while in many cases achieving only 50% production.

*The media—whose attempt to witch-hunt and crush the anti-Tory movement failed to prevent a stoppage that paralysed the Fleet Street lie



Print workers march down Fleet Street

machine and mobilised more strikers than the first day of the General Strike.

*The union leaders—whose efforts to use the day of action to let off steam wound up yet again demonstrating that they are far behind their members, and incapable of mobilising the potential anti-Tory movement in united action to defeat the Thatcher government.

Yet so great has been the media cover-up of the events of May 14 that few rank and file workers will see it in this light.

A cross section of the day's activities offers very different reading from that offered by the capitalist press:

*Docks at Hull, Southampton, Liverpool and some London docks were halted.

*More than half the mines were shut down.

*Inter City and many local train services were halted or disrupted.

*Bus services in many areas were hit.

*Thousands of shipyard workers, steelworkers and Rolls

Royce workers took strike action. BL's Cowley Assembly Plant was reduced to less than 50% production.

Engineering plants in many areas of the country were forced to admit badly reduced production. Civil Servants, too, as well as teachers joined local strikes and demonstrations.

*3,000 Fleet Street printworkers joined one of 60 London area demonstrations. Other marches included 20,000 in Glasgow, 10,000 in Edinburgh, 15,000 in Liverpool and 2,000 in Leicester and Southampton.

In the North West rallies overflowed the narrow spaces booked by pessimistic local officials.

Len Murray and Alan Fisher have spoken of May 14 being only the "first of many" days of action against Tory policies.

Trade unionists must insist that their leaders abandon such efforts to pressurise Thatcher into changing her mind, and begin the serious preparation of General Strike action to bring down this vicious anti-union government.

Officials back scabbing

Leaders of four major unions—comprising nearly 4 million members—are collaborating in the training of scab labour to break a strike by GMWU members.

This scandal has arisen in the dispute over bonus payments to skilled thermal lagers working on the CEGB's Isle of Grain power station.

But the issues involved are far more wide reaching.

As is now usual in major disputes, the CEGB has threatened to close down the whole site—with a loss of over 2,000 jobs—if the lagers maintain their struggle.

And as is also now routine in major disputes, union officials have rushed to comply with this management blackmail.

What is not so usual is that the 27 lagers on the site, together with their GMWU official, have withstood the pressure on them, and refused to back down.

As a result leaders of the TGWU, EETPU, AUEW and UCATT have come together in an unholy alliance to endorse CEGB moves to train unskilled workers to scab on the lagers.

GMWU officials, under pressure from their 6,500 lagers on sites throughout the country have warned that this could cause chaos, and asked for the four unions to be suspended from the TUC!

Whatever the outcome of the dispute the lesson is clear: a growing number of union bureaucrats are now prepared to organise scabbing sooner than organise a fight against the employers.

Brezhnev's offer they can't refuse

Though last week's diplomatic moves by Soviet leaders and other politicians appeared to focus on the question of Afghanistan, there is little doubt that the main driving force behind the latest moves of imperialist and Stalinist leaders alike is the unresolved political crisis in Iran.

In the wake of Carter's abortive military adventure, little reference is being made to the hostage issue. Instead, the real dilemma confronting the imperialists has come to the fore: how to restore stability and imperialist authority over Iran and the Gulf states?

The problem is underlined by the dismal failure of Iranian President Bani-Sadr to secure a majority in the Majlis (Parliamentary) elections, showing that little remains of his sweeping majority in the January presidential election.

State apparatus

Bani-Sadr's decline is obviously related to his attempts to reinforce the central state apparatus, crush the struggles of national minorities, and, by returning the US hos-



Brezhnev

tages, to rebuild the damaged links with imperialism.

It is also linked to his evident lack of any programme to answer the crushing material problems of Iran's workers or peasants, and the obvious mounting economic chaos over which he is presiding—as oil revenues dwindle, leaving Budget estimates high and dry.

Further evidence of Bani-Sadr's impotence was offered when last weekend a gang of volunteers led by Ayatollah Khalkhali defied the President, and began the demolition of the marbled tomb of the Shah's

father Reza Khan.

They declared that Bani-Sadr's hostility was less of a problem to them than the strength of the tomb's reinforced concrete walls!

As Common Market countries prepare to make their—in most cases token—contribution to the US sanctions against Iran, the fear in the minds of the imperialists must be that under internal and external pressure the Iranian central government will crack, and the state itself fragment into its original component parts.

This fear is also in the fore-

front of Kremlin thinking. Increasingly the Stalinist leaders fear the eruption of revolutionary struggles on their very doorstep: struggles which the imperialist powers could not contain, but which would call for prompt military repression if they are not to spread.

Any move by Soviet armies into Iran to crush such struggles could trigger an all-out confrontation with the imperialists. An arrangement is therefore seen as vital to provide adequate means of stabilising the situation in Iran, to preserve the balance of class forces on which both the imperialists and the Stalinists depend.

Talks

This is why last week Brezhnev took the lead in proposing two initiatives to the imperialists: talks on a non-interference pact between the Afghan puppet regime and neighbouring states, and a "world peace conference".

Brezhnev's move has caught

the imperialists on the hop. While the Carter regime remains locked in its Cold War stance, other imperialist leaders—such as Britain's Lord Carrington—are more ready to face up to the political realities of the Middle East.

Offering to help

Carrington recognises that nothing will now persuade the Kremlin leaders to hand back Afghanistan: but he recognises also that they are offering to help stabilise Iran, Pakistan and neighbouring states, in which they have no desire to see revolutionary struggles.

There are also signs that the Pakistani regime, daunted by the Soviet military machine on its borders and by the evident weakness of imperialism in the region, is preparing to accommodate to the Kremlin and to effectively recognise the Afghan regime.

In South East Asia, also, the pro-imperialist regimes of the ASEAN alliance are being

forced to recognise the new facts of life.

It is reported that Thailand has been holding secret talks with the Vietnamese Stalinist regime over Kampuchea in which the Thai government has dropped demands for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops and declared itself ready to recognise the puppet Heng Samrin regime.

In exchange it is proposed the Vietnamese should simply cut back its military forces in Kampuchea, and guarantee not to intervene into Thailand.

The growing political and economic crisis of imperialism, and the obvious military strength of the Stalinist regimes are thus creating conditions in which the imperialists are offered two choices: to proceed along a path of confrontation, with the danger of world war; or to take up the Kremlin offer of renewed collaboration to stem revolutionary struggles.

Either way, the prime victims of such manoeuvres are the workers and peasants of the world—whose only way forward is through the struggle for the defeat of imperialism and Stalinism through the building of revolutionary, Trotskyist parties.