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1977: WHICH WAY FOR THE UNIONS?

Pipe-dreams, wage cuts and dole queues — these were the only prospects offered in New Year's messages from the Healey-Callaghan government, immersed as it is in efforts to restore the profits of crisis-ridden British capitalism.

In this they are still backed to the hilt by the TUC leaders, pledged at all costs to preserve the Social Contract.

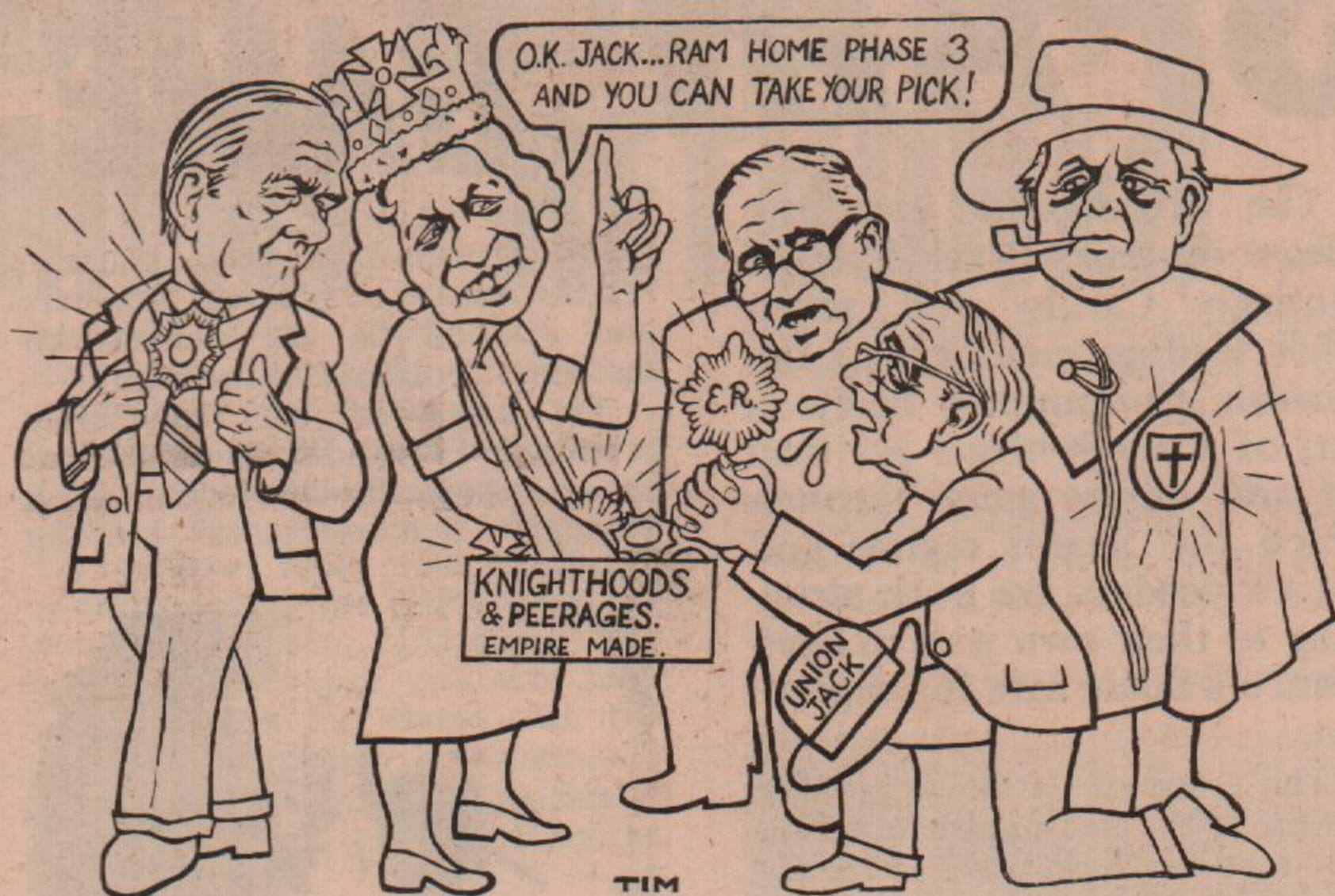
For this reason the central issue facing workers in 1977 is to organise the swelling resistance to these leaders, around policies in defence of jobs and wages.

SIX MONTHS

There can scarcely be a worker anywhere who takes Healey seriously when he claims that "we have got a difficult six months" before things look up again. How many times have we heard this from Labour and trade union bureaucrats determined to force through further cuts in living standards?

Meanwhile, of course, British inflation continues to soar despite the slashed value of the wage packet, and capitalism internationally shows no sign of upturn — trade is already stagnating and investment falling.

All this means that if we accepted Healey's line workers would confront *not* six months, but an *endless* prospect of cuts in public services, huge rises in food and other prices, mounting redundancies and wages held down by the TUC not only until July (under the 4½% deal) but after July under strict limits to be written into a Phase Three of the



Social Contract.

1976 gave an idea of the determination of the TUC leaders to hold down wages — as manoeuvre after manoeuvre was used to secure a stage-managed 17-1 majority for the 4½% limit at the June Special Congress, despite the opposition of the rank and file.

Since then the frontal attacks on the Seamen (with the threat to expel the NUS from the TUC and smash it by organised scabbing if the leadership called strike action against the 4½%) and on the Rubery Owen workers (engineers threatened with discipline by the AUEW; and electricians brow-beaten by an unprecedented intervention by union officials including TUC chief Murray and two union Presidents, all seeking to end sectional strikes which threaten pay laws) show both the hostility within the working class to wage control and their leaders'

complete determination to hold it at all costs.

Such tensions within the trade unions must increase as the pressure for wages grows with the rising tide of inflation. Certain bureaucrats like the miners' leaders have already sensed this and set out to head off their members into 'fringe benefit' claims making cynical use of the legitimate demand for early retirement to take the place of a defence of the basic wage.

Despite this, struggles must erupt on wages in 1977 — struggles which, though they may at first seem isolated, reflect the feelings of the mass of workers, and open up the possibility of the outbreak of widescale action against the 4½% limit.

This movement on wages interconnects also with resistance to all attacks now launched by the employers on the working class — in particular unemployment and



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

the cuts in social services.

TUC leaders have been careful to limit this "fight" on all these questions to *protest* — marches, token strikes and lobbies divorced from all-out strike action to force a change of government policy.

They know only too well that the cuts and unemployment are a vital part of the Social Contract on which the Labour government has chosen to stake its existence.

ELECTION

If the Social Contract is smashed by workers on any of these issues, it will mean the defeat of the Labour government and the prospect of a General Election bringing the Tories to power.

We stand of course in opposition to the return of a Tory government. But if the right wing Labour leaders consciously jeopardise the movement by implementing a programme of Tory policies then the responsibility for the loss of Labour support and the return of a Tory government must lie with *them*, and with the spineless "lefts" who refuse to remove them, *not* with the workers who resist these policies.

In any event, even the Social Contract cannot for long save this completely reactionary Labour administration. The crisis of British capitalism rushes ahead far faster than their desperate attempts to patch it together.

At almost any time another sharp collapse could take place, forcing the government to seek further loans from the IMF — on terms which could force a General Election.

Whatever proves to be the case trade unionists need to enter 1977 armed with a programme adequate to the task of confronting not just the employer, but also TUC and government.

INDEPENDENT

The first task is to mobilise the independent strength of the unions. While the bureaucrats move in to enforce dictatorial rule by full-time officials over the rank and file, dragging stewards and convenors into management roles through 'participation' schemes, the fight must be taken up for the regular election of all full time officials, for democratic procedures in the unions and the complete independence of the unions from employer and state.

At the same time the following demands to defend the working class must be fought for in every union Conference in 1977:

*End wage controls now! For substantial catching up increases

Cont'd on Back Page Col. 5

CHINA'S "CIVIL WAR"

The carefully selected and censored reports of political and armed struggle in several parts of China now being issued by government-run sources give only a very partial picture.

Like the grotesque series of accusations which continue to mount against the Shanghai-based 'gang of four', arrested last October, the reports are clearly designed to brand any and all opposition to the regime of Hua Kuo-feng and the army chiefs as the work of provocateurs, terrorists and counter-revolutionaries.

At the same time the selective release of information now by the official media reveals two important things.

Firstly, Hua's leadership has found it impossible to deal with opposition province by province, and is now trying to head off the spread of news and agitation through 'unofficial' channels.

And secondly, the struggles are taking place on a vast scale.

Szechwan, the vast western agricultural province bordering on Tibet, with a population of 100



millions, was the scene of 'civil war' and fighting in the major city of Paoting, 100 miles south of Peking was quelled only by army intervention.

It is said also that industrial production throughout Kiangsi province (south central China) was paralysed by 'disruption'. All such news points to political resistance on a vast scale, confirming that the grip of Hua's regime remains precarious.

And the substance of Hua's
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ONLY STRIKE ACTION CAN STOP THE CUTS!

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



S AFRICA - MURDER AS USUAL

The final days of 1976 were marked by murder and carnage in the black "townships" of South Africa.

According to the South African police, 72 blacks were killed and hundreds of others wounded. Forty six of the dead were in the province of Natal, 26 in the suburbs of Nyanga, Gugulato and Langa around Cape Town.

Hundreds of others were wounded and thousands made homeless as a result of arson.

OFFICIAL VERSION

The official version of these events given by the racist police is that the deaths and injuries were suffered mainly by black students and resident workers who had attacked migrant workers who then retaliated. The migrants were refusing to participate in a planned "Christmas of mourning" for the hundreds of blacks murdered by the police earlier in the year.

Although the Vorster regime's censorship makes it hard to establish the exact truth, there can be no doubt that its account is a lie.

Tensions certainly exist between migrant workers and others in the

black urban areas but, as last September's events in Soweto proved, the hostility has been systematically fostered by the police.

WHIM

Migrant workers are exceptionally low-paid even for South Africa and they can be sent back to the destitution of the "tribal homelands" they came from at the whim of the white authorities.

This allows the police to bribe and threaten them into taking action against the leaders of the growing organised movement of rebellion among South Africa's urban blacks.

Eye-witnesses have consistently reported provocative actions by the police over the last two weeks of slaughter; and hospital evidence shows that a large proportion of the dead and injured had been shot down by police bullets.

The police casualty figures for the past two weeks should probably be at least doubled.

A detailed report sponsored by the *Rand Daily Mail*, *The Cape Times* and the South African Institute of Race Relations has revealed that since the black uprising first broke out in Soweto

last June 500 blacks have been killed compared with the official police figure of about 250.

Of the 500 dead, 376 were residents of Soweto. A sample of "normal" life under apartheid was given by the police report that over Christmas Soweto was "completely calm".

"Only 19" people died violent deaths, "no more than a normal weekend"!

The number of political prisoners detained since June is unknown since hundreds of blacks and Asians

have simply "disappeared".

In the last two weeks about 100 people detained under the infamously repressive Internal Security Act (the successor to the Suppression of Communism Act) have been "freed".

The most prominent of them, however, including Winnie Mandela, have been immediately subjected to "banning" orders which mean they remain effectively under house arrest.

New political arrests and new

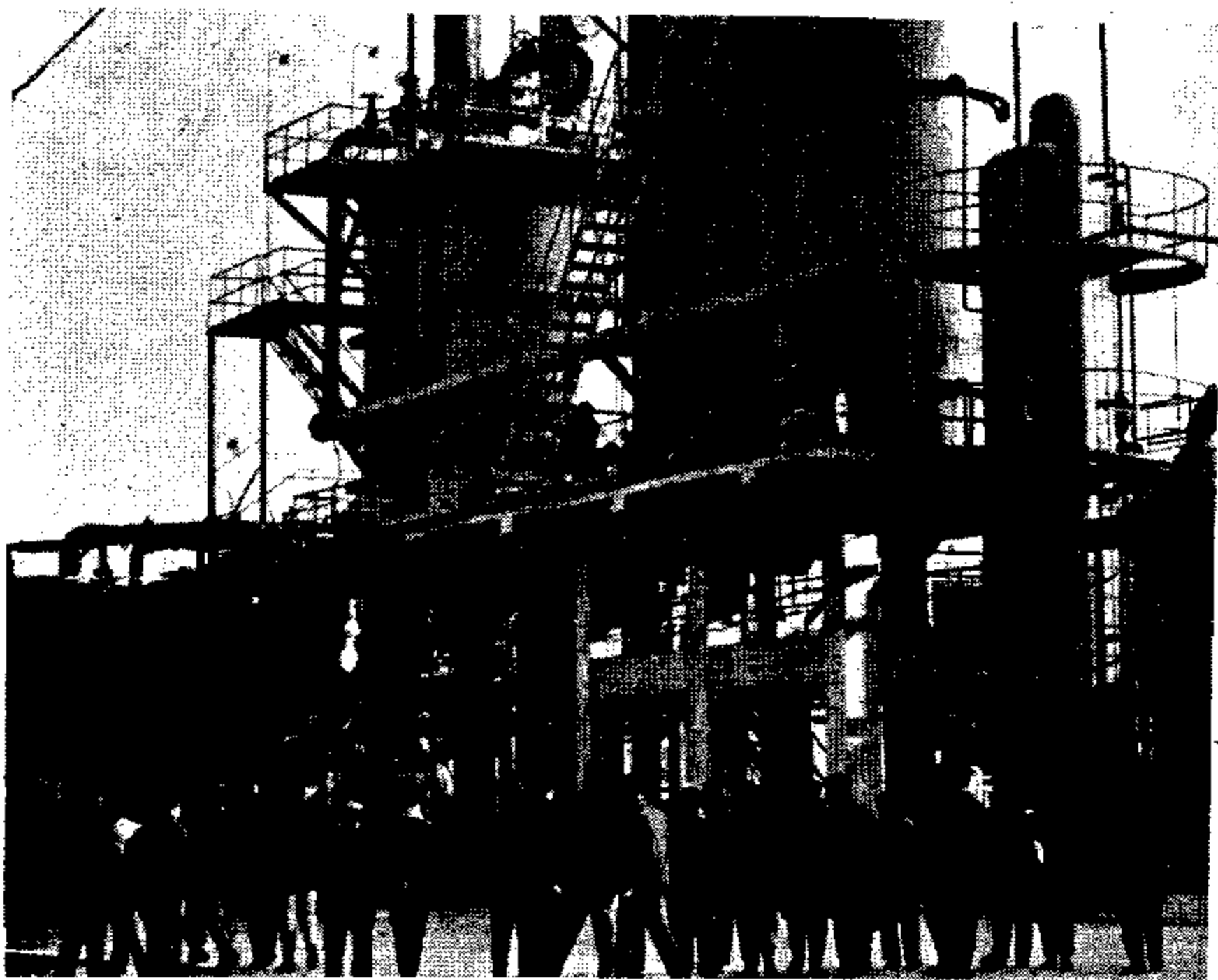
police murders go on.

But 1976 will be seen as the year in which the bloody struggle to end South Africa's racist dictatorship entered its final and decisive phase.

Now is the moment to redouble the fight in the British labour movement to end the Labour government's shameful collaboration with Vorster's regime and to give the maximum material support to the fighters for black liberation throughout Southern Africa.



The Vorster Government



Chinese workers

CHINA . . . Continued from Front Page

Christmas Day speech to the national conference on agriculture could be expected to arouse opposition in important sections of the working class and peasantry.

Alongside the routine obeisances to Mao and the denunciation of the "gang of four" and Soviet "social imperialism" came demands for higher output and labour productivity, and to "systematise norms and national standards" in industry.

This - put more bluntly - means a policy of allowing pay-differentials to be revived in the enterprise (such differentials were one of the main targets of the "Cultural Revolution") and a turn towards the "economic" pricing of at least consumer products.

Such a policy will mean an intensification of work loads, and will hit the living standards of the lower paid, while leaving intact the privileges of the bureaucratic layers.

The regime is attempting to brand all opposition to its policies as being fermented by the "gang of four".

In reality, though, Chiang Ching and her supporters never went beyond the limits of a struggle with the bureaucracy; just as

much as Hua, the so-called "radicals" were anxious to avoid any real political mobilisation of the Chinese masses, with all the dangers this would bring for the rule of the bureaucracy as a whole.

It is because the "left" are part and parcel of the bureaucracy that Hua has been able to make political capital out of Mao's widow's life of privilege and arrogance.

But he is much more reluctant to undertake any sort of systematic charges against them - though if they are guilty of one hundredth of the crimes they are accused of, this would justify immediate trials.

Such trials would, however, be exceedingly difficult to limit to them alone.

In the political crisis opened up by Mao's final illness and death, the Chinese working class will need to build a new political leadership, based on a thoroughgoing opposition to the Stalinist policies of all sections of the bureaucracy.

Such a leadership would settle accounts, openly and democratically, with the privileges and abuses of the ruling caste, and open up for the masses to examine the hidden history of the Chinese Communist Party.

SPAIN CAT & MOUSE GAME GOES ON

The arrest and then the release on bail a week later of Santiago Carillo and seven other leading members of the Spanish Communist Party is part of a much bigger political cat and mouse game through which the Suarez regime and the CP leaders are both struggling in their own way to keep Franco's Spain safe for capitalism.

The arrest of Carillo, is an illustration of the undiminished political repressiveness of Franco's "reformist" successors.

Like all the other political arrests which are still a daily occurrence in Spain, it reemphasises the importance of the demand for a complete amnesty and the legalisation of all political parties.

Carillo's political prominence not only prompted a new wave of militant demonstrations in every Spanish city around these demands; it also led to a chorus of protest from international reformist and Stalinist dignitaries who have managed to remain relatively silent about the many hundreds of other recent political arrests.

EMBARASSMENT

This, of course, has created a certain amount of embarrassment for the regime, anxious to have its "democratic" credentials accepted.

The arrests, however, have a positive side both for the regime and for the Communist Party. Carillo may be an embarrassing captive; but his detention helped the Suarez government at a crucial moment to defuse an outburst of opposition on its ultra-right flank.

The Falangist "bunker" had exploited the regime's failure to rescue the President of the Council

of State (Antonio Maria Oriol) from left-wing kidnapers demanding the release of political prisoners and pointed to the dangers to fascism of political "reformism".

On one occasion the Cortes president Fernandez Miranda had to be physically protected from Falangist demonstrators shouting "Traitor".



Carillo

On December 23rd Suarez and Interior Minister Martin Villa seized the opportunity given by their success in capturing Carillo to dismiss the chiefs of the three police forces against whom hundreds of members of the police had demonstrated a few days earlier.

These dismissals were presented as the beginning of a modernisation and liberalisation of the security system. In fact all the regime has done is to replace the existing chiefs with others they expect to be more directly subordinate to the government.

The regime has also wound up the Public Order Court, which normally tried political offences. The charges against Carillo and the other CP leaders (holding office in an illegal organisation) will now be heard in the ordinary courts where

it will be easier for the regime to keep tactical control over the progress of the case.

Whether or not the CP actually invited the arrests, they have made it more difficult for other parties of the class-collaborationist opposition (the Socialists and Christian Democrats) to proceed with the planned negotiations with the fascist government over the heads of the CP.

The CP itself gives full support to the treacherous policy of negotiating a pact with the Suarez regime; but it demands to be included in the pact and to have at least the same semi-legality as the Socialist Party.

The arrests have also diverted some attention from the failure of the CP to give any effective lead to the Spanish working class in last month's referendum.

The CP refused to mount any major campaign in support of its declared policy of abstention. The result was a high poll (75%) and an enormous "yes" vote for the regime's fake "democratisation" plans, which involve a general election within a few months.

It was a striking feature of the results that in Euskadi, the one area where the opposition parties gave a lead on the question of abstention, the level of abstentions was around 50% of the electorate.

The CP's conduct in the referendum is a guide to the whole opportunistic and unprincipled scheme of its leaders to build a coalition with the ruling class and so crush the growing forces of working class revolution.

While Carillo manoeuvres to conceal the lesson of the arrests, it will not be lost on the thousands of militants from all workers' parties who faced baton charges, smoke bombs and rubber bullets while demonstrating for the CP leader's release.

OILING THE WHEELS OF CAPITALISM

Saudi Arabia produces so much oil that, for a few months at least, it can probably keep the most recent oil price increase down to 5% and break the majority OPEC plan for a 10% rise.

Its decision, Oil Minister Sheik Yamani said, was taken to help the economic problems of Britain, France and Italy and so help forestall Communist Party participation in the governments of the latter two countries.

The motives for Libyan President Gaddafi's decision to pour £250 million of much needed money capital into Fiat, Italy's major manufacturing company are more complex.

The deal gives the government of Libya (ironically once Italy's colony) 10% of Fiat's shares, but evidently a much larger share of control than this.

LIBYA

Though Saudi Arabia has already bought up sections of major capitalist corporations in West Germany, the Fiat deal is Libya's first move in this direction.

Up to now Gaddafi has preferred to take stakes in finance capital operations, such as the powerful Union of Arab and French Banks, which are major operators in the speculative Euro-currency markets.

In this enterprise Gaddafi's state bank operates in a consortium with the Midland Bank.

To Gaddafi at least such activities do not seem inconsistent with his policy of "Arab socialism".

In Libya itself, this policy consists of a combination of nationalised or partly nationalised large firms and the generous encouragement of Libyan capitalists.

Libyan workers benefit from various "welfare state" schemes which do not go to the tens of thousands of foreign migrant workers who suffer appalling hardships.

The Arab Socialist Union is the only legal political "party"; it is really more of a massive public relations enterprise.

The formation of independent workers' parties or trade unions is punishable by death.

"MIDDLE ROAD"

Gaddafi's stated aim, like that of so many demagogues, is a "middle road" between capitalism and communism.

His socialism, he admits, owes more to Mohammed than to Marx and his regime pursues a fundamentalist Islamic line.

The one consistency, however, in Gaddafi's otherwise erratic foreign policy has been his support for the Palestine Liberation movement.

It is for this reason that imper-



Gaddafi

ialist governments and their most trusted agents in the Arab world, such as Sadat in Egypt, have made repeated attempts to sponsor a right-wing coup to unseat Gaddafi.

He evidently feels that the leverage to be gained by financial deals with major capitalists is a better guarantee against this than the strengthening of the mass movement in Libya.

The deal with Fiat has already sparked off an important industrial dispute in Italy.

Since the deal, Turin's daily newspaper *La Stampa*, always owned by Fiat's Agnelli family through a holding company, has been brought directly into the main Fiat company. This plan was never mentioned to the workers on the newspaper.

CONDITION

Journalists and editorial staff protest that this was a condition imposed by Gaddafi in order to secure editorial control of the newspaper.

Even before he owned any of it Gaddafi made demands for the dismissal of the editor for implicitly criticising his policy.

At least Gaddafi can rely on one newspaper to support him, no matter what. References to him in the *Newline*, daily paper of the "Trotskyist" Workers Revolutionary Party are never less than uncritical.

Their "own reporter" at a giant rally in Tripoli last September was carried away in an ecstasy of adulation.

But how it is that the man the *Newline* implies is the architect of permanent revolution in Libya can be a financial capitalist in Paris and London and an industrial capitalist in Turin has not yet been explained.



Oil refinery in Saudi Arabia

JAMAICA: 'SOCIALIST' GOVERNMENT RETURNED

Michael Manley's ruling "socialist" People's National Party (PNP) won 48 out of the 60 seats in Jamaica's mid-December general election.

This landslide victory followed months of political violence initiated by Edward Seaga's right-wing Jamaica Labour Party — probably helped by veteran "destabilizer" Norman Descoteaux who (Philip Agee has revealed) arrived to head the CIA mission last December.

The *Financial Times*, like other capitalist papers, presented the election as "a straight choice between a capitalist or a socialist administration".

There is certainly no doubt that, despite its links with the Bustamente Industrial Trade Union, the Labour Party is the party of the banks, capitalists and landowners.

FOUNDATION

In this respect it has changed little since its foundation by Sir Alexander Bustamente in 1943 after his political split with his cousin Norman Manley.

Manley at that time was the leading figure of both the PNP and the trade union federation later to become the TUC.

In 1952 Manley expelled the "left" and established the National Workers' Union which is now the PNP's trade union base.

It was in this split that today's Prime Minister, Michael Manley, cut his sharp political teeth.

As a budding trade union bureaucrat he became the leading hatchet man in the merciless campaign of political destruction

launched by his father's right wing leadership clique against the rebel left-wing of the movement.

Manley's PNP today describes itself as "anti-imperialist" and "democratic socialist". But the international links most assiduously cultivated by the PNP are not the much publicised diplomatic and technical assistance contacts with Castro's Cuba but those with the so-called "Socialist International" led by Callaghan, Schmidt, Soares and their coterie of traitors to the working class.

COMMON

Jamaica's "socialist" programme over the last four years has a lot in common with the policies of these other so-called "socialists".

Manley has revoked the infamous strike-breaking Essential Services Law and Masters and Servants Act; but he has replaced it with the Labour Relations and Arbitration Act and the Termination of Employment Act which impose controls on unions reminiscent of Barbara Castle's proposed "reforms" of 1969.

Though this legislation gives some new rights to strike in the public services, it still defines some strikes as illegal and authorises fines or prison sentences on workers involved in them.

Manley has "nationalised" sections of the sugar and bauxite (aluminium ore) industries, the mainstays of Jamaica's economy.

COMPENSATION

But "nationalisation" (similar to that in Zambia and other countries) takes the form of 51% government ownership with full

and generous compensation to the international capitalists who continue to manage the firms on well-paid contracts.

All this is very far from socialism. Michael Manley himself remains as much an obstacle to socialism in Jamaica as he did in 1952.

It is not fears of what he wants



Manley

to do which have prompted the CIA's "destabilisation" plans.

What the US is afraid of are the masses of Jamaican workers and peasants who voted for the PNP.

In massive demonstrations they applauded Manley's increasingly anti-imperialist words and will now be expecting them to be translated into some sort of action to put an end to pitifully low wages, ghetto housing conditions, 25% unemployment and the oppression of Jamaica by imperialism.

THE WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class in opposition to the betrayals of both "left" and right wing Labour and trade union leaders and the Communist Party.

In the daily struggle to take the demands and principles of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme* into the trade unions, the WSL has been at the forefront of the fight for the sliding scale of wages, and work sharing on full pay — demands which at the 1975 T&GWU Conference were the only alternative to Jones' £6 pay plan and the wholesale acceptance of redundancies by the bureaucracy. In today's fight against the TUC's 4¼% pay cutting deal with Healey this demand for a sliding scale of wages (rising according to the rising cost of living as assessed by trade union committees) is the essential basis of consistent opposition.

In the Health Service WSL comrades have led the struggle for a sliding scale of NHS spending, for the start of workers' control of the service (beginning with opening the books of the Health Authorities), along with the fight to end all private practice. Perhaps more important we have led the growing call for *strike action* to defend the NHS against the cuts and to implement these policies, fighting those like the ASTMS and NUPE leadership who substitute the words for the action.

In London this policy has already won a big response with the one-day action against the closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital — when 2,000 hospital workers in the area struck and 400 marched to lobby MPs against the cuts.

In local disputes also, WSL comrades have tested and developed the demands of the *Transitional Programme*, putting forward in every case the only real opposition to the Stalinists and the right-wing. Our struggle for the "open the books" demand in the motor industry and against all forms of "workers' participation" have won mass responses.

At the same time we have put forward a policy to fight unemployment, calling for unity of employed and unemployed through the fight to mobilise the trade union movement.

The WSL is the only movement that fights consistently for transitional demands, going beyond mere trade union militancy to pose the political issues to workers.

In doing this our comrades have been forced also to lead struggles for trade union democracy against the bureaucratic manipulation of the Stalinists and right-wing.

But our struggle for the continuity of the principles of Trotskyism is in no way a task confined to Britain. It requires an attention and involvement in the international struggles of the working class and moves to rebuild the Trotskyist Fourth International.

So while many interventions in Britain have developed the League's grasp of Trotsky's *Transitional Programme*, there has been a consistent drive to deepen and enrich the movement's understanding of the history and the present crisis of the Trotskyist Fourth International, as an essential part of any serious initiative towards its reconstruction.

We urge all readers who agree on the need for revolutionary leadership and the demands we put forward to find out more about the WSL and join our fight in the labour movement.

HOTEL WORKERS FIGHT FOR UNIONS

At hotels in Sheffield, Oxford and London bitter struggles are now taking place for union organisation.

In each case workers are finding themselves confronted by a viciously anti-union employer, yet have received next to no active backing from union officials supposedly "organising" the hotel and catering industry.

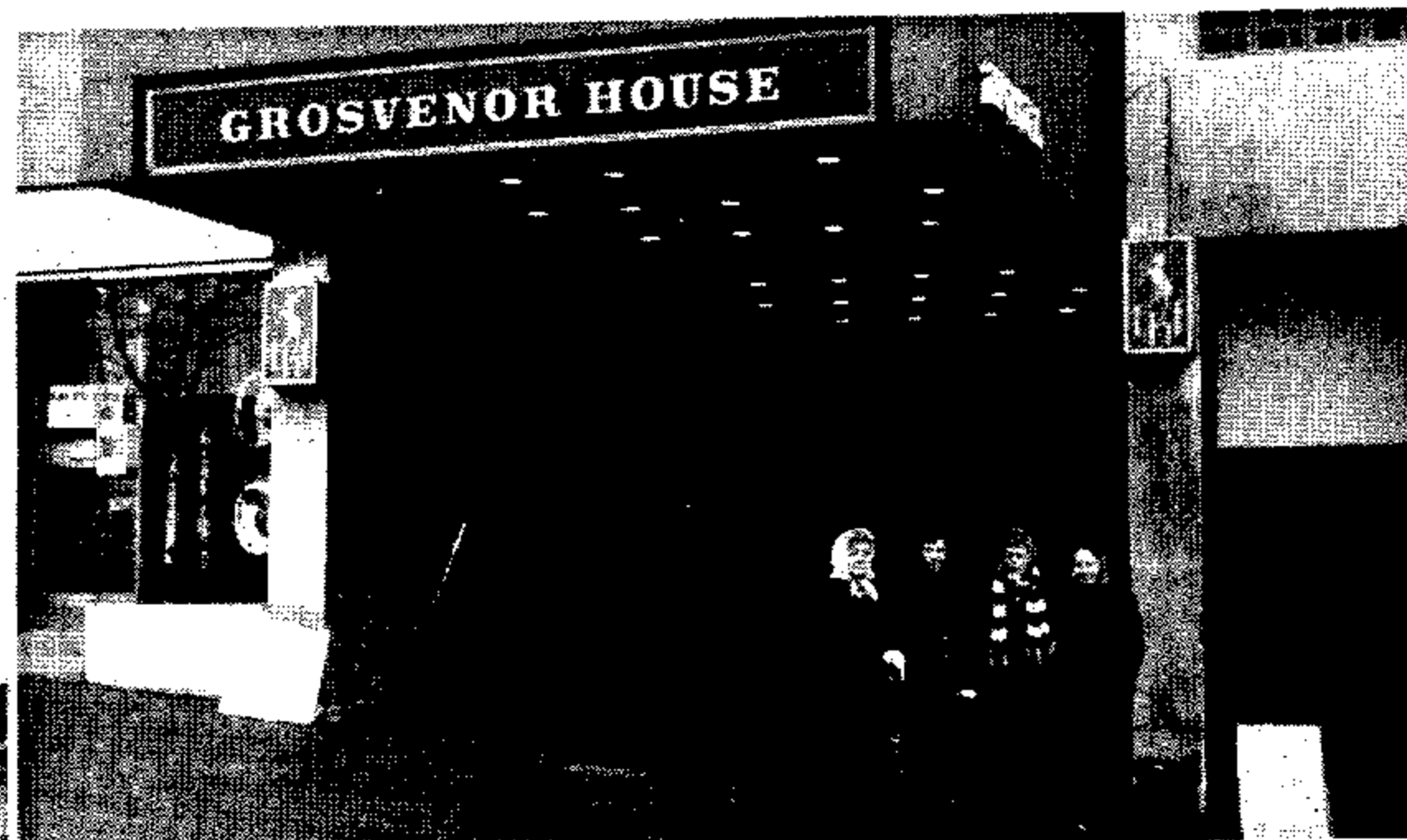
Despite these obstacles the strikers, spurred on by the need to fight the rock bottom wages and feudal working conditions throughout the industry, have given an indication of the tenacity and militancy developing within the working class.

In this special feature we carry first hand accounts of these disputes, two of which are against a common enemy — the giant Trust Houses Forte group of companies which own the Randolph Hotel in Oxford and the Grosvenor House in Sheffield.



Grosvenor Sheffield

The second Trust Houses Forte hotel to take on the T&GWU: an on the spot report on the strike.



OVER FIFTY WORKERS at the Grosvenor House Hotel in Sheffield (all members of the T&GWU) have now been out on strike for three weeks after months of negotiations with management produced only a flat refusal to recognise the union.

Right from the start top directors of Trust Houses Forte stepped in to fight this dispute as part of their national fight against unionisation.

"TRAINEES"

On the first day all the strikers were dismissed and a coachload of "trainee managers" brought in as scab labour.

Since then pickets working long hours in sub-zero conditions have stopped the great majority of deliveries and many customers.

In response to the lead given at Grosvenor House, workers in other hotels have begun applying to join the T&GWU.

But to bring about a swift victory the action must be stepped up and spread to prevent goods being smuggled in via other Trust Houses Forte subsidiaries.

As Trevor Jones, a strike committee member, told *Socialist Press*:

"We should have more mass pickets. We want this brought up on the Trades Council. And we want national blacking of THF and its subsidiaries because we feel this is the only way we can win this battle, since they've got so many hotels.

THF must be made to realise they're taking on the T&GWU nationally — not just a few members in Sheffield".

T&GWU must call a national black of all Trust House Forte hotels and subsidiaries!

Over the holiday they've been the only hotel in Oxford with free rooms. On Christmas Day it was the only place which wasn't fully booked for lunch.

But I reckon we're having most effect on the workers in there. They hate us being there. They get quite abusive and niggly.

There have been plenty of threats and two pickets have been beaten up, one quite badly.

Who has supported you on the picket?

Students, car workers. We've had nurses, schoolteachers and some unemployed workers. Some from the Simon hostel. And a lot of people have given to the strike fund.

We got about £20 over Christmas. Some Americans gave us £10. And others bring food and drink; we get soup every day from Blackfriars.

And what about the officials of the T&GWU?

No, they haven't given enough support. They were going to pull out the Gardner Merchant girls in the factory canteen.

But they kept putting it off and putting it off.

They were all ready to come out. They were down on the picket and said they were just waiting for the call.

But all the officials did was to call for the blacking which was useless.

Five minutes on the picket line is all they've ever done. They haven't got the time they say. They say we're not their only members. But we're the ones in trouble.

What should be the next step towards winning the struggle?

What we're trying to push for is to black all Trust House Forte and their subsidiaries. And strike action by all T&G members at Trust House Forte.

Until we do that we're not going to hit them hard enough. That demand was passed at our union branch meeting. We also demanded an emergency meeting of the Oxford District Committee of the T&GWU.

And we have called for sympathy action by the T&GWU locally.

Linton Lodge Oxford

'Socialist Press' interview with Joseph Tosti, T&GWU shop steward.

What was the origin of your strike?

We had asked the manager for a contract of employment. At the beginning of November the owner, Mr Levi, came to discuss it with us and agreed we'd have contracts by the time he returned from America on December 1st.

At this time the union didn't come into it. But we were going to start a union anyway. People were always moaning. So I went to Transport House and that was it. We rushed it up a bit to be in a better position to get a better contract.

It was on the 15th we told them we were in the union. Two days later two of us were handed our notice by the manager who said we hadn't settled in the hotel!

So we went to see Hewlett in Transport House. He asked the manager to withdraw the notices. He just said 'Talk to my solicitor'.

By that time he had sacked a chambermaid and was telling everyone in the union to quit or lose their job. So at that point the union declared the strike.

Sixteen out of the 29 workers in the hotel came out. All the strikers were then dismissed for taking part in the strike.

All we have been demanding is reinstatement, union recognition and talks about our contract of employment. That's all.

LOST £4,000

How has the strike affected the

hotel?

The manager has admitted losing £4,000. We have turned away lots of customers. Some of them have been very sympathetic especially when we show them the letter of dismissal.

Through the picket we've stopped most of the usual deliveries — the baker, the milk, the post office, the swill bin collectors and the rubbish collectors.

They don't cross the picket. The brewers don't deliver either. Then you've got the small suppliers. They just don't want to know. But for most things the management now have to hire a van and go and get the stuff themselves.

What support have you had on the picket line?

Mainly students, including from Ruskin College. Workers as well. But not sent by their union. They've come of their own accord. We went to the meeting of the Trades Council.

They said they would organise a picket among the unions, but nothing has come back. The only thing they did was to organise the March on December 11th.

That's when the management took the opportunity to disconnect the electricity and the telephone.

Then they threw you out of your lodgings?

Yes. At 6 am on the 16th we had a summons to appear at the High Court in London on the 20th

Randolph Oxford

'Socialist Press' interviews Margaret Radbourne, T&GWU shop steward

How did the present dispute begin?

There was continual pressure which began from September when the first worker in the hotel joined the union. They suddenly started giving out contracts of employment.

Then one Monday at the end of November the chamber maids had decided to attend a union meeting in working time.

They said we'd get the sack if we went; but we decided to go anyway. On the Friday the manager called four of the chambermaids into his office and said they would be made redundant unless they were prepared to work weekends.

On Monday I asked him to withdraw the notices. He refused so I called Geoff Hewlett and told him we were coming out on strike. That was 11.30 on the Monday.

We went round the corner and had a meeting in the cafe and on Tuesday morning we started picketing.

What were the demands of the strikers?

First of all, union recognition, the reinstatement of the sacked workers — they'd sacked all those who came out — and negotiation on pay and conditions.

What were conditions like?

Well when we first started work

in May there were no cleaning materials or equipment. They didn't even own a duster; you had to take your own. All you got was an overall you had to sign for.

The pay is 75p an hour. And they're dreadful payers. Sometimes you have to wait three weeks for what you're entitled to.

We used to have to clean 16 bedrooms but since we joined the union we said 'ten and ten only'.

What effect has the picket had?

It's had a really big effect. We've stopped nearly all goods going in. Only a few scab vans now come. They're having to hire vans to fetch everything.

Transport drivers in the T&G won't cross the picket. The Post Office workers don't deliver mail. The other evening they called the Rentokil people out of bed.

But when they arrived they refused to cross the picket. They said they knew it was bad for mice and cockroaches but they wouldn't cross.

What about the effect on the customers?

We've had a good effect on most people, especially foreigners. Americans and Australians. They seem only too keen to go somewhere else. It must have had an enormous effect on their business.

Aquatels Basildon

A letter from the secretary of the London Hotels (3) G&MWU Branch gives us background information to a recognition struggle.

Strike action continues into its eleventh week at the Aquatels Leisure Centre in Basildon, despite the solid refusal of G&MWU officials to give the slightest backing to the strikers.

Their position was summed up in the cynical reply from the G&MWU recruiting officer, a Mr. Tilston, who when questioned by the Secretary of the London Hotels (3) Branch simply replied "I get them out on strike and clear off".

More action has been forthcoming from the G&MWU Regional Officer - a Mr Romp. He at least has contacted the strikers since the dispute began.

NO ASSISTANCE

However his telephone call to the strike leader Bill Naylor was not to offer any assistance, but to tell him off for putting G&MWU members at the nearby Essex Centre Hotel "at risk" by asking them not to cross the picket line!

"You may lose me members", complained a worried Mr. Romp.

Strikers have also learned they nearly received a visit from Regional Secretary H. Robertson JP. He set out, they were told, but had to turn back - because "the weather was bad".

This was interesting news for the strikers, who have been manning a 15-hours-a-day picket since the dispute began.

Despite these officials there have been moves in support of the strikers from other G&MWU members. An attempt to smuggle beer into the Essex Centre Hotel via

one of the company's London hotels was countered by the London steward, who instructed his members to refuse to handle it.

He stuck to this correct position despite an instruction from Romp that the Basildon strike was nothing to do with him, and that he should load the vans.

HELD BACK

While Basildon Trades Council has offered full support, this too has been held back by the position of the GMWU officials, who have made no approach to other unions for a full scale blacking action, or any attempt to broaden the strike with the company.

G. Bennett,

Secretary,

London Hotels (3) GMWU

OUR COMMENT.

The Aquatels dispute, like the hotel struggles in Oxford and Sheffield, highlights the completely arrogant and reactionary attitude of the union bureaucracy, who simply regard new sections of workers entering the unions as intruders threatening to disrupt their own long-established cosy relations with local employers.

The determination of these workers to fight is proved by the fact that they continue to defy all obstacles and press forward with their action.

We call on all workers in the London area to move for financial support, for assistance on the picket lines, and resolutions demanding the G&MWU leadership give full and active backing to this important dispute.



Part of the 300-strong October wages conference

RECALL WAGES CONFERENCE

A recall Conference on Wage Control and Union Democracy is to be convened on March 27th by the ad-hoc Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.

This was decided at a meeting of the campaign's organising committee held in Birmingham on December 18th, which also adopted a policy statement on the struggle against wage control, the cuts and unemployment as the Committee's resolution to the recall Conference.

Last October the first Conference attracted nearly 300 delegates and visitors to Digbeth Hall, Birmingham.

This support was a significant indication of the growing hostility within the workers' movement to wage control policed by the TUC bureaucracy.

This resistance had broken out during the campaign for the first Conference in the form of the Seamen's vote for strike action - and has continued since with pay struggles in the car component industry and in Fleet Street.

Soaring prices can only further stoke up this pressure for wages in the working class, and bring right to the centre of workers' attention the necessity for a struggle to end at once all forms of wage control, and to win substantial catching up claims tied to automatic rises to

keep pace with the cost of living.

Socialist Press, which gave its full support to the first Conference, calls now on all readers and supporters to campaign to make this recall Conference an even bigger and more representative meeting of all those militants prepared to take up the struggle for an alternative programme against the treacherous social contract defended by the Labour and TUC bureaucrats.

We will carry the full text of the statement for the Conference in our next issue. Enquiries about the Conference and requests for copies of the statement should be sent to the Conference Secretary, Kevin Lee, 44, Devonshire Road, Handsworth Wood, Birmingham 20.

BINGO VICTORY

Encouragement to embattled hotel strikers should be drawn from the victory of women workers at Club One Bingo Halls in Coventry.

After eleven long weeks on strike, maintaining consistent picketing, the strikers have won management recognition of both T&GWU and NATKE as unions to represent them.

The winning of recognition now opens the door for the women to press their demands for improved wages and conditions, and is a major step forward in the fight for unionisation of low-paid labour in the town.



about the management recovering the staff accommodation.

The date of the hearing had been advanced four weeks by judges order. So we had only two days to prepare a case. We got legal representation through Transport House in London but they lost the case.

How has the management reacted to the picket?

The attitude of some of the management has been very provocative. On New Year's Eve the manager threatened some of us with a tile. But he didn't throw it. He was trying to intimidate us.

Altogether five of the pickets have been arrested. One case has already been dismissed for lack of evidence and the others come up in a few days.

The Trades Council has organised defence for them. And the Student Trade Union Liaison Committee has been putting together the evidence for the defence.

How much help have you had from the union officials?

From the T&GWU, besides the unsuccessful defence in the High Court, all we've got so far is money and a lot of talk - words galore, about declaring war on the catering industry and showing them the muscle of the unions.

We haven't seen much of it so far.

The day we were evicted we were supposed to store our stuff in

Transport House. When we took it down there the place was locked.

The caretaker wouldn't give us the key without the authority of Hewlett or Buckle who were unavailable.

At our emergency union branch meeting we passed a resolution for an emergency district committee meeting to try to get wider support from the district.

We're also trying to get the MP, Luard, to commit himself on the question but we haven't heard anything yet.

What help do you need immediately?

The picket is the main issue. We want more pickets to try and harass the management as much as possible.

Because we've heard that the staff inside the hotel are getting fed up and are thinking of leaving. They've hardly been out since the strike started. It's like a prison.

How much are the management colluding with the Trust House Forte management?

We've only got hearsay. But we've been told that the manager is on the phone almost every day to the Randolph and Trust House Forte.

And of course the Randolph manager is in close touch with the manager of the Grosvenor House in Sheffield.

FREE JAILED YOUTHS

A Defence Committee has recently been set up in Islington, North London, in support of 18 black youths now facing High Court trial for 'conspiracy to rob'.

Their trial follows a series of major police attacks on blacks in recent years: the Brockwell Park, Hornsey, Carib Club, Chapeltown (Leeds) and Harlesden trials all followed group arrests and one of the main charges used was 'causing an affray'.

The fraudulence of campaigns against 'mugging' is exposed by the police case against the Islington 18.



Rees

The 13 charges are ridiculously vague.

Allegedly, for example, six of the youths, 'on a day unknown in the month of October 1976 (outside the Nightingale Youth Club, Wood Green, N22) did rob a woman unknown of a handbag and contents.'

UNKNOWN

One main charge is that the youths 'between 21st August and 21st October 1976 in the Greater London area conspired together and with persons unknown to commit robberies.'

The arrests were made over a two week period at the end of October and the charges were concocted out of statements made by the youths about their own and their friends' activities.

At least one youth has stated that he was made to sign a statement he did not make.

The fact that parents were not allowed to see their children for several days after their arrests adds strength to the allegations that they were put under extreme pressure.

INVESTIGATION

The Defence Committee demands an investigation into the behaviour of the police including the violent way in which the arrests were made and the houses of the accused were invaded.

They want to know why bail was not granted, even when the youths' employers, (most of them are either employed or still at school) were prepared to testify and stand bail.

In Islington, the Defence Committee against the police attacks already has, of course, the strong support of relatives of the 18 youths.

But it must reach out to the mass of youth in the area and take its campaign into the local labour movement and call for delegates from youth and workers' organisations.

Thus it can add strength to the fight to root out the local bureaucrats who refuse to lead a struggle against the right-wing policies of the Labour government. It should also take up the following demands:

*Home Secretary Rees must end police brutality and harassment - for a local labour movement enquiry into the actions of the police!

*No cuts - expansion of youth provision and housing and improvement of schools to meet youth's needs!

*More jobs - for an increase in the Direct Labour Force and a programme of public works to create jobs at proper union rates for youth!

WOMEN'S RIGHTS RALLY DUCKS ISSUES

"One Year on from SDA - a Rally for Women's Rights" Saturday February 26th at 11 am. at Alexandra Palace.

This rally, initiated by the Working Women's Charter and now "sponsored" by an endless list of "left" MPs and bureaucrats, correctly concludes that only militant action will achieve equal pay and points to the example of last year's victorious Trico strikers who steadfastly refused to entertain any illusions in tribunals.

However the manoeuvrings of the IMG and their conception of

"united front" action with the Communist Party and 'left' bureaucrats have left the rally totally bereft of any fighting policy for women workers against problems of low pay, unemployment and the cuts in social services.

A resolution to December's Rally Planning Committee proposed by Celia Pugh of the IMG and carried, states that:

"The leaflet that is sent out by the Planning Committee reflects the basis on which that committee has been set up, that is to organise a rally around the inadequacies of the SDA and EPA and therefore does

not take a position on the social contract and the role of the present leadership of the working class."

While we urge members and readers to raise the question of support for the Rally in their union branches we emphasise that the struggle for women's rights is inseparable from the fight against the social contract and the cuts and inseparable from the struggle for new leadership in the working class.

For further information about the Rally contact the Secretary, Mandy Snell, 33, Wemyss Rd., London SE3.

SHOSTAKOVITCH: PROBLEMS OF AN ARTIST UNDER STALINISM

by Peter Alyson

Dimitri Shostakovich, who has probably enjoyed the greatest international reputation of any composer in the last forty years, chose to spend the whole of his working career in a non-capitalist country.

He saw himself as a communist composer. Since the Revolution, many composers in the Soviet Union have enjoyed certain advantages which would not be available in other countries. They can devote themselves entirely to their creative work, without needing to teach, write criticisms, do copying or other hack work, in order to live.

STATE

But in return, the State has made certain demands, which may conflict with the artist's own inclinations.

Trotsky expressed the dangers of the State meddling in the sphere of artistic creativity. In his *Manifesto Towards a Free Revolutionary Art* (Autumn, 1938) he wrote:

"If, for the better development of the forces of material production, the revolution must build a socialist regime with centralised control, to develop intellectual creation an anarchist regime of individual liberty should first be established.

No authority, no dictation, not the last trace of orders from above! Only on a base of friendly cooperation, without constraint from outside, will it be possible for scholars and artists to carry out their tasks, which will be more far-reaching than ever before in history."

Earlier, in 1924, Trotsky formulated a policy towards the various artistic groups and tendencies: there should be complete freedom in the sphere of artistic self-determination, the only criterion being that the artist should be for the revolution and not against it.

EXPERIMENTATION

Soon after the Revolution there was an explosion of artistic activity and experimentation. This reflected the fact that, in Trotsky's words:

"The popular masses were still quivering in every fibre, and were thinking aloud for the first time in a thousand years."

Nevertheless, he pointed out (in a speech on *Class and Art* in 1924) that by its very nature, artistic creativity lags behind other modes of expression and still more behind

the spirit of a class — it is one thing to understand a thing and express it logically, it is quite another to assimilate it organically.

Shostakovich's First Symphony written in 1926 illustrates this point. Its clear and simple style and early mastery of orchestration gave the work an immediate and lasting impact.

NO REFLECTION

Nevertheless, it could have been the product of any competent composer from any country in the western capitalist world: in no way did it reflect the society to which its composer belonged.

Trotsky pointed out that a workers' state has a strictly transitional character; culture will still be tied to the past.

The dictatorship of the proletariat will, of necessity, lay severe limitations upon all forms of activity and he explained that in the programme of the revolution these limitations were regarded as a temporary evil.

If the main factors making this First Symphony a success — its simple themes and style — were to be a "temporary evil", they were certainly a necessity in imposing discipline and order.

It was natural that the youthful Shostakovich would reflect the vigour and aspirations of the Revolution, and in his Second Symphony (performed in 1927) those aspirations were there. The final chorus begins:

"We marched, we asked for work and bread — our hearts gripped by pain and grief — The factory chimneys were stretched to the sky — Like hands too weak to clench a fist... Lenin! Our destiny is FIGHT!"

And the work ended with the chorus, not singing but declaiming: "October, The Commune, Lenin".

A Third Symphony, "The First of May", followed in which the composer endeavoured to express the joy of May Day experienced by the world-wide working class. However Shostakovich was not yet able to do justice to the grandeur of the events he was describing.

Partly this was an example of Trotsky's observation that:

"The political writing of a class hastens ahead on stilts, while its artistic creativity hobbles along behind on crutches".

But already the Stalinist venom had entered the cultural bloodstream of the Soviet Union.



Stalin and Bukharin



May Day 1917

Trotsky had argued that the bourgeois culture should be replaced by a socialist, not a proletarian one, which retains traces of class oppression.

Stalin and Bukharin, however, countered that the progress towards cultural socialism would develop with a "tortoise pace" and that the proletariat would have decades in which to develop its own class culture.

ROUTINE

As a result, routine marches, songs and dances written by members of the Association of Proletarian Musicians were the only styles to enjoy official favour.

Trotsky commented: "The present ruling stratum considers itself called not only to control spiritual creation politically but also to prescribe its roads of development. The method of command without appeal extends in like measure to the concentration camps, to scientific agriculture and to music.

The central organ of the party prints anonymous directive editorials, having the character of military orders, in architecture, literature, dramatic art, the ballet, to say nothing of philosophy, natural science and history.

The bureaucracy superstitiously fears whatever does not serve it directly as well as whatever it does not understand."

Official edicts became ever more ludicrous, until even Tchaikovsky was denigrated as a deplorable bourgeois deviation. Eventually, however, in a new twist of policy, the pathetic attempts of the proletarian art movements came to an end by 1932, when it was claimed that the country had already entered socialism. "Socialist realism" became the only acceptable artistic style.

Shostakovich's musical development during this growth of bureaucratic repression is interesting. Sometimes, he struggled, as did most other notable Russian composers, to follow the official line, but inspiration and individuality in a genuine artist are difficult to suppress. In 1935, in a press interview given while working on his Fourth Symphony he said:

"I am not afraid of difficulties. It is perhaps easier, and certainly safer, to follow a beaten path, but it is also dull, uninteresting and futile."

His battle with the official hierarchy had already begun in 1930 when his satirical opera *The Nose* was the subject of a carping attack in the newspapers — described as a product of bourgeois decadence — performances of it were suppressed.

OPERATIC

In 1934 *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*, the first of a projected operatic tetralogy dealing with Russian woman in a number of historical and social situations, was produced.

The opera was based on a story by Leskov, of which Shostakovich wrote:

"Perhaps there is not in the whole of Russian literature another work portraying the position of a woman in the pre-revolutionary times more vividly."

Nevertheless, he decided to modify it "in order to treat the subject from the Soviet point of view, while keeping the strength of Leskov's original tale."

In this amended version of the story, the heroine, Katerina Ismailova, a merchant's wife, is attracted out of boredom to Sergei, a brutal employee of her husband's. Her lecherous and gluttonous father-in-law discovers the affair and flogs Sergei to unconsciousness.

Forced to watch the flogging, Katerina poisons her father-in-law. Her moron husband learns next of the affair and is killed by Sergei in a fight.

The couple are arrested and, whilst on the road to Siberia, Sergei begins a flirtation with another prisoner. Humiliated and in despair, Katerina pushes her rival into a lake and follows her.

In his modified version of the story Shostakovich decided to transform Katerina from Leskov's squalid, selfish criminal into a much softer, sympathetic character, a victim of her environment and of the people surrounding her.

Using only musical means to bring this about, the transformation is completely successful; as he wrote later, "the musical language of the whole opera is intended to exonerate Katerina". "It was my problem as a composer to lay bare the inner workings of every character.

PRETENCE

The lyrics of Sergei are insincere and theatrical; his sufferings are all pretence. Through his air of slick haberdasher oozes the future kulak who, if he had not been sentenced to hard labour, would have become a merchant exploiter."

Each of the unsympathetic characters is caricatured in the music in his own particular way to be as much a victim of his own circumstances as would be his victim — the whole opera spotlighting the corruption of an idle, over-rich bourgeois household.

Only one character, Katerina, is given sincere, and as the opera proceeds, increasingly sympathetic and warm music.

Audiences in the Soviet Union and abroad appreciated *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* in packed houses, and it was a complete and immediate success.

The influential critic Boris Asafiev wrote:

"The character of Katerina is drawn with great sympathy — it adds a valuable quality to Shostakovich's music of warmth, femininity and tenderness"; and it was hailed as a model of the new Soviet art — one to be studied and imitated by other composers.

In 1936, a year in which Stalin's campaign of political terror reached new extremes, the government issued a famous decree condemning formalism and individualism in music.

Its content was much like earlier instructions from the Party but its language had a new virulent tone. The opera *Lady Macbeth* in particular, was savagely attacked and was banished from the stage for nearly thirty years.

The question has often been asked — why this particular work? It particularly offended the bureaucracy by its opposition to the oppression-of women. The bureau-



Lenin

cracy in its struggle to enforce its power sought to restore the bourgeois family, in which women endured a subordinate position.

It was for this reason that many of the gains, like the right to free abortion, which women enjoyed immediately after the October revolution were withdrawn.

As Trotsky wrote:

"The most compelling motive for the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations and for the disciplining of youth by means of 40 million points of support for authority and power."

From this time onwards Shostakovich was in continuous conflict with the bureaucracy. His great sprawling Fourth Symphony was withdrawn before receiving its first performance and he was forced into an abject compromise with the Fifth Symphony with its show trial worded subtitle "A Soviet Artist's Reply to Just Criticism".



The Seventh Symphony was written whilst firewatching in terrifying conditions during the Siege of Leningrad. Written in response to the nationalistic demands of the bureaucracy, the music fell below Shostakovich's best standards, as invariably happened when he had to make accommodations of this kind.

WITH-HELD

His Eighth and Ninth Symphonies were attacked and his First Violin Concerto was withheld for several years.

During the short Kruschev "thaw" the Fourth Symphony and Lady Macbeth, renamed Katerina Ismailova, reappeared. But, in 1962, Shostakovich still offended the authorities with his Thirteenth Symphony, which used poems by Yevtushenko.

As soon as a composer uses words, meanings become explicit and the protest against anti-Semitism of "Babi Yar", the first poem, went against the official line.



Trotsky

Once again Shostakovich showed his concern at women's place in Soviet society, using a poem "At the Store":

"Russia's women: our honour and judgement. They have mixed concrete, plowed land, reaped the harvest. They have endured everything and will endure everything. There is the strength to do anything."

But these same women are given short-change and short-weight. The last poem pointed at the petty bureaucrats — "Genius will conquer regardless of the charges made against it. Those who slandered these great men [Shakespeare, Pasteur, Newton, Tolstoy] are now forgotten — it is their victims who are remembered".

During the last 12 years of his life Shostakovich was relatively unmolested, protected to some extent by his immense international reputation. If open criticism of the state was difficult, then he retreated into a language of musical code messages. He used the notes corresponding to the letters of his own name — D S C H — when seeming to want to make a personal comment.



with the Bolshevik Central Committee

At times he quoted well-known works by other composers and his last, Fifteenth Symphony ended with a quotation from his own maligned Fourth Symphony, a wry way of having the last word.

When Lady Macbeth was resurrected minor changes were made. Interestingly, he inserted a single extra line into the song of the old convict on his way to Siberia, adding the words, "Oh, why is this life of ours so dark and fearful. Is man really born for such a life?", whilst the music hints at a phrase from Mahler's Song of the Earth, "A Drinking Song to the Earth's Misery".

Though Shostakovich never made any explicitly political resistance to Stalinism, and though on many occasions he covered before the instructions of the bureaucracy, his best music shows that art cannot be created by bureaucratic decrees but is forced at times to develop through a struggle against them.

SYNDICALISM AND THE BRITISH WORKING CLASS

Review of "British Syndicalism 1900-1914: Myths and Realities" by B. Holton, Published by Pluto Press at £2.95.

By John Docherty.

The word 'syndicalism' is often used in the working class movement, but less often understood.

It is thus of some value to have at last a book that describes its main doctrines and the chief forms that syndicalism took in the period just before the First World War, when it was a distinct and organised tendency in the British working class.

We intend in this article to give an account of the background of this movement and some of the great struggles that gave birth to it. In our next issue we will analyse the theories of syndicalism and the views about it presented in Holton's book.

The syndicalist movement was part of the twin crisis of the imperialist system and working class leadership that culminated in the slaughter of millions in the First Imperialist War in 1914.

Syndicalism represented the resistance of the working class to the growing drive directed against them by crisis-ridden imperialism in the form of rationalisation and speed-up.

At the same time, workers confronted their bureaucratic union leaders — who had established their positions in a period of capitalist growth and boom — to fight at all in their interests.

Syndicalism represented therefore a particular stage in the development of workers' struggles and a particular view of how they should be fought.

Despite the argument in this book that it was 'no alien import' it was not a specifically British phenomenon, but part of the response of workers throughout the world to one phase of capitalist offensive.

One of the values of Holton's book is that it provides a reminder of the strength and intensity of workers' struggles in Britain in the years immediately before the great sell-out at the beginning of the war in 1914.

MASS PICKETING

This was a period of mass picketing, widespread solidarity action, violent confrontation with blacklegs, soldiers and police, and the rejection, time after time, of bargains made by the trade union leaders.

It is a period that is often forgotten now in talk of "traditions of democratic compromise" in Britain, and it is well worth recalling some of the episodes from these days as a reminder of the sharpness of class conflict that always lies just beneath the surface.

In 1910-11, over 30,000 miners in South Wales went on strike for higher wages and in opposition to the old agreements by which wages were determined by profits of the employers.

This was before miners could be sure that once they struck, the mines would stop working.

In many places they attacked blacklegs and managers, and at Tonymandy one miner was shot

dead and a number of others injured during such a confrontation.

The aims of this struggle were not achieved, but in future there was never the same problem in stopping the pits, and in 1912 the leaders of the Miners Federation of Great Britain were compelled to call a four-week strike on the issue of the minimum wage.

This time there were no blacklegs and little violence and the miners secured a number of important gains.

By then many other important struggles had broken out. In the summer of 1912, 15,000 Hull dockers replied to a proposed settlement of their wage claim with the call "Let's fire the docks"!

In Merseyside, there were new levels of solidarity action as railwaymen fought their conciliation machinery with the support of dockers, seamen, tramway workers and many more.

BLOODY SUNDAY

Many strikers and their families were injured in a confrontation with police on 'Bloody Sunday', 13th August, and two days later, two men were shot dead when they tried to rescue those being hauled off to prison.

In this atmosphere, Tom Mann, the syndicalist leader who was on the strike committee greeted a ship full of blacklegs with these words:

"As for the scabs on board, the sooner they went to heaven or hell — according to which they were

most fitted — the better for the world."

During the national railway strike that followed, strikers at Chesterfield were only kept back from tackling blacklegs by repeated charges from fifty soldiers.

At Llanelly, efforts to prevent trains passing a level crossing resulted in two deaths and many injuries not just of railway workers, under the guns of the Worcester and North Lancashire Regiment.

The explosion of an ammunition truck in the next week killed four more.

When a big strike of dockers broke out in London soon after, the *Times* of 1st August 1912 described one of the many violent conflicts between scabs and strikers in this way:

"Revolvers were fired on both sides, large stones were thrown at the men on the ship and bottles and other missiles flew about . . . The sound of revolvers was frequently heard."

Soon afterwards on Tower Hill, Ben Tillett made his famous call with regard to the leading employer:

"God, Strike Lord Devenport dead."

Holton shows that the 'labour unrest' by no means came to an end after the London dock strike as some right wing writers have asserted.

Struggles during 1913 and 1914 were more local, but they were just as intense.

In the strike of Leeds Corporation workers in 1913, strikers laid siege to electricity installations still working, while in the china clay industry in Cornwall, there were violent confrontations between police and strikers.

In Dublin from late August to early January 1914, one and a half million working days were lost, 656 workers were imprisoned and five killed during the great lock-out of transport workers.

IRISH UNION

There was a trial of strength with the Irish Transport and General Workers Union of Jim Larkin and James Connolly fighting for its very life against the Dublin Employers Federation of William Martin Murphy.

In the course of this epic struggle the trade union movement fed and provided for thousands of workers and their families, numerous sympathy strikes took place throughout Britain and Larkin drew enormous crowds to meetings on both sides of the Irish Sea.

He attacked the hesitant and unhelpful attitudes of the leaders of the TUC on one such occasion.

"A great many of the trade union leaders seemed to think they existed to apologise for capitalism and to try to stop strikes and smooth difficulties over."

These sentiments were extremely popular at numerous large meetings of workers, though not at the TUC.

This great strike wave carried on well into 1914. Building workers in London were locked out during most of the year, rejecting settlement after settlement proposed by the employers and the union leaders.

When a minor member of the Royal Family went to lay the foundation stone of a scab-produced building, a large demonstration of building workers was heard to proclaim:

"Three cheers for Social Revolution, three boos for blackleg three boos for Royalty."

This struggle and many others that could have broken out at this point, was only brought to an end by the historic treachery of the leadership in supporting the war that began in August 1914.

In the next issue we will say something of the theories of advanced workers in this period, of the achievements and limits of the syndicalist outlook.



The transport strike 1912—the first national strike organized by a union. The forerunner of the post-war huge strikes by the growing trade unions.

FATHER OF RUSSIAN MARXISM

A review by Clive Hills of "The Materialist Conception of History" and "The Role of the Individual in History" by Georgeri Plekhanov, published by Lawrence and Wishart, 75p each.

Georgi Valentinovich Plekhanov (1856-1918) has been justly described as the "Father of Russian Marxism".

He was one of the first generation of Russian Marxists and was one of the founders of the Geneva based Emancipation of Labour Group in 1883 (the Group was one of the organisations that fused together to form the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), the Russian section of the Second International).

AUTHORITY

Plekhanov, who for over two decades was regarded as the world's greatest authority on Marxist philosophy after the death of Engels, was one of "the General's" correspondents and the latter did not hesitate to praise his works with an enthusiasm which he denied to those of Kautsky and Bernstein.

Lenin, too, was "in love" with Plekhanov and continued to value his philosophical writings even after the latter had gone over to the camp of chauvinism.

His famous evaluation of these writings, made during the 1921 Trade Union struggle within the Bolshevik Party and addressed towards the youth, deserves to be repeated here:

"... you cannot hope to become a real, intelligent Communist without making a study, — and I mean a study — of all of Plekhanov's writings, because nothing better has been written on Marxism anywhere in the world." (Once Again on the Trade Unions, January 1921).

NARODNIKS

Plekhanov's philosophical struggles against the utopian-socialist Narodniks in the 1880s and 1890s and against the revisionists in the German Social-Democracy at the turn of the century, formed the indispensable bases of the struggle launched by Lenin against those who sought to revise Marxism in

the Bolshevik Party from 1908-1910 (to which Plekhanov also contributed), a struggle without which the October Revolution would not have been possible.

That is why our movement, which bases itself upon Lenin's lifelong struggle to defend and develop all the sides of Marxist theory, can only welcome the republication of these seminal works of Plekhanov which are before us.

The first of these pamphlets, *The Materialist Conception of History* (which, like the other, has been out of print since 1969), takes the form of a review of the French edition of the book of the same name by the Italian Marxist Antonio Labriola (Professor of Philosophy at Rome University and the leading propagandist of Marxism in Italy).

Plekhanov, following Labriola, begins by considering the charge of 'economic materialism' that is often levelled at Marxism by the ideologists of the bourgeois class on account of its insistence that the economic infrastructure of a given society determines (in the last analysis) the ideological superstructure of that society.

INACCURATE

He shows that this charge is inaccurate and that other schools of thought more correctly deserve this title.

He then goes on to consider the 'theory of factors' that is put forward by the 'critics' of Marxism. This theory asserts that, while it is true that the 'economic factor' plays an important role in the historical development of society, it is equally true that other 'factors' (for example, language) also have a very great influence historically speaking.

Plekhanov shows that Marxism does not in any way deny the influential character of 'social factors' other than the economic; historical materialism does, however, insist that these 'factors', while enjoying a certain limited, relative autonomy

from the economic base, are 'in the last instance' reflections of this self-same base.

He also examines in greater detail the nature of this 'reflection' and of the reciprocal inter-connections which exist between the various so-called 'factors' and the economic foundations upon which they arise.

LAWS

One of these 'factors' is the system of laws of a given society and the state apparatus which serves to enforce the law.

The final sections of the pamphlet are devoted to an analysis of the way in which the law and state depend on the economic order of society and the way in which they serve as instruments of the domination of the ruling class.

The second pamphlet, *The Role of the Individual in History*, was written in 1898 for the journal *Scientific Review*.

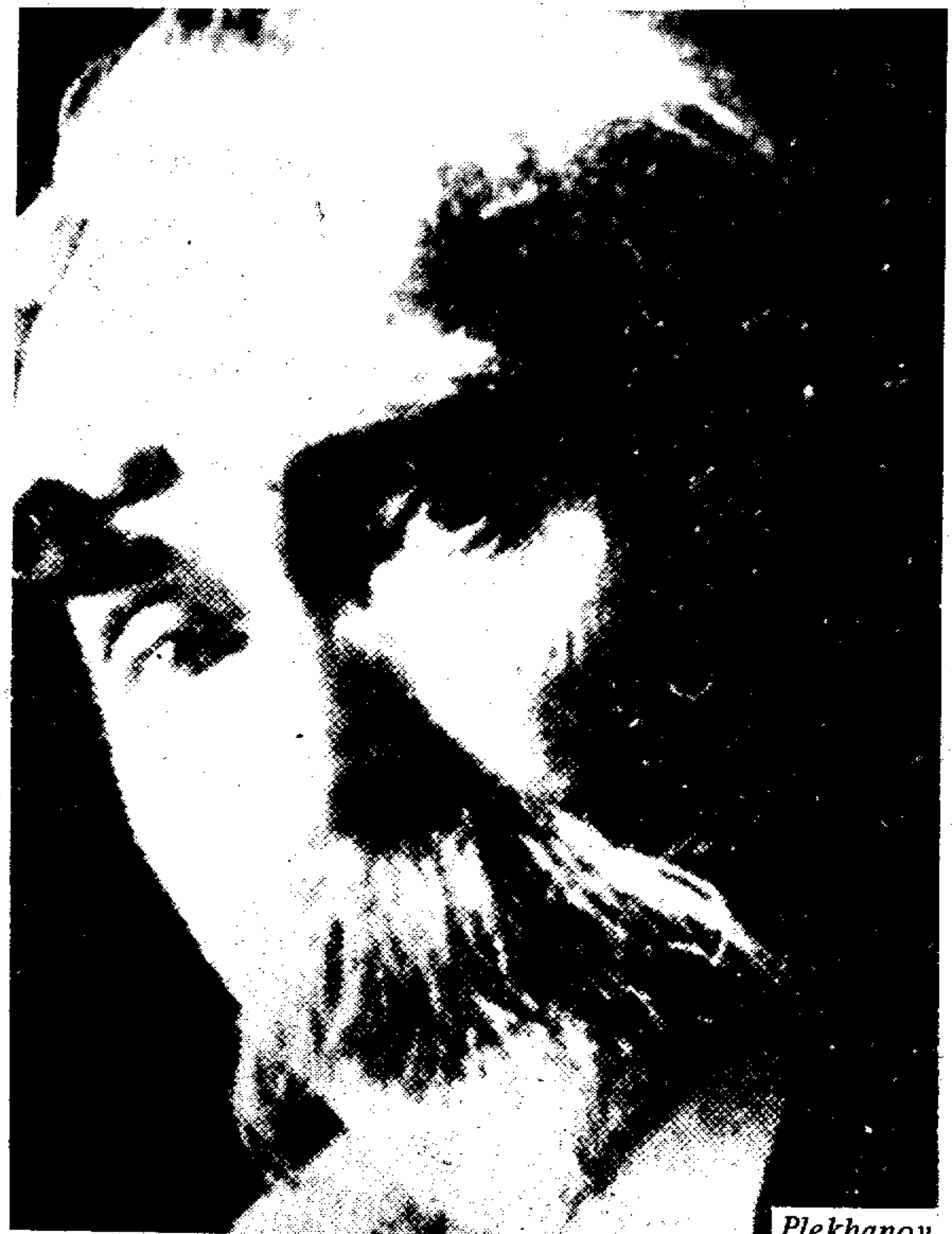
It, too, like the first, is concerned with the exposition and defence of the historical materialist world-outlook of Marxism. In particular, it deals with the question of the role played by 'great men' in historical development.

Marxism is often, even today, accused of failing to grasp the tremendous role played by 'great men' by the ideologists of the bourgeois class and also of the petty-bourgeoisie (a case in point would be Jean-Paul Sartre who makes precisely such an accusation in his *Search for a Method*) and it is this which contrives to make Plekhanov's pamphlet relevant to our own times.

ROLE

Marxism, as Plekhanov explains, does not deny that so-called 'great men' (such as Napoleon) play a certain role in the evolution of society.

Indeed, it recognises that it is the effects of these giant figures that constitute one of the elements of the *accidental* in history.



Plekhanov

We are, however, frequently told that history would have been a very different thing if Napoleon, say, had died at a very young age and had not gone on to become First Consul and Emperor of France.

Marxists do not deny that this is, in a certain sense, true. It does, however, insist that the role played by the 'accidental' is very small, and that it, once again, is historically determined 'in the last instance'. As Plekhanov explains:

"Accident is relative. It appears only at the point of intersection of inevitable processes."

Thus what is *accidental* from a certain point of view and in a certain sense, is — from another standpoint and in another, deeper and more general, sense — inevitable.

This means, in the case of those 'accidental' phenomena that we call 'great men', that:

"every man of talent who actually appears, every man of talent who becomes a social force,

is the product of social relations."

They are so because they are themselves conditioned by forces far greater than themselves, and can only alter individual aspects of events.

Thus the changes that would have occurred if Napoleon had not lived to carry out his historical role would have been only superficial and would not have fundamentally altered the course of history.

Marxism maintains that while 'great men' do play a role in history the significance of this role must not be exaggerated. This is excellently explained by Plekhanov in this pamphlet.

The republication of these two important pamphlets by Plekhanov must be welcomed by the revolutionary movement as it provides us with additional weapons to direct against the Stalinists and centrists' falsifications of the positions of Marxist philosophy and provides further materials for the study of dialectical materialism.

SPOTLIGHT

ON REFORMISM



Spokesman for Labour's nationalisation — Nye Bevan

Labour & Nationalisation

When the post war Labour government nationalised the mines, the newspapers carried photographs of smiling miners standing beside notices proclaiming "This pit is the property of the people of Britain."

Some thirty years later the number of miners has been reduced by 250,000, extensive rationalisation has taken place with the closure of "unprofitable" pits and the wages position of miners in relation to other workers fell back so far that two national strikes were called, the second of which brought down the Heath government early in 1974.

A similar story applies in every other nationalised industry. In the early 1960s rationalisation of the railways cost hundreds of thousands of jobs as "unprofitable"

lines were closed down.

In British Leyland, which is 95% government owned, the government, through the National Enterprise Board is demanding massive increases in productivity with inevitable redundancies as a condition for supplying further finance to the company.

With the government planning to extend nationalisation to the aircraft and shipbuilding industry, there can be little doubt that workers in these industries will be confronted with similar rationalisation plans.

In whose interests, therefore, are these nationalised industries being run? Certainly not in the interests of the British working class whose property these industries are supposed to be.

Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution commits the party to establish public ownership of the means of production and

distribution. But of course the Labour Party is a reformist party, more concerned with making capitalism work by reforming its less acceptable aspects than with the overthrow of the capitalist system. based as it is on the private ownership of wealth.

In 1945, after five years of all-out production for the war effort, much of British industry was suffering from the consequences of under investment and the run-down and destruction of capital.

In order to restore key areas of industry to profitable production, vast quantities of capital investment beyond the reach of the capitalist class, were needed.

Since these industries were essential to the post-war revival of British capitalism, the Labour government stepped in and nationalised these basic industries, the mines, the railways, gas, electricity

and steel.

Generous compensation was paid to the former owners and the nationalised industries were put under the management of state-appointed bureaucrats, with the finance needed to re-capitalise these industries being provided by the government out of taxes and loans from other governments, particularly America.

The working class were to have no say in the running of these industries. On the contrary, these industries were run as a service to the capitalists. Cheap coal, gas and electricity, cheap steel and transportation enabled the employer to keep his costs down.

At the same time, the enormous losses resulting from interest payments to former owners and the undercharging of the bosses (but not of course the domestic consumer, i.e. the working class) gave ready-made arguments to the opponents of nationalisation who argued that private enterprise was "more efficient" than the public sector.

What was actually happening

was that the capitalist state, through the Labour government, was acknowledging the inability of capitalism to maintain and expand the productive forces without the intervention of the state.

The capitalist state was therefore on behalf of the national capitalist class, taking control of sections of industry in order to ensure the return to profitable production of the rest of British industry.

That firms nationalised in this way would remain part of the capitalist economy was something foreseen by Engels as far back as the 1880s.

Arguing that the capitalist state would ultimately have to undertake the direction of production, Engels pointed (in *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*) to communications, and in particular railways, as the first area where the state would have to intervene.

He went on to point out that: "The transformation . . . into state ownership does not do away with the capitalist nature of the

STOP PRINT SACKINGS- OPEN THE BOOKS

It is beginning to look as if union plans for a ballot of Fleet Street printworkers on a joint union-management set of proposals for job-slashing rationalisation and new technology may be shelved or even dropped.

Huge resistance to the plans has emerged from the few meetings that have so far taken place. A meeting of delegates from the National Graphical Association (NGA) voted not only to reject the proposals but to demand that NGA General Secretary Joe Wade withdraw from the Joint Standing Committee of employers and union leaders which negotiated the scheme. Only one delegate out of 300 voted support for the plans.

A meeting of NATSOPA (National Society of Operative Printers, Graphical and Media Personnel) delegates also rejected the scheme, while at meetings of SOGAT and NUJ officials, strong doubts were expressed though no vote was taken.

This increasing mood of resistance underlies the wage struggles in Fleet Street that have hit the headlines over the Christmas period. Printworkers are responding to the massive threats to their jobs contained in these plans by attempting to reassert the dominant power of their trade unions.

The proposals - published after lengthy collaboration between union bureaucrats and management by the TUC Printing Industries Committee - outline a strategy for the axing of some 7,000 out of 35,000 print jobs in Fleet Street, the introduction of new technology and a conscious attempt to prevent industrial disputes.

The deal is recommended to their members by leaders of all the print unions with the exception of the 17,000 strong SLADE, which alone took a principled line and boycotted the talks - being faced with the prospect of extinction as a union if the new technology is introduced throughout the print industry.

The employers, of course, have their horizons set much wider than Fleet Street itself.

productive forces. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage workers - proletarians. The capitalistic relationship is not done away with." (Marx-Engels *Selected Works* p428)

But nationalisation carried out in the manner of the Labour government cannot in itself solve the crisis facing capitalism.

Engels points out that it merely brings that crisis to a head, because the basic contradiction of capitalism is antagonism between the increasing socialisation of production (of which the nationalised industries are the highest form under capitalism) and the individual appropriation of the wealth produced.

This can only be resolved by society taking over the means of production and distribution: in

They see that if they can undermine this citadel of the power of the print unions, then they can rapidly move in on a national level to impose similar measures in local newspapers and other spheres of printing and publishing, in a bid to drive up the rate of profit in the industry as a whole.

For this reason the cash settlements the employers are prepared to offer to secure a peaceful road to redundancy among Fleet Street workers seem comparatively generous.

They know only too well of course, that any print worker who walked quietly out of a job in Fleet Street would find it almost impossible to find alternative employment in the industry.

But they stress that there will be "no compulsory redundancy" - providing the deal as a whole is accepted.

As far as the union general secretaries are concerned, they have been stampeded into deep-going collaboration with the employers because they see no other answer to the publishers' repeated threats of closure and enforced sackings.

It is one of the most deliberately open 'secrets' that only five of the 17 national daily and Sunday papers made a profit last year.

And since every union bureaucrat agrees that he has a responsibility to preserve the profits of the employer - under the illusion that this in turn preserves jobs - the print union secretaries decided to embark on joint action with the employers and recommend the deal because:

"... rejection of it would result in titles continuing to fail as newspaper economics forced them out of business. The inevitable consequences would be compulsory redundancy with little or no advance warning to workers and unions."

The package as a result embodies both complete subservience to "newspaper economics" and "advance warning" of massive sackings.

The *Financial Times* pointed out clearly that for the union leaders the key issue was at no point the defence of the jobs of their members - this was abandoned from the start. Instead they concen-

effect denying the right of individuals to appropriate the product of social labour.

But it is a task that the reformist leaders of the Labour government are unable and unwilling to undertake.

This task falls to the working class lead by a revolutionary Marxist leadership.

Crucial to the mobilisation of the working class for this task is the fight taken up by Marxists for workers control through the demands of the Transitional Programme, in particular the demands to open the books of employers claiming bankruptcy to elected trade union committees, and the occupation of factories threatened with closure.

The struggle around these demands must go hand in hand with the demand that the government nationalise bankrupt firms, not in the old way, but without compensation to the old owners who have proved that they are unfit to own such firms, and under the management of the workers.

trated on:

"the key issues of redundancy terms, pensions, and the problems caused by the industry's casual labour system."

COMPUTERS

The main brunt of speed up and job cutting from technology is in the production side of the industry - with computers making it possible to completely eliminate skilled workers now engaged in typesetting and photographic block-making, along with the entire paste-up stage of conventional litho printing.

But it will also have an impact on journalists, who will increasingly be called on to undertake work previously done by NGA or other union members.

The answer to this would seem obvious - a joint move by the trade

ensuring no disruption of production. This is stated with brutal frankness:

"The parties to this agreement, [including union leaders] recognising the extremely harmful effects of any stoppage or disruption of production, publication or distribution, agree that in the event of any difference arising which cannot immediately be resolved, continuity of the full business operation is to be safeguarded, and, wherever necessary, practices or agreements existing prior to the difference shall continue to operate pending a settlement or until the agreed procedure has been exhausted... there shall be no stoppage of work, either of a partial or general character such as a strike, lock-out, go-slow, work-to-rule, overtime ban, chapel meetings held

nationalised firms must be accompanied by an expansion of the work they undertake - for instance the publication of useful books, booklets, and other material for schools and colleges - while all jobs are protected through a system of work-sharing without loss of pay.

Only in this way can the new technology available in the print industry be used to benefit the working class rather than serve as an additional attack on workers and source of private profit to the employers.

SCREAM

The press barons of Fleet Street will doubtless scream that nationalisation would "prevent free speech" and restrict "access to the press".

This kind of hypocrisy is their standard approach. Speech is only



Computerised page lay-out - the threat to print jobs throughout the industry.

unions to oppose the strategy of the employers, conducting a campaign to win support for a fight to open up the books and the plans of the publishers to examination by elected union committees.

Instead of this the bureaucrats on the joint union-management committee have agreed a procedure which ensures that the union rank and file will on no account be informed of future plans - though the bureaucrats are to be given sufficient advance warning to enable them to defuse struggles.

INFORMATION

Employers are required to supply comprehensive and detailed information to the Joint Committee, including, according to the *Daily Telegraph*:

"returns of a company's present financial situation, sales, newsprint, ink and wages costs, staff employed in major departments and corporate plans, showing economic prospects, broad strategy, long-term objectives, investment, financial resources and pricing and advertising policies."

None of this picture will be revealed to the workers affected - though it will, in the words of the *Telegraph* "occasionally be divulged to unions only on a strictly confidential basis."

So the employers choose which union officials they give information to, and how much detail they give them, making workers dependant upon these 'representatives' for their understanding of the situation.

But not satisfied with this as a means of damping down militancy, the union bureaucrats on the joint committee also advocate a new disputes procedure, aimed at taking power from the shop floor and

without permission during production hours or any other restriction, before the stages of procedure have been exhausted."

BUREAUCRATS

This section shows clearly that the union bureaucrats are quite prepared to hand the whole initiative on speed up and conditions to the employers by forcing workers to go through lengthy and exhausting procedures before they are allowed to answer attacks.

This is why the instinctive reaction of NGA and NATSOPA delegates in rejecting this package of proposals is absolutely correct.

It must be decisively rejected by print workers. It will save neither jobs nor wages in Fleet Street. Instead it simply opens the door to wholesale slaughter of jobs in the industry as a whole.

But in rejecting this package, printworkers must also reject its starting point - their leaders' belief that redundancies must be accepted and that their only job is to negotiate the biggest cash settlement.

ELECTED

The alternative way forward is to demand that the full body of information on their finances and plans that employers are so ready to give to the Joint Standing Committee be made available to elected committees of rank and file trade unionists.

On the basis of this knowledge it will be possible to take up the fight for those newspapers which run at a loss to be nationalised under the management of workers' committees.

After nationalisation, the introduction of new technology into the

regarded as "free" if it is under the direct control of a private owner and his agents who dictate editorial policy in the national and local press.

Yet of course in the case of the state-owned BBC the voice of the employer just as viciously represses the views of the working class as in the privately owned daily press. There is no distinction here on grounds of ownership.

The struggle to prevent the employers monopolising the media for their own ends centres not as such on who owns the press, but on the development of workers control through which trade union committees begin to act to end the policies of falsification and suppression which are so basic to the employers' propaganda.

CONTROL

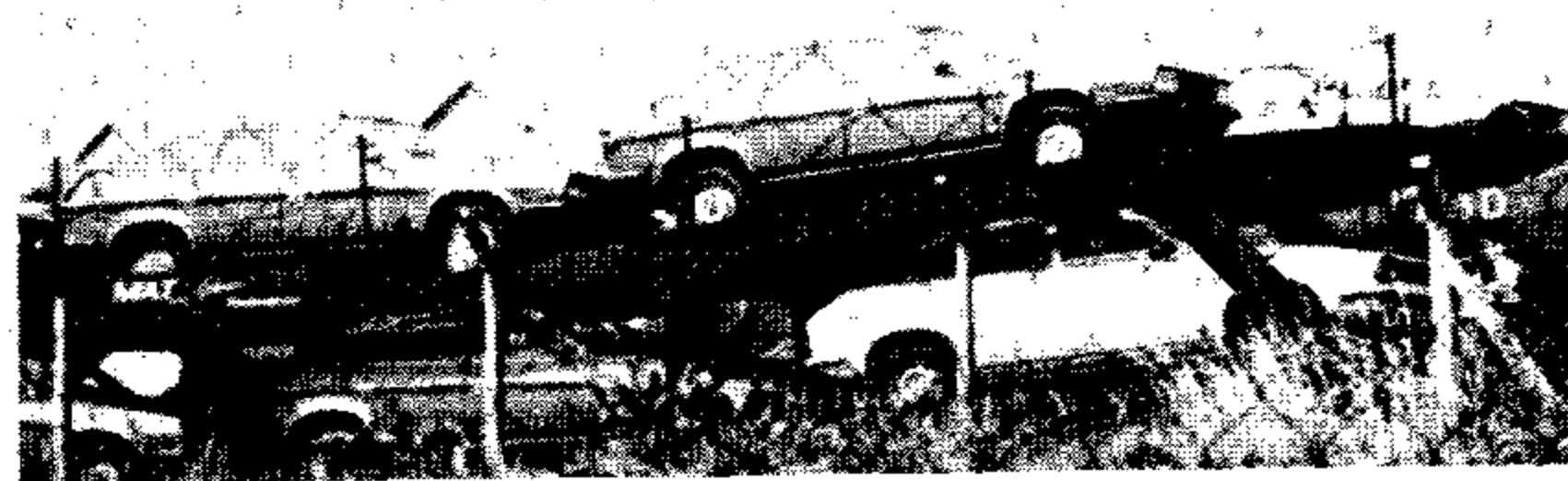
The fight to defend Fleet Street jobs against the employers' abuse of new technology will bring advanced workers quickly to the point of recognising the need for such control.

But in the meantime the struggle on jobs must begin. Wade and the other print union leaders must be dragged out of their relationship with the bosses, and confronted with the needs and demands of the membership.

The document must be thrown out in its entirety. Not one job, not a penny in Fleet Street wages must be sacrificed to the private owners.

The militancy of Fleet Street workers must be given political direction as the spearhead of defence of jobs throughout the industry. That is the only answer to the new technology.

By John Lister



New cars being transported by British Rail

INDUSTRIAL NEWS



November 17th anti-cuts demonstration

NALGO - NO LEAD GIVEN

Despite the grand gesture of a special one-day conference on January 14th, the leaders of NALGO still have absolutely no policy for the defence of jobs and services in the public sector.

Their sole recommendations are a refusal to undertake extra work caused by management's refusal to fill vacancies, and the imposition of overtime bans where redundancies are proposed.

This is smothered over by a 10,000-word report which recommends "selective import controls" and the "repatriation of profits" made by British subsidiary capitalist firms overseas - hinting that this might save jobs in the axed social services!

These nationalist and thoroughly reactionary policies are those of the Communist Party and of the Tribune Group of MPs - who have

slavishly voted support for round after round of public spending cuts and refused at any point to lead the slightest fight to remove the leading exponents of such Tory policies within the Labour Cabinet.

What is needed to fight the cuts is a rejection both of these policies and of the spineless talkers that advocate them in the trade union and labour movement.

NALGO's 600,000 members must be united with the mass membership of NUPE and other unions in the public sector in all-out strike action to stop the cuts, and force the restoration of public spending to the 1973 level plus a lump sum to offset inflation.

Jobs and services must then be defended by the demand that public expenditure be automatically increased to keep up with increased costs as worked out by elected trade union committees with full access to the accounts and plans of the public authorities.

The huge 80,000-strong demonstration on November 17th showed the willingness of workers to fight the cuts - yet trade union bureaucrats, like the linked arms of policemen act to hold back the strength and anger of public sector workers.

Their method is to "deplore" this, that or the other aspect of the cuts - whilst dodging, amending or opposing any motion calling for action.

At a West Midlands District meeting Jack Bradburn, Midlands NEC member, gave a classic example of this technique. He spoke glowingly in support of a motion from the Birmingham Branch which "deplored" the cuts - but felt we should not accept the part that called for NALGO to withdraw from the TUC-Labour Party agreement.

And it is along these lines that the NEC will move on January 14th to oppose all motions calling for strike action.

RUBERY OWEN: OFFICIALS RUSH TO PROP PAY LIMIT

What cause could drag the General Secretary of the TUC together with the President of the AUEW and the President of the EETPU together with the National Organiser of the T&GWU and other officials away from their Christmas holidays?

Certainly not the interests of the working class! On the contrary, these gentlemen leapt from their armchairs spurred only by hopes of working out a deal at the strike-bound Rubery Owen car component works at Darlaston which could preserve the hated 4 1/2% wage limit fixed by the TUC and the Labour government.



Scanlon

that if they won lay-off pay for that period of shut down, this could immediately be demanded by another 1,900 T&GWU members in the plant who have not until now been involved in disputes.

Management and TUC leaders were agreed unanimously therefore that the top priority was to ensure that the electricians did not win their lay-off claim.

From this starting point they arrived at the ludicrous terms to be proposed to the electricians by EETPU President Breakell the day we go to press: that the company pay £6,000 to charity, not to the electricians, and that the electricians go back to work with only three weeks unemployment benefit and a fortnight's social security to show for their struggle.

But the collaboration in this betrayal by the TUC leaders has strengthened the resolve of the employer to tame the strength of shop floor organisation.

Plans are now to be discussed between Regional officials, stewards and management towards a new disputes procedure - which no doubt will centre the power in the hands of full time officials.

And going even further than this, management want to do away with the piecework payment system for manual workers, installing a single payments system.

"FLEXIBILITY"

This of course cannot be done until the expiry of the current pay deal, but it seems certain that proposals for the extension of pay restrictions after July will permit a degree of "flexibility" to enable such reactionary deals to be drawn up.

It seems likely that there will be considerable resistance among the electricians to the first stage in this proposed union-management carve-up of wages and shop floor strength.

But whether or not the EETPU leaders get the acceptance of the deal they so desperately want, it is clear that a whole series of struggles are still to come at Rubery Owen fighting not so much a vicious employer but much more his agents within the labour movement itself - union officials desperate to uphold the social contract.

ELECTRICIANS

Sixty-two electricians at the plant were challenging that policy - staging a sit-in strike to back their demand for £100 each in lay-off pay for time lost during an earlier strike by AUEW members - who had themselves been demanding a wage increase above the TUC limit.

Management threatened to shut down the factory unless full normal working with a guarantee of a 'strike free' year from all unions was forthcoming when the factory reopened on January 4th.

What worried management was not paying the money demanded by the electricians - but the fact

EGA - STRENGTHEN PICKET!

The first months of 1977 will be crucial for the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital.

The Camden-Islington Area Health Authority have now announced that they intend to begin moving equipment out of the hospital after mid-January and to move the patients out early in February.

This announcement has only served to strengthen the resolve of EGA workers to keep the hospital open.

EQUIPMENT

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee is going ahead with plans for preventing the equipment from being moved, and for ensuring that drugs and other supplies will continue to be available.

They are also preparing a financial statement which will prove the hospital's viability and expose the AHA's manipulation of funds and budgets to its own ends - for example the waste of funds in renovating old wards for EGA patients at the Whittington Hospital to a standard far inferior to even present EGA facilities.

Although the picket on the EGA

has been minimal over the holiday period, all possible resources will be mobilised by 17th January so that the front gate can be guarded at all times to prevent heavy vans from moving out equipment.

The EGA Campaign is planning a series of public meetings in Camden to build up local support.

Cinema Action are making a film on the EGA occupation taking up the question of workers' control, which is the key to not only the defence of the EGA occupation but to the defence of the entire Health Service.

We call on all London trade unionists and others from the labour movement to renew support for the EGA picket and to be prepared to take decisive action when the AHA makes its first move.

At the same time every health service union branch should make support for the EGA the centre of a fight to mobilise the national strength of their unions in all-out strike action to halt the cuts, demanding a complete restoration of all spending cutbacks and the protection of the Health Service against inflation through a sliding scale of spending - providing automatic increases in line with increased costs.

T&G BALLOT VOTE THORNETT



Thornett

At its meeting in December the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement decided to support and to campaign for Alan Thornett in the forthcoming ballot for the position of General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union.

Thornett, who has been nominated by the 5/293 Branch at the Cowley BLMC Assembly Plant has a long record of struggle in the T&GWU. Joining the union in 1961 he was rapidly elected shop steward for the Transport Department in the factory, a position he holds today, and to which he has been constantly reelected for the past 14 years.

Having led many struggles for wages and conditions not only on the Transport section but in the plant as a whole (serving for seven years as Deputy Convenor), Thornett was central to the struggle against Measured Day Work, which culminated in a six week strike against its introduction into the factory.

He also played a key role in the actions against anti-union legislation - both the Labour government's 'In Place of Strife' and the Tory Industrial Relations Act.

In 1974 Thornett led the struggle against work study and for mutually agreed work effort. During this fight he was victimised by management who withdrew recognition from him when his section struck in defence of an agreement.

Having been removed from office as deputy convenor by

T&GWU officials, Thornett was subjected to a massive witch-hunt in the national press, and forced to run for reelection under impossible conditions.

This had the effect of removing him not only from the deputy convenor position and from chairmanship of the 5/55 Branch (which was bureaucratically split by T&GWU officials) but also from the Midlands Regional Committee on which he had sat for four years.

With the bankruptcy of British Leyland, Thornett led the fight in Cowley to establish a trade union "open the books committee" to investigate the financial state of the company on behalf of the workforce.

"PARTICIPATION"

He also led a principled struggle against the introduction of so-called 'participation' and has since been elected chairman of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee and of the 5/293 T&GWU Branch at Cowley.

On the basis of Thornett's principled record and his consistent fight for a programme to defend the working class not only on the shop floor but at the Biennial Delegate Conference of the T&GWU, Socialist Press endorses the decision of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement to support him in the election, and will campaign in his support against the group of top bureaucrats vying to be the continuator of the right-wing collaborationist and completely bureaucratic policies of the current General Secretary, Jack Jones.



Workers leave the BLMC Assembly Plant at Cowley

LEYLAND CONVENORS BACK PENALTY CLAUSES

A report on the latest offer by British Leyland management on so-called 'fringe benefits' was presented at a meeting of Senior Stewards of the manual unions on Thursday 23rd December.

Leyland have been using these negotiations as a major step towards corporate (company-wide) bargaining. The company is eager to get rid of plant level bargaining, aiming to put all negotiations into the hands of unelected union officials at national level - away from the strength of the shop floor.

'PARTICIPATION'

The negotiations have been organised on the trade union side by the same 'ad hoc' committee (each one selected by union officials) that negotiated the reactionary 'participation' system into Leyland.

The company's latest proposals are on the basis of certain amendments to the management document which, as we reported in *Socialist Press* 47, was circulated secretly in November to the 'ad hoc' committee behind the backs of other convenors and shop stewards.

The major points of the company offer are:

*Introduction of a common wage review date throughout Leyland's Cars Division - November 1977.

*Slightly improved lay-off payments - increased to 15 days every three months for disputes outside Leyland. But these will be attached to a penalty clause which has never previously existed in Leyland which states that:

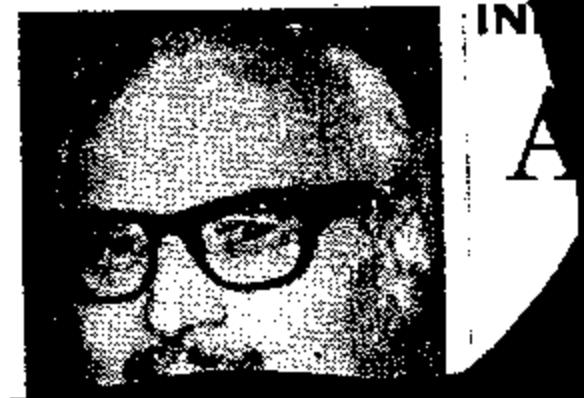
"No lay-off payments will be made for any quarter to any individual employee who in the previous quarter took part in unconstitutional industrial action, the duration of

The Financial Times Friday December 17 1976

The Management Page

Attitudes of shop floor managers can make or break a participation scheme. In this article Bill Roche, a leading shop steward, gives a personal view on this and other problems in Leyland factories

Leyland's fight for survival



Finding his rightful place in the Financial Times, Cowley Body Plant Convenor, Bill Roche.

which was an aggregate of four hours."

*A sick pay scheme - which will no longer include a similar penalty clause.

This offer therefore combines a major step by the company towards their goal of corporate bargaining with the introduction of a new clause which jeopardises all the lay-off entitlements workers have previously won.

WORSE CONDITIONS

In other words, far from offering 'fringe benefits', the package offers

conditions worse than the present state of affairs!

But despite this the senior stewards including, of course, prominent members of the Communist Party, who have been continuously drawn into assisting management through 'participation' and implementation of the pay policy, voted over 3-1 to recommend the offer to their members when it is reported back to the plants.

There is no doubt that the mood on the shop floor is bitterly hostile. Our American Correspondent writes on

to such reactionary moves by the company.

The task of winning any kind of acceptance for this deal will no doubt stretch to the limit the ability of these senior stewards to manoeuvre around the membership.

Under these conditions the fight must be taken up to expose to the entire manual workforce the attacks aimed at them by their bureaucratic leaders, and build an alternative leadership prepared to defend the conditions, jobs, and wages of the membership.

PENALTY CLAUSES - US STYLE

The recent auto workers contract in the United States highlighted the open collaboration between the giant corporations and the United Automobile Workers bureaucracy.

The new auto contract which was built up by the union leadership as shortening the work week actually penalizes those workers who do not have a perfect attendance record.

In order to be eligible for the twelve more "personal" holidays brought into the contract over

three years an auto worker must have no absences even for sickness during each monthly period.

The holiday is then "given" at the company's discretion.

The contract language was so stringent for attendance eligibility that the UAW trade union bureaucracy withheld the actual wording from auto workers who had to vote on the contract!

The wage increase was held down to 3% and changes were allowed that give the companies the right to hire part time workers below the pay scale and without the medical and pension benefits other workers are entitled to.

UAW President Woodcock had quite a time pushing auto workers for acceptance of this contract and was helped mightily in this task by the companies themselves.

Woodcock has of course made quite a name for himself in the US by his early support for Carter (in which he was joined by the President of Ford Motors) and his open political collaboration with General Motors in fighting pollution standards for cars.

Woodcock therefore used the resources of GM to the full extent.

PLANT MEETING

General Motors, aware of the 40% rejection vote at Ford following the four week strike "allowed" the UAW to hold the meeting to ratify the new contract for the first time in the plant cafeteria under company supervision.

This they hoped would allow a much larger vote among the conservative strata of auto workers who would otherwise not vote.

The vote was additionally tied to an 800 dollar Christmas bonus as an incentive for the 'yes' vote - a rejection would have meant the loss of the bonus.

Despite these tactics a large 'no' vote was recorded and although it wasn't successful this resistance will lay the basis for the construction of a national opposition committed to the fight for a sliding scale of wages and against the attack on jobs.

Marathon Betrayal

In July 1971 a work-in was launched at the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders yards in resistance to plans by the Tory government to sack 6,000 out of 8,500 workers.

This form of action, proposed and led by members of the Communist Party, was one which avoided direct confrontation with the Tory government, aiming instead at simply protest to "pressurise" for a change of heart by then Industry Secretary John Davies.

Yet despite this weakness it struck a chord of sympathy among the mass sections of workers seeking a means of resisting Tory attacks - and won a huge response from trade unionists throughout the country, who contributed lavishly to maintain the workforce in the yards while the CP Stalinists allowed them simply to complete ships for the liquidator to sell off.

The work-in eventually ended in October 1972 with three yards merged in a new company and the Clydebank yard taken over by the American Marathon company for constructing oil rigs.

But now things are changed. With a Labour government relying on the TUC bureaucracy to preserve it in power and with the working class desperately looking for a national lead in the struggle against redundancies, the Communist Party seeking to preserve its alliance with the union bureaucrats, has also swung massively to the right.

So when last month Marathon announced financial difficulties were going to necessitate redundancies, the Stalinists' response was not even so much as to call for a work-in.

Instead Stalinist convenor Dickie proudly announced to a delighted capitalist press his new way of 'fighting' redundancies - he had persuaded 1,000 Marathon workers to accept "indefinite suspension" (on the dole, though formally still on Marathon's books) to avoid the need for sackings!

This marks a new depth of Communist Party betrayal - to run alongside their management role in the British Leyland 'participation' set-up.

VICARS & BLACKLEGS

AMONGST THE VARIOUS trade unionists whose services to the ruling class were recognised by the Queen in the New Years Honours List and who seem well suited to this honour were two from Oxford who received OBE's.

One of these is Arthur Dent whose major claim to fame was that, whilst he was a member of Oxford Trades Council he crossed an official picket line during the 1973 Hospital workers' strike. For this he earned such hatred that he stopped attending Trades Council meetings.

The other is worker Priest the right reverend Tony Williamson, chairman of the T&GWU 5/60 Branch which covers the BLMC Body Plant. His most recent claim to notoriety is that as Sheriff of Oxford he is in charge of the bailiffs of the city.

It was Williamson's bailiffs who evicted the Linton Lodge hotel strikers (who are on official T&GWU strike) after management defeated the T&GWU in the courts and had the strikers evicted.



Woodcock next to Carter, with US auto chiefs of General Motors, Chrysler and Ford.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE
PUBLIC MEETING
CENTRAL LONDON

"The Struggle for Wages and Unions in the Hotel Industry"
Tuesday 11th January at 7pm
Kenilworth Hotel, Gt. Russell St.
London WC1

AGEE "TRIAL" DATE LOOMS

On Tuesday January 11th, Philip Agee, ex-CIA agent and author of the book "Inside the Company: CIA Diary", will be "tried" by a three-man tribunal hand-picked by Home Secretary Merlyn Rees, on charges which his accusers refuse to reveal.

His "judges" may reject any of the witnesses whom Agee will have gathered in his defence.

He will not be told in advance the procedure to be adopted at his hearing.

DEPORTED

If he is found "guilty" of having endangered British "security" by his speeches and journalistic activities, he will be deported to the US, where he may well be jailed for his exposure of the CIA's covert activities.

At a press conference on December 22nd, Agee's lawyer Larry Grant (who may himself be excluded from the Kafkaesque proceedings) had this to say about the Home Office's bizarre attempt to play accuser, judge and jury:

"Mr Agee is placed in an impossible position. This is shadow boxing in the dark. He has no rights yet has little alternative if he is to make any attempt to assert his innocence."

SUPPORT

A defence committee has been mobilising support for Agee and for Mark Hosenball, who faces a



Sapper

similar process on January 19th. Agee and Hosenball, and their supporters in their Defence Campaign, are rightly determined to drive Rees, the Labour Cabinet and the officials of the Intelligence Services, out into the open.

CHARGES

They are challenging Rees to bring any charges he may have in a court of law, where they can be openly examined and a proper defence prepared.

Rees' blatant resort to the dictatorial powers given him by the Immigration Act (drawing on his experience of similar frame-up methods in N. Ireland) has raised a widespread campaign of opposition in the labour and trade



Daly

union movement.

Many trades union branches and bodies have passed motions of support for the two. Among leading trade union officials who are sponsoring the defence campaign are Lawrence Daly of the NUM and Alan Sapper of ACTT.

Labour MP Jo Richardson, with the support of almost 100 other MP's has tabled an early day motion in the House of Commons for January 10th.

DEMONSTRATION

It is essential that all sections of the workers' movement act now to stop this arrogant attack on democratic rights.

Trade union bodies should mobilise contingents for the

demonstration being organised in London by the Defence Committee on Sunday January 9th on the following slogans:

— Agee and Hosenball must stay!

— Out with the CIA!

— Repeal the Immigration Act!

The demonstration will assemble outside Embankment Tube Station at 12.45pm and will move off at 1.15 to march to the Home Office in Whitehall and to the US Embassy at Grosvenor Square.

There will then be a rally at Speakers Corner.

SPEAKERS

Speakers will include Judith Hart, NUJ General Secretary Ken Morgan, Philip Agee, Jo Richardson MP, and representatives from the Cypriot Defence Committee and the Campaign for Repeal of the Immigration Act.

Information and literature are available from the Agee/Hosenball Defence Committee, c/o NCCL, 186, Kings Cross Road, WC1, to which donations and resolutions of support should also be sent.

AGEE/HOSENBALL DEFENCE COMMITTEE

Two Publications
CIA Briefing (20p)
Jamaica Destabilised (25p)
Available from:
Agee/Hosenball Defence
Committee
c/o NCCL, 186, Kings Cross
Road, London WC1

CYNICAL SWAP

The main architect of the sordid deal in which Soviet Communist Party General Secretary Brezhnev and Chilean dictator Pinochet swapped the most famous of their thousands of political prisoners, was the United States government, which acted as go-between.

Kissinger and his successors hope to use the deal as a basis for the international economic rehabilitation of the Chilean dictatorship.

The event has predictably produced waves of liberal euphoria and Stalinist self-congratulation.

This hypocrisy is designed to obscure that it is Stalinism which bears the political responsibility for the imprisonment of both Soviet biologist Bukovsky and Chilean Communist Party leader

Continued from Front Page

linked to the rising cost of living through a sliding scale of wages on a price index worked out by elected trade union committees.

*No public spending cuts! Wherever the cuts are imposed there must be sustained strike action with demands that the local labour movement rally round with full support. The demand must be for the full service to be retained through a sliding scale of spending linked to increased costs as assessed by trade union committees, and the nationalisation of public sector suppliers.

*No redundancies! Where the employers threaten redundancies the demand must be for work sharing on full pay — the total hours of work available divided between the whole workforce with no loss of earnings.

*Open the books! When the employer argues he cannot afford a wage increase or to sustain the full workforce, the demand must be to force the firm to open its accounts and plans to an elected committee of trade unionists. This will either prove that the case is a bluff, and spur on the fight for jobs and wages, or show that the employer genuinely is bankrupt — in which case the firm must be nationalised, under the management of the elected committee, with no compensation to the old owners.

*Stop racism! Defend the black communities by the establishment of workers' defence squads. Destroy the basis of racism by attacking unemployment and inadequate social services — for a programme of public works under trade union management to provide jobs for the unemployed and much-needed houses and other amenities.

FUND

As we went to press the total amount received for the December Monthly Fund was a disappointing £430.75.

It is important that we make a good start to the new year with a big effort to raise the full £600 target for the January Monthly Fund.

All donations should be sent to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING

HULL
Thursday January 20th at 7.30
Y.P.I., George Street, HULL

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE LIVERPOOL

Education Class
"THE LABOUR PARTY"
Wednesday 19th January
AUEW Hall, Mount Pleasant
at 7.30 pm

POLISH WORKER BEATEN UP IN COURT

A member of the Polish Workers Defence Committee was beaten up when trying to attend court proceedings in Radom against six of the workers accused of 'damaging state property' in last June's general strike against the anti-working class policies of the bureaucracy.

This new piece of thuggery follows successful police efforts to prevent members of the Committee from attending the previous trial a few days earlier.

In this three workers were given prison sentences of up to three years.

The crisis of the Polish bureaucracy is now expressed in a combination of this savage repression of the working class along with a desperate attempt to stop the economic rot by lifting restrictions on the capitalist sector of the economy.

During December two important measures were passed. One of these gives tax benefits and easier supplies of raw material to Polish

owned small factories, workshops and catering facilities.

The second is designed to encourage more foreign capitalist investment in Poland. It gives the same tax benefits as to Polish capitalists and also guarantees that foreign firms can repatriate 50% of their profits.

If they produce for export then there is no limitation at all on profit repatriation. The Ursus tractor factory, one of the centres of last year's strike, is itself a joint enterprise with Massey-Ferguson and is financed by a consortium of British banks.

The bureaucracy calls this 'allowing private initiative to contribute to the building of developed socialism'

RALLY AGAINST HEALY SLANDERS

On Friday 14th January an international platform of speakers, most of them once prominent in the leadership of the Fourth International will defend Joseph Hansen and George Novak, veteran members of the American Socialist Workers Party against the slanderous allegation of the International Committee of the Fourth International that they are "accomplices of the GPU".

The IC, led by Gerry Healy of the British Workers Revolutionary Party, claims that Hansen and Novak were "criminally negligent" at the time of Trotsky's assassination by a Stalinist agent in 1940.

They further allege that in an attempt to protect themselves Novak and Hansen have "covered up" the role of the GPU in the Trotskyist movement.

We have made quite clear in

several extensive articles in *Socialist Press* our opposition to the accusations made by the WRP and the fraudulent attempts of the IC to establish an international 'inquiry' into the "indictment".

But it is our opinion that no further practical purpose can be served by participating in a meeting where we would not be permitted to make a political assessment of either the IC or the USFI of which the SWP is the American sympathising section.

We feel that Healy's slander campaign is only a part of a much deeper-going crisis within the world Trotskyist movement as a whole and can only be understood as such.

In our view the answer to this is not to dash to relieve one symptom but to confront the disease of disorientation which flourishes not simply within the IC but within all the main groupings internationally calling themselves Trotskyist.

It is for this reason we have consistently called for an inter-

national discussion on the development of political crisis within the post-war Fourth International, particularly in relation to the various splits and divisions that have occurred in the movement.

Only on this basis can a principled footing be established for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and a clear struggle for democratic centralism against all forms of abuse, including slander and frame up.

This, of course, does not mean that we are opposed to joint meetings under any circumstances. In the struggle against the class enemy joint meetings may well serve a useful purpose.

Indeed, only recently the WSL initiated a joint meeting with the IMG addressed by a representative of the Argentinian PST on the defence of political prisoners in Argentina.

We regard such defence as an essential principle. But we regard January's rally as a source of more confusion than clarity. For this reason we will not take part.

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