

# SOCIALIST PRESS



## Fight Tory backlash!

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# Stop the retreat on pay strikes!

# VOTE LABOUR: SACK CALLAGHAN!

No class conscious worker will feel attracted by the policies in the Manifesto now being completed by Callaghan and the right wing Labour leadership. It will offer nothing to anyone.

But there must be no room for doubt: workers who wish to fight for socialist policies to defend jobs, living standards and social services must vote Labour and take up the fight to drive out the Callaghan-Healey leadership and build a socialist alternative.

The return of a Tory government under Thatcher would certainly intensify all of the anti-working class policies implemented by Labour leaders over the last five years—slashing health, education and social services; attacking the unions; axing thousands more jobs; and stepping up the 'law and order' crackdown with new police powers and expanded armed forces.

### Spurious

But it would also give Callaghan the spurious credentials of seeming to oppose Tory policies—many of which he himself has attempted to carry out while in office.

Whether Thatcher or Callaghan is elected on May 3, workers face the prospect of further attacks on their rights and living standards.

But it is only through the struggle for a principled socialist leadership in the labour movement that these attacks can be defeated and steps taken towards ending the capitalist system whose crisis means mass unemployment and continuing exploitation of the working class.

Massive struggles by a forward moving working class challenging Callaghan's reactionary pay limits have shown that there is a yawning gulf between the aspirations and the independent class interests of the working class and the policies of its supposed "leaders" at the head of the Labour Party and the TUC.

### Willing to fight

Workers have time and again shown their willingness to fight in defence of jobs, wages and basic rights.

But the Callaghan-Healey leadership has at each point shown its determination to press ahead with defending the interests of big business at home and British imperialism—both in the occupied North of Ireland and on a world scale.

With the collaboration of TUC leaders their policies have thrown 1½ million workers on the dole, wreaked havoc in the NHS and the schools, cut the value of workers' pay packets, slashed house building programmes and set up picket-busting police detachments.

They have used "sus" laws to harass working class youth on

the streets and army scabs against firemen and ambulance strikers.

This, the real face of the Labour leadership, which points glaringly to the necessity for a socialist alternative, is fully revealed to the working class only when the Labour Party is in government.

And the complete inability of Labour's so-called 'left' MPs to mount anything other than the vaguest verbal challenge to Callaghan's policies is also highlighted only when the government is seen to be implementing those policies without any socialist opposition.

### Leadership

During the life of this government, the Workers Socialist League has consistently drawn out these lessons and fought to construct a revolutionary leadership in the Labour and trade union movement.

TUC leaders, who throughout the life of the Callaghan-Healey government have fought to hold back the legitimate struggles of their members against it and uphold successive phases of wage controls, have predictably used the pretext of the General Election to move in and knife pay struggles.

UPW leaders have abandoned virtually the whole of the postal workers' claim, in a bid to steamroller through a wretched 8% deal; and NUPE leaders too have exerted every muscle to ram home a 9% settlement for hospital manual workers and nurses.

### Raised offer

Hoping for a similar climb-down by Civil Servants' leaders, the Callaghan leadership late last week raised its pay offer to 9%—only to see it rejected by the two biggest unions, the CPSA and SCPS.

Fearing the wrath of their members more than the wrath of Callaghan, these officials have gone so far as to threaten withdrawal from the reactionary Whitley Council pay set-up, and to continue with industrial action during the election campaign.

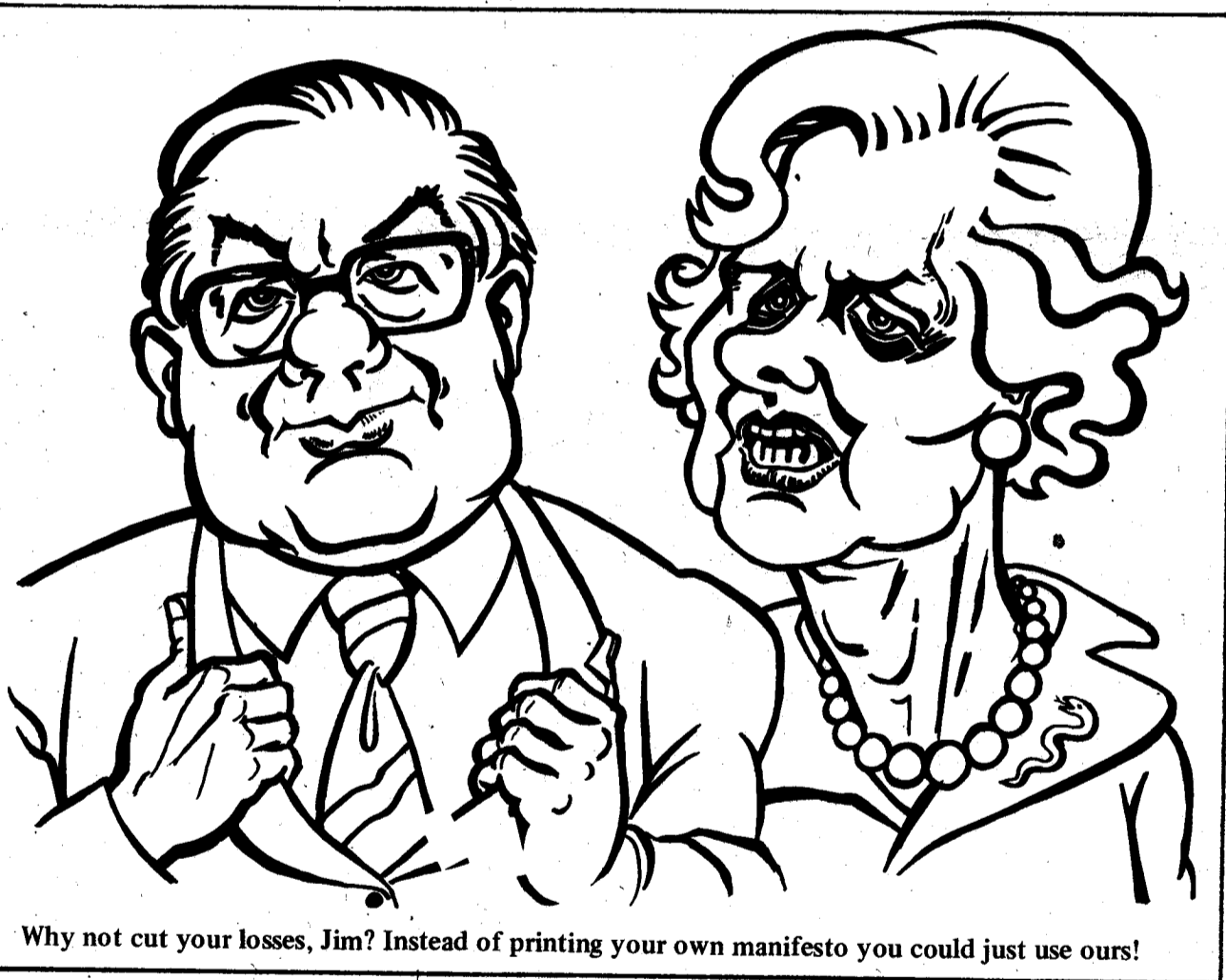
The militancy now developed within the workers' movement is also reflected in the strike decision by stewards representing British Leyland craftsmen—which if implemented could bring car production to a grinding halt at the beginning of next week.

It is this independent fighting strength within the working class which offers the only hope of resisting the attacks on living standards planned by both Callaghan and Thatcher should they be returned to office.

### Extend struggles

These struggles—and unofficial action in the Post Office—must be stepped up, extended and strengthened.

Any attempt at an industrial



Why not cut your losses, Jim? Instead of printing your own manifesto you could just use ours!



Heath

"truce" or to suspend meetings during the election campaign must be resisted.

A powerful, combative working class is the decisive answer to a right wing Thatcher government, which, under such conditions, with mounting inflation fuelling workers' wage demands, and with its planned programme of cuts, could soon

share the same fate as Heath's hated 1970-74 government.

There are already signs that the declaration of the Election date and growing publicity for the Tories' anti-union programme has begun to swing class conscious workers back towards a Labour vote.

Such workers will vote Labour not because they support Callaghan's policies of unemployment, permanent wage controls, repression in Ireland and support for big business, but because they are determined to keep the Tories—the open class enemy—out of office.

We say clearly that such workers must be offered a perspective of a struggle to kick out the Callaghan-Healey leadership, and a programme for action to defend their independent interests.

Already in Hayes and Harlington, London, Labour GMC delegates have voted 31-25 not to adopt sitting right wing MP Neville Sanderson, and instead to endorse Mr Peter Fagan as their candidate for the

election.

Wherever similar opportunities arise, the defenders of Callaghan and Healey must be removed as Labour candidates, and candidates pledged to fight for alternative socialist policies put forward to replace them.

All Labour candidates must be pressed by union branches and Labour Parties to declare themselves committed after the Election—whatever the result—to campaigning for an emergency recall Labour Party conference to drive out the Callaghan clique and adopt socialist policies.

### Crucial months

Indeed, whatever the precise developments, the next few months will be crucial months for the construction of a principled, revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The Workers Socialist League, fighting to build such a leadership, will continue to campaign for the organised working class to take up the

struggle for the following policies:

\*End all wage controls! Defend living standards through wage claims with cost of living clauses to protect against inflation!

\*End unemployment! Defend existing jobs through occupations demanding work-sharing on full pay. Demand a crash programme of useful public works to create new jobs!

\*Open the books of employers that refuse wage demands or threaten sackings! Prove the case for the nationalisation of major industry without compensation under workers' management.

\*Strike to stop the cuts in public services! Fight for a sliding scale of public spending protected against inflation. End private health care and education. Nationalise the railways!

\*An end to national oppression and racism. Withdraw British troops from Ireland now! Scrap the racist immigration laws! No to import controls!

# EUROPEAN RULERS IN CRISIS

Senor Mota Pinto, the ex-official of the Salazar dictatorship who is now Portugal's non-elected Prime Minister, was echoing the sentiments of growing sections of the European capitalist class when he said last weekend that the continued existence of political parties was an obstacle to what he calls "democracy"—meaning capitalism.

Mota Pinto was smarting under the defeat in parliament of his government's one major piece of legislation—a super austerity budget designed to satisfy the IMF, which through loans is keeping Portugal's leaky economy just afloat.

## Pressure

The defeat came about as a result of mounting pressure from the masses of workers and peasants against the reactionary policies of the regime—real wage cuts and unemployment for the workers, forcible removal from redistributed land for the peasants and rural workers.

Workers' anger against these measures forced the Portuguese Stalinists to vote against the budget and the Socialists to abstain.

The right wing Social Democrats also abstained, while only the other bourgeois party, the Christian Democrats voted in favour.

The cowardly abstention of the Socialists was designed to justify their subsequent position—that the vote did not oblige the Mota Pinto government to resign.

## Resignation

Had the Socialists voted against, then the pressure on them and the CP to form a government in the interests of the workers would have become enormous.

Mota Pinto handed in his resignation to the military President Eanes, who prevailed on

him to stay on and have another try at getting a slightly modified budget through.

He might still do this, since the Socialists have hinted they might support a budget which reduced the tax on the annual wage bonus received by Portuguese workers below the proposed figure of 65%.

## Losing patience

The Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces have also begun to make it clear that they are beginning to lose patience with the failure of the parliamentary system to produce a stable form of rule.

The democratic gains of 1974 are now more in jeopardy than ever and that is largely because the CP and SP leaders refuse to mobilise the masses in their defence.

If Mota Pinto's next budget also fails, then the bourgeoisie will be faced with the alternative of intervention by the army, an attempt to set up a new parliamentary party government (which they abandoned last year) or to hold general elections.

The last course looks as if it

would resolve nothing for the bourgeoisie and perhaps make it even more difficult to hold down the working class through the methods of "democracy".

In other West European countries as well as Portugal general elections are clearly not the periodic strengtheners of stable parliamentary democracy which the bourgeoisie held them to be in its days of confidence.

They are desperate last alternatives used when every other tactic has failed, and they carry the threat of confirming or enlarging the government crises which already exist.

In Italy the totally predictable defeat of Andreotti's coalition with the Social Democrats and Republicans (by a combined vote of the Communist and Socialist Parties) will almost certainly force the Italian bourgeoisie to hold general elections, probably on June 10.

## Belgium

In Belgium, too, attempts to reconstruct the coalition between Social Christians and Socialists broke down last week on the intractable issue of the



Portuguese SP leader Soares

division of power between the country's two national communities (French-speaking and Dutch-speaking).

There, also, immediate general elections are likely—only a few months after the last ones.

## Unscheduled

The wave of possible or certain unscheduled elections in Europe (Britain as well as Italy, Portugal and Belgium), far from reflecting the strength of democratic values, are more a manifestation of the failure of the traditional forms of control of the working class—through parliamentary rule and the collaboration of the labour bureaucrats—in conditions of economic crisis and the threat or actuality of mass upsurge of the working class.

It is not only the Portuguese ruling class which is now looking towards non-parliamentary forms of rule.

# Middle East Oil War reopened

Under combined political and economic pressure, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), voted last Tuesday to increase the basic price of oil by 9% to \$14.5 dollars a barrel.

But many oil states have already made it clear that they will exceed this new basic level, adding a premium of not less than \$1.20 per barrel to it.

Algeria announced next day that its crude oil will increase in price by 25%—a level likely to be matched by Libya and Nigeria.

At the same time nearly every oil state that increased output on a temporary basis during the period while Iran became a net importer of oil is now preparing to cut back to their former levels of production—both in order to conserve stocks and to keep market prices high.

## Inflation

These price increases will serve as a major factor triggering a new intensified round of inflation and recession in the advanced capitalist countries, and will further sharpen the acute economic crisis faced by the many underdeveloped nations that rely heavily on oil imports.

The EEC Commission for instance estimates that every one dollar rise in the price of oil cuts growth rates in the EEC by 0.4% and raises inflation by 0.3%. But this calculation

leaves out the new factor in the recession—a world short-fall in oil supplies of around two million barrels a day, caused by cutbacks in Iranian production.

Indeed the Iranian revolution has been a major factor in forcing through this latest price increase. The Shah had, along with the Saudis, been in the forefront of resistance to big price increases that disrupt the shaky economic structures of imperialism.

## Despots

The new, nationalist regime has adopted a more militant posture.

And, more to the point, the ignominious fate of the Shah has made every despot oil Sheikh and dictator look to his own future, and to securing the financial means to bolster his rule against any similar movement—by a combination of cosmetic reforms and military spending.

These pressures forced even the "moderate" Saudi leaders to agree to the 9% increase, and to hedge the question of whether they too will soon impose the \$1.20 surcharge.

The OPEC decision has already brought about a 16% increase in North Sea oil prices—and will ensure in Britain that whether Thatcher or Callaghan is elected on May 3, 1979 will prove a year of massive price inflation and oil crisis paralleling the traumatic events of the first "Oil War" of 1973-4.

# Amin on edge of defeat

Islamic dictator and mass murderer of workers and peasants, Marshall Idi Amin Dada, appears on the point of losing power in Uganda.

With his own army in a state of disarray his only remaining visible means of support seems to be the airforce of his fellow Islamic dictator Gaddafi which intervened at the last moment against the invading anti-Amin forces.

These forces are an alliance of the regular army of the petty-bourgeois "left"-talking Tanzanian premier Julius Nyerere and a rotten political block of Ugandan exiles now calling itself the Uganda

National Liberation Front.

This Front consists of no less than eighteen political organisations, all of them headed by a small group of exiles, without any mass base within Uganda.

The main ones are the followers of ex-"socialist" premier Milton Obote and the former Kabaka (King) of Buganda whom Obote deposed.

## Support

The ease with which the Front's small army has (before Libyan intervention) reached firing distance of the capital Kampala is the result of material support from Tanzania and probably from US and British imperialist sources as well.

But it is also because the soldiers and working masses of Uganda did not raise a finger to assist their beleaguered eight-year dictator.

But those masses now face the prospect of a new dictatorship from one or more sections of the opportunists who comprise the National Liberation Front.

It is essential for them to set up their own independent organisations to fight for the final end of the Amin regime, the removal from Uganda of the Tanzanian and Libyan forces, the reconstruction of the economic life under workers' control and management and the formation of an authentic workers' and peasants' government in Uganda.



Andreotti



Portuguese President Eanes

# S. African scapegoats rebel

The inability of the National Party government in South Africa to contain the Information Department scandal continues.

And past and present Prime Ministers Vorster and Botha continue to protest their innocence in the face of charges by the dismissed Information Department leaders that Vorster was fully aware of the secret dealings of his own government.

The Erasmus Judicial Commission of Enquiry set up by the government as a result of pressure from "liberal" sections of the ruling class and dissension in the National Party's own ranks, is due to present its "findings" as we go to press.

It seems most likely, of course, that Vorster and his cabinet will be exonerated and blame will be apportioned among the chosen scapegoats.

These scapegoats are, however, getting increasingly resentful and restless as we reported last week.

Details of their allegations have been circulating for the last few weeks.

Not surprisingly, it seems that large sums of money were paid by the bourgeois media to get some of the tapes in which one-time Secretary of the Department of Information, Eschel Rhoddie makes his allegations.

## Bribery

These include accounts of the successes and failures of Department of Information attempts to buy various publications and an enormous international network of bribery of political and labour leaders—in short, some of the dirtiest aspects of the secret deals and diplomacy whereby not only the wheels of South African capitalism, but of imperialism are greased.

Amongst the major allegations are claims that:

\*In Britain, two Labour MPs received payments.

\*Attempts were made to buy the *Daily Express*, *Guardian*, *Observer* and *Evening Standard*.

\*In Norway a right wing party which won four seats at the 1973 election was set up and funded by South Africa.

\*In America an attempt was made to buy the *Washington Post*.

\*Major bureaucrats inside the AFL-CIO were bribed to oppose programmes for trade union action in solidarity with black workers.

\*Both Muzorewa and Sithole have received large 'donations'.

## Inevitable

Such fraud, corruption and deceit are inevitable in the capitalist profit system—as inevitable as the exploitation of the black masses by those "liberal" sections of the ruling class which enables them to finance the newspapers which now attack government misappropriation!



Mulder

# Stalinism in hock

Last week it was officially announced that the cost of servicing Poland's debt to the imperialists had reached more than a half of its convertible foreign exchange earnings.

Since then further reports have shown that, if Poland is an extreme case, other East European workers' states are increasingly facing the same problems.

A report from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) estimates that the total debt of the "centrally planned economies" of Eastern Europe at the end of last year was \$47 billion compared with \$37.40 billion in 1977.

The persistent deficit increases the debt by a similar amount each year.

And repayment and interest (so-called "debt service") rises each year to

eat up a growing proportion of hard currency export earnings, though the ECE says that this proportion has not yet (except in the case of Poland) reached what it calls the "permissible limit" of 25%.

In itself a trade deficit with the imperialist countries is not necessarily threatening to socialised property forms.

But the indebtedness to which it leads creates the conditions under which imperialists can begin to apply economic leverage and begin in the end to extract a political price from the bureaucracies.

## Creditors

Already there is widespread speculation that Poland's creditors may be about to demand a say in the running of Polish economic policy.

Already they are receiving information on Poland's economy which no Polish worker has access to.

The same pressures are building up elsewhere: East Germany now owes \$3.7 billion to West German banks—plus another \$10 billion to other imperialist financiers.

## Stifled

The problem arises in the first place because bureaucratic control of the socialised economies of the workers' states stifles their potential productive power.

They would possess such power only under conditions of genuine workers' management and of an authentic union of socialist states, in place of the narrow bilateral trade agreements which are the limits of the bureaucratic conception of a socialist international division of labour held by Comecon (the economic organisation based on the USSR and "friendly" workers' states).

One of the responses of the East European bureaucracies to their growing

debts to the imperialists is to try to restrict their own imports from the capitalist countries (as, for instance, Hungary is now doing).

This is not a move towards any true international socialist economic planning, but simply a defensive move which the bureaucracies see as a second-best alternative which is forced upon them.

And this trade too has its own difficulties. The Soviet Union now has a large annual surplus of \$5 billion in its trade with the other workers' states.

## Deeper in debt

So while Comecon as a whole, including the USSR, gets deeper into debt with the imperialists, within Comecon itself the smaller countries get deeper into debt to the Soviet Union.

This has been accentuated by the fact that the Soviet Union has followed OPEC in increasing the price of its oil exports to

Comecon countries.

This situation of "socialist" indebtedness is exploited by the Soviet bureaucracy to bring into line any other bureaucracy tempted to criticise Moscow.

## Blame workers

Nonetheless, simultaneous indebtedness to the imperialists and Moscow is a situation used by the bureaucracies of the smaller Comecon countries to justify the only "answer" they possess to explain away the disastrous consequences which their own existence has for the economies of their countries.

They turn to blame the working class, and repeat their parrot-cry to the workers, calling on them to solve the problems by working harder, producing more and eating less.

But as the bureaucracy weighs heavier and heavier on the backs of the working class, major events such as



Polish leader Gierek

the 1976 Polish uprising and growing evidence of less dramatic but important instances of resistance show clearly the contradiction between the "socialism" practised by their unchosen "leaders" and the real needs of the workers.

There is evidence of a growing readiness to fight the parasites whose policies are leading to the destruction of the gains of the October revolution.

Only the revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the establishment of governments based on independent workers' councils can save, develop and extend these gains.

# Oil crisis hits US pay limits

The massive price increases announced last week by the OPEC countries are a further blow to President Carter's attempts to cut back workers' living standards and control price inflation in the USA, while at the same time cutting the oil deficit.

At the last moment Carter was forced to shelve his scheduled television broadcast spelling out phase two of his "energy policy", since even his own advisors were divided as to how best to foist the latest crisis onto the backs of the working class.

Carter had originally been planning to cutback price controls in order to allow domestic oil prices to rise by around 15% by Spring of this year.

The object of such increases was to hold down oil consumption, and thus simultaneously ease the economic problems created by the oil deficit and the shortage caused by the cutbacks in Iranian oil production.

## Electoral damage

To minimise the electoral damage that might result from thus boosting the profits of US oil monopolies, Carter had toyed with the idea of taxing away much of the increase—while of course leaving the oil bosses sufficient extra loot to keep them quiet.

Now the OPEC increases mean inevitable rises in oil prices over and above Carter's moves.

Having steeled himself to boosting price inflation by a calculated amount, he now faces the prospect of a dramatic increase at a time when prices are already rocketing upwards.

January's figure of 0.9% inflation was followed by 1.2% in February—a 15% annual rate. Oil increases come on top of this, striking a severe blow at Carter's hopes of enforcing a 7% pay limit in key union negotiations in the next few months.

## Shaky start

The pay policy had made a shaky start, assisted only by the determination of US union bureaucrats to preserve their reactionary alliance with



Carter's capitalist Democratic Party.

But if now faces its most decisive test as 300,000 truck drivers organised in the Teamsters Union come up for renewal of their 3-year contract on April 1.

The Teamsters' claim for wages and fringe benefits amounts to 35% over 3 years—with 13.5% in the first year.

This is clearly well in excess of Carter's guidelines—though well below the going rate of inflation.

When bosses leaders offered only half the claim, Teamster leader Fitzsimmons attempted to disguise the issue by arguing that payment of 58 cents an hour due in April under the Teamster's existing cost of living Agreement should be added to the 64 cent offer—and claiming that this did not breach Carter's pay policy.

The fact is that truck drivers are already entitled to that 58 cents an hour under last year's agreement—it is not up for negotiation.

Fitzsimmons appears to be lining up a settlement which will trade away half the claim in exchange for this cost-of-living supplement—thus producing a fictitiously high increase, in the hopes of fobbing off militants within the Teamsters' ranks.

Indeed the prospect of a strike is one that sends cold shudders down the spines of Carter and Fitzsimmons alike.

Three years ago a token stoppage by truckers brought gun battles with police, a climb-down by the employers, and a pace-setting pay settlement.

But it also showed militants within the union their potential strength in all-out struggle—and thus reinforced opposition within the union to Fitzsimmons' gangster leadership which, in deep collaboration with the bosses and the capitalist partners, does nothing but hold back that strength.

## Paralysing strike

As for Carter, the memories of last year's bitter miners' strike are all too vivid: he knows that a stoppage by truck drivers could quickly paralyse the country. Already he has made it clear that he would immediately apply for an injunction under the union-busting Taft-Hartley laws to enforce an 80-day "cooling off period" if a strike was called.

And Teamster leaders, rather than preparing to mobilise the giant 2 million-strong union to fight such measures have attempted only courtroom manoeuvres to test out Carter's legal powers to impose such measures.

This confrontation takes place however under conditions of sharpening mass struggle in the US working class.

In California thousands of

farmworkers organised in Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers union are on strike demanding wage increases for lettuce pickers in excess of the 7% limit.

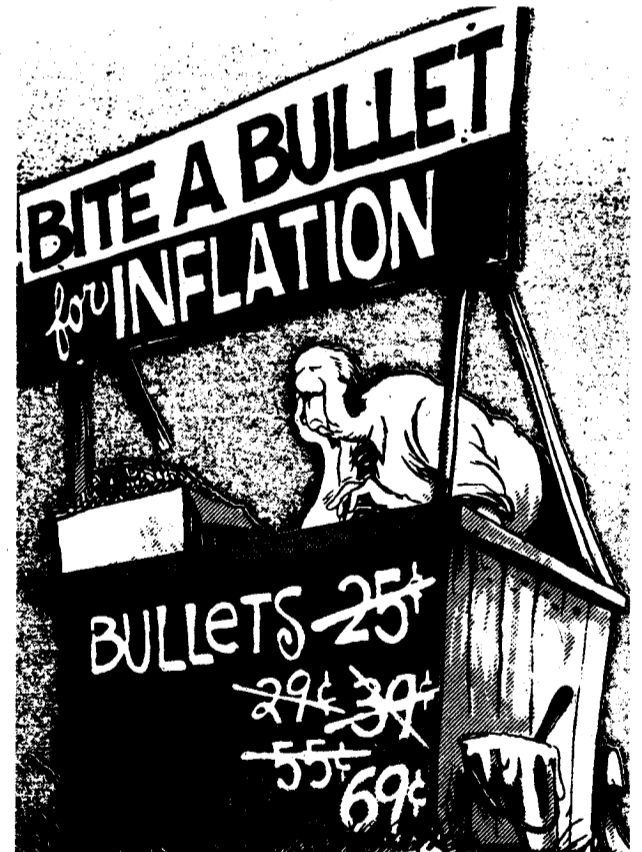
On March 1, 6,000 marched through the streets of Salinas to protest at the shotgun murder of UFW member Rufino Contreras, gunned down on the picket line by a farm owner.

Police in Salinas have already purchased \$250,000 worth of tear gas and other strike breaking equipment to assist scabs when full scale harvesting begins.

Employers have clearly decided not only to resist wage demands but to attempt to break the UFW. Chavez—up to his neck in collaboration with Democratic Party politicians—has been unable to outline any strategy to fight such attacks, and professed himself "surprised" at the employers' attitude.

## Texas fight

But this is not a reflection of the mood of the membership. On the contrary, in Texas, too downtrodden farmworkers are responding to bosses' attacks and falling living standards by turning towards the UFW. An 800-strong Organising Convention in San Juan, Texas showed the militancy and readiness of these workers to fight against



formidable odds for the right to trade union organisation.

## Shipbuilders

And another mass section of workers also fighting simultaneously for trade union rights and for improved living standards are the 13,000 Steel Workers Union members at Newport News Shipbuilding, who have been on strike since January 31.

Newport News is in Virginia. And Virginia is a "right to work" state in which the closed shop is outlawed and employers stand even more confident of the support of the courts and the police in their efforts to keep the unions out.

But the rapid growth of the USWA in the yard and the tenacity of the year-old strike there by 1,200 designers both indicate that only the bankruptcy of political perspective within the USWA bureaucracy will prevent a major inroad being made against the

employers' anti-union set up.

It is vital that all-out solidarity blacking action is fought for by the whole US labour movement against Newport News Shipbuilding's owners, the giant Tenneco oil monopoly, to break the isolation of the strikers in Virginia and force the employers to recognise the nation-wide strength of the trade unions.

At the same time the struggle must continue to break the unions from the paralysing bloc with the Democrats brought about by their reactionary bureaucratic leaders.

## Labour Party

The demand must be for the building of a Labour Party on a programme that will start out from the independent class interests of the US working class and point to the necessity for the overthrow of crisis-ridden US capitalism and the establishment of a planned socialist economy.

# Common Market: racism, trade war & anarchy

**£2.3 bn milk lake**

The policy so beloved of Labour's so-called 'left wing' Tribune Group—import controls—has been eagerly taken up by the European Commission in a confidential report on trade with Japan.

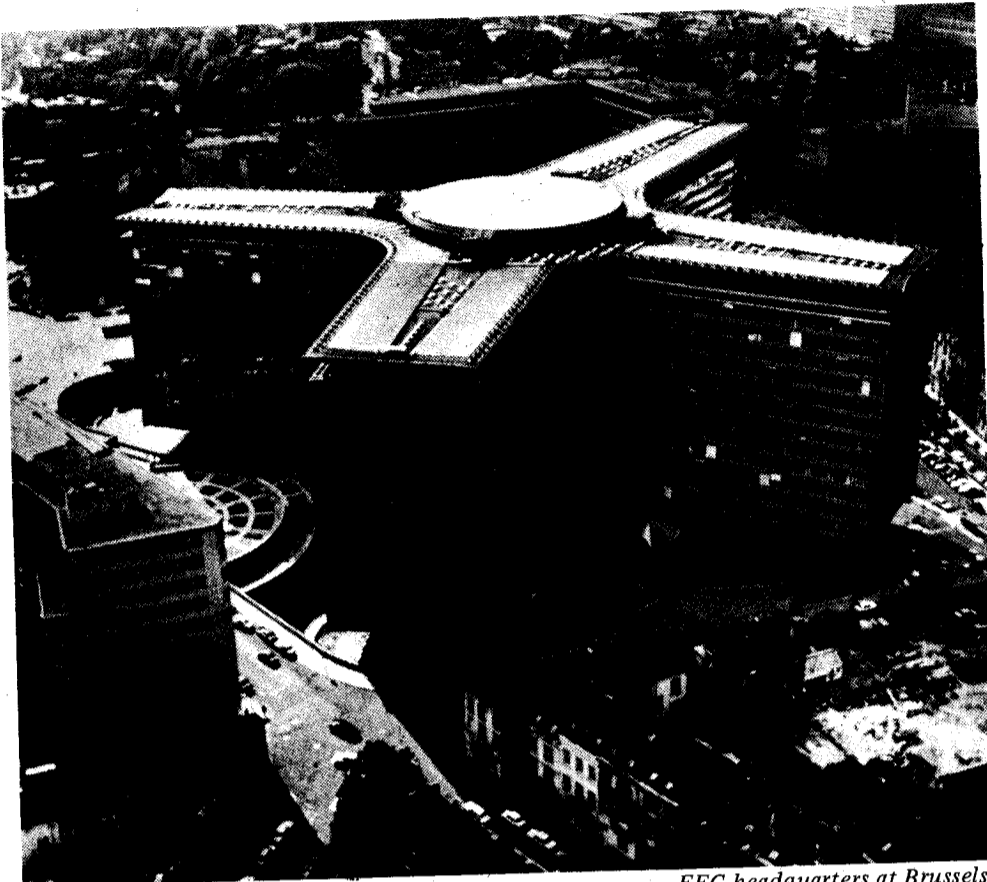
The report is garnished with open and strident racist attacks on the Japanese "national character", describing Japan as "a country of workaholics, living in what Westerners would regard as little more than rabbit hutches", and pointing out that the country has only recently emerged from feudal society.

### Cars

It proposes punitive action to cut back the Japanese surplus on trade with Europe, and is believed to envisage import controls on cars and electronics in particular.

The EEC Commission, headed by one-time British Labourite Roy Jenkins, suggests that it is possible to slash Japanese imports without unleashing an all-out trade war.

It anticipates, however, that imports driven out of Europe will increasingly be



EEC headquarters at Brussels

diverted to the USA—where employers have long believed in using protectionist measures to preserve their markets and profits against competition.

But since the dollar last year fell dramatically against the yen, US employers have an advantage over European capitalists in competing for

sales in Japan.

Of course the whole concept of import controls on the massive scale envisaged by the EEC amounts to little more than a game of

Russian roulette—with the prospect of an all-out trade war at any moment.

Such measures reflect the growing tensions between national sections of capital in this period of acute world crisis and mounting recession.

The EEC as an alliance of European capitalists is driven into conflict with the US and Japan—while within the EEC itself rival capitalist interests produce continuing conflicts.

Nothing could show more clearly the impossibility of arriving at a common, "rational" solution to the crisis within the context of world capitalism.

Unless capitalism is overthrown in the European countries and elsewhere, the prospect facing the working class is an uncontrollable lurch towards trade war and even physical war as desperate national capitalists seek to defend their own markets, encroach on the markets of others, and eliminate their competitors.

The Tribune Group's import controls policy would put workers onto this slippery slope just as surely as the EEC Commission.

It must be rejected out of hand by the labour movement.

Every day now seems to produce further evidence of the colossal waste involved in the functioning of the EEC.

Last week brought the revelation that £2.3 billion—40% of the EEC's total farm budget—was spent in 1978 on buying up surplus dairy products.

The bulk of this surplus has been wilfully destroyed. This wholesale vandalism, at a time when workers face rising food prices throughout the world, takes place in order to prop up the EEC's ludicrous Common Agricultural Policy.

Its cost is now so high that a new milk tax—to fall largely on efficient dairy farms, including most of those in Britain, is to be levied to cut back production.

## The Big Sleep

One reason Callaghan would be far from sorry to lose the May 3 General Election is that he would be spared what promises to be a fiasco of an election to the European Parliament, scheduled for June 7.

Hostility to the EEC and the impossibility of affecting anything through the Assembly is likely to produce a record low poll among Labour supporters.

To counteract this, *Labour Weekly* has been running a series of subsidised supplements praising the work of the European Assembly.

They have preserved a tactful silence on the mammoth £75 million it cost to run last year: and proved very reticent about its recent record of organisational cock-ups.

In one recent incident in Strasbourg the Assembly mistakenly voted to freeze prices on a range of farm products chronically in surplus, and instead of increasing other farm prices by 3% managed to wind up effectively cutting them by 17%!

The reason is clear: half of the Assembly, having collected their appearance money and expenses, had already left Strasbourg before the vote: and the other half, loaded down with EEC high-living, were almost asleep.

Workers are left to guess in which category the British Labour "representatives" were to be found.

# NAC march misses point

"Women decide" was the sole theme of Saturday's march in London called by the International Campaign for Abortion Rights (ICAR), the National Abortion Campaign (NAC) and the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign (LARC).

3,000 demonstrators marched from Hyde Park to Trafalgar Square as part of an international "day of action" which saw similar mobilisations in the U.S., Europe, Australia and Latin America.

### Conference

NAC and LARC had supposedly built for the demon-

stration from their trade union conference in November, a conference which had correctly aimed at the organised labour movement.

However, the small number of union banners on Saturday's march testified to the continued blinkered feminism of the NAC/LARC leadership.

### Back of march

At the start of the march trade unionists were arrogantly ordered to march far down the column behind the banners of women's groups and organisations like "Rock Against Sexism".

The WSL contingent and our supporters with union banners focussed on the need to fight the cuts to safeguard and extend abortion rights.

We see free abortion on demand as an essential democratic right and a vital step in fighting to end the oppression of women.

But such a fight can in no way be carried out through blindly-led single-issue campaigns, which take no account of the massive cuts in the health service and pay only token attention to the organised strength of the working class.

The hard-line feminism and overall barrenness of ICAR's perspective became all too apparent at the rally in Trafalgar Square.

### Non-political

A selection of speakers from the USA, Spain, India and Iran seemed to be holding some sort of competition amongst themselves to see who could talk about abortion the longest without bringing in politics.

Political direction simply consisted of each speaker (including the NAC representative) repeating "Women decide" with sufficient fervour to match the

emptiness of the slogan.

Only two speakers made more than a gesture towards pointing a way forward, Erika Laredo from the NUSS, and Vanessa Wiseman, an NUT member.

However falteringly, these two did at least attempt to make the point that women are a part of the working class and that the demand for abortion rights must be raised in every union branch and Labour Party.

Notable by their absence were the many Labour and trade union lefts who have sponsored NAC and LARC, the same Tribunites and bureaucrats who have refused to take up any fight against the cuts which threaten the already meagre abortion service.

### Cuts issue

Just as at last November's NAC/LARC trade union conference, only the WSL's intervention raised the question of the cuts in the health service.

The IMG leaflet was virtually identical to ICAR's own, repeating the same demands and avoiding the same political questions.

By some strange oversight the membership form on ICAR's leaflet did not appear on the IMG sheet: that was the major difference between the two.

The IMG Pabloites have clearly given up tail-ending bourgeois feminism and are now happily grovelling before it.

Only a policy of occupation linked to supporting strikes can defend the health service against the cuts and make free abortion on demand a reality.

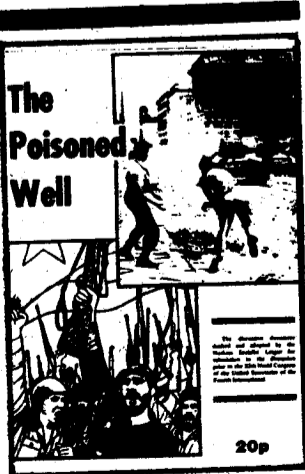
Such democratic rights can only be safeguarded by building for independent workers' control of the health service.



Feminist contingents dominated the march



The head of the March 31 demonstration



NOW OUT! The WSL discussion document adopted for submission to the USFI XIth World Congress. Price 20p plus 10p p&p from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

# Socialist Unity: no answers and no response

With thousands of protest votes floating around against the Labour leadership's wretched record on jobs, wages, housing and social services, it might have seemed that Socialist Unity would have been on to a good thing in the Edge Hill by-election.

But while political confusion abounds within the working class—as reflected in the bizarre turn-round from a 6,000 Labour majority—the task of directing workers into revolutionary struggles is much harder than simply raising a banner and dishing out sufficient election leaflets.

## Practical work

It is necessary patiently to build basic support for a revolutionary programme within the working class through interventions into workers' struggles designed to expose in practice the inadequacy and treachery of existing reformist and Stalinist bureaucrats, and offer a clear alternative at each point.

Socialist Unity—the opportunist electoral front promoted by the International Marxist Group—not only dodges the necessary principled struggle against the bureaucracy but also fails to spell out a satisfactory programme.

In attempting to short-cut the process through "mass" ballot-box campaigns it therefore fails either to win significant numbers of votes—in Edge Hill a weedy 127—or to offer workers the political clarity that they need in the struggles to come.

Edge Hill is a clear case in point. The area contains few immigrant workers, and is situated next to the heavy immigrant population in the Toxteth area.

## Unemployment

And while unemployment in the City of Liverpool is now a staggering 24%, this percentage—equal to the worst periods of the depression in 1932—is exceeded by pockets in Edge Hill where the figure rises to 34%.

The area is peppered with rotting slums and tenements. Of the remaining local industry two more key factories—Dunlops

and Plesseys with a total workforce of 3,200—are the latest facing closure.

As might be expected in this wasteland of Labour government policies, the area has become a breeding ground for racist thugs and a recruiting pitch for the National Front.

## Threadbare

Yet it is precisely on the key issues of the struggle against unemployment and the fight against racism and fascism that the hotch-potch programme presented by Socialist Unity was at its most threadbare.

The main demand on unemployment is Moss Evans' and Len Murray's favourite: the simple reformist call for a 35-hour week.

But the manifesto makes no attack on the miserable betrayal of this demand by every sector of the TUC bureaucracy over recent years.

And it avoids any call for the Trotskyist demand of a full sliding scale of hours—the division of the work available among the whole workforce without loss of pay—which could well mean a working week of less than 35 hours.

Instead the manifesto goes on piously to call for firms which propose redundancies or closures to be "nationalised under workers' control"—but spelling out no concrete steps through which workers can act independently as a class to force such nationalisation, such as occupation of threatened plants, or the opening of the books of the employers to reveal the full extent of their plans and profiteering.

It is particularly important that a revolutionary election manifesto should stress this aspect of the demand for nationalisation if it is not to appear as simply a vague demand for parliamentary action.

## Nothing to offer

On the struggle against racist violence, the Socialist Unity Manifesto has nothing whatever to offer. In a predominantly white populated community it calls limply for support to "the right of black and Asian people to defend themselves".

Since, with or without Socialist Unity's "support", these communities are already forced to defend themselves,

this takes nobody an inch forward.

The issue to be confronted in Edge Hill is the fight to mobilise the white working class through the trade unions and other working class organisations, in joint workers' defence squads alongside workers and youth from the immigrant community.

## Class response

Only this policy offers a class response to fascist and racist attacks and genuinely fights to break down racial divisions in the labour movement.

While the Socialist Unity election campaign therefore offered little to the workers of Edge Hill, it appeared to make a small development with the Liverpool IMG, which suddenly discovered the struggle against closure at Dunlops and produced their first leaflet into the Speke plant.

But this, too, failed to hit the key questions.

Though calling correctly for occupation of the plant, the leaflet failed to make the slightest criticism of the plant convenors whose main efforts since the closure announcement have been directed towards preventing an occupation.

## Blaming workforce

As a result the leaflet winds up implicitly blaming the Dunlop workforce for the lack of action!

With the declaration of the General Election, no doubt large numbers of Socialist



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Edge Hill—pockets of 34% unemployment

Unity candidates will be distributing large quantities of equally bankrupt election material in various areas.

But without a principled fight for the full programme of demands necessary for the working class at this point of the struggle and a ruthless exposure of every section of the trade union bureaucracy, this activity, for all its good intentions, will do little to advance the struggles of the working class and nothing to educate the forces necessary to construct a revolutionary party.



Socialist Unity candidate Alan Walker



Key figure in Dunlops closure fight, Stan Pemberton, chairing TGWU Conference: Socialist Unity failed to criticise Dunlop leaders.

# PRESS GANG



The assassination of Airey Neave by Irish republicans has brought forth from the Tory press an entirely predictable wounded cry for vengeance.

Nor is it a matter of any surprise that in searching for the phrases to best express their anger and distress, the leader writers of Fleet Street have achieved most nakedly an expression of imperialism clothed in the language of the Victorian empire builders.

Indeed it is not so much what the press has said which is a matter for comment, as what has been left unsaid.

For nowhere amongst all the threats, demands for increased oppression, and vitriolic nationalism is there to be found so much as a whisper of criticism for the Labour Government.

## Given all

Despite the capitalists' decision to dispense with a government of social democracy for the time being, they acknowledge that the Labour Government has given them everything they ever wanted on the question of Ireland.

Or as the *Guardian* said on the day following the successful bomb attack:

"Any temptation to take Mr.

Neave's murder as the pretext for advocating a sudden change in what is fundamentally bipartisan policy will not need much resisting because it will not seriously arise."

## Bomb to power

Indeed the *only* paper to put the bombing in a party context was the *Daily Mirror*, which lines up behind the reactionary Labour leadership on every issue, and which pointed to the bombing as an attempt to "bomb the Tories to power".

The *Daily Mail* called for identity cards for anyone travelling into or out of Ireland.

The *Telegraph* called for capital punishment and the reintroduction of internment.

But the dominant theme was unity between the policies of the Tories and those of the Labour leadership.

The *Daily Express* said: "Policy is not affected by this murder. The tough, brave, unyielding line taken by Mr. Roy Mason will be taken by any other possible successor of either party."

"We are in Northern Ireland, that Sicily of the North-West, because it requires a firm, stern hand if it is to stay within the civilised world. We are Northern Ireland's guardians."

The *Daily Mail*: "Nor is it

Mrs. Thatcher alone who will, as a result of this atrocious act, be more than ever determined to deal firmly with what looks like the beginning of a new wave of terrorism.

"At this time, when the parties are shaping up for a hard political fight in the forthcoming General Election, they will not be divided in their revulsion and their resolve that those who are responsible for this shameful act will be brought to justice, and that their goal which is to establish in blood a sort of Marxist Cuba in John Bull's other island will be resisted."

And the *Daily Telegraph*, in a frank admission that Neave's policies were already implemented by the Labour Party, said: "The policy he espoused is working. With the passage of the legislation to increase Ulster's representation in the Commons, the IRA is further than ever from its objective of severing the constitutional links between Britain and Northern Ireland."

It is a mark of the deepness of Labour government reaction that in calling for vengeance for the death of one of their favourite sons, the Tory press feels it necessary to make no criticism of Labour ministers or Labour policy.

The entire Labour Cabinet, from Mason to Benn, stands condemned by this silence.

# SYL BUILDS FOR 'SUS' MARCH

Members of the Socialist Youth League in London, Oxford and Aylesbury have been campaigning for youth to join the anti-SUS demonstration called by the London Area Labour Party Young Socialists and PNP Youth for Saturday 7 April.

The SUS law has been increasingly used by the police and in particular the Special Patrol Group to harass black youth in London.

The demonstration, which begins in Camberwell in South London, will march to Brixton where L Division of the Metropolitan

Police has a particularly bad record on the use of SUS and where 150 members of the SPG recently carried out systematic harassment of the black community.

## Abolition

The SYL will be calling for the abolition of the SUS law—a section of the Vagrancy Act 1824—which permits police to arrest someone suspected of being about to commit an arrestable offence and which carries a possible 3-month prison sentence.

An accused person need not have committed a crime and will not be able to opt for trial by jury.

The SYL will also be calling for the disbanding of the viciously anti-working

class Special Patrol Group, and for the repeal of all other legislation that attacks the democratic rights of the working class.

This includes the Prevention of Terrorism Act, used by the Labour government to harass thousands of Irish workers, few of whom have ever been charged and fewer still convicted of any crime; the conspiracy laws, which have been used against black youth in London; and the Criminal Trespass Law which enables the police to break up occupations of factories, hospitals, schools, and nurseries etc. and arrest the occupying workers on criminal charges.

The demonstration assemblies at 1 p.m. at Camberwell Grove, London SE5 on Saturday April 7.

# IRAQ: WRP BACKS BA

The Trotskyist movement has seen many a grouping undergo a political degeneration—stepping away from the fight for principle at the sharpest point of the struggle.

All too many a current has found itself sucked on the one hand into opportunist adaptation to alien political forces, or blown on the other hand into sectarian abstention, declaiming abstract ultimatums from distant hilltops.

Trotsky repeatedly stressed that the twin diseases of opportunism and sectarianism are *not* polar opposites, but can and do exist within the same rotten body.

## Desertion

But there can be no political organisation currently describing itself as 'Trotskyist' in which they coexist so brazenly as in the British Workers Revolutionary Party, headed by Gerry Healy.

This article will examine in particular the WRP's desertion of Leninist principles in its relationship to petty bourgeois nationalist leadership in the Middle East—and particularly the Iraqi regime.

Spelled out at the Second Congress of the Comintern, these principles constitute a guide to the method through which revolutionaries must approach the fight for leadership:

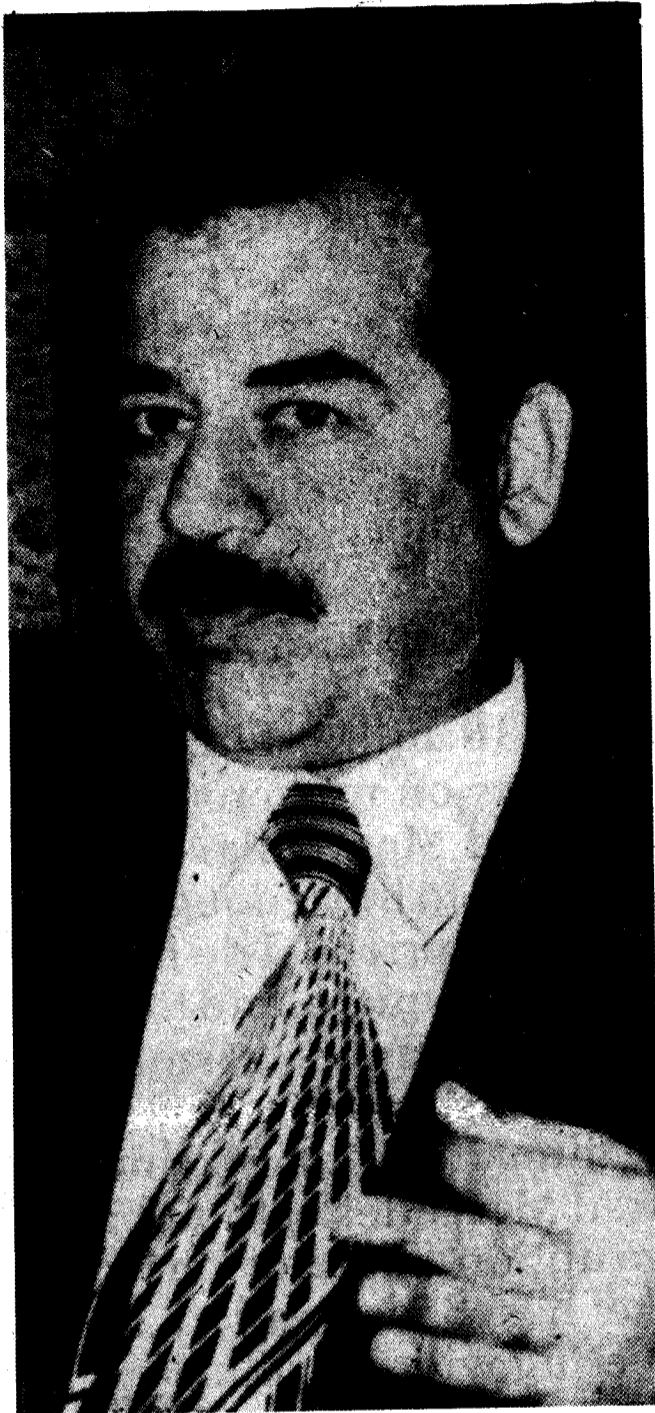
"9. In the sphere of relations within states the national policy of the Communist International cannot confine itself to the bare formal recognition of the equality of nations, expressed only in words and entailing no practical obligations, to which the bourgeois democracies confine themselves, even those that call themselves 'socialist'."

It is not sufficient for the Communist Parties to expose *unflinchingly* in their propaganda and agitation both on the parliamentary tribune and elsewhere the continually repeated offences in every capitalist state, in spite of all the 'democratic' constitutions, against the equality of nations and the guaranteed rights of national minorities.

It is also necessary first to clarify, constantly the point that *only the soviet order is capable of assuring nations true equality*, by uniting first the proletariat and then the whole mass of the toilers in the fight against the bourgeoisie, and secondly to give direct support to the revolutionary movements in dependent nations and those deprived of their rights, through the Communist parties in the countries in question.

Without the last particularly important condition the struggle against the oppression of the dependent nations and the colonies and the recognition of their right to a separate political existence remains the kind of mendacious hypocrisy that we see in the parties of the Second International."

Thus the obligation to support the oppressed



Iraqi strongman Hussein

against the oppressor nation in *practice* as well as in words is spelled out unmistakably.

And stress is laid on the necessity for independent revolutionary parties to implement such policies and spell out the necessity for "the soviet order".

In relation to the struggle in semi-feudal, economically backward states, the Comintern Theses urge special attention to a number of points, including:

"(b) An uncompromising struggle must be carried out against the reactionary and medieval influence of the clergy, the Christian missions and similar elements.



Iraqi armed forces

c) A struggle is necessary against Panislamism, the Panasiatic movement, and similar currents which try to tie the liberation struggle against European and American imperialism to the strengthening of the power of Turkish and Japanese imperialism, the nobility, the big landlords, the clergy, etc. (...)

e) A determined fight is necessary against the attempt to put a communist cloak around revolutionary liberation movements that are not really communist in the backward countries. The Communist International has the duty to support the revolutionary movement in the colonies only for the



Arafat—wheeling and dealing with bourgeois Arab rulers former Algerian leader Boumediene

purpose of gathering the components of the future proletarian parties—communist in fact and not just in name—in all the backward countries and training them to be conscious of their special tasks, the special tasks that is to say, of fighting against the bourgeois-democratic tendencies within their own nation.

The Communist International should accompany the revolutionary movement in the colonies and the backward countries for part of the way, should even make an alliance with it; may not, however, fuse with it, *but must unconditionally maintain the independent character of the proletarian movement, be it only in embryo.*"

[emphasis added]

Yet despite the fact that these quotes come from the WRP's New Park edition of the proceedings of the Comintern's Second Congress, the Healy leadership of that party departs as far from these Leninist principles as any Stalinist or centrist.

## Fawning

So naked is the hypocrisy involved in publishing orthodox positions on the one hand while fawning on petty bourgeois nationalist leaders on the other that it is hard, if not impossible to imagine that there is any political confusion involved in the WRP's position.

Rather the Healy leadership has consciously turned its back not only on the history of the Communist movement, but also on its own, much more recent history.

While new recruits to the WRP in recent years may well have believed that the road to revolution led through Yassir Arafat and Baghdad, anyone with five year's membership of the WRP and any political memory at all must realise that its current positions are the complete opposite of those argued as late as 1974.

## Grave-diggers

For instance: on October 11 1974, *Newsline's* fore-runner *Workers Press*, examining a series of diplomatic manoeuvres by PLO leaders, put forward the view that:

"Arafat and his co-thinkers are clearly casting themselves in the role of the grave-diggers of the Pales-



PLO supporters march in occupied Palestine

tinian revolution".

Yet now we see again and again in *Newsline* the same Arafat being given uncritical acclaim, and the PLO described as "the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."

So far so bad. Perhaps it could be argued in this instance that the WRP was being simply indiscriminate in its support for this important national liberation struggle and confusing this with political support for the Arafat leadership.

## Blind alley

Such lack of criticism might lead up a political blind alley but still remained on the right side of the divide between the oppressed and the oppressors.

The Workers Socialist League of course stands with the PLO in its fight against Zionism and imperialism.

Yet we stress that the petty bourgeois limitations of the Arafat leadership hold back the necessary mobilisation of the Arab workers and peasants independent of their bourgeois leaders which alone can lay the basis for permanent revolution in the Middle East.

In the case of Iraq, however, the WRP's desertion of

Leninism is far more serious. It has led to an unprincipled bloc with a viciously anti-communist regime.

## Cross class lines

By supporting the blood-stained Ba'athist rulers, the WRP actually crosses class lines to support the oppressor against the oppressed!

A recent, public expression of this was *Newsline's* editor Alex Mitchell's scandalous letter to the *Guardian* defending the Ba'athist butchers.

But one scathing attack on the Baghdad regime Mitchell did *not* answer or in any way refer to however is the following:

"A new regime, with General Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr as premier was installed and immediately began a bloody purge of the Communists. At least 8,000 Communists were massacred by the Ba'athists with whom they had previously been in common front. Al-Bakr issued a declaration that all Communist sympathisers and atheists were to be shot on the spot."

Where does this attack come from? Is it a scurrilous piece from the pages of the *Guardian* or the *Telegraph*?

No, it comes from *Workers Press* of June 12 1974!

# 'ATHIST OPPRESSORS



) and Syrian leader Assad



Barzani

on February 2 the WRP was forced to admit that:

"It is true that 21 CP members were executed early last year [!] for illegally forming cells in the armed forces.

The purpose of these cells was to fight against the government. There are no prizes for the answer to what would happen to Ba'athists who set up cells in the Soviet army. They would be ruthlessly purged."

This bizarre line of argument grew even worse:

"As for the executions in the army, we could give a roll-call of honour of dedicated Communists and revolutionaries who were massacred by Stalin."

So in the WRP's eyes it is alright for Iraq's anti-communist rulers to slaughter Stalinists because Stalin was a murderer! What has this to do with Marxism?

## 'Hue and cry'

Nothing daunted, the WRP leaders plough on with their tortuous argument. They claim that the Stalinists are raising a hue and cry over the executions only because they wish to sabotage the Pan-arab unity between Iraq and Syria and worse still:

"Last summer the Stalinists had a hand in the attempts to get the PLO and the Iraqis to exterminate each other in a series of fratricidal killings."

Exactly how this alleged plot operated, we are not told. Nor are we told its relevance to the indefensible butchering of 21 CP members by the Iraqi Ba'athists.

Rather, the WRP leaders try to hide behind yet another "conspiracy" theory.

But they go further. The Ba'athists, they claim:

"... have played a hundred fold more progressive a role in the Middle East than Stalinism. This is a straight case of Moscow trying to set up cells in the Iraqi armed forces for the purposes of undermining

the regime. It must accept the consequences.

It ill behoves the British Stalinists to ingenuously try to turn this into a case of 'human rights' or one of principle.

The principle of defending workers from the attacks of capitalist states has nothing to do with Iraq."

If Iraq is not a capitalist state, then perhaps the "theorists" in the WRP leadership would explain to us what kind of state it is, and through what process capitalism was overthrown without any form of revolutionary leadership.

Workers state?

We note that WRP leaders have yet to admit that Castro's Cuba is a deformed workers' state, clinging still to their wooden notion that it remains capitalist.

So how do they analyse Iraq?

If the WRP has discovered a workers' state newly emerged in the Middle East during the last five years shouldn't they be enthusiastically explaining to the world's working class how this occurred, what lessons can be drawn from it, and where else (Libya?) such events can be expected?

Indeed it is only a workers' state which any Marxist would concede has the right to repress its political opponents.

Carte blanche

But the WRP give the Ba'athists, with their history of murdering communists, atheists and other opponents, *carte blanche* to execute presumably not only Stalinists but anyone organising in Iraq "to fight against the government".

Of course the struggles of a Trotskyist party—a genuinely proletarian internationalist opposition to the Ba'athists—would be repressed in exactly the same way.

Presumably *Newsline* would support such repres-

sion. Certainly it attacks the Stalinists because they raised: "some questions and put demands which could not be met under the prevailing circumstances, with the object of embarrassing the Revolution".

(March 22) Setting aside what demands these were, surely it is the task of Marxists to point an independent road forward for the Iraqi masses against their reactionary nationalist leaders?

Would not Trotskyists seek to organise in the armed forces as well as the working class and peasant movement?

Not the WRP! They condemn any attack at all on the Ba'athist dictatorship:

"All this was finally crowned by violating the agreement concluded between the two parties in regard to the prohibition of political work among the armed forces and by organising cells within the army. The CP was fully aware that the penalty for organising party cells in the army carried a death sentence."

"considers itself" the instrument of the "Arab nation"? But, perhaps more pertinent still, what is supposed to happen to the historic liberation struggle of the Kurdish people—at present an oppressed minority in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and part of the Soviet Union?

Ruthless opponent

The Ba'athists' opposition to "regional tendencies" has made them a ruthless opponent of the Kurds, whom at one point the WRP used correctly to support in their struggle:

"One thing that stands out very clearly in the current struggle is the brutality of the Iraqi rulers and their callous disregard for the Kurds living in the areas outside their hands.

They show all the contempt of men who consider themselves part of a superior race in the way they wage the war and treat the Kurds under their control."

(*Workers Press* June 12 1974).

Now this correct position has also been jettisoned in

wearing red turbans raised the cry: The Shah is the enemy of our leader".

The obituary concludes: "In March 1975 the Kurdish rebellion against Iraq came to an end. They were settled in conditions of extreme poverty. Barzani fled into exile in the US".

But, blushing at this glimpse of objectivity, the WRP leaders sprang into action, and *next day* published the extraordinary disclaimer that:

"This report was inadvertently used direct from Reuter [!]. It does not reflect the views of the WRP. Today we publish an obituary of Barzani which traces the highlights of his counter-revolutionary career."

The article then churns out a sustained cover-up for the Ba'athists, pointing out that Barzani "began his political life as a dedicated Stalinist and ended it as a hireling of the CIA".

Stark contrast

In stark contrast to the previous day's detailed report, it claimed Barzani's funeral was shunned by the Kurds.

The WRP went on to declare, on the very eve of armed revolt by the Kurdish minority in Iran, that they were entirely in support of the Ayatollah Khomeini!

The *WSJ*, on the other hand continues to defend the right of the Kurdish people to genuine self-determination—up to and including secession should they choose it—in place of national oppression in Turkey, Iran and Iraq.

We call for a struggle against such elements as Barzani who, in a sense paralleling Yasser Arafat, seek to pursue the Kurdish struggle through wheeling and dealing with bourgeois heads of state.

We call for the struggle for an independent soviet Kurdistan as part of a Socialist United States of the Middle East.

Such a revolutionary transformation means the mobilisation of the Arab masses for the overthrow of reactionary regimes including that in Iraq and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers, peasants and soldiers Soviets.

We therefore publicly accuse the WRP leadership of flagrant abandonment of the founding principles of Communist movement in their slavish fawning on Gaddafi, Arafat and the Ba'athist butchers.

Never replied

The WRP leadership do not hesitate to put pen to paper to defend the Ba'athists in the capitalist press. But they have never once replied to the points we have made, based as they are on the traditional political positions of Marxism.

We challenge the WRP leadership to reply to our accusations.

And we invite WRP members and ex-members to discuss with us the historical origins of such a political degeneration.



Gaddafi

There are many repressive regimes in the world where to organise a trade union is tantamount to inviting imprisonment and death: does the WRP oppose CP members or other militants undertaking such work? Does it defend the regimes that jail and murder such militants?

No! But all the normal laws of the class struggle are apparently suspended in Iraq. The March 22 *Newsline* actually includes in its two-page eulogy of the Ba'ath Party the following:

"It [the Ba'ath Party] is the first Pan Arab party which embodied the hopes of the entire nation and considered itself the instrument of the Arab nation, disregarding the regional tendencies which still show their potency in some Arab communist parties."

What happened to the Comintern's struggle against Panislamism, and its warnings against wrapping a "communist cloak" around "revolutionary movements that are not really communist"?

What is the class character of this regime which, in bonapartist style,

the WRP's courtship of the Ba'athists.

In the process Kurdish leader Barzani and the Kurdish Pesh Merga guerrilla fighters have been variously branded in cynical *Newsline* articles as tools of the CIA, the Shah, the Zionists, and even Joseph Hansen!

Ghost

In 1974 *Workers Press* journalist John Spencer had correctly assessed the role of assistance given to the Kurds by the Shah—and separated the issue of Barzani leadership from the Kurdish struggle itself.

And at first it seemed as if the ghost of John Spencer haunted the *Newsline* offices to report on Barzani's recent death:

"Barzani who throughout his life was involved in the struggle for Kurdish independence died of lung cancer. The body was flown to Oshnrouien. It was here that Barzani led many battles for Kurdish independence. Hundreds of Kurdish women broke into cries of the Kurdish people are not dead.

... Pesh Merga guerrillas

# Strange bedfellows defend Vietnamese Stalinists

PART TWO BY JOHN PARKER

In 1963, the American Socialist Workers Party which is barred by reactionary US legislation from international affiliations) broke from its support for the International Committee and joined hands with the Pabloites of the International Secretariat, which then formed the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The USFI recognised the social transformations which had taken place in Cuba, and deduced artificially from this empirical evidence that Cuba had become an undeformed workers state under the 'unconscious Trotskyist' leadership of Fidel Castro.

Against this crude piece of formal logic, the International Committee, now headed by the British Socialist Labour League, forerunner of the WRP, argued in equally formal fashion that since Castro had clearly not led a proletarian socialist revolution, then Cuba could not be any kind of workers state at all.

## Abstract

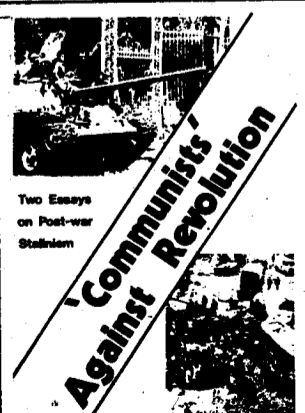
While Gerry Healy and the WRP leadership continue to defend this abstract position, the USFI has extended and deepened its own real political accommodation with the Stalinised leadership of the Cuban bureaucracy.

In this field, they raise hymns of praise of the supposed 'revolutionary internationalism' of the Havana Stalinists, as shown by their policies in Africa—where the Cuban troops have massacred and politically destroyed the proletariat in Angola—where they are even now collaborating with the Ethiopian Derg's offensive against the Eritrean revolution.

But the rigid armour of "orthodoxy" did not prevent the IC from succumbing to the very same pressures which brought Pablo to abandon the struggle of the Trotskyist movement for independent revolutionary parties to fight Stalinism.

Still under the leadership of Healy, the WRP began, particularly from 1975, a systematic adaptation towards 'left' bourgeois nationalism in the Middle East—the Palestine Liberation Organisation, Gaddafi's military dictatorship in Libya and the Ba'athist regime in Iraq.

That adaptation has now extended even to the populist religious fanaticism of the Ayatollah Khomeini.



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Khmer Rouge troops welcomed as liberators in Phnom Penh after defeat of Lon Nol puppet regime

But from 1975 onwards the WRP leadership adapted politically to the Stalinist leadership of the NLF in Vietnam. Vietnam became Healy's 'Cuba'.

The degenerating WRP has retrospectively attempted to conceal or whitewash the crimes of Vietnamese Stalinism during the long wars against imperialism.

The Healy leadership has projected an image of the Vietnamese bureaucracy as a progressive, even revolutionary force—certainly not an agent of Stalinist counter-revolution.

Moving in an ever-widening turn away from the central fight to build Trotskyist parties and a Trotskyist International with the method of the Transitional Programme, the IC has now—as we saw last week—be seen alongside such veteran Pabloites as Tariq Ali in defence of the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea.

## "Critical"

In fact, in its February statement on the new wars in south-east Asia, the IC went even further than Ali.

Although they claimed to offer only 'critical support' to the Vietnamese invasion, it was impossible to discover where the IC differed in its policy from the Hanoi Stalinists.

True they offered a token word of advice on respecting the national aspirations of the Khmer people; a friendly suggestion that the Vietnamese troops should begin a phased withdrawal—but beyond that, nothing.

The action of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Vietnam was

even equated with the decision of the revolutionary Bolshevik leadership of the Soviet republic to send the Red Army into Georgia in 1921.

Clearly Pol Pot's regime was a thorn in the side of the ruling Vietnamese Stalinists. But the IC made no attempt to explain how the deformed workers' state of Kampuchea genuinely, threatened the gains of the Vietnamese revolution.

## Unanswered

That difficult question was left unanswered by almost all the self-styled Trotskyists who defended the Hanoi Stalinists.

But the Socialist Workers Party of the USA did not hesitate in providing a comprehensive solution. They simply cut the Gordian knot.

A lengthy article in the *Militant* of February 23 (reprinted in the *Intercontinental Press* of February 26) argued that Kampuchea was not, and never had been a workers state in any shape or form!

The starting point for the SWP's argument is not a class analysis, but the surface appearance of the vicious, and totally indefensible repression organised by Pol Pot's Stalinist regime to maintain its own political power.

It was this, as Tariq Ali declared in *Socialist Challenge* which made the Kampuchean state a 'blot on the international workers' movement'—and questioned its character as a deformed workers' state.

But in every state from Cuba to North Korea where its dictatorship has been imposed, the Stalinist bureaucracy exists

on the basis of total repression of all forms of independent working class movement—as just such a 'blot'.

## Artificial

Trotskyists do not create any artificial differences in quality between rival factions within the bureaucracy though the Pol Pot regime clearly used repression to a very high degree.

In whatever guise it presents its counter-revolutionary features—whether "liberal" or openly reactionary—Stalinism must be defeated and overthrown by political revolution.

But this is not the only way in which the SWP falsely distinguishes the workers' state of Kampuchea from other deformed workers' states.

*Militant* makes no attempt to deny the massive economic and social transformations which were effected in Kampuchea after the Khmer Rouge was victorious in the war against imperialism and its local allies.

But it attempts to portray them as false coin:

"The nationalisations in Kampuchea came about not through mobilisations of the working class—even limited and controlled ones—but following the Khmer Rouge's crushing of the urban workers.

## From above

That is to say, they followed the pattern established decades before in eastern Europe and China when the first deformed workers states were created and nationalisations were carried through from above after the

working class had been demobilised.

The SWP has to mangle the history of this earlier process to fit its distorted argument, but a Trotskyist analysis of these developments is to be found in the book *Communists Against Revolution*, published last year by the WSL.

Having turned their backs on the real means of understanding the events in Kampuchea, SWP "theorists" Fred Feldman and Steve Clark prolong their rignarole to give a new 'analysis' of the Pol Pot regime.

## State capitalist

Stripped of its pretensions, this stands out in all its naked ugliness as a crude version of the



Castro

state capitalist theory.

Feldman and Clark do not produce one single shred of serious convincing evidence to support their case.

## Irrelevant

The whole argument is based on the supposedly vital, but actually irrelevant fact that the 'nationalisations in Kampuchea came about not through mobilisations of the working class'.

But *Militant* cannot show any way in which these massive nationalisations (unlike those cited in Egypt, Burma, Mozambique and Angola) were of any benefit to imperialism internationally, or to any remaining bourgeois elements within Kampuchea.

Indeed try as they undoubtedly have done to find it, they have been unable to point to any bourgeois elements at all.

Feldman and Clark also fail to point out that the economy of Kampuchea for all its chronic backwardness—a legacy of imperialist oppression—was no more subordinate to imperialism than that of many other bureaucratised workers' states.

They forget to mention that the major economic policies of the Pol Pot regime nearly all have parallel (if less extreme) predecessors in these other bureaucratised workers' states.

And the one policy that does not have a parallel—the abolition of money—was scarcely conducive to capitalist accumulation.

## Privileges

The only refuge left to the SWP is to point to the obvious privileges of the Pol Pot bureaucracy, and then assert that its 'central goal' was:

"minimising consumption, while maximising the exploitation of the work force—thus maximising the accumulation of wealth in their own hands."

Which section of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Eastern Europe or even the Soviet Union does not fit this description?

At the very best, this case is not proven.

Confronted with the complex developments of political reality, the SWP turned once again to the method of analysis adopted 30 years ago by Michel Pablo.

But faced with a contradictory situation that could only be understood through a dialectical materialist analysis, something had to give.

The SWP preferred to deny that Kampuchea had ever been a workers' state rather than admit the bankruptcy of its own political theory.

## Tables turned

Thus the last five years' events in South East Asia have turned the tables on the SWP and the IC.

Where the IC to this day brands Cuba as 'capitalist', it swung in Vietnam to uncritical defence of the Hanoi Stalinist regime.

And where the SWP readily accepted Cuba as an undeformed workers' state, it now seeks to preserve its positions on Stalinism by denying Kampuchea is a workers' state.

Such are the swings and roundabouts of impressionist analysis.

Concluded next week



IT HAS BEEN A WEEK of good news and bad news on our Garners Fines Appeal — the aim of which is to cover the massive £500 in fines incurred by WSL members in supporting the Garners Picket lines. On the one hand we received in a very welcome £48, taking the total so far to £197; but on the other, a further comrade was fined! We call on all our readers to support this appeal: send donations to Garners Fines Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

Once again workers at Chrysler (now part of Peugeot/Citroen) are faced with the threat of redundancies.

Three years ago thousands of jobs were lost when the Chrysler Corporation announced they could not keep the plants in Britain open.

The Labour government refused Chrysler's offer of their British plants for free and instead poured £62 million into the shareholders pockets.

### Sell up

Chrysler used up the hand-out and then announced they were selling out to Peugeot/Citroen.

Once again the Labour

government refused to take over the plants to protect jobs.

Michael Edwardes made it clear that if Chrysler was incorporated into British Leyland, he would close the ex-Chrysler plants.

The deal with Peugeot/Citroen went through despite

the lack of serious guarantees on jobs.

Experience since the take-over indicates that more job losses will occur—unless something is done to fight them.

The immediate threat to jobs in Chrysler has come from the cessation of production at the

factory in Iran where kits built in Britain are assembled.

Some 1,200 workers at Coventry's Stoke Power train plant have been laid off indefinitely with the threat of redundancy hanging over them.

Chrysler management have so far refused to give a clear undertaking on the future of these jobs.

Last week the negotiating committee at the Stoke plant drew up a three-point plan which consisted of no compulsory redundancies (via work-sharing), an immediate statement about the future of the 1,200 workers laid off—and improved redundancy payments for those claiming voluntary redundancy under the Employment Protection Act.

The threat of an all-out strike if no statement was made was enough to force the company to promise such a statement on April 11th.

### Further meeting

At a mass meeting held last Friday, AUEW Convenor Duncan Simpson reported that while the shop stewards committee had decided that the company promise of a statement on April 11th had led them to withdraw the strike threat, there would be another meeting in two weeks' time at which a resolution would be put to adopt an all-out strike policy should there be compulsory redundancies.

It was clear from Simpson's report that the Convenors fear further job loss regardless of the

# NEW THREAT TO CHRYSLER JOBS

future of the Iran contract.

Lay-offs on other projects were reported and indeed at Chrysler's Linwood plant the winding-down of Avenger production (to end next year—with the exception of the estate model) seems to be starting already with the reduction of the track-speed from 37 to 33.

On top of this the future of the Iran contract is not certain even if production re-starts (as has been reported as we go to press).

When Peugeot/Citroen took over Chrysler's British plants they refused to guarantee the contract, using the cryptic formulation that "the people of Iran will decide which car they want".

The French company have always wanted to get their own model into Iran. Do they still have such plans?

Workers at Chrysler need a clear programme to defend their interests. The convenors, despite strong words, have nothing to offer. Their insistence on strike action in the event of compulsory redundancies goes alongside a positive enthusiasm for selling jobs through voluntary redundancy.

One of their major negotia-

ting points is over redundancy payments for those laid off who want them.

Two other points of policy which by themselves mean nothing whatsoever are plans for a meeting with the local MPs and a Coventry-wide shop stewards' meeting "to publicise our situation".

### No redundancies

The real solution to Chrysler workers lies in *no redundancies*—whether voluntary or compulsory—work-sharing on full pay and the election of open the books committees which would look into the plans of Peugeot/Citroen.

The centrepiece of this policy must be the fight for occupation of the plants.

The existing leadership have consistently, over a long period, shown themselves incapable of putting forward such a policy.

When the negotiating committee decided to recommend strike action, they reported this to management *before* seeking the support of the shop stewards—let alone the rank and file!

A new leadership must be built in the process of the struggle to defend jobs.

# Pay victory at ICL

After four weeks of 24-hour mass picketing, striking workers at Winsford's biggest factory 'International Computers Ltd.' have voted overwhelmingly to return to work with strike leaders claiming a major victory.

The strike by 900 members of the Engineering and Electrical unions has

produced the biggest climb-down by an employer in the 15-year history of Winsford's giant industrial estate.

### Full 15%

I.C.L. bosses conceded what amounts to the full 15% increase demanded.

The employers' offer, thinly disguised as being within the 'norm' of recent pay awards, was 9% back-dated to January, plus an

immediate payment of £200 to each striker (being the total amount they would have received over 12 months had the employers paid the extra 6%).

After the deal had been accepted, a Joint Shop Stewards' Committee statement said:

"This is a victory for us, especially for those who stood outside the factory gates on the picket line and produced this new deal.

"This is the best pay increase we have ever achieved and amounts to near enough our original claim of 15%."

The strike—unofficial throughout—was led by strike leaders who clearly felt and reflected the determination and combativity of their members, who picketed under the most atrocious weather conditions possible.

This offensive spirit contrasted sharply with the snivelling "We personally support you but the union doesn't" attitude of the full-time officials.

This strike was a victory not only over the employers but also over union bureaucracy.

There is considerable merriment amongst the workers who are still speculating as to which way the government representatives voted on the board of directors in view of the 20% government share in I.C.L.

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# WSL: we offer a lead

Whichever way you look at the struggles and problems now facing the working class throughout the world, one thing stands out above all: the necessity for a principled leadership capable of leading the struggle for state power and the establishment of a socialist society.

The massive revolutionary upheaval that has now toppled the seemingly impregnable might of the Shah of Iran and which is now already coming into conflict with the restrictions placed upon it by its Islamic "leaders" serves as a vivid reminder that socialist revolution is not only possible, but essential if the apparatus of capitalist repression and exploitation is to be destroyed once and for all.

But such a revolution requires a conscious Marxist leadership. And the fight to construct such a leadership is inseparable from the fight in the day-to-day struggles of the working class internationally for the principles, method and demands of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme. The Workers Socialist League has time and again proved to be the only movement in Britain that fights patiently and relentlessly on such a perspective.

We alone are the movement that does not shrink from even head-on battles with the existing leaders of the working class — whether these 'leaders' be open right wingers, 'left' talking Labourites or Stalinists of the Communist Party.

Of course this policy has made us no friends in the trade union and Labour bureaucracy, or amongst the opportunists and centrists of the British 'left'. But it has meant that the WSL has consistently offered the most powerful lead to workers in struggle.

In each struggle we set out to prove to workers both in theory and in practice the necessity of a new, revolutionary leadership and for a programme of *transitional demands* which, starting from today's problems and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers in struggle to grasp the need for socialist revolution.

This is why the WSL has featured at the forefront of pay struggles in British Leyland and the public sector, in the fight against redundancies and closures, in struggles against the cuts, unionisation fights, and the fight for democracy in the labour movement.

This method of approach — rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy or concession to the labour bureaucracy — is of course essential not only in Britain but *internationally*.

In taking up international issues in the labour movement the WSL stresses not only the obligation of British workers to support the Irish liberation struggle and revolutionary struggles such as those in Iran and Southern Africa, but also the necessity for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of socialist revolution.

The WSL is not the biggest movement on the left in Britain; but its approach to both theory and practice make it the only really serious revolutionary movement.

**WHY NOT JOIN US?**  
Fill in the form below for more details, or approach your local branch, who will gladly supply more information about our programme, policies, and perspectives.

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Simpson

# GARNERS: NEW MOVES NEEDED

Sharp and immediate actions are now necessary to win the Garners recognition strike.

That was the message coming out of a WSL public meeting held in London last Wednesday night on the subject 'Victory to the Garners Strike!'

Manuel Blanco—a member of the Garners Strike Committee—detailed the



Garners supporter

catalogue of bureaucratic sabotage over finance, picketing and blacking by the TGWU Region 1 bureaucracy.

This was the prime factor in allowing a vicious anti-union employer to carry on for 14 months.

He explained his experiences in the strike and how, through the lead and perspective offered to him by WSL members he became convinced of the need to struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership in the working class movement.

Mark Hyde, speaking for the London WSL, outlined the basic aims of the WSL, its understanding of the importance of the Garners strike, and pointed out the connections between the dispute and the sharp political crisis of British capitalism.

### Discussion

A lively discussion followed from the floor.

Particular attention was drawn to the need for a national TGWU delegate conference to discuss the

strike—which poses enormous questions before the whole working class about union rights and the role of the union leaders.

Such an extraordinary step is vital if the strike is to be won and a repetition of a Grunwick-style betrayal averted.

If the union tops refuse to organise such an event—and there is no doubt that Ron Todd and other well-heeled fakers live in deathly fear of such initiatives following the beating they took at two previous conferences—it should be built for and called by the strikers themselves through their rank and file organisations.

Also vital is a further mass mobilisation in May in support of the strike, following the successful Day of Action on March 24, in order to keep building up the necessary support on the picket lines and a regular flow of finance.

The fact that a response is there was clearly shown this week when a £30 donation came in from TGWU members in Coleraine, Ireland, in support of the strike.

# Nurses' fight knifed

Another group of public sector workers are in danger of being sold out by the leadership of the "Low Pay Campaign".

Nurses and midwives, perhaps the most exploited group in the National Health Service, have been informed by the NUPE leadership that they have accepted a derisory pay offer which falls well below their claim for a £60/35 hour week.

They have been offered a 9% pay increase and an extra £2.50 which is to be included in the award from the comparability study in August.

As well as the offer itself being a downright insult to nurses and the vital role they play in the Health Service, there is no reduction in hours; no increase in holidays and the whole comparability study is likely to be a complete sham.

The NUPE bureaucracy have handled the nurses pay claim in the most bureaucratic and high handed way from the very start.

First they encouraged nurses to support the ancillary workers pay claim with industrial action and several sections in London at least answered this call with strike action.

Then the leadership did a complete about-turn and instructed nurses not to strike for their own pay claim without consulting a single nursing section or shop steward.

Finally the National Nurses and Midwives Council unilaterally accepted the pay offer on behalf of the membership without even going through the motions of balloting the section as happened with every other group in the pay claim.

### Strength

Potentially nurses have tremendous strength as a group of workers in the fight for a decent wage and in defence of the NHS against the cuts.

It is for this reason alone that they have been offered £1.50 more than the other groups in the claim.

The union bureaucracy and the government realise that a strike by nurses could possibly restart the whole action on pay in the public sector.

It is obvious that the only way nurses can defend their living standards and improve working conditions is by becoming members of a trade union that is completely independent of management.

But the increasing number of nurses that are joining NUPE and other unions must be fully aware of the fight they must take up against the betrayals of the leadership.

Nursing stewards and militants throughout the

country must take up the fight against this sell out by demanding a national stewards' conference which will reverse the decision of the National Council and plan a determined course of strike action for the full claim with emergency cover to be organised and maintained by elected strike committees.

DESPITE THE desperate efforts of the leadership to kill off action by ambulance drivers on pay prior to the election,

ambulance drivers throughout the country are determined to carry on fighting for the full claim and in some areas are still taking industrial action.

Resolutions must be passed demanding that the union leadership call for all out strike action in support of these ambulance drivers who are still out and link this to rebuilding strike action for the full claim throughout the whole of the public sector.

# Post Office betrayal

A massive pay sellout has been lined up in the Post Office by Jackson and his cronies on the National Executive of the UPW.

At its meeting last week, the Executive voted to recommend acceptance of management's latest pay offer on the 1979 pay claim (due to be paid from 1 January).

The main points of the UPW's claim were: 8% increase on the basic rate; full consolidation; shorter working week; longer annual leave, and an escalator clause.

The 8% has been agreed by the Post Office, but the management deal still leaves unconsolidated the 7% wage rise of 1977.

The demands for shorter hours, longer holidays and limited protection of wages against inflation have all been sunk without trace.

In their place the bureaucrats have negotiated a productivity deal that offers postal workers nothing but useless hopes of cash payouts in exchange for speed-up.

But Jackson has not stopped at this rotten sell out.



Jackson

In exchange for this puny offer management have obtained agreement for the introduction of part-time workers throughout the industry, and the union executive has given them a special bonus with the go-ahead to 'work study' schemes.

Both these attacks on working conditions directly flaunt conference policy.

A week before the executive's meeting, workers in some of the London sorting offices started to impose overtime bans and working-to-rule, with mandatory branch meetings in working hours.

Their action was in protest at the long delay over the pay negotiations.

Because of huge staff shortages throughout the Post Office—caused by low pay and bad conditions—these limited actions had a crippling effect on the postal service.

### Militancy

They soon spread to other areas, and the Executive is now trying to 'persuade' members back to work, to vote on their recommendation.

The militancy in the larger offices will mean a heavy vote against the offer in the branch ballot later this month.

But rejection of the sell out must go alongside an alternative way forward for postal workers. Branches must begin to take up immediately a serious fight to replace the existing bureaucrats and officers, by passing votes of censure on the Executive.

A special delegate conference must be called to decide on what action is necessary to win the union's full claim.

And meanwhile, the unofficial action should continue and be extended to new areas.

# CAMPAIGN WINS CONCESSION

Longworth Hospital, a 50-bed geriatric hospital in the Oxfordshire Vale of White Horse, under threat of closure since last summer has been at the centre of a campaign to stop health service cuts and to improve the desperate shortfall of health facilities for old people.

Public meetings initiated from the local COHSE branch set up a support committee to involve the local community, hospital workers and League of Friends and all trade unionists in stopping the closure.

This committee took up demands in all these bodies that the newly built Witney Hospital must open fully without sacrificing other hospitals.

It called for practical support for the Longworth workers who declared they

would continue working there to stop the hospital closing.

It was agreed that support should take the form of industrial action if the Area Health Authority moved to close it and also in exposing the shortfall of geriatric services.

Alongside this, the committee tried to begin to expose the accounts of the AHA—including profits siphoned from it by private firms.

Because of this campaign, when the AHA met in September, they were unable to take the secret decision they had intended.

They were forced instead to scrap their secret paper, and to hold a series of public meetings in all the local towns concerned to "discover the public's views".

With the support committee showing an alternative to the AHA's phoney 'options' of cuts, the public in every town refused to be divided into supporting

one hospital at the expense of another.

When the time came last week for the AHA to try to make a decision again, they were forced to openly admit the public's hostility to their 'options'.

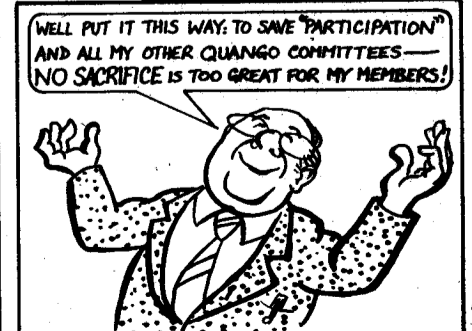
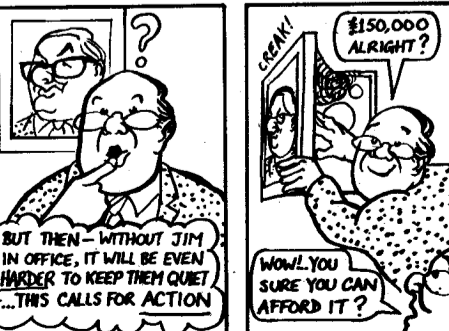
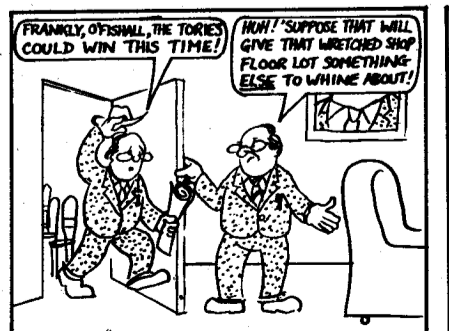
Faced with a lobby of Trade Unionists from Longworth and Oxford Hospitals they could not use their customary method of making decisions on sensitive issues behind closed doors.

Instead they held a serious debate in open session—though they never considered the health needs beyond their tight budgetary limits.

Result: they drew back from their original intention to close Longworth. Both in-patient and day-patient facilities would stay, they promised, until the Regional Authority could fund 1) the complete opening of Witney as a community hospital and 2) building of a day-care centre somewhere in the Vale of White Horse. After this, Longworth would close.

A partial reprieve then—but with a further delay in opening a needed community hospital.

The fight goes on now with new determination.



# SOCIALIST PRESS



## IRAN: minorities

### fight for rights

The vast upsurge of struggle for national rights in Iran against Khomeini and Bazargan has now joined the continued mobilisation of workers in the factories as a major threat to the attempts by the Shah's successors to impose their authority.

The continued occupation and control of factories by workers' committees is one of the chief targets of Bazargan's government which is desperately trying—often in opposition to the doctrinaire Islamic fundamentalism of Khomeini and the Khomeini committees—to re-establish the conditions for capitalist profitability in Iran.

To re-establish discipline in the working class Bazargan needs to reconstruct the bourgeois army.

Last week's resignation in despair of the army chief of staff reflects the fact that this has not yet been done.

#### Deserted

Soldiers have continued to desert in their hundreds and the units of the army which remain in existence have been sent to try to control the upsurge of anti-Khomeini and anti-Bazargan nationalism in Kurdistan and Gorgan (inhabited by the Turkoman people).

In Kurdistan the army was not enough and Bazargan sent in his overworked secret weapon the "liberal" and allegedly highly-respected Ayatollah from Tehran, Taleghani.

At an extraordinary mass meeting in the Kurdish city of Sanandaj, Taleghani addressed a huge crowd, trying to calm them after the previous week's violent fighting for self-determination.

He said he supported the right of the Kurds to decide their own future.

#### Shouted down

He was strongly applauded—but he failed to get the Kurdish crowd to applaud the name of Khomeini.

And he was himself shouted down when he said: "If I ordered the chief of staff to withdraw the army could you govern your country alone?"

The Kurds unanimously

cried "Yes, we can. We don't want the army here. It must be destroyed!"

The "respected" Ayatollah was prevented from speaking any more and the microphone was seized by a Kurdish nationalist who made a long and much applauded speech on the demand for all democratic rights including national self-determination.

While the military clashes in Kurdistan have declined since then they have broken out in Gorgan in the North on the Soviet border where hundreds of Turkomans, fighting for national rights against pro-Khomeini forces, have been killed and injured either by Khomeini's militias and Bazargan's army.

Turkoman peasants have been seizing land given by the Shah to army officers and senior civil servants.

The violent clashes, however, began in the main town of the region, Gonbad-e-Kabus, when a demonstration protesting against the murder of a youth by pro-Khomeini militia, was savagely attacked by the Army and the Islamic militias.

#### 99% claim

On Monday, before the vote was officially counted, Khomeini claimed that over 99% of Iran's people have voted for his Islamic republic in the referendum.

But the mobilisation of the masses against the new drive to reactionary Islamic dictatorship is giving proof that Khomeini's election "results" are a lie.

It will take more than fraudulent polls, or the demagoguery of Ayatollahs, to assure the victory of counter-revolution in Iran.

But equally it will take more than mass action to establish a workers' and peasants' government—that demands the building of a revolutionary, Trotskyist party capable of leading the fight for democratic rights, for the demands of the working class, and for workers power and socialism.



Ayatollah Taleghani donning a 'left' face with PLO leader Arafat

## BL CRAFTSMEN VOTE TO STRIKE

At last Saturday's delegate conference of the British Leyland Craft Committee there was a 3-1 majority vote to take a recommendation for strike action back to mass meetings in the factories.

A further meeting of the Craft Committee is due to take place this Thursday (5 April) and if there is a majority for the strike then the whole skilled workforce will be called out on Friday 8 April.

This will effectively close down most of Leyland immediately, as the committee now includes electricians and since

the 200 stewards at the conference represented all but two of BL's major plants.

What the craft committee is saying is that unless the company or the union officials meet them to discuss their demand before Friday, the strike will go ahead.

This does not fit in with the

company's plans. They wanted corporate bargaining in order to take power away from shop stewards and put it into the hands of full time officials and a few selected senior stewards.

#### Central issue

If the strike goes ahead it will become a central issue in the election. The question to pose to all Labour candidates will be where they stand on this fight in defiance of closure threats for increased wages.

## Civil Servants step up action

The one day token strike called by the Civil Service unions for April 2 brought a devastating response, with at least 400,000 on strike throughout the country.

Having gained some idea of their colossal industrial strength, members of the CPSA and SCPS in particular seem certain to maintain the pressure on their leadership that has already forced them into the front rank of present struggles on pay.

With no concessions on offer from the government over and above the 9% offer and talk of only "phasing in" the remainder of the 25% claim over the next 12 months, this major confrontation seems certain to grow in scale and intensity during and even after the election campaign.

#### Whitley Councils

CPSA and SCPS members must in particular ensure that their leaders are forced to carry through with their blustering



CPSA leader Thomas (left)

threat to withdraw from the aging and reactionary Whitley Council set-up which has shackled public sector pay claims, and to wage an all out fight to force payment of the full, justified 1979 claim.

Such a struggle will lay the basis not only for immediate defence of living standards but also for future pay battles.

## FIGHT TORY BACKLASH!

The death that history—and Irish republican forces—handed out to Airey Neave on the car ramp of the Palace of Westminster last Friday has almost certainly thrown thousands of voters into the Tory camp.

The brilliantly carried out assassination of the Tory spokesman on Northern Ireland has made it harder, not easier, to fight in the British labour movement for opposition to British military rule of the violated and occupied six counties.

Yet it is now more than ever that socialists have a clear and inescapable duty to throw themselves against the tide of reaction and defend the right of Irish freedom fighters to carry out this assassination.

Neave is no innocent victim. He represented British

oppression of Ireland in its most complete form.

He was the first defender of brutality by the British army, the loudest advocate of censorship of all republican views, and the strongest ally of Orange sectarian interests in Ireland.

It was on his advice that Mason introduced open SAS operations into Ireland and on his outcry that BBC TV put their final muzzle on republican statements.

His death was not murder. It was the legitimate execution of one of the most ruthless civilian generals in the army of British imperialism.

Neave's apologists present him as a hero of Colditz; a man who escaped from the most secure fortress of Hitler's Germany.

There is a bitter irony here. In 'H' Block at Long Kesh concentration camp in Ireland, victims of the British war machine are locked in a prisoner-of-war camp better guarded and far more cruelly run than Colditz.

Yet they are denied political status—let alone the luxury of being described as prisoners of war.

They live in filth and squalor that no fine war hero like Neave endured.

#### No rights

They have no Geneva convention to protect them, no status, no rights.

They are branded as "criminals", and denied even the most elementary trappings of an impartial trial.

Gerry Fitt's cringing statement that "Those responsible for his death might have killed a friend rather than an enemy" is a speech with which to bury the SDLP, not Neave.

Labourites have once again rushed to join the Tory backlash.

In the wake of the Birmingham pub bombings the Prevention of Terrorism Act was passed through the House of Commons by a Labour government without opposition, in one sitting.

The mood created by the Neave bombing could usher in further repressive measures.

But the fact that reaction reigns unchecked is first and foremost a product of the betrayal of Irish republicans by Labour and union leaders in Britain.

It is epitomised by the fact that Arthur Scargill, darling of the 'lefts', allows the NUM to sponsor Mason in Parliament and Mason sponsors the policies of Neave in Ireland.

However, if the Provisional IRA believe that a bombing campaign aimed at returning the Tories to power makes conditions more favourable to break the Labour bureaucracy from capitulation to imperialism they are completely and dangerously wrong.

That sharp fight can only be taken up with Labour in power.

Politically, therefore, the bombing was utterly futile. There are dozens of Tories equally as reactionary as Neave waiting to step into his shoes.

And individual acts of terror along these lines fail to confront the real tasks—the mobilisation of the Irish working class in mass action to drive out British imperialism and the struggle in Britain to build the basis for a mass movement in their support.

The IRA is quite wrong to blame the British workers for their silence and confusion on Ireland. It is inevitable that, with discussion censored and poisoned from all sides it is only the most advanced elements of the working class who can as yet penetrate the closely spun web of lies over Ireland.

It is the first task of revolutionaries to penetrate that web and destroy it.

**\*Troops out of Ireland now!**

**\*Self determination for the Irish people as a whole!**

**\*Labour movement blacking of all army supplies!**

**\*For a workers republic in Ireland with full rights for all minorities!**

## FUND APPEAL

An ambitious programme of new publications—starting with an election manifesto spelling out the programme and policies of the Workers Socialist League, and including two major books—was mapped out by the new WSL National Committee at its first meeting last Saturday.

The first of the books is to be a new edition of *The Battle for Trotskyism*—the documentary history of the origins of the Workers Socialist League in a faction struggle within the degenerating Workers Revolutionary Party.

The original edition of this book is now a collector's item circulating from hand to hand, though demand for it remains strong.

The second book is to be a new, detailed study of the struggle for the Trotskyist programme carried through in British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant over the last five years.

This will include an account of the successful struggle to defend the 'Cowley 9' against witch-hunting moves by TGWU leaders to remove them from elected positions and even expel them from

the union.

Other publications will include a new edition of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme, and a pamphlet on the Irish war of liberation.

Such a programme of publications, coupled with an extension of the national and international work of the WSL involves a considerable financial commitment.

For this reason the National Committee decided to launch an immediate Appeal Fund for £2,500, to be raised by Sunday July 29.

We ask all readers of *Socialist Press* to consider a donation—as large as possible, but however small—towards this ambitious fund.

Organise collections, fund-raising events, raffles, jumble sales. *Socialist Press* will chart the progress of the Fund week by week. Help us in this period of sharpening struggle to raise the resources to take forward the fight for Trotsky's programme and method in the international workers' movement.

Send donations to:

WSL Development Fund  
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