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DEFY THE COURTS!

In an unprecedented judgement, going far beyond even the Industrial Relations Act of the Heath government, the Court of Appeal has thrown down the gauntlet not only to the steel unions but to the whole labour movement.

Headed by notorious anti-union judge Lord Denning, the Court instructed leaders of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation to:

*Cancel their instruction to 17,000 ISTC members in private steel firms to strike from 27 January in support of their brothers and sisters employed by BSC.

*Call off their picketing of private sector steelworks, and

*Call off their attempts to prevent the movement of strike-breaking supplies of steel in and out of the country.

Should the ISTC Executive fail to comply with these ultimatums, the judgement makes it clear that the union's General Secretary Bill Sirs, plus its President and Vice President face immediate jail for contempt of court.

Pickets who refuse to adhere to the court's ruling also face possible arrest. The prospect opened up for every striker by the judgement is to be confined to picketing their own plant, while all around employers and scabs work to smash their action.

The grounds for this attack on the most fundamental democratic rights? According to Denning and his two fellow judges, the ISTC decision to call out the private sector as part of its bid to halt the movement and supply of steel and thus win its demands was not part of a



Denning

trade dispute:

"It is plainly arguable in the present case that the objective of this proposed strike in the private sector was to coerce the government to change its policy—and that is not a trade dispute at all."

There is "not a shred of a dispute in the private sector", stressed Denning, and the effects of the proposed strike on

the country:

"Would be so disastrous that it seems to me it is only right that this court should grant the injunctions requested".

Overtured

This judgement, which over- turns the House of Lords ruling only last month on the MacShane case (involving solid-

arity blacking action by the NUJ) has sweeping implications.

If accepted, it will with one swift, extra-Parliamentary move abolish the legal right to take solidarity action in support of other sections of workers in struggle.

In this, the Court of Appeal has raced far ahead of the Tory government's anti-union Employment Bill, which focusses its main attack on "secondary" picketing by those on strike. Indeed MPs were on Monday prevented from discussing the Denning judgement!

And by explicitly ruling it illegal to spread strike action with the objective of forcing the government to change its policy, the Court also clearly rules out the possibility of spreading strike action in the public services and private industry to stop spending cuts in health, education and social services.

Above all, by taking the dramatic step of spelling out the threat of jail for union officials that defy the ruling, the judgement effectively hangs that threat over the head of every trade union militant.

Let there be no doubt: if this ruling is obeyed, and the picketing called off, the steel strike is doomed to defeat by its leaders.

Scab shipments

Scab shipments of steel from private employers—busily increasing output at home—and from overseas suppliers will enable industry to ride out a prolonged strike in BSC and inflict a major blow on steel workers and the whole working class.

ISTC leaders rapidly retreating from their initial defiant speeches in the early days of the dispute, have ominously insisted that they do not wish to break the law.

They say that the Denning judgement has only been

flouted for two days while an ISTC Executive meeting is hurriedly convened to call off the private sector strike.

Yet these bureaucrats are under mounting pressure from the rank and file, not only within the ISTC itself, but across the whole labour movement.

Sunday and Monday saw solid support by the ISTC members called out in the private steel firms—including many who until the weekend were supposedly preparing to defy the strike call.

And on Monday well over 100,000 Welsh workers in coal mining, transport and other industries joined the steelworkers in a massive one-day General Strike against BSC's closure plans—a General Strike that is itself plainly illegal under the Court of Appeal ruling.

Erupt

A protracted strike along similar lines has been called from March 10 by the Welsh TUC if BSC does not retreat.

Bill Sirs was quite right to declare in Cardiff that if he were jailed for continuing the private sector strike "the trade union movement would erupt".

The ISTC leaders meet tomorrow to decide whether or not to defy the courts. They have been urged to do so by Yorkshire NUM leader Arthur Scargill and by Sheffield 'left' MP Martin Flannery.

Such a stand is vital. But the steelworkers must not be left to fight the Tory government and its anti-union courts alone.

This challenge to the labour movement demands that the TUC call a General Strike with the clear political objective of bringing down this reactionary government.

The Welsh TUC has already tabled a call for a General Strike to hold back the steel closures for two years: how much more

urgent it is now to mobilise the full strength of the working class to defend the most basic trade union rights against this government of bankers, speculators and employers, and its apparatus of courts, police and armed forces!

General strike

We call on workers throughout the trade union movement to move resolutions to the TUC demanding that a General Strike be called to defeat the Denning ruling and uphold the right to strike, pledging support for such a strike, and insisting that it demand the removal of the Tory Government.

At the same time such resolutions should call for the setting up in each area of councils of action, to draw delegates from every local labour movement body—union branches, stewards committees, tenants associations, Labour Parties and other political organisations—to lead and extend general strike action independently of the TUC leaders.

Such councils of action would need to oversee mass picketing, the distribution of necessary supplies, the provision of essential services and the defence of picket lines against attacks by scabs and state forces.

This fight to develop the steel strike into a general strike must be combined with a renewed struggle in the unions and the Labour Party for the ousting of the right-wing Callaghan-Healey leadership that paved the way for the Tories and now stands opposed to their removal by working class action.

What is needed is not a repetition of the treacherous Wilson and Callaghan governments, but a workers' government, prepared to implement socialist policies in the interests of the working class.



Welsh TUC leader Wright (left) with ISTC leader Bill Sirs at the Cardiff Rally on Monday. No sign of them fighting for general strike to defend trade union rights.



INTERNATIONAL

Iran's 'left' President faces immediate crises

Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic' has now secured its first—and probably last—elected president. But Abdhassan Beni-Sadr's substantial victory does not guarantee a new period of stability for Iran.

The political conflicts and accumulating tensions within Iran played a determining role throughout the election campaign, and have in no way been abolished by the result.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the election was the absence of any candidate from the Islamic Republican Party, which is the political wing of Khomeini's base.

The IRP had been forced to withdraw its original candidate, Jaleddin Farsi, supposedly because of his suddenly-discovered Afghan parentage.

This ludicrous pretext was put forward to conceal the massive crisis at present wracking the IRP.

Incriminating

The 'Islamic students' occupying the US embassy have passed on to Ali Tehrani (a mullah from Mashad) certain documents incriminating the principal leaders of the IRP.

The party's leader, Ayatollah Behehti, is now in disgrace, and no other candidate could be put forward to replace the thoroughgoing reactionary Farsi.

In the end, Behehti, and the bulk of the Islamic clergy called for support to Hassan Habibi, member of the Revolutionary Council and close to Khomeini from his days in exile.

Revelations from the US embassy files had already forced Moghadam, leader of the Radical Party, to go underground, and drove former prime minister Bazargan to withdraw his candidacy.

When Admiral Madani (one of the favourite runners) issued a bold challenge that anyone holding information on him should release it or stand condemned as a 'traitor to the revolution and to Islam', he met an unexpected reply on the very next day.

Assisted

The worthy Admiral—imprisoned under the Shah and more recently head of the navy and governor-general of Khuzistan, where he brutally suppressed the struggles of the Arabs for national rights—was shown to have assisted in the escape of at least one prominent supporter of the Shah!

But the most decisive move against any of the presidential candidates came from Khomeini himself.

In a statement carefully calculated to give the impression of a casual, throw-away remark, the Ayatollah announced that candidates who had not endorsed the referendum vote in favour of the constitution of the 'Islamic Republic' could not be considered eligible to stand.

The intention of this was to



Khomeini

bar Masoud Rajavi, leader of the Mujaheddin. Along with the Feddayin, the Mujaheddin represent the organised left-wing amongst the forces which ousted the Shah and brought Khomeini to power.

More closely identified with the Islamic clergy than the Feddayin, they have followed more cautiously the same strategy of fighting for a socialist perspective within the existing structures of power, and have never supported the reactionary constitution of Khomeini's state.

Their organised and armed strength is a significant factor, and to date their caution has both spared them most of the attacks directed against the Feddayin, and left them in a position to bargain with Khomeini.

Agreement

The occupation of the US embassy was probably carried out by their forces, after tacit agreement had been wrung from Khomeini.

As a presidential candidate, Rajavi would certainly have attracted votes from the most militant anti-imperialists amongst the oppressed classes, and revealed the growth of support for socialism amongst Iranian workers and youth. It was precisely to avoid that dangerous exposure that Khomeini moved.

This blatantly bureaucratic manoeuvre provoked an immediate response in Kurdistan.

Sheik Hussein (leader of the Kurdish Sunni Moslems) and Ghassemlov (secretary-general of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran) had previously supported the Mujaheddin's candidate, and now promptly called for a boycott of the election in Kurdistan—a boycott that was extremely successful.

In the face of such solidarity, Khomeini must have wondered what ground he could hope to gain from his 'concession' of the previous week to the Sunni sect.

The vast majority of Moslems across the globe are Sunnis, but in Iran they form a minority of less than 7% to the nationally dominant Shiite sect, and are mostly confined to the peoples of the oppressed nations within the borders of the Iranian state.

In giving the green light for Sunni Islam to be recognised as the official religion in areas where Sunnis are in a majority (while Shiite Islam remains the state religion), Khomeini was hoping to divert the struggle for national rights, in which religious conflict plays a real but distinctly secondary part.

The concession has little chance of paying dividends but exposes once again the weakness of the regime against opposition.

But the struggles of the national minorities form only one of the major problems with which Beni-Sadr will now have to grapple as an executive president with ill-defined powers.

His own record gives a fair guide as to how he will attempt to move, but little indication of his ability to succeed in his chosen direction.

Trusted aide

Like Habibi, Beni-Sadr was a trusted aide of Khomeini's in exile before the triumphant return to Tehran. He emerged into greater prominence after the final collapse of Bazargan's government.

His recent slip from full grace with Khomeini came when he announced a readiness to discuss the occupation of the US embassy at the United Nations without first consulting

the Ayatollah.

Beni-Sadr was immediately sacked as Foreign Minister, but stayed on in his other crucial post as Finance Minister.

His politics are supposed to represent a blend of Marxism and Islam. In practice they are more understandable as a left, 'socialist' variety of bourgeois nationalism, in which Islam forms an insignificant element.

It was Beni-Sadr who was largely responsible for the nationalisation of the banks and the insurance companies and he has declared his firm intention to establish a state monopoly of foreign trade.

In recent statements he has called for a diversification of the economy to reduce the massive dependence on oil revenues, and has placed particular emphasis on agricultural production.

Successful land-reforms under the Shah failed to bring about the essential leap in food production, while they inevitably caused massive social dislocation in the rural areas.

Peasants dispossessed of land, together with unemployed and seasonally employed agricultural labourers drifted to the cities to swell the pool of unemployed workers.

As the mass movement against the Shah developed, this exodus from the country also grew and the (unemployed) population of the cities has increased significantly over the last two years.

Burden

The inevitable result has been a fall in agricultural production and a hugely increased burden on the already inadequate social resources of the cities (housing, water, sanitation, health care, etc.).

These festering conditions have already led to demonstrations by unemployed workers (mostly youth) demanding action from the government.

To preserve any stability, Beni-Sadr must deal with this potential source of mass opposition. At present his solution seems to be a call for a return to the land.

But Beni-Sadr's emphasis on agriculture is also dictated by another fear. His over-riding aim is to create an Iran politically and economically independent of both 'super-powers' (i.e. the imperialist US, and the bureaucratically degenerated workers' state of the Soviet Union).

Within this perspective, Iran's oil supplies may represent its source of economic strength internationally, but dependence on oil revenues also makes the Iranian economy highly vulnerable to external developments.

For that reason, Beni-Sadr sees it as essential to develop Iranian agriculture towards the stage where Iran is self-sufficient in food production.



Admiral Madani

The Islamic Republic's new president has no desire to be driven of necessity into closer economic cooperation with the USSR by an economic boycott imposed by the imperialist powers.

In his election campaign, Beni-Sadr made a point of supplementing attacks on US imperialism with the charge that Soviet leaders were intent on provoking the opposition of the national minorities in order to reduce the Iranian state to rubble and so open the way for the Red Army to reach the Indian Ocean.

This clear signal did not pass unnoticed in Washington. The US imperialists have sought to exploit the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to build a firm barrier between the Iranian leaders and the neighbouring USSR.

The Carter administration has delayed the imposition of sanctions to await the outcome of the presidential elections and assess Beni-Sadr's intentions and authority.

Honeyed

In the meantime, honeyed phrases have dripped from their lips about 'a new and mutually beneficial relationship' between Iran and the US. Behind this sweetness lies the growing hope that Iran can be pulled back firmly into the imperialist orbit without the high-risk operation of direct military intervention.

For his part, Beni-Sadr has always regarded the occupation of the US embassy as an unwelcome mess to be cleaned up as soon as possible.

But he is not master of his own destiny, let alone of the future of Iran.

His power is circumscribed by the same driving forces which wrecked Bazargan's impotent government and are now pressing Khomeini with impious haste towards his final blessed resting-place.

'Left Front' defeats Gandhi

Despite a personal intervention in the election campaign by Mrs Gandhi, in support of her Congress-Indira Party, the 'Left Front' in Kerala state won a decisive victory, taking 95 out of 140 seats, against only 17 to Gandhi.

According to Communist Party General Secretary Rajeshwar Rao 'This victory proves that the so-called Indira wave does not work where the left is strong and united and allied with democratic forces.'

But the alliance with 'democratic forces' made by the two Stalinist parties the CP(I) and the CP(M) was in reality an alliance with bourgeois parties, including the Moslem League.

These are the same type of 'democratic forces' that led Communist Parties to throw aside even the pretence of a socialist programme in forming Popular Fronts that led to catastrophic defeats for the working class in Spain in the 1930s and Chile in 1973.

While the two CPs, locked in their alliance with bourgeois parties, offer Indian workers no political alternative, the rampant opportunism of Indian bourgeois politicians has been demonstrated once again by the pell-mell rush to support the victorious Mrs Gandhi.

In Haryana state the Chief Minister, along with 37 members of the legislative assembly, have broken from the defeated Janata coalition and gone over wholesale to Gandhi—giving her a majority in the state!



Gandhi

ICELAND STALEMATE

ICELANDIC Stalinist Svavar Gestsson has failed to form a coalition including his People's Alliance party. The unenviable task of trying to knock together a workable government now falls on Benedikt Grondal, the present caretaker prime minister in the Social Democrat cabinet.

Soames bid to gag Mugabe

With all the arrogance of a military conqueror, Tory governor Soames is imposing an imperialist solution on the struggles of Zimbabwe.

His latest efforts have been directed to ensuring that on the one hand Mugabe participates in the elections (essential if they are to have any credibility) but on the other that he participates under the worst possible conditions (essential to prevent his party winning an outright majority in parliament next month).

Campaign materials from Mugabe's ZANU wing of the Patriotic Front have been seized on Soames' orders because 'they

incite violence and racial hostility'.

At the same time, tactics to delay Mugabe's return to Zimbabwe were developed in order to force him to accept further political compromises or withdraw from the elections.

For all his fervent denials, Mugabe has clearly complied with the imperialists' demands for the release of political opponents detained in Mozambique at a time when thousands of black militants are still being held by the Soames-Smith-Muzorewa administration under the extended martial laws.

But this is only one short step further along Mugabe's road of political compromise

with imperialism.

With Muzorewa frantically claiming that an electoral victory for Mugabe would bring a 'Marxist dictatorship' to Zimbabwe, ZANU (PF) has published its manifesto—a document that essentially has little more in common with socialism and revolutionary Marxism than 'left' manifestos of the British Labour Party.

As one leading white capitalist remarked to his fellow exploiters, 'Even if the Patriotic Front—ZANU (PF)—wins the elections, as many people fear, it will not be the end of the world'.

But for the hundreds of thousands of blacks who gathered on Sunday outside



Muzorewa

Salisbury to hear Mugabe fiercely defend his political actions, his return to Zimbabwe was the arrival of the leader who they believe will serve their interests and meet their demands for an end to oppression and exploitation.

The essential task of socialists in Zimbabwe remains the battle to break this mass of militant workers and peasants from their illusions in Mugabe's socialist credentials by an uncompromising fight for the programme of revolutionary Marxism against both the proven traitors of the oppressed classes of Zimbabwe and those left forces still wrongly trusted by the militants of the Patriotic Front.



Beni-Sadr

INTERNATIONAL



Cartoonist Trog sums up Thatcher's dual standards in an Observer cartoon

The 'Olympic ideal'

By Tony Richardson

The growing talk of a possible imperialist boycott of the Moscow Olympics raises the whole issue of the "Olympic ideal" and the whole attitude of the capitalist class and the Stalinist bureaucracies to sport.

The Workers Socialist League stands opposed to the boycott of the Olympics, as called for by Carter and Thatcher (noticeably leaving their final decision until February, in order to make it impossible for the USSR and East European countries to withdraw from the money-spinning Winter Olympics, to be held at Lake Placid, USA).

But our opposition to a boycott does not mean we are pressing for athletes to go to the Olympics.

We do not endorse either of the two positions held, on the one hand, by the capitalist press and, on the other, by the British Stalinist daily *Morning Star*.

No politics

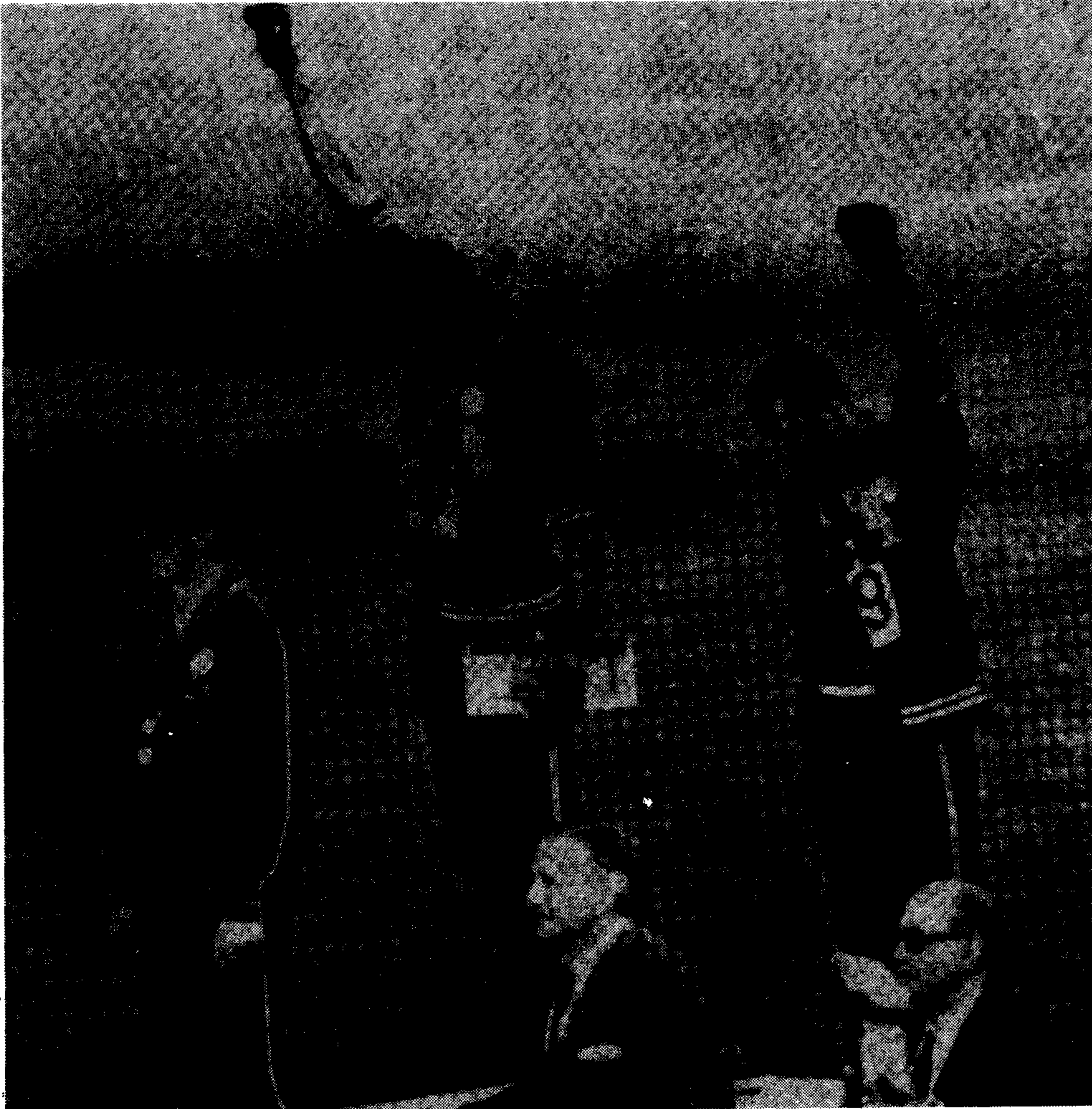
While the Tory press thunders the Carter/Thatcher cold war line, the *Morning Star* pleads for "politics to be kept out of sport", publishing statements from sporting figures in Britain and the USA declaring their wish to take part.

What, then, is the "Olympic ideal"? De Coubertin, founder of the modern games, described it this way:

"The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win, but to take part. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well."

This vague, idealist sentiment is interpreted by the *Morning Star* into the Stalinist language of "peaceful coexistence":

"At stake is the most important of the Olympic principles—the promotion of understanding, harmony, peace and friendship among the youth of the world, irrespective of sex, race, creed or colour."



Defiant gesture by Tommie Smith and John Carlos in 1968

Such a statement sums up the Stalinist view that exploiters and exploited can simply coexist, so long as they come to "understand" each other.

From this standpoint the fight against racialism and

sexism is simply a matter of "understanding". But of course at the same time the Soviet and Eastern European bureaucrats lose no opportunity to exploit the rivalry of the Games to reinforce patriotic sentiment and national pride.

So, far from it being simply a question of having "taken part" in the Games it becomes increasingly vital to *win*: so vital that huge resources and rigorous training programmes are devoted to it, and individual athletes resort to drugs as a means to defeat their competitors.

Equal pressures are brought to bear on athletes from the capitalist countries, where the lust for profit, combined with national chauvinism, drives on the "Olympic spirit".

Stabilised

But of course for all the Stalinist longing for a stabilised "peaceful coexistence" with capitalism, the class struggle continues internationally. Political questions have therefore constantly intruded into the make-believe "non-political" world of sport.

Again and again the Games have been exploited by the host government to boost its national prestige.

The clearest example of this

was, of course, the much-quoted 1936 Berlin Olympics, where Hitler used the Games not only to demonstrate his respectability, but also in an attempt to assert the supremacy of the "master-race".

Impact

This suffered a blow when black American Jesse Owens won four gold medals: but the overall impact of the Games was a success for Hitler, and even today Nazi groups show Leni Riefenstahl's films.

More recently, the Olympics have seen repeated intrusions of the real world into the "ideal".

The 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico were preceded by student demonstrations in Mexico City in the huge expense of the Games in the midst of grinding poverty. Hundreds of students were gunned down in the streets.

Not one country boycotted the Mexico Olympics. The savage Mexican capitalist regime was clearly acceptable to all.

The Mexico Games took place in the midst of a mass movement among US blacks and the growing anti-Vietnam war movement.

When Tommie Smith, US 400 metre hurdle gold medal winner, rose to the winner's rostrum and the American anthem started to play, he and

his black team mate John Carlos bowed their heads and raised their clenched fists in a "black power" salute.

Smith was vilified in the capitalist press for bringing politics into the Olympics—and never allowed to run for the USA again. But his symbolic gesture against US imperialism was the most powerful political statement at any Olympic Games.

In 1972 the Munich Olympics saw the massacre of Israeli athletes and of their PLO kidnappers in a conflict that highlighted the role of US imperialism in driving the Palestinians from their homelands and establishing the Zionist settler state.

Boycott

1976 saw a boycott by many black African countries, demanding the exclusion of New Zealand after a New Zealand rugby tour of South Africa.

And the 1980 Olympics were already threatened with a renewed African boycott in protest at the British Lions rugby tour of South Africa.

The Russians had declared they would not exclude the British team. And Thatcher, while asking the Lions not to tour South Africa, had refused to stop them, in order to "keep politics out of sport".

So how do we see boycotts of sporting events?

We are not generally in favour of the tactic. We do not see the actions of sportspeople as a decisive weapon in the fight against oppression, which must centre on the actions of the international working class.

But of course there are times when the actions of a regime, or the place or timing of a major event give the possibility of developing or assisting workers' struggles, of propagandising in opposition to a dictatorship, or place on sports people an obligation to dissociate themselves from particular acts of savagery.

One example of this would have been if a movement had developed for a boycott of the Mexico Olympics.

Another, even clearer example, was the occasion of the Scottish football team's visit to Chile where they were invited to play in the Santiago stadium which had been used by the Pinochet regime as a concentration camp.

A correct campaign was developed, particularly in the trade unions, aimed at stopping the visit.

But two questions arise in such a boycott campaign:

*It must not give the illusion that a boycott can defeat the regime: it is clearly only a propaganda tactic;

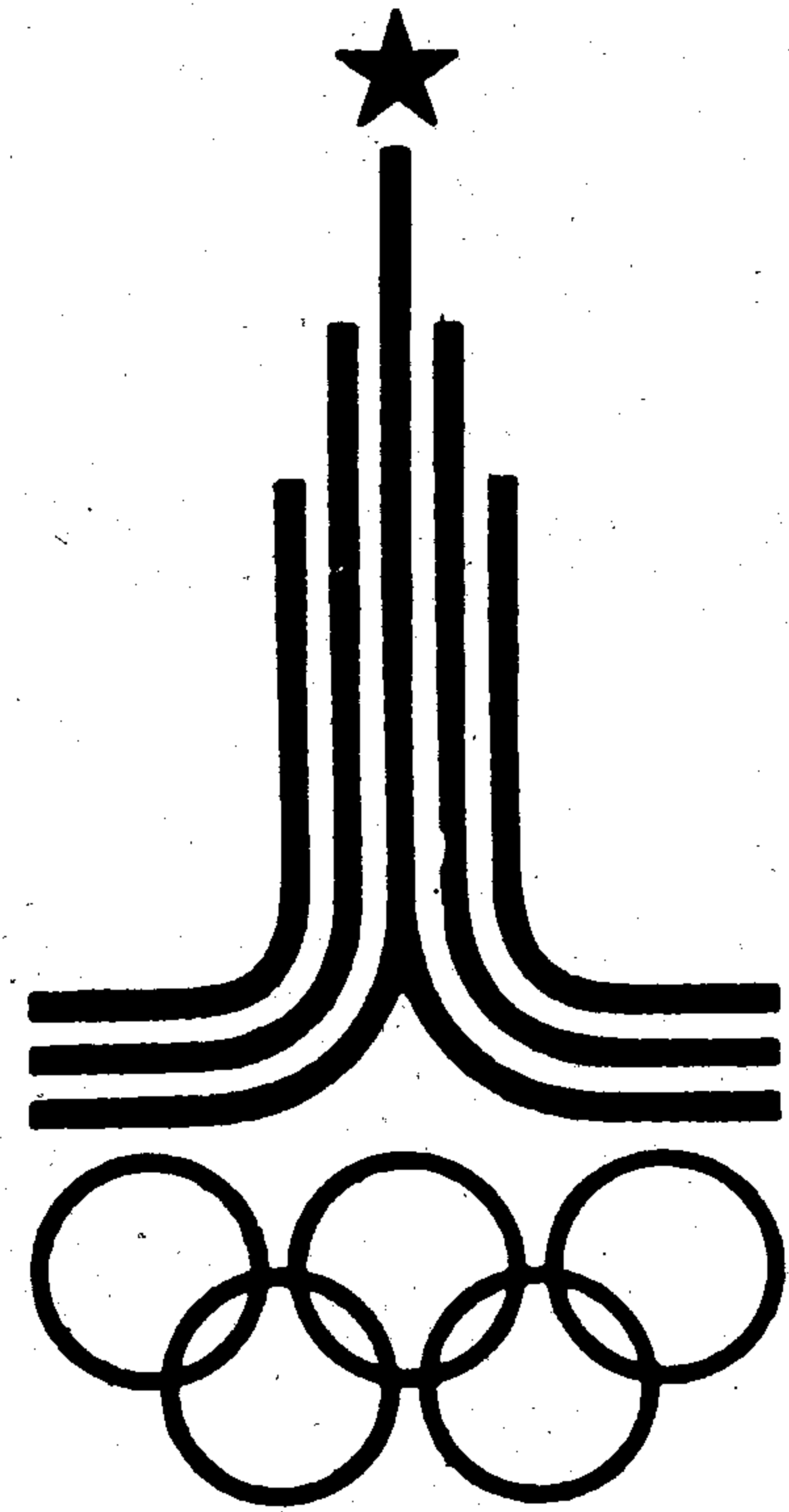
*It must not be a boycott that can be exploited by reactionaries for their own ends.

Workers states

It is therefore very unlikely that the boycott tactic can be used in relation to the deformed and degenerated workers states.

Indeed a tentative campaign for the boycott of the Moscow Olympics at the end of last year centred on the treatment of dissidents by the Kremlin bureaucracy.

We were opposed to this



campaign, which could obviously be utilised by all kinds of anti-communist elements.

Sure enough, this campaign, initiated by Ginsberg, Pyiusch and others, has now dovetailed into the proposed boycott over the Afghan invasion.

But in opposing the boycott call, we are not urging athletes to go to Moscow at all costs. We oppose the political concept and exploitation of the Olympic Games, which, like all sport and recreation are used by capitalism as money-making events.

Despite the "amateur" facade of the Olympics many of the competitors are driven into the struggle not for any abstract love of sport, but through material financial and career pressures.

Italian high jumper Sara Simeoni, for instance, now no longer has to work. Successful Olympic athletes are generally home and dry financially.

While opposing the boycott, we do not endorse the Olympic Games.

In conclusion it is worth adding a word on the concept of competitive sports, which some socialists regard as morally wrong.

The urge to run faster, jump higher or dive better is, they say, a capitalist concept and an elevation of the individual.

I disagree with this. Why are the Olympics so popular? It is not simply nationalism. Rather it is because we can see in the Olympics the supreme development of men and women's physical capabilities (sometimes of course artificially stimulated by drugs).

Just as a socialist society will take forward and develop the level of bourgeois art and culture, so a socialist society will build on the athletic and physical achievements established in sporting events.

The Olympics show what is physically possible for the fittest people in a world where two-thirds of the people are undernourished.

When stadiums, pools, other facilities and liberated leisure time are available to the peoples of the world, as well as enough food, then sporting achievements will be raised, along with the general physical level of mankind.

Such a development will never occur under imperialist oppression bolstered up by the Stalinist policy of "peaceful coexistence": only the world socialist revolution and the overthrow of capitalism can create conditions for the advance of man's cultural and physical well-being.



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Joseph blames immigrants for capitalist slump

Sir Keith Joseph, supposedly one of the "brains" of the Thatcher cabinet, last week came out with the astonishing theory that immigrants are to blame for the decline in British industry.

By settling and providing a potential labour force in what Joseph called the "dynamic areas"—the Midlands and the South East—Joseph believes that they prevented employers there from attempting to move their new investment into other regions.

This bizarre new version of the old racist line that "the immigrants are taking our jobs" was immediately refuted by the Commission for Racial Equality, which pointed out that immigrant workers tended to settle in already-declining inner city areas.

It is a well-known fact that textile and clothing industries in the North would long ago have collapsed if they had not been able to draw in low-wage immigrant labour and thus keep rates of pay down.

Whole sections of industry dependent upon manual labour have relied upon the super exploitation of immigrant workers—who total no more than 6% of the total labour force.

And Sir Keith's supposed "dynamic" areas—the South East and West Midlands—have undergone bigger percentage increases in unemployment—in which, of course immigrant workers and youth are foremost victims.

It would be wrong however to dismiss Joseph's ludicrous argument as no more than a brainstorm from a Minister widely regarded as somewhat unstable.

Behind his statement is, on the one hand the frantic campaign by Tory and other bourgeois ideologists to cover over the most obvious expressions of the anarchy of the capitalist system.

Unemployment in the regions is rising as a result of the wholesale rationalisation of a bankrupt and crisis-ridden British capitalism, which now in place of the promise of increasing wealth and social progress offers workers only the destruction of existing productive forces, social services and basic rights.

But on the other hand, as the Tories spearhead the drive by British employers to carry through these attacks in order to raise profits, they need to seek any means at their disposal to divide and weaken the working class.

Joseph's move to blame immigrant workers for the long-

term chronic crisis of British industry, together with the Tory moves to introduce reactionary new racist legislation, are a conscious attempt to whip up racial divisions in the workers' movement.

Common fight

But as mass struggles develop the conditions for such racist propaganda are made less favourable, as workers—black and white alike—find themselves side by side in the common battle against the employers and the Tory government.

The fight against racialism is thus connected at each point with the fight for a new, revolutionary leadership in the working class, capable of mobilising its full strength in the struggle to bring down the Thatcher-Joseph gang and establish a workers' government.



Joseph

**Defence:
money
no
object**

New round of Tory attacks on NHS

The Tory objection to the expense of providing "a pill for every ill" does not extend to the huge expense of providing a bomb for every Communist. This is one area of public spending they are determined to increase.

While social services in Britain are pruned to the point of collapse, Defence Secretary Pym chose last week to announce an extravagant £5,000 million plan to modernise the British nuclear armoury with a new submarine-borne Trident missile system.

And £1,000 million has already been spent on an improved new warhead for the existing Polaris missiles. This warhead, developed under the last Labour government, is believed to contain a package of bombs, together with decoys, designed to fox radar systems.

Opposed

Only 50 Labourites opposed Callaghan's eager support for the modernisation of these weapons, which are intended solely for use against the world's working class and the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

Cuts in the NHS are to be increased dramatically this year. Social Services secretary, Patrick Jenkin, launched the first barrage in support of major cuts in the health service with a major speech in Parliament on those 'abusing' the NHS.

He said that the NHS could not afford "a pill for every ill" and that the full charge of drugs should be charged to those who were deemed to have made unnecessary demands.

Folksy

This folksy approach was a cover for the fact that the health cuts already seen are mild compared to the next round.

During the current year the NHS has been hit, not just by the overt limits on spending, but by the totally fictitious inflation allowance built into the budgets.

By edict, inflation in the NHS was just eight per cent last year. In fact, according to the government's own NHS inflation index, prices of drugs and equipment rose by 22% over an eleven month period.

Next year on top of a growth in spending of a half of one percent (which is a big cut



Jenkin

compared to the numbers of people needing the NHS) the government is likely to set the inflation rate arbitrarily at around 13%.

Since all cosmetic cuts have now been made, 1980/81 is likely to be the biggest year for hospital closures and the turning away of patients since the NHS was introduced.

Doctors cannot be looked to for any form of defence. The BMA followed Jenkin's speech with an immediate call for the introduction of charges for drugs and a variety of other services.

Dentists

They want to see the GP system become more like the dentists' system, where in many places it is virtually impossible to get any treatment on the NHS and where it can be found it is restricted to the most basic treatment only.

In fact while the NHS is in 'crisis' the ability of the drug companies to make massive profits from the NHS has remained undiminished.

In almost all health budgets the biggest overspendings are to be found in hospital drug bills and a large proportion of that is due to the notorious expense of brand name drugs, which in many cases are indistinguishable from the basic chemicals available.

Yet in almost every case the

response of the AHAs and RHAs is to seek to balance their books through cutting back on staff and closing hospitals and other services.

In the face of these attacks the claim by Stan Orme, shadow minister, that the next Labour government would abolish all charges in the NHS is hypocrisy.

Even Jenkin was able to point out that it was Labour which actually introduced the charge of prescriptions.

Orme replied that this was 'unfortunate' and that Labour would return to "first principles"—whatever they are.

The immediate agitational demands that must be raised in the NHS are for all budgets to be restored to pre-cut positions and then protected fully against real inflation; the abolition of the appointed management bodies and their replacement by elected committee of NHS workers and consumers; and for

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Orme

full staffing with increased wages fully protected against inflation.

All hospital closures must be met with occupations linked with supporting strike action from the local labour movement in the event of Tory attacks.

PRESS GANG



On the front of the *Daily Mail* the bourgeoisie's nightmare of Workers Socialist League policies are presented in an unintelligible stream of trivia.

"Self confessed Trotskyist, union agitator and anarchist" says the introductory paragraph. "Heslin and his colleagues stand for anarchy and revolution of the far left" the article repeats mysteriously.

Trotskyism and anarchy? Revolution of the far left? Clearly what Disraeli said about flattery ("Lay it on with a trowel") the *Daily Mail* believes about calumny.

Incoherent

It is not enough to do a witch-hunt. It is also essential to present the politics of Trotskyism as incoherently as possible. The WSL's 'policies' are chucked down presumably in the order that they strike dread into *Daily Mail* readers.

"They want nationalisation

of the banks and industry without compensation. They want nationalisation of land, the seizure of private homes and personal assets, the abolition of Parliament, the monarchy and the House of Lords.

"The WSL wants the Church disestablished, atheism encouraged, the Armed Forces abolished and the arrest of all those in prominent positions.

"Capital punishment would be brought back for political crimes, newspapers opposed to Marxism would be closed down and TV would be censored."

Well it certainly looks like curtains for the *Daily Mail* at any rate!

All this is a good deal pithier than the lengthy articles published by *Socialist Press* explaining WSL policies; and it certainly packs a great deal into a short "manifesto".

It is to page 20 and 21 readers have to turn to find that, the *Daily Mail* actually stands opposed to witch-hunts.

In a double page spread by Lynda Lee-Potter on Yolande

McShane (who was jailed for two years in 1977 for aiding and abetting her mother in a suicide attempt) the *Mail* makes the point that police film, taken secretly, was handed over to TV for a documentary on the case.

The interview was timed to coincide with McShane's book on the case and she convinced Lee-Potter of her innocence.

But the point that really comes across is that the *Mail* is opposed to "trial by television". Much better stick to trial by newspaper.

FIND OUT WHAT THE WSL REALLY STANDS FOR!
WSL Manifesto
Price 15p including postage, from WSL
31 Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR



Polaris submarine in Portsmouth

NEW REBUFF FOR THE WITCH-HUNTERS

The Labour Party National Executive dashed the hopes of the witch-hunters inside and outside the Labour Party last week by refusing to act against Trotskyists.

By 14-12 the NEC rejected publication of the witch-hunting Underhill report on the Militant tendency and by 15-8 rejected the expulsion of Ted Heslin, a former member of the executive of the Oxford City Labour Party, and a supporter of the policies of this paper.

The votes were a bitter blow to all crypto-Tories within the Labour Party and to the open Tories and the press. It has upset the 'gentleman's agreement' by which the Labour Party limits its opposition to the capitalists.

In particular they have come as a bitter blow to Underhill and his cronies and to right wingers within the Oxford City Labour Party who have devoted years of effort to fighting Trotskyism by every bureaucratic means at their disposal.

Wafer thin

Heslin was expelled by the wafer thin majority of 37 votes to 35 by the Oxford City GC for distributing 'propaganda' of the WSL.

The attack was led by John Power (who once spent a few misguided years in the Socialist Labour League) and the Rev. Tony Williamson.

It is completely tied in with repeated attacks on WSL members and supporters inside the TGWU, the many attempted victimisations of Alan Thornett and militants in Cowley, and the bureaucratic, anti-Trotskyist alliance of Power and the Stalinists on Oxford Trades Council.

The move against Heslin came after he had moved a resolution from his union branch calling for a political challenge to the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

A defence campaign was established with the support of several wards. It was also committed to fight the ban on membership of two other Socialist Press supporters, Peter McIntyre (NUJ) and Ken Williamson (ASTMS).

The defence campaign mounted a lobby of the NEC meeting. Some supporters of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV) also lobbied the meeting.

The leaflet supporting Heslin's rights to be in the Labour Party ended:

"The lefts during the course of the last government confined themselves to verbal protests and launched no challenge to Callaghan and Healey.

WITCH-HUNTERS

Daily Mail

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A VW GOLF

Jim loses again as Labour's executive votes in favour of a militant

VICTORY FOR RED TED

LABOUR'S National Executive Committee refused yesterday to endorse the expulsion from the party of a self-confessed Trotskyist, union agitator and anarchist.



Carter gets Pentagon call-up plan

A PLAN for the possible reintroduction of military conscription in an President Carter's desk. White House officials said last night...



Last week's lobby of the NEC

Why did 'lefts' stand firm?

Tensions inside the Labour Party were sharply increased last week by the decision of the National Executive Committee not to allow a witch-hunt against Trotskyists.

The meeting took place under a barrage of calls from Tories inside and outside the party for an investigation into the Militant Tendency, who though they have done little to earn the title, have been identified as Trotskyists.

Indeed in previous anti-Trotskyist witch-hunts particularly the expulsions from the YS in 1964, leading supporters of Militant have proved themselves ready to line up with the right wing in speaking and voting for expulsion.

Coincidence

In fact, by a coincidence of timing, the NEC was faced not only with a decision on whether to publish the Underhill report, but a clear indication of where such a decision would point.

On the agenda was the expulsion of Ted Heslin, a former executive member of the Oxford City Labour Party and a supporter of the policies of this paper.

The meeting was seen therefore by the right wing in the Labour Party as a litmus test of the pliability of the lefts.

But they had miscalculated. The political crisis which grips the Labour Party at this moment grips the lefts most acutely.

Faced with a major upheaval of struggle against the Tories, in which there are few reformist solutions which carry any credibility, they have to appear to wage a fight on behalf of the militants who support them.

Hence the recent parade of 'left' MPs—mainly from steel-producing areas—making strident anti-Tory speeches at steelworkers' demonstrations and mass meetings.

Parliament

But as reformists, committed above all to parliamentary politics, the 'lefts' always link their demagogic calls for 'united action' against the Tories not to

the perspective of General Strike action to bring down the government, but to a mass protest campaign, aimed essentially at persuading the Tories to change their minds.

Oppose action

This is why none of the 'lefts' have fought for a repudiation of Callaghan's early statement that the Labour Party would oppose industrial action designed to defeat or bring down the Tory government, preferring to wait five years until the next General Election.

There has been no call by Benn or the other 'lefts' for the removal of the discredited Callaghan-Healey right wing leadership.

But though the 'lefts' shrink from a serious political battle against the right wing, they cannot afford, in a period where militants are looking to them for a lead, to be seen to line up with the right wing in a witch-hunt of socialists.

Indeed it is precisely in such conditions that the 'lefts' most need to project a 'radical' image—and the Militant group is the ideal means of sustaining such an image.

Like all good left covers they combine fiery socialist rhetoric with a complete absence of teeth and obedient cheering in the right places.

They seek, not to test out and expose fake lefts, but to

build them up and apologise for them.

To have opened up the way for a witch-hunt against the Militant would have been to threaten the 'lefts' own cheerleaders in the constituency parties.

To have allowed the expulsion of Ted Heslin would have been to weaken defence of the Militant. That is the reason for the decision by 15-8 to reject the proposal of the Organisation Committee that Heslin be expelled.

The closer vote (14-12) against publication of the Underhill report was a reflection of the fact that the right had concentrated its major efforts on this issue, and also the fact that so much of the report has now leaked to the press—already, with the remainder certain to be published soon.

Even in rejecting the call for Heslin's expulsion the lefts stressed that they do not base themselves on defence of Trotskyism as a legitimate political force, but on a liberal policy of rejecting attacks on all sections of the party—left and right.

Argument

Neil Kinnock said in a TV interview after the meeting that Trotskyists had to be defeated 'by political argument'.

The right wing, recognising that in a serious political argument the Trotskyists can win the best elements in the Labour Party, cherish no such illusions, and simply demand repression.

The vote is of major significance. Supporters of Socialist Press now have an opportunity and a duty to demonstrate the dead end of reformist politics to those in the Labour Party who genuinely think that it can lead to socialism.

Our supporters are not 'infiltrating' the Labour Party; they are carrying out an honest struggle, against those who politically deceive the working class and for a revolutionary socialist perspective.

In the coming months it will not be just the right wing that regrets last week's NEC decision, but also those posers of the 'left' that have no real intention of leading a struggle against the right wing and for socialism.

What they said to the lobbyers

The lobby brought predictable clashes with the more arrogant members of the NEC.

Callaghan was ushered through with his bodyguard while Foot charged at the lobby and was almost knocked over by photographers.

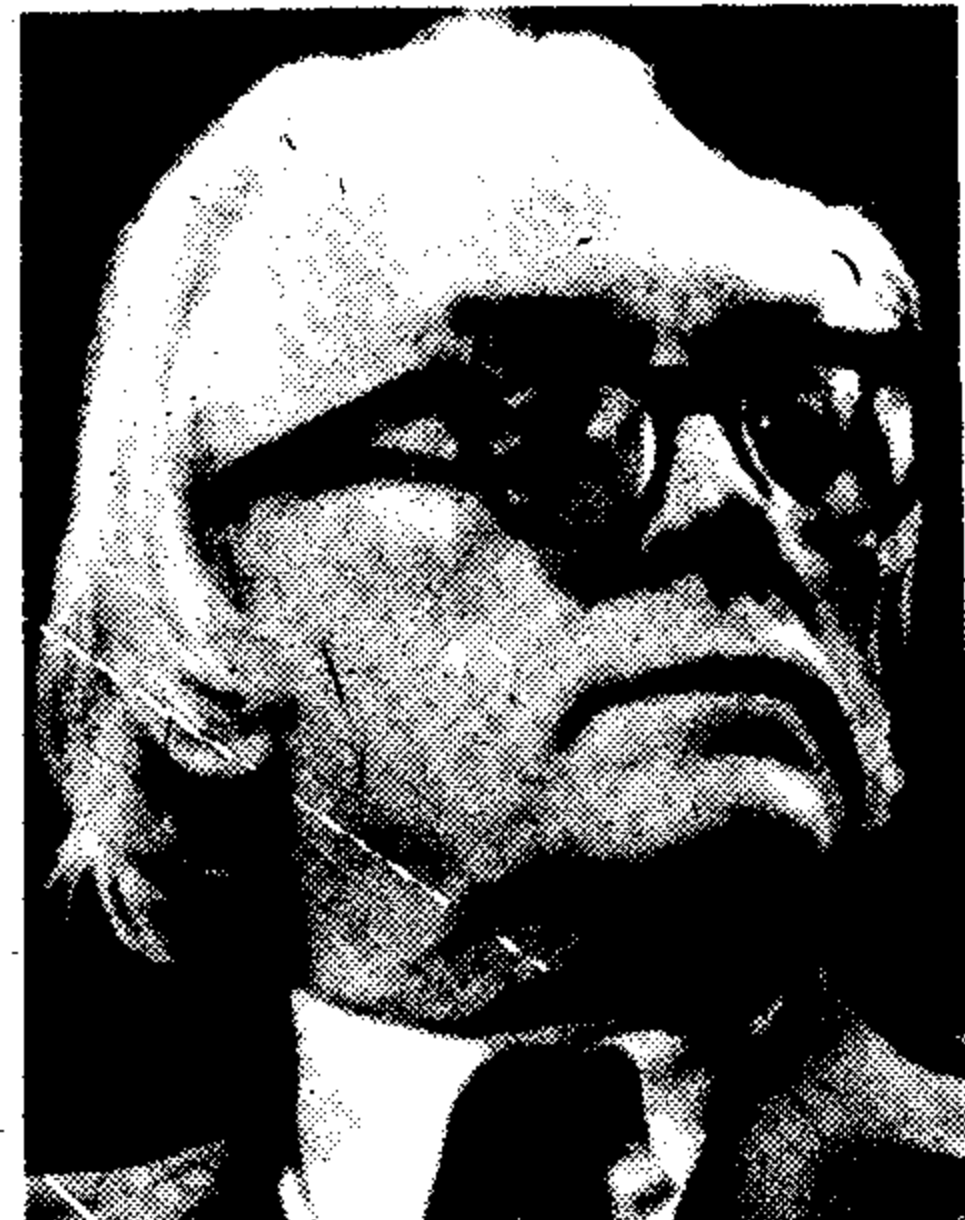
Atkinson, on being asked if he was a member of the NEC, told Heslin that if he didn't recognise him he shouldn't be there.

Abuse

The sharpest clash came with Kitson who hurled abuse at the lobby, refusing to say which way he would vote (he had voted in favour of expulsion on the organisation committee):

"You're not telling me which way to vote" he snarled, "Take it up through the union".

Joan Maynard said she would vote against the expulsion and Emyln Williams also pledged himself against the witch-hunt.



Benn contented himself with telling Heslin he had read his letter, and passed through. One party worker was indignant at the thought that she could be mistaken for an NEC



member. "I told you, you shouldn't have worn that hat", said her colleague as they climbed the stairs.



Kinnock

SOUTH AFRICAN WORKERS HELD BACK BY BETRAYAL

By Rex Hughes

In the coming period, the underlying combativity of an undefeated South African black working class, facing daily attacks on its already pitiful living standards, stands set to burst through the post-Soweto lull.

The stage is being set for the further development of struggle, in which the unresolved political stalemate following Soweto will be opened up and fought out.

The perspective of a re-emerging movement of mass struggle in South Africa opens up new possibilities for, and deepens the urgency of, the building of a revolutionary leadership in the proletariat.

Spontaneous

Soweto was essentially a spontaneous mass movement in which workers in struggle forged a fighting unity and level of political independence which decisively outflanked the reformist straight-jacket of their petty bourgeois nationalist and Stalinist leaders.

But the working class was unable to spontaneously build the political organisations and perspective through which to defend and extend those political gains.

Neither was black consciousness able to offer workers such a way forward.

It was under these circumstances that the leadership of the Soweto movement was appropriated by the clique of black professionals and capitalists known as the 'Soweto 10'.

The erosion of the working class independence and unity that had been built in struggle was exploited by the state to launch a repressive assault on the black consciousness organisations. But this was in no way carried through to a defeat of the working class.

Stalemate

In this situation of political stalemate, with the working class lacking the leadership and programme to move forward towards victory, and the state unable to secure a defeat, reformists were given optimum scope.

Zig-zagging between their capitalist masters and their proletarian supporters, they were able to promote petty bourgeois interests while consolidating their position in the working class.

Combining vicious state repression with a strictly controlled programme of limited reforms aimed at coopting sections of the black petty bourgeoisie and a layer of skilled black workers, the ruling class has sought to exploit the crisis of leadership facing workers.

Fearing above all else the unleashing of the combativ-



ity of an undefeated working class, the state has been forced to temper the full use of its repressive might against specific struggles.

Increasingly, the liberals and their black petty bourgeois underlings have come to the fore as key agents in state efforts to render the working class vulnerable to a decisive blow.

Significance

As the working class now stands poised to move into open struggle once more, specific, apparently localised struggles may assume a crucial national significance.

The process of re-emergence of mass struggle is marked by the fact that struggles may rapidly generalise and escalate from an initial focus, drawing broader layers of workers into action around an extending range of demands and issues.

The struggle at present unfolding in the Port Elizabeth area illustrates this process.

The uneven and combined nature of capitalist development in South Africa has produced the apartheid capitalist state—characterised by developed capitalist relations of production, together with the denial of even minimal bourgeois democratic rights to the mass of the working class, the black workers.

Wide range

Subject to the attacks of a particularly repressive capitalist state in crisis, black workers may come out in struggle on a wide range of immediate issues. Essentially, however,

such spontaneous struggles are the struggles of workers in an industrialised capitalist economy.

Beneath the immediate issue which provokes an eruption, there are always demands relating to the day-to-day material needs of workers—jobs, housing, wages, prices, control over decisions affecting their daily lives.

In the Port Elizabeth area, as in all areas of the country, workers have been made the target of government resettlement plans—arising from the Bantustan policy of rationalising black

labour dormitories "outside" "white South Africa".

Facing removal from Walmer—a black ghetto just outside Port Elizabeth, to an area over 50 km away, workers have turned to a black consciousness community organisation, PEBCO, as a vehicle for struggle.

Demolition

The immediate issue has been the threatened demolition of Walmer—underlying grievances have been around unemployment, low wages and high prices, focussing

Thozamile Botha (right foreground) with Ford workers during mass meet-

very often on transport costs.

Seeking to steer the developing mood of opposition, but fearful of provoking a mass response, the state was unable to simply launch a repressive attack on PEBCO.

Its leader, Thozamile Botha was, however, given an ultimatum by his employers—Ford Motors—to stop his political agitation. When he refused, he was dismissed.

News of his dismissal was followed by immediate strike action by about 700 workers, demanding his reinstatement.

Given the real threat of repression and the massive dangers facing any black striker in South Africa, such a show of solidarity was clearly indicative of a major build-up of combativity.

This was to grow and develop politically as more and more grievances and demands came to the fore. Such developments were set to bring workers up against the political failures of their own union and PEBCO leaderships.

Strike committee

With the extension of demands and the building of a strike committee, the Ford strike promised to serve as a focal point, around which broader layers of workers would move into open struggle.

At the same time, the strikers were able to draw strength from the militant mass mood of workers in the area.

Throughout the strike, independent workers' control of the negotiating committee was a crucial

issue—it was through the breaking of that control that the strength of the strike was undermined.

Very early in the struggle workers had come into conflict with their union leadership on this issue.

About half of the striking workers are members of the United Auto Workers Union, an unregistered black trade union, affiliated to the new Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU).

Far from members

Ford have given negotiating recognition to that union, and immediately turned to it when the initial strike broke out.

Fred Sauls, the central FOSATU leader, involved revealed how far it is from the combative mood of the workers:

"We knew nothing about the strike until it happened. But at least half of the strikers were union members and we obviously had to help achieve a settlement."

After the intervention of the union, the workers were all reinstated, four days after coming out.

The union, however, continued to show no recognition of, or way forward in the struggle around underlying grievances which were beginning to surface.

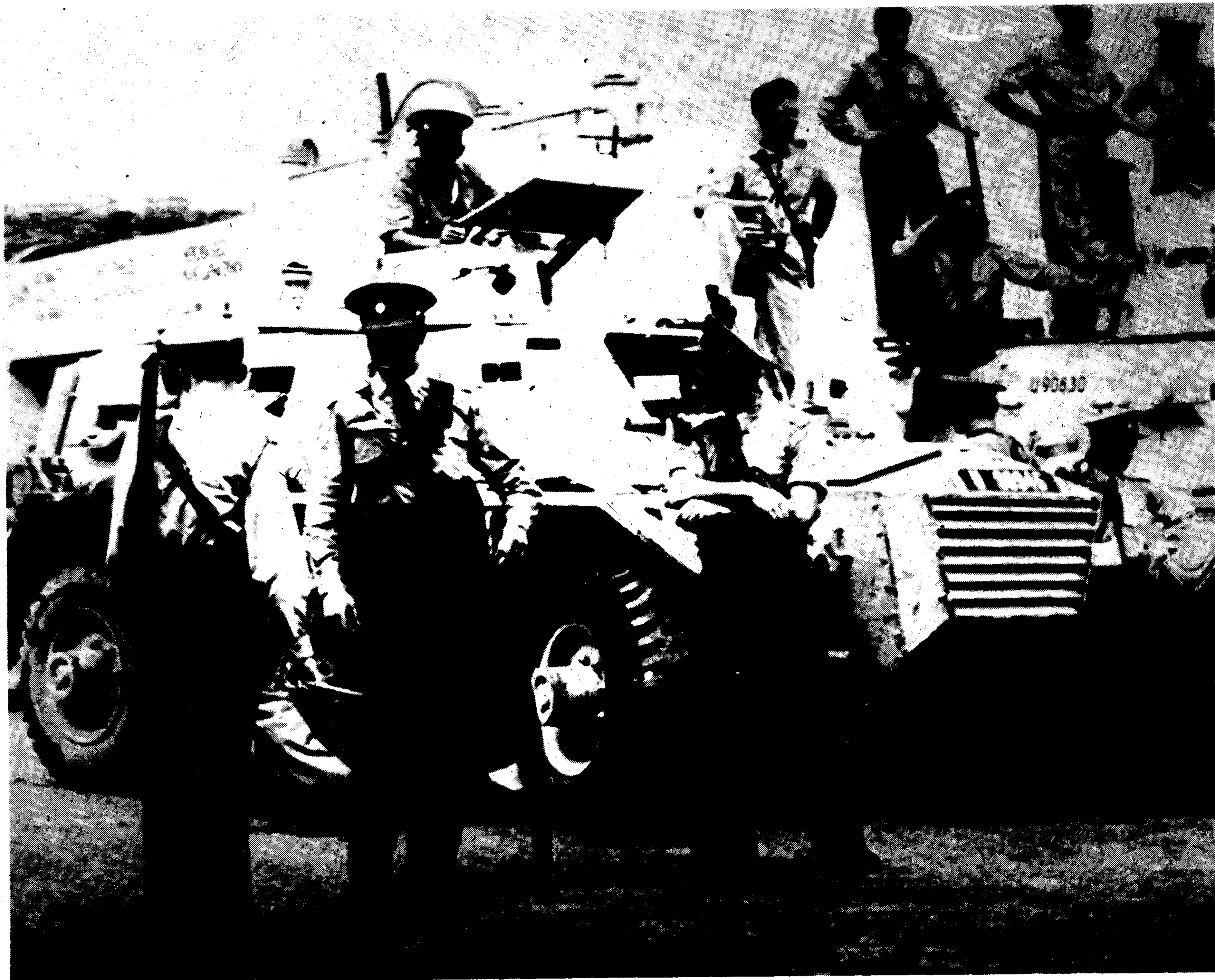
"By negotiating," said Sauls, "Ford shows that it is an enlightened company which handles labour issues with a great deal of goodwill".

Unlike their union leaders, Ford workers were clearly not satisfied with such enlightenment and



Botha

ERS LS



South African state forces

growing Walmer opposition movement, combining militant rhetoric with opportunist criticisms of union reformism, black consciousness ideologues inside PEBCO won from the strikers a trust which they had been refusing to place in the union leadership.

This was further cemented by the general move towards PEBCO through the area, as it came to take up the day-to-day issues affecting workers—in the workplace and community.

The strike committee affiliated to PEBCO. Increasingly, the control by the strikers over negotiations came to be eroded.

Undermine

The PEBCO leadership began to do what neither political repression nor union reformism had achieved—undermine the level of political and organisational independence forged by the striking workers.

PEBCO appropriated control over negotiations, drawing in reformist reinforcements from the South African Council of Churches, the Soweto 10, and even the US consul.

A process which threatened the strength of the strike had been set in motion.

Meanwhile however the real basis of that strength—the determination and combativity of strikers and workers in the area—was reflected in growing levels of militancy and mobilisation.

A meeting of 3,000 workers held by PEBCO unanimously resolved to call a one-day general strike in Port Elizabeth—to protest against the removals and in support of the Ford workers. Plans were also approved for a week-long consumer boycott of all “white businesses”.

Working class support for a consumer boycott was clearly the expression of an

overwhelming solidarity and resolve to fight—at the same time, it posed a potential diversionary danger to the levels of working class mobilisation developing.

Abstention

As the example of the recent Monis and Fathis dispute in South Africa indicates, a consumer boycott can easily be reduced to *abstention* by the working class, orchestrated by the petty bourgeoisie.

The boycott of M&F, launched in solidarity with victimised workers demanding reinstatement was eagerly adopted by black workers seeking to aid the strikers.

But it was equally eagerly appropriated by black businessmen who used it to foster their credentials as allies of black workers, and at the same time, promote the illusion that workers' interests could be served by black capitalists.

The boycott became little more than the refusal of some black businessmen to deal with M&F.

Although the experience of workers at the hands of the apartheid capitalist state breeds a racial identity and solidarity, the race of the capitalist makes no difference to the fact of exploitation.

In the event, the M&F strike was partially won—conditional upon workers not fighting for wage claims for a year.

Faced with the escalation of struggle and the threatening political developments generated by a broader and broader mobilisation, the state stepped up its efforts to isolate, contain and defuse the situation.

Pattern

In so doing, in a pattern which will be repeated in struggles throughout South Africa in the coming period, it turned to increased repression only after reformist leaders had eroded

the level of political independence and organisation forged by workers.

Ford, no doubt in consultation with other employers and the government, backed down and agreed to reinstate all strikers with no loss of benefits.

The inroads which PEBCO and its reformist cohorts had made on control of the strike now became crucial.

Despite the fact that reinstatement left unchanged the employment conditions which had generated basic grievances in the first place, workers were urged by PEBCO negotiators to accept re-instatement.

A matter of a few hours after PEBCO leader Botha had convinced Ford workers to return, he was arrested by Security Police.

Demanded release

As news of the arrest spread, hundreds of workers congregated, reaffirmed the strike call for the following Monday and demanded his immediate release.

For the first time, police moved in force, using teargas to disperse meetings.

Pushed forward by a growing tide of militancy to which it could give no political perspective and leadership which met the workers' interests, the PEBCO executive used this developing situation of struggle to signal a total retreat.

Having first been instrumental in ending a strike which had served as a focal point, they now acted to contain the general mobilisation which had been developing with it.

Even as workers were meeting to endorse the planned one day general strike, and to demand the release of Botha, the PEBCO Executive issued a statement which called on Ford workers to abide by the settlement and end their strike; called off the

planned consumer boycott; and called off the general protest strike.

There can be no doubt that this apparent about-turn by PEBCO at the first signs of developing confrontation will have sown a level of political confusion amongst workers in the area.

Indications are that the calls made in the executive statement have been heeded.

At the same time, however, there can be no doubt that mobilisation is set to grow.

For in Port Elizabeth as in all parts of the country, underlying grievances are growing. Strike action, at present relatively isolated and usually for limited periods, is bound to develop.

Thousands of workers have been involved in action against bus price increases in Natal—in a mobilisation which has been contained, for the meanwhile, only by the increasing intervention of Buthelezi's Inkatha.

In Soweto, proposed rent increases have not been implemented. Bus price increases, planned for Soweto and the Witwatersand in the near future are likely to compound growing combativity and oppos-

ition.

The stage is being set in South Africa for a crucial phase of struggle in which the political stalemate underlying the post-Soweto lull will be opened up and conflict fought out. As they move into that phase, workers stand threatened, not merely by the repressive state apparatus, but above all, by the political bankruptcy of their own leaders.

Turning to black consciousness groups, trade unions, Inkatha, community organisations, the traditional nationalist organisations as vehicles of struggle, workers will time and again come up against reformist misleadership and betrayals—as the militant populist of today emerges as the reformist collaborator of tomorrow.

It is revolutionary Marxists alone who, intervening in day-to-day struggles which are bound to emerge, turn workers to the only forces which can pursue their independent class interests, their independent strength, organisations, programme and party—a Trotskyist party in South Africa, as a section of the reconstructed Fourth International.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME IN TODAY'S CLASS STRUGGLE
Founding document of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee
Published in the International Discussion Bulletin No. 1.
Available, price 75p including postage from WSL, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR



How liberated are Russian women?

Rosemary Hardwick reviews "Women in Russia", edited by Dorothy Atkinson, Alexander Dalin, and Gail Warshofsky and published by Harvester Press at £12.50.

Women in Russia is not intended as a book for the average reader: it is, rather, an academic work, heavy with sociology and statistics, and its price alone (£12.50) is enough to put most workers off.

However, for those who do penetrate it, it contains a mass of very interesting information and a fairly thorough picture (given the inadequate data available) of the lives of Soviet women.

It also includes background essays on women in pre-revolutionary Russia and on the debates on 'the woman question' within Marxism and Stalinism.

The main theme is an examination of the Soviet claim that women in the USSR are completely liberated.

It is, of course, no surprise to Trotskyists to find that this claim is a myth. In fact it is almost surprising that equal opportunities in jobs and education have gone so far.

Economists

It is interesting to find out, for instance, that in 1970, 82% of economists and planners, 45% of journalists and 40% of scientists were women.

Women make up two-thirds of doctors and teachers and there are also, apparently, more women engineers, in the USSR than in all other countries combined!

The essays concentrate almost exclusively on the situation in the RSFSR—i.e. in Russia, as opposed to the other



Men and women workers leaving Russian factory.

Soviet states.

Another valuable area of study would be the position of women among the minority nationalities, especially in the East, where Islamic culture remains strong.

It would be interesting to know how far the legal independence of women and the abolition of bride-price are enforced in these areas.

The contributors correctly emphasise that the main

obstacle to the emancipation of women in Russia is their double burden of work: career and home.

However, their explanations for this phenomenon are hampered by their liberal feminist perspective.

Instead of rooting their analysis in the development of Stalinism, and the authoritarian need for the family, they see it in terms of the triumph of

innate conservatism and sexism, and a general 'lack of commitment' to women's liberation among the (male) political leaders.

The Soviet regime encourages everyone to work because of the shortage of the labour required in the drive for rapid industrial growth—85% of women work outside the home.

At the same time, it encourages reproduction in a more long-term attempt to ease this problem.

A rational way of encouraging reproduction would be to provide communal dining, childcare and other hitherto 'domestic' facilities, together with a generous system of maternity leave, etc.

This would allow women to have children and go out to work without undue hardship. However, the bureaucracy do not act according to the needs of mothers.

The growth of Stalinism from the late 1920s onwards necessitated a social policy aimed at stabilisation and the imposition of authority.

The family unit was ideal for this task, as Trotsky points out in *Revolution Betrayed*:

"The most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is undoubtedly the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the disciplining of youth by means of 40,000,000 points of support for authority and power".

Since the provision of communal facilities to supercede the tasks of the family threatens this stability and authority, the Stalinist regime is unable to consider this as a policy option.

Instead, they encourage a high birth-rate by obstructing the use of contraception (although abortion is widely available, and is the standard form of birth control), by glorifying 'motherhood' in their ideology, and by increasing of "wages for housework" to pay women to stay at home.

So the Soviet bureaucracy is caught in a contradiction: on the one hand they need women working, but on the other hand, their policies to boost the population have the effect of driving women out of the labour force.

This contradiction is resolved by the long-suffering Russian married woman, who ends up doing both: pursuing a

career, and raising a family.

The Russian husband rarely sees childcare and housework as his responsibility: a constant theme of the book is the prevalent sexism.

Arguments that motherhood is the "natural" role for women often go unchallenged in the USSR. In this collection, Mollie Rosenhan's study of "Images of Male and Female in Children's Readers" brings this out particularly clearly.

Alfred Meyer's "Marxism and the Women's Movement" contains some points of more general interest about the role the struggle for women's liberation plays in Marxist theory:

Beatrice Farnsworth's "Bolshevik Alternatives and the Soviet Family" argues that the 1926 Marriage Law, generally regarded as a radical attack on the institution of the bourgeois family, was in fact the opposite: an attempt to stabilise, rather than undermine the family.

This essay throws considerable light on the debate within the Bolshevik Party about sexuality and family life—a debate which revealed quite deep-rooted differences between radicals like Kollontai, at one extreme and conservatives like Riazanov at the other.

The dominance of radical ideas within the Bolshevik Party was short-lived; experiments in family law and communal living were one of the earliest victims of bureaucratisation.

Anyone interested in the Soviet Union, Stalinism or, more generally, women's liberation, would do well to get hold of this book (I suggest you borrow it).

The quality of the essays is uneven: some are swamped by sociological data and statistics, but on the whole it should be of interest to Trotskyists fighting for the emancipation of women and for political revolution in the USSR.

Trotsky: architect of the Red

Army

By Phil French

For the first time the complete military writings and speeches of Leon Trotsky during the period of the Russian civil war (1918-22) will be available in English.

The present volume is the first of five, and covers the year 1918 when the young Soviet Republic was in greatest danger.

Trotsky, as People's Commissar for War from March 1918 was responsible for building up the Red Army from a few detachments of Red Guards, numbering only a few thousand, to a million strong by the end of 1918.

The articles, speeches, letters, orders and telegrams collected here reveal Trotsky not only as one of the greatest military strategists of all time, but also as a brilliant Marxist able to assess with great sensitivity the relations between and changing moods of all classes and between layers within each class in the white heat of civil war.

Arsenal

Trotsky could not have built up a Red Army without the theoretical arsenal of Marxism, and these writings themselves are a powerful addition to that arsenal.

These writings were first published in Russia in 1923, and Trotsky intended them to be translated into all languages to be used by proletarian revolutionaries all over the world in the struggle for communism.

Review of "The Military Writings and Speeches of Leon Trotsky", Vol. 1, "How the Revolution Armed", published by New Park Publications, price £10.

But with the rise to power of the Stalinist bureaucracy, these and all other writings and speeches of Trotsky were suppressed. They have not been available in Russia for over 50 years.

Now we can see how the Red Army was really built.

No wonder the Stalinists are unable to write a history of the Red Army.

Nationalist

In these writings and speeches there is no trace of the reactionary nationalist theories of "socialism in one country" and "peaceful coexistence with imperialism".

It is true that one of the first decrees of the Bolshevik government after seizing power in 1917 was the decree on peace, calling on all governments and peoples to cease the imperialist slaughter and negotiate a democratic peace without annexations and indemnities.

But at the same time workers in all belligerent countries were urged to struggle to overthrow their own ruling classes.

The imperialists of both warring camps had no intention of "peacefully coexisting" with the Soviet power in Russia.

They organised massive armed intervention with their own forces, as well as organising support for counter-revolutionary White Guard armies which seized power and set up reactionary capitalist administrations in various parts of Russia.



Red Guard detachment from the Putilov works

The first foreign invasion came from the Germans.

The Bolsheviks were eventually forced to accept harsh terms for a peace treaty, including the loss of the grain producing areas of the Ukraine and the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Trotsky himself was reluctant to accept the peace terms until persuaded by Lenin that there was no other way to preserve Soviet power.

The majority of the Bolshevik Party was inclined to the Left Communist policy of "revolutionary war" against the Germans—a hopeless perspective at the time because the old Tsarist Russian army had disintegrated and the Red Army was not yet built.

After the peace treaty with the Germans was signed at Brest Litovsk, the Bolshevik government had to deal not only with White Guard armies which had seized power in the South and East but also with direct imperialist invasion from the Allied Powers (Britain and France) in the North and South as well as the Japanese in the East.

The most dangerous situation was caused by the revolt of the Czechoslovak legions against the Soviet power in May 1918.

These former prisoners of war from the Austrian army were interned in Siberia under Tsarist rule, and were released by the Bolsheviks on the under-

standing that they would be sent to France.

The revolt was undoubtedly sparked off by propaganda and false information supplied by Allied Imperialism and local White Guard forces.

The Czechoslovak revolt coincided with an offensive organised by White Guard forces in Siberia, and organised uprisings by Social Revolutionaries elsewhere in Russia.

This was followed by British and French intervention in Murmansk and Archangelsk in the North.

At the same time the armies of the Don Cossacks advanced to overthrow Soviet power in the South and White Guard troops backed by Turkish forces advanced in Central Asia.

Indeed by August 1918 the Soviet power in Russia hung by a thread.

The territory of the Soviet Republic was completely encircled by hostile armies.

All the vital grain producing areas of Russia were held by anti-Soviet forces and the spectre of famine stalked the land.

In July the Left Socialist Revolutionaries who had been in alliance with the Bolsheviks staged a revolt and assassinated the German ambassador Count Mirbach in order to provoke war with Germany.

Uritsky, a prominent Bolshevik leader in Petrograd was murdered and Lenin was shot and wounded by Socialist Revolutionaries.

Rallied

But in the hour of greatest danger, the workers and poor peasants rallied to the Soviet government.

A decisive change occurred in the Red Army, and for the first time they took the offensive and began to drive back the White Guard forces.

The recapture of the city of Kazan in September gave a tremendous boost to the Red Army—and the Soviet government.

The section in this book on the fight for Kazan is one which will educate and inspire all those who fight for the revolutionary overthrow of imperialism.

The fight was, directed by Trotsky himself from his armoured train at the front.

This train was to travel to all parts of the front during the civil war and Trotsky was able to rally and inspire the Red Army wherever he went.

Continued next week

MATCHGIRLS STRIKE TOUCHED OFF EXPLOSION OF STRUGGLE

It is a great disappointment that the National Museum of Labour History gives such inadequate treatment to such an important event as the Matchgirls' strike.

Their earlier pamphlet on the Dublin General Strike led this reviewer to expect somewhat better from an institution which ought to inspire to authoritative status in the labour movement.

There is no shortage of scholarship in Beer's pamphlet. His 46 pages include six of references, predominantly to local contemporary material which would otherwise be little known. (Curiously however it omits any mention of Annie Besant's autobiography). On the contrary, the complaint to be made of Beer's piece is that its focus is too fine.

New Unionism

The pivotal role of the 1888 strike in the development of the 'New Unionism' and the re-awakening of the labour movement is almost entirely omitted.

Without it the whole story is no more than a stirring tale of oppression and revolt in a historical vacuum.

The analysis of the fitful growth of the labour movement in the nineteenth century is beset with difficulties and contradictions.

In the second half of the century, trade unionism and socialism both took their first uncertain steps into the world, sometimes together and sometimes reeling apart.

The difficulties of understanding this growth flow from the difficulties of understanding the economic history of the 19th century, and its last quarter in particular—the period of the 'Great Depression'.

The British economy had reached the limits imposed upon it by its own empire as a market and a source of raw materials.

Outside the Empire it was challenged increasingly by Germany and the USA for the markets of the world.

Feared competition

Contrary to the Thatcherite vision of the dynamic entrepreneur, the capitalist classes of the world reacted with fear and loathing to the threat of enforced competition. Investment declined and world trade stagnated.

The British trade union movement was not robust enough to stand against this ebb, but the process was complex and contradictory.

One effect of the unification of the imperial market was a substantial reduction in food prices, which offset the stabilisation, in some cases fall, in money wages.

At the same time, successive governments were not ignorant of the threat to their power represented by the relentless growth of the urban proletariat. Reforms such as state education and the extension of the right to vote were designed to deflect this threat.

In this aim the ruling class was only partly successful.

State education was eventually to produce generations of articulate labour leaders against whom new techniques of absorption would be needed.

The manhood suffrage itself brought into being demands for such leaders to act independently of the Liberal reformers.

In trying to assess conditions in a particular area, such as the East End of London, we are faced with another range of problems.



Bryant and May strikers

As Beer makes plain in his pamphlet, East London suffered from the first effects of industrialisation and did not recover fast enough to be hit by the second.

That is to say, mechanisation destroyed the silk weaving industry before the Great Depression even began, and the area's second major industry—shipbuilding—suffered a disastrous crash in the late 1860s when the speculative shipbuilders ran against the brick wall of a limit to world trade.

Thus East London entered the Great Depression already depressed, with anything up to half a million dependent on public charity for their survival.

A minimal level of resistance persisted—evidenced by the bread riots of 1860-61 and 1867, but a systematic policy of atomisation, directed against any generalisation of welfare assistance, served to block major revolts developing on the City's doorstep.

In early 1888 even Engels had to admit that he saw the workers of East London as more passive, more accepting of oppression than those in any other part of the 'civilised world'.

It is in this context that the explosive strike of the matchgirls at the Bryant and May factory in Bow must be understood.

The origins of the socialist agitation around the Bryant and May factory can be traced to a meeting of the Fabian Society in June 1888.

At this meeting Clementina Black read a paper on 'Female Labour'. H.H. Champion afterwards presented information on Bryant and May's dividends and their exploitation of the workforce.

The meeting resolved to call for a boycott of the company. Annie Besant set out to research the question for her paper, the Link, and travelled to Bow the next day to discuss with the factory girls.

Annie Besant was a remarkable personality. Originally a devout and inspired Christian and the wife of a clergyman, she was unable to reconcile herself to the poverty and misery in which her husband's congregation lived.

She was to break from the church and her family on the occasion of her publishing a pamphlet rejecting the divinity of Jesus of Nazareth.

She threw herself into the work of Bradlaugh's National Secular Society, writing regularly for the 'National Reformer' and conducting extensive lecture tours.

The struggle of 1880 for Bradlaugh's right to sit in Parliament as an atheist brought her

into contact with Aveling and others in Marx's circle.

However, she was never to become a Marxist, and under the baleful influence of Shaw, joined the Fabians in 1885.

Her brand of socialism however was ill matched to that of the Fabians. She took a leading role in the Trafalgar Square riots of 1886 and 1887, and organised a defence fund to bail out the arrested.

Her position in the socialist movement of the time is reflected in the fact that she was chosen as one of Linnell's pallbearers after Bloody Sunday of November 1887.

By the time of the matchgirls strike she was already well known as a regular orator at dock gate meetings.

Beer's pamphlet documents the problems that Besant found in the factory and among the outworkers who made the matchboxes.

The wages themselves were wretchedly low, and the women were regularly fined for a range of 'offences'.

More serious even than this was the widespread necrosis of the jaw, 'phossy jaw', resulting from regular handling of phosphorus.

A particular irritation to the workers was that the company had docked their wages to erect a statue of Gladstone.

On 23 June, Besant

published her first article exposing the exploitation at the match factory under the title 'White Slavery in London'. Although Bryant threatened legal action, a visit by the Factory Inspector confirmed the fact that the illegal fines were taking place.

The company began to seek out which of the women had given Besant the information for her article, and three were dismissed early in July.

After a further sacking on July 5 the women walked out. The Fabians were forced to take responsibility for the strike that their publicity had brought about.

Defeat

This was not in fact the first industrial action at the Bryant and May factory.

Beer reports the earlier strike of 1885 over a wage cut and the phossy jaw problem, which won no general support and was defeated.

The memory still lived of this strike and also of the great demonstration of 1871 against the match tax. Obviously there was some tradition of collective action among the matchgirls, no doubt buoyed up by the intermittent bread riots in the locality.

The difference in 1888 was the active intervention by the socialists.

Besant took up the task of organising a strike fund and giving a lead to the campaign.

Although a large number of the women went to the country for the seasonal fruit picking work, some 800 were left in London dependent on strike pay.

As a result of appeals in the Link and other papers public donations began to flow in.

The main factor however which gave the strike the strength and determination to continue was the decision of the London Trades Council, led by John Burns, to give active support.

An independent investigation into the factory bore out all of Besant's charges, and also made clear that the workers were charged for their working materials, which Besant had never understood.

This was published in full in the Times, and Bradlaugh tabled parliamentary questions which promised more publicity.

WOMAN WORKER

Women's paper of the
Workers Socialist League.

Articles on:

- *Chile
- *Textile Industry
- *Meccano
- *NUPE and the cuts



Available from WSL, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR, price 15p including postage.

A review of "The Matchgirls Strike 1888" by Reg Beer. National Museum of Labour History pamphlet No. 2.

Besant kept up the momentum of the campaign with rallies, meetings and deputations to Parliament.

By mid-July the pressure on the company was enough to force them to meet the strikers and the Trades Council.

Abolish fines

The company agreed to abolish the fines and charges for materials, which was no major concession since both were illegal. It did however mean a big increase in real pay. A canteen would be provided away from the phosphorus and some other safety improvements would be made.

On this basis the women returned to work. The 'phossy jaw' persisted however, until the development of the safety match effectively rendered the phosphorus match obsolete.

The matchgirls however retained their organisation after the return to work, and the following year sent a delegation to the TUC.

The matchgirls victory transformed the industrial situation in East London.

Tramways

Besant and Tom Mann became involved in the unionisation struggle for the London Tramways Company, and the example of the Bryant and May strike was powerful in winning the men over.

Although there were no strikes in this case, the union won a series of court cases over the company, and conditions improved greatly.

A much more important breakthrough followed at the Beckton Gas Works, where in 1889 Will Thorne unionised the unskilled to win an eight hour working day.

This in turn had a tremendous effect on the dock workers and led to the great dock strike of 1889. This wave of unionisation of the unskilled was to change the face of trade unionism in Britain, breaking the hold of the older craft unions and the labour aristocracy on the TUC.

It was this change in the character of the TUC which was to make the formation of the Labour Party possible.

By Ernie Stubbins



Teachers strike to stop school sale

St George's work-in shows the way

Stewards and workers at St. George's Hospital, Hyde Park Corner, London, decided last week to move into occupation to prevent any further rundown of the hospital, which specialises in heart surgery.

St. George's has been listed

**Out for
25%**

On Thursday 24 January the whole manual staff at the heating and air conditioning firm of F.H. Biddles Ltd., Nuneaton walked out on indefinite strike in support of a 25% pay claim.

This followed protracted negotiations over a three month period, during which the same 15% offer was put three times to mass meetings—and rejected.

A management attempt to ballot the workforce failed when, in spite of a recommendation from the shop stewards committee, the workforce showed their contempt for the offer by tearing up their ballot slips.

The company, without any agreement, implemented their offer from the review date, 1 January.

An external conference on Wednesday failed to move the company.

At the following mass meeting Bro. Roy. Howells, TGWU District Officer again put the same offer.

When this again resulted in an overwhelming rejection he urged a seven-day "cooling off period", and another mass meeting to allow the company to think about it.

When it was pointed out from the floor that the firm had already had three months to think about it, the meeting voted by 86 to 9 to reject the Official's advice and strike from four o'clock that afternoon.

The other Nuneaton factory at Tuttle Hill have followed the main works and joined the strike.

for complete closure by June 30. The casualty department has been closed for some time as the first part of the plan by Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth AHA to move the facilities from St. George's to Tooting—which they claim will save £1½ million.

The stewards have decided to occupy at this point to prevent a ward closure scheduled for next week, and because the new hospital in Tooting is opening on Monday January 28.

The occupation at St. George's must be seen as a rallying point for the fight against hospital closures in the London area.

Following on from St. Benedict's, St. George's is the second hospital to be occupied against closure in the recent period.

As the savage Tory cash limits are translated into cuts, the list of closures and

rundowns in the London area is growing to frightening proportions.

Another recent addition is the casualty department at the Royal Northern Hospital in Islington, due for closure on 1 March.

Opposition to the plan is strong. An action committee is being formed in the hospital, and Camden ambulance NUPE branch has joined other ambulance branches in pledging to continue to bring patients to the casualty department if it is occupied.

Despite the opposition, Camden and Islington AHA are determined to go ahead with the closure and have so far brushed aside a compromise proposal of keeping the casualty open during weekdays only.

The main danger facing these occupations is isolation. No matter how strong is the local organisation, St. George's and

the Royal Northern depend very much on the support of consultants—not the most principled and reliable anti-cuts fighters!

Workers of St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road—also due for complete closure—are having problems fighting the AHA tactics of gradually reducing manning levels.

Leadership

The answer to such isolation lies in the hands of the public sector trade union leadership.

The recent inactivity of NUPE—especially the London Division—is nothing short of treacherous.

Militants in all threatened hospitals must begin the fight to force the trade union leadership to prepare a programme of national strike action alongside the steelworkers to reverse all public spending cuts.

Over 400 Ealing teachers participated on January 22 in a half-day strike and mass meeting to oppose the sale of Twyford comprehensive school to the Church of England.

Ealing's Tory council has proposed that the sale, for £1.78 million, should take place by September. It provides a backdoor route to the reintroduction of a selective, grammar-school set-up in a largely working-class area.

The sale—part of a package of £2.5 million in education cuts that attack other aspects of the school service—has been vociferously opposed by the majority of parents, teachers and school students, local community organisations and the 1,600-strong Ealing NUT.

No cover

A well-supported policy of "no-cover" action has been in force for some time, and the borough wide strike on January 22 was widely followed.

The local NUSS backed up the teachers' stand, leafleting a number of schools calling for support to the strike and the mass meeting, and nailing the blame firmly on the Tory government's £380 million cuts in education spending.

Indeed it was NUSS speaker Neil James who offered the only perspective for a fight to the meeting.

His speech followed on a

turgid 15 minutes of waffle from NUT vice-president Peter Kennedy, an equally vacant speech from school governor Moira Cyriaux, and a call for a "publicity campaign"—including a deputation to the Archbishop of Canterbury!—from local Labour 'left' councillor Hilary Benn.

In contrast Neil James correctly urged that the fight must be taken up through the organised labour movement and linked to strike action to stop the cuts.

"Your jobs and our futures are a common goal to be defended", he stressed.

The demands must include a restoration of the cuts, a policy of protecting education by linking expenditure to inflation as assessed by elected union committees; and occupation and strike action to halt the cuts.

To warm applause he also called for NUT recognition of the NUSS and for motions to this effect to be moved at the Union's conference.

*2,000 redundancies amongst school ancillary staff and teachers are threatened by Leicestershire County Council's decision to axe the education budget by £6 million.

*In Dundee 1,500 teachers staged a one-day strike in protest against education cuts which have axed 100 teaching jobs.

*Teachers in Trafford, Manchester are to undertake a programme of selective strikes to prevent a cuts package costing 90 jobs.

Back to the 1930s

Tory policies implemented by successive Labour and Tory governments made themselves felt with a vengeance last month, as 115,000 more unemployed signed on the dole.

The official total—now 1,424,927—is only 200,000 less than the record-setting level established under Callaghan in 1977, and certain to be no more than a stage in a continual climb over the next period.

Between now and the autumn BL is due to shed some 25,000 workers and BSC plans to axe a further 50,000 jobs. With every major capitalist employer looking to rationalisation and shedding "surplus" labour, the Tories are also pledged to end the Labour government's phoney job sup-

port schemes by September—throwing a further 300,000 onto the unemployment register.

The Tories' June budget allocated funds to cater for a 300,000 increase in unemployment. All the signs are that with recession under way and spending cuts in full swing this figure is likely to be exceeded before the end of 1980—while job vacancies continue to fall in number as desperate workers accept even low-paid jobs sooner than rot on the dole.

Scotland

The crisis of capitalism has actually brought the return of 1930s levels of unemployment in Scotland—where the 8.9% unemployment leaves over 200,000 on the dole, and in the North, where the unemployment rate is 9%.

Never before has it been more important for workers to take the most determined action—through occupations backed up by strike action—to defend existing jobs and to fight for united class action to bring down the Tories and create conditions for a planned socialist economy which alone can provide new jobs, secure living standards and a development of the productive forces to meet the needs of the British and international working class.

'Fighting the Cuts'
(Socialist Press Supplement)
available 15p (inc p&p)
from WSL,
31, Dartmouth Park Hill,
London NW5 1HR.

**YOU SHOULD
JOIN US!**

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

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

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

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

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed

which, in today's struggles fights to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

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

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

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

RED YOUTH
Monthly paper of the Socialist Youth League
New issue out next week

Articles on NUSS Week of Action; Anti-fascist activity in Leicester; Iran; Afghanistan; Review of new Clash album; steel strike.

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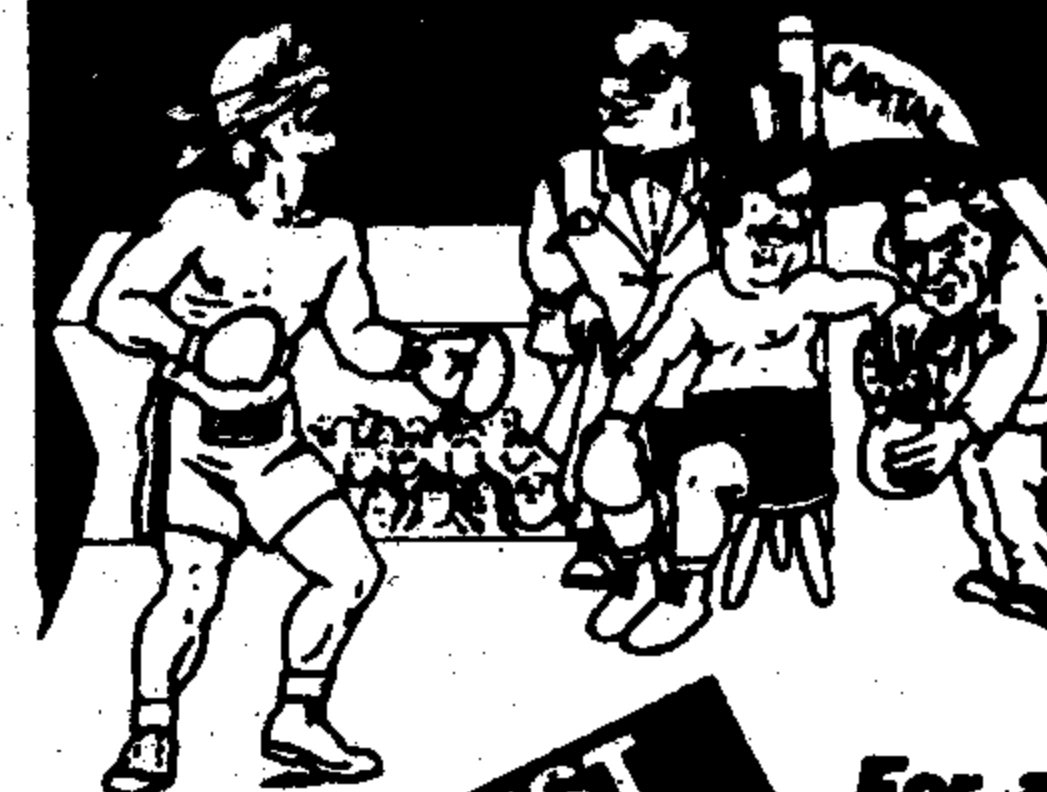
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End of the road for the

LCDTU?

Last Saturday's conference of the Stalinist-run Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions marked the end of that organisation as we have known it.

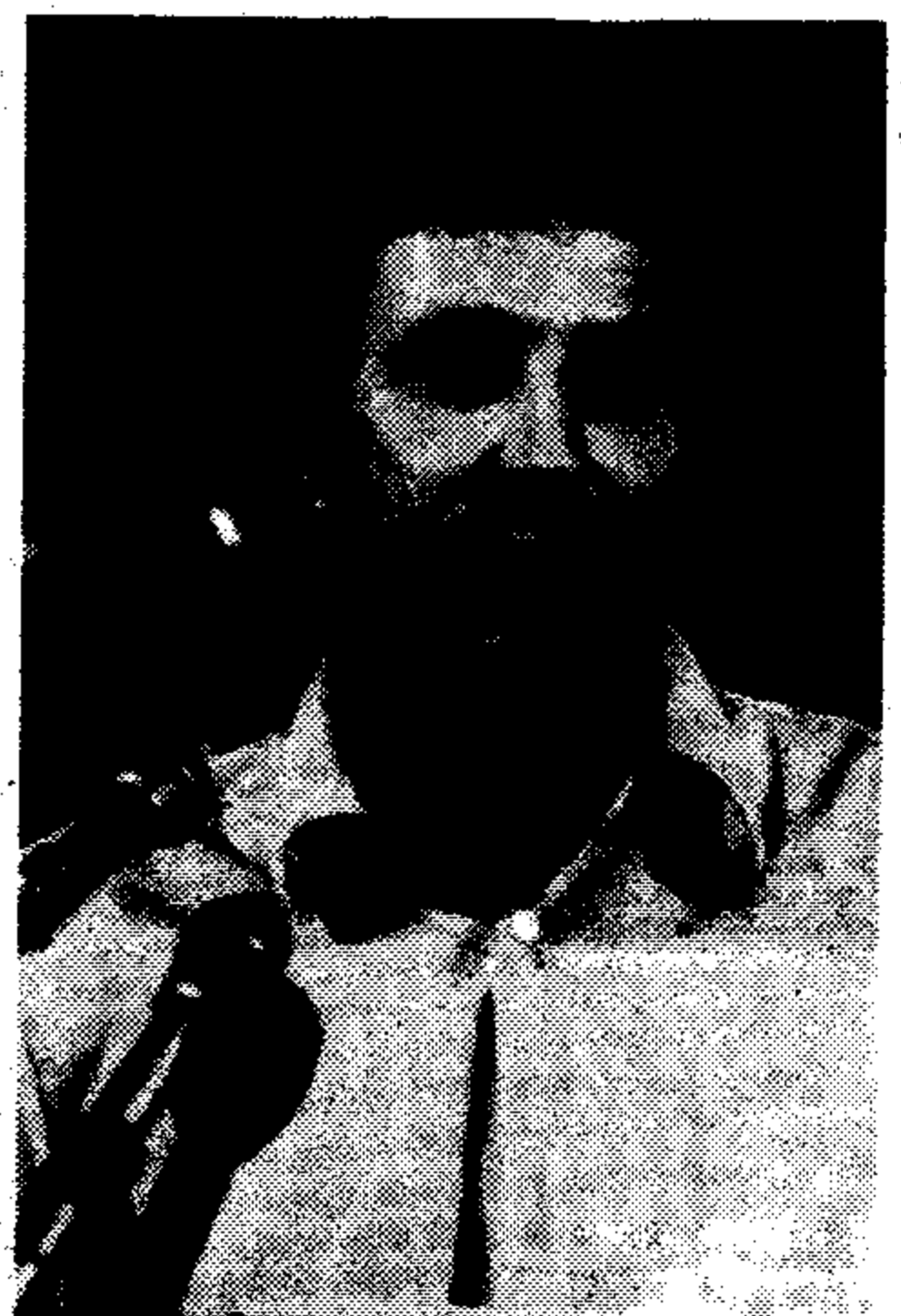
Its afternoon session at the Friends Meeting House was broken up by the refusal of the chairman—veteran Communist Party member Kevin Halpin—to recognise any form of democratic procedures or rules of debate within the conference.

Hand picked

Matters came to a head after the morning session had seen a parade of hand-picked speakers endorse the resolution which, the chairman, stressed, would be the *only* business in front of the conference.

No amendments or alternative resolutions or proposals could be allowed, he insisted.

With the steel strike in full swing and legal action underway to destroy union rights, the CP-



Alan Thornett

drafted resolution avoided—not surprisingly—the main question of the hour: the fight for an indefinite general strike to bring down the Tory government.

Instead it merely called for support for the South Wales day of action on January 28, for more extended action on March 10, and for a one-day strike of "General Strike proportions" on the TUC day of action on May 14—in *four months' time!*

But it was clear that the resolution had been drafted to take account of the position of the Socialist Workers Party, whose supporters turned out to constitute a majority of the conference delegates.

The SWP agreed with the CP in making no call for indefinite General Strike action. Instead a leaflet put out at the door by their front 'Rank and File' organisation called on delegates to support and press for a vote on the following non-political resolution.

"This Conference calls on the LCDTU and the Rank and File Defend Our Unions Committee to unite their efforts to campaign for defiance of the Employment Bill and other associated anti-union legislation. We also call on the two organisations to jointly campaign for the TUC to call a one day general stoppage against the anti-union laws.

"We further call upon the LCDTU and the Rank and File Defend Our Unions Committee to jointly convene a national delegate conference of bona fide trade union delegates as soon

after the Employment Bill becomes law as is practicable.

"We call on the LCDTU and Rank and File Defend Our Unions Committee to organise this conference in order to plan a campaign of protest and defiance against the new laws."

After the lunch break, Alan Thornett, a delegate from the TGWU 5/293 Branch, attempted to raise a point of order on the issue of speaking rights at the conference.

Lost vote

He was obstructed by the chair, and refused access to the microphone. Amid widespread protests, Halpin put to the vote a proposal "that we take the next speaker"—only to lose by 2-1.

Despite this defeat for the chair, Thornett was still not allowed access to the microphone, but was allowed to raise the question of whether the chair intended to allow time for any speaker—such as himself—who was *critical* of the resolution. He pointed out that every speaker so far had fully backed the resolution.

Halpin declared he had no intention of hearing such speakers, and ruled against the point of order, calling at once on AUEW Assistant General Secretary Ken Brett to deliver a dreary 25-minute speech.

As Brett came to a halt, leading SWP spokesman John Deason raised a point of order. In contrast to Thornett he was immediately given the micro-



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

An old style LCDTU conference —1978

phone. But Deason was not interested in pressing for political discussion. He demanded only that the part of the Rank and File resolution calling for a joint Rank and File-LCDTU conference be put to the vote.

Majority

Even this was too much for Halpin, who ruled him out of order, and stated again that *only* the platform resolution would be voted on.

When Deason called for this ruling to be put to a vote he was strongly backed by a clear majority of the conference.

But Halpin was adamant. As scuffles broke out, he decided that the conference had got out of hand, moved to a hasty vote on the platform's resolution, and promptly closed the conference at 3.00 p.m.—just one hour after the lunch break!

The break-up of the conference was plainly the responsibility of the Stalinists' insistence on bureaucratic suppression of any political opposition, under conditions where the CP's influence in the unions has declined to such an extent that they can no longer as on countless occasions in the past guarantee themselves a majority in a conference of the LCDTU—their main front organisation.

But the role of the SWP—refusing to politically challenge

the Stalinists, and intervening simply on the apolitical basis of "unity"—indicates that they are set to step politically and organisationally into the gap left by the decline of the CP in the unions.

As the forces they mobilised for the conference indicated it is now the SWP as much as the CP that is primarily peddling the line of militant protest politics, in which the readiness of workers to fight is channelled away from the necessary political struggle against the trade union and Labour bureaucracy.

A full political debate on the way forward is necessary. A recall of the abortive LCDTU conference, this time on a democratic and open basis, could create conditions for such a debate.

An organising committee should be set up from among the political organisations represented at Saturday's conference, together with the independent forces that oppose Stalinist methods.

That committee should organise a recall conference that would not be controlled by any one movement but would give the opportunity to each movement and the independent forces to present what they see as the way forward for the working class in the present crisis. The WSL would fully and actively participate in such a conference.

Scottish steel pickets spread out

The steel strike in Scotland is now a month old and so far over 1,000 ISTC workers out of the 4,500 workforce at Ravenscraig have volunteered for picketing duties.

The picketing has been extended to manufacturing industry in the Motherwell and Glasgow area, much of which has virtually no steel stocks, and the picketed plants have trailer-loads of finished material lying blacked in the plant.

Flying pickets have been ranging as far as Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen in an attempt to prevent steel moving and stop the oil rigs from operating.

However, despite the fact that the NCCC representing engineers, boilermakers, etc., has taken over the picketing of Ravenscraig, the strike committee continues to refuse help in picketing from other groups of workers.

For instance, ISTC pickets outside GKN in South Street, Glasgow, refused to allow workers from Albion and Yarrow shipyards to join them.

Yet these workers correctly see that the winning of the steel strike is vital to *their* interests.

If the strike is lost not only will shipbuilding have virtually no chance of winning their 25% claim, but the Scottish shipbuilding, mining and truck manufacturing industries (all nationalised) will be totally decimated. The strike committee must combine with delegates from other sections of workers such as water workers, dockers and shipyard workers to build councils of action to coordinate the building of a general strike to bring down the Tories.

The strike committee has also made a number of deals with steel stockholders whereby the stockholder shuts down for a month, freeing pickets for duties elsewhere and leaving two ISTC members to make sure the stockholder sticks to the agreement.

However, these men are only at the gates during the day and rumour has it that the steel in fact goes out as normal at night!

One case in point was the first of these agreements, made by steel stockholders Wishaw, with Tom Brennan, chairman of the Action Committee, Ravenscraig on Wednesday 9 January without any consultation with the strike committee.

This agreement allowed the stockholder to remain open for two days without pickets.

That night 38 lorries laden with steel left the stockholder at less than six hours notice!

Action needed on teachers' pay

Last week's backdated 8.2% interim pay increase will do little to appease teachers angry at the endless delays in their 1979 pay claim.

Since the agreement last April to submit their claim to a comparability study by the Clegg Commission, teachers had been led to believe that a substantial payment (around 13%) would be made this January.

No amount of double talk will convince them that they have not been misled and betrayed.

Abortive

The seeds of the present situation were sown in the abortive campaign for the 1979 salaries claim.

Half-hearted efforts by the leadership of the NUT and the Scottish teaching union, the EIS led, at that point, to a settlement which secured a mere

9.2% plus £6 a month on account in anticipation of the Clegg findings.

Members, initially keyed up for an increase of 42.5% were disillusioned by weak action culminating in capitulation and an agreement to the comparability study.

Since then, members have been kept in suspense, tied to an agreement to accept the findings of the Commission.

At first they were promised an interim report in December, to be followed by payment of half of the award in January and the second half in September.

Now they have received a mere 8.2%—from which the nine payments of £6 will be deducted.

The Commission will not publish its findings until at least April, and no substantial sums of money will be forthcoming until after then.

Instead of a straightforward claim based on the rise in the rate of inflation and the changes in the salaries scale for non-manual workers since the Houghton Report of 1974, the teaching union leaderships have become embroiled in a complicated comparability study involving the selection of comparators in terms of jobs outside teaching.

Having found the original 40 comparators chosen to be unsatisfactory, the Commission is now researching into another 30 non-teaching jobs.

This kind of pseudo-scientific mumbo-jumbo is said by the union leaders to be aimed at achieving an "objective" assessment of the true value of a teacher's job.

Going by the wretched 18%

average award given by Clegg to the nurses, many teachers no doubt now wish that they had never become entangled in the comparability study, but had pursued their claim with more vigour when they had the opportunity last April.

Only an award of 30% at least could bring teachers back to the standards they were at after the Houghton settlement in 1974.

But Keir Bloomer, the EIS chief negotiator, has already let slip the figure of 15%.

To mobilise the frustration of the membership, 18 representatives from schools in Glasgow met the week before last and launched a campaign for a Special General Meeting of Glasgow Local Association.

The motions on the petition for the SGM call for an immediate interim increase of £20 per week plus a campaign, including if necessary, industrial action for a wage claim in April 1980 such as will compensate for the rise in inflation since April 1979.

(Many members are increasingly concerned that, as the Clegg Report is now due in April, it will prejudice their annual salary negotiations).

The representatives see this SGM as a launching pad for a one-day stoppage as soon as possible in protest against the contemptuous fashion in which teachers have been treated.

They also regard it as the beginning of the campaign to secure an award of at least 20% in this year's negotiations.

Only by purposeful action now will teachers demonstrate to the authorities that they will not be pushed around on the questions of wages and jobs.

'YES' WE REJECT 5%!

Leyland management, who have been quoting ballots at their workforce, say they will not accept the result of the ballot on their 5%-with-strings offer.

Despite this the union leadership have played further into their hands than we reported last week.

They have agreed that there will be no statement from either side in the envelope that the ballot paper goes out in.

But the company is posting out the papers, and it is understood that they will put a statement of theirs in a separate envelope on the same day!

The ballot papers will be posted on Friday 1 February—timed to arrive at people's homes on a Saturday. In this way it gets the ballot as far away from work as possible.

Vote 'yes'

Similarly the wording of the question is such that in order to oppose the company's offer you have to vote 'Yes'.

Despite all this confusion sown by the union leadership, the likely result is still a rejection of the company's offer.

In order to make sure of this and to prepare the next step the best move would be to hold mass meetings on the

Friday.

Workers still do not know what the LCJNC proposes to do if the offer is rejected.

These leaders must stop avoiding uniting with the steel strikers. Leyland workers should join steelworkers on all-out strike.

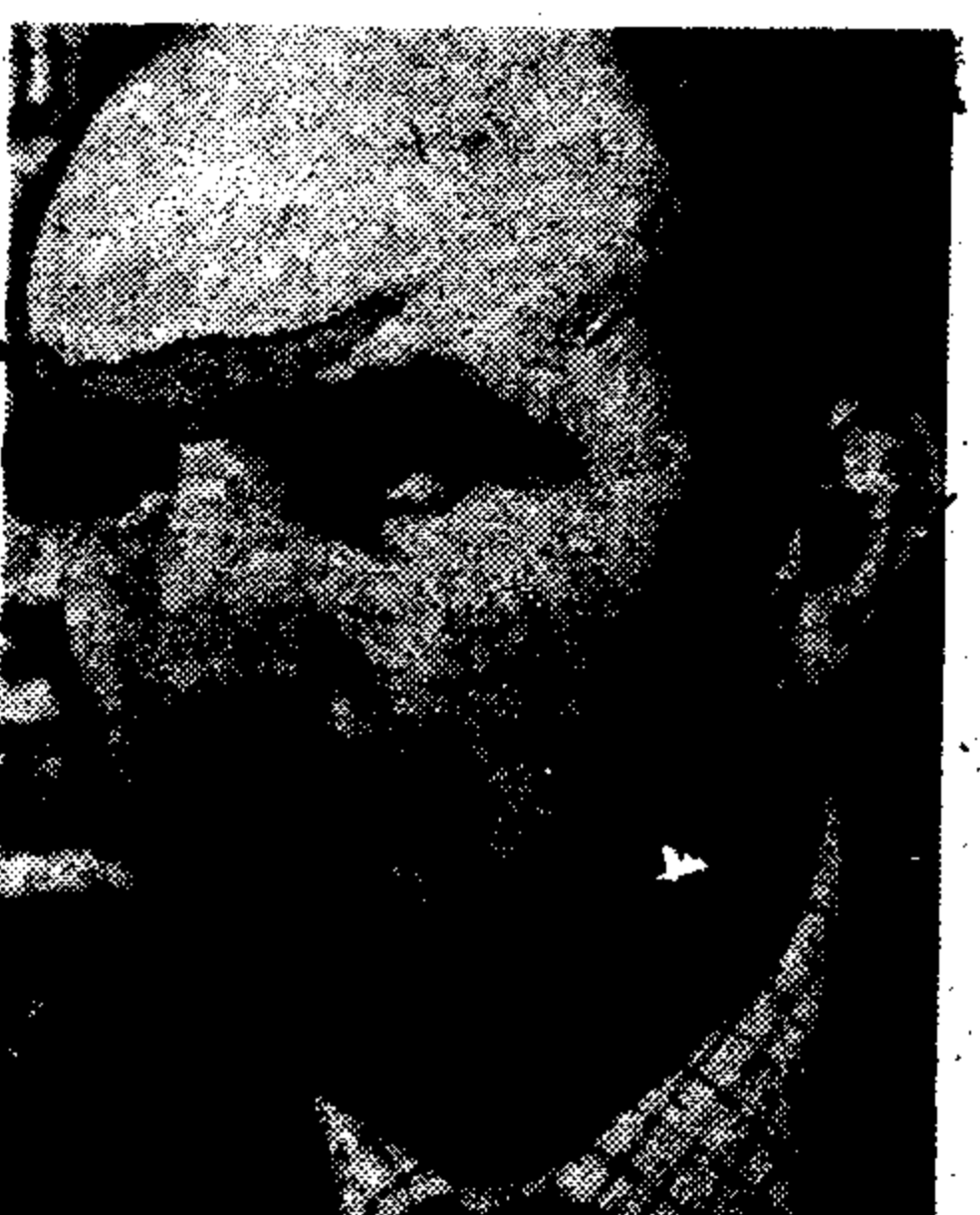
PUBLIC MEETINGS

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE Public meeting OXFORD

Victory to the Steel-Workers! Bring down the Tories! Speakers include Tee-side steel worker Thursday 7 February OCCR, Princes St off Cowley Road 8.00 p.m.

SOCIALIST PRESS PUBLIC MEETING The Fight for Trotskyism in the Labour Party Speaker: Ted Heslin Socialist Press supporter Friends Meeting House Euston Road, London NW1 Wednesday 6 February 7.30 p.m.

MOTHERWELL Victory to the Steel Workers! Bring down the Tories! Wednesday 6 February 8.00 p.m. YMCA, Brandon Street Motherwell



Clegg

SOCIALIST PRESS



IMPERIALISTS WIND DOWN IRON CURTAIN

Alarmed by the blows struck at US and world imperialism by the revolutionary struggles that in 1979 toppled the Shah in Iran and Somoza in Nicaragua, Carter and Thatcher are exploiting the Afghan invasion as a cover for a major anti-Soviet build-up.

Arms deals already surreptitiously underway long before the Soviet invasion have been brought to the surface and pressed home amid demagogic attacks on Russian "aggression".

\$33 billion

In particular Carter is proceeding full speed ahead with the mammoth \$33 billion MX missile system, which will desecrate thousands of square miles of US desert and farmland.

And the long-projected installation of Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles into NATO bases in Europe will also go ahead as planned.

In Britain, the Thatcher government has revealed its advanced plans for refurbishing existing British nuclear weapons and a £5,000 million scheme for a new fleet of submarines and missiles.

Meanwhile the SALT 2 treaty, stalled by warmongers in the US Congress last autumn, has been shelved indefinitely.

Carter's 'State of the Union' message last week also included steps to register American youth preparatory for a possible re-introduction of conscription, and moves to bolster the flagging prestige of the CIA.

"Outside forces"

And he made it clear that the US military build-up is not simply in opposition to the supposed Soviet "threat" to Iran.

"Let our position be absolutely clear: an attempt by any outside force to gain control of



the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States. It will be repelled by the use of any means necessary, including military force".

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Intervention

This is a naked threat of US military intervention against any revolutionary movement by the masses or oppressed nationalities in the Middle East.

Such an intervention would of course have nothing to do with preserving "world peace", but everything to do with preserving US imperialist exploitation of the masses throughout the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

The talk of a possible Soviet invasion of Iran is, of course a deliberate deception by the imperialists.

They know all too well that the Kremlin bureaucracy has consistently acted not for any motives of world domination, but to safeguard its own power

threatens to drive the Muslim masses of the Middle East further into the arms of reaction and which provides the imperialists with a new pretext for anti-Soviet agitation.

Expropriation

But, recognising that in the present situation the withdrawal of Soviet troops would create conditions for a pro-imperialist takeover in Afghanistan, we call now not for the withdrawal of troops, but for policies through which the Afghan masses can, alongside rank and file Red Army men, press through the struggle for the expropriation of land and private property and the establishment of an independent Soviet Afghanistan.

From the same standpoint we condemn the new Cold War offensive against the Soviet Union, and all those reactionaries within the labour bureaucracy that have sided with the imperialists.

A precondition of the working class making new gains is to defend those already won.

For this reason socialists must unconditionally defend the nationalised property relations of the USSR against all forms of imperialist attack, while fighting for the political overthrow of the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

and privileges through the preservation of a balance of forces—"peaceful coexistence"—with imperialism.

It was precisely because imperialist-backed right wing forces in Afghanistan threatened to disrupt the balance of forces on the borders of the USSR that the invasion was launched, in a misguided defensive move.

The Workers Socialist League has condemned this invasion as a high-handed bureaucratic measure that

Prepare to defy Corrie All out Feb 5!

Amid a renewed burst of reactionary propaganda in last week's *Sun*, the Third Reading of Corrie's anti-abortion bill is due before Parliament on February 8.

Opposed by every remotely progressive organisation in the health service and medical profession, and containing proposals that would make two-thirds of current abortions illegal and subject to prosecution, the Corrie Bill is an arch-Tory attempt to set back the struggle for women's rights.

Agony

Aided by reactionary Labour MPs anxious to play a role in restoring the agony, the suffering and the mediaeval morality campaigned for by the Catholic Church, the Bill seems set to become law in the near future. In a bid to swing last minute votes a national lobby of Parli-

ment has been called by the National Abortion Campaign on Tuesday February 5, and backed by the SE Region TUC.

NAC is correctly calling for every possible section of workers to take strike action on that day to register opposition to the Corrie Bill.

But at the same time trade unions—particularly those in the health service and MPU/ASTMS—must commit themselves now



Uniformed gunman opposing the march

2,000 demand 'troops out'

Some 1500 demonstrators left Sparkhill Park, Birmingham, on the second of Provisional Sinn Fein's series of demonstrations in British cities. At the Bull Ring local residents and others had swelled numbers to 2,000.

In preparation for future bans, Birmingham police announced that they had considered banning the march and large numbers of police were turned out.

A by-product was the prevention of physical conflict with 100-200 backward youth and fascists in the town centre (who later went off to ransack a CP bookshop and broke up a Women's Liberation meeting in the CP's Star Club).

To advance the struggle the crucial question remains: will the issue of Ireland be turned remorselessly back to the labour movement, to base the struggle against the British army on the strength of the working class?

Yet apart from republican, UTOM and left organisations there were pitifully few labour movement banners in Birmingham on Sunday (Selly Oak Constituency Labour Party being one of the exceptions).

Notably there was not a single delegation from the CP-led BL Longbridge trade union bodies.

Only a principled struggle for a policy of troops out of Ireland within the labour movement can place the issue in the forefront, as it deserves.

Sakharov is no spy!

The Kremlin bureaucracy has exiled Andrei Sakharov, the most prominent of the Soviet dissidents, and his wife Yelena, to the city of Gorki, 250 miles east of Moscow.

Sakharov, a Nobel Prize winning physicist is not a 'left' oppositionist. But we have no doubts about condemning this action by the Stalinist bureaucracy, and demanding the restoration of his right to live in Moscow.

It is clear that the Soviet leadership moved against Sakharov only reluctantly and under considerable pressure. So wary were the bureaucracy that they held back from their more usual repressive methods—exile to Siberia, confinement to a mental asylum, or a swift show trial and prison sentence.

In view of the fact that he is accused of "being used as a channel by the special services of imperialist powers to spy out important state secrets of the Soviet Union", the action taken against him is relatively minor—though he may be put on trial at a later date.

Internal problems

But the action of the bureaucracy is far from "incomprehensible", as said by the French Communist Party. Rather Sakharov is the victim of the internal problems faced by the bureaucracy in a situation of internal economic crisis, crisis in the capitalist system, and now a Cold War offensive by US and other imperialist powers.

As national consciousness develops among oppressed minorities in Iran, Kurdistan and elsewhere, the Soviet leadership also fears a challenge to its chauvinist and bureaucratic treatment of the many national minorities within the borders of the USSR itself.

Sakharov is known as a defender of the national rights of the Crimean Tartars—and the bureaucracy clearly feel he could become a focus for opposition on a far broader scale than the present dissident movement.

His most recent moves however have played into the hands of imperialism and of the bureaucracy. In signing a statement opposing the invasion of Afghanistan and pointing out that the Soviet people are denied the right to express their opinion on the war, Sakharov also put his name to supporting the Carter call for a boycott of the Olympics.

By not starting from a Trotskyist perspective of building a revolutionary party for the political overthrow of the bureaucracy and defence of the nationalised property relations in the USSR, Sakharov has thus been pushed by the bureaucracy into lending support to a pro-imperialist campaign.

But he is no spy. In defending his rights against repression we fight to create conditions in which the Soviet working class can organise and mobilise to remove the parasitic Kremlin bureaucracy.

FUND

With the end of the month upon us, the monthly fund is trailing very badly at £522.15, over £200 short of our monthly target. Last week saw only £60.60 arrive at the office.

We really cannot allow this situation to continue. Every penny of our fund target is needed every month in order to meet the rapidly rising costs incurred in the production of Socialist Press. It is essential, therefore, that the fund is raised in full if we are to avoid building up debts that can only cause us major problems in the future.

Rush a donation immediately to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
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