

# SOCIALIST PRESS



Invasions and  
revolutionary  
politics  
Centre pages

Weekly paper of the Workers Socialist League \* No. 219 \* 15 October 1980 \* 20p

Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee



# TORIES BANK ALL ON TUC TRAITORS

Behind the blood-curdling battle-cries of the blue-suited bloodsuckers in Brighton last week lay a morbid fear of the growing bitterness and hostility that 18 months of Tory policies have incited within the working class.

Indications of that anger and militancy could be seen not only in the massive 6,000-strong protest demonstration outside the final day of the Tory conference, forcing the delegates into siege conditions, but also in the defeats that had been inflicted on Labour's right wing leaders the previous week in Blackpool.

## Looming answer

Again and again Tory leaders were forced to look nervously over their shoulder at the looming anger of the organised labour movement. Thatcher herself admitted that:

"Because of what happened at that [Blackpool] Conference, there has been, behind all our deliberations this week, a heightened awareness that now, more than ever, our Conservative Government must succeed. We just must, because now there is even more at stake than some had realised."

And her concluding remarks

pointed out that:

"We close our conference in the aftermath of that sinister utopia unveiled at Blackpool: let Labour's Orwellian nightmare of the Left be the spur for us to dedicate with a new urgency our every ounce of energy and moral strength to rebuild the fortunes of this free nation".

The threat posed by Thatcher before the assembled sections of aristocrats, millionaires, managers, businessmen large and small and motley middle class reactionaries is a stark one: it's either us, or a downhill slide towards socialism.

And, despite the acute limitations of the processes of change now underway in the Labour Party, there is a germ of truth in what Thatcher is suggesting.

Emerging in the working class is a growing political current that is crying out for action to defeat the Tory spending cuts; for action to restore trade union rights; and for action to halt the wild rush towards Cold War confrontation with the Soviet Union.

## Rising layer

None of these problems can be resolved while the Tories remain in power—but this new, rising layer does not see itself as confined to the Parliamentary

niceties of the Labour Party's right wing and its established Tribuneite 'left'.

On the contrary, it made itself most vocally felt at the Labour Party conference when it gave a deafening ovation to the call issued by Lambeth council leader Ted Knight for general strike action to stop the cuts.

## Rank and file

It was conspicuous that it was amongst constituency delegations—most closely linked to the rank and file of the labour movement—that this new militant political current found most support. The more bureaucratised trade union delegations continued in the main to provide the staple block vote support for the right wing leadership.

The fact is that not one union leader has called for mass industrial action to defeat the Tory cuts at local or national level; not one official struggle has been conducted against factory closures or redundancies; and no union leader (with the exception of Arthur Scargill) has unequivocally declared himself prepared to mobilise action to defy Prior's new anti-union laws.

The continued existence of the Thatcher government rests on this absolute refusal of the union leaders to build upon,

strengthen and mobilise the mass anti-Tory feeling that has grown within the working class.

Instead, TUC leaders will this week troop limply into Downing Street with another list of half-baked suggestions which they know in advance Thatcher will derisively reject.

Were the union bureaucracy half as ready to wage an all-out fight to defend their members as the Tories are to defend and raise the rate of profit of the big businesses they represent, they would not even be talking to Thatcher at all: they would be preparing their members for the General Strike which alone can topple this government and create conditions for the establishment of a workers' government in Britain.

But the union leaders are just as afraid of the power of the working class as are the Tories. They know full well that as it learns its own strength in the course of struggle, the working class will turn increasingly against those trade union and Labour leaders who support the continuation of capitalism because they seek only to preserve their own positions of power and privilege, feeding off the strength of the workers' movement.

Far from preparing action to defend jobs or an offensive to bring down the Tories, the

*Financial Times* has revealed that TUC leaders have for the past year been closeted in regular dinner meetings with CBI leaders, drawing up a joint agreement on the introduction of new job-cutting technology in industry!

The *Financial Times* warns industrialists that if the CBI rejects this new "deal" it would: "endanger the mood of collaboration which has built up between the two organisations [!] during a series of dinner meetings over the past year or so".

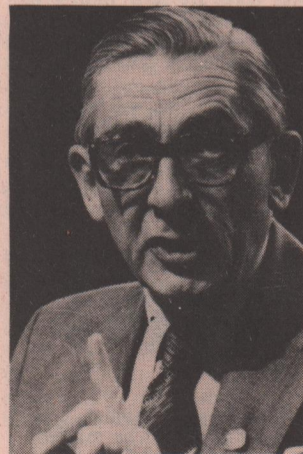
While TUC leaders can still hobnob with the bosses, trading their members' jobs for glasses of claret, what interest have they in bringing down the bosses' government or putting an end to a system that offers them such a lavish style of living?

## Challenge

Thatcher, however, has recognised that a growing challenge to such class collaboration has now begun to break to the surface in the Labour Party.

She is relying on the trade union and Labour bureaucracy—with the aid of the Tory press and media—to crush such resistance.

For socialists, however, the task is to build upon and



Len Murray

develop the struggle for a new leadership within the labour movement—fighting *within* the new emerging forces for the kind of consistent programme and principles that can offer workers the way forward to revolutionary politics.

It is in this context that the November 15 conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement (see page 11) acquires a particular importance in the fight to build a genuine alternative to the existing leaderships within the unions and the Labour Party. We urge readers to support and attend this vital conference.



# INTERNATIONAL

# Turkey's Sept. 12 Junta:

# a bonapartist stopgap

Either a civil war or a military dictatorship: these were the two alternatives that imperialism and the big bourgeoisie of Turkey faced if it was to resolve its crisis of authority and destroy the obstacles in front of it. They decided on military dictatorship on September 12.

Under the influence of the deepening world economic and political crisis of imperialism, Turkish capitalism was at a stage of total bankruptcy.

The bourgeoisie had for a long period of time preserved its social dominance and its class hegemony over the oppressed classes by relying on forces outside of Parliament.

The 'democratic' parliament had long been unable to fulfill any of its constitutional functions.

The economic and political crisis of the bourgeoisie was so acute that not only was there no room for concessions to the workers, but even those already granted had to be taken away.

This could easily be seen in the conditions attached by the IMF to loans sought by the Turkish government. They demanded the freezing of wages for five years as the most decisive in a package of austerity measures aimed to foist the crisis onto the shoulders of the working class.

From the very first day of the military coup, all strikes and lock-outs have been banned, trade unions closed down and all rights to organise have been taken away.

The new junta's decree granting a 70% wage rise was followed up by a rise in the prices of basic commodities the next day, which absorbed the whole of the pay increase.

## IMF happy

The new vice-premier has emphasised that this austerity programme must be in force for 4-5 years.

He says that the IMF and other financial institutions are happy with the developments in Turkey.

Indeed it appears that the ruling class are now united in trying to resolve their political and economic crisis through the present regime of military dictatorship.

So the question will be asked: What about fascism? What role will Turkey's mass fascist party play in the next period?

These questions can only be

Statement by the Turkish organisation in sympathy with the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee on the situation in Turkey.



Turkish troops in action

answered scientifically by correct analysis of the nature of the present regime.

Fascism is the reaction of bourgeois society to the threat of proletarian revolution. The big capitalists arm the petty bourgeoisie and sections of lumpen thugs for action against the organised proletariat seeing their hopes of secure exploitation in the atomisation of the working class and its organisations by the mass base of fascism.

But this method has some dangers: it brings the threat of civil war, and major social convulsions. In that sense, Trotsky describes the bourgeoisie turning to the fascists as "a man with aching molars going to the dentist".

## Last alternative

The bourgeoisie does not really like the fascists' methods—but they see them as their last alternative.

When the bourgeoisie is in decline, can no longer rule on the basis of reforms and class collaboration, and is forced to take back the existing reforms, the capitalists are also obliged to create the forces to carry out this task.

This is why the big bourgeoisie feeds and organises sections of the petty bourgeoisie around the ideology of fascism and sends them to attack the proletariat.

Increasingly the parliamentary forms of rule appropriate to peaceful, prosperous periods lose their function as the power reverts to the streets.

This process divides society into the irreconcilable camps and places civil war on the agenda.

The big bourgeoisie can only establish its absolute dictatorship over the proletariat and other oppressed classes, by atomising the organised proletariat. For this it needs a mass base of support.

The 12 September regime cannot fulfill this function; it has no such mass base.

It can only base itself on the police, military and state apparatus and for that reason it can only suppress the working class.

## Transitional

That is why the new military junta is a military and not a full-fledged fascist dictatorship.

For exactly the same reason the role of the fascists in Turkey has not yet finished for the big bourgeoisie.

The 12 September junta is a transitional regime.

Imperialism and the big bourgeoisie decided on it because in the present situation there are dangers in a long-running civil war which would pull the Kurdish masses within Turkey into an open struggle.

An ongoing civil war would

power in the Middle East unfavourably for imperialism.

These are the main reasons why the big bourgeoisie has decided on the present solution.

In that sense the present regime came to power when the struggle between the two camps of revolution and counter-revolution was reaching a climax.

## Bonapartist

This regime cannot therefore be seen as independent from this struggle.

Its programme is the programme of the IMF which in turn bases its demands on the interests of imperialism. Previous governments tried to implement these demands and failed.

The social base of the new junta includes the existence of fascist mass base; its aim is from above to repress the labour movement and change the balance of forces in favour of the bourgeoisie.

In this respect the September 12 regime is to be characterised as a *bonapartist-military dictatorship*.

Such a regime has been explained by Trotsky in his writings on fascism in Germany:

"Two mighty camps are locked in irreconcilable conflict. Neither side can win by parliamentary means. Neither would willingly accept a decision unfavourable to it. Such a split in society foreshadows a civil war. The threat of a civil war creates a need in the ruling class for an arbiter and commander, for a Caesar. That, precisely, is the function of Bonapartism.

Every regime claims to stand above classes, safeguarding the interests of the whole. But the effects of social forces cannot be so easily determined as those in the field of mechanics. The government itself is made up of flesh and bone. It is bound up with certain classes and their interests. In peaceful times a democratic parliament seems to be the best instrument for reconciling conflicting forces. But when fundamental forces veer off at 180-degree angles, pulling in opposite directions, then the opening for a Bonapartist dictatorship appears."

(The German Puzzle, from *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, Pathfinder).

Elsewhere, Trotsky goes on: "this is the most important function of Bonapartism: raising itself over the two struggling camps in order to preserve property and order. It suppresses civil war, or precedes it, or does not allow it to rekindle."

(German Bonapartism, *ibid*)

## Forward movement

It was in the period of "free collective bargaining" during 1980, with the beginning of the forward movement of the working class that the September 12 coup emerged.

Labour Party (TLP), and the Turkish Socialist Labour Party (TSIP) along with the leadership of the 'left' union confederation DISK and other democratic 'left' leaderships.

Trotsky on Germany explains this life and death question:

"With a correct leadership of the proletariat fascism would be exterminated without difficulty and not a chink could remain open for Bonapartism. Unfortunately that is not the situation. The paralysed strength of the proletariat has assumed the deceptive form of a 'strength' of the Bonapartist clique".

## Deceiving

Holding back the working class at every step in the struggle against fascism and refusing to organise it as a class in united action in the struggles at Paris, Karaman Maras, Korum and Fatsa, deceiving it with the nonsense of defence of 'democracy' behind Ecevit's bourgeois Republican Peoples Party, the Stalinist, reformist and 'democratic left' leaderships are now striving to persuade the proletariat of the 'justness' of the generals' Kemalist principles and their empty words of return to democracy.

The ultra-left wing of the Stalinists will now say with shameless irresponsibility that nothing has changed in Turkey. "Fascism" exists as it was existing before, they declare.

As a result they will continue their petty bourgeois adventurist actions in isolation from the working class.

The ultra-left wing of the Stalinists will now say with shameless irresponsibility that nothing has changed in Turkey. "Fascism" exists as it was existing before, they declare.

As a result they will continue their petty bourgeois adventurist actions in isolation from the working class.

In this way they actually help to politically disarm the working class in the face of even more catastrophic dangers.

The working class has not yet been defeated.

The junta cannot hope to survive simply through issuing decrees.

The class struggle is the decisive factor and it will be decisive in the coming period.

The September 12 coup balances itself on this struggle. The failure of the programme which the junta is implementing will necessitate a new alternative. For the bourgeoisie this must mean fascist rule.

The opposite alternative to it is for the working class to organise itself in its own trenches to fight against this regime with a correct programme, create the organs of dual power, overthrow this dictatorship and build a workers' and farmers' government in Turkey.

We, the Trotskyists, propose to the proletariat this alternative.

We call for united action to overthrow this military dictatorship and destroy fascism in this fight.

The working class has the power and the will to win such a fight.

The question once again reduces itself to the question of revolutionary leadership of the proletariat.

And this leadership can only be given by building a Trotskyist party in Turkey based on the Transitional Programme in this struggle.

## Election victory for Portuguese right

It is often boasted that the great political upheavals in Portugal in 1974 and 1975 took place without anyone being killed in street political violence.

People were killed last week, however, when the general election victory of Sa Carneiro's right wing Democratic Alliance (AD) brought bands of aggressive fascist demonstrators into the streets to celebrate.

In various towns they besieged buildings owned by workers' parties and attacked known left wing militants in the street.

At least two people have been killed so far in the wave of fascist rejoicing, and several were injured.

The Portuguese Socialist Party was not far wrong when it

commented that Sa Carneiro's government was "the continuity of the regime of Salazar which Caetano didn't manage to achieve".

What, of course, the SP failed to add was that the reason that the continuers of Salazar's political tradition can regain political control in Lisbon is that the way has been paved for them by the Socialist and Communist leaders' betrayals of the 1974 revolution.

The SP and CP leaders played a crucial part in deflecting the great and militant mobilisations of 1974 and 1975 and preventing them from finally killing the forces of Salazarism.

And since then the main workers parties have both failed to defend the gains of 1974-5 and failed to provide any policy

to advance the interests of workers and peasants.

In the recent election the Socialist Party didn't even present its programme until five days before the voting.

Sa Carneiro's victory is now a prelude to a new capitalist offensive against the remnants of the gains made by the workers and peasants in the last six years—not only the material gains, but even the formal ones, such as references to 'socialism' in the constitution.

This means a sharpening conflict between Sa Carneiro and the current pro-Socialist Party President Eanes and the Revolutionary Council of military officers.

In the Presidential election to be held in December Eanes will be opposed by Sa Carneiro's candidate General Soares Carneiro (no relation to either of his namesakes)—an extreme reactionary who sent MPLA militants to concentration camps during his term of office as Secretary General in Angola when it was still a Portuguese colony.

It is still predicted that Eanes will win the election in spite of the AD's support for Soares Carneiro.

But Sa Carneiro says that if that happens his government will resign and refuse to rule any longer with Eanes as president.

So, whoever wins the presidential election, Portugal imminently faces a new huge political crisis in circumstances where the main leaders of the workers' parties are paralysed and discredited.



Arrest of fascist secret policeman 1974: now fascists celebrate

# New!

Socialist Press Pamphlet containing analysis of the military coup by the Bolivian generals.



Price 32p incl. p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V

# 'JUSTICE' IS A CLASS QUESTION

Jim Farnham reviews "JUSTICE IN SOUTH AFRICA" (Penguin)

The barbaric ruling class 'justice' which terrorises the everyday lives of South Africa's black masses probably receives more attention in the bourgeois media than all the capitalist tyrannies on this planet.

Notwithstanding that attention, even the appearances of apartheid-capitalist brutality have not begun to be adequately documented, much less analysed.

Jackson's book—Justice in South Africa—does little to fill that gap.

The book is a subjective account of Jackson's experiences of the machinations of South Africa's legal system as a liberal lawyer in the Eastern Cape over the past twenty years.

His book is a good example of the indignant bourgeois-moralistic response to certain aspects of the excesses of capitalist terror so characteristic of the liberal and Stalinist reformist opposition in South Africa.

## Mechanisms

However the book does provide a glimpse into the repressive mechanisms of a legal system based on the denial of even the most basic democratic rights to the mass of South Africa's black people; a legal system which, in one of its aspects (the only one dealt with by Jackson), legitimises hard labour, solitary confinement, floggings, bannings, torture and murder.

But for an understanding of law and justice in relation to the reality of the class struggle being fought out in South Africa, this book is useless.

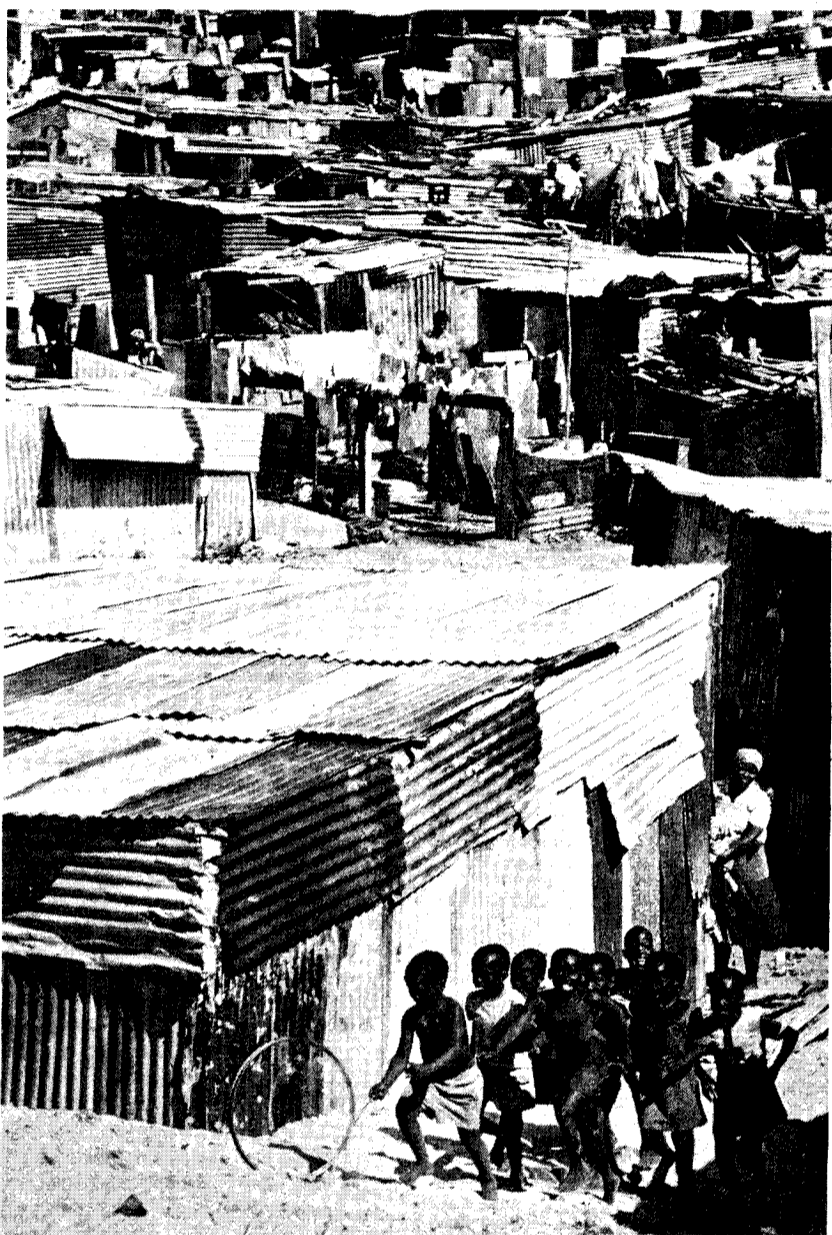
Yet in recent months the massive forward movement of black workers in South Africa has highlighted the fact that the law is created and destroyed, not in the pages of capitalist statute books, but in the living clash of irreconcilable class forces.

Today in South Africa the dividing line between legality and illegality has been eroded in various respects. With the balance of class forces currently tilted in favour of the working class, the class basis of bourgeois justice has been undermined as the strength of the working class has forced open certain semi-legal arenas of struggle.

The solid struggle of the Crossroads worker-community is one example of this. In the post-Soweto lull which preceded the re-emergence of mass struggle this year, the state was able literally to smash to the ground three huge squatter communities within a few miles of Crossroads.

## Combativity

But the determination and combativity of the Crossroads workers, coupled with the widespread mood



Crossroads



Black youth in revolt, 1978

of solidarity for their struggle throughout the black working class, forced the state to back down and officially recognise the existence of Crossroads last year.

## 'Legalise'

What was illegal in 1978 was 'legalised' in 1979 through nothing other than the revolutionary pressure of the working class.

Likewise this year's nationwide campaign for the release of political prisoners including Nelson Mandela is another example of how the working class has begun to, as it were, appropriate the law—to take

the law into its own hands in struggle.

Whereas a couple of years ago any indication of open support for the illegal petty-bourgeois nationalist organisations and their leaders in prison would have landed one a lengthy jail term, today the bourgeois media in South Africa brazenly publishes the programme of the ANC while thousands sign an open petition supporting the release of Mandela.

Although these actions are illegal in the statute books, the huge combativity of the working class has forced them, for the moment at least, into the grey area of semi-legal

activity.

Again and again in struggle, the workers break through the repressive 'legal' parameters and establish in fact the semi-legalisation of an illegal action.

## Threatened

Of course, all the gains forced by the working class in this way stand threatened by the treacherous reformist politics of their pro-capitalist ANC and PAC leaderships.

While the working class has thrown its class weight behind the demand for the release of all political prisoners by raising it in struggle alongside demands

over wages, jobs, housing and transport, the petty bourgeois nationalists have sought to transform it into a single-issue campaign of petitions and declarations to the racist government.

They have found ample support for this orientation amongst the big bourgeoisie and their liberal mouthpieces who were quick to recognise the qualitative difference between a campaign orchestrated by the black petty-bourgeoisie and a demand emerging alongside others from the struggles of black workers.

By wresting the demand for the release of political prisoners from the workers' struggle the petty bourgeois-



South African riot police



ie not only undermines the only class force capable of realising the demand but also boosts its own sagging political credentials.

Unable to provide any leadership itself to the workers' struggle in South Africa, the petty-bourgeoisie actively seeks to turn workers away from their own independent strength towards passively awaiting their liberation from their leaders-in-absentia and the guerrilla forces responsive to them.

Like Jackson, the petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership of the ANC and PAC seek only to reform capitalism in South Africa, to strip it of its racist vestiges and to clothe it in the acceptable garments of bourgeois 'democracy'.

They don't want to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie—they aim simply to share power with the bourgeoisie in the same way as Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

Only a Trotskyist party, basing itself irreconcilably on the independent interests and strength of the black working class, can smash these reformists' obstacles in South Africa and lead the workers' struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and a socialist Southern Africa.

Build the South African Trotskyist party as a section of the reconstructed Fourth International.

# PRESS GANG



After the Lord Mayor's show—the dustcart of the Tory Party conference.

Half arrogant, half frightened, the representatives of the bourgeoisie gathered behind the army of police at Brighton to drive away their doubts and fears with rallying speeches and jingoistic songs.

The press had wiped the froth and blood of Blackpool from their typewriters and sat down to interpret the bland facade of agreement that was served up at Brighton.

Their difficulties were considerable. The conference is more difficult to interpret than developments within the Politburo. Who sits next to whom? Who joined in the applause? How long did the standing ovation last? These are the kind of questions which the political commentators needed to ask.

A stopwatch, a clapperboard and a sharp eye for facial expressions are the vital tools of this trade—rather like a glorified version of a television talent

show. Thatcher's impact on the conference was measured by the length of the standing ovation (6½ minutes—a marked decline on last year when Thatcher was unveiled with the same pomp and ceremony as the Metro is getting this year).

Controversy is measured only by the size of majorities.

The Tories' immigration policy for example was approved 'only' by a 75% majority—a marked decline on the routine 95% majorities on other issues.

Even the most loyal and servile hacks find it hard to convert such warmed over sycophancy into stirring copy.

One delegate calling for the sacking of Joseph and the return of Heath; two Right to Work demonstrators challenging the conference—such were the incidents around which they had to build.

Despite the fulsome praise heaped by the *Sun*, *Express* and *Mail* ('This lady's not for turning' is not after all much of

a joke) there were distinct signs of nervousness therefore in the coverage of the conference, which itself was a reflection of the nervousness of the Tories themselves.

### Television

Of course it is possible to try to take the Tory conference neat, by watching it on television.

This is not advisable for those of a nervous disposition and on no account should be attempted without careful training.

For six months or so before the conference would-be viewers are advised to prepare by listening to bits of Radio 4's Any Questions, starting with five or ten minutes at a time and slowly building up to the point where they can not only take Any Questions but Any Answers as well.

If this produces strange side-effects, smash your radio, see your doctor and cancel your order at the newsagents.



Over 2,000 police from six constabularies formed a massive cordon to shield the Tories from a protest lobby of 6,000 trade unionists and unemployed. Teams of police photographers lined the balcony, while other squads, and growling dogs, were held in reserve.

A special report by John Lister

# WAVE AT TORY

As Tory leaders stand firm not only against the demands of the working class but also against the increasingly anguished pleas for relief from bankrupt businessmen and anxious industrialists in their own ranks, their annual conference reverberated to the sound of clichés of patriotism, anti-communism and exploitation.

It was a case of "us" (no, not the Tories—they really mean us!) getting our noses to the grindstone, shoulders to the wheel, getting our fingers out

and our chins up, putting our backs into it, grasping the nettle and standing on our own two feet—an uncomfortable gymnastic exercise at the best of times!

### Vandals

Meanwhile the prosperous middle class and aristocratic vandals who are demanding Thatcher press ahead with her destruction of social services and nationalised industries, and "Cruise On" with the lethal new weaponry of nuclear war will grin and bear it, even if their professionally stiff upper lips could be seen to droop slightly each time a speaker was impolite enough to refer to the

problems of small businesses under Thatcher.

It was only in such smaller trifles that even a ripple of the real world emerged to ruffle the placid surface of a conference so bureaucratically stage-managed it made Brezhnev's Politbureau look like a model of free speech and democracy.

Every "chap" knew that his speech had to contribute to the greater good, rather than expressing personal anxiety at the chaos and devastation unleashed on all sides by Thatcher's team of monetarist maniacs.

That's why it was such bad form of that fellow Milburn to come to the rostrum—dressed in overalls!—and whine about



Maude with number one liability Sir Keith Joseph

## Maude blurts it out

Tory publicity chief Angus Maude made the following points:

I sometimes get a little peeved at people who say, "Why do we only see and hear Opposition speakers on television and radio, and hardly any Conservatives?" Not to put too fine a point on it, that assertion is absolute poppycock. I know by precisely how many the number of Conservative spokesmen appearances on radio and television has outnumbered those by the Opposition, and the figures might surprise you. However, since I do not want to start a lot of aggro from the Socialists I shall keep them to myself".

"When all that is said, you have to face on the doorsteps a lot of complaints. The reason is simple enough, and you know it. People just do not like the effects on them of what the Government has had to do, plus the impact of a major world recession. And why should they? How can anyone be expected to like the reality or the threat of unemployment, or high interest rates, or higher energy prices, higher rents and rates, prescription charges and the rest? They do not like them and you cannot make them".

"Please don't go around just telling people that it is all their own fault, or even that it is all for their own good. I really do not recommend that approach

to the young man or woman who desperately wants a job and cannot find one, or to the man who has just seen the business he built up from scratch go bust. That sort of tactlessness is at best divisive, and at the worst it may get you a punch on the nose".



Conference 'representatives' pass through the police checkpoint

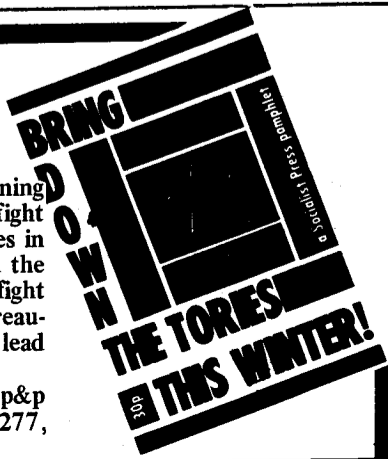


A section of the massive demonstration that assembled outside the Brighton conference

## OUT NOW

New pamphlet explaining why it is necessary to fight to bring down the Tories in the coming months and the need to take up a fight against the union bureaucracy who refuse to lead that struggle.

Price 42p including p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.





'Oh look, dear, are those some unemployed over there?'  
'I don't know, mummy, I've never seen one before'



# OF CLICHES CONFERENCE

unemployment.

After all, as one Birmingham back bencher complained on his way home, every Tory activist knows full well the bitter hostility to their recessionary policies.

"They really give me some stick in the pubs and clubs round our area," he told a fellow party worker from the

North West," after all, they're all getting laid off or made redundant."

"I know," replied his companion, "the main firm up our way is on a one-day week!"

Tory delegates (or "representatives", as they prefer to be called) did not travel to Brighton to hear of such problems. They encounter them

every day.

They went to hear ministers one after the other get up to reassure them that they "will not flinch", that they "must succeed", and warn chillingly of the "totalitarian utopia" that the Labour conference has supposedly threatened to bring about if they fail.

the most grotesquely revolting. Sporting such badges as "Double the Cuts!", "Cruise On" and "Khomeini is a Shit", they emerged as some of the most bloodthirsty advocates of capital punishment, anti-union laws and Cold War.

They must have been well pleased with the sabre rattling speech from Defence Secretary Francis Pym, who assured the conference that Tory plans—at a time of draconian cuts in social services—include a new tank, new armoured personnel carrier and additional self-propelled guns for the army; new ships and weapons for the Navy and the Tornado strike aircraft.

## Platitudes

They came to hear a range of platitudes, back-slapping, and grovelling compliments to Thatcher that made even the seasoned hacks on the press benches wince, grimace, and at times even giggle uncontrollably.

They came to read out hackneyed speeches of a uniform dullness and stupidity that made even the most incompetent speech at the Labour conference sound like the height of sincerity and eloquence.

Indeed so juvenile is the level of argument developed in the Tory "debates"—in which all the speakers both "for" and "against" the vague resolutions get up and either endorse government policies or urge them to go further and further in their attacks on the working class—that it is difficult to tell whether it is retarded adult Tories who draft the inanities mouthed by the "Young" Conservative speakers or sixth formers who write the speeches of the adults!

## Indictment

Certainly the pathetically weak intellectual content of the speeches is a crushing indictment of the level of education in the public schools and further testimony to the value of comprehensive education!

But in such a ludicrous gathering perhaps it is the "Young" Conservatives who are

## Gunboat

There were—albeit faint and rather ironic—echoes of the grand old days of British imperialism when the audience wildly applauded Pym's announcement that he had responded to the Gulf war by redeploying . . . well, not a fleet, perhaps, but one destroyer to the Gulf of Oman.

There was no laughter when he followed this by declaring that "we cannot leave it all to the Americans!"

Yet even Pym's ministry is feeling the financial pinch of Thatcher's monetarist policies—and was forced to admit that cash limits have brought about a temporary moratorium on lucrative arms contracts with which it greases the palms of some of the Tories' main industrial sponsors.

Well, as Chancellor Howe pointed out in yet another of an incessant flow of trite cliches, you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs—which is why it is best for the Tories not to count their chickens until they are hatched!

## Jenkin hails women's oppression

A glimpse of the sheer weight and scale of oppression suffered particularly by women in the home as a result of the continuing government cutbacks in health and social services was given by Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkin.

Speaking enthusiastically in support of a resolution which tacitly endorsed the cuts by stressing the importance of "voluntary" services, Jenkin went on to point out that:

"No speech on volunteers would be complete without a mention of the family, because the family is the biggest voluntary body of the lot . . . One of the gravest problems that we face in Britain is the rising number of very elderly people who suffer from dementia. I estimate that there are now some 700,000 such people in the country today—a formidable problem. Only 13,500 are being

cared for in hospital and, overwhelmingly, the rest are being looked after by their families in the community. It simply is not fair to accuse the modern family, as some do, of shuffling off its responsibilities on to the State. It does not. More elderly people today are being looked after by their families than at any time in our history, and it is right to remind ourselves of that".

In other words on these figures alone women in no less than 686,500 homes in Britain are saddled with the burden of full time care for elderly relatives, while hospital facilities continue to be slashed back.

As Jenkin pointed out "that is what our social philosophy is all about". And as nurseries are closed, and child care facilities axed, he stressed that this is no accident of policy.

"We do not strengthen the family by relieving parents of their responsibilities".



Scenes of somewhat synthetic ecstasy greet Thatcher's speech: as the clapping began to flag some old hands could be heard saying 'keep it up, we must put on a show for the press.'

# INVASIONS AND REVO

Recent months have seen the emergence of a campaign by two former Trotskyists, Robin Blick (a former member of the SLL/WRP and of the OCRFI's British 'Bulletin Group') and Adam Westoby (once a member of the Workers Socialist League) aimed at discrediting those who fight for revolutionary politics today by falsely establishing a link between the politics of Lenin and those of Stalin.

We take seriously the need to defend the revolutionary programme and tradition of Lenin, Trotsky, and the first four Congresses of the Communist International. The attack on these fundamentals by Blick and Westoby is a reflection of a trend of anti-communism at present rife within certain layers of the radical middle class: for this reason, and because the questions raised have a wide interest, we have given over two pages to an extended reply to their letter, which we published in last week's Socialist Press.

Blick and Westoby are prime examples of petty bourgeois intellectuals whose search for a "theoretical" basis to their anti-Leninism has brought them to reject the most basic concepts of Marxism.

As a result their letter offers us a pathetic attempt to link together and equate a succession of "invasions" each of which is separated in reality by total differences of objective situation, time and place.

Like any bourgeois commentator with two eyes Blick and Westoby are able to spot the superficial similarities: in each case troops from one country have crossed borders into another—there to exercise various degrees of control and forcible suppression.

But they leave out precisely the differences that make each of the examples they cite an important individual episode in the class struggle, necessitating individual study if it is to be fully understood.

In 1920, for instance, the Soviet Union was economically backward, war-exhausted, and militarily weak, facing the real immediate danger of counter-revolutionary reaction from the White Guard and the Imperialist countries and their agents.

Today the Soviet Union is industrialised, economically powerful, militarily strong and facing no real and immediate military threat which endangers its very existence, internally, or on its borders.

## Wilful distortion

Any attempt to equate actions from these two very different periods must stem either from ignorance or, as in the case of Blick and Westoby, both of whom have made in the past a considerable contribution to the understanding of Stalinism, a wilful distortion of history to justify their own present anti-communist positions.

Given the very real difficulties facing revolutionaries in developing a principled way

forward in adverse political conditions (sharply exacerbated by the Stalinist bureaucracy's counter-revolutionary invasion of Afghanistan) it is necessary to examine the invasions referred to by Westoby and Blick with a seriousness which their own anti-Leninism and hypocritical moralising does not itself warrant.

Serious socialists attracted by some of the ideas which they put forward should beware.

For beneath their apparent championing of the interests of the oppressed in Afghanistan is a deep suspicion of one of the central lessons of the working class in struggle and one of the cardinal political starting points of revolutionary Marxist politics—that without a revolutionary party, there can be no revolution.

Their apparent commitment to Marxist political principle is nothing more than a concentrated layer of flabby bourgeois moralism, coagulated by the chilling encounter of observing the way in which Soviet soldiers and workers are

being used as the cannon fodder in the murderous repression of Afghanistan in a misconceived defensive measure by the counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy.

## POLAND

In May 1920, just as the Civil War was draining the exhausted Red Army to a point where defeat by the counter-revolutionary White Army was a real and immediate threat, Pilsudski, the Polish Prime Minister entered into an anti-Soviet pact with the Ukrainian government.

On May 7 1920 Polish and Ukrainian armies invaded the Soviet Union and occupied Kiev.

In June, Red Army forces of Tukhachevsky and Budienny repulsed the attack and crossed the Polish border to continue their actions against the retreating invaders.

In mid July, the Polish Communists set up a provisional government in Bialystok.



Imperialist efforts to boost the Polish army were severely undermined by the refusal of Danzig dockers to unload arms shipments and by the pressure exerted on hesitant imperialist governments by international working class solidarity expressed through movements such as "Hands off Russia" in Britain.

The Red Army however proved unable to maintain this military effort against the Polish army and was forced to retreat, having advanced to near Warsaw.

Like any revolutionary concerned with the defence of revolutionary gains against counter-revolutionary attack, Trotsky had no objection to the Polish Army being defeated on Polish soil (the 'invasion' of Poland, according to Blick and Westoby).

## Military strength

Neither did he object in principle to utilising the military strength and victories of the Red Army over the forces of the Polish state to promote a workers revolution in Poland (the attempt to force upon Poland a revolution, according to Blick and Westoby).

For unlike Blick and Westoby, Trotsky realised the capacity and the necessity of international working class solidarity in defending and promoting working class gains and interests.

"We more than once announced the duty of the proletariat of countries in which the revolution had conquered to come to the aid of oppressed and insurrectionary classes, and that not only with ideas but if possible with arms.

Nor did we limit ourselves to announcements. We in our own time aided the workers of Finland, Latvia, Estonia and Georgia with armed force: we made an attempt to bring aid to the revolting Polish proletariat by the campaign of the Red Army against Warsaw. We sent organisers and commanders to the help of the Chinese in revolution. In 1926 we collected millions of roubles for the aid of the British strikers"

(*Revolution Betrayed* p285) But Trotsky also shows the problems of such actions:

"After the retreat of the Red Army from the vicinity of Warsaw in 1920 only a powerful wave of revolutionary protests prevented the Entente from coming to the aid of Poland and crushing the Soviets"

(*Ibid* p 187) The assessment of the actual balance of military and political forces led Trotsky—in disagreement with Lenin—to favour an early armistice, once the Polish invasion had been defeated.

"It would be easy to pick

out a number of my statements to the effect that, in the event that war was forced on us by Pilsudski, we would try not to stop half-way.

Such statements were the result of the entire setting. But to draw the conclusion from this that we wanted a war with Poland, or were even preparing it, is to lie in the face of facts and common sense.

We strained every effort to avoid that war... Even more perhaps than anyone else, I did not want this war because I realised only too clearly how difficult it would be to prosecute it after three years of continuous civil war... We sincerely wanted peace. Pilsudski imposed war on us... The Poles were rolled back with a velocity I never anticipated, since I could hardly believe the foolhardiness that actually lay at the bottom of Pilsudski's campaign.

But on our side too often our first major successes, the ideas of the possibilities that were opened to us became greatly exaggerated.

A point of view that the war which began as one of defence should be turned into an offensive and revolutionary war began to grow and acquire strength.

In principle of course, I could not possibly have any objection to such a course. The question was simply one of the correlation of forces. The unknown quantity was the attitude of the Polish workers and peasants.

Some of our Polish comrades such as the late J. Markhlevsky, a co-worker of Rosa Luxemburgs, weighed the situation very soberly. The former's estimation was an important factor in my desire to get out of the war as quickly as possible.

But there were other voices, too. There were high hopes of an uprising of the Polish workers. At any rate, Lenin fixed his mind on carrying the war to an end, up to the entry into Warsaw to help the Polish workers overthrow Pilsudski's government and seize the power"

(*My Life* pp456-6)

As Trotsky goes on to argue, Lenin believed that the defeat of the Polish army and the fall of Warsaw would be the decisive factor in triggering off a workers' insurrection.

## Assessment

While Stalin maintained his support for continuing the war even after retreat of the Soviet army, Lenin waited for a report from Trotsky who was sent to investigate the western front.

On the basis of Trotsky's assessment, Lenin changed his position and supported an immediate armistice.

This then is the reality of



Red Army leaders Budienny (left), Mikhail Frunze and Voroshilov in 1920

## The Blick/Westoby letter

74 Regina Road,  
London NW4  
12 August 1980

Dear Editor,

You have repeatedly invited discussion of the WSL and TILC's politics.

Brezhnev's war in Afghanistan remains front-page news in the world's press, yet for months *Socialist Press* has preserved a guilty *sotto voce*. The last substantial article, almost a fortnight after the Kabul uprising in February, was demonstrably written by two authors. The first half accurately described the mass uprising and the violence with which it was suppressed, helicopter gunships strafing unarmed crowds.

The second, shifting from facts to programme, recalled that Trotskyists defend the Red Army's presence and, from editorial safety, advised Afghans to 'unite' with them.

Your ambiguities are perplexing. You have said, more than once, that the Russians should not have gone in, but

now that they are there (and how!) they should stay, lest others (Afghans, perhaps?) fill the 'vacuum' that would be created by their too precipitate departure.

(Yet you have unaccountably failed to denounce the 'fifth column' which may yet force the rapid redeployment of the Red Army—the workers of Togliattigrad and Poland).

An organisation that prides itself on its Leninist-Trotskyist orthodoxy should have little difficulty in discovering the precedents for a more forthright defence of the Soviet subjugation of Afghanistan.

Has the WSL Executive forgotten the days of the 'healthy workers' state' in 1920 when Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin jointly attempted to force upon Poland precisely that 'revolution by foreign bayonets' that Marx condemned half a century before?

Has it overlooked the similar but more successful military annexation of Georgia in 1921?

And, last but not least, why

is the WSL so reticent concerning that classic dry run for Afghanistan: Lenin and Trotsky's 'satellitization' of Outer Mongolia?

The Red Army invaded Mongolia in 1921 and installed a government thickly laced with Soviet 'advisors'. Moscow had to intervene repeatedly to guarantee the subservience of the tiny Mongolian Party.

Most members of the 1921 cabinet were purged in 1922. At the August 1924 Congress Danzan, head of the Party and Congress chairman, was foolhardy enough to argue for a measure of independence from Moscow. Before the end of the Congress, with full Soviet approval, he had been removed and shot.

So the confusion of WSL members is understandable. They are befuddled on the one hand by the unqualified pro-Stalinist racism of such as the Spartacist tendency and on the other side by their own doubts

whether it is possible to carry people closer to socialism by napalming them.

Meantime the WSL leadership itself abdicates its theoretical responsibilities, failing to draw out the essential lessons of Lenin's pioneering role as 'proletarian' imperialist.

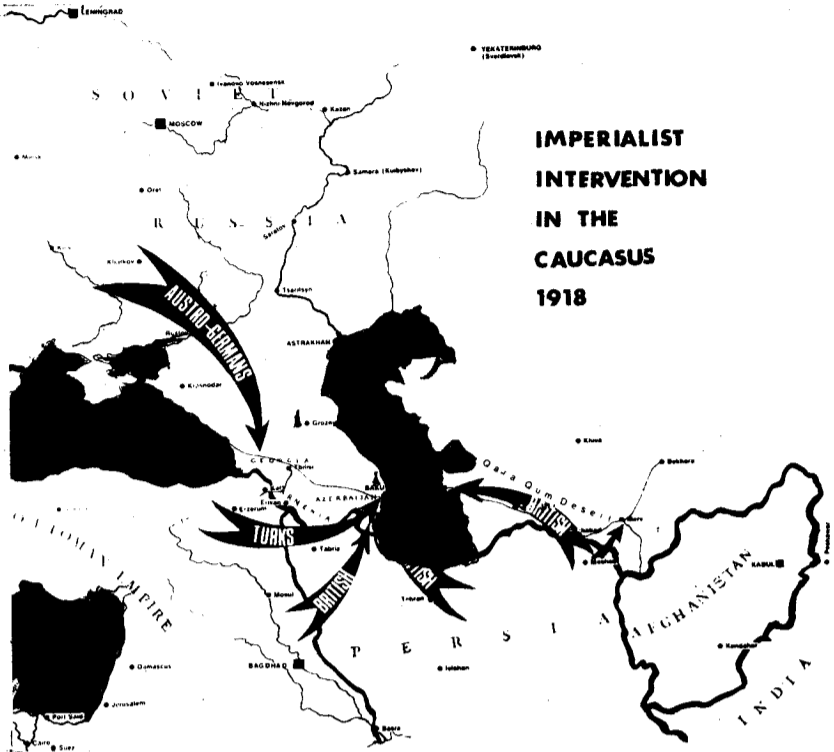
Trotsky's mature analysis of the USSR was as a 'counter-revolutionary workers' state'. But the concepts of dialectical science, you have reminded us, must be ever-mobile to escape extinction.

Forty years on, why no clear statement on the historic gains embodied in the expansion of the 'genocidal workers' state'?

Adam Westoby  
Robin Blick

# REVOLUTIONARY POLITICS

## НА ЗАЩИТУ ПЕТРОГРАДА!



IMPERIALIST INTERVENTION IN THE CAUCASUS 1918

(left) 'Stand up and defend Petrograd!', Bolshevik poster, October 1919.

German government against the Turkish, led to the occupation of Georgia by German troops as a protection against Turkish claims.

At the end of the world imperialist war, British troops occupied Georgia. In 1919, the Georgian Mensheviks appealed for an imperialist mandate (through the League of Nations) over the Transcaucasian region, under British control.

But world imperialism staked its hopes on the White Army (troops of which under Denikin were occupying the territory bordering on Georgia to the north) and British troops were pulled out at the end of 1919.

At a time when the Soviet workers' state faced the full onslaught of the imperialist-backed White counter-revolution, the Georgian Mensheviks were offering an open door to imperialism.

In a situation of mortal danger to the workers' state, the Red Army moved into Georgia in May 1920.

But the invasion of the workers' state by Polish-Ukraine forces that same month led to a withdrawal of the Red Army units while Moscow concentrated its efforts on repelling the invaders.

The Red Army moved in again in February 1921 and toppled the Menshevik government with the aid of the Georgian communists.

The forceful sovietisation of Georgia was undertaken by the Soviet Republic as a necessary act of self defence by a revolutionary workers' state under imperialist siege.

In the same way that workers in strikes against big capitalists may cause the bankruptcy of small capitalist concerns, the revolutionary workers' state in military struggle against imperialism may be forced by imperialist aggression to violate the independence of small states.

The tactical decision to invade and sovietise Georgia flowed from the over-riding task of safeguarding the socialist revolution that had been accomplished.

Lenin called for the subordination of policy in Georgia to the control of the Georgian Communist Revkom under Makhardadze; for the arming of the workers and poorest peasants of Georgia; and for maximum flexibility in concessions to the petty traders, peasants and intelligentsia.

'The Soviet Republic in 1921 peacefully sovietized Georgia which constituted an open gateway for imperialist assault in the Caucasus.

From the standpoint of the principles of national self-determination a good deal might have been said in objection to such sovietisation.

From the standpoint of extending the arena of socialist revolution, military intervention in a peasant country was more than a dubious act.

From the standpoint of the self defence of the workers' state surrounded by enemies, forceful sovietisation was justified: the safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal democratic principles.

World imperialism for a long time utilised the question of violence in Georgia, as the rallying cry in mobilising world public opinion against the Soviets.

The Second International took the lead in this campaign. The Entente aimed at the preparation of a possible new military intervention against the Soviets.'

(In Defence of Marxism p 173) While unequivocally defending the right and the absolute necessity for the forceful sovietisation of Georgia, Trotsky, with the increasingly expressed support of Lenin, was to sharply attack the bureaucratic method and chauvinist attitude with which Stalin, as Commissar of Nationalities took up the specific problems and questions posed by Sovietisation.

In response to a challenge,

we have examined the bogus historical "parallels" cited by Blick and Westoby. We have answered their allegations that the early Bolsheviks in fact nurtured neo imperialist ambitions.

But for revolutionaries, who unlike Blick and Westoby still uphold Trotsky's denial of the process of degeneration of the workers' state under the Stalinist bureaucracy there is a far more important political difference which makes the simple drawing of parallels between the 'invasions' totally misleading.

For whatever the appearance, there can be no genuine similarity between measures taken to defend the gains and interests of the working class, and those taken to defend the benefits and caste interests of the parasitic bureaucracy.

Nothing in revolutionary Marxism suggests that there is anything unprincipled in crossing borders to defeat counter-revolution, or to aid and promote workers' revolution.

But everything in revolutionary Marxism shows that the Stalinist bureaucracy seeks to defend its own caste interests through class collaboration and oppression which hold back, and are directed against workers revolution.

It is precisely because the military action of the Bolshevik government was necessary to defend the gains of the October revolution and the interests of the working class that we defend them, and it is precisely because the invasion of Afghanistan was undertaken to protect the Soviet bureaucracy from a self-perceived threat, at the expense of workers' interests, that we oppose it.

Unlike Blick and Westoby, the WSL approaches questions and problems of class struggle, not merely to announce principles, and evaluate as right or wrong what has already occurred.

We seek to develop an intervention and perspective which, drawing on the lessons of class struggle, can provide militants and workers in each situation a way forward; to turn the adverse conditions persistently imposed on them by imperialism and Stalinism to the maximum possible advantage of the working class and its oppressed allies.

The war in Afghanistan, imposed upon workers and peasants by Stalinism, imperialism, petty bourgeois nationalism and feudal reactionaries does not serve and cannot serve the interests of either Soviet or Afghani fighters and workers. A return to the status quo (if it were possible) is a return to exactly that set of political factors out of which the war actually grew.

The only way forward is one which politically confronts the counter revolutionary leaderships which have imposed this war.

The basis of the WSL position thus lies in taking up the adverse circumstances as they actually are and developing demands which provide a way forward against the counter revolutionary leaderships which have imposed this war.

It is only by forging links, on the basis of their common objective interests against their existing leaderships, that a way forward from the adverse circumstances imposed on them exists for both Afghani and Soviet.

In their trite "similarities", Blick and Westoby not surprisingly fail to draw out the one central similarity and lesson which is common to the invasions they falsely equate: the task of moving forward from adverse political conditions is a task which can only be taken up by the united strength and solidarity of workers against the leaderships which divide them to the point of war, and on the basis of the common independent interests which unite all workers.

## MONGOLIA

In the autumn of 1920, Baron Ungern-Steinberg, a White Guard general, invaded Outer Mongolia and captured Urga, the principle town in February 1921.

With the support of Japanese imperialists and reactionary Chinese militarists, he exerted a brutal rule over the Mongolians which was characterised by almost inconceivable oppression.

Partisan Mongolian groups had been organised, initially in opposition to the military dictatorship of General Sui-Si-Sehin [leader of An Fu which controlled Northern China] and later against Izin Gun [after An Fu lost control in mid 1920].

Those military dictatorships were exercised with the collaboration of Mongolian feudal dukes, who had accepted the invaders' rule in return for guarantees of feudal privilege.

When Ungern Steinberg, sponsored by the Japanese, invaded Outer Mongolia the Mongolian partisans turned their struggle against the White Guard.

In March 1921 a popular government was organised by the partisans in Khalkha.

Spearheaded by the Mongolian Peoples Party formed at the beginning of

1920 from two nationalist groups), a majority within the partisan government favoured turning to the Red Army for aid against the White Guard.

With the successful defeat of counter revolutionary armies in Siberia, the Red Army moved into Mongolia to attack Ungern-Steinberg who, with Japanese support, was preparing his own attack into Siberia.

Fighting alongside forces of the partisan government, units of the Red Army participated in the defeat of Ungern Steinberg in June 1921.

Numbers of White Guard detachments remained in Outer Mongolia—under General Bakitch, Colonel Karagrandi, General Resvonkin, Colonel Karansev, Kitargorodov and others. The Red Army continued to co-operate with the Mongolians in the war against those bands.

In November 1921, a Mongolian Peoples Republic was proclaimed. The fact that units of the Red Army remained in Mongolia and that there was massive Soviet influence does not mean as Blick and Westoby imply, that they did so as oppressors against the interests of the oppressed classes in Mongolia.

With Outer Mongolia having been historically divided between competing Russian, Chinese and Japanese capitalists, and the country almost completely economically backward, there could of course be no 'Mongolian independence' which did not involve extremely developed economic ties with at least one of these relative economic powers.

## Won support

By sending substantial military aid to the Mongolians in their struggles against the Japanese, Chinese and White Guard, and by ushering in a new set of economic ties, based on renouncing all Tsarist treaties, property and the exploitative benefits accruing from them, the Bolsheviks and the Red Army won the political support of layers of militants, particularly in the youth section of the party.

They moved from the national struggle to embrace the socialist programme through which alone the material interests of workers and poor peasants, mobilised under the banner of nationalist slogans, could actually be met.

It is worth noting that the workers' state was able to offer real material aid, even at a time when its own existence was militarily threatened and its own economy backward and drained by the imperialist and Civil Wars.

And though the revolu-

tionary Third International, the Soviet leadership was central in acquiring from Sun Yat Sen assurances that he would not pursue the imperialist Chinese claims to Outer Mongolia.

We have no precise reliable information concerning the 'reported interventions' by Moscow to guarantee subservience, the 1922 purges; and the execution of Danzan referred to by Blick and Westoby.

In particular, we have found no information which supports Blick and Westoby's implications that there was mass resistance [or indeed, any resistance, save from individuals and reactionary social layers] to the presence of Soviet troops, advisors and political influence.

As revolutionary Marxists, we would indeed expect, what to Blick and Westoby must clearly be unthinkable, that oppressed peasants and workers would welcome troops, advisers and influence from a state and a party irrevocably committed to prosecuting the interests of oppressed classes.

Danzan was executed. But we have been unable to find any evidence which suggests that this was due to arguing for a measure of independence from Moscow.

As a previous Minister of Finance, he was charged with collusion with Orlev (Tsarist representative) and with aiding Chinese merchants in extracting debts.

In the absence of concrete information to the contrary, we tend to think that the mass oppression, bureaucratic control and disregard for socialist principles with which Blick and Westoby accuse the Bolsheviks are to be explained more in terms of Blick and Westoby's own receptivity to anti Leninism, than actual historical fact.

## GEORGIA

Together with Armenia and Azerbaijan, Georgia formed the Transcaucasian territory, an oil and mineral rich region between the Black and Caspian Seas.

The Georgian republic, set up in 1918 under a Menshevik government, covered two provinces of former Tsarist Russia.

Three quarters of the Georgian population was peasant, and the Mensheviks secured a level of peasant support through a limited land reform.

The Menshevik government banned the Georgian Communist Party in 1918 and carried out severe repressions against communists. They continually looked to the imperialist powers to preserve their bourgeois republic.

In 1918 a deal with the

what Blick and Westoby denounce as Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin's joint attempt to force a revolution by foreign bayonets through an invasion.

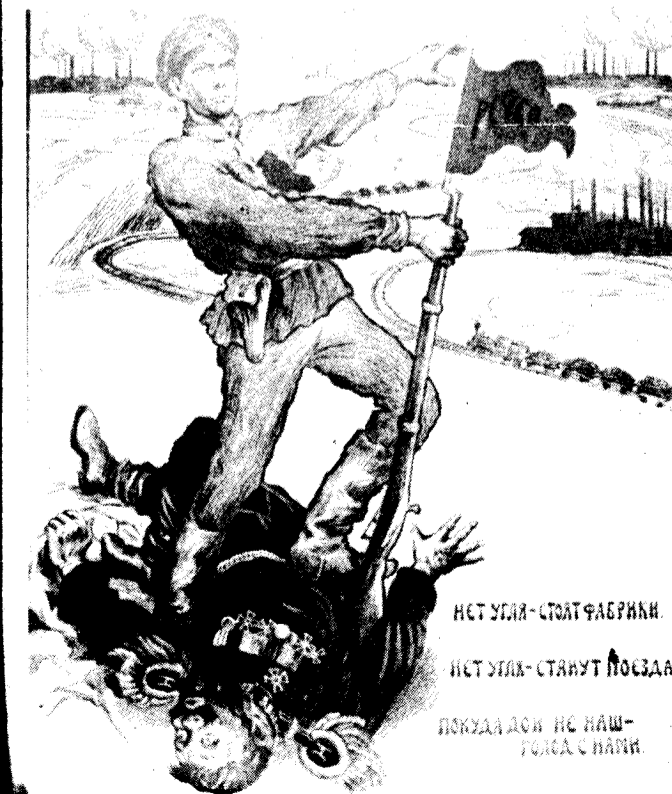
It was a defensive war, imposed on the Soviet Union. Even if Blick and Westoby are reluctant to concede its legitimacy and necessity in defending the very existence of the workers' state, surely they will at least extend their declaration of the right of Afghanistan to defend itself against foreign aggression to the Soviet Union?

## Hostility

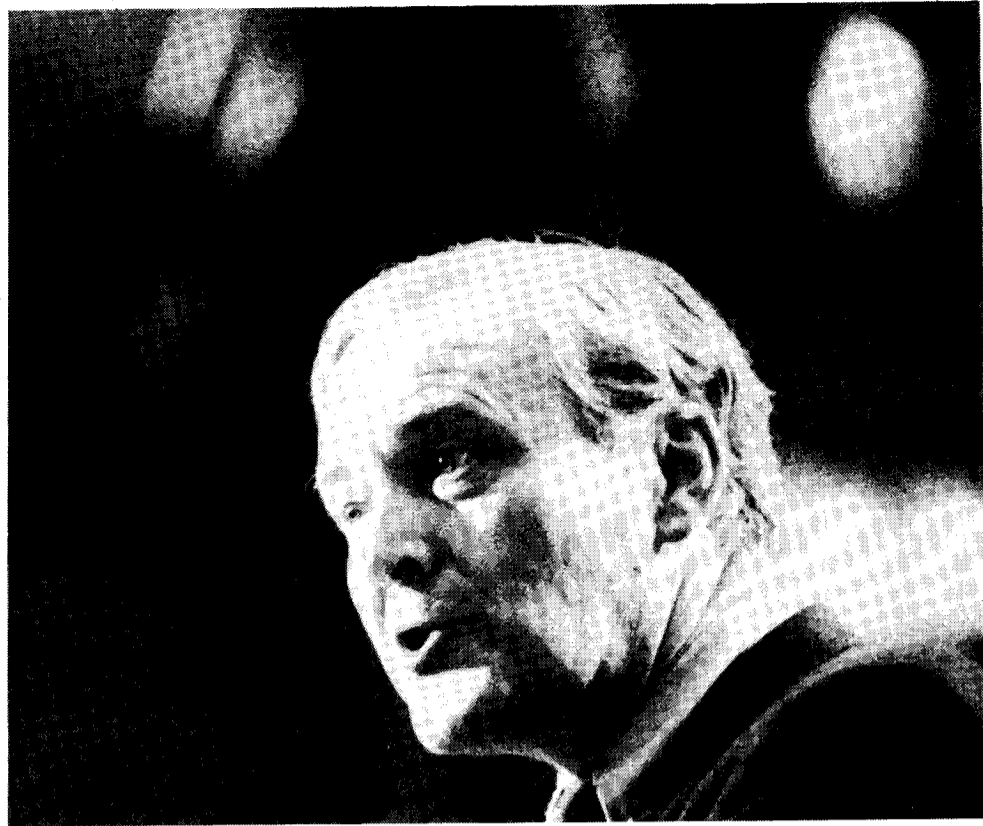
Or has their hostility to Leninism and the gains of the Bolshevik revolution led them to deny that right only to nations in which the working class has followed the banner of Marxism to the seizure of power?

As an effort to turn the initial defence into an offensive, aimed at aiding the Polish working class to seize power, the 'invasion' stands condemned only by virtue of the fact that it was misconceived—and founded on a wrong assessment of the balance of forces.

Aiding workers to seize power with whatever resources can be mustered is not only consistent with every principle of revolutionary Marxism—it is a clear responsibility of every revolutionary Marxist.



'Workers Coal Must be Ours!', 1919



Heffer on Tribune platform; Benn: the Parliamentary 'lefts' are finding themselves overtaken by demands for action to defeat Tories

# AFTER BLACKPOOL: WHERE NEXT?

## Readers' letters and a reply

Dear Comrades,

Earlier this year, *Socialist Press* published a series of articles by me on the counter-revolutionary history of social democracy. In those articles, using the examples of Germany in 1919, the General Strike in Britain, the international crises of the late 20s and early 30s I tried to show the way in which reformism's commitment to a gradual evolution towards socialism within the continuing framework of a capitalist society has historically driven social democrats to line up with their own bourgeoisie against the working class.

Your article on the Labour Party conference raises, I think, a number of fundamental questions for Trotskyists, not least on the role of centrism.

To describe the events at Blackpool as being evidence of the emergence of a mass anti-capitalist movement within the organised working class is both somewhat premature and also politically rather dangerous.

What we saw at Blackpool was a confused expression of the frustration and anger within the working class and the recognition which has begun to develop amongst sections of workers that the right wing leadership inside the Labour

Party do not represent any formal alternative to Thatcher and the Tories.

Essentially that was the lesson drawn at Blackpool from the experience of the last Labour government. But being anti-EEC and unilateralist does not yet constitute anti-capitalism.

This empirical rejection of the bankrupt policies of the Callaghan clique does not however necessarily constitute the emergence of a mass anti-capitalist movement although that possibility certainly exists as part of that process.

### Confines

At present the search for solutions remains firmly within the confines of bourgeois parliamentarism.

In practice the political confusion of the rank and file members expresses itself in the capacity of hardened centrists like Benn to head off and channel working class hostility into a series of reforms inside the Labour Party which would create conditions for the carrying out of the 'lefts' alternative economic strategy, which is itself formulated within the context of the continuation of

the capitalist system.

Benn's politics remain those of social democracy at the point when it betrayed the class struggle to line up with its own ruling class in the First World War.

### Phased withdrawal

His support for a phased withdrawal of troops from Ireland rests on no principle but rather the same sort of tactical assessments which lead him to argue for import controls.

As a consequence of this the central task for revolutionaries in this particular period must be to challenge the rights of the centrists to lead the labour movement.

That Benn and co should find it both possible and desirable to line up with Moss Evans at Blackpool as Evans arrived hot-foot from the betrayal of the Adwest strike shows clearly the counter-revolutionary content of the machinations amongst the upper echelons of the labour movement.

For class fighters today what is fundamental is not the potential for a mass anti-capitalist movement but the necessity to arm that movement with a programme which begins from the

independent interests of the working class.

I would suggest therefore that rather than being rolled over with enthusiasm for what happened at Blackpool, *Socialist Press* ought to be raising some questions about what didn't happen!

Fraternally,  
Colin Morrow  
Leicester



Callaghan

### EDITOR'S REPLY

Have comrades Morrow and William G. actually read the articles in *Socialist Press* 218 to which their letters apparently refer?

The question is worth asking because they solemnly inform us as if for the first time, of a series of points which were in fact clearly contained within the original articles, while on the other hand they appear almost willfully to leave out perhaps the most crucial element in our assessment.

Our articles of course gave no revolutionary credentials to Tony Benn: *Socialist Press* would not even grant him the status of "hardened centrist" allotted to him by comrades Morrow and William G.

### Social democrat

We make it clear that Benn remains a left talking social democrat, whose quest for reforms and socialism legislated through parliament mean that he stands, quite openly, opposed to the necessary mass strike action to bring down the Tories.

Unlike comrades Morrow and William G, however, we also take notice of the fact that Benn's left rhetoric and fight for important democratic reforms within the Labour Party have reinforced illusions amongst large sections of workers that such politics can lead to socialism.

We therefore point, (particularly in our inside page article) to the kind of approach necessary to show workers the falsity of these illusions.

While there is of course a certain abstract historical validity in equating Benn's positions today with those of the social democrats prior to World War I it is unlikely that such literary denunciations and extravagant comparisons are likely to change the thinking of more than a tiny handful of workers.

*Socialist Press* 218 on the other hand pointed out that, in terms of a willingness to mount tangible action to defeat the

Tories, particularly around the cuts question, broad layers of Labour activists showed themselves at the Blackpool conference to have gone already way beyond Benn's parliamentary, propagandist perspective.

In the next period the further development of this conflict—through the fight in practice for strikes, occupations and a stand by Labour councils against the cuts—can bring workers in large numbers face to face with the political limitations of Benn and his fellow left-talkers, in a situation where revolutionaries can spell out clearly the necessity for an alternative leadership.

As our front page article pointed out:

"... the next period offers the best conditions to put such leaders to the test; by their willingness or refusal to fight for extra-parliamentary action to defeat the Tories; by their willingness or refusal to press home the gains of the Blackpool conference and drive out the right wing leadership, workers can quickly assess the real character of those who now put themselves forward as opponents of the Callaghan gang.

We offer our full support to every step forward taken by the lefts in the fight for united class action to bring down Thatcher; at the same time we fight consistently against the limited policies of the Labour left, to win support for the kind of programme that is vital to defend the interests of the working class in the next period.

In this way we seek to win the most principled sections of trade unionists and Labour activists to the fight for a new, revolutionary, leadership in the labour movement."

In telling us that we must build such a leadership, oppose Benn's politics and fight for a revolutionary programme, comrades Morrow and William G. tell us nothing we did not clearly say ourselves last week: what they signally leave out is any appreciation of how or under what new political conditions, these tasks must be carried out!

Dear Comrades,

Your reports of the Labour Party conference at Blackpool in SP218 contain, I think, some rather dangerous political formulations. I refer to the headline 'Victory at Labour Party Conference' and the article on page five which begins 'Telling confirmation of the emergence of a mass anti-capitalist current within the British labour movement was offered by this year's Labour Party conference.'

As revolutionaries we must be clear on what precisely the nature of this "victory" was. Benn and Co., in creating the conditions for the removal of

the Callaghan/Healey clique from the leadership, failed to in any way link this to the necessary mass action of the working class to bring down the Tory government.

Benn and Co's moves at Blackpool represent, I feel, not such a victory for a working class prepared to fight but lacking the political leadership necessary to overthrow capitalism, but rather a victory for hardened centrists, like Benn, to channel and divert the energies and strength of the working class into a fight for reforms inside the Labour Party and the continuation of capitalism in the guise of the alternative

economic strategy.

On the question of the "mass anti-capitalist movement" we must recognise that while the Labour Party conference expressed the hostility of the working class both to the Tories and to Callaghan, the emerging mass movement remains fundamentally an anti-Tory movement. It is the task of revolutionaries to turn it into an anti-capitalist movement!

This can only be done by arming the working class with a programme starting from the independent interests of the working class and by the building of the organs of working class power which

cannot only bring down the Tories but prepare the way for the taking of power.

This means building councils of action, uniting struggles in every area against the Tories as the prelude for the creation of soviets, not with the limited objective of "creating the conditions for ousting Callaghan from the leadership of the Labour Party" (and presumably replacing him with a "left" Bennite government?) but to lay the foundations for a workers' government.

Yours fraternally,  
William G.  
Leicester



# Irish women fight for right to choose

By Mary Wilson

An estimated 9,000 Irish women each year travel to England for the abortions they are denied in the Republic.

Nevertheless, the abortion issue has only recently begun to be debated in public. The organised opposition of the Catholic Church is such that for years the subject has been swept under the carpet, condemned out of hand from the pulpit and its confessional.

Up to now, the 'Wellwoman Clinic' in Dublin has enabled women in the Republic to obtain the abortions they need by referring them to English private clinics and arranging travel and accommodation for them.

This, of course, cannot be a free service and creates difficulties for women with low incomes.

Even so, the Wellwoman (which deals with all aspects of women's health) has found itself unable to cope with the demand for their abortion referral

service.

A couple of weeks ago, seven women in Dublin got together to form a 'Right to Choose Group' which as well as planning to campaign for contraceptive rights and choice on abortion, has already set up its own abortion referral centre.

## Donations

This is funded by donations, and now has a full time organiser and trained staff.

The campaign for abortion rights within the Republic has only just started. Already the question has been raised, tempestuously, in the National Union of Journalists, which organises in the Republic as well as in the UK.

Right wing members objected to the Union's pro-choice policy, demanding that it should not be applicable to the Republic!

The campaign for the right to abortion must now be carried into other British-based unions which have a pro-choice policy

—and into the wider Irish labour movement.

Support for its referral centre must also be sought from Dublin Trades Council, although at this early stage it is not likely to be immediately forthcoming.

Indeed even some of the small feminist groups in Dublin do not have a pro-choice policy for fear of alienating women.

Not only is the abortion issue hotly disputed, but the Church and state are both organising against contraception and the Family Planning Clinics.

These at present are technically legal, operating a loophole in existing legislation—since it is illegal to sell contraceptives they just give them away, and survive on donations alone.

## Legislation

Haughey's new Bill aims to put an end to this: clinics which refuse to comply with the new legislation will have to organise support from the women who use their service and from the wider labour movement if they

are to survive.

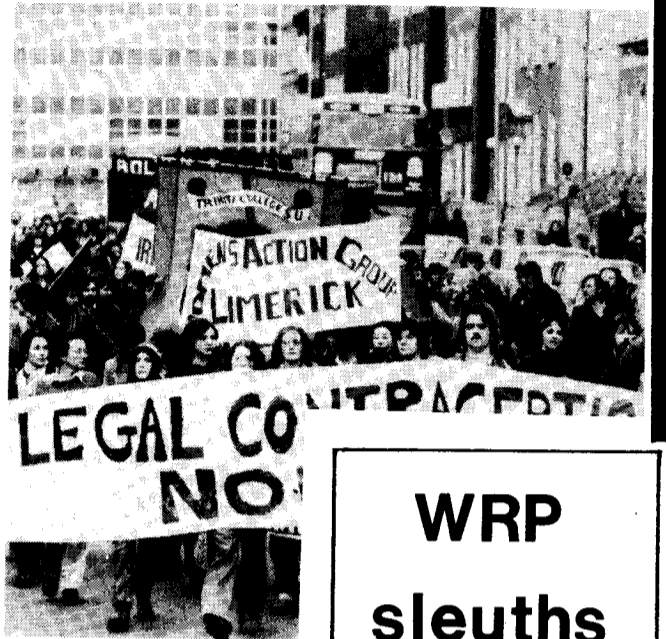
Needless to say, this is a class issue. Irish women, like women elsewhere, can evade anti-contraception and anti-abortion legislation if they have the money.

## Status quo

Indeed, the fact that England is so near, relatively, is commonly used as an argument for not fighting the status quo at home.

Both these issues will be on the agenda for the meeting of the 'International Abortion, Contraception and Sterilisation Campaign' which is meeting in Dublin on 18-19 October at the invitation of the 'Right to Choose Group'.

It is vital that, from this meeting, the referral clinic and the family planning clinics get the active support they need from Irish women and the Irish labour movement.



Dublin march

**WRP sleuths wrong again!**

Dear Editor,

Thank you for your courtesy in publishing my review of 'The Young Trotsky'. I would like, if I may, to use your columns again to reply to some of the hysterical reaction to my review as expressed by WRP leader Alex Mitchell in Saturday's *Newsline*.

Mitchell takes a full page to reply to me: yet he concentrates on a mere three paragraphs which mention the WRP.

Applying all the skills and training he accumulated as a Fleet Street hack, Mitchell endeavours to denigrate and misrepresent every word in my three paragraphs.

It would take a large pamphlet to reply to every one of Mitchell's falsehoods: I will deal only with the most important.

First, he wrongly identifies me with the Editor of *Socialist Press*—quite a blunder for the ace "investigator"!

Second, Mitchell asks why if the Eastman pamphlet has "attracted deservedly little critical attention" I have renewed it at all.

It seems he has not read even to the end of the first column of part one, where I explained the educational value of such a study.

This brings me to the third point. Mitchell defends Eastman's pamphlet as "essential for the education of the youth of today". Let us ask, if *Newsline* and the WRP are so concerned to educate the youth, why they have failed to review the Eastman pamphlet themselves? And why have they also failed to review a number of other recent WRP publications—such as Trotsky's 'Report of the Siberian Delegation', 'Our Political Tasks' and Volume 2 of the 'Military Writings', as well as Sedov's 'Red Book' (the last of which they have not even advertised).

This inability to review even his own party's material presumably accounts for Mitchell's inability to understand my review!

At no point do I seek to link the right wing anti-communism of Eastman with the WRP's capitulation to petty bourgeois nationalism, even though, as in Iraq and Iran, the result is often the same.

Finally, Mitchell's assessment of Eastman as "never a Marxist" contrasts with Cannon's statement "The first American Trotskyist was undoubtedly Max Eastman".

Yours fraternally,  
Ernie Stubbins

# THE MINER'S DAUGHTER

This film is really about Loretta Lyn, the "first lady of country music". But it begins as a picture of the life of a Kentucky coal miner, his wife and daughter.

For Loretta, the daughter, the only way out of grinding poverty and misery is to break out of her home environment.

The hard work, the killer dust from the mine, the low wages all spent in the company store, are well depicted in the film.

One memorable scene highlights the poverty of the family as the camera moves from the darkness of the mine to the darkness of the house in which the wife is at work.

The children wear shoes only in the winter, and it is a big treat for Loretta when, at the age of 14, she gets a new dress.

Their only entertainment is an occasional barn dance and the 'Grand Ol' Opry' on the radio.

But even in this film which focusses on one person who escaped from poverty there is the tendency—all too evident in country music—to take pride in poverty.

Loretta's husband, fresh out of the army, declares that he is not going to be a miner—though he wants to stay with Loretta.

It takes a moonshiner (soon to be shot dead) to point out to him that in the harsh world of the Kentucky mountains "if you don't become a miner you either moonshine or move on down the line". He is forced to become a miner.

They get married—and Loretta starts having the first of her four children. She is headed down the same course as her heavily oppressed mother.

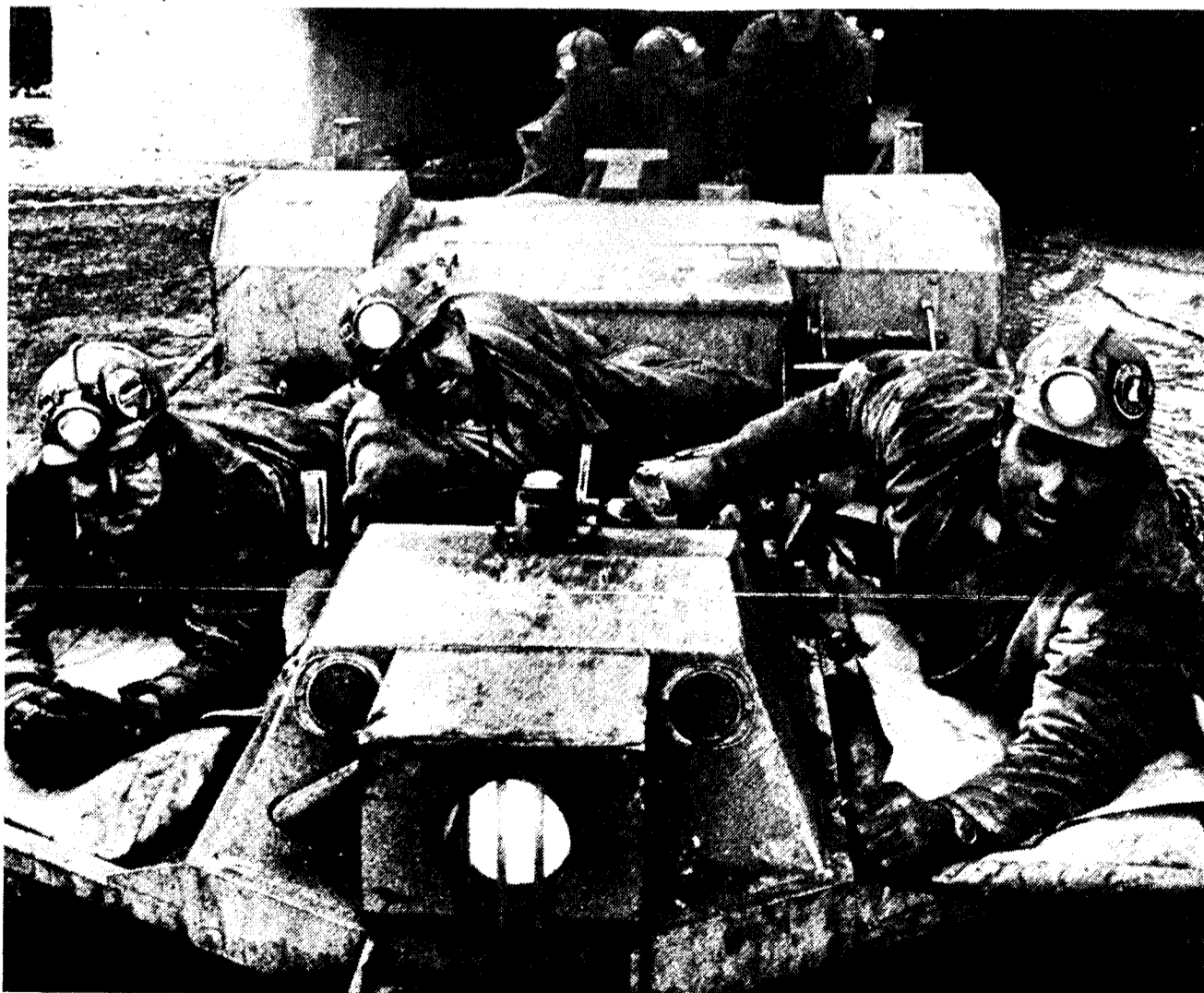
But her husband makes a break—heads to Washington and becomes a tractor driver, later to send for Loretta and the children.

Her escape from the Kentucky coalfields has still left her isolated in the home. Her story makes up the second half of the film.

It is indeed the first half which is most interesting for a socialist.

Yet the poverty of the miners is not *once* shown in any class setting: no strikes or union

Country music buff TONY RICHARDSON reviews 'The Coal Miner's Daughter', a film directed by Michael Apted, starring Cissy Spacek and Tammy Lee Jones.



Kentucky miners

activity take place. All that is depicted is *family* solidarity—in keeping with the ideal bourgeois concept of the family unit.

The strength of this is that—unusually for a film—it does for once show people who have to work for a living.

But even in this respect it appears to be used largely as a counter-weight to show how high Loretta subsequently climbs.

Her escape from the oppression of child care and domestic toil comes when her husband buys her a guitar as an anniversary present and pushes her into singing professionally.

Given the opportunity, she climbs to the top. The remainder of the film follows the well-worn theme of the problems of rising to stardom: the sacrifices and the pressures of continual touring, the death in a plane

crash of Loretta's friend and fellow country star Patsy Cline, and of course the old story of money not resolving personal problems.

Loretta's husband is reduced to an appendage of her—confined to the home. Of course all relationships are distorted under capitalism.

The relieving factor in this half of the film is the music of Loretta Lyn, Patsy Cline and

Merle Haggard.

Another bright spot is the acting of Cissy Spacek, whose versatility in performances as characters from 14 to 40 is astounding.

Country music buffs, Cissy Spacek fans and those looking for a moving portrayal of conditions in US mining districts will all find something to savour in this film.



# LABOUR COUNCIL BID TO CLOSE NURSERIES

Labour-controlled Birmingham City Council decided on Wednesday to close all the residential nursery places in the city.

Another four children's homes are under threat of "changed use" which will in all probability mean closure for these homes as well.

This move comes after an attempt two years ago by the then Tory council to close 18 children's homes. A campaign by NUPE—the main union involved—prevented the closure of 14 of the homes and was therefore partially successful.

However the campaign mainly revolved around the use of stunt tactics and so enabled the council to try again two years later, hoping that through negotiations they would not have to fight vigorous opposition.

### Rumours

Following rumours of proposed closure of the homes, a joint NUPE/NALGO meeting was called a week before the council decision. There it was decided to set up an action committee comprised of stewards of all the homes involved and other members of the two unions.

The meeting also resolved itself to be totally opposed to the closure of the homes and to fight the closures through occupation if necessary.

Already however the campaign has come up against the official trade union bureaucracy who have been discussing with management "to protect the interests of our members" the terms of redundancy and severance payments.

It is quite clear though that the workers in these homes are determined not to give in and just accept redundancy. The effect of the closures (in the face of a well-publicised fostering campaign by the Social Services Department which has miserably failed) will be devastating.

Nursery age children in care, many of whom suffer from mental and physical handicaps, need the specialist care of residential nurseries and cannot possibly be easily assimilated into children's homes where the children are older and where staff are neither experienced or plentiful enough to deal with the particular problems of young children and babies.

It is clear that the management has been planning the closures for a long time and has run homes down accordingly. The campaign is therefore determined to collect its own information of what the need and provision for children in care is and to set up alternative structures under workers' control to keep the homes in full use so as to prevent an easy closure by management.

# Liverpool health workers fight cuts

Hospital workers on Merseyside have forced Liverpool Area Health Authority to retreat over plans to make ward closures at Newsham General Hospital despite an official union/management collaboration agreement.

At a mass meeting two weeks ago, 1500 health workers packed into the city's St. Georges Hall and overwhelmingly rejected the agreement recommended by their full time officers which promised the AHA cooperation over service cuts and closures in return for assurances that there would be no compulsory redundancies.

Liverpool AHA faces over-spending on its budget for the year to the tune of £3.5 million and management threatened sackings if they could not cut overtime and beds.

The meeting responded in no uncertain terms. They pledged themselves by a massive majority to fight both cuts and any resulting redundancies.

Following this decision, Liverpool AHA moved quickly to try and push through the closure of two wards at the Newsham General Hospital, ostensibly "for safety reasons". 115 beds are planned for axing out of 650.

The workers responded by barricading a geriatric ward where eleven male patients were due to be removed and the beds dismantled.

Nursing and ancillary staff were joined by patients who lined up behind food trolleys placed across the entrance to the ward. Two porters who refused to cooperate in breaking the barricade were sent home but the action forced the management to back down temporarily.

Later in the week, a peaceful picket of a female geriatric ward by about 50 staff took place to prevent the removal of patients and to demand the reinstatement of the two porters.

Nursing staff at the hospital are refusing to discuss the issue of redeployment. The COHSE Branch Chairman on the site, Val Duncan, stated "as far as we are concerned the wards will not close".

In the face of this principled and resolute action by the hospital workers, the AHA agreed to "postpone" the closure plans subject to further discussion with the CHCs and the unions.

Although the fight is not yet won, staff of Newsham General have given the possible answer not only to the hospital management and the AHA but also to the spineless collaboration of their full-time officers.

**MERSEYSIDE FACTORY CLOSURES**  
Fisher Bendix Leyland Dunlop Meccano

**Why campaigns were lost & how they can be won**

A WSL Pamphlet

**JUST OUT**  
A new pamphlet produced by the North West Area of the Workers Socialist League exposing the betrayals of the trade union leadership in the fight against factory closures and the policies needed to defend jobs.  
Price 27p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

**DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!**

**GET SOCIALIST PRESS** For a clear lead in the struggle against wage control, cuts and redundancies

**RATES:**

Trial sub (UK):  
Six issues .....£2

Six months ..... £8.00  
One year ..... £14.00

Europe:  
Six months ..... £9.00

Rest of the World:  
Six months ..... £10.00

Please send me trial sub/six months/one year of Socialist Press. I enclose .....

Name.....  
Address.....

Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

**Out now!**

Bringing together recent material published in Socialist Press, this new pamphlet details the crisis in BL, the collaboration of the union leadership with Edwardes on the future of BL and explains how BL management are manoeuvring on this year's pay review.

Price 42p including p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

**JOIN THE WSL!**

With workers by the thousands 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.

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name.....  
Address.....

Send to WSL: BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

# Conference prepares for winter pay battles

Terry Duffy's statement last month that the leadership of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions were "not in an aggressive mood" in pursuing their notional wage claim of 18.5% has been warmly received by the employers.

Following the rejection of their initial miserable 6% offer, they now seem likely to offer an almost equally miserable 8%—and expect to find it endorsed by Duffy and his reactionary Confed colleagues.

## Cut in wages

The engineering pay review is one of the first clear instances of a whole section of particularly avaricious employers exploiting the recession and mass lay-offs to force through a cut in real wages of around 10% for 2 million workers.

The EEF's offer has since

been echoed by British Leyland management's offer of 6% to BL carworkers.

Far from rejecting such a puny amount out of hand, the union leaders have gone away to consider it—no doubt calculating their chances of successfully foisting it on shop floor workers who have suffered more than almost any other from successive years of wage control and collaboration between union leaders and management.

Meanwhile under pressure from their members, NUM leaders have announced that they intend to press ahead with the miners 35% pay claim due for settlement next month.

The Tories have already hinted that the miners and a few other powerful sections of public sector workers may be regarded as "special cases" in order to avoid potentially disastrous confrontations.

Rather, they hope to select their targets for victimisation, and to pick off isolated and industrially weak sections of workers with the assistance of the craven TUC leadership.

Living standards will fall dramatically for the vast majority of the working class unless there is concerted action to defeat the Tory government this winter.

The political questions that arise in such a fight will form a central part of the discussion at the Birmingham conference convened on November 15 by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement.



AUEW leaders Duffy, Boyd and Laird

The consistent thrust of the CDLM has been towards the development of a new leadership based on a consistent programme of struggle to defend the independent interests of the working class.

This autumn's conference, taking place in the shadow of 2½ million unemployed, huge cuts in the public services and the new anti-union laws, will seek ways of promoting such a programme.

It will also take stock of the new political developments in the Labour Party in the run-up to the Special Conference in January.

We urge *Socialist Press* readers to support and attend this conference.

## CONFERENCE

"BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER"  
Saturday November 15 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.  
Digbeth Hall, Birmingham

Open to all labour movement bodies  
Credential £1 (unwaged 50p) from G. Webster  
169, Barclay Road, Smethwick, W. Midlands

## Bring down Tories -MP

A conference of over 100 delegates including representatives of 15 trade unions, three trades councils and five Constituency Labour Parties meeting in Falkirk last Sunday decided upon a fighting programme of action against unemployment.

The conference, organised by the Scottish Central Region Federation of Trades Councils pledged itself to support a campaign to recruit the unemployed into the trade unions, and to combat all redundancies.

Local MP Harry Ewing, speaking at the conference revealed secret Tory plans to cut unemployment and sickness benefit by 5% and to end exemptions from prescription charges.

Ewing called for the bringing down of the Tory government at the earliest possible opportunity.

*Socialist Press* will publish a fuller report of this conference in the next issue.

# Lambeth conference

FROM BACK PAGE

Parties, in cooperation with local anti-cuts committees and tenants' associations, to campaign for rent and rate strikes as soon as any Labour council is removed or surcharged for taking a stand against the cuts".

Under the heading of industrial action, the amendments call for:

"A policy of no cover for vacancies and a campaign against voluntary redundancies and natural wastage. Create and defend jobs by stopping overtime and fight for a shorter working week".

"Initiation of and support for action now against the cuts. Trade unionists and councillors should immediately publicise proposed cuts; no secret deals!

Where closures are proposed, resist rundown prior to closure, demand repairs are made, defend equipment.

Immediate strike action with official support to stop redun-

dancies as soon as notices are issued.

Where closures are announced, prepare for occupation of the threatened facilities, and supporting strike action as soon as the occupation is threatened with eviction.

Organise full strike pay for staff in occupation if wages are cut off".

"A national fight is necessary to force the Tories to back down, but this should not mean staking everything on a pre-determined date or holding back immediate local action. Conference calls on all activists to campaign for complete non-cooperation with the Tory cuts, for Labour Party and union support for local anti-cuts fights, and for Labour MPs to assist the fight against the Tories by filibustering and obstructing the Tories' work in Parliament".

The resolution's call for non-cooperation in the sale of council houses is strengthened

in the amendments by specific support for such action by Newcastle NALGO, and a call for strike action to defend any worker victimised.

An attempt to fix a definitive date of January 1 for the necessary all-out action is deleted, and there is an attempt to put the left talkers on the spot by calling for the publication of:

"... details of those councils, trade union organisations and Labour Parties willing to make the commitment called for by this conference".

## Practical fight

Other trade union and Labour Party bodies are discussing the same package of amendments, which provide a firm basis for a practical fight on a national level against the cuts.

In this way the militant words of Ted Knight and com-

pany can best be put to the test in the eyes of public sector workers.

We urge *Socialist Press* readers to attend this important conference and support these amendments.

## Cowley strike

The AUEW craftsmen in the Cowley Body Plant won a significant victory over the management last week.

During the shutdown the company had brought in outside contractors to do the work the millwrights refused to do on overtime.

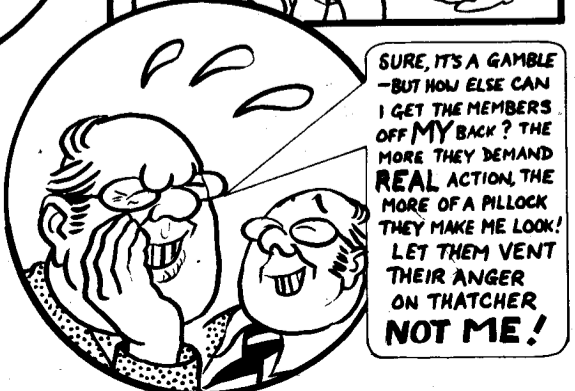
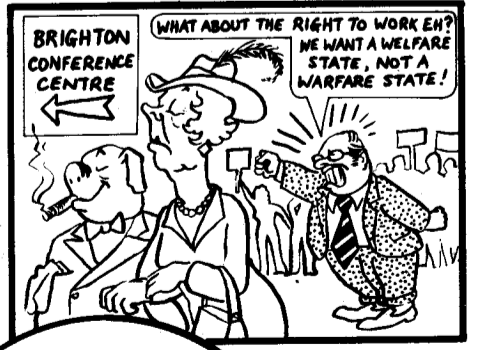
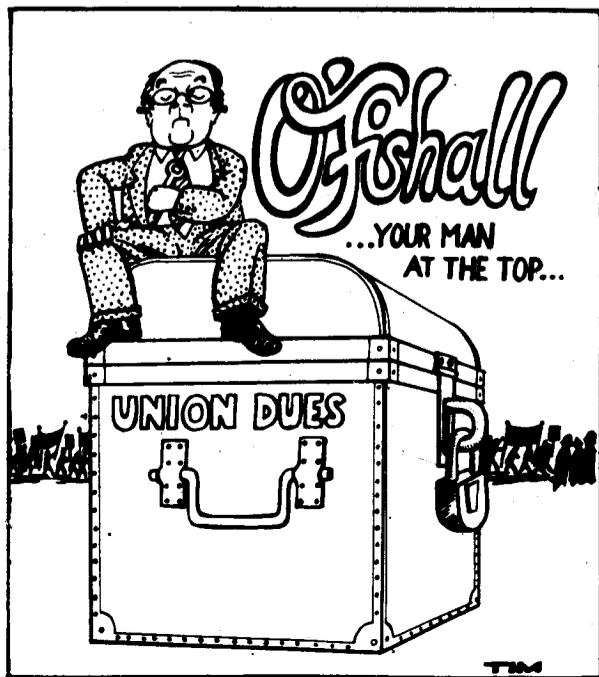
The millwrights on the Ital blacked a job done wrongly by the contractors. This action stopped production and on Tuesday the millwrights were "taken off the clock".

All the AUEW craftsmen, on both shifts, in the plant stopped work in support of the millwrights.

On Thursday the company conceded an agreement that no contractors would be brought in without the union's agreement.

During the week, also, there was a walkout by the fork-lift drivers on the Ital and Maxi/Princess over the ending of their rota agreements.

Management did their jobs and the TGWU leadership did nothing about it.



# SOCIALIST PRESS ★

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN CRISIS

National Labour and Trade Union Conference  
Saturday November 1  
10.30 a.m.  
For credentials write to  
Rm 103, Lambeth Town Hall, London SW2 1RW

## LABOUR PARTY RANK AND FILE "TRAD" UNIONISTS CONFERENCE

Leeds University  
Saturday November 1  
Called by Labour Coordinating Committee  
Credentials £1.25 from  
9 Poland St., London W1

## H Block hunger strike

"We, the republican prisoners of war in the H Blocks of Long Kesh demand as of right political recognition and that we be accorded the status of political prisoners.

"We claim this right as captured combatants in the continuing struggle for national liberation and self-determination.

"We refute most strongly the tag of criminal with which the British have attempted to label us and our struggle, and we point to the divisive, partitionist institutions of the six county state as the sole criminal aspect of the present conflict".

With these words, the courageous blanket men of Belfast announced that they are to commence a hunger strike on October 27 in the hopes of achieving the demands for which they have been fighting for four years.

Their struggle is just: it is one which the British labour movement must support with every means at its disposal. They have not yet received such support and their hunger strike is a sign of desperation as well as determination.

Don't let the 'H' Block prisoners fight alone!

\*Troops out of Ireland now!  
\*Self determination for the Irish people!

# Lambeth conference Nov 1: let's start the real fight to halt the cuts!



Ted Knight

The conference against the cuts convened by Lambeth Labour Council marks a focal point for those militants seeking a way forward against the Tory offensive in the public sector.

But it will also form a stamping ground for numerous 'left' talking councillors seeking to register a token vote of protest before implementing the Tory cuts.

The draft resolution tabled by the organisers leaves many loopholes for such elements. But a series of amendments

put forward last week by the Leicester AUEW 16 Branch, and supported by *Socialist Press*, *Socialist Organiser* and the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, aim to lay the basis for a generalised struggle against the cuts.

### Commitment

They specifically demand that the resolution's call for joint action:

"should not mean CLPs or Labour councillors using the inactivity of others to justify implementing or accepting cuts themselves".

They add the commitment

that:  
"We pledge ourselves to fight to commit the whole labour movement to the following policies:

- 1) Cancellation of debt

charges. Open the books; nationalise the supply industries, e.g. drugs, food and building, and the banks and finance institutions without compensation under workers' control.

2) No charity funding of facilities! Black private sector use of facilities!

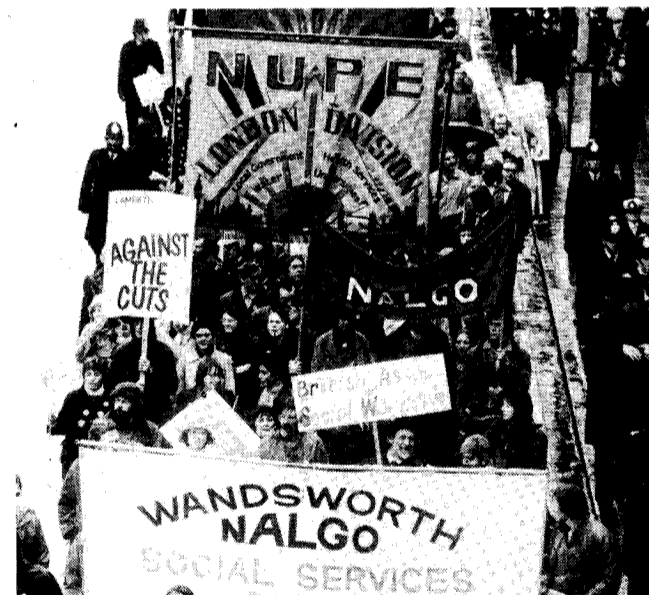
3) Funds of public services to be (as a minimum) protected from inflation in line with a cost index worked out by labour movement committees".

A weak-kneed section on Town Hall unions is deleted and replaced by a declaration that:

"This conference calls on trade union organisations at all levels [from TUC General Council to branches and shop steward committees] to pledge themselves to and campaign for all-out strikes and occupations of workplaces as soon as any Labour council faces receivers or commissioners, or is surcharged, for taking a stand against the cuts.

"The struggle may centre around the public sector unions at first, but conference calls on other workers, especially the strong sections like the miners and engineers, to join this fight to force the Tory government to back down on the cuts or get out. Conference also calls on Labour councils and Labour

Cont'd p.11, col. 2



Lambeth cuts demonstration

# TURN 'NUKES' FIGHT AGAINST THE TORIES!

"We played a major part in the decision to modernise the Alliance's theatre nuclear forces. That decision more than any other cemented the Alliance in a new cohesion".

This proud announcement from Defence Secretary Frances Pym at the Tory conference drew rapturous applause from delegates, most of whom are plainly unaware that "theatre" weapons relate to the projected "European theatre" of war.

The fact is that NATO, under US command, now has a strengthened "theatre" arsenal makes it infinitely more likely that some future US President could decide to use such weapons in a "limited" strike against the Soviet Union and East European workers' states, in which the USA could hope to emerge unscathed while Europe is reduced to radioactive rubble.

Key to this new awesome possibility are the Cruise and Pershing 2 missiles to be sited in European countries, 150 of which are coming to Britain. It is essential that this wild



Pym

provocation is halted. A national demonstration on October 26 called by the regenerated Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament assemblies in Hyde Park at 11 a.m.

While urging all *Socialist Press* readers to support what promises to be a massive anti-war demonstration, we stress the need not simply to protest

at the Tory war plans, but to link up the fight on this issue with the broader struggle to defeat and bring down the Thatcher government, and remove Labour's right wing leaders who stand opposed to the necessary policies of immediate withdrawal from NATO and unilateral nuclear disarmament.

# SPECIAL FUND: a slow start

£20 from Oxford and £44 from London means that our Special Fund has got off to a very slow start. As we explained in last week's issue of *Socialist Press*, this money is urgently needed to enable us to develop our campaigns during the autumn and winter period. New pamphlets on the crisis in British Leyland, on the need to bring down the Tories this winter and on the fight against the Bolivian junta have all now appeared and are advertised on other pages of this paper.

But with inflation still at 16% we continue to feel the impact of Tory policies on our own spending. We know that Tory policies affect the pockets of our readers and supporters too. But we also know that they recognise the importance of the work being carried out by the Workers Socialist League and *Socialist Press* supporters up and down the country.

That is why we are confident that we will get the necessary response to our appeal for £1,500 by December with the first £1,000 in by November 15. However it is important not to leave it until the last minute. We are asking readers and supporters to send us a day's wages as a donation. It's going to be the same amount whenever you pay it, so why not get it over with and send it to us now!

(And by the way, don't forget that we are still running our £850 monthly fund throughout the duration of the Special Fund).

Send us a donation today. Our address is:

Socialist Press Special Fund, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX