

SOCIALIST PRESS



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Inside Spanish Popular Front Centre pages

SWP Role in Speke p.4
New lies from Newsline p.8
Statement by Polisario Front p.9

DEFEND USSR! NO TO THE TRIALS!

The huge press campaign over the trials of Anatoli Shcharansky and Alexander Ginsburg, and the statements about "human rights" from Jimmy Carter, James Callaghan and other leading imperialist politicians, amount to the most naked hypocrisy.

Only last week a 16 year old youth was shot dead by Callaghan's army of torturers, thugs and murderers in Ireland.

In Long Kesh concentration camp 300 Republican and socialist prisoners, branded "criminals" for their resistance to British imperialism, are subjected to the most barbaric treatment for demanding their status as political prisoners.

In September, Aubrey Berry and Campbell face a frame up "spy" trial under the Official Secrets Act in which each face jail sentences of up to 14 years for the "crime" of defending the freedom of the press to collect published information on the state's military apparatus.

Agee deported

Phillip Agee, the former agent who set out to publicise the outrages the CIA carries out, was deported from Britain by Callaghan's government and is now being hounded out of every capitalist state in Europe because he insists on his right to free speech.

In the USA itself, the Wilmington 10 along with hundreds and thousands of black activists and victims of racially biased courts languish in the jails that witnessed the brutal murder of George Jackson.



Young

And Carter's regime props up some of the most vicious, dictatorial governments in the world—including that in Iran, and a chain of savage military regimes throughout Latin America.

The anti-communist 'human rights' campaign around the Russian show-trials result from the pressure of certain sections of capitalists impatient with the policy of collaboration with the Stalinist bureaucracy in the USSR known as 'detente'.

Recognising that the struggles of workers and peasants internationally—

particularly those in Africa—are becoming harder to control, this section of the bourgeoisie is urging a more direct line, such as the direct use of imperialist troops in Zaire, and a return to the tactics of the Cold War.

Carter's "human rights" charade is connected with this pressure, and is in no way a move towards any form of liberalisation.

US prisoners

Indeed as soon as US ambassador Andrew Young an advocate of more developed collaboration with the Kremlin bureaucracy, let slip a remark on thousands of political prisoners in the USA, Carter immediately called for a retraction.

But while the imperialists are struggling to control the working class, the trials are an indication that within the Soviet Union itself the Stalinist bureaucracy feels that the workers' movement is threatening its power and privileges.

Dangers

The dangers in this situation are very real. It is important to see

that in the current economic crisis of imperialism it is no longer sufficient for the US capitalist class to take steps to avoid any more Vietnam-style defeats.

Desperate for markets and for workers to exploit, they are drawn towards the idea of recapturing the lost territory in Russia, Eastern Europe, Cuba and Asia.

They want to end the nationalised property relations in those countries and reintroduce exploitation, through private enterprise.

As Trotskyists we begin from the defence of the historic gains of the working class. The greatest of these gains was the October Revolution in Russia which drove out the capitalist exploiters.

Isolation

But defending the Soviet Union against imperialism does not mean we defend the actions of the Stalinist bureaucracy which emerged in the harsh period of isolation that followed the Civil War and the death of Lenin.

This bureaucracy usurped political control from the working class in Russia, and ensured in the post-war period that the working class was held back from the seizure of power even in those states where capitalist property relations were overturned.

Counter-revolutionary

While this bureaucracy's power rests on its administration of the nationalised economy of a workers' state, its actions internationally are thoroughly counter-revolutionary, aiming simply at preserving a 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism.

We call for a political revolution to overthrow this bureaucracy and for the building of workers councils to reinstitute Soviet democracy.

The show trials of



Carter addressing NATO chiefs—including Callaghan

Shcharansky and Ginsburg do nothing to defend the Soviet Union.

They hand a propaganda weapon to the most anti-Soviet sections of the imperialists, and further sully the name of communism in the eyes of the international workers' movement.

It even jeopardises the collaborationist policy of detente, so much loved by the Kremlin leaders.

This would certainly be a heavy price to pay if the trials were simply aimed at punishing Shcharansky and Ginsburg, who both hold right wing views and are part of a group set up to assist imperialism to monitor the Helsinki agree-

ment in the USSR.

In a healthy workers state such individuals could easily be dealt with through the education and mobilisation of the working class.

Even in the Stalinist regime such trials are a rarity, and must indicate acute uncertainty among the Kremlin leaders.

They knew from the outset that the capitalist media would launch a huge campaign on this issue, and that such publicity would reach into Russia itself.

But they decided to make an example of two relatively right wing

Continued on Page 2

GRUNWICK - THE FINAL BLOW

After 690 days of bureaucratic sabotage by TUC officials, the valiant struggle of the Grunwick strikers for union recognition was given the death blow last week by leaders of their union APEX.

Socialist Press stressed from the earliest days of the strike that the crucial point was trade union action to force the APEX leaders to demand that the TUC black all services to Grunwick, including postal services, regardless of court injunctions.

It was obvious straight away that such policies would be rejected by the right wing. But they were headed off also by the 'left' talkers such as Jack Dromey who claimed to be leading the Grunwick struggle.

As a result, even at the height of the mass picketing and the influence of the Strike Committee there were no calls for mass mobilisations against the TUC bureaucrats to force them to implement blacking.

And when the strikers' hunger strike on the steps of the TUC was broken up by fines and suspensions imposed by APEX leaders, there was no

campaign by the strike committee against this action.

Meanwhile, safe from attack, APEX and TGWU bureaucrats handed over the whole of the initiative to ACAS, whose task of defusing and demoralising struggles was successfully carried through.

Eight weeks ago a conference on Grunwick did no more than talk of the strike in the past tense.

No proposals for winning the action were allowed to be put. Dromey announced he would walk out of this dispute with his "head held high".

While the Grunwick battle has turned out to be a defeat, the lessons it has to offer on the role of both right wing and 'left' talking bureaucracy in the unions must be taken seriously.

Jack Dromey has already begun to play his distinctive role, helping to head off independent struggle in the Garners Steak House strike.

Now we hear he is moving in on the East London dockers' action committee, set up to fight the closure of the Royal group of docks.

The lessons of Grunwick must be learned by these workers if they are not to face a similar fate.



The unstable Kremlin bureaucracy rests on the isolation of the October Revolution



INTERNATIONAL

More Janata jockeying

The factional struggles within the parties of the Indian bourgeoisie have followed some sharp turns over recent weeks.

Sackings, threats of resignation and reconciliations have followed one another at a confusing pace.

But this latest episode of the power struggle within the ruling Janata coalition repeats the pattern of earlier, smaller crises.

The forces have not changed, but now they are exerting themselves with far greater pressure on Prime Minister Desai and his quarrelsome cabinet.

The only pressure that has ever held the five parties together in the Janata is their determination to keep Indira Gandhi out of power.

The huge revival of support for the former dictator is a powerful deterrent to those elements seeking a split in the coalition.

But the arguments that have broken out over economic policy and the prosecution of Gandhi must not be seen as principled disagreements.

The Janata leaders are at once alarmed by the general loss of support for the whole coalition, and are seeking individually to strengthen their own positions.

Conflict over which opportunist tactic to adopt is therefore inevitable.

Home Minister Singh's aim has been to build up his own base amongst the peasantry by arguing for the development of village crafts as against large scale industry, and to follow up this outflanking of Gandhi on a populist tack by a show trial of his opponent for the crimes

of the 'Emergency'.

While the Janata is locked in internal strife, Gandhi has her own problems. The miserable failure of the coalition to bring any relief to the poverty and misery of the Indian masses, enables her to campaign for mass support on a radical populist platform, decked out with an attractive range of 'socialist' promises.



Janata leader Desai

Coup leads to ceasefire

The declarations of the new military regime in Mauritania have already shown the force of the dilemma that threatens to wreck these new bonapartist rulers of the impoverished north African state.

For the last two years, Mauritanian troops have been engaged alongside Moroccan forces in the attempt to conquer and partition the former Spanish colony of the Western Sahara.

Military expenditure has been colossal in proportion to the diminutive economy, but the war has also increased old problems and created new ones.

83% of Mauritania's foreign currency earnings are derived from iron ore. This trade has been severely hit by the slump in world demand, caused by the

crisis of steel production internationally.

At the same time, attacks by the Polisario Front on the mining and transport installations of the industry have added further crippling blows.

Restricted

The French-owned company which holds the mining concessions has declared that it can pay no taxes to the Mauritanian government this year.

These taxes amount to 10% of the country's entire budget!

The burden of the war also restricted the availability of funds to offset the catastrophic problems of agricultural production.

Mass starvation

Inefficient techniques, droughts and bad harvests have combined to result in mass

starvation, and a huge exodus to the already overcrowded shantytowns around the capital, Nouakchott.

In these intolerable conditions, there emerged widespread opposition to the one-party regime.

But the toppling of President Ould Daddah was accomplished by a group of army officers led by Colonel Mustapha Ould Salek.

The new 'Committee for National Rehabilitation' has proclaimed its desire for peace in the Sahara.

It could scarcely do anything else, if it is to gain any credibility with the embittered masses of Mauritania, or within the army itself, demoralised as it is by the humiliating defeats inflicted by the Polisario Front.

But the Committee also declared its intention of maintaining Mauritania's links with

Morocco and its imperialist allies. Again, they had little choice in the matter.

There are 9,000 Moroccan troops in Mauritania—ostensibly as part of the war against the Polisario, but in fact to prevent any popular uprising and maintain a client government.

King Hassan's appetite to swallow Mauritania as part of 'Greater Morocco' may have fallen off of late, but it could easily be whetted again by any display of Mauritanian independence.

Hassan has in fact already pronounced his 'full support' for the new regime, while the Polisario Front has declared a temporary ceasefire 'as a gesture of goodwill'.

But, willing or (more likely) not, there is little chance that the officers will advance the right of the Saharoui people to self-determination.

Hands off South Yemen!



Ali Nasser

Last month's coup d'etat in South Yemen, which brought to power the most pro-Soviet section of the National Liberation Front led by Ali Nasser, appears to be encountering fierce political and even military attack from imperialism and its agents.

At the beginning of last week the new South Yemen government in Aden announced that aircraft from North Yemen had bombed the South and troops had captured a number of villages; other sources claimed that Saudi Arabian forces were massing on the South Yemeni border.

The Aden government said defiantly it would protect "every grain of sand of the national territory".

Two days later the South Yemenis were reported as saying that the Northern invaders had been repulsed.

Whatever the truth of

these events it is clear from well attested statements that Saudi Arabia and its reactionary friends in North Yemen will have no scruples in trying to destroy the South Yemeni government and install an imperialist puppet in its place.

Fifteen members of the Arab League (meeting in the absence of Libya, Iraq and the other members of the "rejection front") decided to "freeze" all relations with South Yemen and cut all economic and diplomatic ties with what the North Yemeni delegate called "the band of lawless Marxists in power in Aden".

The labour movement must take whatever measures of solidarity are possible to assist the masses of South Yemen who are threatened with imperialist invasion.

"SOCIALIST" FILLS ITALIAN BREACH

The curtain has been dropped at the end of yet another farcical scene in the black comedy of Italian parliamentary politics.

When President Leone was forced to resign because of the massive bribery and corruption scandals, the bourgeoisie was at a loss.

The obvious candidate, Aldo Moro, was well out of the running, unfortunately detained in some region of the afterlife, pending trial.

After no less than fifteen ballots of the electoral college, still no stand-in could be agreed on to fill this attractive role.

But at the sixteenth attempt, Sandro Pertini emerged as the most satisfactory specimen on the list of available understudies.

Respectable

An aged veteran of the Socialist Party, Pertini has a suitably respectable history of opposition to fascism followed by long immersion in the Chamber of Deputies.

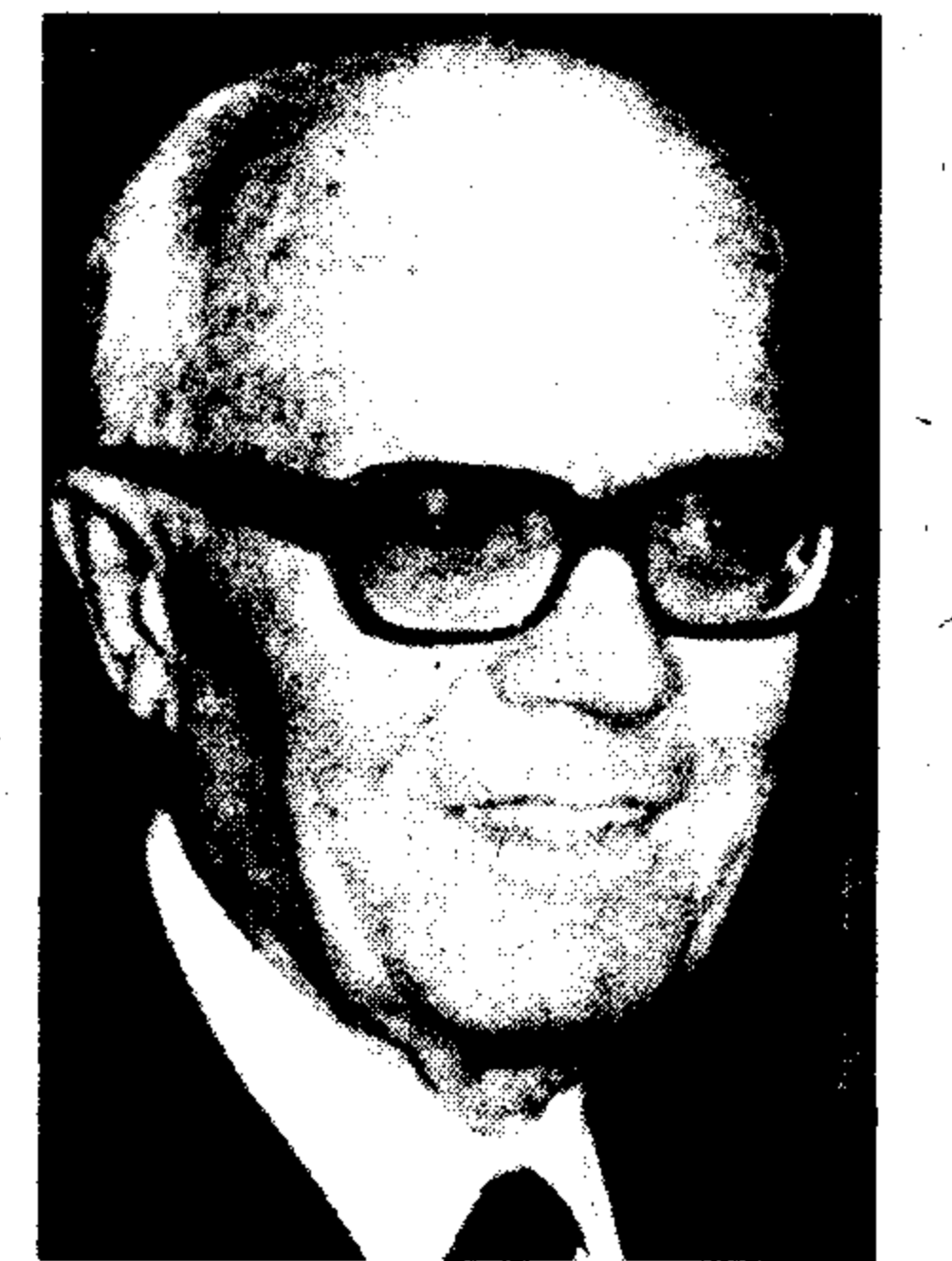
This career gives him ideal credentials to preside over the 'historic compromise' between the Christian Democrats and the Stalinists.

But this savage farce has been mounted at the expense of the Italian working class.

The presidential crisis has been merely a grotesque reflection of the entire political crisis of Italian society—the inability of the bourgeoisie to maintain their 'democratic' dictatorship without the support of the labour leaders, and the determination of those traitors to attack the

working class in order to defend the capitalist 'order'.

A 'socialist' President of the bourgeois state will not bring any advance for workers in Italy, but act rather as a screen to cover the growing battery of repressive measures that the capitalist class will need if they are to preserve their ability to rule and exploit the proletariat for their own profit.



Pertini

DEFEND USSR—from front page

elements through a show trial, in which Ginsburg was accused of having:

"financed the hostile activities of criminal elements including professional members of gangs and henchmen of the German fascists who took part in mass shootings during the war".

None of these "criminal elements" was named. But the charges were dutifully publicised by the official news agency TASS.

Yet the Kremlin leaders know that these two individual dissidents cannot themselves challenge or threaten their position.

The only motive for such show trials must be the anxiety of the bureaucracy to head off growing opposition tendencies within the working class inside the Soviet Union, which is in a position to challenge their control, their privileges, their special shops, their country houses, limousines, perks and patronage.

The trials and the long sentences are designed to intimidate all opposition forces, and to link them all with imperialism.

It is above all for this reason that the trials and

any further such trials must be opposed.

The bureaucracy argues that all their opponents must favour capitalist restoration. But the events of 1956 in Hungary proved that as workers in the deformed workers states enter all-out struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy they seek not the return of capitalism but the reconstruction of the organisations of working class rule—the workers' councils, or soviets—that were instrumental in the Russian Revolution itself.

Ended privileges

In Hungary workers councils set up joint militias of workers, students and soldiers.

They destroyed the Stalinist secret police and ended bureaucratic privileges.

The full might of the Russian army was needed to crush the rising.

And only recently food riots and strikes in Poland have shown that the same forces remain as a threat to the bureaucracy.

The Workers Socialist League fights for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist

Fourth International to provide conscious leadership for the forward movement of the working class both in the capitalist states in the struggle to end capitalist exploitation and for revolutionary parties in the deformed workers states to overthrow the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy.

As part of this we demand the rehabilitation of all the victims of the 1930 frame-up Moscow Trials, through which Stalin liquidated many of the Old Bolsheviks that had led the October Revolution.

But our fight has nothing in common with the hypocrisy of capitalist politicians or the position of the "Eurocommunist" Parties.

Even while these CP leaders criticise the trials they themselves are lining up with capitalist parties in Popular Front formations—in Italy even supporting the Tory Christian Democrats in office.

Meeting with Vance

And in their criticisms they line up with the imperialists themselves. Mrs. Shcharansky went from a French CP demonstration straight to a meeting with



Italian CP leader Berlinguer

US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance!

Build parties

The greatest blow we can strike against the Stalinist bureaucracy is through building revolutionary parties in Britain and internationally for the overthrow of capitalism, thus ending the isolation of the workers states on which the Kremlin parasites rest.

Defend the USSR!
For political revolution!

USA

National Guardsmen are being lined up to scab on a strike of 600 firemen in Louisville, Kentucky. The firemen are fighting for a wage claim and have only been offered 5.5%.

In another strike of municipal workers in Philadelphia, 19,600 blue collar, clerical and professional workers are out over pay and lay-offs.

The background to both these strikes is the attempt to cut back on state expenditure as a measure to help solve the economic crisis of US capitalism. This will be the subject of an extensive article in the next issue of *Socialist Press*.

Eritrea's historic liberation struggle

David Whitfield traces the history of the struggle of the Eritrean people for self-determination against both the imperialist powers and a succession of repressive regimes in Ethiopia, the latest of which is now backed up by military support from Cuba and the USSR.

PART FOUR

It would be naive to expect that the Stalinist bureaucracy would act with any less self-interest, with any less cynicism, or any less hostility to revolution, in the case of Eritrea than in any other area of the globe.

Although the Soviet delegate to the UN proclaimed in 1950 that the USSR had 'consistently supported the proposal that Eritrea should be granted independence', this was a blatant lie.

In earlier negotiations, Soviet representatives had proposed at different times a 'trusteeship' (i.e. colonial rule masked by a legal fiction) of US, British or Italian imperialism, or finally a collective international trusteeship.

Twists and turns

Proletarian internationalism was not the principle that directed the Stalinists' twists and turns.

Alarmed by the arrogant international disregard for their demands, the Moslem League and the Liberal Progressive Party united with six smaller organisations to form the Independence Bloc in 1949.

The Bloc could claim to represent the aspirations of the majority of Eritreans.

At the United Nations its leader, Ibrahim Sultan, declared that Eritreans 'refuse and reject any form of annexation, dismemberment or a return to the hated colonialism no matter what type it would be, whatever form it takes or from which direction it comes'.

Defeated

But in the General Assembly debate of 1950, motions from the USSR and Poland, proposing Eritrean independence, were defeated.

The imperialist powers sank their differences and rallied behind a motion proposing that Eritrea become 'an autonomous state federated with Ethiopia under the sovereignty of the Ethiopian Crown'.



People's militia

In 1951, the UN sent its Commissioner to Asmara, the capital city. For 19 months he laboured in Eritrea with the British colonial administration.

Their aim was first to 'pacify' the country and break all resistance to 'federation'.

Autonomy

Elections were held to an Assembly in 1952.

The Unionists won 32 of the 68 seats. The short-lived Independence Bloc had split by this time, with the majority forming themselves into the Democratic Bloc, which gained 18 seats.

The Moslem League, once again standing independently, won 15 seats. It was an alliance of the Moslem League and the Unionists which approved the draft constitution.

This provided on paper for Eritrean autonomy and considerable restrictions on the power of Haile Selassie. It was a constitution that the Ethiopian emperor had no intention of observing, that the imperialist powers never intended to enforce.

The 'federation' began its official existence on 15 Sep-

tember 1952, and the British troops and administration withdrew.

On 22 May 1953, a Mutual Defence Pact was signed between the US and Ethiopian governments.

Under this agreement, the US established what was (until its closure in 1977) its largest military base in Africa—at Kagnaw, in Eritrea.

Later, the US also constructed a naval base at Decamere, again in Eritrea, and the Zionist state was allowed facilities on the Eritrean coast for its international spying network.

But this military exploitation by the imperialist powers reveals only one aspect of the oppression of the Eritrean masses.

Unionisation

Many elements of the supposed constitution were simply never implemented. Those that were, all met the same fate over the next ten years.

Through the last years of British rule, the urban proletariat had entered into a process of unionisation. In December 1952, the General Union of Labour Syndicates was formed.

The General Union was banned by the Ethiopian state in the next month. Its leaders were physically attacked and all mass meetings of workers forbidden.

Strikes and demonstrations in protest were viciously repressed by the police, and the labour laws repealed.

Later that year, *Voice of Eritrea*, the paper of the Democratic Bloc, was banned and its editors imprisoned. By 1954 all political parties, trade unions, professional associ-

ations and independent newspapers had been banned.

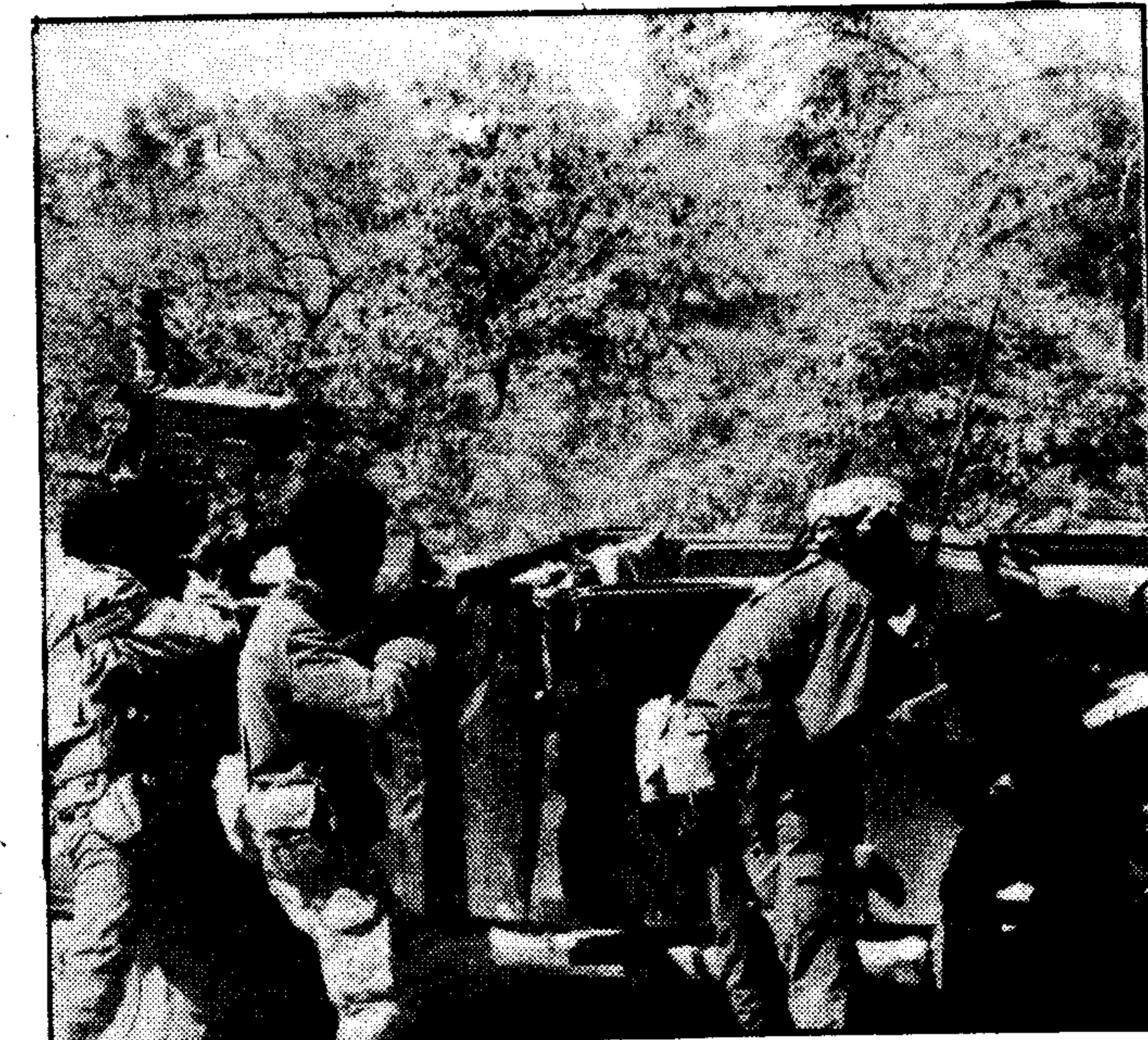
This direct repression went alongside mounting Ethiopian abuse of the Eritrean constitution.

In 1953 the Eritrean courts and legal system had been subordinated to Ethiopian authority. Three years later the Chief Executive, representing Ethiopian interests in Eritrea, moved to suspend the electoral laws and revive the procedures of the British colonial period.

The Supreme Court ruled that any assembly formed by these methods would be unconstitutional and unrepresentative.

The judges were promptly replaced!

The deputies to the new Assembly were elected in theory by the community elders. This meant in practice, an Assembly that would offer not the slightest resistance to the advance of Ethiopian oppression.



The suppression of Eritrea was enforced by economic as well as political and military means.

As a result of the decades of Italian rule, Eritrea was far more industrially developed than Ethiopia.

Its new rulers continued the British moves to dismantle the economy systematically. Plant was transferred to Ethiopia, the port of Massawa run down as a new Ethiopian outlet was created at Assab, and permission refused for the development of new industry.

Low wages

Those employers allowed to continue production (mostly US, Israeli and Italian capitalists) were able to exploit labour at barbarically low wages, since trade unions and strikes were both banned.

The Eritrean masses were to be starved and beaten into submission. As unemployment increased, thousands of workers were forced to emigrate to Ethiopia, the Sudan, the Middle East and Europe.

Battered by these attacks the workers continued to organise themselves in the General Union of Labour Syndicates—now operating underground and growing steadily.

Workers joined with students in a stream of demonstrations against Ethiopian domination.

General strike

This movement came to a head in the national general strike of March 1958. For four days the towns and cities were brought to a standstill.

Then a demonstration of thousands marched through Asmara, condemning Ethiopian oppression of Eritrea and demanding independence.

The colonial rulers reacted with furious violence. 88 Eritreans were killed in Asmara alone, with

hundreds more injured and thousands imprisoned throughout the country.

As the Ethiopian regime pressed on in its determination to subjugate Eritrea entirely, so the momentum of the liberation struggle fast gathered pace.

Amharic (the language of the dominant nationality in Ethiopia) was imposed as the official language of the education system, while all books in Tigrinya and Arabic were burned.

The power of the Assembly was reduced even further and it became demoted to the status of an 'Administration'.

After the crushing of the general strike, there was no mass resistance to these blows for some ten years.

Students staged demonstrations with increasing frequency, but the major development was to emerge beyond the towns.

On 14 November 1962, the 'federation' was ended by imperial decree. Jets flew over the towns to intimidate any protests while troops moved into the session of the Assembly.

14th province

The Ethiopian government proclaimed this 'unanimous decision' that Eritrea should become the '14th province of the Ethiopian Empire'.

But by this stage the Eritrean masses had no illusions in the good intentions, let alone the power of the Assembly. The armed struggle had already begun.

The Eritrean Liberation Front had been formed on 1 September 1961—a group of 13 fighters led by Hamid Idris Awate and equipped only with old British rifles.

By 1963, the ELF numbered 250. Its tactics were those of guerrillaism—attacks on government buildings and officials, raids on small military and police outposts. Arms were captured in these incidents and brought along by deserters from the police.

Violent conflict

In the next year, the ELF engaged directly with Ethiopian regular soldiers for the first time. The Ethiopian troops were heavily defeated at Togoruba.

As the scale of the guerrilla war rapidly expanded, it became more than every necessary for the ELF to fight with a clear political programme to mobilise the masses in civil war.

Under this pressure, violent conflicts developed within the ELF and were to lead to its splitting.

To be continued

Workers Socialist League
Public meeting
The Eritrean
Revolution

Showing of the EPLF film
'SAWRANA' ('Our Revolution')
Thursday July 27, 7.30pm.
OCCR Hall, Princes St
OXFORD
Admission 50pence

SWP's CYNICAL ROLE ON SPEKE FIGHT

READERS
LETTER

Dear Editor,

As a postscript to your article on the role of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) at Speke (*Socialist Press* 108) let me add a few facts.

Two years ago in October 1976, ten members of the South Liverpool branch of the SWP were expelled in a most bureaucratic manner because we refused to drop our work in the Speke area around Triumph and devote our energies to recruiting unemployed for the Right to Work March from London to Brighton.

We had sent one member only to the march—he being the only unemployed member—and for this we were accused of sabotaging the Right to Work Campaign.

We had felt that since we were all employed, our main contribution should be devoted to organising resistance to closures and public spending cuts from within the organised labour movement.

Delegate bodies

This we had done by our work around the Speke Area Trade Union Committee for the Defence of Jobs and the Liverpool Action Committee for Education Expenditure, both being delegate trade union bodies which have done a lot of campaigning in the area.

The fact that we had helped to initiate these bodies which were the only bodies fighting to organise resistance to unemployment from within the labour movement was totally ignored.

So was the fact that we'd got both to affiliate to the Right to Work Campaign.

Totally failed

Since our expulsions it is fair to say that the SWP has totally failed to do any work around Triumph for the whole of the two year period and have been quite content to carry out the type of pathetic publicity

seeking stunts that have become the hallmark of that organisation.

Needless to say when the crunch came at Triumph they did not have one member in the plant and it was too late.

The final grisly comedy was enacted by them as the SWP vultures circled the fatal mass meeting after Robinson had sold them down the river.



PHOTO: John Sturrock (Report)

Robinson

They rubbed their hands with glee as they contemplated the many recruits they would now have for their funeral procession to London!

"Public" meeting

While it gives me no great satisfaction to have to recount all this I feel I must also mention the "public" Right to Work meeting which they held in the Vines Hotel a few weeks prior to the mass meeting which my wife and I attended.

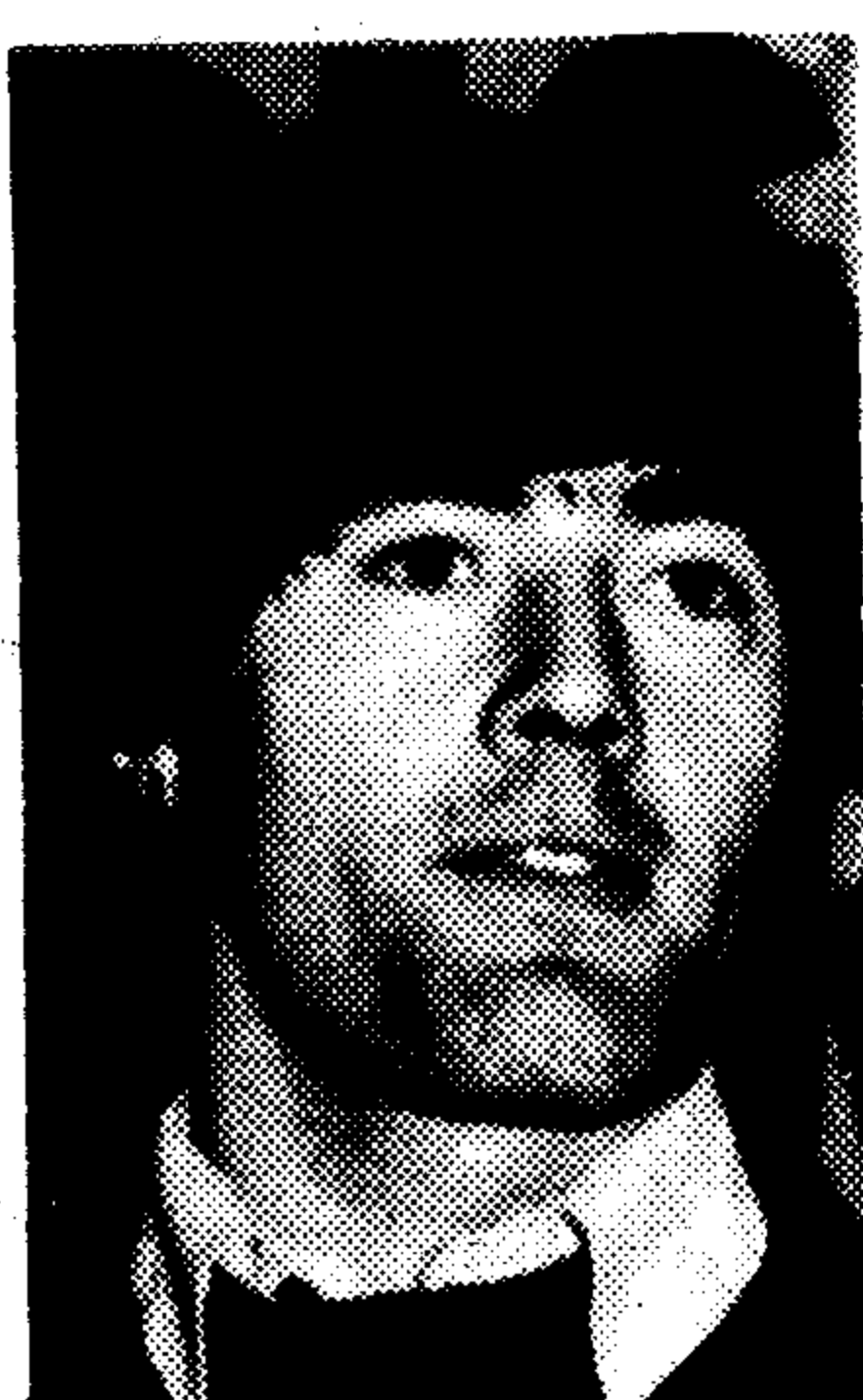
As we entered the meeting room our way was barred by the burly shape of the Merseyside SWP "organiser" who informed us that we "were not invited to the meeting".

Pushing him aside we entered the room and called over to Tony Ryan, the only Triumph steward at the meeting, who had told

us about the meeting the previous day.

After Ryan had explained to the bemused doorman that he had invited us and that I was from Vauxhalls, we received a muttered apology and were begrudgingly allowed into the meeting.

Throughout the meeting John Deason, Secretary of the Right to Work Campaign, never once made



Deason

any attempt to argue the case for occupation and seemed quite content to accept the fact that the closures would happen and that we had to get on with the job of organising the march.

The important point, he said, was to get trade union sponsorships because while it would be perfectly possible to get 50 or so kids "wound up" for a march and have a good "protest", it would be better to try and make "some connection" with the trade union movement in the area by means of sponsorships.

The fact that this would be only a token gesture and that no shop stewards committee could ever refuse to sponsor such a march was not questioned.

Yours fraternally,
Chris Erswal
Liverpool



Ireland killing: no mistake!

The murder of 16 year old John Boyle by British imperialist troops is being branded as a "tragic mistake" by the Tory press and by every defender of the continued military occupation.

But there is no mistake involved. The heavily-armed forces that uphold British rule remain there as a result of conscious policy by the capitalist class and their servile lackeys in the Callaghan cabinet.

And last autumn Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason ordered a further intensification of the under cover activities of the murder squads of the Special Air Services, which meant that even the notional restrictions on the use of rifles

by troops—as set out on the "yellow card" were effectively abandoned.

Since then a policy of 'shoot first, ask questions afterwards' has led to a spate of deaths, culminating in the shooting of John Boyle.

This naked use of repression in Ireland has now reached the point where even the police, Protestant workers and reactionary demagogue Ian Paisley have been forced to expose the ludicrous lies put out by the army.

The task is to show that this killing is not simply one isolated outrage or "tragedy" but part of a continuing historical outrage of barbaric enforcement of colonial rule on the Irish people.

The Labour leaders have shown themselves determined to beat, intimidate, intern, harass and muzzle those elements that

attempt—with whatever limitations—to draw out such lessons and advocate a struggle against imperialist rule.

In 'H' Block of the Long Kesh concentration camp over 300 Republican prisoners remain held naked in conditions of indescribable filth and brutality as a result of their refusal to accept 'criminal' status.

In May of this year the entire officer board of Belfast Sinn Fein was arrested and charged with conspiracy, and printer Gary Kennedy, a leading SDLP member who printed *Republican News* has also been imprisoned "on remand"—the latest substitute for formal internment—charged with membership of the IRA.

The jailing of Kennedy led to harassment of the Irish Pablotte paper *Socialist Republic* which was printed on the same press as *Republican News*.

Frightened printers, seeing Kennedy jailed, have not surprisingly drawn the conclusion that to print anti-imperialist material in the North is to invite arbitrary arrest and detention at the hands of Mason's armed thugs.

Support demand

Last weekend 2,000 workers and youth marched to condemn British imperialism's barbaric role in Ireland and support the demand of the Republican prisoners for prisoner of war status pending a withdrawal of British troops and an amnesty.

Now each of these marchers must ensure that the struggle to force the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and ensure the self-determination of the Irish people is taken up with renewed vigour throughout the Labour and trade union movement.

These demands must be coupled with demands for the expulsion of butcher Mason from the Labour Party.

PRESS GANG

Nice one, Cecil

Viscount Rothermere—owner of the *Daily Mail*, president of Associated Newspapers, sacker of thousands of newspaper workers and one of the most unpleasant products of British capitalism had the grace to drop dead last week.

Nevertheless at 80 years of age Rothermere had lived several decades too long.

Yet in one of the most convincing displays of the futility of trying to rid the world of individual capitalists his son, the 'Honourable' Vere Harmsworth became the third Viscount even as his father croaked his last.

There is indeed always a cloud to every silver lining.

Esmond Cecil Harmsworth had a hard life. Born the son of a modest owner of several national newspapers he had to outlive his father before he earned his right to tell the nation what to think.

He was the youngest MP entering the House of Commons from Eton and the Royal Marines in 1919 as a Unionist.

Alter ego

There he acted as his father's alter ego ensuring that the Harmsworth family had a leading voice in three of the four estates of the realm—the House of Lords, the House of Commons and the Press.

The outstanding achieve-

ments of his 30 years in charge of one of the biggest newspaper empires in the world were his vicious and stubborn control in 1955 of the Newspaper Publishers Association in the Fleet Street strike and his role in closing down several newspapers.

His newspapers reflected not just the business needs of the Rothermere family and their like but also his personal whims.

When his second wife left him for Ian Fleming, Rothermere ordered that James Bond books should receive scant space in the book review columns.

In his personal habits Rothermere was mean and nasty.

Even Cecil King—former chairman of the *Daily Mirror* and himself no slouch when it comes to big business anti-charisma—refused to pay him any death bed compliments, stressing instead the mediocrity of his talents.

This is not quite the picture his faithful lackies in the editorial chairs of Fleet Street painted of Rothermere. The *Times* called him a "dominating figure in the world of journalism", although he was rarely seen at the working end of his newspapers.

The *Daily Mail* gave its readers two whole pages of sickening sycophancy.

"He was a forceful member first of the House of Commons, later of the Lords, a gifted public speaker, a connoisseur of painting and a fine sports-

man and tennis player.

"He loved Fleet Street, in his own words for its "passionate love of liberty and devotion to the freedom of expression".

The article went on to describe his 'sympathy' for the working journalist.

In words the truth of which he could presumably vouch for, he said:

"There is no single moment of the day that he is able to call his own and in a great many cases, there is not a night he can call his own".

Recalling his hard childhood the paper remarks:

"One of his vivid childhood memories was that once a year, Lord Northcliffe would invite his nephews and neices to lunch. Each would find a £5 note under his or her plate".

Later on the £5 notes became gifts of newspapers.

This week as the Rothermere dynasty stepped one generation nearer extinction the *Daily Mail*, that stalwart supporter of Moseley in the 1930s, was still throwing its energies into defending the international rule of the bourgeoisie.

Its pages were strewn with attacks on the Soviet Union, support for the police and demands for further wage cuts and tougher stands against the working class.

The task of seeing that the *Daily Mail* and those who shape its policies join the second Viscount Rothermere in the dustbin of history is the task of a Trotskyist party.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

Speke workers on their long struggle against speed-up prior to closure

"I agree with Tariq" Kinnock

Labour 'left' Neil Kinnock and "Trotskyist" Tariq Ali made a fitting couple on the platform of the Cardiff anti-racist Carnival last Saturday.

2,000 joined the march, which was called by the Cardiff Committee against Racism (and obviously backed by the Anti Nazi League).

Its stated aim was to provide a peaceful show of solidarity and opposition to racialism as well as to have a good time".

The march started in the working class area of Bute and was joined by many of the black and white youth who live there, some with their whole families.



Kinnock

Trade union banners included the NUM, NALGO, CPSA, AUEW and NUPE plus the Cardiff Trades Union Council and Welsh TUC.

'No politics' was of course the aim of the organisers and both a steel band

and a jazz band were drafted in.

Whenever the music stopped, in fact, the spontaneous shouts of "Smash the National Front" were generally megaphoned out by "One Race, the Human Race" or "Equality In" from the stewards.

At the rally which launched the Carnival proper Ali, fresh from the Richard Baker chat show earlier in the week and Neil Kinnock added their non-political comments.

Although Ali did mention that the real problem was capitalism in crisis—at which Kinnock clapped—he went on to draw the conclusion that what was needed were more carnivals all over the country, that the ANL had been "vindicated" and were partly responsible for the decrease in the fascist vote.

The other people Ali saw

as partly responsible were the Tories who were poaching the racist vote!

Kinnock was a happy man when he got to his feet. No speaker—least of Tariq Ali—had fingered the Labour government's responsibility for maintaining the conditions that breed fascism.

"I agree with Tariq", began Kinnock, before going on to blather about mobilising "beauty, joy and equality" against the forces of ugliness which of course were alien to the "British people".

Judging by the smiles, laughs and claps Kinnock was getting from his fellow platform speaker, Tariq agreed with him too.

Nothing was said against the Labour leaders or their 'left' assistants; not a word was breathed about workers self defence; and a good time was had by fakers of all descriptions.



Secrets pledge formally dropped

As the time set for the Official Secrets trial of journalists Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell and former soldier John Berry draws closer, Prime Minister Callaghan has formally announced the abandonment of a Labour Manifesto pledge to scrap the Official Secrets Act.

Replying to a Parliamentary question by Barbara Castle, Callaghan replied that while he had the Manifesto pledge "in mind",

"I regret that I cannot come to that conclusion at this time".

Labour policy is to call for the repeal of the Official Secrets Act and its replacement with a 'freedom of information' Act, placing the onus on the state for proving that information should be withheld.

Four years in office in close liaison with all of the most reactionary heads of military intelligence and the professional Civil Service has clearly persuaded Callaghan and the Cabinet that these bastions of capitalist class rule must remain shrouded from the eyes of the workers movement.

Like every other pledge in Labour's manifesto which might in any way weaken or threaten capitalism, it has been cynically jettisoned by the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

Suffrage climbdown

By express order of a Labour minister, Margaret Thatcher's photograph is to be given greater prominence in the Westminster Hall exhibition to mark the 50th anniversary of women's suffrage.

Baroness Kirk was yielding to accusations from Tory MPs that the show revealed 'political bias' and was 'intended to give the impression that votes for women were entirely a trades union and Labour performance'.

PHOTO: Andrew Ward (Report)

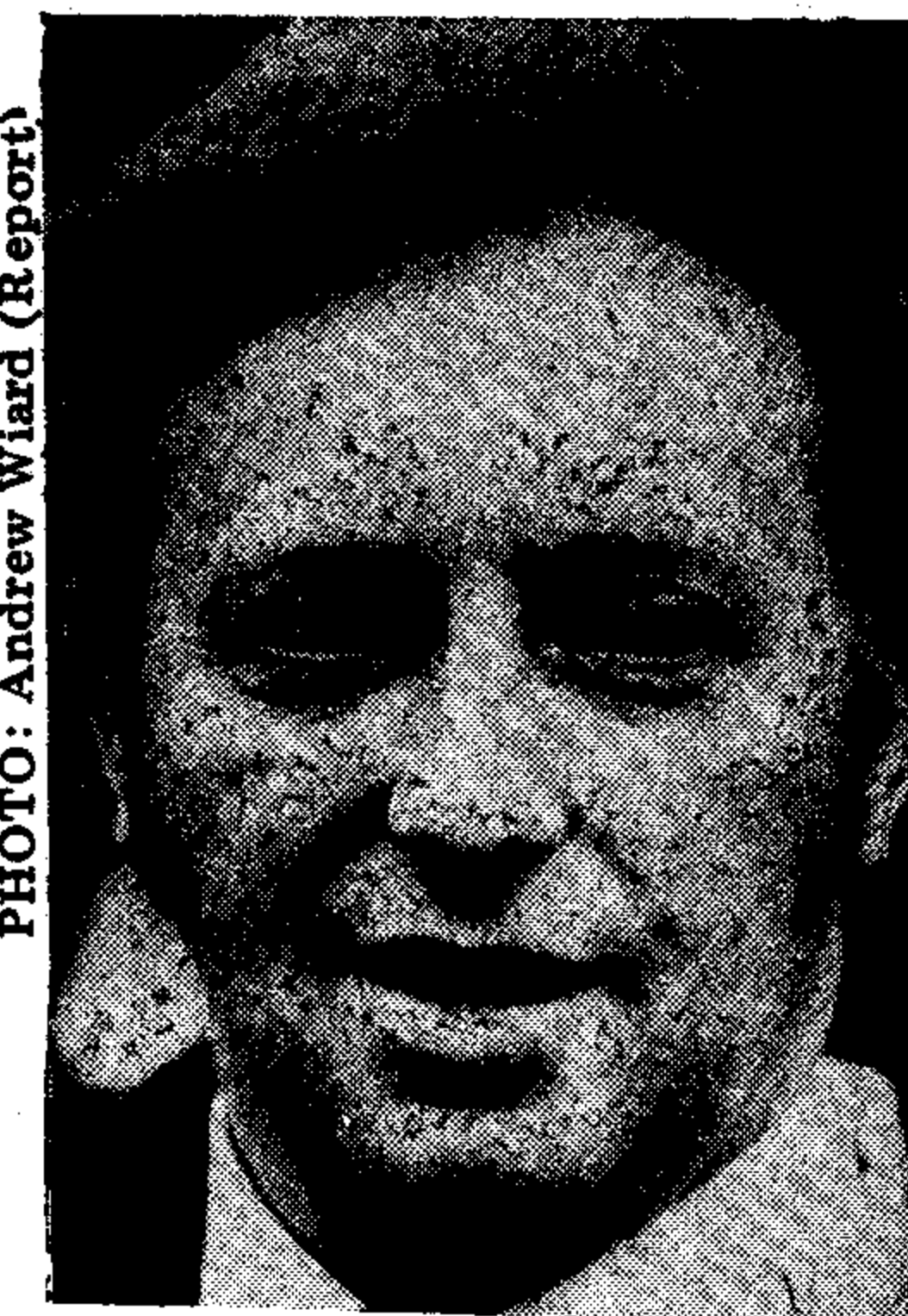
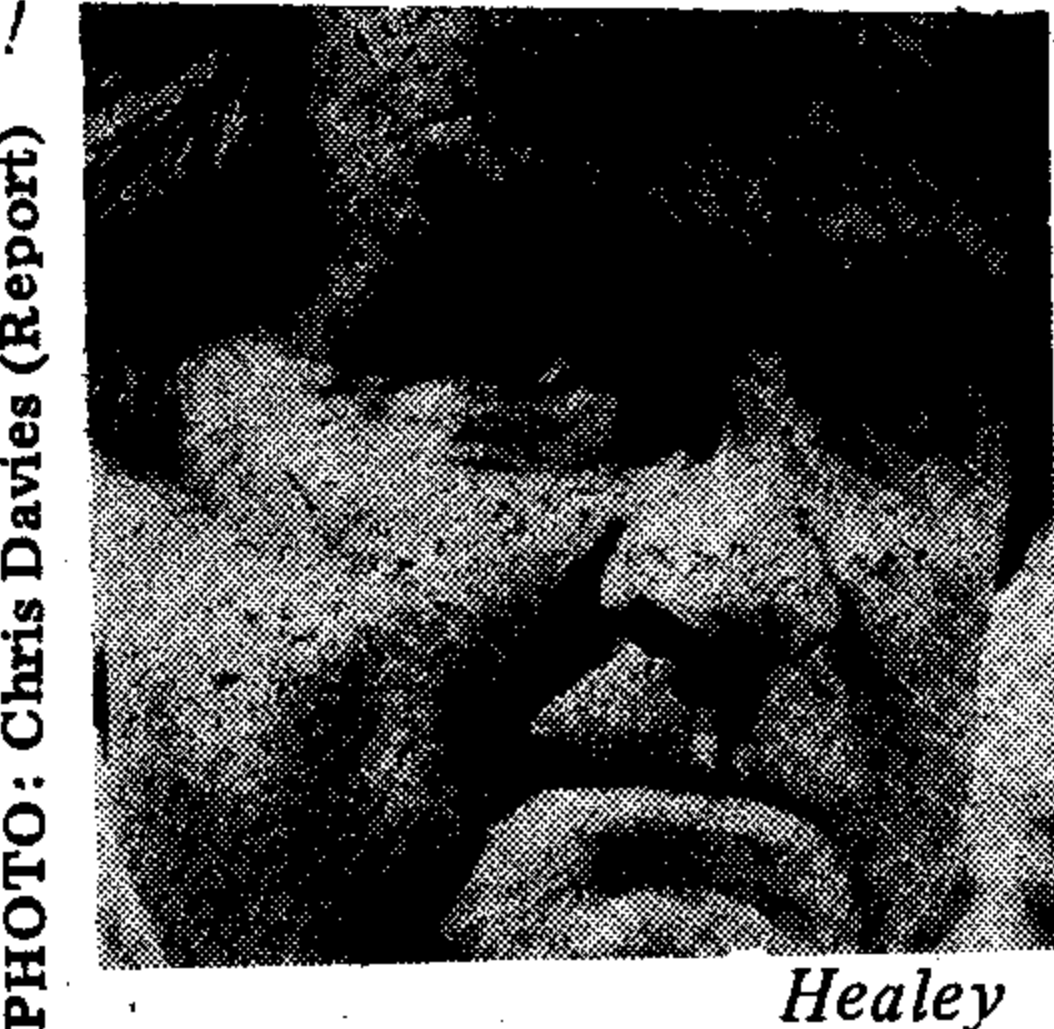


PHOTO: Chris Davies (Report)



Butcher Mason—Scargill's 'socialist' campaign has not gone so far as to fight for Mason's removal in his Barnsley mining constituency!

"Callaghan and Healey have found an echo in the labour movement", one Chartist announced.

Under these conditions he felt the SCLV had to play the role of a "nuisance" to Callaghan.

If this were done, then, according to this same Chartist, Callaghan would "be forced to debate openly".

"Then", he went on, "we will have achieved a great deal indeed!"

Silence on 'lefts'

It took a WSL supporter to pinpoint the conference's resounding silence on the role of the 'lefts' and to challenge the notion that "debate" on socialist ideas would change things.

Years of Labour Party conferences should surely have taught people that the right wing leaders pay no attention to the democratic wishes of the membership—and must be removed.

Only the struggles of workers would provide the forces to expose the 'lefts' who have consistently refused to fight and remove the right wing leaders, she argued.

It was essential to take up the main policies of the Callaghan leadership—wage control and unemployment.

No confidence

By challenging the 'lefts' to kick out Callaghan and Healey the fight could be taken up simultaneously against both right wing and the 'left' fakers.

The WSL supporter

Conference draws teeth from fight in Labour Party

A conference entitled "Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory" which excludes any discussion on programme, any examination of the role of the 'lefts' within the Labour Party and any reference to actual struggles within the trade union and labour movement obviously does not have much to offer the working class.

Such was the case at the 150-strong conference, jointly inspired by supporters of the International Communist League and the Chartist group, that was held in London last Saturday.

It had been hailed by NUM 'left' Arthur Scargill in a message conveying his "best wishes".

Chaired by Ted Knight—the one-time Trotskyist who is now the 'left' leader of Lambeth Council—and addressed by prospective 'left' candidate Ken Livingstone and by victimised Clay Cross councillor David Skinner, the conference steered well clear of any analysis of the record of wretched betrayals carried out by Tribune MPs on every major issue of government policy.

Far from minds

Livingstone certainly spoke of the need to expose Labour's "traitors"—but centred exclusively on the role of the right wing of the Labour Party, ignoring completely the Parliamentary support given to them by the 'lefts'!

And while SCLV speaker

Mike Davies referred fleetingly to the "ultimate aim" of removing the right wing MPs, this objective was far from the minds of almost every speaker.

So too was any fight for a consistent socialist programme.

Voted down

A bid by supporters of the 'Workers Power' grouping to raise amendments specifying a more precise programmatic platform for the SCLV was overwhelmingly voted down—with ICL supporters arguing that the campaign itself was a "compromise" to link up with and organise others who "don't share our conception". The amendments were not even discussed.

An IMG speaker, surprisingly professing concern at this failure to discuss programme, referred glowingly to the splendid work of "Comrade" Ernie Roberts in N. Hackney CLP, and was welcomed to the fold on all sides.

Another speaker referred to the fight against the cuts, stressing his view that there should not be too much emphasis on mobilising health workers—who are not experienced enough, organised enough, or possessing enough muscle to win!

Blaming workers

Graham Bash, a Chartist supporter, declared it was necessary to "build the party"—meaning of course not a revolutionary combat party, but the Labour Party.

"We must create the conditions in which the left can progress", he went on.

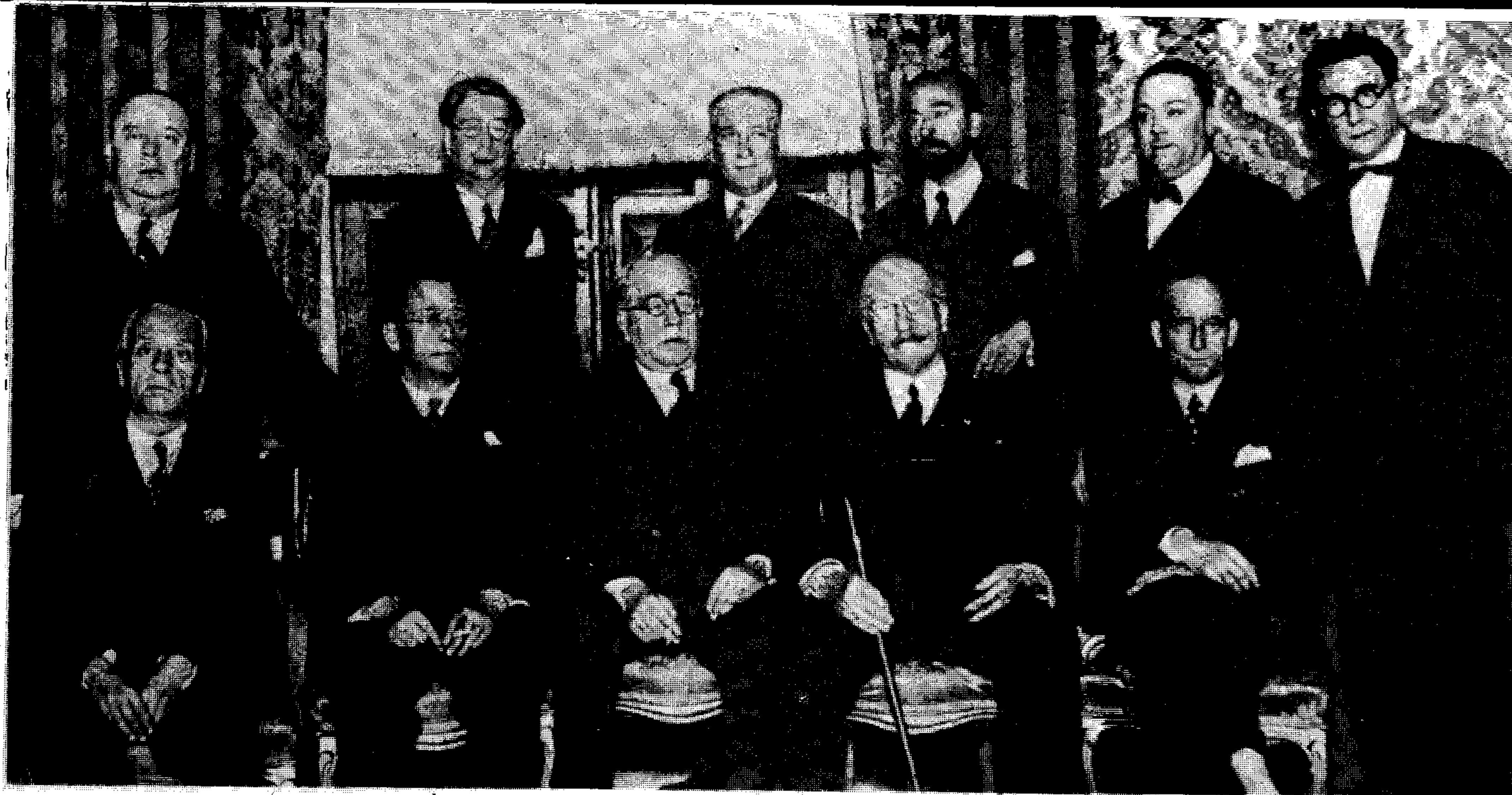
Chartist supporters were unanimous on this view, and insisted that the last few years have seen a victory for reformism over the working class—effectively blaming workers for four years of wage cuts and unemployment.



Workers have consistently shown readiness to fight cuts but Chartists argue they accept Healey's policies



Posters in the 1936 election in Spain



Azana with his Ministers. From left to right, (front row): Albornoz, Giral, Azana, Lerroux, Casares Quiroga; (second row): Prieto, Marcelino Domingo, Largo Caballero, de los Rios, Martinez Barrio, Nicolau d'Oliver.

SPANISH POPULAR FRONT: A ROADBLOCK TO REVOLUTION

France and Spain were the settings for the last great confrontations of the interwar period between the working class and the bourgeoisie.

In Spain during this conflict on more than one occasion the working class came close to the seizure of power.

In July and August 1936 in large parts of Spain, including the largest cities, the bourgeoisie was expropriated and the working class succeeded in setting up its own organs of revolutionary power.

By this time the working class and its allies in much of the rest of Western and Central Europe had been decisively crushed under the most savage reaction.

"Impossible"

Stalinist historians claim that this fact meant that social revolution in Spain in the years after 1935 was impossible and that any attempt at revolution was dangerous because of the isolation of the Spanish working class.

This interpretation, however, is a conscious lie—cultivated in order to justify the treacherous policies of class collaboration pursued by the Stalinist and other working class leaders, in particular

through the Popular Front.

It is impossible to understand the crucial role in the history of the European working class played by the Spanish Popular Front without seeing the objective material possibilities which existed for the Spanish working class.

Actually occurred

First of all, not only was social revolution possible in the Spain of 1936, it actually occurred in large parts of the country.

In April 1936 Trotsky observed:

"Both the profound ferment in the masses and the continual violent explosions demonstrate that the workers of town and country, as well as the poor peasants, deceived over and over again, are continually directing all their forces toward a revolutionary solution. And what role does the Popular Front play in the face of their powerful movement? The role of a gigantic brake, built and set in motion by traitors and servile scum".

And he later rightly concluded that:

"In its specific gravity in the country's economic life, in its political and cultural level the Spanish proletariat stood on the first day of the revolution not below but above the Russian proletariat at the beginning of 1917."

Objectively the balance of forces within Spain favoured the working class. The distribution of arms to the working class would have made it invincible in the short term against even the full military might of the Spanish bourgeois state.

Of course, the bourgeoisie had access to strong international aid—especially from Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

But the working class, too, had important possible

sources of international support.

Not defeated

The French working class was not defeated; it was attaining new heights of militancy and from June 1936 its leaders were in the government.

And French support could have been crucial to the Spanish working class in many ways.

Also there was the Soviet

Union—the world's first workers' state whose rapid material development was making it capable of providing important material assistance to any major working class struggle in another country.

In Spain, therefore, all the objective material circumstances made a working class seizure of power a historic possibility.

And if the working class had succeeded in establishing its power in Spain,

the impact of this event in France and so indirectly across Europe would have been tremendous.

It was not too late in Spain in 1936 for the long tide of working class defeats in Europe to be decisively reversed.

All this could have happened. None of it did.

But unless a successful Spanish revolution is seen as an objective historical possibility, the responsibility for its failure cannot be understood.

There can be no doubt where that responsibility lies: with the leadership of workers' organisations and parties who—some all the time, others only at crucial moments—pursued a policy not of identifying and fighting for the independent interests of the working class and the poor peasantry but of collaborating with a section of the enemy capitalist class.

'Left bloc'

Such alliances took many forms during the tumultuous years between the fall of the Spanish monarchy in 1931 and the end of the civil war in 1939.

But they culminated in the Popular Front (also known at the time as the 'left bloc').

This was formed late in 1935 between a group of 'liberal' bourgeois republican parties (the main ones being the Republican Left, led by Manuel Azana, the Republican Union, and the Esquerra of Catalonia, led by Luis Companys), the mass workers parties (the Socialist Party—PSOE—and the much smaller Communist Party—and the self-styled "revolutionary" party, the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) led by renegade former supporters of the Trotskyist



Republican fighter dies in action

FRENTE POPULAR DE IZQUIERDAS

Al pueblo sevillano:

Mientras las derechas reaccionarias, monárquicas y fascistas de Sevilla discuten análogamente las actas que han de leerse para su medra personal y para defender los intereses de los grandes terratenientes y banqueros, el Frente Popular de Izquierdas ha quedado formado en Sevilla con los Partidos republicanos y obreros.

Las derechas, con sus apellidos desordenados, con sus egoísmos y bajo la égida de la Compañía de Jesús, solo coinciden en esto en insultar a los republicanos y a los obreros. Rivalizan en la práctica del soborno, de la coacción, de los peores trucos de mudidores y electoreros. Y perdido todo átomo de vergüenza política, apelan a la desfiguración y al "chantaje", utilizando una designación muy parecida a la de una gran Central Sindical obrera, para firmar ciertos carteles y pasquines repugnantes, con el propósito de sembrar entre las filas de la clase trabajadora la duda, la vacilación y el confusismo.

En cambio, el Frente Popular de Izquierdas se ha constituido para defender a la República y realizar un programa concreto, elaborado a la luz del día, conocido y aprobado por las grandes masas populares del país. Programa que, si bien no representa los postulados máximos o mínimos de los partidos coaligados encarna, cuando menos, todos aquellos puntos que nos son comunes.

El Frente Popular de Izquierdas, lucha

Por la Amnistía; por la admisión de los represaliados; por la exigencia de responsabilidades individuales por los excesos cometidos en la represión de Asturias; por la exigencia de responsabilidades por los sucesos y escandalosos negocios; contra la inmoralidad, la desvergüenza y la indecencia de los políticos del bicho negro; por la supresión de los jornales "católicos" de 1,50; por el establecimiento de un jornal mínimo en la industria y en la Agricultura; por el establecimiento de la legislación social de la República; por la supresión de la pena de muerte; por la rebaja de impuestos a los industriales, campesinos y pequeños comerciantes; por una reforma agraria eficaz; por una reforma de nuestro sistema fiscal; por PAN, TRABAJO, CULTURA, DIGNIDAD, DECENCIA Y MORALIDAD.

Sevillanos: El programa del FRENTE POPULAR DE IZQUIERDAS y las odiosas y subrepticias intenciones de las derechas monárquicas no admiten comparación.

Cumplid con vuestro deber de ciudadanía votando al

Frente Popular de Izquierdas

Por Unión Republicana: Miguel Mendola. Por el Partido Socialista: José Estrada.
Por Izquierda Republicana: Pascual García Santos. Por el Partido Comunista: Jesús Beltrán.

Sevilla 1 de febrero de 1936.

Imprenta del Carme - Regua, 19 - Sevilla

Popular Front leaflet, February 1936

International Communist Party, Andreas Nin and Juan Andrade.

This Popular Front differed from the French Popular Front in a number of details. Its leading names came not from the Socialist Party but from the bourgeois parties; and it received formal adherence of both the Stalinist CP and a party, the POUM, which, despite its own denials, was widely regarded in Spain as Trotskyist and even in its own eyes was "revolutionary" and anti-Stalinist.

The Popular Front agreement was signed in January 1936 and became the election manifesto of the Popular Front of the Left in the February elections.

It was an extraordinary political document, quite different from the manifesto of other similar coalitions.

Where other Popular Fronts produced manifestos which were a series of timid reforms made to sound extremely radical, the Spanish coalition issued a manifesto which explicitly set itself against any social reform which would threaten the capitalist class.

Culmination

The Popular Front alliance which took shape in Spain at the end of 1935 was not new.

It was, for virtually all the parties to it, the culmination of policies which had been maturing since the overthrow of the monarchy.

For the bourgeois, liberal republicans like Azana, Cacaes Quiroga and Companys, the Popular Front represented their last hope of keeping even a narrow foothold on political power which, posing as revolutionaries, they had (with the help of the PSOE leaders) usurped from the working class after the 1931 revolution.

In the interval, the bourgeoisie, looking in horror at the growth of the revolutionary struggle of the workers and peasants, had turned almost unanimously towards either right-wing parties like the CEDA, led by Gil Robles, or to the fascist groups.

By 1935 Azana and Co no longer represented any

significant section of the bourgeoisie—they were, as Trotsky put it, the bourgeoisie's shadow.

This shadow fell right across the political landscape. Nonetheless, it was this tiny group of "political phantoms" who—because, as Trotsky said, they incarnated "the principles of the 'democratic revolution', that is, the inviolability of private property"—gave the popular front its political colour.



Azana

What should go into the election manifesto was entirely their decision—and the workers' parties accepted this.

They stood for, in Azana's words, "peace and order . . . We want no dangerous innovations."

In effect they were saying to their own class: we can do through compromise with the workers' parties what the right wing of the bourgeoisie cannot do through confrontation—draw the teeth of the revolution and protect private property.

The Socialist Party was in some ways the kingpin of the Popular Front alliance.

It was by far the largest of the parties involved and carried most electoral weight.

It was convenient for the PSOE leaders to disguise the fact but they could probably have got nearly as many votes on their own as they could as part of the Popular Front.

Central

The Socialist leaders were also central to the alliance in another respect—they were no strangers to political blocs with all the

other parties of the Popular Front.

The prototype of the Popular Front government had already ruled Spain from the fall of the monarchy through the first constituent parliamentary elections in 1931 until the right-wing victory in the Cortes elections of 1933.

In these governments the Socialist leaders held ministries alongside the bourgeois republicans.

This was no longer the immediate plan—much as the republicans desired it. Under pressure from the left of the PSOE, the socialist leaders refused in advance to participate in any future government coalition with the republicans.

"Unprincipled"

That, said PSOE leader, Largo Caballero would have been "unprincipled"!

He didn't find it unprincipled, it seems, to offer loyal parliamentary support for any government the bourgeois republicans decided to form after the elections.

The Socialists had also known recent political alliances with the other participants in the Popular Front.

In 1933 and 34 they had formed the Workers' Alliances.

The initial aim of this policy, of which Largo Caballero was the principal architect, was to reduce the obviously suicidal divisions which existed in the workers' movement between the two main unions, the U.G.T. and the anarchist-dominated C.N.T.

Framework

The C.N.T., however, refused to join these alliances except in Asturias.

The forces which did join the Socialists and the UGT were the small "rebel" unions the Libertarian Syndicalist Federation and other unions expelled from the CNT.

Along with them came the centrist group the Workers and Peasants' Bloc (led by Maurin), and the Communist Left of Spain (the Spanish "Trotskyists" led by Nin and Andrade, who by then were moving rapidly towards a definitive break with Trotsky).

The workers' alliances could have been the framework for a policy of the workers' united front and in some places it moved in that direction.

Bourgeois groupings were explicitly excluded from membership of the Workers Alliances and they played a central role in organising the insurrectional strikes in Madrid, Barcelona and Asturias, which followed the admission of the right-wing CEDA to the government in October 1934.

But even before their defeat by the state the Workers Alliances were failing to develop into strong organs of the workers' united front, except in a very few towns.

Alibi

The Socialist leaders were plainly on the look-out for an alliance which also included forces on their right and which would provide them with an alibi for their unwillingness to lead the social revolution.

And in September 1934 the CP changed its sectarian line and joined the Workers' Alliances.

Though, in principle this should have strengthened them, in practice the Stalinist leaders brought with them the embryo of the class collaborationist approach to political alliances which was to be codified in Moscow at the

Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935:

So it was only for a very short time, if at all, that the CP conceived of the workers' alliances as anything other than a step towards the Popular Front.

As Trotsky wrote when, as early as April 1933, the CP had participated in a "national anti-fascist conference",

"the Comintern from time to time organises a masquerade in imitation of a united front".

This is what the workers alliances were to become, as throughout 1935 the Stalinists and the right-wing Socialist leaders made plans for a strategic political alliance with the widest possible selection of bourgeois politicians.

Despite their small (though rapidly growing) quantitative political weight in 1935 the Stalinists' political importance in the construction of the Popular Front was very great.

Acting in accordance with the Comintern's new policy, and fortified by the model already established in France, the CP appeared as the force with the most clear-cut vision of what kind of Popular Front it wanted to set up.

The party's Secretary-General Jose Diaz described the policy as follows:

"We wish to fight only

on the side of Menshevism—of class collaboration, of betrayal of the independent revolutionary interests of the working class and peasantry.

The first of these were the anarchists of the CNT.

The traditional position of the Spanish anarchists had been to advocate abstention in all elections, since voting was held to be a compromise with the bourgeois state.

In spite of the "official" position it is certain that many anarchist workers did vote though hundreds of thousands followed the abstentionist line.

Adaptation

But this ultra-leftist stance now transformed itself into a wholesale adaptation to the politics of the Popular Front.

The anarchist leaders did not join the class collaborationist bloc. But they reversed their traditional posture by calling for a vote for the Popular Front without any campaign to break the cross-class alliance.

This change was to be consummated later when anarchists joined the Popular Front governments first in Catalonia and then in Madrid in November 1936.

The other "revolutionaries" to go decisively onto

"an authentic government of the Popular Front, with the direct (ministerial) participation of the Socialist and Communist parties."

This the POUM imagined would "complete the democratic experience of the masses" and so bring the revolution closer.

A small but significant section of the revolutionary masses looked to the POUM as their leaders. Millions looked towards the CNT.

Reactionary alliance

And yet, at a time when the bourgeoisie was preparing the blackest reaction, both these organisations told their followers in effect to put their faith in a reactionary alliance with the shadow of the bourgeoisie.

"Unfortunately for the revolution," Trotsky observed bitterly, "between a handful of Bolsheviks and the revolutionary proletariat stood the counter-revolutionary wall of the Popular Front".

The handful of Bolsheviks were in no position to make a direct appeal to the masses.

A small number of Trotskyists remained in the POUM where they unsuccessfully attempted to fight the liquidation of the POUM into the Popular Front.

Only in late 1936 did



POUM demonstration

for a democratic republic with a broad social content. There can be no question at the moment of a dictatorship of the proletariat or of Socialism but only of the struggle of democracy against fascism".

Stalinists

The importance of the Stalinists in the alliance was recognised by the other forces in an allocation of places in the electoral lists.

The CP had nearly 5 percent of the candidates which was still considerably more than the share of the vote it was likely to win independently.

To Trotsky, writing just two days before Franco's military rebellion:

"The question of questions at present is the Popular Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even a technical manoeuvre, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the Popular Front. In reality the Popular Front is the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism."

And in this "question of questions" the main forces which claimed to be revolutionary in Spain showed definitively that they stood

the side of class collaboration were the POUM.

The POUM had been formed in September 1935 as a unification between Maurin's centrist Workers and Peasants Bloc and Nin's Communist Left—the former Trotskyists who had broken with Leninism and with the rest of the International Left Opposition.

The POUM joined the Popular Front, claiming when challenged that this was a mere tactical manoeuvre because the Spanish electoral law made it so difficult to stand independent candidates.

Trotsky retorted sharply that:

"This argument is worthless. Electoral technique cannot justify the politics of betrayal which a joint programme with the bourgeoisie amounts to."

The POUM signed the reactionary, bourgeois programme of the Popular Front without protest.

It hoped to "persuade" its partners in the coalition of the superiority of socialism.

It made no call in its propaganda to break the coalition with the bourgeoisie.

In fact the POUM advocated that the unprincipled liaison to be consummated by calling for:



Socialist party leader Prieto they manage to establish an independent group, the Bolshevik-Leninist Group which after only a few months of existence was to be destroyed by state and Stalinist repression.

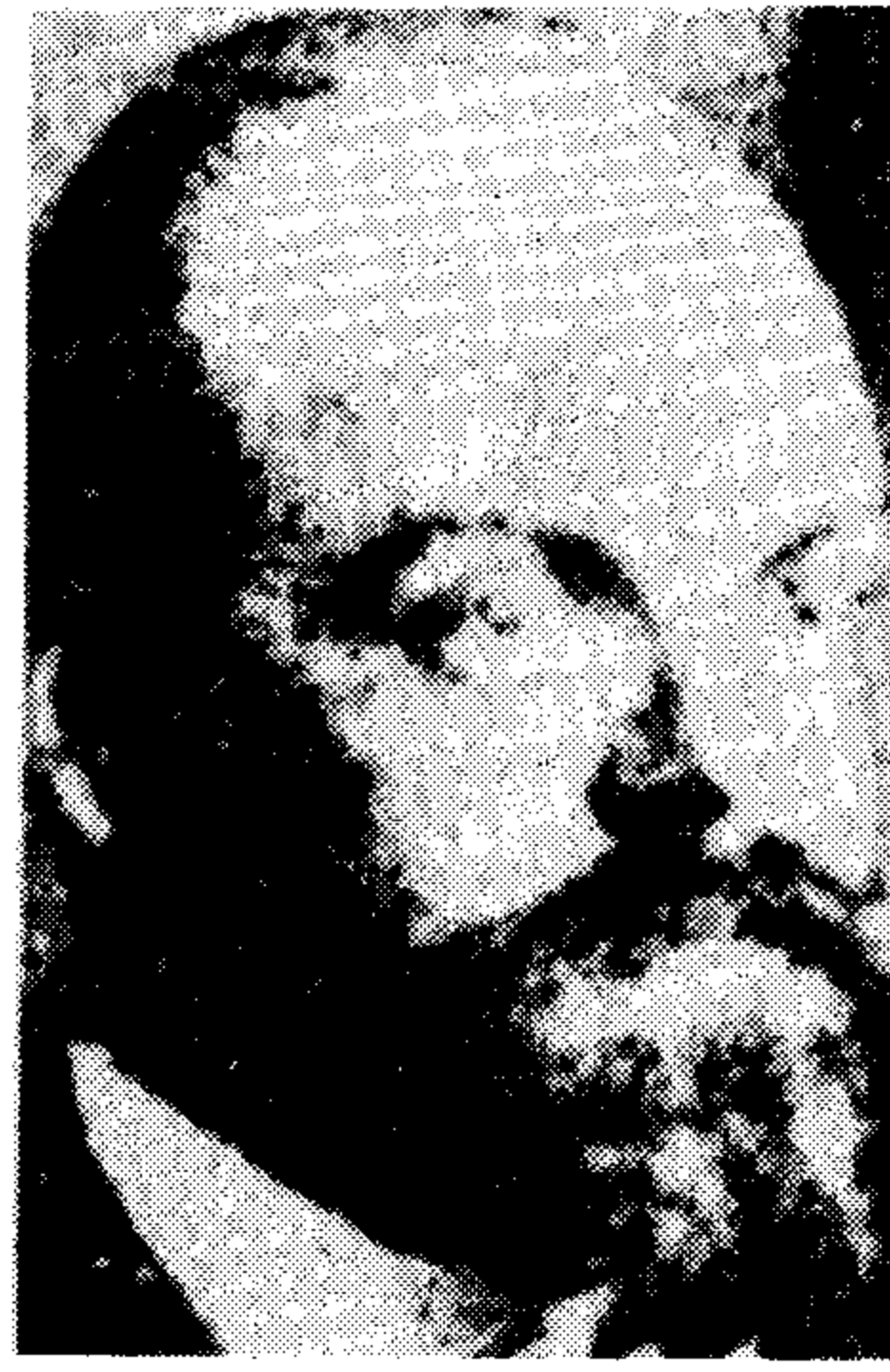
Among the anarchists and in the Socialist Party, too, there was some resistance to the Popular Front.

In a few areas attempts were made to set up "rebel" candidacies without the participation of bourgeois candidates. But in no case did they achieve any success.

Continued next edition

NEW LIES FROM NEWSLINE

By John Docherty



Parvus



Trotsky

After 1905, when Trotsky was in exile following the defeat of the first Russian Revolution, he had discussions with a German Socialist called M.I. Helphand who used the penname Parvus.

'Parvus' was famous in the circles of international socialism, wrote a number of books and articles which appeared on the front page of *Iskra*. Before any other Marxist in the world had grasped the significance of the fact, he developed the view that the international character of the capitalist system and the proletariat made possible the struggle for workers power before the completion of the bourgeois revolution.

Originator

Parvus was thus the originator of the theory of 'permanent revolution', taken up and expounded by Trotsky in his pamphlet *Results and Prospects* in 1906.

Such a view is essential to explain the primary role of the Russian proletariat in the international revolutionary upsurge a decade later, provides the basis and method of the fight for socialist aims in any national bourgeois revolution today.

Now an interesting point about Parvus is that he did not have an entirely reputable career.

In later years he became obsessed with money-making, and later still became a corrupted agent of German imperialism arguing for its 'progressive' role during the First World War and standing on the extreme right wing of the German Social Democratic Party.

'Proof'

In the 1920s, when the Stalinists wanted to discredit the theory of permanent revolution and attack Trotsky as an agent of capitalism, they referred to the career of Parvus as a 'proof' of the falsity of the views he had once put forward.

This argument was not only illogical, it was mixed with an 'amalgam' technique that culminated in the nightmare of the Moscow Trials, when revolutionaries with different opinions were lumped together, humiliated, murdered, and called spies, saboteurs, fascists and so on.

It might be thought that those who claim to be against Stalinism would shy well away from such methods of polemic, for fear they would tar them with the same Stalinist brush.

'Agents'

This, however, does not concern the ex-Trotskyists of the WRP leadership who have now become well steeped in the technique of

calling their political opponents 'agents' of the Stalinists or imperialists, and then attacking others who reject this view as in some way supporters of imperialism, Stalinism, or any other agency that readily comes to mind.

A very worked-out version of this was seen in the WRP's daily *News Line* of 1st July last.

Here an anti-communist letter to *Tribune* written by Mark Jenkins, who is a former member of the *Bulletin* group (a group of British supporters of the French OCI, immersed in the Labour Party) is used to attack anyone who has ever agreed with Jenkins on anything.

Picture

The article is entitled



WRP leader Healy—adopting Stalin's technique

'From Labour Party Towards CIA Position. Far-right move by renegades' and, in a bid to link it to the WSL, includes a picture of Alan Thornett.

Jenkins, in two letters to *Tribune* called for opposition to Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa.

Greater support

This, as our readers well know, has never been the position of the WSL.

We have consistently supported liberation movements in Africa and called for greater support for them from the workers states.

We have drawn attention to the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, for example, their support for the war against the Eritrean liberation movement.

Where has the WRP stood on these questions?

Have they criticised the ambiguous and 'conciliatory' role taken by left nationalist Gadafi in relation to the war against French colonialism in Chad, not to mention the war in Eritrea?

Have they even attempted to explain how Cuba—which they apparently still define as 'capitalist'—has become part of the Stalinist world system of workers states and counter-revolutionary alliances?

Sordid purposes

The WRP, of course, does not feel it necessary to explain any of this. Its sordid purposes are served by maintaining without any basis in fact or reason the following propositions:

*Alan Thornett agreed in the WRP 'that the crises of capitalism would force the Labour government to the left'

*Thornett and his supporters 'flouted the discipline of the Workers Revolutionary Party over and over again.'

*Joseph Hansen 'has been proved' to be a double agent inside the Trotskyist movement.

The first of these statements has been 'proved' only by means of invented and falsified WRP minutes, and has never been shown to have any relationship

with the policies put forward publicly in 3½ years of *Socialist Press*.

The second statement has been refuted in detail many times.

The third is part of the WRP's now well-known and particularly vile efforts to deal with political differences by conspiracy theories.

Moved to right

To return to Mark Jenkins. It is quite true that Jenkins for several years has put forward positions with which we strongly disagree.

He has long since broken from Trotskyism and moved sharply to the right. But this is no reason to say that he has not in the past argued for points of view which were correct.

In the early 60s Jenkins was a leading member of the WRP's forerunner, the Socialist Labour League, in the Paddington area of London.

In the early 70s he made a number of generally correct criticisms of the ultra-left sectarian and anti-Trotskyist policies of the WRP.

'Amalgam'

His subsequent evolution is a matter for explanation and regret.

But to attempt to associate his present position with the positions of the WSL is as logical as to equate all the positions taken by Parvus with those of the Left Opposition of the 20s; or those of the extreme reactionary ex-Trotskyist James Burnham with the present-day Trotskyist movement.

The use of the 'amalgam' the repetition of stale lies, appear to be the only answer that the WRP feels able to make to the series of articles that recently appeared in *Socialist Press* dealing with the utterly unprincipled role of the WRP in the trade unions and the rejection of all the principles on which some of them once stood on the national and colonial question.

If the Healy School of Falsification is all that WRP leadership has left, is it not time WRP members began to ask where the principles of Trotskyism are being defended and fought for in the workers movement?

IN REVIEW

Inside the 'internal settlement'

By Ann Evans

Since the signing of the internal settlement in March of this year, the Smith regime, now propped up by his black stooges, has been concentrating his efforts on selling the agreement to western imperialism.

Muzorewa, Sithole and Chief Chirau, the three black members of the new Executive Council, fully realise the importance of international recognition—a precondition for which is that the agreement should seem acceptable to a substantial section of the black population.

Sithole, himself, stressed this at one of the 'negotiations' prior to the settlement:

'What we fear is that at present the police, the army, prison service and the administration are predominantly white at the top. Should they remain as they are, this will cause difficulty in selling the settle-

ment. . . . While we are determined to see a settlement, we must face up to the problem of selling that settlement'.

The efforts of Smith and his black stooges to persuade the imperialist powers that they are in control of the situation and the settlement is secure have been quite frenzied.

The statements made by the security forces and government about the guerrilla war are faithfully repeated as fact throughout the bourgeois media in the West. The severe restrictions on the movement of foreign reporters are still in force.

This tight control of publicity is used by the government to try to show that the settlement is popular, that the regime is being liberalised and

that the guerrillas are losing the war.

All these propositions are quite false.

The government's need to crack down on the rural areas through curfews and 'protecting' villages, proves that the African peasantry fully support the Patriotic Front guerrillas and the guerrillas are becoming more, not less, successful.

The regime, now presided over by an Executive Council, in which effective power is concentrated in the hands of Smith and the Rhodesian Front, has stepped up the war against the Patriotic Front since the settlement was signed.

It has increased repression in the rural areas by placing further restrictions on 'protected villages'.



Rhodesian soldier preserving the 'settlement'

These are villages sympathetic to the guerrillas where the movements of the inhabitants are severely restricted.

Curfew regulations have become even stricter since March—in some places they have been extended to 22 hours a day.

Anyone seen in the fields or the countryside during the curfew is shot on sight—and these are regulations which Smith and Co. claim are for the 'protection' of the villagers!

Detainees

One way in which the government has tried to establish its new 'liberal' image, is through the well-publicised release of political detainees.

However, Joshua Nkomo, leader of ZAPU, has asserted that the authorities often release

prisoners: "only to rearrest them immediately, this time without any legal proceedings".

Detainees are required to sign a statement in support of the internal settlement as a condition of release. Many Patriotic Front supporters have refused to sign and remain in jail.

The State of Emergency, and all the repression that that implies, remains in force, so that released detainees get out to find the same climate of political repression.

The International Defence and Aid Fund pamphlet *Smith's Settlement*, contains the names of over 200 people arrested on security grounds in the first two months of the agreement.

The full number must be far greater, given the unwillingness of the authorities to disclose such information.

Political executions have continued, despite attempts by the black internal leaders to persuade Smith that such moves are not likely to convince the black majority of his sincerity.

The IDAF pamphlet provides a rundown of the terms of the settlement and the activities of the security forces since March 1978.

Information on the extent of imprisonment, murders and beatings carried out by the security forces is distorted or absent from most of the bourgeois press in Britain, so pamphlets such as these are useful and their contents deserve to be publicised.

**Fact Paper on Southern Africa No. 6. Smith's Settlement—Events in Zimbabwe Since 3 March 1978. Published by International Defence and Aid Fund, 104, Newgate Street, London EC1. Price 50p.*

POLISARIO DENOUNCE FRENCH STRATEGY IN AFRICA



Polisario Front fighters

The Polisario Front was formed in May 1974 to fight Spanish colonial rule in the Western Sahara. In February 1976, when Morocco and Mauritania took over the role of imperialist aggressors, the Saharan Democratic Arab Republic was declared in opposition to this enforced partition.

Since then, the Polisario has continued the war for the independence of the Saharoui people against the occupation armies, which have been unable to subdue this resistance, despite the forceful military support of the French state.

The war has in turn provoked a major crisis within Mauritania and increasing problems for the reactionary monarchy in Morocco. Almost the only concrete support for this liberation struggle comes from Algeria, where the bonapartist regime is making clearer its eagerness to be rid of this cumbersome commitment.

We print below the text of a statement issued by Aini Sayed (from the Political Bureau of the Polisario Front) and translated from *Le Monde* 23 June.

We hold no brief for the political methods of the Polisario Front, where naivety is flavoured with opportunism, while reactionary positions jostle with progressive and principled demands. But we fully support the right of the Saharoui people to self determination, and the demand that all imperialist troops be withdrawn from the Sahara. It is the revolutionary duty of the international working class to fight in solidarity with this call as one battle in its struggle for socialist revolution.

The fresh outbreak of French military interventions in Africa shows no signs of being random or unprepared. Troops had been kept ready on a state of alert, and were plainly equipped for the tasks which lay before them; local co-operation had been perfectly co-ordinated; the campaign of propaganda and publicity at once gushed out in full spate.

Everything indicates that the

events themselves are only the end-product of a thoroughly organised project which we are now confronting.

There can be no doubt that this project is bigger than France (see the recent conference of the five western countries on Africa). But Paris is marked out by its high degree of activity and its lack of caution.

After some 20 years of thriving neo-colonialism, Africa began to stir again. Those countries least allied with the West, threatened to break out of the conditions of isolation that

had been duly imposed on them. And then the Portuguese colonies seized their independence within a few months of each other. It was the whole neo-capitalist stability of the continent that had been changed—not to the profit of some foreign power, but as a gain for all the peoples of Africa.

Political blocs

That was barely four years ago. Since then the French state, anxious for its African game reserve, has been busy drawing up the general plans for a new display of energy.

The plan is to impose on Africa a division into political blocs. Our continent has escaped this fate until now, preserving some form of unity within the framework of the OAU, and the very strong resistance—even in the least revolutionary countries—means that this policy can only slowly be put into effect.

But several actions, that have had highly dramatic consequences for the peoples concerned, show that this scheme is now being put into operation—the first, French-Moroccan war in Shaba; the Senegalese complicity in the French attacks against the Sahara and even against Chad; the second war in Shaba with the arrival of Moroccan troops...

It is in this way that the cold war will find its new battlefield in Africa, with the probable outcome that we saw in south-east Asia.

Pretences

These policies are a danger to peace, and harmful to the interests of the peoples of the world. We take them up for what they truly represent.

These policies are hidden behind a panoply of pretexts and pretences. If France is 'constrained' to intervene here or there, it is—says France—with a humanitarian aim, to save

French nationals. Or again to respect the co-operation agreements concerning the security of an allied country. Or yet again, to protect Africa from a foreign invasion and to defend 'liberty' in the continent.

All these arguments don't convince us at all. However, in the eyes of some people they can give a semblance of legitimacy to some actions. But how can there be even a semblance of legitimacy in bombarding a small people like the Saharoui people, and arming their aggressors from Morocco and Mauritania?

'Legitimate'

Take the example of Chad, where there is—formally—a 'legitimate' government which has the 'right' to appeal to its friends. But in the Western Sahara, what is the legitimate authority, or even quite simply the legal authority, which could appeal for foreign intervention?

The most recent legal power was that of the UN, since our territory was under international jurisdiction at the time of the armed invasion by Morocco and Mauritania. And the only legitimate power is that of the Saharoui people itself, through the representatives which it gave itself: the Polisario Front and the government of the Saharoui Arab Democratic Republic. Neither the UN, nor the Polisario Front could have appealed to the French army to bomb Saharoui civilians and fighters! No, it is neighbouring Morocco and Mauritania who have made this call. Yet these two countries are the aggressors of our people, who have violated our frontiers since 1975 although here in France they try to cover up these facts with every means at their disposal.

Aggression

And it is in a state of legitimate defence that the fighters of the Polisario Front are going to carry the war back into the homelands of their aggressors.

France therefore cannot hide the fact that in intervening to rescue these two countries, France is participating directly in the aggression against the Saharoui people, and in the carving-up of their land.

In the Zaire affair, moreover, it was possible to 'justify' the French intervention by putting forward humanitarian grounds—the rescue of a few hundred Europeans...

But in the Sahara? Once the French elections were over, the Jaguars and Breguet-Atlantiques bombed on several occasions in the very heart of the Western Sahara, hundreds of kilometres from any place where there are supposed to be French nationals.

On May 4 and 5 it was the Jaguars, and lastly on June 4 the Breguet-Atlantiques which intervened at the demand of the

Moroccan general staff, because the monarchist troops had been placed in difficulties by our fighters.

No alibi

Yes, there is a war in our country—the war of liberation which the Saharoui people are fighting against the Morocco-Mauritanian invasion. But where then are these French who need saving?

Further, nobody will dare to claim that there are Cubans, Algerians, or Vietnamese or representatives of some foreign power in the Sahara. Our enemies, and the whole continent, know full well that it is our people who are fighting, and them alone.

So what could (apparently) hold good for Shaba or Chad, does not in any case apply to the Sahara. There is neither justification nor any possible alibi for the French intervention in our country.

The culpable silence of the media on this subject is significant. Moreover on May 21, 22 and 23, several dozen women and children were still in detention, having been seized at El-Ayou. Their names are added to the hundreds of others who have never been seen again.

Who dares to talk about it?



French President Giscard

The Saharoui people are fighting so that their internationally recognised right to self-determination and to independence shall be respected. For the problem of the Sahara remains a problem of decolonisation.

Do we need to point to the fact that the UN and the OAU are still discussing the question? Is it not an item on the agenda of the next ordinary OAU summit at Khartoum? At its last meeting in Havana, hasn't the bureau of non-aligned countries confirmed its support for the right of the Saharoui people to self-determination and to independence, without any foreign interference?

The international community has very great responsibility for the guarantee of our people's rights. Yet by its policy of intervention

directed against the popular liberation army and the Saharoui civilians, France shamelessly turns its back on these commitments.

Not only does France deny its 'own' principles (France has voted for every resolution stipulating our right to self-determination), but also obstructs the contribution that international processes of justice could make to a just and lasting solution based on the right of peoples to settle their own fate.

Plot

Even more France has laid an enormous threat against the peace and stability of the whole region. A foreign intervention like that by France creates the danger of accelerating the internationalisation of the conflict, which has been avoided until now.

It is no longer possible to conceal the gravity of the very real plot against our people, against the peoples of Africa. The democratic forces in France must, more firmly than ever before, declare themselves against this policy of domination and genocide, without forgetting that this same policy also damages the interests of the French people. If they have to pay the cost of the war, the



See article on Mauritania on page 2.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Vauxhall workers in sympathy strike

100 drivers who drive the Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port inter-plant fleet trucks are on strike for a tonnage allowance.

They have been negotiating with the company for several years since the company introduced new 32 ton trucks which were 10 tons heavier than previous ones.

All the way through these negotiations—which have gone right up to national level—the company has claimed that the government pay codes have prevented them from paying the men any money.

Vauxhalls declared that they would introduce an allowance as soon as the pay code expired if the men would drive the 32 tonners in the meantime.

This the drivers have done all along and the company is stalling.

No exact figure has been claimed by the drivers who say they will consider any company offer.

The crunch came after the end of the negotiations last week when the company still had not come forward with an offer and the men refused to drive the 32 tonners. The company

threatened disciplinary action and the drivers came out on strike.

The rest of the 3,000 TGWU members at the plant voted to go out in sympathy shortly afterwards.

This is a magnificent gesture of solidarity since it is almost holiday time and no one wants a strike at this time of the year.

The remaining 7000 AUEW members are likely to be laid off as a result of this strike.

So far the strike has not been made official.

FIGHT HERBERTS SACKINGS

Trade Union leaders at Alfred Herberts, Coventry, where 800 redundancies have been announced have adopted a policy to fight the sackings which is bound to fail.

While the first step they have taken—opposition to voluntary redundancy—is correct, no real strategy to defend jobs has been put forward.

Instead they are demanding the removal of the Herberts chairman and appealing to the NEB which owns the company to intervene against what they regard as "bad management".

This short-sighted policy, which misses out the basic fact that the NEB have obviously planned the sackings, does nothing to protect the independent interests of the workers concerned.

Work sharing

There must be an immediate fight for work sharing on full pay and the opening of the company books.

A full investigation will show the basis or otherwise for the charges of bad management.

The problems of the British machine tool

industry reflect the general crisis of British capitalism.

The workers at Herberts must use the information they get from an investigation of the company's books to draw up a plan for a fully nationalised British machine tool industry under workers management.

The fight for this policy of course raises the basic questions of what sort of government and economy is needed to protect Herberts jobs.

But it is the only realistic policy in the face of the employers determined drive to sack at Herberts and elsewhere.

NHS IN CRISIS



Bethnal Green day of action called

Workers occupying the Bethnal Green Hospital in East London, against the closure of the casualty department continue their fight.

They have now fixed 1st August as a 'day of action'. This has been backed by the Area Shop Stewards Committee and calls have been made for token protest strikes of up to one day's duration on that date.

The sympathy for the struggle in the local working class, and the fact (reported in last week's *Socialist Press*) that ambulance drivers continue to deliver patients to the hospital despite contrary instructions, stands as an example of determination to fight the cuts made by this Lib-Lab government.

Total support

On the picket lines it is extremely rare to come across any response from passers by except total support.

In factories in the area there has been a strong response to circulated petitions and appeals for finance. If determination and support were sufficient guarantee of victory the Bethnal Green workers could stop worrying.

Not enough

However, as the ruthless attack by management scabs on Hounslow Hospital proved, well-intentioned protests and sympathy, even among the broadest layers of the working class, are not enough to halt the drive towards destruction of the health service caused by the crisis of capitalism.

More important than ever now is the fight for the political mobilisation of the strength of the working class.

The fight to defend the Bethnal Green Hospital and the health service must take the form of a sharp struggle for all-out strike action in the health service.

This means a struggle

against the union leaders who have not lifted a finger to use the enormous power of their organisations to defend the hospitals.

The August 1 day of action can be a step forward if the demand that all-out strike action be called in the event of any attempt to close Bethnal Green is raised and carried into the widest layers of the working class.

A fight must be taken up to drive out those union leaders who refuse to commit their unions to such action.

Starting point

In this way the hospital occupation movement can become a starting point for building a new leadership in the unions which can lead the struggle to force the opening of the books of the health authorities, the drugs companies and other parasitic firms as a step towards the establishment of a socialist plan for the health service that can serve the needs of the working class.

WSL

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to construct a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally and for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL fights at every step against the leading leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party—now firmly harnessed to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party in an unspoken coalition arrangement.

Against their policies of class collaboration we put forward instead a programme which points to the independent class interests of the working class, its need to organise independently to overthrow capitalism, destroy its repressive state machinery and establish a socialist planned economy.

Only in this way can workers resolve today's problems of tumbling living standards, mass unemployment, slashed social services, racial, national and sexual oppression.

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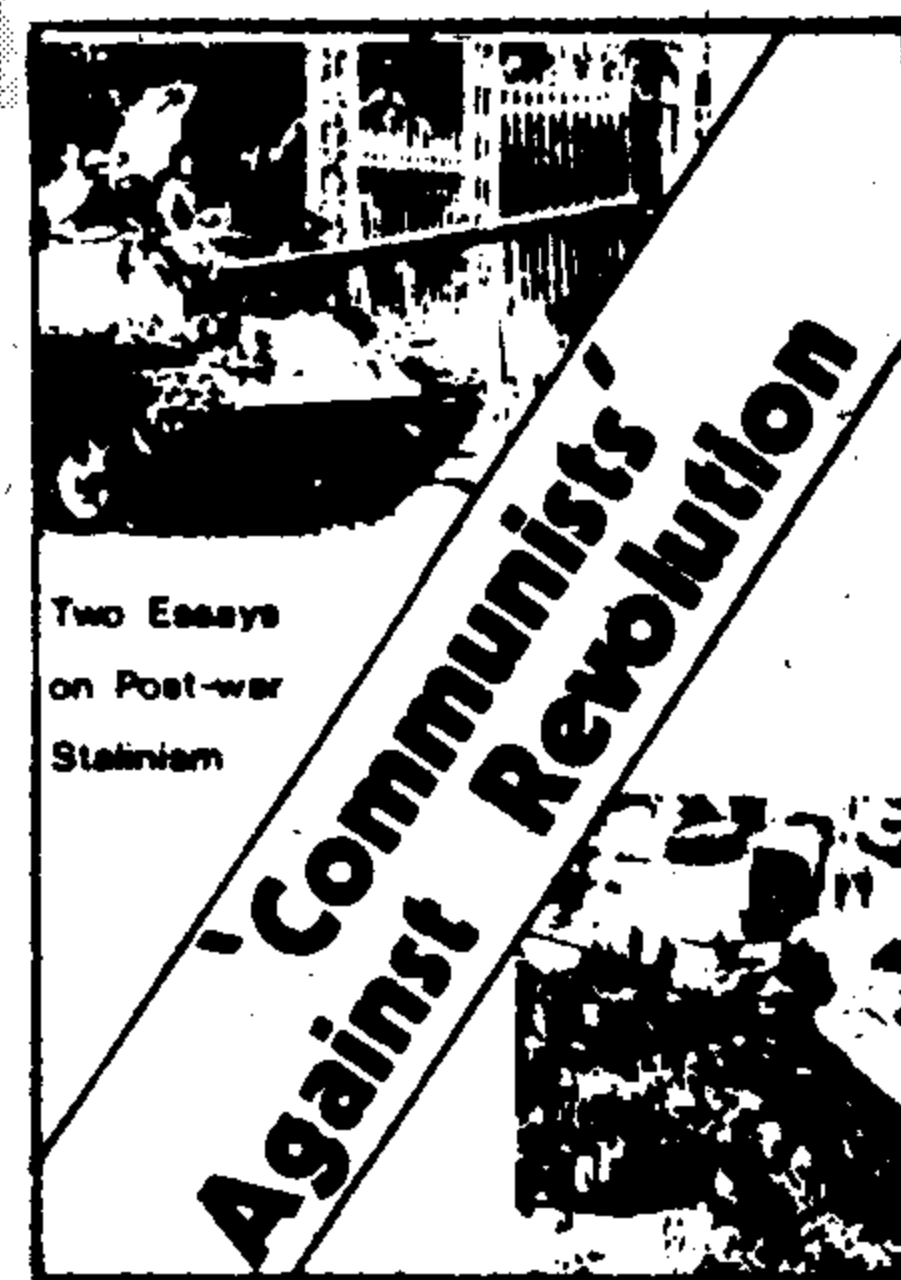
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Rough ride for do-nothing NUPE bureaucrats

Three members of the NUPE executive council and two regional full time officers were left shocked and speechless last week after two hours of ruthless attack by over 150 NUPE militants determined to fight against hospital closures.

This took place at Caxton Hall on 11 July at a conference called by the NUPE London Divisional Council to discuss strategy over pay and further moves to defend the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital.

It became clear from the outset that the NUPE leadership planned to take no further steps to defend the EGA and that they intended to turn this conference into yet another "discussion of the situation", without initiating any action against cuts in the Health Service.

Non-committal

Regional official Mike Taylor, reporting on the EGA, revealed that the DHSS's proposed structure of the working party—set up to discuss alternative sites for the hospital after the postponement of the July 21 closure date—was to be a party of ten consisting of only two trade union representatives.

Instead of calling for a

complete boycott of these proposals Taylor remained non-committal, merely stating that the EGA stewards would "probably reject it".

Nor did he have any plans for the future defence of the EGA. He seemed relieved that Ennals had been "edged out of a confrontation" on July 21.

Repair lift

It was left to Arthur Churchley, an EGA steward, to spell out what policies were needed to save the EGA—a complete rejection of the working party, and a demand that the Area Health Authority should repair the lift—and it was his frustration at the NUPE's apparent unwillingness and inability to defend the hospital that led a massive attack on the NUPE executive from the floor of the conference.

A delegate from the Ambulance Service condemned the executive for not giving full backing to the ambulance drivers who were going against the Area Health Authority's instructions by continuing to take patients into the casualty ward of Bethnal Green Hospital.

Visibly worried

Delegates from St. Bartholomew's hospital—which was one of the hospitals that staged a one-day strike to defend Bethnal Green—

and from Tower Hamlets branch, both continued the attack on the executive for their refusal to take up a fight in defence of jobs and services in the public sector.

The executive members present were by now visibly worried that the conference was not going according to plan.

Bob Pincher, from the executive, attempted to defend himself by claiming that his job was only to report to the executive what went on in London—a job which he thought he did quite well.

He went on to say that any action must be initiated from a local level, and then the leadership would be ready to give "full support".

This bluff was called immediately by a delegate from Hammersmith Hospital who pointed out that the West London Hospital had gone on strike for three days over the closure of Hounslow Hospital, and would have stayed out longer—except that no support whatsoever was given by the NUPE leadership!

It was over the current dispute at the West London Hospital that the strongest attack of all was made on the executive members.

Full time officer Harold Wilde outlined the dispute—where members of the Branch who refused to use the "clocking on" system had their pay docked.

He reported that the tactics adopted so far by NUPE—which include going

to ACAS and plans to go through the courts—seemed to have met with little success.

He was immediately attacked by Stan Hunt, Branch Secretary at the West London, who pointed out how the moves by management were obviously an attempt to break the militancy of one of the strongest branches in London—plans have been made to transfer patients from two wards to the nearby Western Hospital, which shows that the AHA are set for a major confrontation.

Disgusted

Hunt pointed out that in his nine years as an active trade unionist, he had never been so disgusted with the NUPE leadership, and a resolution was passed condemning the executive, calling for a lobby of the AHA and demanding full financial and organisational support.

The conference ended with the NUPE officials visibly squirming before such a show of militancy.

The conference proved that the determination to fight the cuts exists amongst the rank and file, and all that is lacking is a strong lead from the union leadership.

Obvious need

If they are unwilling or incapable of giving this lead, then they must be replaced with a leadership that will fight the cuts all the way, mobilising the full strength of the labour movement.

The final message from the conference is that there is an obvious need for an all-London Joint Shop Stewards Committee to be formed by Health Service Stewards.

This will bring together the strongest elements in the fight against hospital closures and co-ordinate a fight which the bureaucracy has shown itself to be incapable of taking up.



Garner scabs and friend

Garners kept open by SPG

Cyril Margolis's Garners Steak Houses were protected last Saturday from the mass picket which had the previous week successfully closed down his Haymarket restaurant.

A huge number of police turned out to harass pickets. With SPG thugs present and bus loads of police in reserve at the top of the Haymarket, it was clear that the police were determined to stamp out any threat of further mass pickets in Central London.

Without enough forces present to challenge the police on Saturday, pickets dispersed onto most of the Central London Garners restaurants and mounted an effective picket all night.

Not mirrored

The determination of the police was not mirrored by the leadership of Region 1 TGWU who have continually refused to mobilise forces from their 500,000 members onto mass pickets which would threaten the company and challenge police harassment, intimidation and attempts to limit picketing to six at a time.

Further evidence that the TGWU bureaucracy has every intention of killing this strike rather than mobilise the necessary forces to win it, was seen this week with the conference of Hotel and Catering workers called last Thursday to discuss ways of winning the strike.

Abortive

After their failure to bring a single delegation of workers along to last Saturday's mobile picket, Catering Officer George Abrahams and Hotels official John Stephens managed to get a mere two members at what turned out to be an abortive meeting.

We have also learned that the Regional Committee still refuse (after 24 weeks!) to circulate the London membership with the strike committee's policy.

It is essential that the strike committee continue to turn into the mobilisation of the TGWU membership around their policies—by fighting to force Regional Organiser Shorter and Staden to take measures such as circulating the Regional membership.

The result of this fight so far is that Shorter has produced a lengthy list of TGWU-organised factory meetings for the strike committee.

At these meetings the strike committee must fight for resolutions to be poured into the Regional Committee supporting their policies of:

- *No return to work without reinstatement and recognition.

- *Full secondary blacking of supplies.

- *Mass picketing every Saturday with delegations from the TGWU organised on a regular basis to all Steak Houses.

- *Regional Levy to raise a weekly minimum strike pay of £36.

From these meetings the strikers must directly organise factory delegations onto the picket lines.

Sandwell struggle looms

A major confrontation looms in Sandwell, West Midlands, over the Tory Council's attempts to break the trade union organisation of the direct labour department and give contracts for modernisation and maintenance to private builders.

Question mark

The closed shop agreement was signed just before Labour lost control of the council in May and is due to come into effect on August 1.

The Tories have already forced through the council, a decision to end the agreement, with the statutory six months notice.

But a big question mark hangs over their response to the commitment under the agreement to sack eight non-union members on August 1.

Decisions for strike action if they fail to do so have already been taken.

The Tory policy is to starve the department of work by awarding contracts to private builders but this has met opposition from tenants groups who have previous experience of private builders' workmanship.

But the need for united opposition to the Tories' attack should not allow tenants or building workers to forget that it is precisely the failure of the Labour government and Labour council to defend workers' interests which has allowed this situation to arise.

Union leaders aid BL attack

In September 1976 Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon appeared jointly on the front page of British Leyland management's house journal *Leyland Mirror* to call on their members to 'Keep Working', no matter what attacks management may make.

A year ago officials from all unions involved in British Leyland went further still and agreed to help increase Leyland's profitability at the expense of their membership.

They decided to implement a three-fold plan of attack:

- 1) An end to plant bargaining. All pay negotiations to be handled nationally, by selected officials and senior stewards, every November from 1979.

- 2) Job evaluation and parity. All jobs throughout Leyland to be graded on a single structure, and each grade paid the same nationally.

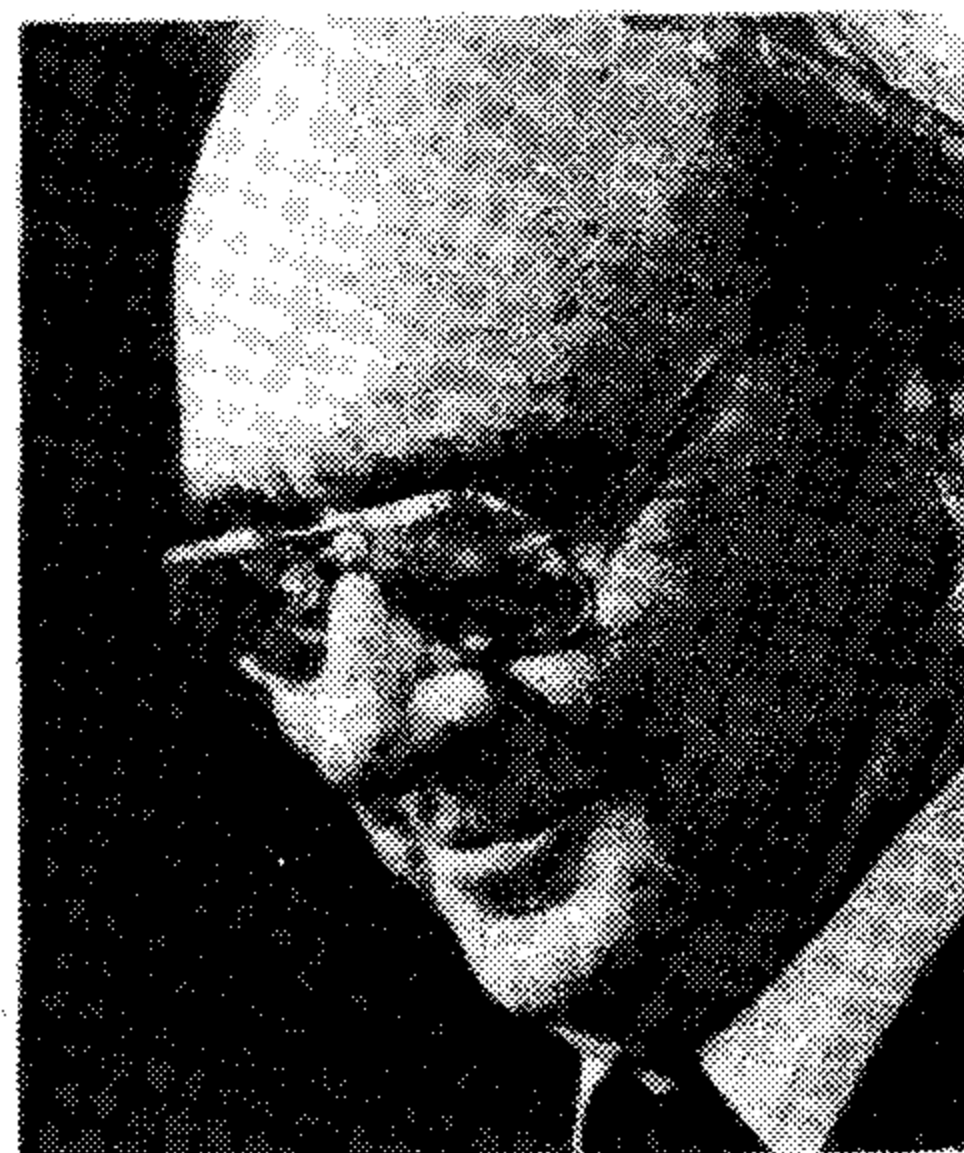
- 3) Fringe benefits to be equalised throughout Leyland.

Working with the selected representatives of the National Joint Negotiating Committee the company then organised a company-side ballot to force through these general principles.

Contained in the "fringe benefits" document was a clause declaring all previous agreements null and void.

As a result, since the ballot, Leyland have been attacking all agreements—

attack



Jones

ation, Leyland again set out to draw in the union bureaucracy, by first of all persuading the NJNC to agree to a method of evaluation and to set a couple of jobs for each plant to evaluate.

Now joint union-management committees in the plants are being set up to evaluate all jobs in all plants, and then slot them into the national "benchmarks".

With convenors and stewards now drawn into working this scheme, any section of workers that resists or puts forward a grading claim will have to fight their own factory leadership and the NJNC as well as the company.

The ballot declared that normal bargaining arrangements would operate for 1978.

But already impatient right wing and Stalinist convenors are trying to get around this. In Longbridge, the wage claim has been intermingled with talk of 'parity', in preparation for a 'fait accompli' national level settlement.

In the Cowley Body Plant the right wing leadership has made specific moves towards a corporate claim.

Complex

The procedure for such a claim is astonishingly complex—indicating how far such national claims are removed from the shop floor.

A claim drawn up by the Body Plant union branch leadership is to be put before a stewards meeting, to go then as a recommendation to the Oxford Automotive Committee, to go from there to the Oxford District Committee. From the District Committee it will be referred to a meeting of TGWU senior stewards in Leyland, as a recommendation for TGWU representatives on the NJNC. If it were then endorsed by the whole NJNC it would then go to the company!

It doesn't take a genius to recognise that such a procedure puts all the power in the hands of the union bureaucracy. This is why corporate bargaining has been continuously fought in Cowley.

In the Cowley Assembly Plant, TGWU stewards have taken a stand against this sabo-

tage of the wages struggle, and voted to submit a plant level wage claim.

Other Leyland plants should follow suit, and there must be a fight to withdraw all cooperation from job evaluation, and to pull union representatives out of all joint union-management committees.

Existing agreements must be defended. The independent interests of the working class demand the opening of Leyland's books and policies leading towards workers' control as preparation for workers' management of a planned, nationalised car industry, not union collaboration with capitalist managers to maximise the profits of the banks and components firms that feed off British Leyland.

Such policies require the urgent construction of a revolutionary leadership within the Leyland stewards' movement.



Body Plant convenor Roche

SOCIALIST PRESS



The face of Francoism reappears

It was the full power and violence of the Francoist state that was unleashed in Euskadi last week.

On Saturday 8 July, the demonstration of Basque nationalists in Pamplona bullring was attacked with characteristic violence by the riot police.

The demand for a political amnesty was answered with smoke grenades and rubber bullets. In subsequent demonstrations and riots, one militant was killed, and more than a hundred injured.

At San Sebastian two days later, a demonstration called to protest against the police violence ended in a battle outside the police headquarters.

Here the police assassinated a leader of the LKI (Revolutionary Communist League, the Euskadi section of the USFI to which the British IMG belongs).

Throughout Navarra and the other Basque provinces, 700,000 workers took part in a general strike condemnation of the killings.

Barricades were erected in all the towns and traffic halted as industry was paralysed.

But on Thursday, after the strike had ended, the riot police moved in again.

This time their target was the small town of Renteria, where they rioted, vandalised and looted.

The 'liberal' government of Suarez issued statements expressing polite shock, appealed for calm and sacked a few police chiefs.

But the replacement of a few officers will do nothing to transform the character of the Francoist state apparatus.

Fascists

Many riot police are well-known as members of fascist gangs, who fulfil their duties of repression even more violently in off-duty hours.

The army itself still holds massive power intact. In Barcelona, Miguel Salas is shortly to be court-martialled. Editor of *La Aurora* (paper of the PORE, Revolutionary Workers Party of Spain, which is part of the sectarian LIRQI—the International League for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International), Salas is charged with publishing 'attacks and calumnies' against the army—an offence over which the military courts have jurisdiction, as *Socialist Press* has reported in similar cases.

Calls for the "reform" of the army, the expulsion of fascists from the police, or for the setting up of a 'national' Basque police force cannot lead, to the smashing of the Francoist state.

The workers and other militants of Euskadi must join with all Spanish workers in a united offensive around demands which can lead to the overthrow of the heirs of Franco, the destruction of the repressive machinery of the capitalist state and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which alone can guarantee the Basque people their national rights.



PHOTO: Dave Evans, IFL

Asian youth and workers in Stetchford last February

ASIAN LEADERS CALL FOR 'SELF DEFENCE'

In a bid to retain control of the thousands of militant Asian youth who have gone onto the streets in recent weeks to demonstrate their willingness to fight fascism, three Asian community leaders have issued a statement of support for the forming of self-defence groups.

The Federation of Pakistani Organisations, the Federation of Bangladeshi Organisations and the Indian Workers Association of Southall declared jointly that:

"For the past decade the Asian welfare organisations have resisted pressure encouraging their members to join self-defence vigilante groups in the face of such attacks and in spite of considerable apathy from the forces of law and order.

We now believe that the time has come when we must urge our people to look to their own defence."

But simultaneously with this call, the immigrant leaders urged Asians to join the Anti Nazi League, whose pacifist policy of distributing posters and propaganda against the fascists makes no call or provision for self-defence.

Businessmen

And they further urged Asian businessmen to give money to the ANL, thus joining the list of showbusiness celebrities, bourgeois politicians, trade union bureaucrats and clergymen whose "support" for the ANL acts as a barrier to a fight for the forming of genuine workers defence squads or the adoption of socialist policies as

an answer to the conditions that have spawned the fascists.

The basis for the formation of workers defence squads which unite both white and black workers in struggle against fascist attacks was demonstrated again this weekend with a succession of anti-fascist mobilisations in Cardiff, in Manchester and in Brick Lane in East London.

Even as we go to press, 1,000 workers and youth are engaged in a march through Hackney after a 'day of action'.

But the prospect of united class action against the fascists frightens the bourgeois Asian leaders as much as it does the Liberals and famous names in

the Anti Nazi League.

This is why the Asian leaders called only for 'self defence' rather than turning to the wider workers' movement. In taking up this call, Asian workers and youth must insist that the local labour movement takes up its responsibility to help defend against the common fascist enemy.

Divisive

Meanwhile, whether they are making the divisive and adventurist call for 'black workers' to take strike action against the fascist attacks, calling for more police action against the National Front, or simply failing to make any call for workers

defence squads whenever they speak at rallies, the Anti Nazi League leaders are playing a criminal role in heading off the possible development of a real struggle both against the fascists and against the Labour leaders and union bureaucrats whose betrayals have opened the door for them.

Now is the time in key areas to mobilise every workplace, factory, working class estate, political and trade union body and immigrant community in united defence squads trained to combat the fascists.

Wolverhampton - the wrong road

The struggle against the growth of fascism in Wolverhampton took a step backwards on Sunday when the Anti Fascist Committee rejected the policy of forming workers defence groups.

Instead the committee has decided to hold a meeting around the pacifist and propagandist policies of the Anti Nazi League.

The situation in Wolverhampton could not more clearly show the need for workers defence.

It is now unsafe for blacks to walk alone in the city centre at night.

Two months ago two fascists launched a shotgun

attack from a car against a group of black youth.

But the Anti Fascist Committee is a classic class alliance of reformist black and white workers with an amalgam of vicars, community relations workers, Communist Party Stalinists, shop keepers and do-gooders.

Its response to the attack was first to call an inquiry to which the police were invited. Then it proposed joint patrols with police.

Next it suggested a call system where requests for assistance would be passed on to the police.

Home Secretary

Finally it called for the Home Secretary to come and meet immigrant leaders.

In all these developments the so-called "revolutionaries" of the International

Marxist Group and the Socialist Workers Party have played a most shameful role.

Never once have they stood out for the independent organisation of the working class to combat the fascists.

Petition

In many cases they themselves have been the source of these pathetic proposals.

(This has been paralleled in East London where IMG members are touting a petition drawn up by the Tower Hamlets Movement Against Racism and Fascism which calls for more police patrols in the area to protect the black community!)

The most aggressive response of these revisionist

NEXT EDITION

SOCIALIST PRESS is taking a break for one week. *Socialist Press* will therefore not appear on Wednesday 26 July.

The next edition of *Socialist Press* will appear on Wednesday 2 August.