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No.259 6 February 1986 30p Claimants and strikers 15p

Defy Tory law!

SHUT DOWN WAPPING!

By the end of this week the printers' union SOGAT could well find itself in court.

Rupert Murdoch's News International company which is running the scab printing of the Sun, News of the World, Times and Sunday Times behind barbed wire at Fortress Wapping, is going to ask the High Court to impose penalties on the union for blocking the distribution of these newspapers.

On Monday 3 February News Group Ltd, a subsidiary of News International, issued a new writ (number 7) demanding that SOGAT withdraw its instructions to printers at the Express buildings in Manchester who have refused to print northern copies of the News of the World.

So far the response of the SOGAT leadership to these legal threats has been good. "We are not ducking and diving. There is no point, too much is at stake".

It's true: too much is at stake, and no-one in the labour movement can afford to sit back and let the bosses' law strangle our unions.

Our unions are fighting organisations of the working class or they are nothing. The British trade union movement only came into existence because workers fought against unjust laws. Solidarnosc, the ten million strong movement of the Polish workers, only appeared because the workers were prepared to defy the law and the might of the state. And the powerful mass trade union movement in South Africa today took shape in struggles that the powers that be defined as illegal.

So prim trade unions have a

choice: either they shape and limit their struggle to what is allowed within the Tories' anti-union laws or they break these laws. So far the print workers have taken the second course because they know that even the most limited form of action against Murdoch's union-busting can be defined as 'secondary' and 'illegal'.

It is up to the whole of the labour movement to back the printers. The TUC must give its full support, not the kind of cowardly, backstabbing support it gave the miners.

The TUC should call mass pickets at Wapping. Picketing the narrow, busy roads round the plant can close the place down.

Petition

Rank and file print workers want this kind of action now and the paper 'Link-Up' is circulating a petition for all print workers to sign. Throughout the coalfields in Kent, Yorkshire, Durham and Scotland, miners who received solidarity from the print workers during their year long struggle are waiting, banners at the ready, to go down to London and help the printers shut down Wapping.

Despite and against what the law says, Wapping must be deprived of everything: ink, paper, wire services, water and phone lines, that is needed to keep the place going.

And if the print unions and SOGAT in particular is hauled before the court then there can only be one response. The TUC print industry committee must call an all-out strike across the whole of Fleet Street.



SOGAT general secretary Brenda Dean with printworkers demonstrating outside the TUC Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL.

More on the print:p2-3

THE BATTLE

Fleet St's future



Many print bosses have plans to follow Rupert Murdoch and pull out of Fleet Street. All of them are preparing to attack their workers.

The Guardian reports one print manager as saying:

"Murdoch's achievement is brilliant. The environment has been fundamentally changed overnight. The notion he could do it was not accepted by anyone...until he proved it. Now any direct competitors, Telegraph, Mail, Mirror, Express, Guardian has to equal his production costs."

So the bosses will be going all out to use new technology and "flexible" working practices to break the back of the print unions.

This is what the various print managements have planned.

The Daily and Sunday Telegraph. New presses are due to arrive in the spring at a £105 million printing project on the Isle of Dogs. Management are demanding a 30% reduction of the workforce and have hinted at the possibility of a no-strike deal with the EETPU if the print unions don't accept redundancies.

The Guardian. A £22 million print works is on line for the end of 1987 and cold setting is being introduced now in the composing room at the Farringdon Road headquarters.

Associated Newspapers [Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday]. The plan is to move to Surrey Docks (SE London) by 1988, four

years ahead of the original schedule. They have drafted in a new managing director, Mr John Winnington-Ingram, to mastermind massive job losses and relocation.

The Mirror. Maxwell has already forced through 2,100 redundancies without a fight from the print unions. That amounts to a 30% reduction in the workforce. By Spring 1987 Maxwell wants to be installed in Docklands.

Express Newspapers [Daily and Sunday Express and the Daily Star].

Management are demanding job losses of one-third from a workforce of 6,800 by the end of March. Alongside *The Observer* and *The Financial Times* they claim not to have any plans to move out of Fleet Street or introduce new technology.

Shah

Coming up on the inside lane is Eddie Shah, who plans to launch his high-tech colour daily 'Today', on 4 March. The EETPU has signed a no-strike deal with Shah and the paper will be printed at "Green field" sites in West Drayton (West London) and Trafford Park (Manchester).

The scope of these plans underlines the need for a united fightback by the print unions. Only if the old sectional divisions of the past are buried forever is there any hope of holding the line and defending jobs, pay, conditions and union organisation in the print.

As the battle against Rupert Murdoch's union-busting print operations at Wapping moved into its second week, Tony Dubbins, general secretary of the NGA argued "if we don't fight, then we can't expect the support of others".

He is right. Only very determined resistance by the print unions can stand a chance of defeating Murdoch.

So far there has been some success, in particular the defiant stand taken by SOGAT members at the Express buildings in Manchester who, risking legal action, again refused for a second week to print scab copies of the News of the World.

But this action needs to be stepped up. The seriousness of the present dispute and its implications for trade unionism in the print and indeed for the labour movement as a whole demands a fighting strategy from the print unions.

If Murdoch wins and the 5,000 print workers remain sacked forever then it will mean the beginning of the end of the power of the modern machine room — the skilled printers who can exert tremendous leverage on the bosses.

Destroyed

The NGA could be destroyed as happened to its US equivalent the ITU, in similar battles in the mid-70s. SOGAT, broader-based, so better able to survive defeat, would probably not be destroyed but would be greatly weakened.

This would amount to a very serious defeat for one of the best organised sections of the workers' movement.

So it is not enough to hope to wage a long war of attrition on the model of the Times dispute in 1978 — when strikes were supported by levies throughout Fleet Street, and the union got strikers jobs as 'casuals' on other papers.

The aim should be to shut down Wapping. To do this means breaking the Tories' anti-union laws, but so does any form of action that is effective, like that at Manchester. There is no alternative to illegality in this battle except complete capitulation.

Conditions in the print are different now from what they were a few years ago and the unions' strategy has to be re-adjusted to fit in with changed circumstances.

Back in 1978 the other newspaper proprietors believed that carving up the Times' market was priority number one. Now the print bosses are prepared to side with and support Murdoch.

As we outline on this page, all the print bosses have plans for massive job losses and/or new-tech sites outside Fleet Street. They are watching the dispute very keenly and want Murdoch to win.

As a result the pressure is likely to be stepped up on the print unions throughout the whole of Fleet Street. Already the Express is demanding 2,000 redundancies by the end of March and Reuters won't recognise the unions for negotiating purposes anymore.

But fighting the dispute on the Times model implies avoiding strikes anywhere else. The SOGAT leadership pursued this strategy at the Sunday People a few weeks ago and the result was that a strike to defend union

The battle to defeat Rupert Murdoch's union-busting attack at News International is probably the most important fight the print unions have ever faced. Tom Rigby looks at the issues.

organisation was sabotaged and the machine room FoC and Deputy Foc were victimised and remain sacked.

Such an approach spells disaster if management throughout Fleet Street choose this moment to go in for the kill. All the signs are that this is exactly what management are preparing for.

Murdoch is also better placed to win this dispute than Times Newspapers were in 1978. For a start he is publishing, his papers are on the streets though in limited numbers, and he has made it plain that he is prepared for a long bitter war of attrition.

Print runs may be down but according to Bruce Matthews, every paper produced at Wapping is 80% more profitable for Murdoch than those produced at Grays Inn Road or Bouverie Street.

Sides

So why just attack Murdoch from one side as at present. Concentrating on trying to sabotage distribution of News International's titles — why not try and prevent them being printed in the first place?

This can be done by organising and building support for solidarity action from other print workers and trade unionists.

*Militants in the print must demand that the strike at News International is total. SOGAT members still working at Grays Inn Road and Bouverie Street must be pulled out. The print unions cannot allow their members to work on the Sunday supplements while their brothers and sisters are sacked. If the supplements are shut down Murdoch will be deprived of valuable advertising revenue.

He is already under pressure from estate agents for shifting adverts from one part of the Sunday Times to another, so closing down the colour supplement would really foul things up for him.

*The TGWU policy of respecting picket lines must be turned into action. The 100,000 leaflets aimed at drivers should form part of a joint TGWU/print union campaign to enforce this policy. Delegations of News International workers should be sent to every depot to argue the case.

*Dockers, rail workers and drivers must refuse to touch anything bound for Wapping, be it paper, ink, machinery or anything.

Trade union branches throughout the country should follow the example of the central

London branch of the telecom engineers' union NCU which voted overwhelmingly not to do any work connected with News International.

*The strike must be run by the rank and file. Regular Chapel and branch meetings must be held with report-backs, every striker should be drawn into action around the dispute and whenever possible joint union rank and file meetings should be held to develop a coordinated response from all the union branches and chapels involved.

*Levies should be established as is happening in parts of Fleet Street and extended to cover the whole of the printing industry and the wider labour movement.

*TUC and Labour Party policy of boycotting News International should be carried out, with no exceptions. Shop stewards' committees should take the argument about boycotting these papers into the workplace.

All Labour councils must follow the example of Southwark and ban News International titles from all their buildings including public libraries.

*The print trade unionists paper 'Link-Up' which includes activists from all the print unions has drawn up a petition calling for mass pickets at Wapping. This petition should be taken to every chapel and branch throughout the printing industry and used as a way of winning support for the idea of mass pickets at Wapping.

The narrow, busy roads around Wapping mean that it is not picket-proof. It is possible to close the place down.

The TUC must call a mass picket at Wapping.

*In the event of Murdoch taking any print union to court the TUC print industry sub-committee must be prepared to pull out the whole of Fleet Street in solidarity.

More attacks on the way

In what has been described by an NGA spokesperson as "a typical Maxwellian move", publisher Robert Maxwell has threatened to sack the whole of the workforce at his print works at Poulton near Bristol.

If the unions refuse to accept 185 redundancies then the entire workforce of 544 is out of a job, says Maxwell, the millionaire Labour Party member and friend

of 'socialist' Poland.

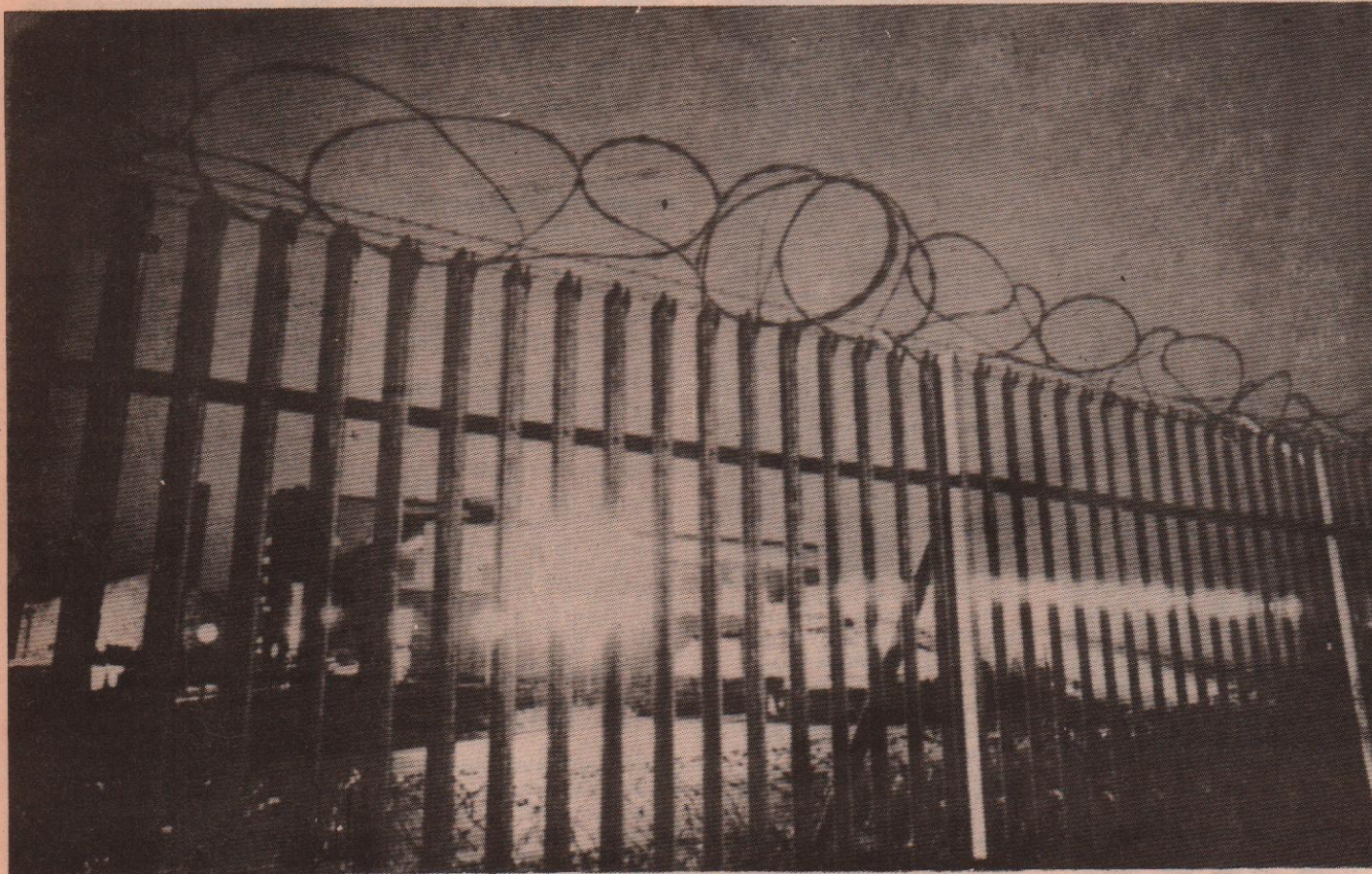
Meanwhile IPC Magazines in North Southwark are looking for a reduction of 20% in their workforce and the Liverpool paper the Daily Post and Echo are demanding the loss of 85 printers' jobs.

All this is more proof of the need for a united fightback from the unions across the whole of the printing industry.



Scots miners showed solidarity at Warrington in 1983.

OF WAPPING



Murdoch's fortified Wapping plant. Photo: Paul Mattsson.

Sparks solidarity

The York branch of EETPU has hit back hard against the outright scabbing of the union's leadership on the print workers.

In a motion the branch condemned "The executive council, and in particular the general secretary Eric Hammond, in allowing our union to help organise the scabbing operation now taking place at News International plants at Wapping and Glasgow."

EETPU branches in Southampton have also passed similar resolutions. Militants throughout the country should follow this example.

Scottish picketting

Stan Crooke reports

"The Sun — Jobs for Scotland" reads the sign jutting out above the barbed wire which surrounds the entrance to the News International plant in Glasgow's Kinning Park, a derelict and rundown area on the south bank of the Clyde.

How many "jobs for Scotland" have been created by the Australian-born Rupert Murdoch is not stated. Estimates vary from 50 to 250. Even a Sun reader can work out that that falls far short of the 6,000 jobs destroyed ("for England"?), in Murdoch's latest union-busting operation.

SOGAT and NGA members picket the plant round the clock. But without success. Murdoch is reaping the rotten fruit of the last six years of Tory government. Many of the scabs are young, and have probably never had a job nor been in a union. Given the failure of the union leaderships to open up the unions to the unemployed, appeals to trade union solidarity fall on deaf ears.

The TGWU members who drive the TNT lorries which transport the papers from Kinning Park to the central distribution point in Bellshill (Lan-

arkshire) are also responsive to picketing. Given the readiness with which TGWU membership was restored to the scab drivers who took iron ore into Ravenscraig during the miners' strike, they are hardly likely to take heed of instructions to support SOGAT from the Scottish TGWU full timers.

To date, picketing at Kinning Park has been small scale, a deliberate policy on the part of SOGAT. After the experiences of the NGA dispute in Warrington and of the miners' strike, many SOGAT members have drawn the conclusion that the police have become too adept at breaking up picket lines. But a bigger factor in the thinking of many SOGAT officials must be the fear of running foul of the Tories' anti-union legislation.

Instead of reorganising mass picketing, emphasis has been placed upon trying to seal off the distribution outlets for the papers printed at Kinning Park. SOGAT members employed by Menzies have blacked the papers, and mass distribution of leaflets appealing to people not to buy the Sun, Times, Sunday Times and News of the World are due for distribution this week.

But here to the employers and their learned colleagues on the law benches have been swift to act. An interim interdict has been granted to Menzies banning SOGAT members blacking Murdoch's papers.

To see the tactics of picketing and hitting Murdoch's distribution system as either-or alternatives is wrong. Any tactics will mean conflict with the Tories' class laws. An overall strategy is needed which hits at Murdoch's operation all along the line — supplies, production, distribution, and individual sales.

How to deal with Hammond

By Martin Thomas

It looks like the EETPU is well on the way to being expelled from the TUC.

EETPU official and leading SDP member John Grant has replied to the print unions' charges with the most shameless dishonesty. The EETPU just had a few members working at Wapping to get the plant ready to run, he says. How were they to know that these members would start printing newspapers? Who could have thought that Rupert Murdoch would do such a thing?

The plain fact is that the EETPU actively collaborated with Murdoch in setting up a scab operation.

No wonder that even right-wing TUC leaders are reported to be intent on expelling the EETPU. But before doing so they would be well advised to think through their whole strategy.

John Aitkin, who was the left candidate against Eric Hammond for EETPU general secretary, has called on the TUC to organise a parallel union.

"If suspension goes ahead there is only one avenue available to us, and that is to look for support from the TUC for a nationally recognised parallel organisation.

"If we are not careful we could see a fragmentation, with members of the union in different industries diving into whatever union suits them".

In some workplaces, where the EETPU organises only a few maintenance workers, it will be easy for EETPU members to transfer to a TUC union. Elsewhere it will be more difficult. And unless the TUC works out proper strategy, we will just have a minority of the best trade unionists from the

EETPU transferring one by one to TUC unions, while the bulk of the members who are not keen TUC loyalists but not hardened scabs either remain with Hammond.

The problem of dealing with the EETPU is not just whether or not to throw Eric Hammond out of the Congress House committee-rooms. The important thing is to organise rank-and-file EETPU members against Hammond.

Unless that is done properly — and unless there is also an organised TUC campaign to unionise the 'greenfield' sites where the EETPU is signing up members through no-strike deals — expelling the EETPU could do more harm than good.

Alternative

An expelled EETPU — linked up with the UDM and possibly other organisations, well supplied with funds, boosted by the media, and offering a business-like range of facilities to members — could put together the beginnings of an alternative TUC. Heavily backed by employers, it could do to other unions what the EETPU is now doing to the NGA and SOGAT, and with even less restraint.

The way to stop that is to convince workers that proper trade unions can, will and must fight to defend their interests. There is no administrative short-cut.

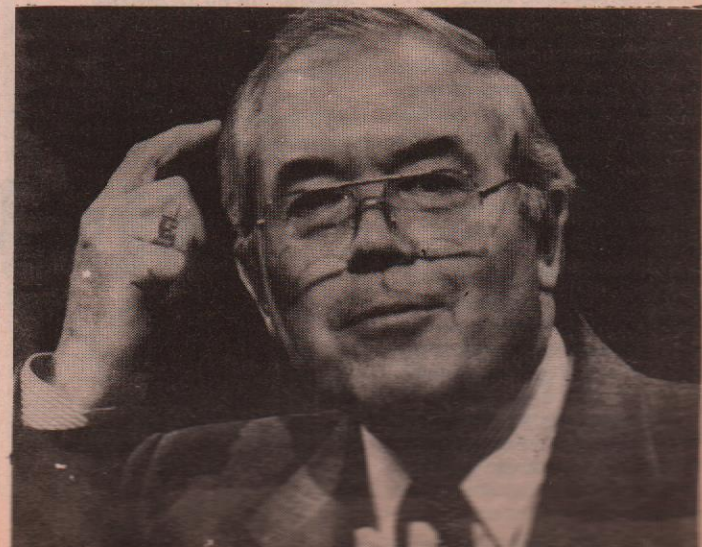
The first things the TUC must do, before it considers definitely expelling the EETPU, are a campaign to organise the good trade unionists in the EETPU against Hammond, and a programme of industrial action to win the fight against Murdoch.

Murdoch is illegal

As Rupert Murdoch proposes to haul the print unions before the courts it is worth looking at his own commitment to uphold the rule of law.

The fortifications and barbed wire round News International's Wapping plant were put there illegally without planning permission. So says the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and even the Tory-inspired and created London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC).

News International and TNT are also breaking the GLC's lorry ban by driving their 16.5 tonne vehicles round the streets of London. But GLC transport chief Dave Wetzel has granted Murdoch an exemption — and the police say they won't enforce the ban anyway.



Hammond's certainly not thick. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, Report.



Boneheads

Last Sunday's march to commemorate Bloody Sunday — 30 January 1972, when paratroopers shot dead 13 people on a peaceful nationalist demonstration in Derry — was a depressing event for Labour activists concerned

with Ireland.

Rather less than 1000 people turned out. There was only one Labour Party banner [Bow and Poplar] and one trade union banner [Tower Hamlets Trades Council]. Apart from a fair sprinkling of Socialist Organiser and Socialist Worker sellers, the demonstration was entirely made up of the smaller and more bone-headed Stalinist and would-be Trotskyist groups.

The biggest force was the RCP ['Revolutionary Communist Party'], a group which positively prides itself on its sectarian distance from the mass labour movement.

Can we console ourselves with the thought that even if we can't persuade many people to come out on the streets over Ireland, we have shifted opinions and forced some change in Labour Party policy?

Not really. The Labour front bench's support for the Anglo-Irish deal has practically restored Labour-Tory bipartisanship on Ireland, and with not much protest from Labour MPs or even the Labour Party at large.

The net result of all our agitation, leafleting, propagandising and demonstrating over some 18 years is very small indeed: that's the grim fact. We need to register that fact and draw the conclusion: that simplistic sloganising about 'Britain out and it's none of your business to worry about what happens after that' has little power to grip and mobilise people.

A policy which gives some possibility of approaching and talking to Protestant workers is necessary not only in Ireland, but also as part of the basis of a serious Irish solidarity movement in Britain.

SDP and Cof E

The Bishop of Durham is not alone. The Church of England, once described as 'the Tory Party at prayer', is now more like the Alliance at prayer.

A Gallup poll published last week showed 49% of C of E clergymen favouring the Alliance, 24% backing the Tories, and 13% supporting Labour.



The Church's favourite vampire

Paul Whetton's diary FIGHTING THE UDM

Last week an undermanager issued instructions to a deputy to get two men to bring material in by the bottom belt as a result of which the belt was damaged and the same undermanager then threatened to fine the men £50 each. Despite union representations, the undermanager stuck to his position and the men refused to pay the fine.

Next day, the whole pit felt that this was totally unjust and stayed in the canteen — UDM workers as well as NUM.

The manager next reduced the fine to £25 each but the men still refused to go down the pit.

Finally the manager dropped the charges and the fine, but the men still went home in spite of UDM officials pleading with their members that it had nothing to do with them as it was a NUM matter, and asking them to go down the pit.

Booed

UDM members booed the UDM officials out of the canteen, and then went home.

What that illustrates to me is that in spite of what we might think about the UDM, many rank and file members still recognise a threat, and the UDM officials could not see that it was a threat.

To me it demonstrates, alongside the Leicestershire NUM ballot result and the refusal of the international trade union movement to recognise them, that the UDM is on the way out.

Articles in the paper appeared on our noticeboard this morning saying that the UDM was all washed up.

We recruited 25 UDM members who were disgusted with the way their officials handed this case back to the NUM.

We have now produced three issues of our own news-sheet. The UDM didn't like it so they put out their own, a very professional, glossy job, produced by a public relations firm. And now the management have put their own one out!

Management then called in the secretary and president of the NUM branch at my pit and told us that we were not permitted to distribute any literature at all at the pit and if we did we would face disciplinary proceedings.

He said that if we took any literature at all onto the premises that would be

deemed as canvassing for support for the NUM and he would have no hesitation in sacking us.

So management, who all along have been the front-runners for the UDM are obviously scared stiff.

Our bulletin is very well received. It has been sent into neighbouring pits, especially on the Yorkshire border.

The UDM bulletin, despite its glossy paper, is nothing more than a series of personal attacks on NUM members and the men can see through that. It's rather like the way the UDM leadership is always trying to slag off Scargill as its main platform.

The management bulletin is just a joke.

We remain firmly behind the printers sacked by News International. We have met some of them and told them that anything we can do in any way, shape or form we will do.

We know that if Murdoch is allowed to get away with this thousands of jobs will go down the river, something the trade union movement cannot allow to happen.

We want to know what the TUC is going to do about this issue. They should be coordinating the struggle. Maybe we can't trust the TUC, but we shouldn't just let them off the hook because of that.

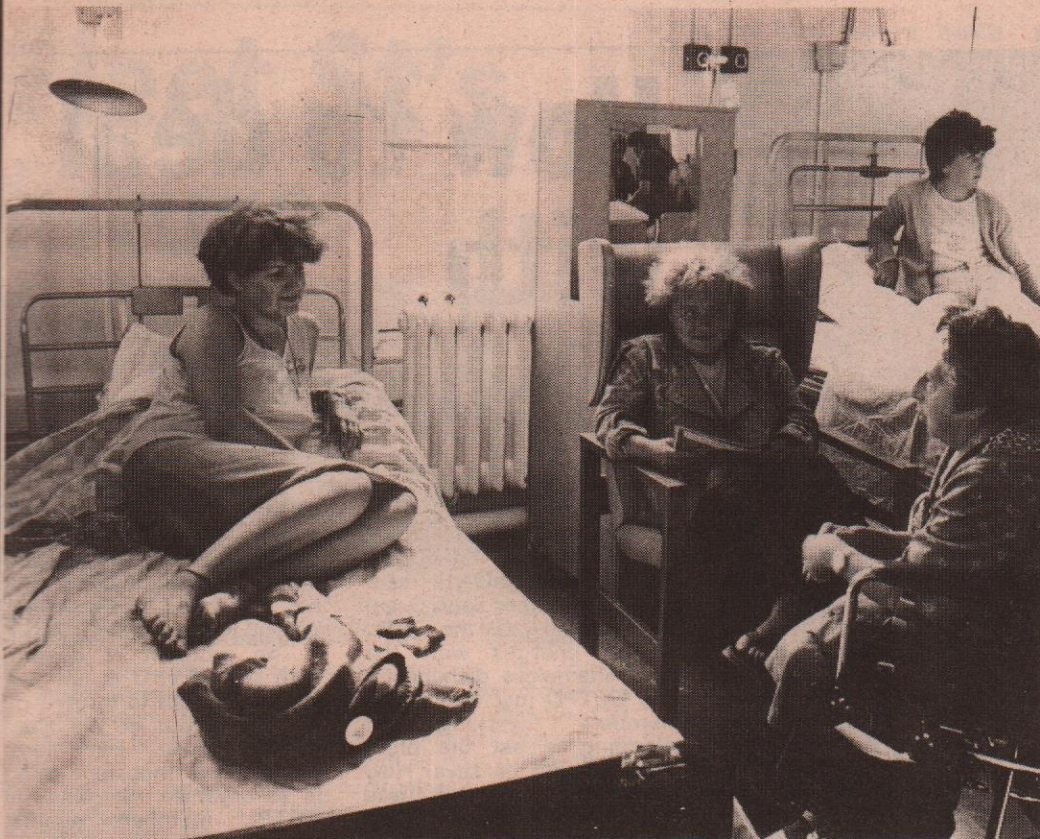
In the power industry where the EETPU is one of four unions organising, members of the other unions are trying to get rid of the EETPU by recruiting at rank and file level into their own unions. It is, I suppose, one way to tackle it rather than argue it out with Hammond and Co.

It would certainly play into the UDM's hands if the EETPU is expelled from the TUC. They would join up and pretend to be some sort of alternative TUC. But I think such an attempt would be doomed to die out just as the UDM itself is doomed to die out.

But the main fight has to be with the real enemy — the Tories. All others are diversions from that main fight.

Whether we have to try and get the EETPU rank and file to turn on its own leadership or whether we have to recruit them to other unions, we'll do whatever we have to.

We have to make clear to this government and any other that may follow it that tampering with trade union rights is not on. We have fought against it time and time again and we will continue to fight against it.



South London women's hospital; another victim of the cuts

Scabies on NHS

Rupert Murdoch and stropky, high-paid print-workers is one thing. But surely most workers don't have to fear such tactics. In the Health Service, for example?

Don't be too sure! NALGO members in the North West recently got hold of a document circulated among managers in the Regional Health Authority. And this is how the managers saw things:

"General political climate: i) Aftermath of miners' strike. Management firmness pays off. ii) Unem-

ployment. Job losses feared...

"NHS climate:... Introduction of general management function has favoured a firm, decisive management stance both towards privatisation and industrial action..."

(During industrial action) "Substitution of private sector services should be considered. This is easier if contingency arrangements have been made... The use of alternative labour, i.e. management or professional, should be considered..."

While managers have been considering this document, and perhaps making their 'contingency arrangements' for EETPU style private contract labour to be substituted for NHS trade unionists, the health side of the health service has not been doing too well.

There has been the salmonella outbreak at Wesham Park Hospital, 40 cases of scabies at Hope Hospital, Salford, and temporary close-downs of emergency services at Withington Hospital, South Manchester.

Temporary

On present trends two million people will do temporary jobs this year. That's a 50% increase over 1983.

These figures from the Manpower agency are backed up by an official government survey of employers, which also shows increased use of temps.

The rise of the temp is part of a general drive by employers towards more 'flexible'

workforces. Together with increased use of part-time workers and sub-contractors, and increased power for bosses to shift workers from job to job, it is supposed to help employers to trim their labour supply more precisely to their volume of business.

It also helps to split up workforces and hinder union organisation.

Strikes

Department of Employment figures for trade union membership and for strikes show a worrying trend.

The DE has just published its estimate for end-1984 trade union membership — 11 million, or 17% down on the 1979 peak of 13.3 million.

These figures include all organisations described as

trade unions, not just TUC affiliates.

The DE's figure for worker-days of strike action in 1985 is relatively high, at 6.3 million. But 4 million of these were due to the miners' strike.

The number of strikes recorded, at 814, was the lowest for 50 years.

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Poland's underground

Recently Socialist Organiser published documents from a new left-wing group in Solidarnosc, the 'Workers' Opposition'. This article, reprinted from the Eastern Europe Solidarity Campaign's new bulletin 'The Socialist Alternative in Eastern Europe', locates the Workers' Opposition in the spectrum of different groups which organise in opposition to the Jaruzelski dictatorship. (Contact: EESC, 10 Park Drive, London NW11).

*Solidarnosc TKK. The TKK is the underground leadership of Solidarity. It advocates the legalisation of Solidarity, release of prisoners and dialogue with the authorities. It urges workers to take part in the self-management committees and to put pressure on the authorities to improve the economy.

The TKK is preparing, in the long-term, for a general strike if the regime threatens the basic interests of the working class.

Within Solidarity, however, there are a number of groupings which put forward different perspectives:

Inter-factory Solidarity Workers' Committee (MRKS) in Warsaw, active since 1982, led by Zbigniew Romaszewski, which generally urges more radical tactics within Solidarity.

Wola (The Will), founded in February 1984 to "politicise Solidarity", this journal is produced by trade union militants with

links in the Wola district of Warsaw. It bases itself on the traditions of the PPS (the old Polish Socialist Party).

*Solidarnosc Walczaca (Fighting Solidarity) (SW). The SW was founded in June 1982 in Wroclaw and is led by Kornel Morawiecki. They call for a "free and independent Poland" and for the overthrow of the present system.

Their social programme envisages a non-communist, non-capitalist system based on a free market, workers' management, no large-scale private ownership and political pluralism. SW has its own radio station and publishes papers in about ten different centres. It supports the independent peace groups and prints their material.

*Committee of Social Resistance (KOS). KOS was set up after martial law and defines itself as a social movement organised to help the families of



Mass meeting at Gdansk shipyard, 1981

those arrested. There are thousands of such circles now in Poland.

KOS has a decentralised structure and produces regularly since 1982 a paper "Kos". It is broadly social-democratic and one of its best-known writers is David Wardzawski. It takes an interest in international affairs and opposes the setting up of

political parties as divisive.

*Wolnosc-Sprawiedliwosc-Niepodlegosc (WSN). The Freedom-Justice-Independence group first appeared in August 1982 and continues the tradition of the Clubs for a Self-Managed Republic. The WSN favours a mixed market economy, self-managed large industrial complexes, the profit motive, free trade unions, a decentralised parliamentary democracy.

Based in Warsaw the WSN is small in number and publishes the monthly "Idee" as well as a series of books.

*Wyzwolenie (Liberation). This Warsaw-based group began to publish its monthly "Wyzwolenie" in January 1984.

It advocates a mixed economy in which large-scale industry and natural resources are self-managed by working class bodies. It favours a parliamentary democracy with a limited number of parties in Parliament and a large degree of local autonomy.

It appears to be a moderate mixture of socialist and liberal elements. Its main slogan is "Independence, Democracy, Society".

*Glosno is the organ of the Provisional Coordination of the Mines (TKKG) of Solidarity, also operating in Upper Silesia. The TKKG is known in the West for its support for the British miners' strike.

*Polska Socjalistyczna Partia Pracy (PSPP) Polish Socialist Labour Party. The PSPP was founded by Edmund Baluka in September 1981. Baluka, a veteran leader of the Szczecin shipyard strikes in 1970-1, went back to Poland in April 1981.

Based in Szczecin, the PSPP is said to have a few dozen members, mostly shipyard workers. Its own paper "Biuletyn Informacyjny PSPP" has appeared since May 1983.

*Robotnik (The Worker). This is the only group which at the moment calls for the construction of a socialist party. This paper has appeared regularly since the end of 1982 and has no connection with the paper of the same name once produced by KOR.

Robotnik publishes regular features on the history of Polish and European socialism and deals mainly with labour issues — unions, prices, self-management. It claims a large base in the factories.

*Niepodleglosc (Independence). Very critical of Solidarity, this group calls for the overthrow of communism. Its ideological roots are 19th century laissez faire liberalism and the Polish romantic insurrectionary tradition. It publishes the monthly "Niepodleglosc" and, on 11 November 1984, declared the creation of a Liberal-Democratic Party.

It favours a form of parliamentary democracy, a free market economy with a minimum of state intervention or welfare, and openness to foreign capital. Two of its editors have been imprisoned.

*Konfederacja Polski Niepodleglej (KPN) Confederation for Independent Poland. The KPN was formed in September 1979, a right wing nationalist group led by Leszek Moczulski. The KPN leaders were arrested soon afterwards and sentenced in 1982. The KPN practically ceased to exist after 1981.

After the July amnesty it attempted a comeback, but without success. In December 1984 four of its leading members split off to form the Polish Independence Party.

*Kongres Solidarnosci Narodu (KSN) Congress of the Solidarity of the Nation. The

KSN was founded at Easter 1983 and led by W. Ziembinski. It is a centre right nationalist grouping which publishes a paper "Solidarnosc Narodu". Its size is unknown.

Ziembinski was one of the founders of ROPCO in March 1977 and in February 1979 he founded the Committee for National Self-Determination (KPSN). The KSN rejects the Yalta agreement and recognises the Polish emigre government in London.

*Res Publica is a journal produced by "independent neo-conservatives" whose ideological roots are the conservative European Christian tradition and Polish nationalism. In the recent period the group around "Res Publica" has linked up with the leaders of the Young Poland movement, a national-Catholic organisation formed in 1980, to obtain the support of the Catholic hierarchy for negotiations with the regime.

Both wanted to participate in elections to a future Sejm, a move condemned by KOS, Tygodnik Mazowsze, and others as a capitulation to the regime. Both groups represent a so-called "realise" current in Poland.

*Wolny Robotnik (Workers' Will) is the organ of the Union of Workers' Councils of the Polish Resistance Movement (ZRP-PRO). Based on clandestine groups in the factories, it has operated in Upper Silesia since 1982. The WR calls for a general strike led by the workers' councils.

*Front Robotniczy and Sprawa Robotnicza have been published since summer 1984 by groups working for self-management. They identify with the left in Europe. In its first issue "Front Robotniczy" produced extracts from Kuron's and Modzelewski's 1964 "Open Letter". "Sprawa Robotnicza" considers itself "a link in the international working class community" and is anti-capitalist as well as anti-bureaucratic.

*Alliance of the Workers' Opposition (PROR). In the spring of 1985 four editorial groups came together to form this new socialist current. They were the "Front Robotniczy", "Sprawa Robotnicza", "Glosno" and "Wolny Robotnik".

The PROR is a left socialist current in favour of self-management and a working class revolutionary struggle against the CP bureaucracy.



Empty shelves in Poland's shops

Stop the strip searches!

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer are two young Irish prisoners being held on remand at HMP Brixton. They are awaiting trial at the Central Criminal Court.

They have been kept in a confined unit within the prison since July 1 1985 and from that time they have been subjected to repeated strip and body searches in prison and at court.

Strip searches are carried out randomly and before and after every legal and social visit. For the period November 4-16, these women were strip searched 21 times each. On November 8 Ella O'Dwyer was strip searched twice in six minutes. In addition to strip searches they are subjected to frequent frisk and body searches, i.e. with their clothes on. They are thoroughly searched in this way 115 times a month. They are required to change their cell one or twice a week and each cell change is accompanied by a further strip search.

Martina Anderson describes the experience in this way:

"I walk to the wing knowing what lies ahead. There are two empty cells and I am ordered into one of them. Once in the cell two prison officers order me to take my clothes off while a third holds up a blanket shoulder high. The fourth stands watching.

Demoralised

Realising that their eyes are constantly looking at me over the blanket and feeling so helpless knowing I cannot do anything I start to remove my blouse and bra. The officers take them to check and I put on a so called dressing gown which is like a scruffy surgical gown. It is made of rough starchy material. Feeling demoralised I start to remove the bottom half of my clothes. Every last bit of my underwear is scrutinised. When my clothes have been searched I dress and then one of the prison officers starts putting her hands through my hair. Oh, how that gives me the creeps. I feel I could strike her but knowing

that this is what they would like me to do I control my anger".

Ella O'Dwyer describes the experience in a similar way:

"I stand like an embarrassed child watching her dangle my bra and panties about. For increased effect I am ordered to turn around slowly to give them a peep at everything. They order me to lift the gown that I have been given to wear. I have only been allowed to wear this gown since September. Before that I had to stand naked while they checked my clothes. Prison officers rub my hair and ears and like an animal I have to lift my feet so they can inspect them too. The awful dread is that I will be touched so I am stiffened to resist. They have told me that they can lift my breasts forcibly if they decide to and even probe my body folds. They can touch any part of me at all. It is horrible to have four eyes staring at me over the top of a blanket. While two officers stand behind this blanket another may stand in front. I know that every part of me is being touched acci-

dentally or deliberately since I have arrived here. Normal physical contact has become a challenge. The gown I am wearing slips off when I fumble, sweat and rush into my clothes."

Martina Anderson and Ella O'Dwyer believe that the strip searching of Irish women held in prisons in this country is linked to the treatment which women in Armagh Prison have endured for years. They do not accept that the strip searching is in any way necessary for security but the frequency and manner in which it is done makes it clear that the purpose is to harass and humiliate them.

Video

National Stop the Strip Searches Campaign can be contacted c/o London Armagh Women's Group, 52-54 Featherstone St., London EC1. They have a strip searches video and "Women and the War in Ireland" exhibition for hire and pamphlets, including some on strip searches, for sale.

The victors a

The withdrawal of the Germans from Greece was severely disrupted by ELAS partisans who carried out hundreds of acts of sabotage, attacked German troops evacuating northwards and captured large amounts of arms.

The Germans retaliated by massacring civilians and burning villages.

The British continued in their attempts to limit the seizure of arms by ELAS and it was this that lay behind their appeal to ELAS to ease off their attacks on the Germans, although they cited the need to avoid further German reprisals against civilians.

Aris Velouchiotis had, in the meantime, been sent to the Peloponnese to put things in order after the German winter offensive of 1943/4. He pursued collaborators mercilessly. Many of these had been organised in so-called Security Battalions — anti-communist units under the command of a German SS General. Aris attacked their stronghold in the Peloponnese — at Kalamata — on 8 September 1944, and pursued them to Meligala where they were defeated. All those who failed to escape went before People's Tribunals and the firing squad. It was a complete rout. Thousands of Security Battalion members throughout the Peloponnese surrendered to local organisations to avoid capture by ELAS and were sent to prison camps on Spetse.

The situation in Athens was, by now, quite desperate. By the end of August 1944 a kilo of bread cost 122 million drachmas. On 15 August the Germans launched a massive assault on three working class areas of the city. All the men were taken out into the streets where hooded informers passed among them, singling people out. This went on for days. Thousands of these 'fingered' men were taken away to concentration camps in Germany. Hundreds more were simply executed on the spot. By 24 August the Athenian working class responded with a general strike and when, three days later, the Germans tried to repeat their operations in another working class suburb of Athens they were met with barricades.

On 2 September the four EAM ministers (2 KKE and 2 Socialists) left for Cairo to join the government. But the British didn't want them getting in the way of preparations to land British troops in Greece and Churchill had the whole government isolated in a remote village near the Italian town of Caserta.

On 19 September Prime Minister George Papandreou appointed General Scobie Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in Greece. Scobie had already

In November 1944, the last German occupying troops left Athens. As the people of Athens celebrated in the streets and Churchill rushed British troops from North Africa, the left-wing Greek Resistance Army — ELAS — controlled four-fifths of Greece and could easily have occupied the main cities before Churchill's troops arrived. But the policy of the Greek Communist Party (KKE) was to restore bourgeois democracy with itself holding posts in the government. Ian Swindale, in the third of his five part series, looks at the role played by the British in Athens.

been appointed commander of the Royalist remnants of the Greek Middle East Army, now fighting on the Rimini Front. It was hoped, by this device, to avoid the charge of foreign interference in the affairs of Greece.

Sarafis, the military commander of ELAS, was next summoned to Caserta where the British put a fresh set of proposals to EAM/ELAS. As Commander-in-Chief, Scobie would be in charge of the Greek Army and the Partisan Armies; any attempt by the Partisans to seize power would be treated as an attack on the security of the state and punished accordingly; there should be no military operations in Athens without Scobie's approval; and ELAS and its smaller, rival partisan group EDES could continue to act against the retreating German army within their own allotted areas but not in Attica (the area surrounding Athens), Thrace (the district which included Greece's second city, Salonika) or the Peloponnese (where the spectacular job done by Aris in clearing the area of collaborators would now have to be undone again). The Government of National Union would appoint military commanders to these three areas.

Power

The intention of the document was clear — to get the agreement of EAM/ELAS in advance not to seize power in Athens or Salonika or act independently of government-appointed commanders in the three areas — Attica, Thrace and the Peloponnese — where it was essential for the British to rapidly establish control if they were to succeed in imposing their own political solution in Greece. To make matters worse, the two Greek generals appoin-

ted by the government to take command of Attica and Thrace were both extreme right-wingers.

It was, of course, another trap. As long as EAM/KKE remained in the Government of National Union they were its prisoners — bound by its decisions but unable to influence them.

The alternative — to pull out of the government and seize power — was never even seriously considered.

This was to some extent, at least, due to uncertainty on the part of the KKE leadership as to what Moscow's wishes might be in all this. The attempt to establish 'Popular Democracies' — bourgeois governments with Communist Party participation, flowed from the policy of the Popular Front, established in 1934. And it was this that formed the main strand in the policy of the KKE during the Occupation.

But the situation was now very different from 1934. The fascists were being decisively defeated and the people were armed. In many of the occupied countries of Europe, the bourgeoisie had completely discredited itself by its collaboration with the Nazis. The Communist Parties, on the other hand, had succeeded in establishing broad-based support for the Resistance and had grown enormously both in numbers and prestige. In Greece, the National Liberation Front (EAM) had something like 1.5 million members and the KKE had grown from a small, persecuted organisation of 2,000 under the pre-war Metaxas dictatorship to a mass party of over 200,000.

ELAS controlled 80% of Greek territory and was involved in administering the lives of a third of the Greek popula-

tion. What were they to do now? What did Moscow want them to do? Nothing could be gleaned from the newly arrived head of the Soviet Military Mission to Greece, Colonel Popov.

But unknown to the KKE leadership, Moscow was deciding the future of Greece. After months of negotiations by their respective Foreign Offices, Churchill and Stalin finally met on 9/10 October to allocate "percentages of predominance" between their two governments in the countries of Eastern Europe.

The story is now famous of how Churchill wrote on a piece of paper the names of these countries and beside each one the percentage of predominance to be enjoyed by the USSR and Britain. He handed it to Stalin who put a large tick on it. Beside 'Greece', Churchill had written "Great Britain (in accord with USA) 90%. Russia 10%".

The KKE were to look in vain to Stalin not only for assistance in the struggles that lay ahead but even for an indication of what USSR policy might be. All they encountered was a resounding silence from Moscow.

After the signing of the Caserta agreement ELAS HQ was careful not to release its full text to the guerrillas. Instead, the various units were only informed of that part of the agreement which affected them. In the Peloponnese, Aris Velouchiotis, continuing his race against time to completely clear the area of collaborators and right wing elements was recalled at British insistence.

Retreat

The German retreat from Athens itself was now underway. As German troops massed at Amfissa to the west of Athens and hundreds of andartes waited in the mountains above for the order to attack, an ELAS staff car drove up and out got Siantos and Colonel Popov. Not only was there no order to attack the retreating German columns, but when news arrived that Athens was finally free, Siantos told the andartes that they were not going to the capital.

So while on the night of 12 October 1944 the streets of Athens filled with jubilant crowds celebrating their freedom after three and a half years of occupation, neither the 20,000-strong ELAS force in Athens itself nor the thousands of partisans in the surrounding areas were mobilised to take the city on behalf of EAM and its provisional government. The policy of KKE was explained in a political bureau statement to its fighters in ELAS:

"The KKE, which has been in the front rank of the fight against fascist tyranny, calls upon all patriots to display discipline and sacrifice of the highest order. Maintaining law and order and ensuring a return to normal political life are national priorities. War criminals will be punished whoever they are, but this is a task for the National Government. Do not take the law into your own hands; avoid actions which might harm the ennobling work we have accomplished together. Communists, you have been the soul of the National Democratic Movement against the occupying forces; now become the builders of public order and the democratic liberties! Patriots, unite, with ELAS and our Allies, to achieve the Liberation of Greece under the aegis of a Government of National Union!"

On the 13th, the day after the last German troops left Athens, the airlift of British troops began. They marched into Athens the following day to a rapturous reception from the crowds. Next, Scobie arrived by sea with thousands of British soldiers. The Government of National Union returned from Italy and, in front of an enormous gathering at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Constitution Square, George



Papandreou spoke. But his speech, full of evasions, was drowned out time and again by chants of 'Laocratia' — 'People's Power'.

On their way from the demonstration, part of the crowd passed the Hermes Hotel which was being used as a 'prison' to hold members of General Grivas's X organisation — a private army of rabid anti-communists and collaborators. Some of them were shot and they opened fire on the crowd who charged the hotel. British officials insisted that these were prisoners who would be disarmed and tried. But in the following days members of the X organisation were seen in liberty in the streets of Athens, helping to 'keep order'.

When known collaborators, including some of the hooded 'finger-men' were arrested by the people and har-



Yalta 1945: carving up the world

are disarmed



Greek communists imprisoned by the British military authorities

over to the police they were promptly released again. The British army would give them 'passes' and let them out 'on bail'.

ELAS set up a Civil Guard and together with EAM and with the KKE's secret police group OPLA, they combed Athens, arresting collaborators and members of the Security Battalions, and handing them over to the authorities. Scobie's response was to demand an end to these "illegal arrests".

Streets

Meanwhile, in Salonika, the people took to the streets even before the Germans had evacuated. The Security Battalions there, terrified of the fate awaiting them, launched an attack on the working class districts. They were beaten off by large crowds who pro-

ceeded to arm themselves and take control of the city. Meanwhile, local ELAS commanders were being informed of 'their part' of the Caserta agreement — 'Don't take Salonika!' Ignoring these instructions, Markos and Kikitsas mobilised two ELAS divisions and marched into Salonika. The advanced party of British troops who were supposed to liberate Salonika in the name of King George II and the Government of National Union arrived too late and were informed that their presence wasn't needed. For liberating Salonika the KKE awarded Markos with... a severe reprimand.

In Athens Papandreou was busy forming a National Guard. Since this was essentially a volunteer organisation, whose job was to 'keep order', i.e. counter the EAM's Civil Guard and ensure that ELAS didn't seize power,

and since Papandreou was in no position, even had he wanted to, to screen those joining the National Guard, it inevitably filled up with right wing elements including former collaborators and members of the Security Battalions.

Army

At a conference called to discuss the creation of a new national army, the British proposed a mixed division made up of elements of ELAS, EDES, the Rimini Brigade and the Sacred Battalion, together with some newly conscripted soldiers. ELAS agreed to negotiate on this basis, but Papandreou wanted to keep his military units intact as a separate military force.

In effect, ELAS was being invited to disband while all the Royalist, right-

wing military units remained in existence. If they agreed to this they would expose the left to reprisals from the extreme right and if they refused to disarm unilaterally, Papandreou made it quite clear that he would use British troops to clear them out of Athens.

Siantos decided that ELAS would not unilaterally disarm but he also decided that if it came to an armed confrontation in Athens he would not mobilise the full strength of ELAS against Papandreou and the British. In other words the untrained, untested and inexperienced ELAS units in Athens would bear the brunt of the fighting against battle-hardened British troops while the Mountain guerillas, tried and tested in battle with the Germans, would be left to kick their heels in the mountains.

At the end of November Scobie issued an ultimatum to ELAS to disband its forces by December 10 and when, on December 1, Papandreou called a Cabinet meeting, none of the EAM ministers appeared. The KKE was now in opposition.

Next day, RAF planes showered Athens with leaflets announcing that the British intended to protect the people and their government from a coup d'etat.

On the 3rd, a huge demonstration, called by EAM, headed towards Constitution Square. As the demonstrators arrived, machine guns placed on top of the police HQ and the Royal Palace opened fire. 28 people were killed and over 100 injured. On the 4th, all Greece was paralysed by a general strike and half a million marched in the funeral procession for those killed the previous day. At the Hermes Hotel members of the X organisation opened fire and a further hundred demonstrators were killed or injured.

It is not known whether this provocation was directly planned by Papandreou and the British or whether it was merely the intended result of allowing undisciplined, heavily-armed, fanatical anti-communists on the loose in the city. Whatever the truth of the matter, Churchill got the provocation he needed and Scobie declared martial law. ELAS were told that if they were not out of Athens by the next day they would be regarded as 'enemy forces' and all food supplies to the capital would be suspended until they left.

ELAS

That night ELAS units seized all the police stations in the capital, though they were under instructions not to fire on the British. However, the following day British troops opened fire on ELAS guerillas who responded by cutting the road between Athens and the port of Piraeus.

Churchill now come under strong pressure at home and abroad. The US government attacked him, the Commons debated Greece for two days and even the TUC managed to express 'regret' over government policy in Greece.

On 8 December ELAS offered a truce but Churchill intended seeing his policy of confrontation with EAM through to the end:

"Do not be at all disquieted by criticisms made from divers quarters in the House of Commons. No one knows better than I the difficulties you have to contend with. I do not yield to a passing clamour, and will always stand by those who execute their instructions with courage and precision. In Athens as everywhere else our maxim is: 'No peace without victory'.

"...The clear objective is the defeat of EAM. The ending of the fighting is subsidiary to this. I am ordering large reinforcements to come to Athens... Firmness and sobriety are what is needed now, and not eager embraces, while the real quarrel is unsettled."

Churchill to Leeper and Scobie.

Scobie was now surrounded, confined to a small enclave in Athens and cut off from his supply base at Piraeus. Again, ELAS offered him a truce, but he refused, insisting that they must withdraw from Attica. Although fierce fighting continued and RAF planes bombed and strafed working class areas in the city, the ELAS CC were hoping for a negotiated settlement as a result of the pressure they were putting on the British. No final offensive against Scobie was ordered and no ELAS reinforcements were sent to Athens. Instead, Aris was ordered to finish off the rival EDES guerilla units in Epirus, which he did in 2½ days.

On 17 December ELAS offered to disband if the Rimini Brigade was sent to the islands, the gendarmerie dissolved and the British kept to their functions as set out in the Caserta agreement. The beleaguered Scobie rejected the offer.

Three days later, and by now heavily reinforced, Scobie went onto the offensive. 15,000 Athenians were rounded up and shipped to prison camps in Libya. By Christmas Eve Scobie controlled most of Athens. Churchill and Eden flew to Greece to meet Archbishop Damaskinos who agreed to chair a conference of all parties to the conflict.

Churchill

It was never Churchill's intention that the conference should succeed. If ELAS refused to attend it would amount to 'an unbridled bid for power' and if they *did* attend the right wing could be relied upon to make the conference fail. The KKE mistakenly interpreted the conference as a sign of weakness on Churchill's part. In fact, it was really being organised to mollify Churchill's critics and its failure would be his excuse to carry on with business as usual.

Before leaving for Greece Churchill had forced King George II of Greece to accept the appointment of Damaskinos as Regent. Finally, as he had played out his role, Churchill replaced Papandreou with a new prime minister, the liberal republican Plastiras.

ELAS units began to withdraw early in January 1945. They had lost 5,000 dead in a month of fighting. A ceasefire was agreed — to come into effect on the 15th, by which time all ELAS troops had to be behind a ceasefire line 150 kilometres from Athens. Salonika was also to be evacuated by ELAS.

As they left, ELAS took 15,000 civilian hostages with them — mainly from the Athens bourgeoisie. This was a terrible mistake which did not advance the struggle one jot, but which cost ELAS a lot of support and handed the British and Greek governments a powerful propaganda weapon.

OPLA also went into action assassinating political opponents in the labour movement.

As the guerillas struggled to reach the ceasefire line by the 15th and under orders to keep moving and not to fight back, they were bombed and strafed by the RAF and pursued by British troops all the way.

The Athens brigades of ELAS had been defeated. But ELAS still controlled most of the country and the British acknowledged that they did not have the forces at their disposal to dislodge them. The majority of ELAS guerillas had not been involved in the Battle of Athens and did not regard that defeat as their defeat. A battle might have been lost but the war could still be won.

The KKE leadership, however, had other plans. Where the British army had been unable to disarm ELAS, the KKE leaders were now both willing and able to do just that.

Continued next week

HOW NOT TO UNITE IRISH WORKERS

The Workers' Party, previously the Official Republicans, have the slogan 'Workers Unite'. But their policies, argues Stan Crooke, will not achieve that aim.

Despite being very weak in Northern Ireland, the Workers' Party (WP) is now running neck and neck with the Irish Labour Party in the South.

The WP got 4.8% of the vote in nine constituencies where it stood on 23 January, and only 1.6% in the Northern local council elections of May 1985. But in Dublin it already outpolls Labour.

For some on the left the WP merits mention only as an example of sell-out and betrayal of national politics. For others the WP slogan on 23 January — 'Workers Unite' — will have seemed a valiant voice of sanity. What is the truth?

The WP is a product of the split in the Irish Republican movement of December 1969-January 1970. Since then it has changed its name (from Official Sinn Fein) — and its politics.

After the fiasco of its 1956-62 military campaign, the Republican movement turned towards political reassessment. It made something of a "left turn" towards the trade unions, housing campaigns, and small farmer and civil liberties agitation. Less emphasis was placed on the question of "physical force".

Link-up

This turn was considerably influenced by Stalinists. Royal tactical education officer and gained a place on the Army Council of the IRA. The idea was also floated of a link-up with the Southern Irish Communist Party.

Many Republicans resented these political shifts, and the divisions came to a head in 1969.

The "Ireland Today" document of that year proposed dropping the policy of abstention on principle from Irish and British Parliaments. And the IRA was virtually non-existent in the fighting in Belfast and Derry in the summer of 1969.

When the December 1969 IRA convention and the January 1970

Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (national conference) voted to adopt "Ireland Today", the movement split with the more 'traditionalist' elements establishing what is now Sinn Fein/IRA.

Early Official Republican (WP) publications stressed that Wolfe Tone's organisation of "United Irishmen" was a "non-sectarian, democratic organisation", which "formulated a theory of Irish nationhood which was based on substituting the common name of Irishmen for Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter". This meant making inroads into the Protestant working class if a united Ireland were to be achieved.

As Cathal Goulding put it in 1971: "There can be no Ireland in Wolfe Tone's sense without the Protestant working class. They must be reached. We believe we are on the right road."

The Provisionals, on the other hand, were criticised for having broken with the basic tenets of Tone: "They have rejected Tone's concept of Irish nationhood, preferring instead a sort of two-nations theory or even four-nations theory of nationhood. They have rejected the concept of building a new Irish nation through the elimination of sectarian divisions..."

"The Provisionals are a narrowly sectarian organisation whose concept of nationality cannot go beyond religious categories...Fundamentally a Catholic defence force, the Provisionals are incapable of progressive political thinking and substitute sloganising for political awareness."

The Officials/WP stressed their allegiance to the working class Republicanism of James Connolly.

Despite what they say about the Provisionals' 'military elitism' the Officials maintained a military campaign against the British Army until May 1972.



A working class democratic programme is needed to create unity

In 1974 the Officials split, with many of their more militarily-inclined members, especially in Derry, hiving off to form the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP) and Irish National Liberation Army (INLA). A new and very bloody military campaign by the Officials followed — against the IRSP.

Today the WP denies having any military wing, though journalists have speculated that an armed section of some sort still exists secretly.

The IRSP in 1974 was rather to the left of the Officials, and saw itself as more socialist and less militarist than the Provisionals. Today the Provisionals regard the IRSP/INLA as reckless, wild, and short-sighted militarists. The Officials/WP have evolved in a different direction.

'Legal Marxists'

In Tsarist Russia around the end of the 19th century, there was a whole intellectual and political current known as 'Legal Marxism'. For decades the dominant radical politics in Russia had been populism — its aims a utopian peasant socialism, its method spectacular armed attacks on state officials.

Both revolutionary Marxists and 'Legal Marxists' criticised the populists' romanticism and insisted on a sober factual analysis of the development of capitalism in Russia. But the 'Legal Marxists' went from recognising the development of capitalism to positively cheering it on; from a criticism of romanticism to ultra-sceptical 'realism'.

The WP have in many ways become Ireland's 'Legal Marxists'.

Since the '70s the Provisionals have moved way to the left on social and economic questions — arriving at roughly the same position as the Officials in the late '60s, but with Catholic communalism as the addling factor in place of Stalinism. The WP's attacks on the Provisionals have become hysterical.

The WP equate Provisionals with fascists and their growing popularity in the poverty-stricken North with Hitler's rise to power in crisis-ridden Germany.

They liken hunger-striker Bobby Sands to the Nazi pimp Horst Wessel who died in a street brawl, and pledge the WP to "rescue the Irish revolutionary tradition from the bloody grip of fascist and ultraleftist interpretations".

The WP remains Stalinist. At its 1982 national conference, WP General Secretary Sean Garland successfully opposed a resolution in support of Solidarnosc on the grounds that martial law was necessary to prevent the country ending up "in the hands of imperialism".

But it criticises the official Irish CP as not being doubly Marxist enough.

"We will make dramatic change in the social order if we exercise vigilance — revolutionary vigilance...Fashionable, trendy issues which divide the working class should be avoided like the plague..."

Something like Militant, the WP insists that bread-and-butter working-class issues must be central.

Thus, speaking at the 1980 WP national conference, Sean Garland stressed that it was "imperative that we seize every opportunity, that we seek out every contact, in working class organisations all over the country and start building a broad working class front on common issues..."

But its day-to-day policies and practices hardly live up to the rhetoric. The WP's economic policies are no more than lukewarm reformism.

The WP holds rigidly to the Stalinist theory of 'stages', and insists in doctrinaire fashion that substantial capitalist development in Ireland is a necessary stage before socialism can be achieved — and therefore to be supported.

Vehemently denouncing traditional Irish economic nationalism, the WP hails multinational investment as progressive.

"Any serious study of the Irish economy is...a serious condemnation of Irish private enterprise...They have had every chance to prove themselves and failed time and time again...The general effect of foreign companies has been, on the whole, beneficial to the Irish econ-

omy.

"Foreign industry means a progressive industrial base, explicit imperialist control and a vast workforce which in times of crisis is open instantly to the argument for state socialism rather than feudal and reactionary appeals of the "Buy Irish" nature."

In the North, the WP has called for the establishment of an All Party Jobs Forum (where "the different parties could put forward their own proposals in both formal session and in sectoral working groups held over a limited period of one or two months") and tri-partite planning council involving representation from the government, employers and trade unionists.

This vehement 'realism' guides the WP on other issues.

In the early '80s they provided the crucial votes in the (Southern Irish Parliament) needed by the Irish-Tory Fianna Fail to stay in power in the hung Parliament. WP leader Tomas MacGiolla justified this by claiming that "the electorate wanted a government, they gave Fianna Fail a slight edge and put sufficient WPTDs (Irish MPs) in the Dail to keep a clear check on them."

In the trade union movement, the WP became an increasingly conservative influence.

Stages

It still advocates a 32-county socialist Republic, but via a tortuous series of 'stages', of which the first is the democratisation of Northern Ireland, within the framework of a divided Ireland.

So for now they are committed to the Six County unit. They advocate a devolved Assembly and a Bill of Rights.

When James Prior, then Northern Ireland secretary of state, launched his plans for a new Northern Irish Assembly in 1982, the WP backed him to the hilt: "Mr Prior must not only receive encouragement but unequivocal support from all those parties who believe in the democratic process."

It supports the London-Dublin agreement but opposes power-sharing in the name of Six County democracy.

According to a WP pamphlet of 1985, Ian Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party has "a better grasp of the democratic political needs of Northern Ireland than any of the other parties excluding the WP", whilst the Official Unionist Party is praised for "their reasoned opposition to Direct Rule and their commitment to a Bill of Rights".

The WP gives the RUC "only qualified (!) support" and regards it as superior to the only possible alternative: "the policing of West Belfast by the Provos and INLA who are, when analysed, fascist-type organisations."

The WP's political development is significant in many ways.

Irish Republicanism has traditionally defined revolutionary politics by physical-force methods rather than by a social programme. The result, again and again, is that Republican groups who seek more effective tactics than traditional militarism rapidly collapse into abject reformism. In this respect the WP is the latest in a long line of groups which also includes the South's major parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail.

The fact that the WP (and, though less so, the Irish Militant) have been the most successful left-wing groups in Southern Ireland in recent years is also instructive. The current impasse in the Six Counties is not generating pan-Catholic solidarity but giving strength to politics which represent a hysterical negation of the national struggle.

A working class democratic programme recognising the rights of Ireland's Protestant minority is necessary not only to create Catholic-Protestant workers' unity but even to create North-South unity among Catholic workers.

The WP's commitment to working class unity is not to be condemned. What is to be condemned is that the political logic which it pursues in pursuit of such unity is consistently right wing and accommodationist, which is both bad enough in itself and also of no benefit in achieving working class unity or a socialist society.

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Liverpool: a bad charge sheet and a bad reply

By Martin Thomas

The Labour Party National Executive's inquiry into Liverpool District Labour Party is an outrageously unjust procedure for several reasons.

In the first place, it is not an inquiry. If it were an inquiry, why suspend the District Labour Party?

It has no precise terms of reference as a proper inquiry should have.

In reality, it is a disciplinary tribunal, only with a back-to-front procedure. First the District Party is found guilty and sentenced to suspension; then the tribunal gets underway, but with no provision for cross-examination of witnesses or open hearings; and the end result, so it seems, will be the formulation of charges and the naming of individual 'defendants'!

Worse: the bulk of the NEC have already made it clear that they regard 'Militant' as guilty regardless of what evidence comes to the inquiry.

Kinnock has long been committed to a witch-hunt against Militant. Before the Liverpool crisis blew up last autumn, the witch-hunt was proceeding slowly and piecemeal.

Liverpool Council's attempt to confront the Tory government angered Kinnock; their bungling of that attempt (the redundancy notices to the council workers, and so on) gave him a chance to isolate Militant and hit them when they were down. So Kinnock and his allies set up the inquiry.

Rules

If there are allegations that the District Labour Party breaks party rules, then they should be spelled out and the DLP should have a chance to put its case to an unprejudiced hearing. If there are allegations against individuals, then again elementary justice demands that they be given notice of the charges and a chance to be heard without the case being judged in advance.

None of this, it seems, bothers the Merseyside Labour Coordinating Committee or the two papers, Tribune and Chartist, which have published its evidence to the NEC inquiry.

Very restrained and reasonable in tone, the submission points the way to expulsions without actually daring to argue for them. It's rather like a pacifist handing over a loaded gun to an executioner while declaring that he abhors all violence but that the person in the firing line has not behaved quite as they should.

The submission has three sections: District Labour Party democracy, selection of councillors and allegations of intimidation and corruption by Militant supporters. The first two sections end with lists of proposals — proposals which can be debated one way or another, but in any case are relevant to the complaints made.

The third (and more explosive) section carries no such proposals. Instead it ends as follows:

"...Any measures undertaken by the NEC must be capable of



gaining the consent of non-Militant members...At the moment large scale expulsions fail to meet that criteria. However we recognise the right of the NEC to take action against individuals on the basis of breaches of the party constitution and rules..." (emphasis added).

Wrong

So "large scale" expulsions would be wrong "at the moment" — not because they are unjust, but because local Labour Party members would resent them! By implication "small scale" expulsions are all right now, and "large scale" expulsions will be all right later, when the party has been softened up sufficiently.

Who are the "individuals" who should be acted against "on the basis of breaches of the party...rules"? If the LCC thinks there is a case for expelling particular individuals, then why does it not name them and spell out the charges? If not, then they should shut up.

The sliminess of the LCC, however, is unfortunately not the end of the story. Militant's 4-page reply to the LCC in its issue of 31 January will have dismayed many left wingers in the Labour Party. And we have a right to complain: for the witch-hunt is already hitting many left-wingers besides Militant, and an inept self-defence by Militant will endanger many more of us on the left of the party.

A large part of Militant's reply is a denunciation of the LCC's miserable line on Labour local authorities' fight against the Tory government.

(The LCC now call the left Labour councils' concerted defiance in spring 1985 a "lemming syndrome"!)

That the LCC are fake-lefts and hypocrites besides, however, doesn't prove that everything they say is untrue. Not everything that social-democrats (or Tories, for that matter) say against Stalinism is untrue. A lot of what assorted witch-hunters and right-wingers had been

saying for years against the WRP has recently been proved to be true.

Labour activists know this. And if the left is to defend itself against the born-again-Kinnockite witch-hunters, we'll need to do more than denounce their general politics. We'll need to convince middle-of-the-road Labour members on specific issues.

Militant scarcely even tries to do this. It does answer some specific charges quite well, but on the whole it simply denounces middle-of-the-road opinion rather than seeking to convince.

Indeed, Militant's general response to the witch-hunt has not been to seek any broad front in defence of democratic rights, but simply to stage their own rallies and fund-raising. They evidently believe that they are so strong that the witch-hunt cannot hurt them.

This attitude should cause concern to many rank-and-file Militant supporters. If Militant's editors respond to the accusations about Liverpool with nothing more than ballyhoo and bluster, then many Labour activists with no 'crime' beyond sympathy for Militant's ideas risk guilt by association.

'Perspective'

They should reflect. Militant can appear each week only thanks to the self-sacrifice and dedication of its sellers. It should therefore give them a fair chance to express their views in its pages when they disagree with the editors. Does it? Or do the editors have the attitude that the 'correct Marxist perspective' was laid down many years ago by Ted Grant, and the paper's main role is to stress how well reality is matching up to that perspective?

Now the running of the paper is a private matter between the editors and the sellers. But what happens when the same top-down approach is applied to the running of a District Labour Party?

Labour MPs and parliamentary candidates who support Militant, like Dave Nellist, Terry Fields, and Pat Wa'l, take pride in their slogan 'A workers' MP on a workers' wage'. What do they think of Derek Hatton's Flash Harry act (on £20,000 a year according to Hatton's own figures) which has given so much grist to the right-wing mills? Why don't they insist that Militant's editors either get Hatton to sue the 'World In Action' TV programme, which made detailed allegations against him, or dissociate themselves from Hatton?

The whole of the left fought against the expulsion of Militant's editors from the Labour Party. To this day Ted Grant and Peter Taaffe still carry party membership cards issued to them by Islington South CLP in defiance of the official witch-hunt decision.

Now a new witch-hunt threatens both rank-and-file Militant supporters and other left-wingers. We have a right to demand that Militant co-operates with the rest of the left, deals straightforwardly with any genuine allegations, and puts its own house in order.

The LCC's allegations

HOW THE DISTRICT LABOUR PARTY WORKS

The LCC says that the District Labour Party is swamped by trade union delegates who are not very accountable to their branches; that the DLP delegates are often effectively by-passed by the DLP executive or officers on the one hand, or DLP aggregates which are more like rallies on the other; that the DLP runs activities and campaigns which are properly the province of constituencies and wards; and that there is no list of DLP delegates available for checking.

Militant replies that there is a list available for checking at all meetings. There are aggregates, but decisive votes are by DLP delegates' credentials. The DLP's wide range of trade union delegates and of activities has been essential for the sort of campaign that Liverpool has run.

The LCC does not make any precise allegation that the DLP has broken party rules.

The case that does stand to be answered, however, is that Militant has run the DLP using many of the standard methods of the Labour Party right wing. SELECTION OF COUNCILLORS. People nominated as Labour council candidates have to be approved for the 'panel' before their names can go forward for selection contests in the wards. This is standard procedure throughout the Labour Party. Usually approval is automatic unless candidates have some special blot on their records.

The LCC says that in Liverpool Militant's control of the DLP is used to exclude political opponents from the panel. It names five cases.

Militant could make a strong reply to the LCC by basing themselves on the need for the DLP, once having democratically decided to confront the Tory government, to make sure its policy was carried out.

There would be nothing democratic about a right-wing minority of Labour councillors basing themselves on 'accountability' to right wing wards in order to thwart the Liverpool Labour Party line of no cuts and no rent rises or big rate rises. The LCC clearly wants to make the council Labour group independent from the DLP (as most council Labour groups are).

However, Militant do not reply that way. On the excluded five, they say lamely that three cases are "from way back" and "very few people remember the circumstances"; the other two were excluded "not for ideological reasons" but because they were not "strong candidates".

TAMMANY HALL POLITICS. The LCC's general case is that control of the council machine has been used to reward supporters of Militant and penalise opponents.

*According to the LCC, the deputy chair of the council education council appoints sabbatical officers for student unions in Liverpool's Further Education colleges. "None has ever been elected by any student body... they are in effect full-time organisers for Militant paid for on the rates." Militant flatly denies this. "They were... elected by the Further Education Federation, which comprises delegates directly elected by all students from

each student union..."

*The LCC says that the new council security force set up since 1983 "gives rise to genuine fears of a private 'army' some of whose members appear to be appointed on the basis of political or social patronage". It offers, however, no detailed or precise allegations.

*The LCC says that some gardeners were moved to a 'leper colony' after working through a council Day of Action in 1984. Militant says that the gardeners were moved because other trade unionists refused to work with them, and that the cause of it was the gardeners scabbing on a strike against the previous Liberal administration in 1983.

*The LCC says that leading council trade unionists who disagree with Militant have been threatened with victimisation. The allegations on this score, however, are vague.

*The LCC makes two allegations of physical attacks. Militant replies that in one case the attack was by "a passer-by who had no connection whatsoever with... Militant"; in the other it was "six of one and half-a-dozen of the other"; the case came to court and both people were bound over.

*The LCC makes more general allegations about abuse, threats and the presence of the council security force at DLP meetings. Militant replies that "heckling and barracking has been no greater than... in other meetings of the labour and trade union movement."

For sure the LCC does not make any allegations specific and serious enough to warrant NEC disciplinary action. Many left-wingers in Liverpool do find that DLP meetings are run in a way better calculated to rally Militant's ranks on a football-fan basis than to allow calm debate. But a 'cure' by NEC intervention could be worse than the disease. 'A PARTY WITHIN A PARTY'. The LCC concludes by charging that Militant has an organised political machine, 'a party within a party'.

Piously it protests that in contrast "Neither Merseyside LCC nor any genuine pressure group in the party exercise political discipline over its own membership".

Oh yes? In the Labour student organisation, the LCC's co-thinkers, the 'Democratic Left', operate a Stalinist discipline and a level of bureaucratic manipulation that puts all the LCC's allegations about Liverpool in the shade.

In any tense political conflict within the Labour Party cabals and caucuses are formed. The right wing ones are often funded from outside (NATO, for example funds a pro-NATO group). To ban organised factions means, in effect, to allow only one faction — the established leadership.

It might be better if the status of organised factions in the Labour Party were rationalised — for example by returning to the system under which the British Socialist Party (forerunner of the Communist Party) and the Independent Labour Party were explicitly recognised as affiliated 'parties within the party'.

But for sure, if Militant can be witch-hunted for having some organisation, then every local left caucus in the country is potentially at risk. So is the LCC, if ever it falls out with Neil Kinnock!

Tragedy in space

By Les Hearn

The shuttle tragedy was a moving and poignant one for many people, particularly the American public, whose children had been extensively acquainted with Christa McAuliffe, the civilian teacher on the mission.

Despite the fact that many astronauts become right-wing American Dreamers or born-again cretins, and that the Space Programme is mortgaged up to the hilt to the US Department of Defense, many saw Challenger as a symbol of some of the better human aspirations.

The idea of the space shuttle is an elegant one. Instead of expensive equipment being used once and lost, a spacecraft with wings is sent into space by powerful rockets, does its work of scientific experiments, launching satellites, etc., and then descends to Earth like a rather fast glider.

The programme was dogged from the start by cash shortages and in order to attract Pentagon money the original design had to be modified to allow for putting heavy military payloads into orbit. This led to the need to adapt the propulsion system to carry the extra weight, adding to the time and expense of development already affected by such embarrassing problems as the heat-resistant tiles that kept falling off.

Challenger was a larger version of the basic shuttle particularly dedicated to military needs and thus required an even bigger propulsion unit. In the new design, the engines were hotter, necessitating a bigger heat-shield which caused heavier vibrations which damaged the fuel lines and so on. All three engines (two solid-fuel boosters and the main hydrogen-oxygen rocket) were eventually replaced before its first flight.

It had actually never been intended to fly, being planned solely as an Earth-based test-bed for future models.

On its first flight, Challenger came within a second of disaster. The solid-fuel boosters were found to have almost burnt through their casing, something which could have sent it out of control.

Mechanical problems dogged other flights, with one mission curtailed after one engine automatically shut down for safety reasons soon after take off.

No-one knows yet what caused the destruction of Challenger, though film released last weekend shows a growing spout of flame from the side of a booster. Why this did not trigger a shut-down of the boosters and an automatic ditching of the main propulsion unit will presumably be discovered.

No safety mechanisms did intervene to prevent the subsequent blast, described as having the force of a small nuclear explosion. This happened as the main fuel tanks were disrupted, releasing the stores of liquid hydrogen and oxygen. The ensuing cataclysm left a cloud of steam where Challenger had been. Miraculously, the seven crew members probably had no time to know what was happening.

Challenger's destruction leaves the shuttle programme reeling, hard pressed as it is by spiralling costs, budget cut-backs, military pressure and commercial competition from the European rocket, Ariane.

All missions are suspended, hitting such military projects as the launch of a military recon-



Science

nnaissance satellite in September (the US only has one up at the moment and feels somewhat vulnerable as a result) and the launch of an infra-red detector for tracking bombers and cruise missiles. This sort of detector will be essential for the Strategic Defence Initiative (star wars).

Peaceful projects affected include the Hubble space telescope and space-craft to visit Jupiter and to survey the polar regions of the Sun.

The disaster has made space scientists look at some of the alternatives to the American space shuttle. Already, there are moves to go back to once-only rockets to launch satellites and there is questioning about whether humans even need to go into space, with the current state of development of remote-controlled technology.

The way that civilian Christa McAuliffe was allowed onto Challenger can only fuel such questions. It was one of Ronnie Raygun's bright ideas to send a teacher up. It was seized on by a desperate NASA, worried about future funding as mission after mission was delayed by last second computer glitches and adverse weather.

Mini-shuttle

The size of the shuttle appears to be a major problem which could be answered by the European mini-shuttle, Hermes. This is a self-powered, re-usable space vehicle, designed only for those activities requiring human presence. Satellites, etc., would be launched separately.

Hermes could provide a platform for long experiments, ferry crews to orbiting space stations and give access to satellites up to 1300 kms high.

Other possibilities include the European HOTOL (Horizontal Take-off and Landing Plane) and the US hypersonic space plane, both of which use conventional wings and jets to get quite high before rocket motors take over. The massive motors and fuel tanks of the Shuttle would be obsolete.

The possibilities of the space shuttle are manifold. As socialists, we are naturally sympathetic to anything whose purpose is exploration, understanding and peaceful scientific research. Those who saw the shuttle as a part of this process have seen that process subverted by military interests and sacrificed to the prestige of the United States (and its president).

The enquiry into Challenger may also show that the astronauts' safety was sacrificed on that altar.

Socialists should use this tragedy to expose and combat the military and commercial distortion of science, not to argue Ludd-fashion against space exploration.



Pain, suffering, filth and more pain

'REVOLUTION' has been universally panned by the critics. Many have foretold the collapse of Goldcrest Films as a result of it. But if you go to see it expecting scene after scene of ecstatic awfulness, you will be disappointed.

It really isn't as bad as all that. It's not good, mind you, but I've seen worse.

It is the story of ordinary folk who get caught up in the American War of Independence. Tom Dobb (Al Pacino) is a likeable Dad who gets drawn very reluctantly into fighting the Brits by his more eager son Ned.

Meanwhile Nastassja Kinski plays an aristocratic American

Edward Ellis reviews the new film 'Revolution'

who chooses to abandon high society for the revolution, where she finds (albeit very occasionally) Pacino. They are destined to be together.

The Revolution, it has to be said, is a pretty unpleasant affair. There are a lot of loud banging noises, screams, extras falling into the mud, and patients having their legs hacked off without an anaesthetic. Pain, suffering, filth, and more pain — that's this revolutionary war.

The plot is not exactly the most plausible ever written, and

in places the critics are right: it is undeniably corny.

Pacino tries to keep himself and his son out of trouble. Son Ned starts to resent his Dad, suspecting him of cowardice. Ned is kidnapped. Dad has to go and rescue him and prove that he's brave after all. The reconciliation scene is one of the great moments of big screen cringe.

Further, there is a certain degree of overkill in having more than one joyful reunion between Pacino and Kinski. We start to feel that we've seen this bit before somewhere.

But amidst all this rubbish, 'Revolution' has its charms.

The Brits are all unspeakable baddies — upper class twits and sadists. One can't help but wonder if part of the motivation behind the critical hostility is that the English don't like being portrayed in such a poor light.

It does make for somewhat two-dimensional characters. But I suspect that Brit colonials probably were mostly two-dimensional fatheads. You don't get to build an empire on which the sun never sets by personal depth and subtlety, after all.

The British authorities in the New World probably were malicious, vicious tyrants: so why not make fun of them?

Donald Sutherland is a particularly nasty Colonel Blimp figure with a very odd accent (like a cross between Irish and South Yorkshire — but I rather enjoyed all the odd accents in the film. For certain 18th-century New York must have been different from 20th-century Bronx).

Responsible for the savage treatment of Ned, Sutherland of course gets his come-uppance before the revolution is through. Equally in line with cliché, Ned can't just cold-bloodedly kill him.

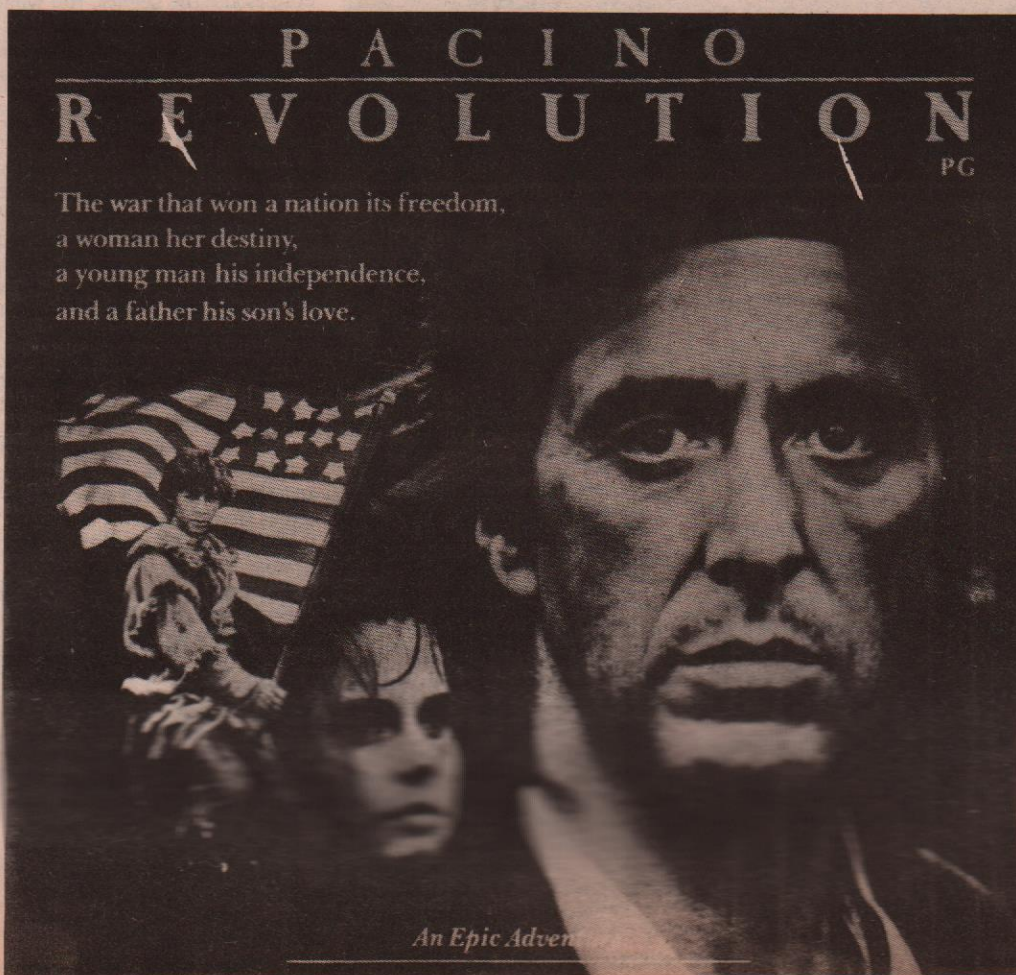
What does the revolution bring? Freedom, equality... But Pacino loses his boat and his promised plot of land; and he warns the new post-revolutionary authorities that ordinary folk like him haven't fought just for a new set of tyrants to replace the old.

A black man complains that he wants freedom too.

But this half-hearted political message is lost in the climax of the Kinski-Pacino sub-plot. Pacino finds her (yet again) amidst the crowd. And we are left still not quite sure why their destinies are so inextricably bound together when over several years they have only exchanged a handful of words.

Perhaps Kinski is symbolic of the elusiveness of freedom? Who cares. That's Hollywood.

Except in the old days they made them to last.



BL: International workers' solidarity is the answer

By Jim Denham

The prospect of BL's Leyland Vehicles Division (including Land Rover) being sold to General Motors has caused understandable alarm among the workforce.

According to Labour Deputy Leader Roy Hattersley, negotiations are also underway with Ford to take over the Austin Rover Cars Division.

But Hattersley's bluster (echoed by senior trade union officials) about 'foreigners' taking over 'our' motor industry, and his suggestion that such moves would have 'a most serious defence implication' is entirely beside the point.

Under British management BL's workforce has been cut literally in half over the past nine years. Leyland Vehicles boss Ron Hancock took his cue from Michael Edwardes in closing down plants, imposing speed-up and attacking working conditions.

The fact that BL is technically state owned has been of little comfort to BL workers, who have seen their management give a lead to the private sector in union bashing.

Faced with a serious financial crisis, the BL bosses react no differently from private capitalists — indeed Ford and GM could probably learn a thing or two in "tough guy" management techniques from Edwardes and his successor at Austin Rover, Harold Musgrove.

BL was nationalised in

order to bail out the private shareholders. Throughout the '50s and '60s the shareholders had pocketed fat dividends, £3,000 invested in the British Motor Company in 1952 would have earned £33,000 in dividends by the time of the 1967 merger with Leyland.

Meanwhile investment was neglected. In 1969 BL had fixed assets of £969 per employee, compared with Ford UK's £2709. So when world competition in the motor industry heated up in the late '60s, BL went onto the rocks.

BL workers came under attack but shareholders were safe. The government paid them 10p for every share although the shares had only been fetching 6½p on the day before nationalisation was announced.

BL is still paying out millions every month in interest charges.

For a while after nationalisation the bosses played "softly-softly" and tried [with some success] to buy off the powerful shop stewards movement with a workers' participation scheme.

Communist Party stewards and convenors like Derek Robinson, even went so far as to welcome participation as a 'step towards workers' control'!

Participation was kicked aside by the bosses when it no longer suited them.

Michael Edwardes took over as chairman in 1977 and immediately launched a full-scale attack on jobs, conditions and shop floor organisation.

During the Edwardes years productivity in BL Cars shot up from 5.9 cars per worker in 1979 to 10.1 cars per worker in 1982 with 96,000 redundancies and 19 plants closed over five years.

Meanwhile real wage levels were driven down with a series of pay settlements of 5% or less. In all of this the national union officials played a central role, with the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed) campaigning actively in support of the Edwardes plan and the AUEW regularly sabotaging rank and file resistance by ordering its members back to work whenever action was taken.

Edwardes

Edwardes's job was clearly to prepare BL for privatisation. In the short term he had some very limited success in reducing the company's massive losses and taking the car operation towards break even point.

But his hatchet job only made BL's overall position in the world car market more precarious. Quite simply BL was and is too small to survive on its own as a volume manufacturer in the increasingly competitive world market.

Jaguar, whose specialist product sets it apart from the volume car sector, was returned to profitability in the early '80s and promptly privatised.

The Edwardes approach was still more shortsighted even in capitalist terms in the trucks division. Leyland Vehicles was traditionally BL's most profitable sector, making £20 million a year in the 1970s. But while its international competitors like Ford, DAF and Volvo underwent a process of continual modernisation in the '70s, the profits from Leyland Vehicles were siphoned off elsewhere.

As a result their share of the market dropped from 27% in 1976 to 19.5% in 1980. Dated plant and machinery, outmoded products, poor after-sales service and an incompetent management. The response of BL management and Vehicles boss Ron Hancock was in effect to turn the Vehicles Division into an assembly operation simply putting together components made by smaller, private companies.

A £30 million order for a new foundry was cancelled and engine production "outsourced".

Leyland Vehicles was broken up into separate "profit centres" intended to be self-sufficient and the



BL workers' mass meeting. Photo: John Harris.

Bathgate plant and some other smaller plants were shut down.

Meanwhile the process of privatisation had already begun with profitable sectors being sold off in a highly dubious manner, with former BL managers involved in the companies taking over the privatised sectors and in turn securing further orders from BL for work in these privatised factories.

Privatisation

Clearly the latest "final solution" privatisation plans must be opposed. But not on the dead-end nationalistic basis that people like Hattersley, the union officials and even some Tories are putting forward.

BL workers need to get together with their opposite numbers at Ford and GM at both national and international level, to work out a strategy to protect jobs and trade union rights for all motor industry workers.

The development of 'world cars' and 'world trucks' by Ford and GM gives employers the facility to build models with components from anywhere in the world, while being able to isolate individual action in particular plants. The re-division of the world market among a smaller number of economic giants makes internationalism a top priority for BL workers, whether or not the Ford and GM deals go ahead.

At the moment BL shop stewards do not even have an effective combine committee or regular links between Austin Rover and Leyland Vehicles, let alone international contacts. But it

can be done. GM union representatives from over 20 countries have met in the General Motors World Auto Council to draw up a list of world bargaining objectives.

Solidarity, they decided, was the key to stop workers in one country being forced to accept low wages because of the bosses' pleas about competition and lower labour costs in other countries.

Ford workers, too, have fairly regular links with their opposite numbers in Germany and Belgium and occasional contact with the Detroit unions.

For BL workers the only serious answer to the sell-off

is to fight for workers' control. The first essential is full information about management's plans — open the books and end commercial secrecy. Next BL workers need to draw up their own work schedules to share out the work with no loss of pay.

Seize

With combine-wide solidarity, links with Ford and GM workers and a willingness to seize the factories if necessary, BL workers can enforce this control — also creating ideal conditions in which to demand of the next Labour government that they renationalise the industry under workers' control.

Call to Co-op to ban scab beds

Strikers at Silentnight are campaigning to get Co-op shops to stop selling beds produced by strike-breaking labour.

The workers at Sutton (Yorkshire) and Barnoldswick (Lancs) struck over pay in June 1985 and were sacked six weeks later. They are still on strike, supported by their union, FTAT, but the factories are running on scab labour.

To meet the workers' pay demands would have cost Silentnight boss Tom Clarke £210,000 a year. In 1984 Clarke paid himself and his family £640,000 in dividends. He has been awarded an OBE for 'services to industry'.

The strikers have tried to stop supplies to Silentnight, but with little success, and now they are trying to stop sales of the beds. The Co-op, which is supposed to be linked to the labour movement, is one of Silentnight's major outlets.

FTAT has approached both the Co-op and USDAW, the union which organises Co-op workers.

The strikers need assistance in this campaign from activists in USDAW, and also donations (to Mrs A King, 10 Rainhall Crescent, Barnoldswick, Colne, Lancs) and invitations to meetings (to Terry Bennett, 0282 603055).

20p Where we stand

Just reprinted: Socialist Organiser's 'Where We Stand'. 20p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court London N1 2SY.

WORKERS' LIBERTY

Under whose flag?

Trotskyists today working class socialism or Third World nationalism?

60p

'Under Whose Flag?': class politics or bloc politics? 60p plus postage from 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY

Socialist Organiser

Fund

The half way mark

OUR FUND drive passes the halfway mark this week, at £7500. And as near as we can estimate, we'll move into our new offices some time around the weekend of 15-16 February.

That may mean Socialist Organiser missing another week — sorry: we don't yet know exactly whether and when, but it should be the last missed issue because of the move.

There will still be a lot of fund-raising to do after 15-16 February. We're spending money at a great rate now on paint and floor coverings, and there are large parts of the new offices which remain to be tackled after we move in.

Besides, we have to pay off loans we've taken out in the last couple of months.

Thanks this week to Basingstoke readers, £8 (raffle ticket sales); Cardiff, £22 more from Martin Barclay's sponsored walk; Colchester readers £4 and Shaun Hayes £20; Mark Nevill

£50; Callum Macrae £5; Glasgow readers £20; Tony Dale £10; E. London readers £6.20 and raffle tickets £2.20; North London readers £4.67, raffle tickets £3, Mike Grayson £10, Pete Gilman £10; South London readers £30, Sue Rossiter £4 Michele Carlisle £40.

And special thanks to a Midlands reader who has sent a donation of £500.

Keep the money coming in, especially from the raffle tickets. Send to: Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Tories deeper in Westland mire

Let's hear a Labour alternative!

But what would Labour do different?

Thatcher is covering up something about the Westland affair. Plainly the government was pushing the Sikorsky deal while publicly pretending to be neutral.

Now the Tories are planning to sell off Leyland Trucks to GM and Austin Rover cars to Ford. As the plot thickens it becomes not ridiculous to suspect that these deals are part of some secret agreement between the British and US governments.

So much for the Tories' claim to be the party of patriotism and the free market.

But what would Labour do different?

What alternative do Labour's front-bench leaders put forward?

Do they proclaim Labour as the real party of patriotism and the free market? That's the nearest they get to an alternative. But what interest can workers have in a Labour party that claims to be...the real representative of Tory values!

And the claim 'we're the honest ones' needs a lot of stiffening if it is going to stand up. The last Labour government negotiated with the US and commissioned research and development work for Trident — all in secret!

What else? Should Labour



A major political crisis focused round defence. And does Neil Kinnock ever mention Labour's policy commitment to scrap the nuclear bomb? Photo: John Harris.

dress itself up in anti-Americanism and become a campaigner for Euro-takeovers rather than US takeovers, as TUC chair Ken Gill has done over Westland?

That might be more realistic than waving the flag of 'Little England' capitalism —

but hardly more socialist.

No wonder Labour's front bench is failing so dismally to score from the Tories' crisis. It is not just that Neil Kinnock is stupid. Obviously he is, but trade front-bencher John Smith isn't. And Smith, too, has simply had nothing to say about what Labour would do different.

Labour should be campaigning now, loudly and strongly, for its commitment to a Freedom of Information law. It should come out squarely and say that the corridors of power will be opened to public scrutiny.

If our leaders won't campaign for the policy now, what chance is there of them carrying it out in office against the opposition of the civil service hierarchies?

Instead of relegating Labour's renationalisation policy to the distance future,

the front bench should be saying now that they will renationalise British Aerospace and integrate Westland into it.

BL workers know what nationalisation has meant under previous Labour governments. It was a Labour government that appointed Michael Edwardes. Labour's leaders should promise that future nationalisations will be under workers' control.

And instead of beating the nationalist drum they should recognise that the old frontiers are outdated in the modern world. British workers have more in common with US, Japanese and European workers than with British bosses.

Labour should offer the perspective of a joint fight of the labour movements of Europe for a Socialist United Europe.

Fulham Labour Party needs helpers for its by-election campaign. Contact Fulham Labour Party at 861 Fulham Road, London SW6, 01-736 3045, or the London Labour Party, 01-703 6511.

Local group	Target	So far	Per cent
North London	1600	1006.33	63%
Nottingham	1000	898.53	90%
South London	800	775.15	97%
Manchester	1000	544.45	54%
East London	760	503.50	66%
Merseyside	500	475.50	95%
Cardiff	600	426.50	71%
Glasgow/Edinburgh	560	326.00	58%
Durham/North East	200	262.80	131%
West London	500	200.00	40%
York/Harrogate	300	193.90	65%
Coventry	350	175.00	50%
Sheffield	400	174.10	44%
Stoke North	200	132.75	66%
Basingstoke	560	123.47	22%
Stoke South	200	90.00	45%
Birmingham	100	64.00	64%
Colchester	100	47.80	48%
Aberdeen	20	46.00	230%
Canterbury	90	32.00	36%
Leeds	60		
Oxford	40		
Southampton	60		
Central/general	5000	1011.50	20%
Total	15000	7509.48	50%

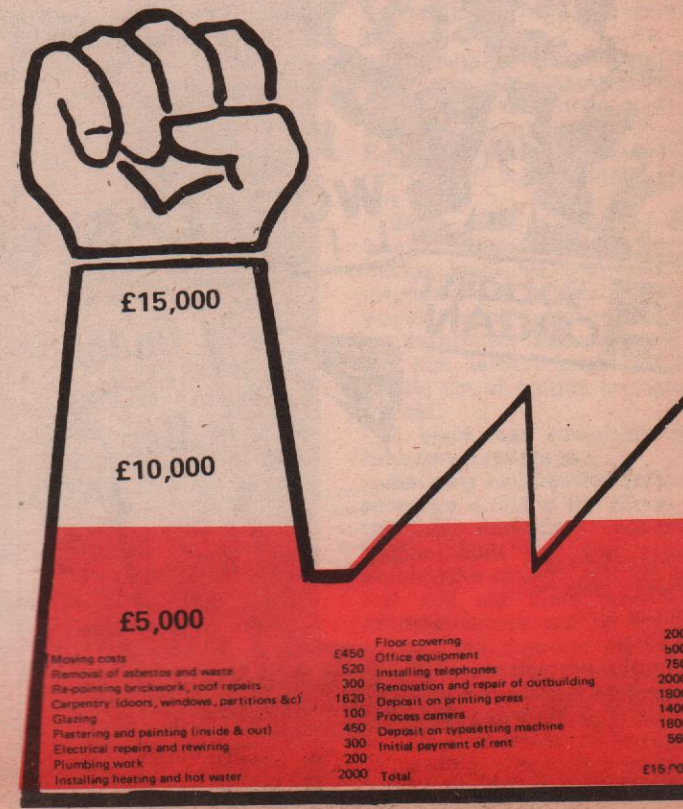
Socialist Organiser premises fund

★ RAFFLE ★

Prizes: 1 & 2. Radio/cassette recorder
3. Gestetner duplicator
4. £30 worth of books

Winning tickets will be drawn on Tuesday February 18th

For tickets (20p each) or books of 10 on sale or return, write to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



Get organised

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £5 a month minimum (£1 unwaged) contribution from supporters.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter/I want more information.

Name

Address

Phone no.

Send to Socialist Organiser, PO Box 823, London SE15 4 NA, or phone 01-639 7965.