

workers' ACTION

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TORIES GIVE GO-AHEAD FOR RACE HATE THUGS

WORKERS, BE warned! People from an alien culture and with an alien philosophy are poised to take over in Britain. And to do it, Margaret Thatcher and her upper crust Tory gang are preparing to beat the racist drum from now until the next election. Already they are ranting like the fascists about 'aliens' — who happen to work side by side with us and share our hardships and our struggles.

This week Thatcher talks of "The danger the British character... might be swamped". A fortnight ago Tory spokesman Keith Speed gave the racist brew a stir with a promise that the Tories would cut immigration if elected.

This foul grab for votes feared lost to the fascist National Front has left the Labour leaders looking like apostles of anti-racism. But the Labour Government believes 100% in immigration controls.

Indeed it was Callaghan who ten years ago introduced stricter immigration laws in response to Powell's notorious "rivers of blood" speech.

The fact is that both Tories and Labour license the racist filth of the NF

by operating immigration controls. They have both helped make racism part of the 'common sense' of the precious culture Margaret Thatcher wants to protect.

The argument that immigration controls are necessary to 'good race relations' is a phony. It says in effect that because a lot of people are racists, they are going to kick up a big fuss if there is a lot of immigration.

In other words, it takes ingrained racism for granted and is designed to avoid challenging it.

The attitude of the state itself makes the same point. It is not white immigrants but black ones who have to endure the humiliating treatment meted out by immigration authorities.

Recently we reported on raids carried out by Newcastle police on Bangladeshi families. Last week there were similar raids in London, with 40 people seized as 'illegal immigrants'.

In Wolverhampton last week black teenagers were assailed by white youths shouting racist insults. There is a background of six or seven racist attacks in the last three months,



Ku Klux Klan graffiti, and thugs going round in KKK hoods in the town.

Police intervened in the clash — to arrest seven blacks. Next day they arrested two whites.

Last week **Socialist Worker** reported "Thirty-nine shops, restaurants and a pub, almost all immigrant-owned, have been attacked [over the last three weeks, in the Edmonton-Enfield area of North London]. Lives have been endangered and almost £5000 of damage caused by mystery catapultists who fire missiles as they drive past in a

car". With the Tories making an open bid for NF votes the NF itself, and other fascists, become bolder. Street attacks increase, threats and insults become more frequent.

The black community will have to organise in self-defence. And it has a right to expect labour movement support for that self-defence.

At the same time we must insist:
 No immigration controls;
 No platform for fascists.

Would
you
trust
your
life to
Jimmy
Carter?*

ABOUT 750 satellites in orbit: many of them carrying nuclear power units, and if they come down by accident it can just as easily be in London or — still worse — in the crowded shanty-towns of Calcutta or Lima, as in the snow-bound tracts of Canada.

Thousands of nuclear weapons stationed across the world. They could kill us all several times over.

Hundreds of thousands of factories using dangerous processes. When one of them 'went wrong' in Seveso, Italy, it devastated the whole area. The people who lived there suffered serious injuries and were driven from their homes.

A mishap on a similar scale at any one of dozens of nuclear power stations could spread death over a whole region.

Napalm factories, defoliant production lines, chemical warfare technology, their products all battle-tested in Vietnam.

■ ■

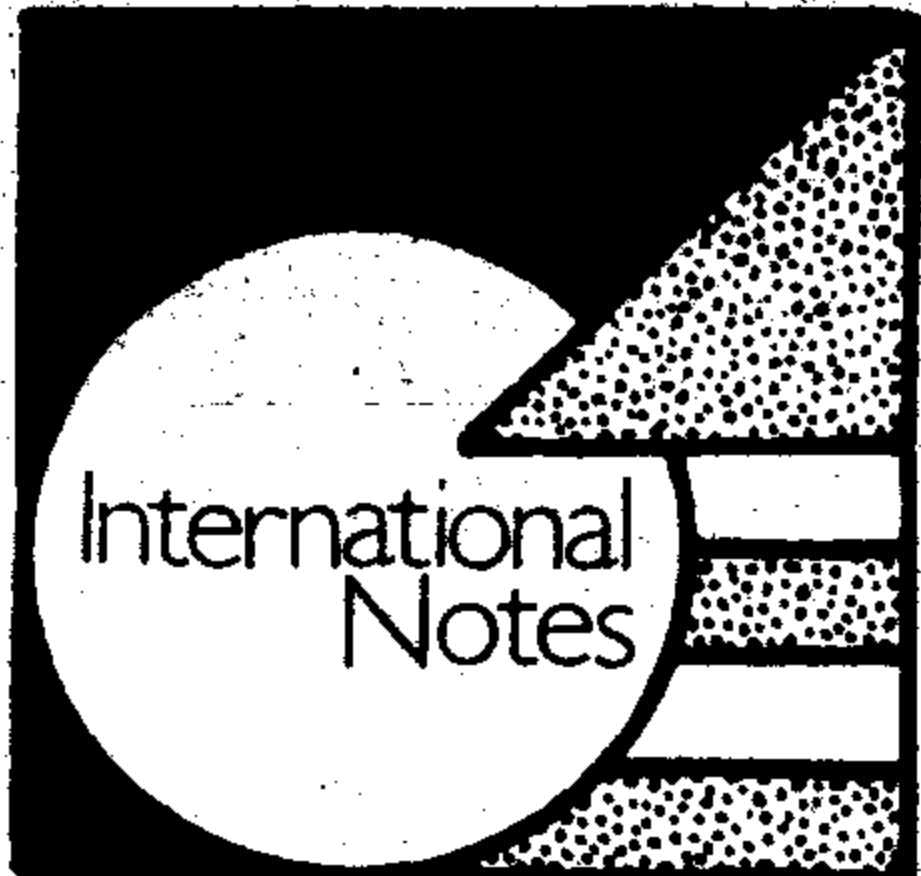
And who are the people who control all these? The people who by taking one risk too many, or by making a crucial misjudgment, or out of sheer blind aggressive greed, could unleash destruction on a scale never known before? They are the presidents and prime ministers of the great powers, and the big bosses of the giant capitalist enterprises.

Would you trust your life to Peanut Jimmy Carter? To Leonid Brezhnev? To Tricky Dicky Nixon? To the Rockefellers?

You wouldn't. But you do. As long as they dominate the world, you have no choice.

Any machine, any scientific device, is likely to have a certain risk factor. No-one would want to forego all the benefits of weather satellites, communications satellites, and scientific research satellites for fear that one might go wrong one day.

But technology can, and should, be controlled democratically, by the working people. People can, and should, be sufficiently educated and informed that we can make intelligent collective decisions on the use of science. Technology can, and should, be directed to peaceful uses and not to the preparation of war. On one condition: that we get rid of the profiteers and the parasites, the bureaucrats and the bosses, and put the resources of society under a rational working-class planned economy.



DENMARK: JOBLESS JOIN STRIKERS ON MASS PICKETS

THE RECENT defeat of the SCANIADAM strikers in Copenhagen shows up the leaders of the Danish trade unions in the same light as their British counterparts. Although small, the dispute had become a major political issue.

32 mechanics at the Scaniadam Ford repair garages had taken action as part of a campaign for higher wages by the Copenhagen vehicle mechanics' branch of the engineering union. In other firms the campaign had been successful. But Scaniadam decided to stand firm as a test case, with the active backing of the Danish national employers' organisation, DA.

The national leadership of the engineering union worked out a sell-out deal with DA. The deal was rejected by the mechanics, who immediately escalated their action into an all-out strike.

The union leaders then held a press conference, at which they gave an ultimatum to the vehicle mechanics' branch: expel the strikers from the union, or face expulsion yourselves.

The branch, however, with the support of other big engineering union branches in Copenhagen, stood by the strikers, and the union leaders had to withdraw their blackmail. The unemployed workers' committee of the engineering union was also active in supporting the strike. [In Denmark workers who become unemployed retain their union membership, with full rights.]

After two weeks, however, Scaniadam sacked all 32 strikers and started taking on scabs. Police cleared the way for scab workers and customers to get in through the mass pickets mounted by the strikers and the unemployed workers' committee.

Only by spreading the action to other engineering workers could it have been won. But the Communist Party, which has the influence in the Copenhagen union branches to do that, let the Scaniadam workers go down to defeat.

MAC CLARKE

WHEN working class parties join coalitions with parties of the ruling class, the excuse is usually "keeping out the Right". That is the way the Lib-Lab pact is justified: it's a lesser evil, the Labour leaders say, than letting the Tories in.

Yet the government crises in Italy and Portugal this month have shown that the reformist parties are willing to ally with the most right wing bourgeois parties, if that's the best way for the reformist leaders to get, or keep, their ministerial salaries.

In Portugal, Social Party leader Mario Soares has formed a new government by an informal coalition with the

Ministerial salaries buy a different scale of values...

CDS, usually considered to be the more right wing of the two big bourgeois parties. The CDS has been given three ministries (foreign affairs, commerce, justice) and five positions of secretary of state. In return, its 41 parliamentary votes, added to the SP's 102, will give the government a majority in the 263-seat assembly.

CDS leader Freitas do Amaral is a former adviser of Portugal's last ruler under

the dictatorship, Caetano. The CDS was the only party to vote against the Constitution (which is supposed to commit the State to 'socialism') in 1976, and in 1975 its congress was besieged by militant workers denouncing it as a cover for neo-fascists.

The less right-wing appearance of the other main party of the Portuguese bourgeoisie — the PSD — is largely illusory. But most probably the reason why the CDS entered the coalition rather than the PSD was that the larger and stronger PSD demanded a higher price for its cooperation.

With Portugal swinging steadily to the right, the PSD can hope to gain a clear majority in the next general elections.

Moral

The CGTP — Portugal's equivalent of the TUC, dominated by the Communist Party — has called a special meeting to plan a struggle against the SP-CDS government. But that is not because the CP is in principle opposed to coalitions with the Right. The CP itself calls for a coalition government of the CDS, the PSD, the SP ... and the CP.

A similar proposal for an all-party "government of national emergency" is the policy of the Italian Communist Party.

For 18 months, since the June 1976 general elections, the CP has given informal support to the minority Christian-Democratic government of Andreotti. (The Christian Democracy is the major party of the Italian ruling class.)

Two weeks ago the CD government fell after the Communist Party (supported by the SP) had insisted that it should be granted some ministerial posts. With the US State Department thundering against Communist participation in the government, and the Christian Democracy also standing firm, it looks as if the CP is launching a great battle against the Right.

In fact, though, the CP is still preaching the "austerity" policy which it has backed for the last 18 months. A speech by CP leader Giorgio Amendola, at the height of the government crisis, justified this in the name of opposing bourgeois corruption! "Today, moral pollution has also affected sectors of the working class; racing to



push up their income at all costs...

"An austerity policy demands a different scale of values. Why wear yourself out to get extra money for unnecessary goods, a new car, costly furniture, or stupid expense for weddings ... in the manner of the old bourgeoisie" he pontificated.

The CP itself admits that its rank and file worker members are dissatisfied with this policy. The membership of the CP is declining — after a long period of increase — the proportion of manual workers in the party (now about 35%) is also declining, and the membership of the CP youth organisation is down 20% this year.

The major organisations to the left of the CP, disorientated and disintegrating, remain tragically impotent. Yet the unsubdued militancy of the Italian working class is a promise that the Italian CP, like the Portuguese SP, will not escape without paying the price for its treacherous liaison with the Right.

COLIN FOSTER

WE'VE NOT BEEN COMMUNISTS FOR YEARS — CARRILLO

THE Workers' Commissions are well ahead according to the first results from the trade union elections in Spain.

In these elections — the first since genuine trade union organisations became legal after the death of Franco — the CP-dominated Workers' Commissions got 51% of the first 4,648 delegates elected, in 498 workplaces. The Socialist Party-dominated UGT ran second with 21%, and "Independent" unions (most of them neo-Francoists under new labels) got 11%.

The anarchist-led CNT boycotted the elections.

The elections began on 16th January and will finish on 6th February. A question mark has been placed over them, however, by a new draft trade union law which Prime Minister Suarez has just presented to the Cortes (Parliament).

If this new law is passed, there will have to be new elections — and this after the trade union elections now taking place have already been delayed, month after month, by the government's slowness in finalising the present laws. Up till now — since the dismantling of the old Francoist unions in midsummer 1977 — there has been no official, legally-recognised system of workers' representation in Spanish factories at all.

The elections are to choose factory committees in every workplace of more than 50 employees. Following the policy of the UGT (opposed by the Workers' Commissions) workers can only vote for one or another of the slates presented by the different unions in the workplace, except in workplaces with less than 250



Carrillo

employees.

Meanwhile the Spanish Communist Party is preparing for its congress on 5th-9th April. The Central Committee has decided to propose new statutes which will reject any mention of Leninism. CP leader Santiago Carrillo explained: "For us, Leninism is no longer the Marxism of today. And it is in that sense that we must go beyond a series of classical theses of Leninism, which the European CPs have in reality forsaken for many years, although the question has never been posed in the field of doctrine as it is today."

The "theses of Leninism" in question are to do with the conception of the party, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the international extension of the revolution.



Berlinguer and (top) Soares



THE WAR GOES ON, THE TORTURE GOES ON

ROY MASON keeps on saying that the British Army has almost completely beaten down the revolt of the Catholic community in Northern Ireland. Yet the continuing strength of the struggle was shown at the Bloody Sunday commemoration in Derry, where the Republicans were able to parade newly-acquired machine-guns.

In London 1,000 people marched from Shepherd's Bush to Hammermith. Convened by the Bloody Sunday Commemoration Demonstration Committee, the marchers, from 'troops out' campaigns, the International Marxist Group, the Socialist Workers' Party, and Workers' Action, demanded immediate British withdrawal and self-determination for Ireland. There was another demonstration, on similar slogans, organised from Speakers' Corner by London Sinn Fein.

□ □ □

FR DENIS FAUL and Fr Raymond Murray, well known for their defence of civil rights in Northern Ireland, have written in their comment on the Strasbourg verdict: "... sad to say,

we have continually recorded ill-treatment of persons under interrogation in Northern Ireland from 1971 right up to January 10, 1978".

As far as the European Court and the Dublin and Westminster governments are concerned, the issue of torture in Northern Ireland is closed. But an 'International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland' has been launched to see that the testimony of men like Fr Faul and Fr Murray gets a hearing.

The Tribunal was officially launched at a Press Conference on 24th January, with the sponsorship of the National Executive of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, many prominent figures in Ireland, four Labour MPs, eight Trades Councils, and the Executive of the National Union of Students.

The brief of the Tribunal is "to investigate, in particular (but not exclusively):—

"a) The role and activities of the British Army, and the British security forces in Northern Ireland...

b) allegations of torture at interrogation centres;

c) allegations of abuse and assault on Irish prisoners in

British, including English, jails;

d) the operation of no-jury courts in Northern Ireland;

e) the operation of the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act and the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act;

f) charges of discrimination in many fields levelled at the Northern Ireland authorities;

g) the treatment of Irish republican prisoners in the Maze Prison (Long Kesh) and other jails.

h) the question of freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

The aim is to get a 'jury' of labour movement delegates, supplemented by a panel of well-known international figures from the sponsors, to hear the evidence. Northern Ireland Secretary Roy Mason and Home Secretary Merlyn Rees are to be invited to put their case to the Tribunal.

Trade union branches and Labour Parties are invited to add their sponsorship. The address for correspondence is: Committee for the International Tribunal, 182 Upper Street, London N1.

Rhodesia:

Editorial



a

settlement for whom?

WHEN THE CHANNELS of negotiation and compromise are too narrow, and serious issues are at stake, armed struggle will always be the last resort. Thus David Owen was telling the truth for once when he said that he was keeping his distance from the 'internal settlement' moves in Rhodesia because he wanted a settlement that would end the armed struggle.

The 'internal settlement' proposals worked out between Ian Smith and a group of black leaders would make each white person's vote worth 10 black votes. The whites — a 2½% minority of the population — would have 28 out of 100 seats in Parliament, and those 28 would constitute a blocking minority for any attempts to change constitutional clauses guaranteeing such things as security of private property.

As Owen predicts, the black people of Zimbabwe who have taken up arms against white supremacy would continue their fight against this modified white supremacy.

That fact also lies behind Bishop Muzorewa's last-minute walk-out from the 'internal settlement' talks. Whatever the tactical details, his basic motive is to use the weight of Anglo-American diplomatic pressure and the threat of the armed struggle in order to wring more concessions from Smith.

It should not be thought that the nationalist leaders conferring with Owen in Malta, Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, have any difference from Muzorewa in principle. They too have been discussing deals which would leave the white minority dominating the wealth of Zimbabwe. They too are fundamentally concerned with using the liberation struggle of the Zimbabwean people as a lever to gain for themselves a portion of the privileges at present monopolised by the whites.

The Labour government's role throughout — in alliance with US imperialism — has been to seek the best deal, with the most reliable black bourgeois leader they can find, in order to safeguard imperialist interests in Rhodesia.

But it is for the people of Zimbabwe themselves, and especially the working class, to settle accounts with the Nkomos and Muzorewas, the Mugabes and the Sitholes. It is to them, and not to the conglaves in Malta or in Salisbury, that the power to decide should belong. Meanwhile, the account with Smith and his bandits is still outstanding.

Except in Scotland

A MAJORITY is a majority, except when it is in Scotland. That is the essence of the amendment to the Devolution Bill pushed through the Commons on 25th January by George Cunningham, Labour MP for Islington South.

According to the amendment the devolution proposals need to get not only a majority of the votes cast, but at least 40% of the votes possible. So, for example, if there is a 60% turnout and a 60-40 majority for devolution, then the devolutionists lose, for they only have 36% of the total votes possible.

It is a wrecking amendment.

Workers' Action considers that devolution is a harmful diversion. We would advise a vote against it. But the only way to stop the nationalist confusion getting worse is to deal with such issues cleanly and democratically. The Scottish people must have the right to decide — without trickery like Cunningham's.

WHEN THE 'MAIL' WENT FASCIST

SUPPOSE the owner of a major national newspaper — the 'Daily Mail', for example — became sympathetic to the fascist National Front, and turned over its columns to promoting fascism...

That is just the way it happened in the 1930s. The latest issue of the anti-fascist newspaper 'CARF' reproduces the editorial page from the 'Daily Mail' of 15th January, 1934. The major article, by the Mail's owner, Viscount Rothermere, is headlined "Hurrah for the Blackshirts!"

It declares:

"Hundreds of thousands of young British men and women would like to see their own country develop that spirit of patriotic pride and service which has transformed Germany and Italy. They cannot do better than seek out the nearest branch of the Blackshirts..."

A note at the end of the article gives the address:

"Young men may join the British Union of Fascists by writing to..."

Maybe Rothermere did not understand fully what fascism meant? Maybe he did not really know what was happening in Mussolini's Italy and Hitler's Germany? No:

"Italy and Germany... are beyond all doubt the best-governed nations in Europe today. From repeated visits to both under their present regime, I can vouch for it that in no other land does the overwhelming majority of the people feel such confidence and pride in its rulers".

There is no doubt, either, about whether Rothermere endorsed the anti-semitism and racism of the fascists.

"The Socialists, especially, who jeer at the principles and uniform of the Blackshirts as being of foreign origin, forget that the founder and High Priest of their own creed was the

German Jew Karl Marx".

And the accompanying editorial flays the Government of the day because it had "allowed Ceylon to be handed over to a crazy system of coloured democracy".

Today, while the major capitalist powers still have more leeway than in the crisis-wracked 1930s, the Fleet Street press lords keep more of an image of 'objectivity', usually breaking into open, venomous partisanship only against particular strikes. But when and if big business turns towards fascism again, the 'free press' will be there at its service.



'CARF' no.3, paper of the Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Coordinating Committee. Price 10p. Subscription: One year [six issues] £1.20, from ARAFCC, Box 35, 182 Upper St, London N1.

Under the rule of Gamal Abdul Nasser Egypt was the vanguard of Arab nationalism. The policy of the Sadat government has marked a complete about-turn.

Sadat has all but completed his accommodation to Zionism — though as yet Israel has offered Egypt little in exchange for this betrayal. He has staked the political future of Egypt and the Palestinians on the US — the leading world imperialist and pro-Zionist power. Now he is busy asset-stripping Egypt for the benefit of local capitalists and Western imperialism.

PAUL ADAMS shows how the Egyptian bourgeoisie is now rewarding itself handsomely for its patience in riding out nearly twenty years of state capitalist development.

ASSET STRIP



Dent was reminding American businessmen of the opportunities it presented. "For American business the predicted \$300 billion in oil revenues in the Middle East means a staggering proliferation of marketing opportunities for everything from consumer goods to whole industrial systems and massive infrastructural projects..."

"US business has this unbeatable advantage — the President of the US has already opened the door to these markets and has created the most receptive possible climate for American goods... Let me assure you that your government is not going to leave you at the door. We are going through the door with you and we will be on hand to support your commercial efforts where possible"

Dent had his eye above all on Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, but Egypt still formed an important part of his glowing vision of US profiteering — particularly because Egypt had always been seen as the political lynch-pin of the Middle East.

Egypt continued to devise methods of milking state ownership. Another was to vest control in private enterprise or banks fronting for private businesses. For instance, a recent borrowing from the World Bank gave the Bank the right to vet the appointment of staff to the Suez Canal Company.

'Aid'

Two others, from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, give the IBRD the right to dictate policy to the nationalised cement works and the right to sell off or otherwise dispose of goods or equipment belonging to the National Railway Company.

remove all obstacles and hindrances to the realisation of this objective. Any unit failing to achieve these ends will be regarded as a burden and liquidated."

An investment law passed in June 1974 admitted foreign investors to Egyptian industry, metallurgy, banking and insurance, all previously nationalised. Comparable privileges were granted to local capital by means of returning expropriated property to former landowners and big Egyptian capitalists.

Another law voted at the same time allowed Egyptian nationals to represent foreign firms, effectively destroying the public sector's monopoly of the import trade. After July 1975 imports by individuals and private firms were legalised, under the pretext of establishing a 'balance' between private and public sectors.

The public sector, already crippled, has been eaten away by a series of laws subjecting it to the interests of domestic and international capital, and turning it into a public service comparable to those existing in Britain and France.

In Egypt this stripping of the state sector by private enterprise was not possible without challenging the social power of a mighty bureaucratic apparatus. Sadat has been cautious not to stir things up too much too quickly, for he is wary of a backlash from these layers.

He has assured them that they will not be attacked, and even guaranteed wage rises throughout the state bureaucracy against the advice of international banking forces who have warned of the inevitable inflation.

While Sadat was launching this 'open door' policy, Nixon's Commerce Secretary Frederick

thwart the problems posed by the international recession and pull foreign investment to Egypt.

At the same time Hassanain Heykal, the influential editor of Al-Ahram, the official newspaper, was dismissed over his criticism of Sadat's extreme pro-US policy. He was replaced by Ali Amir, whom Nasser had sacked for being in the pay of the CIA.

Flow

The new philosophy was clearly expressed by Sadat's Prime Minister Mamdouh Saleh: "The open door policy has come up against two dangerous obstacles: people whose watchword is socialism, and bureaucratic and administrative complications. The fundamental objective is to facilitate a free flow of investment; every obstacle closes the door a little more."

Or by Finance Minister Ahmed Abu Ismail: "The government is set on the open door policy. One of the first priorities has been to dissolve the public institutions and give economic units complete freedom to reform their administration and

IN THE RICH quarters of Cairo sparkling limousines and luxurious window displays signal for the wealthy a return of the 'good life'. People compare it with the days of Farouk's dummy-monarchy, supported by British imperialism before it was toppled in 1952, or the high life of Havana before Castro's overthrow of Batista.

Sadat's policies are kind to this golden upper crust. To the remaining 95% of so of Egyptian society his 'Infitah', or 'open door', policy spells misery and more misery.

The first steps of this policy came shortly after the 1973 war. On February 10th 1974 Sadat promulgated three decrees to seek and attract investments.

By June enterprises investing in the Canal Free Zone were exempted from taxes and duties. In the rest of Egypt new enterprises would not be required to pay tax on profits for a period of five to eight years. Business and investment banks were exempted from currency controls.

Even this Aladdin's cave of incentives failed to bring in investments according to the government's plans. So they were dropped and even more alluring incentives were devised to

'HE DRESSES IN STYLE, WE LIVE TEN TO A ROOM'

UNLIKE last year, January 1978 has passed off without widespread revolt against Sadat's policies. The promise is being held out of a possible peace and, with peace, a diversion of the military budget to social uses, and a chance to reclaim lost territories and lost honour.

Temporarily at least Sadat seems to have saved himself from the anger of the workers, many of whom have swallowed the anti-Palestinian propaganda of the government and have no objection to a sell-out of the Palestinian cause.

But the illusions will soon burst and then a repeat of the spontaneous eruption that faced the government after its budget announcement last year will follow. In January 1977 tens of thousands of workers came out onto the street in Cairo, Alexandria, Mansourah, Kena, Suez and Iswan, and strikes brought the Helwan industrial complex to a standstill.

Demonstrators started by slashing the signs advertis-

ing luxury products. They grabbed bricks from the many building sites sprouting up as land speculation takes its grip. "This is a government of thieves!" they shouted. "Sadat dresses in high style, we live ten to a room!"

About 200 were killed by the police and army during the riots, and a new wave of arrests followed in the weeks after.

Conditions for the Egyptian workers are no better today. Inflation continues at about 30%; unemployment is very high, particularly in the countryside (although about one million Egyptians work abroad, mainly in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf), workers' wages continue to be miserably low, and urban overcrowding means worsening health, transport, and housing facilities. Removal of subsidies to food prices and booming land speculation have further worsened conditions.



In the countryside a law was passed in 1975 on the proposal of the big landowner Abu Wafia. It said:

□ "Rent should be equal to seven times the amount of taxes". This means a 25% increase.

□ "The landowner and tenant are authorised to have a rental agreement in kind, not simply in monetary terms". This had been forbidden since 1952.

□ "The landowner is authorised to evict the tenant from the land he rents if the rent is not paid within two months after the end of the

financial year". The 1962 law allowed a three year gap.

The same law also removed from the village committees the right to adjudicate in rent disputes, which since 1952 had belonged to them rather than the civil courts.

The general effect is to push down living standards in the countryside, to reintroduce serfdom and drive peasants off the land in the towns.

As yet there is no party in the country against Sadat. The

sists of one left-Nasserist party, the 'Tagamo', led by parliamentary deputy Khaled Mohieiddin, and a number of extra-parliamentary groups.

'Tagamo' includes some ex-member of the Egyptian CP and it is opposed to the 'Infitah' policy and to Sadat's 'peace' moves.

While the Egyptian Communist Party is the only party that has some implantation among the peasantry, it is very weak. Government attacks on it, the present wave of anti-communism, and the fact that its policy has added to that of left Nasserism

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OPENING EGYPT

... of the money pouring
... the 'opening' created by
... 'Infitah' policy is orchestrat-
... through bodies like the
... Bank, the IBRD, and the
... It comes not only from the
... but also from France,
... and West Germany.
... oil-rich Saudis and Iran-
... as well as the Gulf states,
... on the act, both in their
... light and as a conduit for
... people's money.
... the first two years of
... the US 'aid' to Egypt
... \$1.4 billion. The pro-
... 1977 and 1978 figure is
... billion. Secretary Dent
... not be disappointed.
... 1978", reports the 'Econo-
... "\$500 million will be
... to finance a new power
... ating facility to be located
... Suez City, a new agricul-
... tural project to support new
... sector initiatives in
... production and process-
... and several other pro-
... motably the reconstruct-
... and development of the
... canal; water and sewage
... es; new port develop-
... projects; grain and veget-
... ible storage facilities; a
... plant; telecommunica-
... and two new industrial
... s (for manufacture of
... wagons and flat glass)".
... In addition to all this the US
... ment is busy with so-
... cial technical aid program-
... ming a new layer of ex-
... perts to run these schemes.
... costs an enormous am-
... of money. Egypt's trade
... deficit rose from £E192 million in 1972;
... to £E1,361 million.
... enormous increases in
... interest on debt. Egypt's
... debt rose from £E545 milli-
... on to £E2,596 million between
... 1972 and 1975.
... 'Infitah' simply empties
... the cash boxes, placing
... the burden of repayment on
... the workers — still overwhelming
... — for whom prices
... continue to rise.



From the first days after they had overthrown King Farouk in 1952, the Free Officers led by Nasser introduced reforms designed to 'modernise' Egypt, to pull it out of the swamp of economic backwardness and foreign dependence.

With the expropriations of the early sixties the Egyptian government created a state capitalist economy in which what remained of big private capital had lost all control over their property.

On the land the government's policies contrasted sharply with the pro-landlord monarchy's: between 1935 and 1949 only 182,623 feddans had been reclaimed and sold, almost all the estate companies and big landlords. Nasser redistributed nearly a million feddans to over 300,000 families.

Alongside all this arose a huge state bureaucracy interlinked with the military. The state controlled almost every aspect of economic life; it also controlled — through an official press and censorship, through huge women's and youth organisations, and through the sole political party, the Arab Socialist Union — the cultural and political life of the nation.

Sadat's road to the American alliance

TO UNDERSTAND the development of 'Infitah' we must look back to 1972. In that year Sadat expelled Soviet technicians and instructors from Egypt. The open breach resulted from Russia's policy of detente.

Since 1956 the Soviet Union and its satellites had been the chief arms suppliers to Egypt. In the period of the cold war Russia had nothing to lose by this policy. Indeed, it built up a substantial clientele throughout the nationalist regimes in the Middle East.

Towards the end of the Nasser regime Egyptian leaders had decided that the 'voice of battle' would get them nowhere against Israel. But they drew hope from the nature of the UN resolutions at the end of the 1967 war that with Russian support Israel could be pressured into concessions. The development of detente seemed to hold out the promise that the US could be brought into the act under Russian pressure.

Sadat called 1971 'the year of decision'. By this he meant that in this first year after Nasser's death, the great powers would have to decide to bring pressure on Israel, or Egypt would have to decide in favour of war to force the result.

But the great powers took no obvious decision in 1971. Russia did not deliver promised arms

supplies, and the May 1972 summit showed that Russia was far more interested in detente and the situation in the Indian sub-continent.

The only possibility for the Egyptian government seemed to be to drop the Russian connection, swing towards the US, and force the Nixon government to act by initiating a 'war of diplomatic manoeuvre'. That war took place the following year.

These considerations brought Egypt back into the orbit of world imperialism. In itself this meant considerable pressure by imperialism for the opening up of Egypt to capitalist investment outside the control of the Egyptian state. The beginning of the dismantling of Nasserist state capitalism was inevitable.

But this course might have met with greater opposition within the state apparatus if it were not the case that economic and political changes — in particular the pattern of world investment, partly resulting from Middle East oil wealth — now gave the Egyptian bourgeoisie the chance of becoming a junior partner of imperialism.

Thus the bourgeoisie, the upper echelons of the state apparatus, and the rural rich could easily collaborate on the same course of destruction of the old state capitalism.



...cept unswerving loyalty
... [the USSR] have kept its
... kns down.
... The most important of the
... remaining groups seems to
... be the Egyptian Communist
... Workers' Party, 450 of whose
... members were arrested after
... the January 1977 riots.
... According to the French revolu-
... tionary daily 'Rouge', the
... group is said to be linked to
... the People's Republic of South
... Yemen and the Popular Demo-
... cratic Front for the Liberation
... of Palestine [PDFLP] led by
... Yusef Hawatmeh. It was, says
... Rouge, the only group to play
... a substantial role in the riots.

'like the rest of us...'

FRANK IVES reviews 'The Spongers' by Jim Allen, shown as BBC1's Play for Today on Tuesday 24 January

PLAYS LIKE Jim Allen's 'The Spongers' always spark off arguments about accuracy.

Someone wants to know whether all councillors are as smug, heartless, ineffectual or ignorant as those in the play. Are all social workers as useless as that? Are all social security tribunals really dominated by middle class bastards who could break stones with their faces if they were in a chain gang?

To those too blind to see we offer the answer: "No. Not all. We know, the one that lives in your street..."

But finally the questions are forgotten: "She kills herself and her four kids at the end. Now, don't tell me every mother whose furniture is carted off by the bailiffs does herself in like that!"

'The Spongers' is set against the background of Jubilee celebrations in a Merseyside town. While thousands are being spent on the festivities and souvenir crowns for the kids 'so that they'll remember in years to come', the council is implementing the cuts.

It is a Labour council. There is a bit of opposition. But it doesn't matter.

Pauline Crosby is a mother of four whose husband has left her. One of her children, Paula, is a mongol. The play shows how Mrs Crosby tries and fails to get the Supplementary Benefits Commission to pay her rent arrears before the bailiffs come and take her furniture away. At the same time, because of the cuts, Paula is moved from the home where she is happy and put into an old age home where her fits start again. Mrs

Crosby fights and fails to get the decision to remove Paula reversed. "It's policy", is the only answer she gets.

If the play were not so obviously accurate no-one would bother to accuse it of 'slogans', 'untruthfulness' or 'exaggeration'. The newspapers who only care about the Maria Colwells and Stephen Menheniotts as long as their stories sell papers — when are they as accurate about the social services or the system's victims as this play? When, for that matter, is the nine o'clock news which preceded 'The Spongers' or 'Tonight' which followed it more truthful, less propagandistic?

Stuart Weir, who worked as a researcher on the play, has written in 'New Society' of "the effort which Allen [the playwright], Garnett [the producer] and Joffe [the director] put into establishing the authenticity of their material."

Jim Allen was initially inspired by the actual withdrawal of three mentally handicapped children from a well-run voluntary home by Salford social services. Both he and Joffe researched this real-life affair thoroughly —

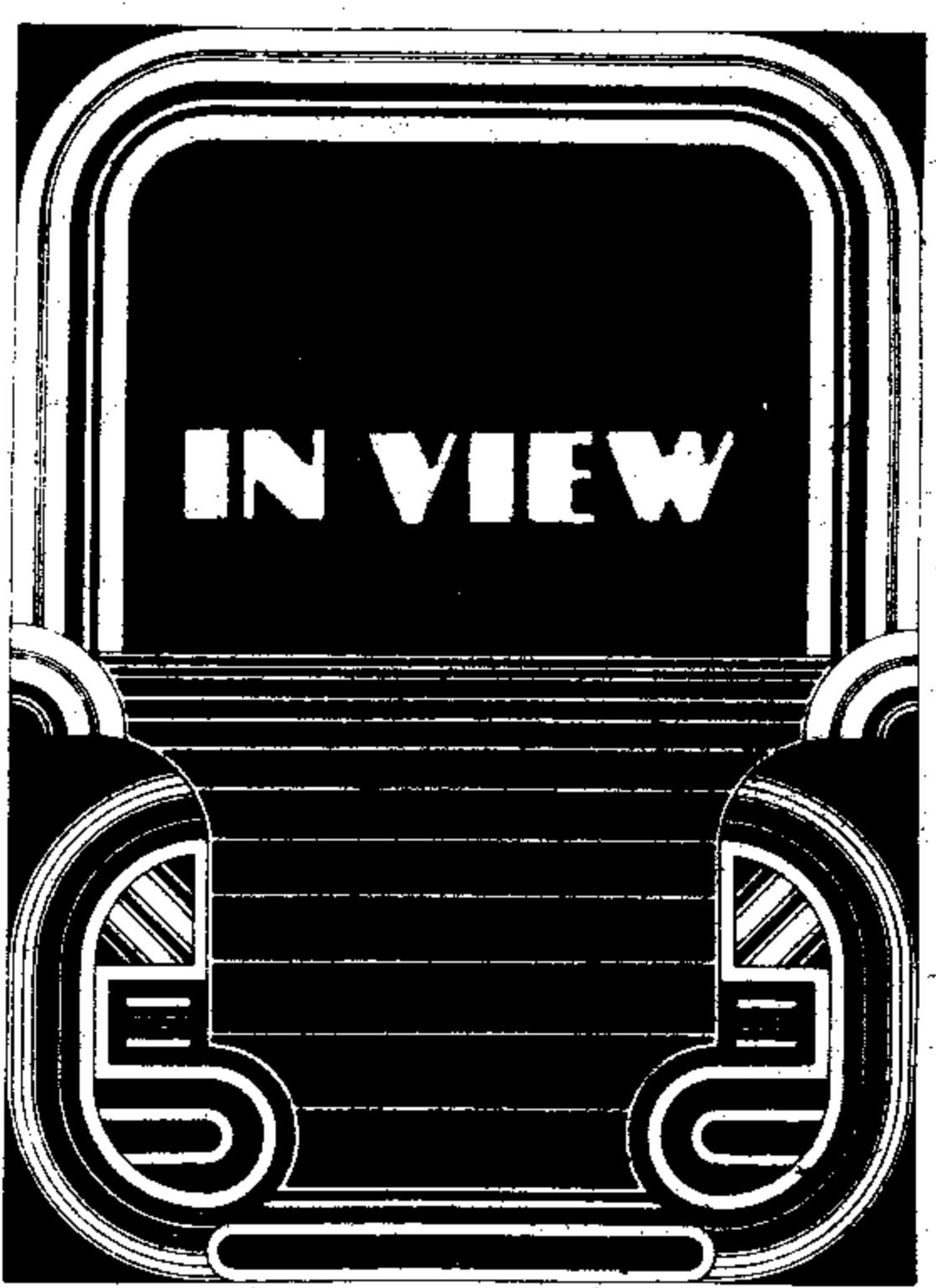
though they make important changes in what happens in the play.

"They undertook research on all the significant events in the play — the powers of the bailiffs, the conduct of the Supplementary Benefit tribunals, the shift in social services policy towards 'community care', the impact of public expenditure cuts on local authority services, council preparations for the jubilee, and so on. They took on two special advisers and consulted widely.

"This was a largely improvised play. And the cast, too, undertook their own research..."

But the play was not 'innocent' realism. How could it be? It wasn't made by innocents. How should it be? It is committed, sharp-witted, keen-sighted, elliptical, rhetorical, didactic... as any realism must be if it is not to degenerate into meaningless, random impressionism.

The theme of 'spongers' is very skilfully worked out through the play. From the title frame with pictures of the Queen and Prince Philip behind the title through the social security trials to the



end. At the centre there is a brief scene in a 'working men's' club where the audience laughs easily at jokes about 'Scroungers on the dole' — Pauline too. A community worker argues with a couple of workers about the system. They prefer to believe the comedian's line.

As any socialist knows, it is often impossible to convince workers of the injustices going on in front of them. But television creates a new reality the way explanation cannot. Hopefully, for many who watched 'The Spongers', the lives in the play will have entered their lives. They will become as real as those of 'the bloke who lives in our street who...'

If it does there will be fewer who will echo the bitter resignation of Pauline's neighbour: "She should have stuck it out like the rest of us". And more who will begin to fight back.

JL REVIEW

MONAD PRESS have recently published the fourth and final volume of Farrell Dobbs' memoirs as a Teamster leader and Trotskyist organiser in America during the 1930s. The four volumes, *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics* and *Teamster Bureaucracy*, describe the struggles of the Minneapolis lorry drivers and their Trotskyist leadership against the bosses, the State and Federal Governments, and the bureaucrats who controlled the International Brotherhood of Teamsters [IBT].

SIMON TEMPLE
reviews the series.

IN THE EARLY 1930s, THE narrowly craft based organisations, which dominated the American trade union movement, were losing members rapidly. This was due partly to the Depression but also to the inability of these unions [organised in the American Federation of Labour] to organise effectively in the basic, mass-production sections of American industry.

The Minneapolis Teamsters were one of three groups that started the revolt in 1934 and paved the way for industrial unionism. The others were the Electric Auto-Lite workers in Toledo, Ohio, and the West Coast dockers.

In three hard-fought strikes between February and August 1934, the General Drivers Local (branch) 574 won union recognition, first from the coal merchants and then from most other transport concerns.

In the course of the strikes, car-loads of pickets toured the streets stopping any scab trucks they found. A picket despatcher at the strike headquarters could rush reinforcements to any picket line where there was trouble. A canteen was established so that pickets did not have to go home to eat; and a temporary hospital was established to prevent injured strikers being arrested at the regular hospitals. A Women's Auxiliary was formed which staffed the strike headquarters, and throughout the later part of the strike the drivers published a 4-page daily paper, "The Organiser".

Murder

Minneapolis was at that time a notoriously anti-union town, and the bosses' organisation — the Citizens Alliance — organised a number of attempts to beat down the pickets by brute force. When that failed, the police turned to cold-blooded murder, shooting several dozen pickets and killing two of them.

But despite all this and even the intervention of the National Guard, the transport firms couldn't break the strike and had to give in. Minneapolis was on the way to becoming a union town.

Over the next few years the drivers won big improvements in conditions, including paid holidays and a seniority system for lay-offs. Wages were pushed up from an aver-



Convoy of picket trucks at funeral of striker Henry Ness, shot by the police.

FIGHTING TO WIN

age of \$11 for a 60-hour week in 1933 to \$33 for 44 hours in 1940.

The growing militancy within the ranks did not go down at all well with Daniel J. Tobin, president of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. In April 1935 he revoked the Local's charter with the intention of splitting up the membership and expelling the militants.

He reckoned without the base which Local 574 had built for itself in the labour movement around it. His various attempts to isolate the Trotskyist leadership of the drivers failed completely and the alternative branch that he set up — "Local 500" — never had more than a few dozen members. Even when the AFL president William Green sent a special representative to Minneapolis he was unable to break the strength of the drivers' union.

Victory

After 18 months Tobin gave up and they were reinstated, as Local 544, on terms that were, in effect though not on paper, a complete victory over the bureaucracy.

Despite continued sniping from Tobin, an organising drive was launched which culminated in the creation of an 11-state Area Contract for long distance drivers, signed in August 1938. This campaign alone recruited 200,000 members to the IBT, compared with a total membership of 80,000 in 1933, and put the Teamsters on the road to becoming America's largest union.

From the start, the Trotskyists recognised the need to unite the struggles of employed and unemployed workers.

Many of the unemployed had joined the picket lines and fought alongside the drivers during the 1934 strikes. Afterwards an auxiliary section of the union with its own offices and regular meetings was formed to organise the unemployed. It fought a series of battles with the city relief authorities and the managers of federal "make work" projects — to such effect that Minneapolis soon had the highest relief rates in the country.

When a fascist organisation, the Silver Shirts, tried to organise in the city, Local 544 established a Union Defence Guard which drilled regularly and prepared to deal with any fascist attacks. The one attempt of the fascists to hold

a rally in Minneapolis was called off when the Defence Guard occupied the hall where the meeting was to be held.

After that they had to seek other towns, where the workers were not so well organised.

Through most of the period after 1934, the local union published a weekly paper, "The Northwest Organiser", which played an important role in the organising drives of the late 1930s.

But as well as dealing with everyday trade union matters, the NWO right from 1937 was warning of the danger of a new imperialist war. It denounced the course the Roosevelt administration was taking which led towards US participation in the slaughter.

The paper argued that war would come about as the capitalists of different countries sought to get a bigger share of the world market and that the workers had no interest in such a struggle.



Farrell Dobbs

As Northwest Organiser put it, "J.P. Morgan (a leading banker) has a gun. He just returned from a sojourn in Scotland where he was shooting grouse. If he wants to defend his investments, let him take his gun and fight for them. But don't let him try to force us to fight for him. And don't let him try to lie about any fake 'war for democracy'."

But by 1940 the tide was turning against Local 544. The great organising drives of the mid-1930s had largely come to an end, and the government's war preparations were being stepped up. The majority of the trade union leaders, and especially Tobin, were lining up to support Roosevelt, despite the hostility of many of their members.

Tobin tried to impose dict-

atorial powers over the Minneapolis Teamsters. Under these circumstances, a mass meeting of 4,000 members voted in June 1941 to go over to the alternative trade union federation, the CIO, where a section of the leadership around United Mine Workers president John L. Lewis was opposed to Roosevelt.

But the CIO leadership would not sanction the national organising drive among transport workers that could have created a mass revolt against Tobin and his jackboot methods. Instead they were left to the tender mercies of Tobin's hired thugs, who signed "sweetheart" contracts with the employers and forced the workers to pay dues to the IBT — often at gunpoint.

At the same time, the FBI was preparing to frame up 29 people, including the entire leadership of Local 544 and several of the national leaders of the Socialist Workers Party. The Party's national secretary James P. Cannon was among them.

They were charged with conspiring to overthrow the government and advocating such an overthrow by force and violence.

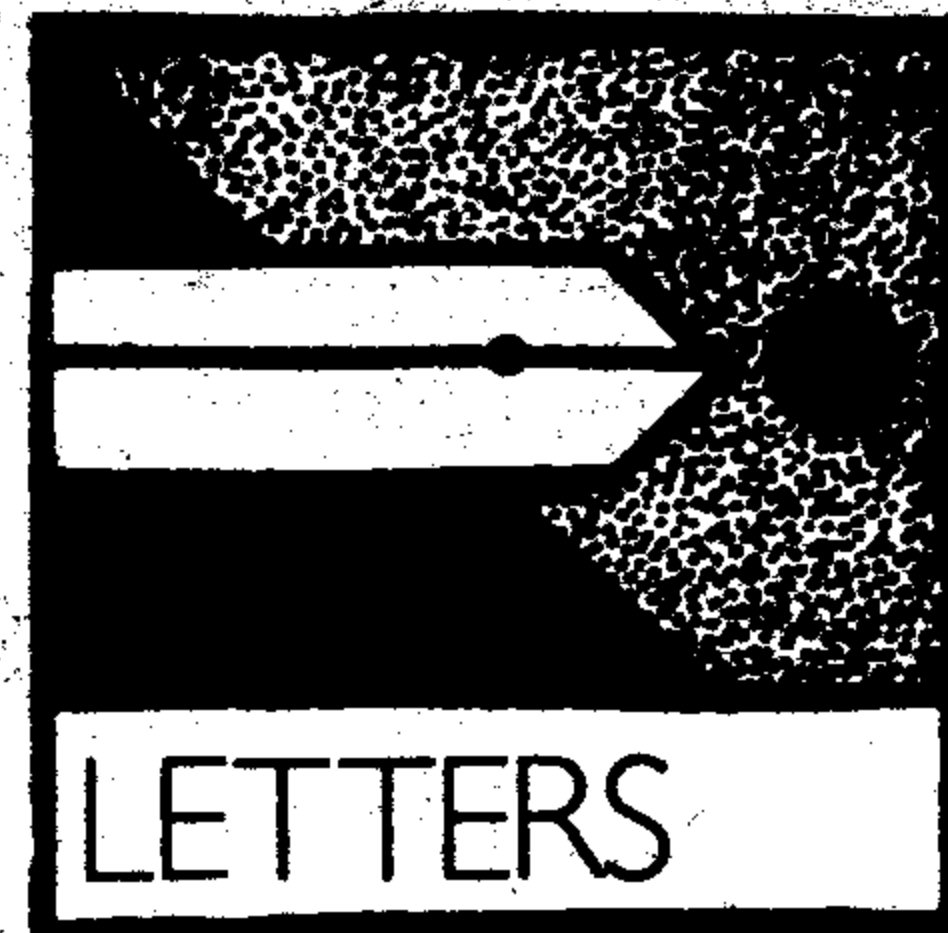
Jailed

After a lengthy trial before a loaded jury they were all cleared of conspiracy to overthrow the government. But 18 were convicted of advocating violent overthrow and jailed for terms of between a year and 18 months.

The law used for the purpose was the 1940 Smith "Gag" Act and the case brought a storm of protest from trade union and liberal sources. They included the national CIO, the United Auto Workers, the United Rubber Workers and the International Ladies Garment Workers, as well as the American Civil Liberties Union and various black organisations.

Although, in the end, Local 544 was smashed, its history is full of valuable lessons in trade union and revolutionary tactics — most of which can still be applied today.

The basic point is one made by Farrell Dobbs himself at the end of *Teamster Bureaucracy*, where he says: "The principal lesson for labour militants to draw from the Minneapolis experience is not that, under an adverse relationship of forces, the workers can be overcome; but that, with proper leadership, they can overcome."



Don't endorse Reich!

Comrades, "Workers' Action" is to be congratulated for the feature *Women Under the Jackboot*. The fact that an ideology such as fascism (or bourgeois democracy, for that matter) has social implications going beyond economic relations of oppression, even to include matters which are regarded as "purely personal", is often overlooked. (Arguably, the category of "purely personal" matters is only a certain way of looking at social relations; a way conditioned by an atomised, individualistic, competitive world-view.) Linda Collins' article demonstrated well how short-sighted such a categorisation could be, for women in Nazi Germany.)

So it's a pity that the article seemed to endorse uncritically the ideas of Wilhelm Reich.

For Reich, biology determined psychology; and psychology determined social and economic relations, rather than the other way round. For example, he laid the blame for the degeneration of the Russian Revolution on the psychology of the Russian masses who, he said, were psychologically crippled, unready and unwilling for the liberation which October 1917 brought.

He went on to identify Stalinist Russia with Nazi Germany, identifying a common "mass psychology" and an identical oppression.

Ms. Collins also seems to fall into the trap of Reich's rather simplistic ideas about sexuality: that monogamy comes into the same category of "un-naturalness" as "perversion" (unspecified) and rape. She doesn't mention that for Reich homosexuality was also "unnatural". The "natural" person must be hard to find, even harder to identify. "Anti-social" might be a better pejorative term, except that by talking in social terms we diverge from Reich's biological determinism, which turned on people's "orgone (sexual) energy", fettered or unfettered.

Reich later claimed to have isolated "orgones" in his laboratory, to have discovered thereby the cure for cancer, etc. The point is that the method, the assumptions, of Reich's later work followed as a logical consequence of his earlier assumptions.

While Reich's writings may be a useful source of ideas, both about the history and the mechanisms of repression and about the individual psyche, nonetheless they should be used with care and qualification, because in the last analysis they are wrong.

E. STANTON

Industrial Democracy in the Post Office is now officially under way.

The new Post Office Board has held its first meeting, with 7 management members, 7 union members and 5 "independents".

Who are the "worker directors"? There are three full time officials, three supervisors or management-grade employees, and one "rank and file" member, from the POEU. There is one woman, from the CPSA, although the Post Office employs a very high proportion of women.

In some cases these Board members were appointed by their union's Executive Committee, and not elected at all.

Moreover, although the scheme has only just started, it is beset by inter-union disputes. For political reasons the Government wanted it introduced as soon as possible, but the Post Office unions are still squabbling over the sharing out of the bureaucratic spoils.

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At the Government's press conference to launch the new board, strict instructions were given to the trade unionists not to mention the disagreements on other parts of the scheme. When one enterprising journalist from the *Financial Times* started asking questions on this, Industry Minister Eric Varley simply put an end to the press conference!

The main area of disagree-

BUREAUGRATS SQUABBLE OVER POST OFFICE SPOILS

ment is in the Telecomms business. The postal side is relatively simple: there are only three unions involved, and the vast majority are UPW members. But in Telecomms six unions are involved, and there is chaos over the distribution of seats.

The CPSA and the UPW have about equal membership in Telecomms. CPSA is demanding equal representation at local level and an extra seat at regional level (i.e. 6 not 5 as against the UPW's 8).

The squabble has been conducted entirely at national level. No information has come down to the members in any of the unions involved.

However, it appears that in the same week that the new Board had its first meeting, the CPSA Post Office Group had an emergency Executive meeting to discuss an ultimatum from the UPW. If the CPSA would not agree, the UPW considered that the CPSA had no further part to play in the experim-

ent. It seems that CPSA will either have to bow to UPW pressure and accept what is offered, or take the issue to their members. The end result might be the CPSA withdrawing altogether from the scheme, but this seems unlikely because of the stake come officials have in it.

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Meanwhile the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS) has had a Special Conference to decide what it should do after being refused a seat of its own on the PO Board. In the end they agreed to take what they could get, and are trying to enter agreement with the management union POMSA to 'share' the POMSA's Board member.

Thus all the Post Office unions are now officially committed to participation. Details remain to be settled, however, in a number of areas.

These bureaucratic carve-ups should show up "Industrial Democracy" for what it is. But militants in the Post Office lost the first round on "ID", and we are now saddled with the experiment for two years, while campaigning against its continuation.

For a start, the scheme is called industrial democracy, so let's begin with the unions telling us what they are doing. We don't want the rank and file to get embroiled in the bureaucrats' squabbles, but if trade union action is to be affected by these disputes let us at least have the facts and the documents.

Secondly we should seek to ensure that representatives at all levels are elected and accountable.

Third: an oppressive cloak of Business Secrecy seems to be descending on the freedom of Board members to inform their unions what they learn on the Board. We should insist: open the books and the Board meetings! Full

THE UNIONS



reports back to the workers in the Post Office.

As for the union squabbling, the answer is to begin a campaign for a unified Post Office Union for basic grades — merge the UPW and the POEU with CPSA PO workers, and forget the rows!

CHRIS WHYTEHEAD
CPSA Bristol DPS

Clare Russell reports on the Socialist-Feminist conference in Manchester last weekend [28th-29th].

A ghetto for women

IN THE numbers of women that attended — 1,000 — the conference was a remarkable success. In terms of clarifying the basis of socialist-feminism it was an abysmal failure.

The only proposals taken at the end of the conference were to have another one next year and to adopt *Scarlet Woman* as the open journal of the socialist-feminist current.

Attempts to define what is meant by feminism or socialism were scrupulously avoided for fear of creating divisions within the movement. So there were no answers to the questions: why do many feminists explicitly reject the class

struggle? why do some self-proclaimed socialists defend the continued oppression of women?

Agreement on the six points of the women's liberation movement and the need to build an autonomous women's movement appeared to be the minimum basis of agreement between the socialist-feminists.

The question, autonomy from what, nearly always got the reply: autonomy from left wing organisations.

There was hardly any attempt to differentiate between the left-wing groups. For some women, this flowed from a clear rejection of the

need to build a revolutionary party and of the need to integrate the demands of women into a unified revolutionary programme.

So then what? The socialist-feminist current does not ally itself with the fight to build a revolutionary working-class party, and it is not a broad campaigning movement, either. The major concern of the documents and the discussions at the conference was to define 'socialist-feminist practice' as a distinctive sort of politics.

Life-style politics was the answer for some. Many socialist-feminists place great stress on breaking down the division between personal and political.

It is true that often male arrogance towards women has been regarded as a purely personal — i.e., accidental — matter, whereas in fact it is a social and political phenomenon, needing political action to change it. But often feminists get the relation upside down. Instead of seeing the need for political action to resolve apparently 'personal' issues, they resort to personal self-improvement to resolve political issues.

Thus they become (to adapt Marx's description of the utopian socialists) "a movement which renounces the hope of overturning the old world by using the huge combination of means provided by the latter, and seeks rather to achieve its salvation in a private manner, behind the back of society, within its own limited conditions of existence..."

This tendency was aptly reflected in a document from Margaret Coulson of 'Socialist Challenge'.

"The revolutionary process at some point must involve a confrontation with the capitalist state... [but] we have to find ways of changing what we can now (not waiting for some

miracle utopian revolution to sort everything out for those who stay around long enough to benefit). It means challenging oppressive structures within ourselves as well as in the external world, and striving towards some ideal of revolutionary personal autonomy".

Freedom is the recognition of necessity, declared Hegel and Engels. But Coulson seeks autonomy from the necessities of disciplined struggle for the working-class revolution she so cynically dismisses as an 'utopian miracle'.

This cynicism about revolution serves as a conduit to the anti-revolutionary politics of the Communist Party. The CP has gained influence among the socialist-feminists, and there were probably more members of the CP than of any other left organisation at the conference. Many feminists — it seems — are willing to forgive the CP its reformist and Stalinist class-struggle politics as long as it allows 'autonomy' to women militants.

Division

One of the main aims of socialist-feminism is to examine the connections between patriarchy [i.e. male domination] and capitalism. But in practice a division has occurred.

The fight against patriarchy has become the domain of socialist-feminists; the class struggle the domain of men on the left.

"Our task then as socialist-feminists (as distinct from our tasks as female revolutionary socialists) is not to build a vanguard revolutionary organisation to help the working class overthrow capitalism, but to infiltrate every organisation whose activities impinge upon the lives of women, from revolutionary groups to tenants'

associations, in order to spread our subversive ideas amongst women so that patriarchy will be overthrown at the same time as capitalism" (from a socialist-feminist document in *Scarlet Woman*, no. 5).

This dualist concept was closely echoed by the IMG:

"We feel that there is a danger of some socialist-feminists seeing their main role as a pressure group on the 'male left'. This can lead to a concentration on broader issues to the exclusion of explicitly feminist issues. We see socialist-feminism as a way of politicising feminist issues as much as feminising trade union issues".

This approach ghettoises women and in fact lets men off the hook. With the knowledge that the socialist-feminists have got the women's issue in hand they can get on with organising the class struggle.

The current rise of the socialist-feminist current comes out of the decline of the Working Women's Charter Campaign, which got sidetracked into focusing on paper support from trade union bureaucrats. More generally it is the result of the weakness of revolutionary socialism, and the fact that for many people communism is identified with Stalinism. As one woman at the conference said, "socialism in Russia was built on the backs of women".

There is a role for an organisationally autonomous movement of socialist women — but it lies in orientating towards working-class women, and building a mass, militant working-class based women's movement, separate from and in opposition to bourgeois feminism. The road the socialist-feminist current is pursuing at present leads in the opposite direction: channelling revolutionary-minded women towards the politics of petty-bourgeois individualism and reformism.

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WORKERS IN

ACTION

TANKER DRIVERS

Government makes new plans for strikebreaking

BP, Esso, Texaco, and Shell oil tanker drivers are banning overtime and rest-day working in pursuit of their wage claim. But 200 Mobil drivers — the smallest of the 'Big 5' oil companies — are reported to have accepted 10%.

A large part of this confusion has been caused by the T&GWU national officials, who stalled negotiations on the claim — due for settlement on November 22nd last year — apparently until they saw what happened to the firemen. So bad did the situation become that West Midlands drivers struck for a day last month to demand some action in the negotiations.

The drivers' claim is for a 30% increase on the current basic (for an artic. driver) of £66.50 plus phase 1 and phase 2 supplements. They are also demanding improved fringe benefits.

It is difficult to estimate how much effect an overtime ban will have. Eight to ten hours overtime per week is standard for most drivers and the ban will disrupt delivery patterns. Refusal to take out vehicles with minor defects could rapidly increase the amount of time they spend in the workshops.

It is probable that deliveries from the firms involved in the action will be cut by between 35% and 50%. But the overall effect will be determined by whether drivers employed by sub-contractors and the smaller oil companies join in.

It is, however, quite clear that whatever happens the tanker drivers are in for a big fight if they are to win more than 10%. The oil companies are determined to hold to the pay limit; and the government have been making

detailed plans for breaking the strike.

These appear to centre on moving fuel from the major oil depots to a limited number of fuel distribution points [possibly by army tankers]. A priority supply schedule has been drawn up to supply the post office, the transport system, airports, schools, hospitals, blocks of flats and some government buildings. The army has already drawn up a list of all its HGV drivers so they can be used for strike-breaking.

The government does face some problems, though. Army strikebreaking will be less easily accepted than during the firemen's strike, and it is not at all certain that there are enough army drivers with the necessary training to handle the work.

There is also a political dilemma for the government. They do not want a fuel shortage and resulting mass layoffs, especially in a probable election year; still less do they want a breach in the 10% limit.



The overtime ban will be useful in running down supplies [London Transport keeps 13 days supply, the National Freight Corporation four days, and the largest private haulage firm, SPD, six weeks], but it is unlikely to win the claim. All-out strike action will be needed to do that, using flying pickets to ensure the smaller firms come out and to hinder the military escorts.

Workers in other industries [and especially in the rest of the transport industry] should black any oil moved by the troops. In that way a fairly quick victory could be won.

SIMON TOWLER

CHAPPLE'S LAW MEETS RESISTANCE

AS PART of their campaign against the high-handed action of the EETPU Executive in suspending their branch [see WA 74], sparks from the Cardiff area met last Wednesday, 25th, to discuss what action to take.

The meeting heard that despite repeated requests for information on what the latest position was, there had been nothing but silence from EETPU general secretary Frank Chapple. The branch is still getting normal correspondence from the union, but they are being denied copies of the EC minutes. Presumably Chapple hopes that this will reduce the possibility of a fight-back.

The meeting was in no doubt as to Chapple's real reasons for wanting the branch closed down. These were to keep Billy Williams, a well-known left-winger in the union, out of the recent Rules Revision Conference, and to carry on Chapple's vendetta against leading members of the branch. This was made clear by the treatment those Cardiff sparks who went up to the conference got from Chapple and his henchmen. When one asked an EC member what his future was in the union, he was told "You've got none".

The branch has taken steps to try to reverse Chapple's dictat. A petition signed by a large number of sparks in the Cardiff area, demanding an end to the suspension, was presented to the EC at their meeting on Monday 30th. A national petition is being circulated by the paper 'Rank and File Contact'. As well as calling for the reinstatement of the Cardiff branch, this also demands the return of full union rights to the West London Supply Branch, which like Cardiff was suspended just before Conference, and the Swindon branch, which has been suspended for two years!

EETPU branches throughout the country should make sure they get hold of copies of the petition. They should also bombard the EC with resolutions condemning the suspension and put all possible pressure on their regional EC members to vote for such resolutions. If Chapple's gangster-like leadership is going to be beaten on this issue, then it's up to the rank and file to do it.

AS WELL AS discussing the position of the branch, the Cardiff meeting also heard about the situation in the contracting industry. A new JIB wage rate of £1.53 an hour, plus 22p in lieu of bonus payments, making a minimum rate of £1.75 an hour, has just been agreed by the union and employers. This has, however, been vetoed by the Labour government, who have stopped the payment of the 22p.



Chapple

Chapple has sent a letter to all shop stewards saying that they should not be working for less than the £1.75 an hour, and to consider taking action if the employers refuse to pay it. On the face of it Chapple seems to be taking a militant stance on this issue. The catch is, though, that all action has to be channelled through the area officials, and in Cardiff at least they have so far refused to sanction anything.

The only areas where there is strike action over the £1.75 are places like Leeds and Sheffield where there is strong rank and file organisation.

Chapple's reasons for taking this line seem clear. Contracting sparks have a tradition for independent action and have built up extensive rank and file links over the years. By forcing them to act through official channels, as well as placing a limit to any real fight, he hopes to bring them more under the control of the union bureaucracy.

Militants in the industry have other plans. As someone said at the meeting: "We've got to take Chapple's words and ram them down his throat".

PETE KEENLYSIDE

LEYLAND SACKINGS

ONE OUT, ALL OUT

LEYLAND car division workers face a two-pronged attack on their jobs and conditions.

The widely publicised Edwardes carve-up will mean 12,000 jobs lost this year and a total of at least 30,000 by 1980. And the national joint negotiating committee will soon present the shop floor with proposals for an incentive scheme which will require thousands of jobs to be lost throughout the cars division if bonus is ever to be reached.

The bonus would be earned only when 92% of 'budget' is achieved — and management

has sole right to determine what 'budget' is. At Rover Solihull, 500 jobs would have to go just for a chance of earning the bonus. At Longbridge, management plan to impose 800 jobs to go from body and assembly and 580 from paint and trim — before the bonus scheme has even been accepted!

The Longbridge Works Committee has said they will support any section that takes action against cutbacks. But they have also made it clear that they are not prepared to call for or lead any action.

This leaves the workforce

open to being carved up section by section.

Management plan to close down one mini track this week. The rest of the mini assembly shop have voted to walk out if this happens. Workers' Action supporters are pressing for such action to be generalised throughout Longbridge on the basis of 'one out, all out'.

But more even that solidarity throughout one plant will be needed. Combine-wide solidarity is the only way to stop the carve-up.

J.D.

CHIEF CONSTABLE HELPS THE FRONT AGAIN

OVER 1,000 anti-fascists turned out on Thursday 24th January to picket the National Front meeting in Hyde town hall in Manchester.

Once again, Chief Constable James Anderton announced he had secretly met National Front leaders beforehand to arrange safe conduct to and from Hyde town hall. Police leave had been cancelled all day, and the whole thing was turned into a professional military operation, with 2,000 police to protect the Front from the anti-fascists.

While anti-fascist coaches from Lancaster, Leeds and Sheffield were searched coming into Manchester, the Front were courteously ferried in by police in four coaches at 8.30, an hour later than expected.

Pickets who arrived at 5pm found the police already waiting. But the picket clearly warned off any casual observers, and less than 100 hard-line NF supporters got into the meeting, which broke up after only an hour. Eight anti-fascists were

arrested.

The picket was called by North-West TUC anti-racist committee, and was supported by the revolutionary left and Labour Party organisations. Workers' Action supporters in Manchester Labour Party are calling for the removal of Chief Constable Anderton on the grounds of his repeated behind-closed-doors collaboration with the Front.

On March 10th support will be needed to picket a planned NF meeting at Bolton town hall.

SUE ARNALL

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to *Events*, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

SATURDAY 4 FEBRUARY. Demonstration against Racism and Fascism, for Worker's Unity and Socialism, called by Manchester District Labour Party. Assemble 12.30, Crowcroft Park, Stockport Road, Levenshulme.

WEDNESDAY 8 FEBRUARY. Workers' Action public meeting: 'MARXISM AND TERRORISM'. Speaker: Ian Hollingworth. 8pm. 'Roebuck', 108a Tottenham Court Road, London WC1.

SATURDAY 11 FEBRUARY. Anti-Apartheid Emergency Action Conference. 10am, Friends House, Euston Road, London NW1. Open to

delegates from all organisations supporting the aims of the AAM. Further details: AAM, 89 Charlotte St, London W1P 2DQ.

SATURDAY 18 FEBRUARY. Midlands Anti-Apartheid Action Conference. At 'F' Block, Lanchester Polytechnic, Coventry. Details: D.Spencer, 17 Winifred Ave, Earlsdon, Coventry.

SATURDAY 4 MARCH. Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions conference. Credentials for trade union delegates 75p from J.Hiles, 137 Wanstead Park Road, Ilford, Essex.

THURSDAY 16 MARCH. 'All London Teachers against Racism and Fascism' rally. 5.45pm at Central Hall, Westminster. Adm. 50p.

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