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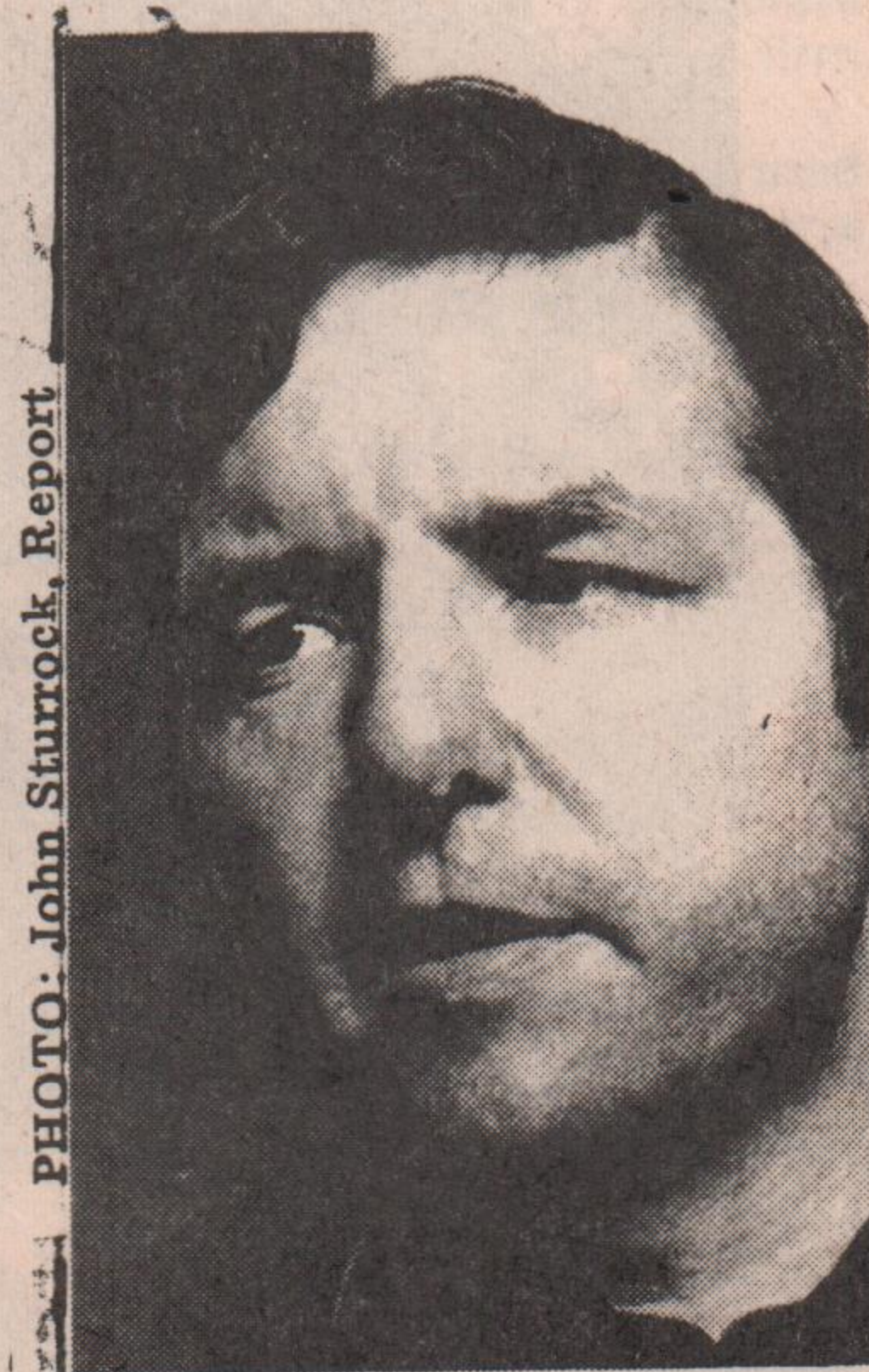
LOBBY THE TUC
Wednesday
September 6
Brighton

*Defend the right to strike!
 *Action now to defeat Phase 4!
 *Kick out the Callaghan-Healey leadership. Fight for socialist policies!

DEFEND THE S.U. TOOLMAKERS!

Defend the right to strike!

WSL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STATEMENT



Roy Fraser



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Leyland toolmakers at their mass meeting in February 1977 when they howled down Scanlon's attempts to force them back to work.

The Birmingham East District Committee of the AUEW has recommended the expulsion from the union of the thirty-two toolmakers on strike at SU Carburettors demanding a £7 wage increase.

Terry Duffy, the right wing President Elect of the union has said that the endorsement of this decision by the Executive Committee is a formality.

The 32, he says, can regard themselves as expelled if they refuse to return to work, and the AUEW will support Leyland bringing in scab labour to fill their jobs.

Expulsions of this sort—with trade union bureaucrats acting openly and ruthlessly on behalf of the employers against their own members struggling to improve their standard of living—create a new situation in the trade unions.

Scanlon

But it is a situation firmly rooted in Scanlon's three years of defence of the social contract and wage controls.

During that period, the trade union leaders have been drawn increasingly close to the government. Now they are no longer content simply to refuse to support strikes, try to isolate them or (as in the case of the firemen) deliberately hold back other workers with pay claims from fighting alongside them: they now move to *expel* and sack those workers who strike.

They do it now because pay strikes at this time threaten Phase 4 of wage control and the Labour government which is going to the polls on a policy of permanent wage control.

In reality the TUC leaders support Phase 4 as much as they supported phases 1, 2 and 3.

This is why the current struggle is no longer a matter of skilled workers, semi-skilled or unskilled workers.

If these expulsions are successful, any section of workers who strike to improve wages and conditions will receive the same vicious treatment.

Right to strike

The expulsion threats therefore must become the immediate concern of every trade unionist seeking to defend the interests of the working class.

The defence of the 32 now becomes the defence of the right to strike. Scanlon and Duffy know that once the right to strike is taken away workers are left defenceless against the attacks of the employers and the government.

Scanlon's role in Leyland has prepared the ground for this policy. Two years ago, as the workers' participation set up was launched, Scanlon and Jones called on the front page of *Leyland Mirror* for workers

These officials have long put the "viability" of Leyland and British capitalism as a whole far in front of the interests of their own members.

The moves by the AUEW to implement expulsions flows from this long period of class collaboration.

And in this way it links up with the bureaucratic moves by TGWU officials to victimise nine newly re-elected shop stewards, including the plant convenor and three deputy convenors, at Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant.

Elected deputy convenor Alan Thornett, refused recognition by management for his record in fighting to defend working conditions and in opposition to the social contract, is threatened with expulsion—and others with a life ban on holding union office.

All sections

The issues raised by the SU toolmakers' struggle therefore affect all sections of workers and all unions. It is not a matter of the rights or wrongs of their particular claim.

The strike itself is over parity with Rover toolroom workers, who get £7 a week more. The company has agreed to pay the extra money.

Duffy argues that the company will pay the money in 1979, and that there should be a return to work. But the reality is that the agreement to pay up in 1979 is tied to increased productivity.

Pay policy

In any case SU toolroom leader Regan says "We are not prepared to wait that long".

Such statements do not reflect particularly strong or principled leadership from Regan or other toolroom leaders, but the fact that these skilled workers see this claim as a way of defending their living standards without confronting the pay policy. Regan even claims (wrongly) that:

"Government pay policy is flexible enough now for them to pay the £7".

But when the SU men argue that they speak for all skilled workers, they are right. Skilled workers, as part of the whole organised working class, are seeking a means of defending

their living standards.

The SU strike is in this respect similar to the fight by semi-skilled AUEW members at Bathgate in Scotland, where 1500 strikers voted 2-1 to reject the pleading of EC member Gavin Laird for them to return to work, even though the company was threatening closure.

The Workers Socialist League has definite criticisms of the toolmakers. We consider that they should come out in a clear and open fight against the social contract and on this basis unite in struggle with other sections of workers.

We have opposed the way in which the Leyland toolroom committee has accepted the principle but not the form of company-wide wage bargaining argued for by Leyland management and the union bureaucracy in a bid to destroy the power of shop floor organisation.

Mistake

And the policy of refusing to pay union subscriptions is a serious mistake that only helps the union bureaucracy.

It is obviously difficult to persuade lapsed AUEW

members (many toolmakers are now 12-13 weeks in arrears) to strike against the expulsion of fellow craftsmen from the union.

The policy of non-payment should be ended immediately and back-subs must be paid up.

The refusal to pay union dues and the 50p levies to sustain the 32 SU men were attempts to pressurise union officials and Leyland management without an all-out confrontation.

Inevitable clash

But the reality is that for any workers who do want to defend living standards a confrontation with the Callaghan-Healey government is inevitable. This emerged unmistakably in the last Leyland toolroom strike in March 1977.

The Labour leaders at that point formed a coalition deal with the Liberals sooner than relinquish Phase 2 of wage control, while their TUC hangers-on showed that they would go to the lengths of expelling strikers.

But what also emerged was the tremendous support that there was amongst other

Anti-strike squad

IF ANY ONE doubts that the attacks on the SU men are part of a trend towards disciplining strikers, they should look at the moves against the strike at Leyland's Llanelli plant.

A delegation of convenors from the company-wide National Joint Negotiating Committee was elected to go down to Llanelli to get the workers back to work since their strike went against national union policy.

The delegation included not only right wingers but also Derek Robinson, a toolroom steward, convenor of the Longbridge plant, and a leading member of the Communist Party.

And Moss Evans, TGWU General Secretary, has written to Leyland management seeking a meeting to discuss unofficial strikes.

workers. Spontaneous movements of supporting strike action swept through the AUEW all over the country.

The situation has now reached the crucial point at which last year toolroom leader Roy Fraser and his committee backed down.

We now call on them to learn the lessons of last year's struggle. If they do not move now to defend the right to strike they will deal a blow against all workers.

Prevarication only gives time to the AUEW bureaucracy. Fraser's quibbles on the distinction between expulsion by the District Committee and expulsion by the Executive must end.

The decision is that the SU men would be expelled on Monday if they did not turn up for work. All toolroom workers must be called at once to mass meetings and called out on strike.

And the Leyland toolroom committee must make an appeal to all other workers to come out in their support. Lobby the TUC in defence of the right to strike!

Assist

Despite our opposition to some of the toolmakers' demands, if they manage to defeat the AUEW leaders in this struggle they will assist every worker in the struggle to defend jobs, conditions and living standards against speed up, participation and corporate bargaining.

*Fight to defeat state control of wages! Put in catching-up pay claims with cost of living clauses to provide rises to keep pace with the cost of living as calculated by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives!

*Challenge threats of closure—from Duffy, Leyland management or Chrysler—by demanding the opening of the company's books and those of their suppliers to elected trade union committees!

*Fight for the nationalisation of the whole motor and component industry, without compensation and under workers management, as part of a planned, socialist economy!

*Force the dropping of the expulsion threats against the SU men, and the TGWU disciplinary charges against the Cowley 9!

*Build a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions, capable of fighting the treachery and collaboration of the bureaucracy, right and 'left' wing alike!

INTERNATIONAL



Chinese Stalinists back tottering Shah

STRIKE BY POPULAR FRONT FOLLOWS RAID

A novice in the skills of counter-revolution might feel a shade embarrassed in returning the embraces of the Shah of Iran.

This is, after all, the tyrant who proclaimed the 'White Revolution' to defeat the 'Black' and 'Red Revolution' of feudal reaction and communism.

Even in the present trying conditions of popular uprising, Chairman Hua is unlikely to be troubled by the qualms of a less experienced traitor.

Like the earlier stops at Bucharest and Belgrade, the visit to Tehran has one supreme purpose for the Peking bureaucracy.

The foreign policy of the ruling Chinese Stalinists centres on forming alliances against the 'main enemy' of Soviet 'imperialism'.

Reactionary

To this end they outstrip even their rival brothers from the Kremlin in giving support to imperialist and viciously reactionary regimes—Pinochet's military dictatorship in Chile, Mobutu's corrupt tyranny in Zaire among them.

But Iran's central position in Asia gives the Shah a prominent place on the Chinese list of friends to be cultivated.

Straddling the continent from the central Asian states of the Soviet Union to the Gulf with its rich oilfields, Iran figures crucially in any global military strategy.

The fanatically anti-Soviet stand of the Shah at once endears him to the Chinese bureaucracy with its fears of 'encirclement' by Soviet 'hegemony' over Asia.

The pro-Soviet coup in Afghanistan and the slight cooling of Chinese relations with the military rulers of Pakistan have both injected new warmth into the formal Sino-Iranian friendship already existing.

Threat

At the same time, the Peking Stalinists have every interest in arresting any revolutionary developments in Iran.

The overthrow of the Shah's dictatorship by the mobilisations of the mass opposition would be a grave threat to them, whatever leadership this might bring into power.

Not only could Soviet influence gain some hold. Far more important, such a political—or even social—revolution would massively strengthen the struggles of workers and peasants in the Middle East, south Asia and even in China itself.

The dangers of such an earthquake to the unstable rule of the Peking bureaucracy are never far from its mind.

Share fears

These agents of counter-revolution share their fears with every section of the international bourgeoisie.



Mobutu

As chief policeman for imperialism in the Gulf area, the Shah holds meetings to discuss



Yugoslavia's Stalinist leader Tito rides in triumph alongside the Shah

'security' with the feudal lords of Saudi Arabia and the 'progressive' Ba'athist leaders of Iraq.

Prince Ibn Abdul Aziz—Saudi Defence Minister—has called upon Arab states 'to support the Shah to preserve stability in Iran'.

But the Iraqi leaders had already taken practical steps to ensure that this unusual plea from their reactionary neighbours was answered.

Exile in Iraq

Ayatollah Ruhollah al-Khomeini—a prominent Iranian religious leader involved in agitation for the Shah's overthrow—has lived in exile in southern Iraq since 1963. He has outlived his welcome and usefulness to his Ba'athist hosts.

These idols of *Newsline* signed an agreement with the Shah to end the Kurdish rebellion in March 1975.

Beyond the contemptible betrayal of the Kurds' right to self-determination, this arrange-

ment has now brought them into alliance with the Shah against the aspirations of the Iranian masses.

The Iraqi regime today refuses to broadcast the Ayatollah's inflammatory statements—but not from any principled objection to their reactionary religious form.

Far from receiving encouragement or assistance from these 'progressive' petty bourgeois nationalists, the struggles of the Iranian masses have been scarcely reported in the government-controlled press.

Meanwhile we must wait to see if *Newsline* abandons its previous opposition to the Shah in deference to its Ba'athist 'allies'.

Mobilisations

But the Shah can have little time to be properly grateful for these attentions.

Huge mobilisations have continued despite efforts to frustrate and smash them by displays of military strength.

Mosques stay locked up by order in parts of Tehran, although troops have now been withdrawn from the streets. Isfahan remains under martial law, and three days of rioting followed the cinema fire at Abadan.

Defiance

Above all, the widespread defiance of his repressive measures has alarmed the Shah.

It has become clear to him on the one hand that the systematic and bloody repression required to crush the opposition by force would provoke a civil war.

On the other hand he has recognised that the determination and tenacity of the masses make it doubtful who would emerge victorious.

The Shah's problems are complicated by the knowledge that any holding back on his part will both increase the confidence of the mass opposition, and in turn bring the possibility

of the army deciding to secure stability for imperialism by seizing power itself.

For all his massive machinery of repression, the Shah is in a highly vulnerable position.

This underlying weakness has partly dictated the tyrant's 'restraint' over the last week, as in calling an enquiry into the Abadan cinema fire with the associated dismissals and suspensions of officials.

But this policy of 'appeasement'—summed up in the 'resignation' of Prime Minister Amouzegar—has also been calculated to divide the mass movement of opposition.

'Moderation' at this stage could bring about negotiations with the Shi'ite Muslim leaders, and it is precisely for this result that these reactionary elements have encouraged the opposition movement.

If these apparently implacable enemies can pull together a mutually convenient deal, then their first united move will be a ferocious attack on the workers and peasants of Iran.

A general strike has been called in Nicaragua, after the spectacularly successful raid on the parliament buildings by guerrillas of the Sandinist National Liberation Front.

But like the similar strike in January, this initiative has been organised by the Broad Opposition Front—an all-inclusive popular front against the dictator Somoza, which includes major capitalists and church dignitaries alongside trade union leaders.

While US imperialism struggles to negotiate the peaceful removal of Somoza and 'democratisation' of Nicaragua, the country's economy is reeling as foreign investors pull out their capital from such perilous regions.

The ending of the Somoza family dictatorship can be only a gain for the workers and peasants of Nicaragua.

But that limited advance cannot be developed to fulfil their economic and political demands by a leadership which sees its task as simply guerrilla warfare and terrorism, or the formation of 'democratic' blocs with sections of the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

PERU STATE OF EMERGENCY

In a desperate attempt to smash the Peruvian miners' strike, General Bermudez and his military dictatorship have declared a state of emergency in five mining areas and suspended all civil liberties there.

The wide ranging powers of the decree are designed to guarantee mining production and eliminate subversive action designed to jeopardise reactivation of the national economy.

Troops are already being moved in to take control of the mines. Some 10,000 miners (a fifth of the total strikers) are refusing to leave Lima where they have gathered and are holding protest demonstrations.

VORSTER PLANES HIT ZAMBIA

South African planes attacked civilian and military targets in a reprisal raid into Zambia last Wednesday.

This raid followed one by SWAPO guerrillas into the Caprivi Strip which links Namibia with Zimbabwe and is bordered by Zambia and Botswana.

Since this outbreak of fighting, violence has continued over several days including raids into Zambia by South African troops.

Despite the fact that finance minister Siteke Mwale has threatened the South Africans with possible calls for outside help, the Zambian government is up to its neck in collaboration with the Vorster regime.

Instrumental

It has been instrumental in forcing SWAPO into the 'internal settlement' on the future of Namibia agreed to some weeks ago by leaders of the liberation forces.

In this situation Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda will

be opposed to an escalation of conflict with the South Africans.

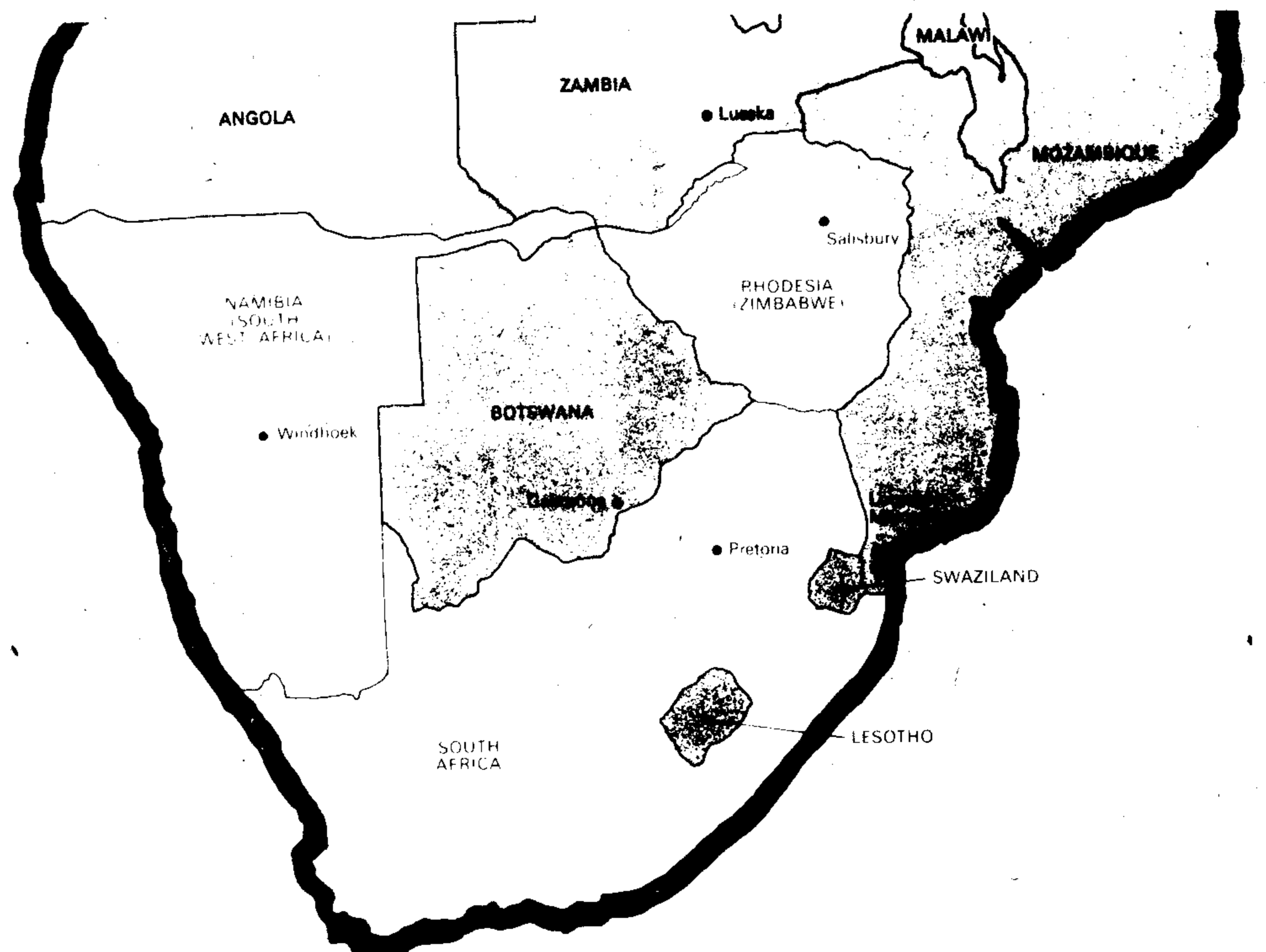
The lesson of these raids by the Vorster racists is that no amount of negotiations or internal 'settlements' can protect the interests of the masses in Southern Africa.

Plea

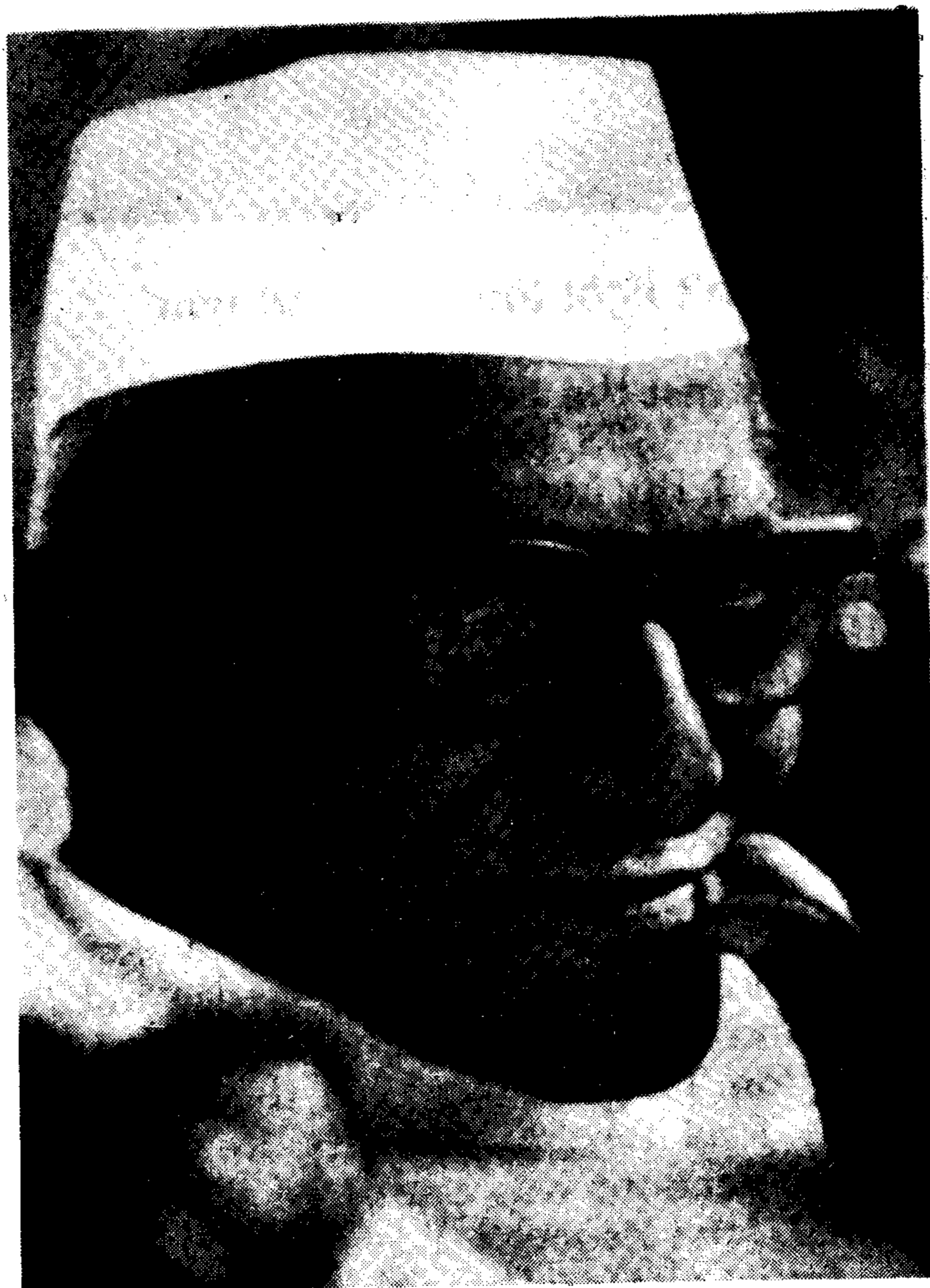
The weak position of Vorster and Smith in the face of the armed liberation struggle was typified yet again last week by Smith's desperate plea to whites in Zimbabwe to stay in the country while further attempts are made to establish a stable internal 'settlement'.

The masses in Zimbabwe and Namibia must resist to the utmost the attempts by their leaders to sell out the military struggle for negotiated deals and accommodations with imperialism just as the years of struggle and heavy guerrilla deaths are beginning to bear fruit.

No sell-out deals! Intensify the armed struggle!



JANATA COALITION LURCHES FROM CRISIS TO CRISIS



Janata leader Desai

Starving, oppressed and rebellious, the masses of India are forced to pay dearly for a melodramatic production of bourgeois politics on a scale that rivals the glories of Indian cinema.

The themes of corruption and nepotism may be stale—the dazzling intricacies of the plot are tedious—but ham acting and crudely-painted face-masks cannot conceal the real crisis of

the ruling Janata coalition.

Janata leaders 'resolved' their latest bout of internal strife by redistributing power between their factions. But prime minister Desai has salvaged his position and fragile unity only by creating fertile conditions for future conflict.

Main force

The main force holding the coalition together is at the same time working to shatter it for

good and all.

Desai can argue plausibly that, without his leadership, the Janata would fly apart, leaving Gandhi free to re-assert her power.

With the coalition publicly divided on how to deal with the charges of corruption against Desai's son, Gandhi scented blood. As the majority in the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of parliament), her Congress (Indira) party demanded an enquiry.

Seeds of defeat

In the lower house (Lok Sabha), it was clear that the Janata would not split, for all the resignations and furore that had gone before. The 'victory' of the Janata contained all the seeds of future defeat.

Charan Singh—Desai's main rival—has been rewarded for his loyalty with the presidency of the party. This move will undoubtedly provoke further desertions from the Janata, as small-time opportunists scurry for safety.

Singh is well to the right in the coalition, and dedicated to preserving the privileges of the Hindu caste system. This means ruthless suppression of the masses—in particular the "untouchables".

Contradiction

The gross contradiction of the coalition is seen in the latest measure put forward by George Fernandes, Socialist Party leader and Minister for Industries.

The coalition has banned any expansion in the capacity of the cotton-mills and power-looms. At the same time, subsidies are to be given to encourage handloom weaving, and the cloth market is to be regulated by state controls.

Fernandes claims that these measures will 'create employment', and provide cheap

material needed for basic clothing by millions of the Indian masses. In reality they will sharpen the crisis of the textile industry, throw thousands of mill workers into unemployment, trap sections of the peasantry further in debt, raise the price of cloth, create shortages, and hurl the cotton-growing industry into chaos.

But this is one of the Janata's 'progressive' measures. It has also been active in employing, or sanctioning and encouraging, violence against strikers, and against 'untouchables' and landless labourers who have occupied land for cultivation.

The Janata's support hangs by the thread of the memory in the masses of the even more vicious repression by the Gandhi dictatorship.

Singh's new authority will undoubtedly bring about a further alienation of the work-

ers, poor peasants and unemployed millions whose votes swept the Janata to power two years ago.

United only by their opposition to Indira Gandhi, even divided over how best to defend capitalism in India, the Janata leaders are doomed by their own alliance to see their every act pushing Gandhi nearer to power.

Violent crowds

But Gandhi has not restricted her populism to left demagoguery.

In towns throughout India violent crowds have assembled in recent months to demonstrate around aspects of Janata policy or to declare a firm position on Gandhi.

Desai has of course used police brutality to disperse them.

Some have been organised

by Singh supporters; most by forces concerned to restore the former dictator.

Already another scandal has risen to prominence with the alleged kidnapping of Suresh Kumar.

Opportunist

Kumar is son to Jagjivan Ram, perhaps the most blatant opportunist of the whole Janata crew.

Now Defence Minister and immensely powerful within the coalition, Ram was apparently Gandhi's most dedicated supporter until the 11th hour before the 1977 election which swept her out of office.

Ram's power base lies among the "untouchables" and this brings him into constant tactical conflict with Charan Singh.

Now his son claims to have been kidnapped by elements in the Janata very closely bound up with Singh's political interests.

Already the arrests have begun.



Among those celebrating the election of the new Pope will no doubt be Italian Stalinist leader Enrico Berlinguer. As can be seen from this recent photo, Berlinguer has got on famously with the reactionary new figurehead, as part of the Communist Party's 'historic compromise' with Italian capitalism and all its most anti-working class institutions.

Palestinian leaders call a truce

An end to the recent spate of internecine struggles within the Palestinian Liberation Organisation was apparently indicated by the announcement in Beirut on 24 August of a truce between the PLO leadership and the break-away group of Abu Nidal, close collaborators with the Iraqi regime.

This truce was arranged through the good offices of the Algerian government and its ambassador in the Lebanon, Muhamad Yazid.

It is to be hoped that it has

brought to an end the series of deaths which began last January with the shooting of the PLO's London representative, Said Hammami.

Unity

The truce also comes during a week of many discussions about 'unity' within the Palestinian movement.

Yasser Arafat's Fatah organisation has been talking about closer links with the rejectionist

forces outside the PLO for some years now, particularly with the largest of them, George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The issue of a joint declaration between these two bodies has been part of discussions about the reorganisation of the Palestinian movement to give less weight to Fatah in the 55-man central council which runs the Palestinian 'parliament in exile'—the Palestine National Council.

Speaking in Damascus on 18

August, PLO leader Arafat also referred favourably to the Syrian regime who are in Lebanon to prevent his supporters from confronting the Zionists.

He described Damascus somewhat inappropriately as 'the Hanoi of the Palestinian revolution'.

These moves show clearly how the petty bourgeois Palestinian leadership has completely accepted the restrictions on their role in the fight against Israel.

Now they are consolidating their forces for a 'dialogue' which will be aimed at preventing mass mobilisation on socialist policies or the military and political defeat of the Zionists.

Comrade Brown, in his letter in the last issue of *Socialist Press* was quite right to draw readers' attention to the struggle for leadership within the Palestinian movement.

It is also right for us to point out the political inadequacies of 'rejectionists' like Habash as well as those like Abu Nidal, who use only the utterly bankrupt methods of individual terrorism to deal with problems which can only be resolved by socialist policies and the mobilisation of the Palestinian and Arab masses.

Postal workers fight Carter

Taking a leaf out of the book of the miners, whose 110 day strike forced back a determined employers' offensive, members of the American Postal Workers Union have voted 98,000 to 78,000 to throw out the shoddy sell-out contract recommended by their union leaders.

Both major postal unions—the APWU and the National Association of Letter Carriers—have now rejected the contract, which offers only a 10% pay rise and a restricted cost of living clause to cover the next three years.

Inflation

As US inflation reaches into double figures, and in the wake of the miners' 30% settlement, the postal workers are in no mood to passively accept this deal, and their leaders are now mandated to call illegal national strike action.

In a desperate attempt to head off such a move the Carter administration has used the courts, threats of military intervention, and attacks on unofficial strikers who have already staged walkouts.

In New Jersey and California 92 unofficial strikers have been sacked, and two of the 60 sacked strikers in Jersey City hauled before the courts for contempt.

This followed a ruling by Federal Judge Frederick Lacey ordering the Jersey City strikers back to work, and declaring illegal a strike ballot scheduled for New York.

Pressure

It is now open to doubt whether union bureaucrats will, as they would prefer, bow to this ruling and to the threats from Carter, and call off all action, or whether the pressure from the membership will force an all-out strike.

Plans have already been laid for army personnel to scab on the strikers, in a move to uphold Carter's attempts at wage control, which suffered a major blow at the hands of the miners.

As the Democratic administration once again enters battle against the organised labour movement and in defence of US capitalism the urgency of a political fight within the unions for a Labour Party to represent the independent interests of the working class is sharper than ever.



This pamphlet brings together two articles recently published in *Socialist Press*, dealing with the policies of the self-styled 'Trotskyists' of the Workers Revolutionary Party in relation to the Middle East. The second article in particular exposes the way in which almost every aspect of the WRP's current international orientation represents the polar opposite of the principles historically defended by the WRP and its forerunner the Socialist Labour League. The remainder of the pamphlet consists of documentary material to demonstrate the full extent of this volte face. Price 45p plus 10p p&p from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

OUT SOON!

WRP JUNKS THE OLD TROTSKYISM

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IRELAND



Detention without charge a "deterrent" - Shackleton

The so-called "Prevention of Terrorism Act", the set of draconian measures railroaded through Parliament in 1974 in the wake of the Birmingham pub bombings, has received another clean bill of health from Labour leaders.

Lord Shackleton, who as a former Labour leader in the House of Lords has also managed to secure the deputy chairmanship of Rio Tinto Zinc has completed the "review" of the Act commissioned last December by Home Secretary Merlyn Rees.

Glibly brushing aside the welter of evidence that shows the wanton intimidation meted out to Irish people under the powers conferred by the Act, Lord Shackleton accuses its opponents of holding "pre-conceived views".

What matter that hardly anyone out of the 3,259 victims of the Act's powers of detention has been charged with a criminal offence?

People who point this out, according to Lord Shackleton, "ignore the point that its purpose is the prevention of terrorism".

The detention powers have great value as a deterrent, he claims.

He goes on to defend proscription of the IRA, which he claims helped to avoid "high feelings" against the Irish community in Britain.

Also defended is the use of exclusion orders, used by police to remove selected victims from Britain, whether or not they could prove them guilty of any offence.

Hint

Lord Shackleton does add a marginal hint of liberalisation by suggesting the lapsing of Section 11 of the Act, which currently makes it an offence to withhold information about acts of terrorism.

But even here there is a proviso that Section 11 has been useful in Northern Ireland—the only place where it has actually been used!

The true spirit of reformism emerges in Lord Shackleton's appeal for the detention cells so

extensively used under this Labour legislation to be made less "gloomy and depressing" and for the food for the unfortunate victims of police "questioning" to be improved.

Treachery

In short, the powers of harassment and intimidation in the hands of British imperialism in its repression of the Irish people are to remain intact as a living indictment of the treachery of the British Labour leaders' subservience to their capitalist masters.

The struggle of British workers for the defence of jobs and living standards again and again brings them into conflict with these same Labour traitors and the union bureaucrats who have consciously assisted every reactionary policy.

The fight for the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, for the withdrawal of British imperialist troops from Ireland and the right of self-

determination for the Irish people is an inseparable part of the struggle for the independent interests of the British working class.

On October 7 the United Troops Out Movement has called a demonstration through the streets of Barnsley—constituency of butcher Roy Mason—around these demands and demanding Prisoner of War status for Republican prisoners.

Day of solidarity

And on November 26, commemorating the 25,000 strong torchlit demonstration through London organised by Karl Marx to protest the hanging of the Manchester Martyrs, the Prisoners Aid Committee is planning a Day of Solidarity with Irish prisoners of war.

The labour and trade union movement must be mobilised to support these important initiatives.

PHOTO: Andrew Wiazd, Report

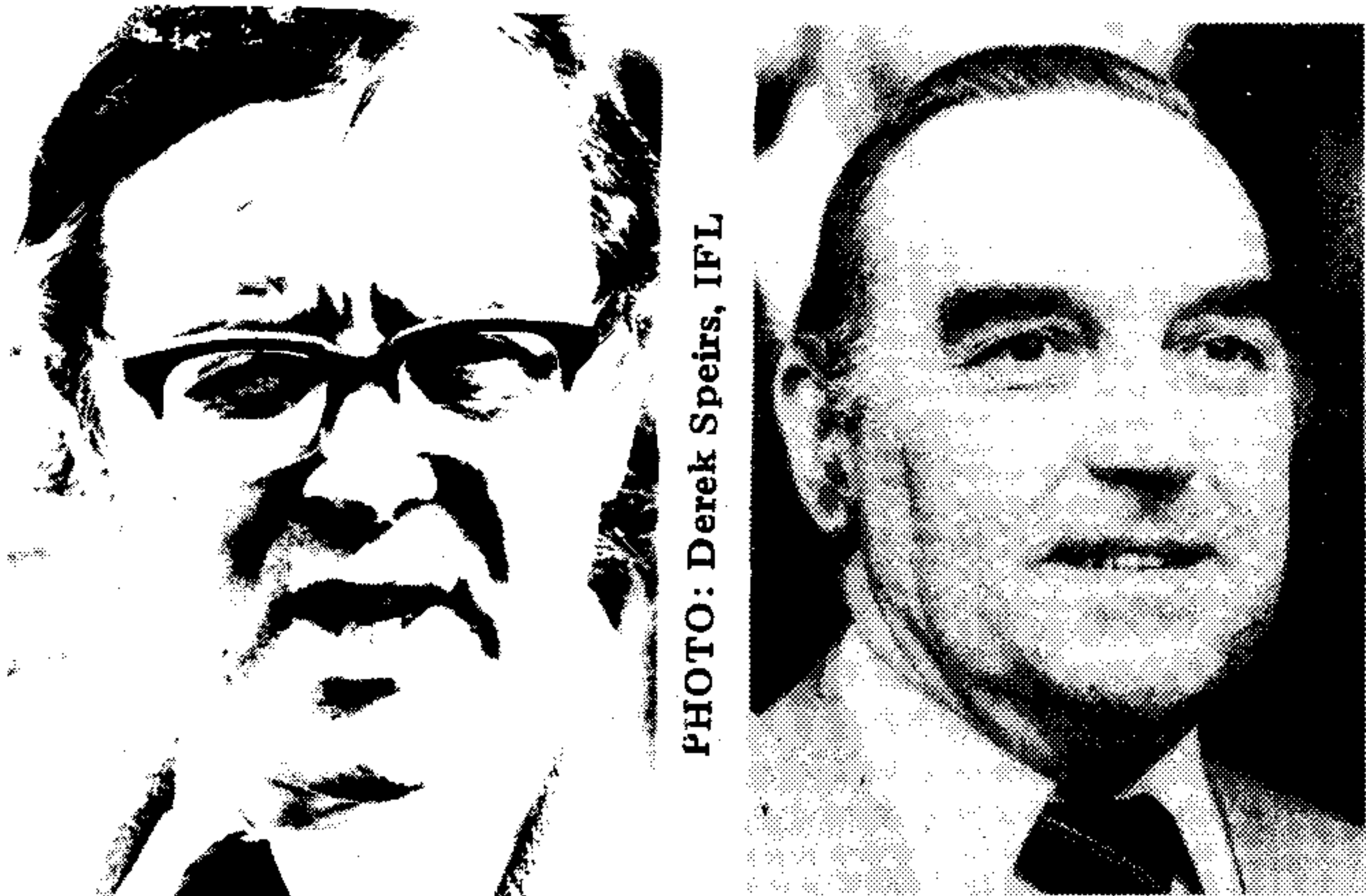


PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL

Labour chiefs of Irish repression: Merlyn Rees (left) and Roy Mason.

SHUT DOWN THIS BOMB FACTORY

Work will be "resumed as soon as possible" declared the Ministry of Defence last week as it reluctantly bowed to public pressure and closed down the plutonium-handling areas of the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston.

This "work" consists in manufacturing and refurbishing British imperialism's nuclear weapons stock, as well as research into new, more lethal bombs and shells.

The fear that most haunts top military chiefs is that the closedown could hamper the ability of the British capitalist class as part of NATO to play its full role in intimidating the workers and peasants of the world and threatening the nationalised property relations of workers' states in Europe and Asia.

Lethal

Indeed the revelation that so far 12 of Aldermaston's thousands-strong workforce have been subjected to dangerous levels of plutonium merely highlights the fact that the plant itself is designed to provide British capitalism with the deadly means for deliberately exposing thousands or millions of workers to lethal amounts of radioactive fall-out and contamination.

Rather than arguing for the Aldermaston plant to be reopened with new "safety" checks, the trade unions concerned—the TGWU and the AUEW—should be fighting for the complete closure of the weapons research unit, with the entire staff being kept on full pay until such time as a planned programme of research into the uses of nuclear energy, under the control of elected trade union committees, can be launched.

Meanwhile attention must also be directed towards safety standards in force at other nuclear establishments.

The Aldermaston scandal seems likely to cause disruption on Atomic Energy Authority projects which are at least nominally peaceful in content—including research into industrial reprocessing of nuclear fuels and the disposal of radioactive waste.

The trade unions concerned must call on the labour movement as a whole to play a role in lifting the shroud of the Official

Secrets Act from the activities carried out in these establishments, and enforcing trade union control over the application of nuclear energy.

To carry out such a fight, the reactionary Labour cabinet leaders who have shamelessly conspired to finance the warmongering actions and preparations of British imperialism must be removed.



Anti-Windscale demonstrators

PHOTO: Mark Rusher, IFL

New attack on direct works

Direct building departments of local councils should make a profit or be axed—that is the conclusion of a report welcomed by Reg Freeson, Minister of Housing.

A Department of Environment report has recommended that councils should demand a 5% return on capital from their direct labour force or be shut down with the work going to private tender.

Competition

To underpin the move to bring a new spirit of capitalism into the council workforce the Department of Employment recommends that it competes for all building tenders in the area.

Council workforces have certain advantages for the working class—they are unionised, 'lump' free and able to build to higher standards than private contractors.

They must be defended

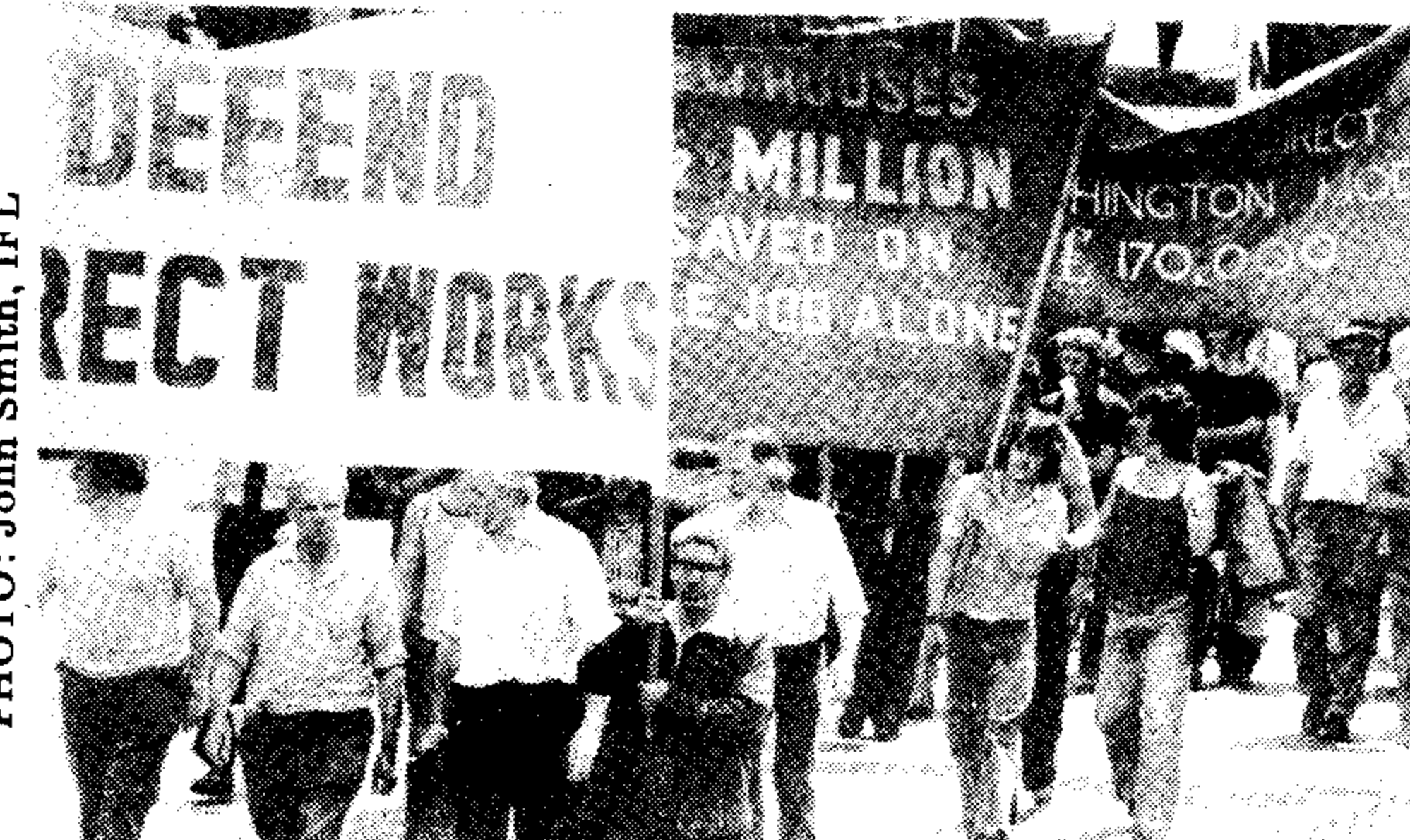


PHOTO: John Smith, IFL

Builders protest at closure of Birmingham Direct Works last year.

against a move which would lead to the sacking of thousands of building workers and open the way for further 'lump' and non-union employers to increase their empires.

It would also provide Tory councils with a golden opportunity to slash public spending and impose speed-up on council

workers. *Nationalise the building industry without compensation under workers' control! Extend direct works!

*An end to lump labour. A socialist planned economy of useful public works to end unemployment, under the control of the working class.

Socialist Youth League

Red Youth
 NUS: WHY THE YCL CAN OFFER NO PERSPECTIVE

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Campbell reveals computer files

Only days before he himself is due to go on trial under the Official Secrets Act, freelance journalist Duncan Campbell has pointed out the growing police surveillance of working men and women by revealing that the majority of the 1.5 million people to be catalogued on a new police computer have no criminal record.

1.23 million of the files are to be from the Special Branch, which specialises in political and intelligence work, Campbell reveals in a *New Statesman* article.

Another 29,000 files will come from the National Immigration Intelligence Unit and 160,000 from the National Drugs Unit.

A mere 130 files from the Serious Crimes Squad will deal with known criminals.

The extent of police surveillance of innocent civilians is proved by Campbell's own case, which is to be heard at the Old Bailey on September 5.

Along with fellow journalist Crispin Aubrey and ex-soldier John Berry, Campbell was a supporter of the campaign to prevent the deportation of former CIA agent Phillip Agee and American journalist Mark Hosenball.

This, coupled with their reputation as investigative journalists, brought them under the watchful eyes and ears of intelligence agencies.

When Berry—who seven years beforehand had been an army corporal attached to the

top secret signals intelligence unit SIGINT—contacted them and sought a discussion, phone taps and surveillance ensured that MI5 knew where and when the meeting would be.

After a two hour tape-recorded conversation, all three were arrested. The content of the conversation has never been published or revealed.

Spying clause

The three victims are now charged under Section 1 of the Official Secrets Act—the “spying clause”—though not even the prosecution have claimed they are spies.

If found guilty they each face a possible 14 years in jail.

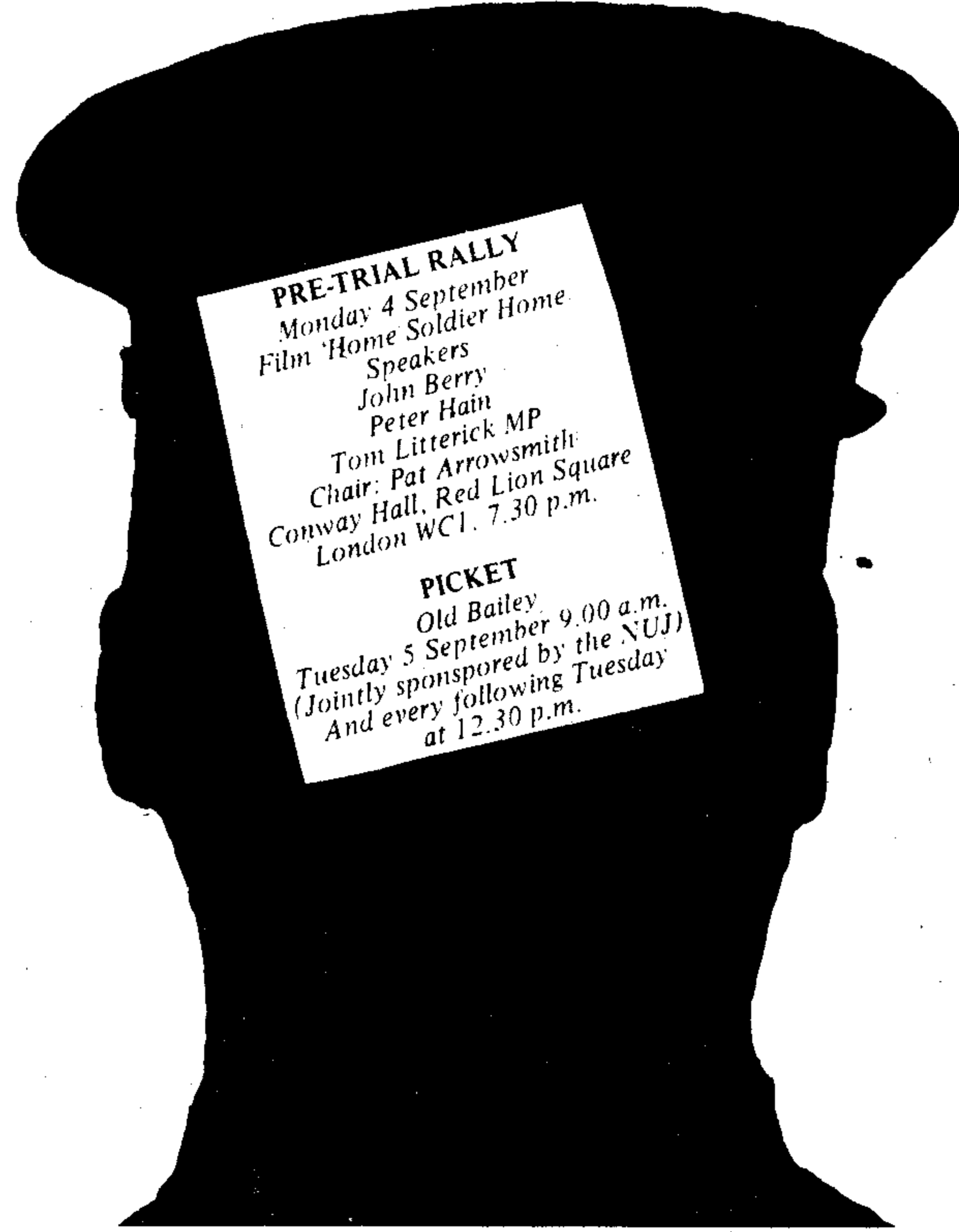
The information on the new police computer, along with the announcement last week that even the exact number of employees in the atomic weapons establishment at Aldermaston is an official secret, indicates how wide-reaching this Act is, and how severely it restricts the rights of the workers' movement.

Abandoned

Labour Home Secretary Marlyn Rees recently announced the cabinet decision to abandon Labour's manifesto pledge to repeal the Act, and thus to perpetuate all the clandestine activities of the most reactionary elements in the police and military apparatus.

The fight to defend Aubrey, Berry and Campbell and prevent dramatic new attacks on democratic rights must therefore be taken up with urgency by the labour movement as a whole.

THE RETURN OF COLONEL B



Mikardo backs Colonel B gag

The House of Commons Privileges Committee—which includes arch Parliamentarian, Michael Foot, and fake left Ian Mikardo, has approved censorship of the Press by the Director of Public Prosecutions and increased state control over Parliament.

The Committee upheld the Director's right to threaten newspaper radio and TV with prosecution last April if they continued to publicise the name of Colonel B—a prosecution witness in the Official Secrets Trial of Aubrey, Berry and Campbell.

Prosecuted

His name was given by four MPs in the House of Commons as part of the BBC campaign and because *Peace News*, *The Leveller* and *The Journalist* were being prosecuted for contempt of court for naming him.

Immediately under the protection of Parliamentary privileges his name was broadcast on TV and named in the Press.

The Director of Public Prosecutions—T.C. Heatherington—promptly sent a warning to all editors. “It is not accepted

despite the naming of the Colonel on the floor of the House of Commons that the publication of his name would not be a contempt of court even if it was part of a report of the proceedings in the House”.

Improbable

The Privileges Committee ruled that it was ‘improbable’ that such reports should be protected by privilege—hitherto held to have protected all reports of Parliament. They also ruled that the Director was “fully entitled to reserve his position”.

The Committee may yet go further and attack privilege in the House of Commons itself. The question of whether the four Labour MPs—Jo Richardson, Ron Thomas, Robert Kilroy-Silk and Christopher Price—should be condemned for naming Colonel B is to be further examined.

This seemingly minor question could openly reveal for the first time in hundreds of years the sham of Parliamentary privilege when it conflicts with the interests of the state.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Mikardo

PRESS GANG CENSOR'S CARVE UP

The censored version of the BBC Play for Today on the trial of Willie Gallagher in Belfast for the Legion Hall bombing was a devastating attack on martial law in northern Ireland—despite the cuts that were made.

The BBC changed the commentary that introduced the film. It cut another passage altogether. What it could not change was the verbatim official account of the trial of Willie Gallagher.

Gallagher is no work of fiction. He is on hunger strike close to the point of death in Long Kesh concentration camp. His trial, and events around the play raise the pressure for the whole weight of the Labour movement to be mobilised on both sides of the Irish Sea to put an end to the occupation of northern Ireland and the massive repression that goes with it.

The events around the play have demonstrated the dilemma that the British state and a nominally Labour Government find themselves in.

On the one hand the BBC proved again it is willing to go to extreme lengths of censorship to protect the state from criticism, even in TV ‘drama’.

On the other it proved unable to carry that censorship to the point required by the state—not just a total blackout of the play, but a total blackout of news that it had ever been written and stifled.

The police proved again that they are ready to use the legislation they have been given to hold anyone in opposition to the occupation—however blatantly. Yet they too were unable to do the job the state required. They were unable to hold Willie's father indefinitely and without publicity.

Niceties

The result has been to demonstrate to thousands of workers the abolition of ‘democratic’ niceties, without achieving any tangible gain for the ruling class.

Author Caryl Churchill and director Roland Joffe were correct to resist using the courts to try to stop the play going out since the courts would have been delighted to stop the show.

Just a sample of the changes shows that the *only* aim was to present the stooge trials and the Government in a more favourable light.

Churchill: According to the Diplock Committee it was difficult to get convictions in the courts because of the intimidation of potential witnesses and the difficulty of finding impartial jurors for sectarian crimes.

BBC Censor: The main problem for the courts in Northern Ireland has been the intimidation of witnesses and the finding of impartial jurors.

Churchill: The rules of evidence have been altered so that a confession is allowed as evidence even if it was obtained by threats or force.

Censor: Under this Act a judge may admit as evidence a confession obtained under intense interrogation.

Churchill: (The Diplock Committee was set up)...to find ways of dealing with terrorists other than by internment without trial which was causing widespread disapproval.

Censor: In 1972 a commission was set up under Lord Diplock, an English judge, to find ways of bringing terrorists to justice.

The passage cut out altogether pointed to the rising rate of convictions under the no jury trials and asked whether it was worth putting up a defence.

The entire labour movement must now demand an end to all the secrets and censorship on the British role in northern Ireland. They cannot censor the entire working class.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

TUC leader Murray with Callaghan

ANGER NO ANSWER

Never mind, you unemployed! According to Chancellor Denis Healey, the British capitalist economy is now in “better balance” than almost any time since the war.

The recessionary measures that have ensured 1½ million workers remain on the dole have also managed to cut the rate of inflation and stabilise the value of the pound against other currencies internationally.

But Healey is still not satisfied with the historic cuts in living standards and post-war record levels of unemployment he has created in his efforts to boost the profits of big business.

Phase 4

In his speech to the employers at the Edinburgh junior Chamber of Commerce he stressed the importance of maintaining rigid Phase 4 wage controls.

But he claimed that the fall in inflation had increased living standards by 5% over the last 12

months. This is certainly not true for the growing army of unemployed workers cast aside by government-backed rationalisation in industry and cuts in social service spending.

The legitimate frustration and anger of unemployed workers and youth is being directed by the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party towards the Brick Lane to Brighton march entitled ‘Anger on the Road’.

But experience has shown

again and again that anger and frustration are *not* enough to defend existing jobs or to force through socialist policies that can create new ones.

Such abstract and sterile demands as the march's call for a 35 hour week are readily accepted by the TUC traitors who have collaborated with the employers in scores of factory closures and mass redundancies.

Occupation

A programme to fight unemployment must begin with the fight for factory occupations and independent working class action to prevent further sackings, linked to the demand for work-sharing on full pay, the opening of the books of the employers, and the nationalisation without compensation of major industry.

This calls for the building of a revolutionary leadership in the trade union and labour movement capable of directing workers' anger and resentment along the path to political independence of their treacherous leaders.

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report



Healey

LESSONS OF THE U.S. MINERS' STRIKE 1978

We saw in last week's article that the rank and file of the United Mine Workers of America continually clashed with attempts by their leadership to sell out the struggle.

The conflict was so sharp that even during the strike thousands of miners signed petitions demanding the resignation of union President Arnold Miller.

In this situation it is clear that great opportunities were opened up for the fight for a revolutionary line.

For the duration of the strike some 32% of coal production continued. This coal was mined in non-union pits.

A key focus of the struggle was blacking of this scab coal. The miners themselves shut down many scab operations, but it was necessary to back this up with a vigorous campaign of blacking throughout the US labour movement.

Those trade union leaders who paraded their support for the miners at rallies all over the country should have been put on the spot over this question.



Arnold Miller

Determination

As we pointed out in Part One of this article the efforts of Miller and co. to sell out the strike were in sharp distinction to the determination of the rank and file miners to fight the bosses.

There should have been a struggle for the running of the strike to be completely in the hands of the rank and file at a local level.

This could have been done by calling local meetings to pass resolutions removing Miller and replacing his control with that of the rank and file Miners Safety Committees for the duration of the strike.

It was important for the many donations from those who supported the miners to be directed to those who were organising at a local level.

Even after the strike ended, miners were still complaining that money sent to the Miller leadership was being withheld.

In fighting for active support for the miners, *Socialist Press* called for the setting up of Committees of Action to organise blacking and financial support.

The existence of Committees of Action would have laid a firm basis for the demand for a general strike against Taft-Hartley as Carter began his moves to implement this anti-labour legislation.

Subordination

Throughout the strike we placed at the centre of our demands the fight for a break with the Democratic Party and the construction of a Labour Party.

The top leaders of the US labour movement showed their complete subordination to the Carter government and the massive contradiction which opened up between these traitors and the rank and file miners and their supporters offered a great opportunity to push forward this demand.

A fight for a Labour Party would pose sharply the need for class independence and a political development out of the strike.

Alongside this it was important to fight for the nationalisation of the mines.

The largest self-styled Trotskyist group in the USA is the Socialist Workers Party.

Throughout the strike the SWP newspaper *The Militant* gave extensive coverage offering a detailed picture of the strategy and tactics that party pursued.

A study of their record in

US 'Trotskyists' fail to develop political independence

PART TWO

By Keith White



the strike shows that the SWP was totally incapable of posing the real issues and giving the necessary revolutionary line for the UMWA.

"Solidarity"

The tone for the SWP's intervention into the strike was set by the December 16 issue headline "Support Coal Miners Strike".

Between then and the end of the dispute the central theme of the SWP was "solidarity".

Despite the fact that many thousands of words were written giving the details of the attack on the UMWA and battles being fought out by the miners, *The Militant* appeared throughout as a paper giving no more than a commentary from a socialist viewpoint.

To be sure the SWP were not passive in the face of the strike.

It is clear that the membership acted in line with the February 22 Political Committee statement which gave the SWP's top priorities as follows:

*To expose the lies and divisive tactics of the energy corporations.

*To help mobilise the broadest possible support for the miners, and

*To draw the lessons of this battle for working people.

Independence

Within the strike itself the SWP at least in words stressed the centrality of the gains in union democracy coming from the 1972 victory of Miller's Miners for Democracy and the need to extend these gains, to

direct towards class independence, defence of conditions and, from time to time, talked of the need for a Labour Party.

In practice, however, the SWP concentrated on the support element in the strike—setting up support committees, organising rallies and collecting money.

The sharp political edge in the struggle—that between the rank and file miners and the Miller leadership—was reported in general terms.

But in no way did the SWP emphasise the treacherous role of Miller or find ways of developing the struggle against him.

A diligent search of the pages of *The Militant* during the 110-day strike reveals a consistent avoidance of the question of blacking action by supporters of the strike.

Nowhere did the SWP argue for this demand.

No call

This is shown starkly in one article, "Why the mine workers need a labor party" (*Militant*, 3 March, 1978), where the SWP declared:

"Labor Party representatives in Congress and in the state legislatures would . . . vote against any and all measures to move scab coal".

But in the same issue of the paper, in an article entitled "How not to support a strike", the SWP makes no call to campaign for the blacking demand and gives the impression of opposition.

Attacking the sectarian Spartacist League, the SWP says:

"The Spartacist League, another sectarian outfit with

Trotskyist pretensions "supports" the miners by introducing union resolutions calling on workers to "hot cargo" (boycott) scab coal and demand that the steelworkers immediately go out on strike too".

The author, Shelley Kramer, goes on to attack the idea of sympathy strikes as the central focus for solidarity, putting forward as an alternative "support activities that can make headway."

Not central

But conspicuously absent from the SWP's suggested list is any mention of blacking scab coal.

We can only conclude that

the SWP did not regard the fight for blacking to be central in the miners strike.

Yet in this strike the production and shipment of scab coal was an important weapon in the hands of the employers.

Further evidence of the SWP's solidarity actions can be seen within the San Francisco "Miners Strike Labor-Community Support Coalition".

Despite the fact that a resolution was passed calling for blacking of coal shipments within the area and the SWP did not oppose this resolution, the publicly issued leaflets of the Coalition did not mention this important demand.

And the SWP voted against resolutions from union locals in the San Francisco area for sym-

pathy strikes in support of the miners.

The bulk of the SWP's support activities was the collection of money.

But the money collected by Support Coalitions did not go to local miners organisations but to Miller!

He of course did nothing to distribute it to the ranks.

Socialist Press called for the preparation of a General Strike if Carter implemented the anti-union Taft-Hartley legislation against the miners. The SWP, however, again restricted its call to further protest rallies by those supporting the miners.

Strike action

Nowhere did the SWP advocate the preparation of strike action, restricting itself to historical articles about the great struggles against Taft-Hartley in the late 1940's.

In Part One of this article, we drew attention to the article in *The Militant* (June 23) which attempted to answer the sectarianism of the Spartacist League and the Healyite Workers League on the tasks of revolutionaries in the miners strike.

In this article and in the April 28 supplement, "The Meaning of the Miners Strike" those who want to study the real face of the SWP's "turn to the unions" will find the necessary information.

We have already drawn attention to the fact that the essence of the SWP's intervention was to build trade union level solidarity with the miners.

In practice the implementation of this line was carried out in such a way as to avoid head on conflict with Miller.

After the strike was over the major article "The Meaning of the Miners Strike" had this to say about the question of leadership:

"The reform leadership was swept into office by the mass upsurge in the coalfields. But



UMW bureaucrats: Right winger Patterson (left) and 'militant' Patrick

the new officers—and many of those who elected them—did not realise that it would take a continuing mobilisation of the ranks to strengthen and transform the UMWA."

Nowhere is there any direct attack on Miller and co.—simply descriptions of their shortcomings!

No explanation

In referring to the 1977 election, where Miller was opposed not only by Patterson from the old Boyle leadership but also by Harry Patrick who had split from Miller's 'Miners For Democracy' in a 'militant' direction (in fact staying in the same place while MFD moved to the right), the SWP have no explanation of their line.

In such a major article they should have said where they stood in the 1977 election, and analysed the evolution of Harry Patrick who posed as a left winger, who was given a major interview in *The Militant*, but who is now working for Carter's federal anti-poverty agency ACTION.

New leadership

The SWP in reality see the question of a new leadership in terms of simply the organisation of the rank and file on a class struggle programme. But they are silent in the face of petitions signed by thousands of miners correctly demanding Miller's resignation.

What is the SWP's attitude to this? Should miners have signed such a petition?

In 'The Meaning of the Miners Strike' the SWP outlines "A strategy to fight back".

Here, they describe the attacks now being launched on workers by employers throughout the USA.

The SWP's answer to these attacks is to combine demands for union democracy with the call for a Labor Party.

"A Labor Party would... fight to open the books of the banks and corporations... with access to all the financial and technical information kept secret by the bosses, the workers themselves could take control of the production process..."

"The current chaos of contrived shortages, unexpected gluts, business crisis, and inflation could be replaced with democratic planning, of production to meet human needs."

"These far-reaching tasks can be carried out only by the power of the government..."

"Formation of an independent labor party would be a giant step toward abolishing the rule of a wealthy minority and bringing to power a truly democratic government—a workers' government."

Two points can be made on this.

its own candidates in elections and has not begun the practical fight for a Labor Party now by fighting for the construction of labour slates in elections.

In closing this very brief look at the SWP and the miners strike it is important to make it clear that in many ways the coverage given by *The Militant* was very informative.

At each stage of the fight the proposed contracts were examined in detail showing the extent of the "giveback" demands of the employers.

Articles on who owns the mines, the effects of the employers' profit drive, etc., the dangers of arbitration to workers, the historical fights in the miners union, were all important background material for those who wanted to counter the lies of the employers and the government.

No substitute

But background material is no substitute for a correct political line in the struggle itself.

The fact remains that the SWP not only avoided, but clearly had no conception of how to take up the sharp edge in the miners strike—the fight to construct new leadership through the building of a revolutionary cadre and the struggle to mobilise workers to remove their existing bureaucratic leaders.

The Spartacist League claims to have put forward a revolutionary line in the miners strike.

Sectarian

In contrast with *The Militant Workers Vanguard* from the beginning of the strike put forward the demand for blacking of the scab coal.

However, this correct and vitally necessary intervention was hampered as usual by the sectarian nature of the Spartacists approach.

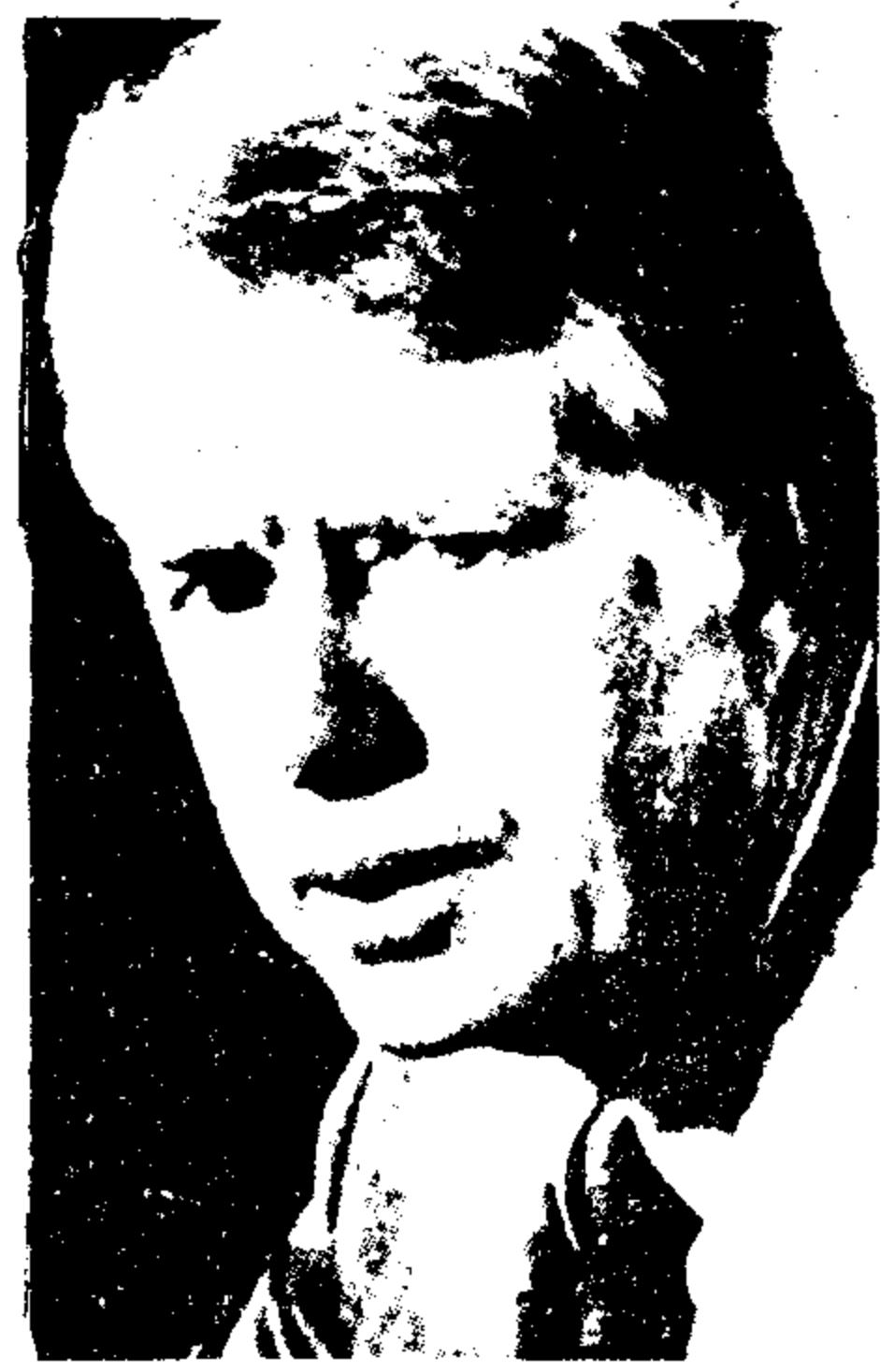
As we drew out in Part One of this article, the Spartacists had had a sectarian attitude from the outset to the development of the Miners for Democracy movement.

In the miners' strike itself the Spartacists combined their calls for blacking the scab coal with the demand that the miners be joined in struggle by the steelworkers.

Counterposed

This proposed steel strike was envisaged not simply as a solidarity strike but also as a strike by steelworkers against the attacks being launched by their employers (see *Workers Vanguard*, Dec. 9, 1977).

As the miners' strike developed, the demand for sympathy strikes was actually counterposed by the Spartacists to the



Carter

were in our opinion most relevant as Carter prepared to use Taft-Hartley.

If anyone had been jailed through the injunction a massive fight could have developed around these jailings and it would have been essential to demand a General Strike to destroy the anti-labour law.

In the period leading up to that the emphasis should have been on blacking, although we would have supported the calls for one-day sympathy strikes in those union locals where they were proposed and in the Miners Strike Labour-Community Support Committees (for instance in San Francisco where the SWP voted against such a resolution).

In relation to the internal running of the strike the Spartacists put forward a generally correct demand for setting up strike committees, while giving incorrect emphasis to the call for a special convention to dump Miller.

The call for a convention—which may or may not have actually "dumped" Miller could only serve as a diversion from the fight in practice for strike committees to take over the genuine control of the struggle.

Desperate to avoid even the mildest taint of "opportunism" the Spartacists also feel it necessary to call not for a Labor Party but for a "Workers Party".



Burning a sell-out contract

Yet this call is not coupled to any concrete move by the Spartacists to build such a party on the basis of workers' struggles and the mobilisation of the trade union movement.

Generally correct

The Socialist League (Democratic Centralist), through its paper *Labor News*, put forward a generally correct orientation on the main issues involved in the strike.

While working in a non-sectarian way in support of the miners struggle the Socialist League was also able to make an important contribution within the San Francisco 'Miners Strike Labor-Community Coalition' by successfully putting forward the resolution to black coal within the area.

The SL(DC) fights for the formation of a Labor Party through the struggle to establish independent labour slates in elections.

The miners went back to work having suffered some important set-backs (see Part One) but the overwhelming point to come out of the strike was that despite the mine-owners bid to smash all the gains won by miners in years of struggle they were forced to retreat.

The strike was a massive show of strength of the US working class—a show of strength which has inspired other workers coming into struggle.

A careful study of the role of the trade union leaders and "the revolutionaries" in this strike is a necessary preparation for the battles to come in which the central task is the construction of an authentic Trotskyist party in the USA.

No crumbs for old-age pensioners!

This discussion document from the Department of Health and Social Security has been produced by well-meaning people who would like to be good to old, retired members of the working class.

I am sure that David Ennals, Stanley Orme and John Morris mean well, are good to their mothers, and help old ladies across roads, but they must work within limits set by private profit, and they accept these limits.

Cake

So the key to the document appears very early, on page six in the foreword, when they say:

"While comments need not be limited to the agenda we have set, they do need to take proper account of the availability of resources. More for elderly people could mean less for other members of the community".

They believe that 'resources' are a cake which is rigidly defined in size, and that if the old people take too big a slice, someone else must go short.

No limits

The truth is, of course, that wealth is being created all the time by workers who will one day be pensioners; that surplus value is being creamed off in larger and richer quantities by the ruling class, who acknowledge no limits on the 'resources' claimed by them.

As long as society is run according to this system,

Veteran Trotskyist DULCIE YELLAND reviews "A Happier Old Age", a discussion document on elderly people in our society, published for the Department of Health and Social Security Welsh Office by HMSO, London, 95p.

pensioners will be the useless tag end of the population, which lives on crumbs because it can no longer be used to make profit, and the recommendations of documents like this are simply whispers against the economic blizzard which is capitalism.

The first two chapters deal with aspects of old age such as leisure, community support, keeping fit, etc. and in chapter three comes a more suspect section, when the age of retirement is discussed.

We are told that the TUC has been asking for retirement at 60 for both men and women but, it says regretfully, the cost would be large.

There is no explanation of why it does not cost too much for policemen and officers in the armed forces to retire at 65 in good health.

If the gentlemen who wrote this document had worked in factories or mines and seen the desperate tiredness of men dragging out their working life for for the years between 60 and 65, they would know the absurdity of their suggestions that retired people should do 'community work', etc.

Of course the retirement age must be reduced, for the sake of elderly workers and

because, with increased technology, hours of work will have to be reduced in all industries.

Furthermore, those women workers who can now retire at 60 must not fall for the argument that it would be 'fair' to compromise by allowing both sexes to work until 63.

There is no need for this unless you are afraid of losing profit and no reason why workers should not enjoy leisure before arthritis and other ageing conditions spoil it.

Chapter four deals with Incomes in Retirement. After paying lip service to the need for 'a respectable level of pensions' it comes to the new pension scheme which began in April.

It admits that those already retired are not so well provided for, and that the older generation of pensioners, most of whom are women, tend to be poorer.

It then refers to the paltry 25p per week enjoyed(?) by those over 80, and concludes:

"For many years ahead the very old will in general be unlikely to have substantial earnings-related pensions".

They can say that again!

The rest of the document is devoted to suggestions for residential homes for infirm pensioners, help with transport costs, and grants towards fuel costs.

If the authors had more contact with working class people they would know of old people who would rather struggle alone in lonely, single-roomed hovels than go to hostels where they are treated like children and sent to bed at 7.30 p.m. because there is not the money for local authorities to pay staff to provide comfort.

They would know that facilities are being cut down everywhere; that Library newsrooms are being closed down and the Health Service eroded, in the name of economy, and the quality of life diminished in every way, with pensioners always on the dirty end.

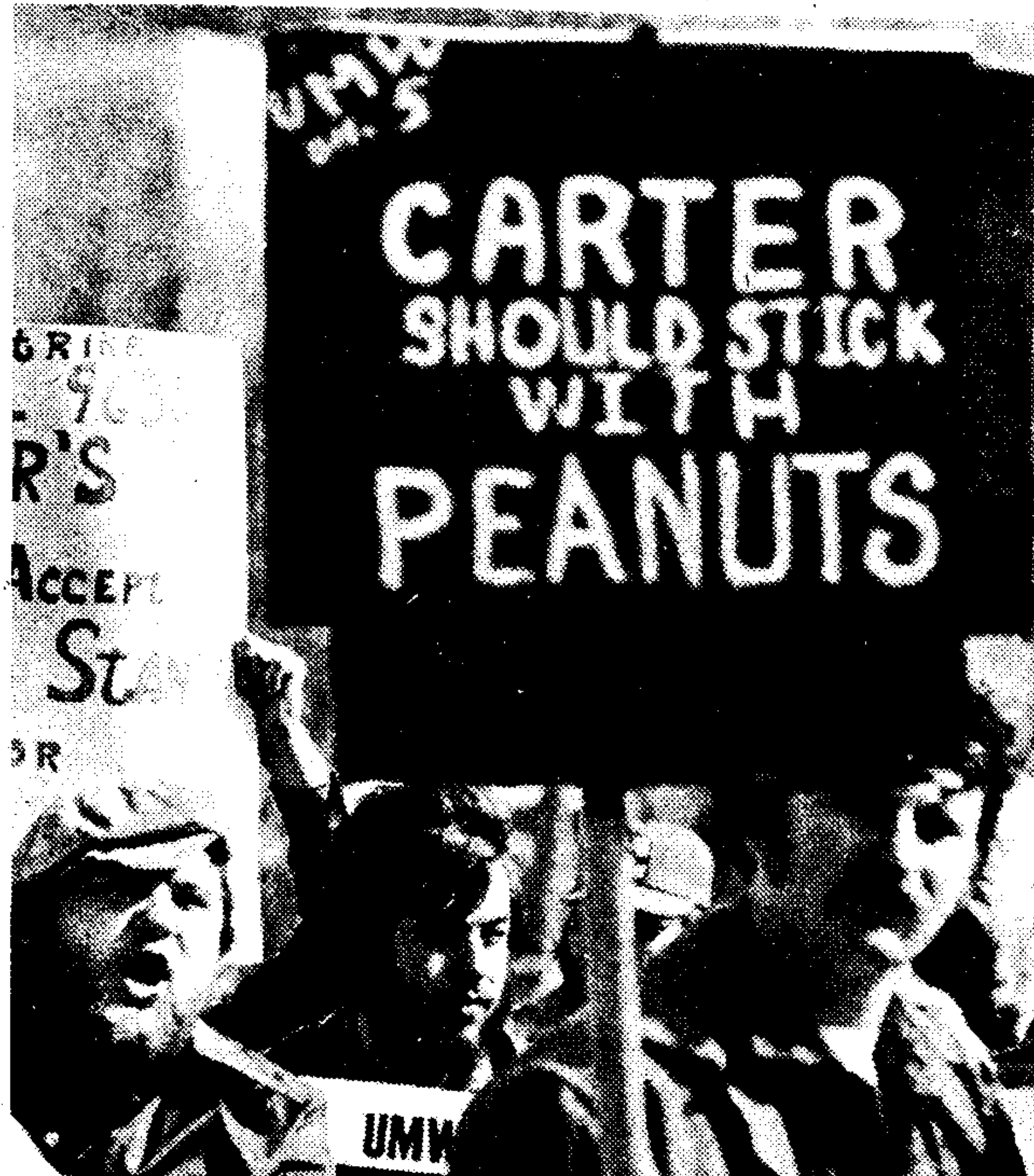
It is of little use to talk of "an active approach to treatment and rehabilitation" while elderly people are waiting for years for replacement hip joint operations, and Liverpool heart sufferers are hoping for charity from private medicine.

Only when the means of creating wealth are owned by the people and used for the people, can youth grow happily into age, and leisure and tranquillity be enjoyed along with self-respect, by all ages.



PHOTO: Mark Rusher, IFL

Pensioners fight the closure of the EGA



To break from Democrats was the central issue of the strike

The test of this line and whether it is to be implemented in a reformist or revolutionary way will be to see whether the SWP now begins to fight in practice for the organisation of elected workers' committees within the mines, within the steel plants, and factories to fight for the open the books demand.

Secondly, while the SWP has placed increasing verbal emphasis on the demand for a Labor Party, this has remained on an abstract, propaganda level.

The SWP continues to stand

collection of material aid such as food and money which were vital for the survival of the strike.

Necessary

Arnold Miller understood how important the money was. He sat on it while the rank and file of the UMWA battled on for 110 days without pay.

Canned goods and dollar donations though not a complete political answer to miners' problems were necessary to keep the strike going.

Demands for strike action

Harrison reduces Marxism to debates with Labour 'lefts'

DAVID WHITFIELD reviews "Marxist Economics for Socialists—A Critique of Reformism" by John Harrison, published by Pluto Press, paperback £2.40.

'Politics is the concentrated expression of economics'.

This motto from Lenin, tacked on at the front of Harrison's book has a savage irony in such a context.

Here economic analysis is not so much concentrated into revolutionary politics as dissipated into milk-and-water generalisations.

A former Trotskyist, Harrison now slowly boils up Marx's economics in a private laboratory until they are transformed into useless gas which is absorbed by the poisonous atmosphere of reformism.

This 'Critique of Reformism' falls into three main sections. In the first half, Harrison provides an exposition of 'The Social Relations of Commodity Production', and in the second approaches the relationship between 'Capitalism and the Productive Forces', by offering an analysis of capitalist crises, and by criticising the analyses of reformists.

Presentation

Minor details apart, the first section gives a valuable presentation of the central elements of Marxist economics.

Writing simply and concisely, Harrison explains the nature of commodity production and expounds the law of value, before moving on to show what distinguishes capitalism from simple commodity production.

After exposing the wage-form and the origin of profit, he deals with the ways in which the economic structure of capitalism affects the whole of social life.

In themselves—and even more as an introduction to reading 'Capital'—these pages make a very useful contribution to the political development of the labour movement in Britain.

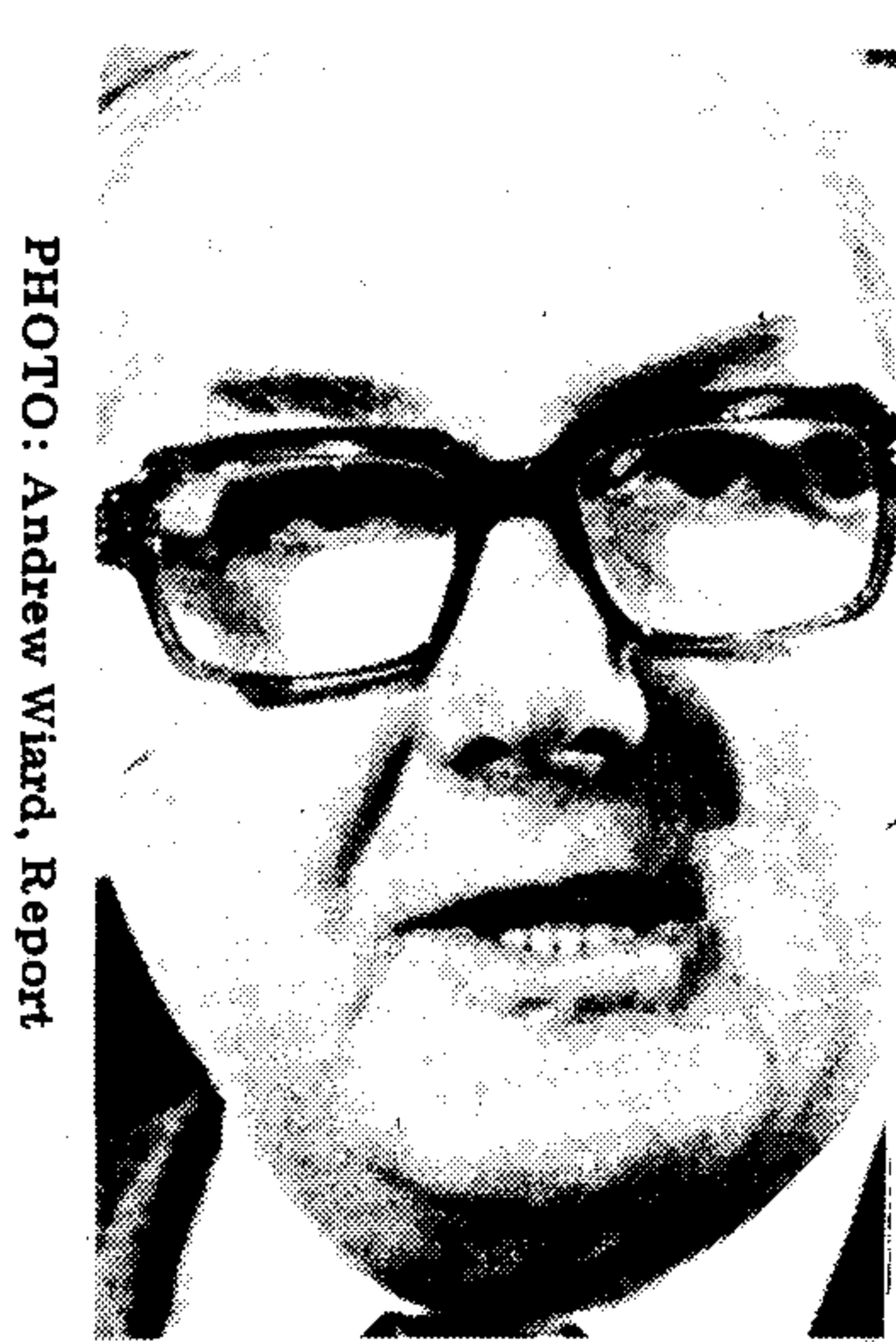
If they had been published separately, we could have welcomed them enthusiastically, despite all the obvious limitations of such a project.

Erratic

But from here on down, Harrison pilots his readers like a drunk but self-confident tobogganist, heading blindly for burial in a vast bank of snow. The course may be erratic, but the destination is all too certain.

Firstly, he gives some account of the early and historically progressive phase of capitalism.

Then come two chapters on 'Rotten Capitalism' and 'Capitalism Since the War', where Harrison pits his own 'Marxist' analysis against the positions of representative



Callaghan

reformists.

We have many minor points and fundamental disagreements with the analysis put forward here of capitalist crisis in general and the current crisis in particular.

But these pale into insignificance before the grotesque enormity of Harrison's approach to reformism.

Significantly, the emphasis of these last two chapters is on the writings of three prominent reformists—Anthony Crosland, Stuart Holland and Eduard Bernstein—and in the last case, again, the theoretical rather than the practical refutations of Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky.

Battle of ideas

The tone is set by the reference to "a debate which took place around the turn of the century about the limits to capitalism's progressive role".

This battle of ideas was the historic struggle between revisionism and revolutionary socialism which centred in the German Social Democracy with Bernstein and Luxemburg as its main protagonists.

Luxemburg herself was quite clear as to the importance of the 'debate':

"In the controversy with Bernstein and his followers, everybody in the Party



Lenin

ought to understand clearly it is not a question of this or that method of struggle, or the use of this or that set of tactics, but of the very existence of the Social-Democratic movement."

Although Bernstein's ideas, his full-blown revisionism, were rejected by the party, it was at this period that the German Social Democracy did cease to exist as a revolutionary movement.

Collaboration

The opportunist current on which Bernstein was able to float became a great sea of class collaboration in 1914 with the vote of the party's deputies in the Reichstag for war credits.

At one level, of course, the battles within the German Social Democracy can be seen as a 'debate', but to concentrate on this formal aspect is to fail utterly in understanding their historical content, and the lessons which such struggles hold for revolutionaries today.

Harrison treats reformism as being essentially a set of ideas—wrong ideas which are to be fought out in a debate.

But ideas are not the essence of reformism, they are its expression. Reformism developed as the result of the massive political pressure brought to bear on the political growth of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie.

At every level it is a deformity of the revolutionary consciousness and independence of the working class.

Betrayal

The degeneration of the German Social Democracy was the first great triumph of reformism over revolutionary socialism, and that tradition lives on today within the parties of the Second 'Socialist' International—the international of class collaboration and betrayal to which Callaghan, Schmidt, Golda Meir and other notable agents of imperialism belong.

In this unparalleled history of treachery there is of course a real continuity—reformists use the same political arguments to justify their sellouts and their attacks on the working class.

But to present this history as an essay in the history of ideas is at best political naivety.

Conditions

As historical materialists, Marxists do not approach political movements in the one-sided manner of academic abstraction.

We analyse the way in

which they develop from specific historical conditions the way in which they spring from the living struggle of class forces and how they act to influence the development of that struggle.

Such a method is alien to Harrison's 'Critique of Reformism', and this is most fully evident in the section on the present-day reformism of the British Labour Party.

Opposing his own analysis of the current crisis of imperialism to texts by Anthony Crosland ('The Future of Socialism') and a theoretician of the Labour 'left', Stuart Holland ('Strategy for Socialism' and 'The Socialist Challenge'), Harrison is easily able to make many correct points of criticism.

But these debating points are contained within a very definite political method. A concise statement of this position is best left to Harrison himself:



Schmidt

"Regardless of the motivations of particular individuals, right reformism embodies directly anti-working class policies whereas left reformism represents an attempt to defend workers' interests, albeit an ultimately misguided one.

"While right reformism should be treated with outright hostility by socialists of all persuasions, left reformism should be approached in a spirit of fraternal if unrelenting criticism".

And this astounding announcement of doublethink comes from a self-styled 'Marxist', a 'revolutionary'!

Anyone half-acquainted with the role of the Labour 'lefts' today must wonder how Harrison can justify such a thoroughly mystified piece of political 'analysis'.



Luxemburg

The answer is really quite simple. Harrison is able to take the 'lefts' at face value by following their own time-honoured method—divorcing their ideas and their words from their actions, their role in the class struggle.

It is no accident that the record of the Labour Party in government since 1974 is glossed over in two easy paragraphs.

An examination of left reformism in practice would be inconvenient to Harrison's thesis, and is wisely left alone.

He fails to mention such trivial facts as the Labour leadership's formation of a coalition with the Liberals, its imperialist role in Ireland and southern Africa, its use of troops to scab on strikes and wholesale strategy of strengthening the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state—surely worth a line or two.

But he also neglects to show any instance of how Tony Benn and his supporters around the Tribune newspaper have 'opposed' these vicious attacks on the working class.

It is not the purity of the 'lefts' socialist conscience which concerns workers but their actions—the leadership they give to the class.



Benn

The 'lefts' may not have attacked the working class so directly as the right wing, but at every stage they have betrayed workers by their capitulations, abstentions, evasions and fine 'socialist' words.

Objectively, they act as a cover for the right wing, shielding its atrocities with their energetic and fervent speechifying.

The root of Harrison's distortion of the reality of 'left' social democracy is not hard to unearth. Consistently, political ideas are divorced from the material conditions of history, the reality of the class struggle.

The refusal to fight for revolutionary political leadership of the working class breeds its own corollary and justification—reformism is not the political method of bureaucratic leadership, but a set of wrong and sometimes misguided wrong ideas.

The reform of reformism is the ultimate and inevitable "solution".

Opportunity

Of course Harrison advises no such course explicitly. As he says:

"The slump has confirmed Marxist prognoses of crisis. Reformism's inability to offer a realistic way forward has weakened its political hold on the working class.

"The opportunity exists for perhaps the first time for a generation of winning large sections of the labour movement to a revolutionary socialist perspective".

Blank sheets

Aroused by this stirring proclamation, the reader eagerly turns the page—only to encounter 'Notes and References'... 'Guide to Further Reading' 'Bibliography'... 'Index'... and three blank sheets.

What is the 'revolutionary' conclusion of this 'Critique of Reformism'?

That we should all rush off to place our orders for *Socialist Challenge* and *The Leveller*, before writing letters of 'fraternal if unrelenting criticism' to the pages of *Tribune*?



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Harrison offers no political alternative. There is not even a faint glimmer of suggestion as to what political programme can be opposed to reformism in the vital fight for the leadership of the working class, not even the flimsy shred of one policy.

The abstract ideological confrontation is apparently sufficient unto itself—and presumably considered sufficient for the needs of the proletariat.

Waving a red flag in the privacy of your own room is a futile if rather pathetic gesture, and balancing on barricades is a notoriously tricky operation that cannot be sustained for long.

In a spirit of unrelenting if fraternal criticism, we urge John Harrison to step down on one side or the other while he still has the choice.

IN REVIEW

The thriller that unmasks the capitalist crisis

'Tell me, Dr. Hitchcock, what do you think of the future of the capitalistic system?' As I said, Yamani had a versatile mind.

'It is extremely precarious.'

'I agree. But tell me your reasons for thinking so . . .'

It is not often that international best-selling novels contain lengthy discourses on the instability and insoluble contradictions of capitalism.

But Paul E. Erdman's latest book, *The Crash of '79*, actually centres its attention on the developing economic crisis and the implications of imperialist policies in the Middle East, to produce a gripping narrative.

While Erdman's previous smash hit *The Billion Dollar Killing* based its plot on high level manipulation of paper currency in relation to gold, *The Crash of '79* is a story conducted at government level, examining the material motive forces behind the US imperialist regime, the semi-feudal despotism in Saudi Arabia, and the vicious CIA-installed dictatorial rule of the Shah of Iran, and drawing from these sources the basis of its plot.

Ailing economy

The narrator, banker Bill Hitchcock, is hired by the Saudi Arabian government to undertake a massive programme for recycling oil revenue in order to prop up the ailing US economy, and thus guarantee American military backing for the Saudi regime.

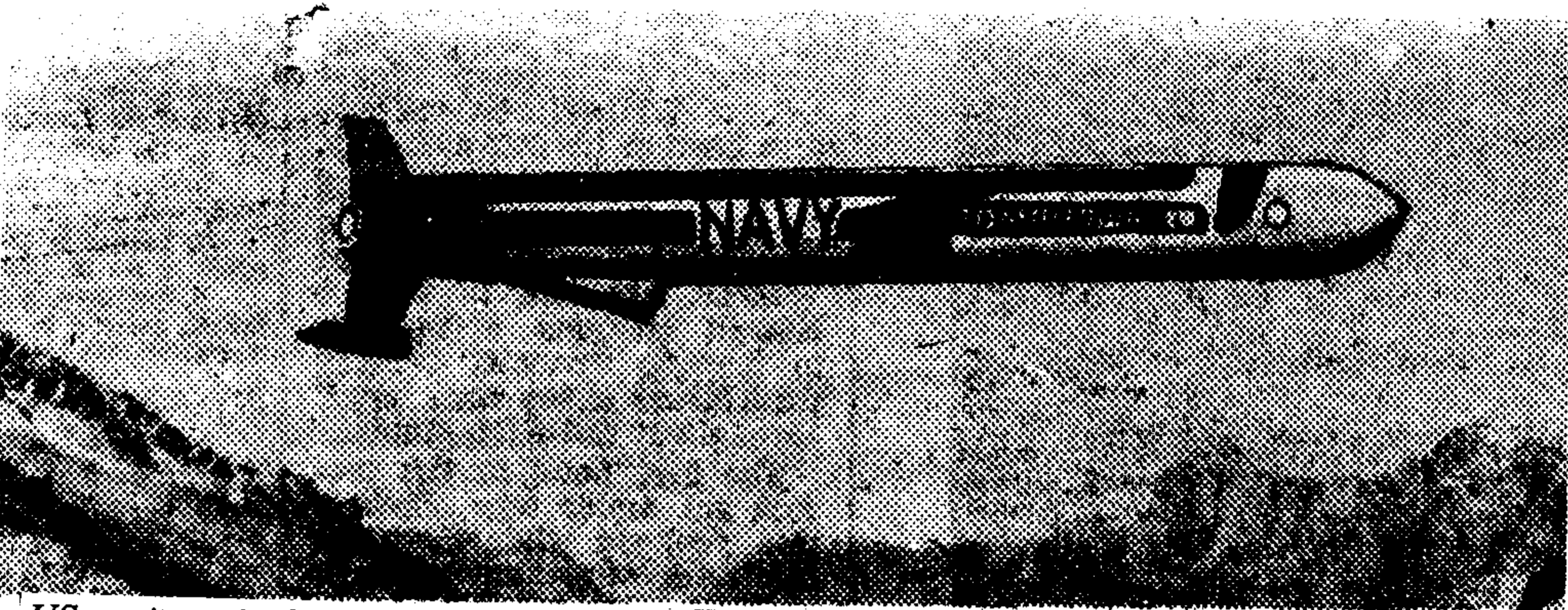
Meanwhile in Iran the Shah lays plans to acquire and to use nuclear weapons alongside his already vast battery of sophisticated military hardware and his colossal army in a bid to seize the Saudi oilfields and thus control the whole Gulf area.

This involves detailed planning of ways and means to obtain quantities of plutonium from Iranian nuclear power plants, and advanced scientific know-how from the supposedly "neutral" Swiss government, which has developed its own defensive nuclear shield.

The most contrived aspect of the plot of Erdman's novel is his attempt to link these two parallel plots together through the romantic relationship between banker Hitchcock and the daughter of the Swiss nuclear scientist hired by the Shah to make his bombs.

Authentic

In almost every other respect the plot is startlingly authentic—though the economic analysis is hardly surprisingly, *not* based on Marx's tenet of labour as the source of surplus value under capitalism.



US cruise missile—US armaments have been supplied in huge quantities to Iran as imperialism's policeman in the Middle East



The Hiroshima bomb

The working relationship between the major US banks and the government is tellingly described in a two-page account showing the role of "a very closely knit old-boy net" of top bankers' nominees in "keeping the world safe for American capitalism in the post-war era" through direct governmental control.

Banker Hitchcock concludes:

"I had always been highly sceptical about any 'conspiracy' theories of history. You know, the stuff about the Rockefeller, the Rothschilds, the old boys at Morgan Stanley, First Boston, Lehman Brothers and a few other places like that being really in control of America and thus the world, through their control of the world's only really big capital market . . . But by the time I was middle-aged, I had become less sceptical".

And indeed as the story unfolds Erdman skilfully and convincingly sketches in the mechanisms through which the interests of the capitalist class and its top leaders both create

and then respond to economic crisis, manipulating the puppet figures of bourgeois democracy in the elected governments.

In addition he points to the chronic contradictions faced by US capitalism, and in particular the banks:

"Their problem lay in both sides of the balance sheet. On the asset side, where the loans and investments of a bank are listed, their situation was bad enough to give an honest bank examiner a case of cardiac arrest, even though it is generally considered extremely bad form to drop dead in a bank.

"For at least 25 percent—one quarter—of the assets of the top fifteen banks in the United States were worthless.

They were carried on the books at full value, of course. But they were simply not there. They represented loans and investments that had gone down the drain, totally and irrevocably".

Fictional assets

In a six-page analysis, banker Hitchcock convincingly lists real

JOHN LISTER reviews "The Crash of '79" by Paul E. Erdman, published in paperback by Sphere, price 95p.

estate, tanker fleets, giant loans to gaint bankrupt corporations, loans to bankrupt underdeveloped nations and growing holdings in bonds of bankrupt US state and city administrations as the fictional assets of the banks.

And he goes on to point out the crisis on the liabilities side, emphasising that:

"You can have all the bad loans in the world, as a bank; as long as nobody knows it, they will keep putting money in your bank . . . As any banker can tell you, no bank ever went belly up because of bad loans on its books. What kills banks is a shortage of liquidity—ready cash—to pay off doubters when they appear at the door".

The novel builds on this conception of immediate and impending crisis, and imagines a move by Saudi Arabia to prop up this rickety structure by shifting investment from Europe to the USA and unilaterally lowering the price of US oil imports in order to restore the competitive advantage of American capital against Europe and Japan.

But into this scheme intrudes an internecine struggle within the Saudi ruling clique, and the Shah, with his desperate

plan to stabilise his power by annexing the much larger Saudi oilfields, and his willingness to use his huge armoury to do so.

Iran is accurately described as imperialism's chosen bulwark against communism in the Middle East, with military capacity in some areas exceeding that of the USA.

In two pages Erdman catalogues the formidable air, sea and ground forces and weaponry placed at the disposal of the Shah, by international imperialism.

It is but a small step further to envisage the addition of small scale nuclear bombs to an already lethal force in order to provide a plausible basis for the Saudi-Iranian war which provides the climax to the novel itself.

The war finds the US almost unable militarily to prevent the Shah's initiative, and triggers a huge financial crash, in which international bankers and US small savers together engage in a mad dash to withdraw their holdings from the US banks and corporations.

The run on the dollar and on the banks is staved off by a wholesale turn to the printing press to produce billions of inflationary paper dollars—reviving the horrors of Germany in the 1920s.

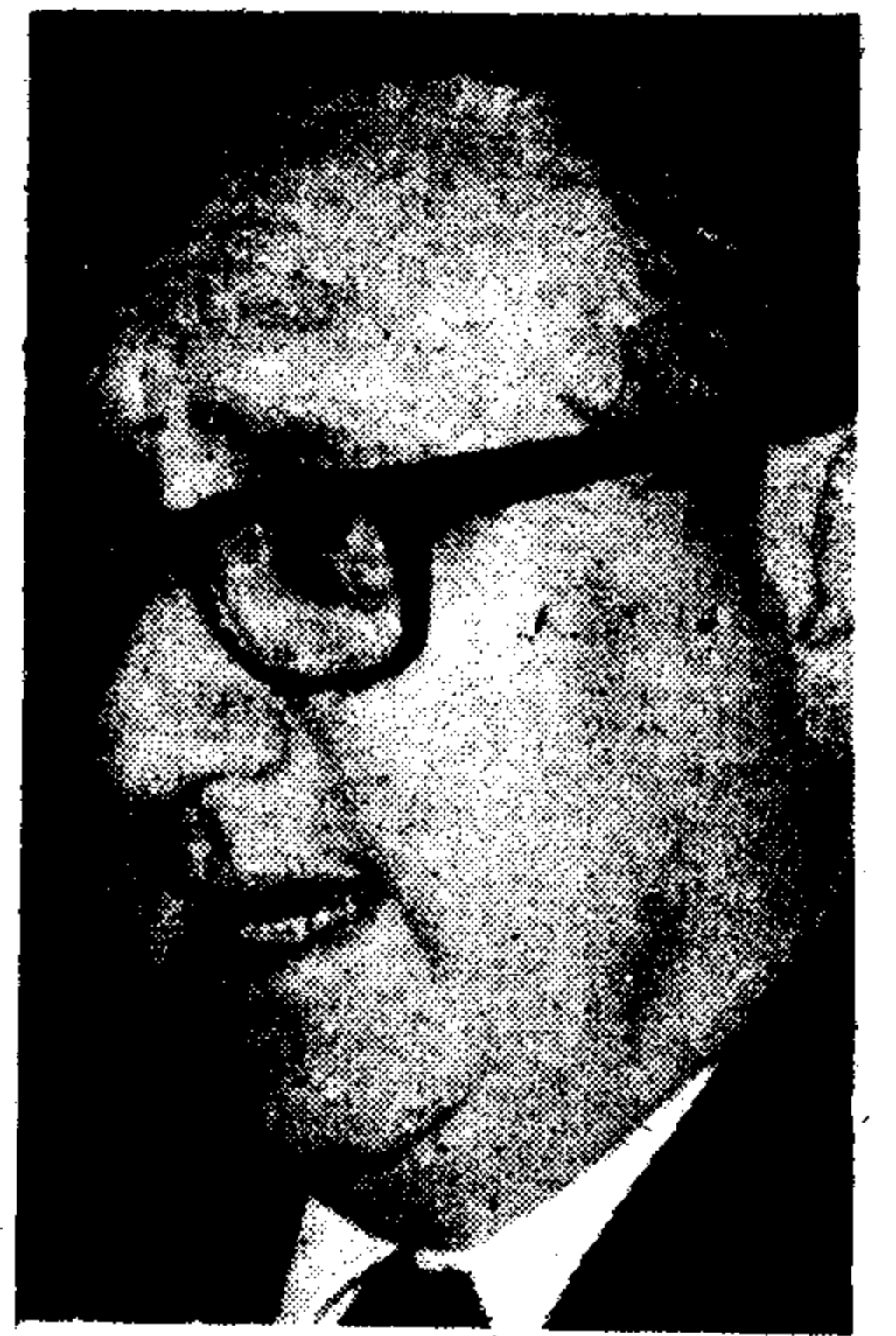
Nuclear bombs are dropped on the Saudi oilfields, cutting off half the world's oil supply:

"The world was now forced to live with a bank system that lay in ruins, with monetary chaos, and with the prospect of having to survive on half its former oil reserves. The lights, everywhere, gradually began to flicker and fade".

Erdman's novel is written from the standpoint of a defender of capitalism, in the

guise of a banker who is anything but a revolutionary

Consistently socialist revolution is depicted as a threat even more unpleasant than the effects of the capitalist crisis.

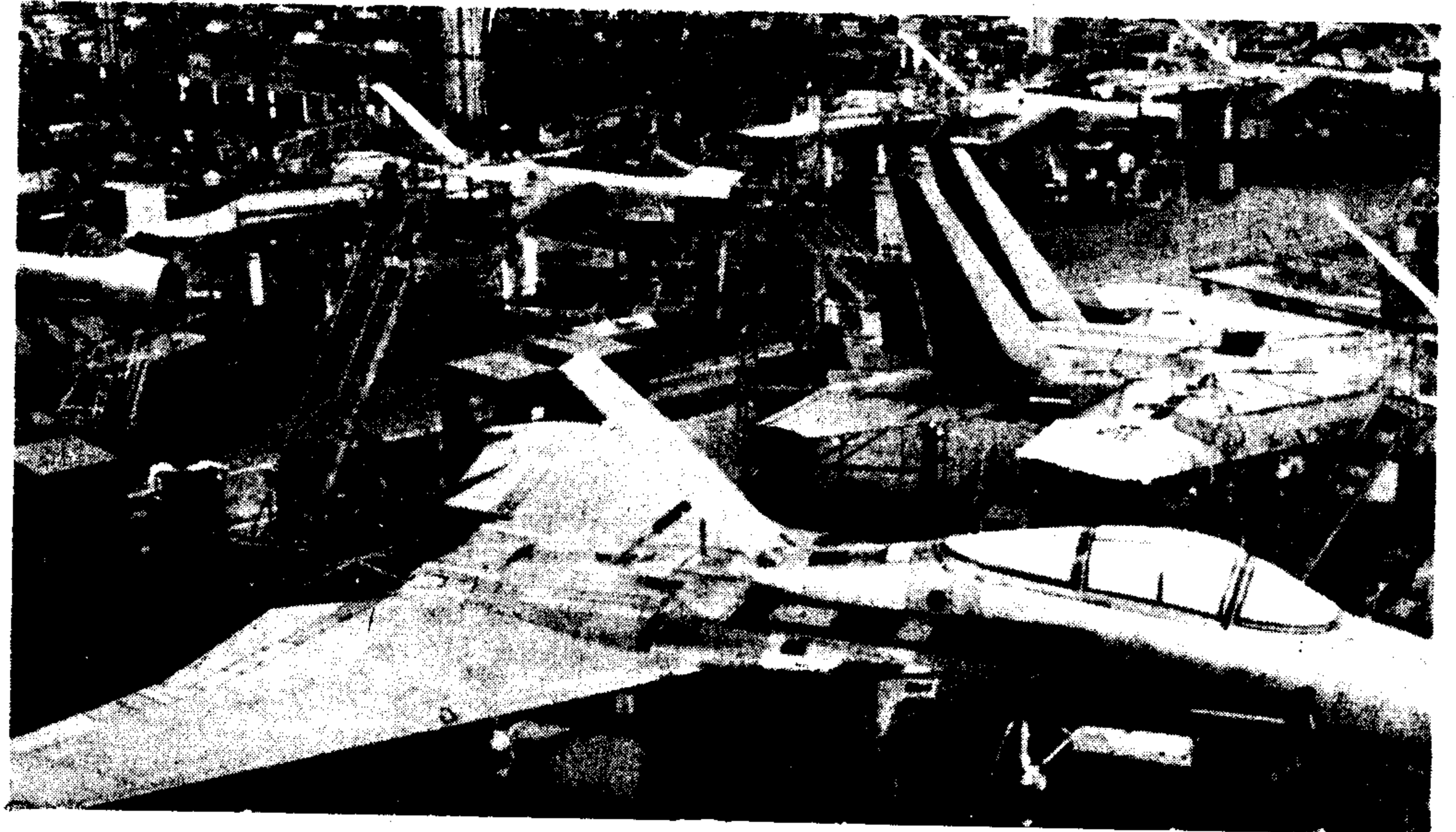


"It might be said that Nixon was helped both into and out of the White House by the biggest bond lawyer in Wall Street annals, John Mitchell. And Jerry Ford was given little choice but to delegate half of his Presidency to the leading alumnus of the Rockefeller training camp, the good Herr Doktor Kissinger. Finally the Coach himself, Nelson Rockefeller, took leave of absence from the Big Apple to make sure Jerry did not screw up the other half." (p86)

The working class is referred to only as an obstacle to certain capitalist strategies.

But in stripping away illusions in the stability of capitalism, or in the possibility of a "rational" solution to the capitalist crisis, and pointing to the real contradictions faced by imperialism in its death agony, the book offers an entertaining antidote to the glamourised banalities of contemporary 'spy' and crime fiction.

Despite being billed as "The No. 1 International Superseller" *The Crash of '79* is worth reading.



US jet fighters on a production line

'Communists' against revolution

'Communists' Against Revolution, containing the important essay 'The Theory of Structural Assimilation' by Tim Wohlforth is the book on post-war Stalinism that Mandel and Healy would not discuss.

Make sure you get your copy—available at £1.75 plus 20p p&p from: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

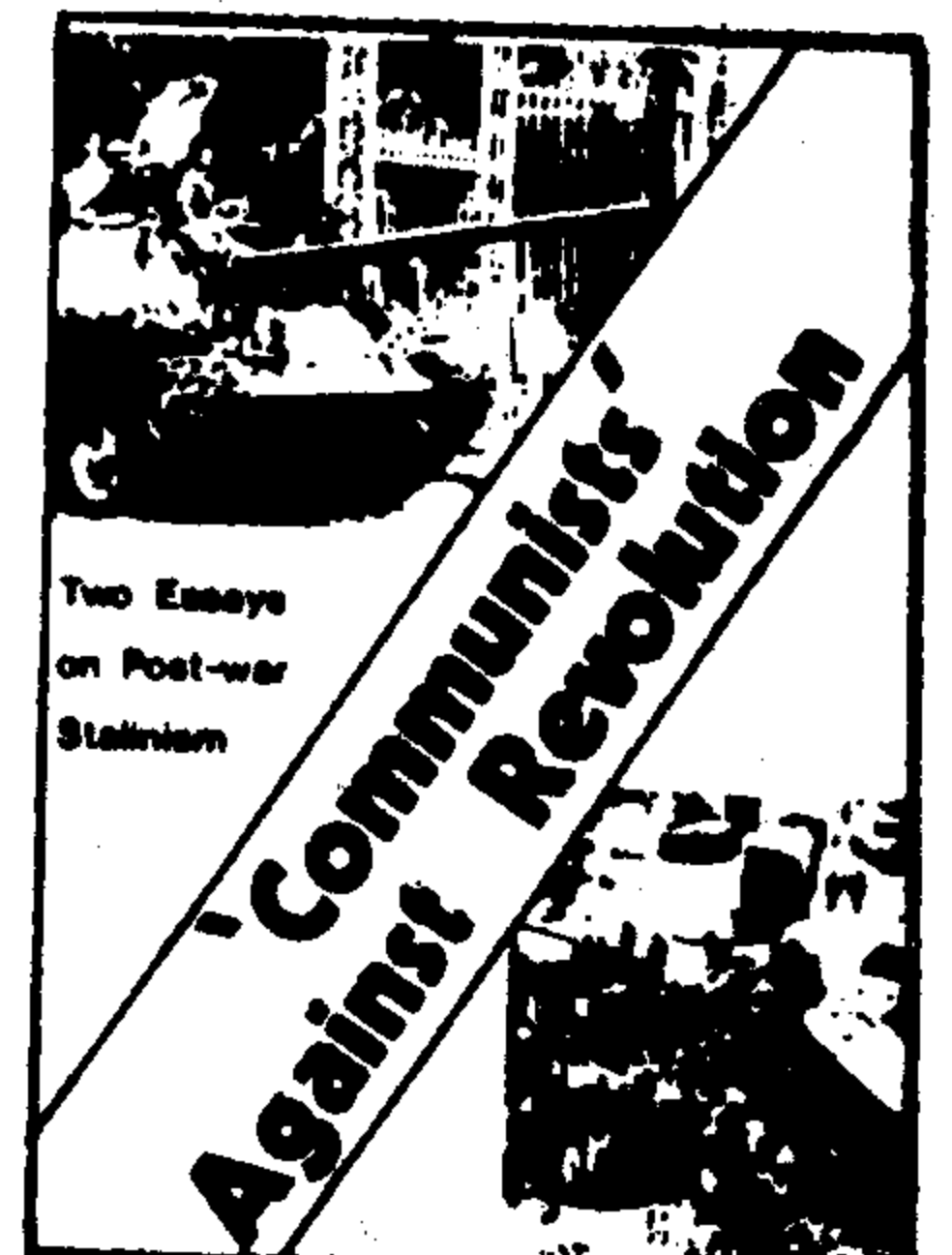
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WSL



The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation which fights to build a revolutionary leadership that can politically prepare and mobilise the working class for the taking of state power and the construction of a socialist society.

The fight of the Workers Socialist League in Britain is a part of the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution, founded in 1938 under the leadership of Leon Trotsky. The basis of this fight is the theory and practice of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.

The Workers Socialist League puts forward a programme to defend the interests of the working class today against the attacks of capitalism in crisis. The aim of the programme is the independent political mobilisation of the working class towards the overthrow of capitalism and its state machine in the capitalist countries.

In the workers states which must be defended against imperialism the task is the political revolution to overthrow the parasitic bureaucracies which repress the working class and endanger the gains that have been made.

The fight for socialism is impossible without the fight to expose at every step the misleaders of the working class: the Labour and trade union leaders (both 'right' and 'left'), the Communist Party Stalinists (both 'Eurocommunist' and 'pro-Moscow'), the petty bourgeois nationalists who derail anti-imperialist struggles in the underdeveloped countries and those groupings which pay lip service to Trotskyism whilst rejecting its basic methods and programme.

Only through such a struggle can the working class find a road out of the capitalist crisis—falling living standards, unemployment, denial of basic rights, colonial repression as in Ireland, and the threats of fascism and war.

For more details of the policies, programme and work of the Workers Socialist League, fill in the form below.

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Send to: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Social workers picket

Bethnal Green Hospital, already under occupation, had pickets on its front gates this week—this time not manned by hospital workers but by the social workers striking in Tower Hamlets.

Six hospitals in the area are being picketed due to the activities of non-union medical social workers.

About 200 social workers have been out since Monday 21 August as part of the fight for their regrading claim.

At present the demand is for the basic right to local negotiations—steadfastly rejected by the Labour-controlled authority since NALGO adopted the policy earlier this year.

Many social workers take home as little as £40 a week—a fact which lies at the basis of crippling staff shortages and inadequate services.

Messages of support and donations to: NALGO Social Services Strike Committee, 13, Wellington Way, London E3.

Pickets protect Bethnal Green hospital

Pickets at Bethnal Green Hospital have thwarted several attempts made by management over the past weeks to begin running down the hospital into a small geriatric unit.

Earlier in the occupation, the delivery of special geriatric beds to the hospital was prevented by pickets, and during last week a building contractor was stopped from beginning structural alterations to the surgical wards.

Also, in the casualty department, which has been occupied since July 1, the administration cut off the telephones, but these were reconnected immediately following pressure from the hospital stewards.

The occupation is now at a crucial stage in maintaining Bethnal Green as a full general hospital.

Equipped

Although the authorities have succeeded in stopping the casualty and operating theatres from being used, these departments are still fully equipped and could be reopened at any time.

Also, the surgical wards, which are now empty, are being guarded by the occupation and all attempts at conversion of the wards into geriatric wards—such as those mentioned above—are being strongly resisted by the pickets.

It is of central importance that the surgical beds are kept for surgical patients alone, otherwise the fight to reopen the theatres will be severely weakened.

It is vital that this fight is maintained and supported. Res-

olutions must be passed through union branches—particularly Hospital branches, to pledge support on the picket line.

Also the lead must be given by Bethnal Green stewards in calling for London-wide strike action in the health service against any further moves to run down the hospital, and for the re-opening of the casualty and theatres.

nearby Mile End hospital is next on the list for closure—and throughout a number of areas of London.

Long term plan

In last week's *Socialist Press* there was an outline of the longer term plans to close St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd., London—another large general hospital with accident and emergency facilities.

This vicious and well-planned series of attacks can only be fought on a London-wide basis.

The Workers Socialist League has worked consistently to build an all-London joint shop stewards committee in the health service which can co-ordinate the fight against hospital closures.

London-wide strike

A strong all-London committee would be in the position to organise London-wide strike action amongst health workers in defence of threatened hospitals, whilst at the same time leading a fierce campaign to force the trade union leadership to give their full backing to this action on a material level.

It is only action and organisation of this sort which will re-open the casualty and theatres at Bethnal Green and provide a strong lead in the fight against hospital closures and the cuts in the health service.



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Cuts minister Ennals

The running down of Bethnal Green by the authorities is part of a general plan of savage cuts in the London health service both in this part of East London—where the casualty department at the

Officials bow to scabs

A management-backed delegation of scabs to lobby the AUEW District Office last week brought a dramatic sell-out of the struggle for the reinstatement of a sacked shop steward.

The steward, Gordon Parsons, had been actively organising for the AUEW among the employees at Milthorpe International in Wakefield, and was sacked for reporting an industrial accident to the union.

Management laid on a coach to enable a contingent of scabs to travel to the AUEW offices where union officials not only listened sympathetically to their case, but followed their advice and withdrew official backing for the strike.

The refusal of union bureaucrats even to organise workers into the unions is clearly spreading from Desoutters and Grunwick throughout the labour movement.

Support Sandersons week of action

The strike for union recognition and reinstatement of a sacked shop steward at Sandersons Forklift Trucks is now in its sixteenth month.

The strikers have shown tremendous strength and their spirits remain amazingly high, but the strike is destined to end in the same manner as Grunwicks unless the TGWU national leadership are forced to step up the action.

The picketing and limited blackings such as that by workers at Fords, Basildon, which the strikers themselves organised, is having a crippling effect on production at the factory.

Step up action

The main task now is to force the TGWU to step up the action so that support is no longer scattered and spasmodic. The factory owner, Roy

Sanderson, is obviously cast in the most reactionary mould.

Apart from the Forklift factory he is a major landowner in the area, an agent for Toyota forklifts and Crown pallet trucks and lives in a brand new fourteen bedroomed house with an airstrip behind it.

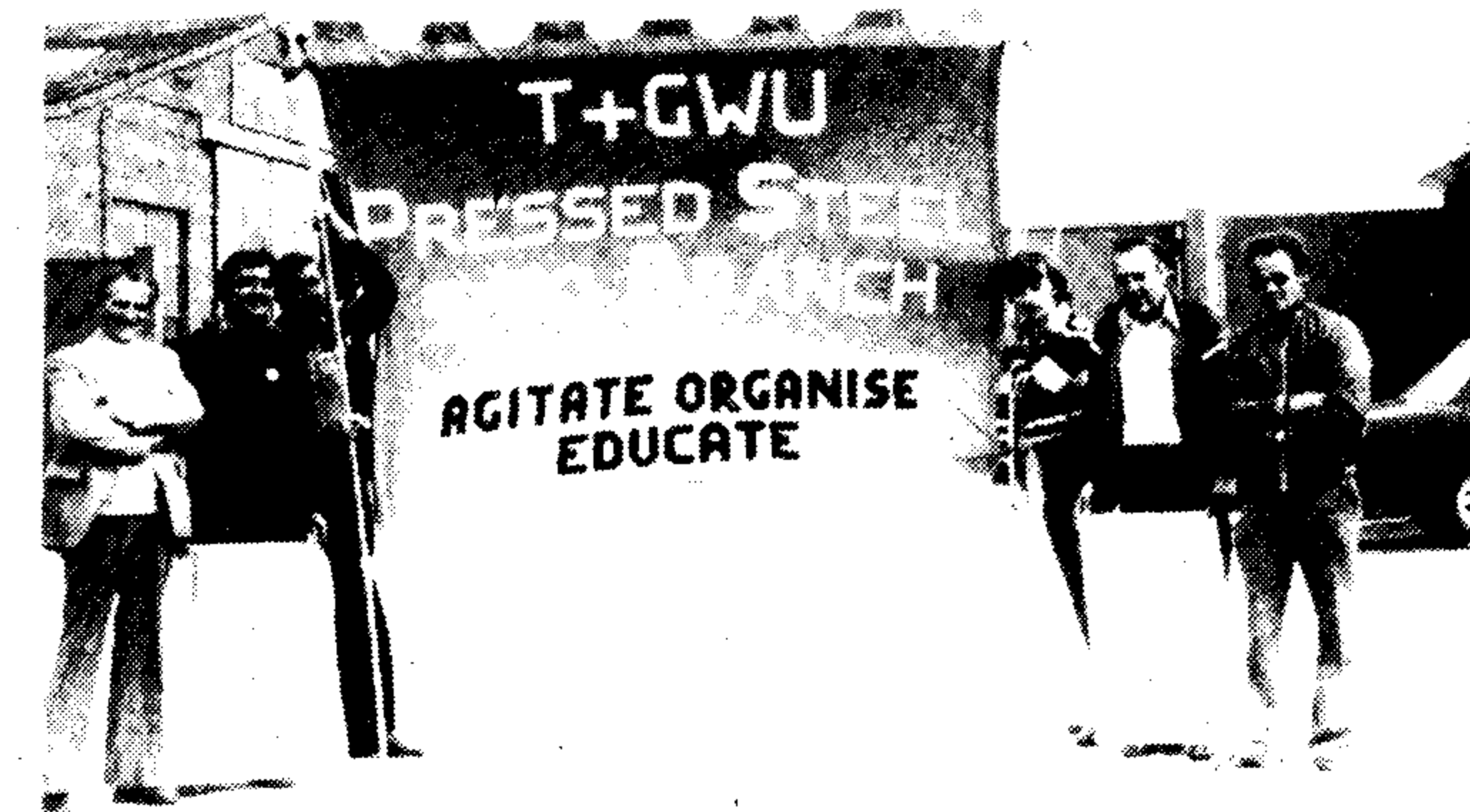
After initially cooperating with ACAS and allowing them to conduct a ballot of the workforce, which went in favour of the union, he took up his real position and called a meeting of the workforce to tell them they could have a union, but if they did he would sack them.

Faced with this type of opposition the TGWU should be using all its power to gain a victory, but up to now union officials have acted abysmally, advising them to cut the size of the picket, even telling some that they should get part-time jobs.

Lump sum

Sacked steward, Phil Gillat's case has even been upheld by an Industrial Tribunal and a lump sum of £2,500 paid over to him by Sanderson as compensation.

Whilst not aiding the fight for reinstatement, since these bodies have no powers to get people their jobs back, the money carries severe dangers, since it throws a shadow over the struggle by putting a weapon into the hands of the



Support on the picket from Cowley car workers

bureaucracy and risks splitting the unity of the strikers themselves.

The only principled way to deal with this now would be for the money to be put immediately into the strike fund to assist the financing of the struggle.

Requests for a levy to finance the strike have been consistently refused at Regional and National level.

And the inevitable confusion has arisen over the date of a week of action originally called for 21-25 August, but put back to 11-15 September at the request of Moss Evans.

Evans has also given over responsibility for the strike to

Ron Todd, now TGWU National Organiser and formerly Secretary of the London Region.

However no hopes should be raised by this move. For the last four months before his promotion up the bureaucratic ladder, Todd presided over the Garners strike in Central London, where the issues are almost identical to Sandersons, not least in the adamant refusal of the full-time officials to organise the measures required for victory.

Every effort must now be made to make the mass picketing during the week of action a success and branches should be demanding intensification of backing plus the imposition of a levy.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING

"British Leyland and the Crisis in the Motor Industry"
Friday 15 September at 8.00pm
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DEFEND TELEPHONE

JOBS!

For a shorter working week on full pay!

UPW telephonists' representatives have been summoned to Loughborough this week in a bid to persuade them to sell thousands of jobs.

A special conference on new technology and productivity was ordered by UPW delegates to this year's annual conference, who threw out a scanty report drawn up by the Executive.

UPW leaders are seeking to reverse the conference decisions of 1975, 76 and 77, all of which declared that no trials on new equipment would be permitted until a shorter working week had been agreed for telephonists.

The report already rejected this year had been drawn up just three weeks before the annual conference. One delegate described it as being asked to buy a black box which wouldn't reveal its contents for two years.

Road show

The Executive Council of the UPW complied with the request for more information by collaborating with the Post Office to send a 'Roadshow' touring the country explaining the technology on management's terms. The Post Office paid overtime money to telephonists to see it, so anxious were they for acceptance of the new equipment and for trials to commence.

The Special Report for the Special Conference was not sent out to branches until July 14, allowing only seventeen days to call meetings and send in amendments by the August 1 deadline.

Amendments were not circulated until August 21 and the Conference itself, called in Bank Holiday week, excluded many delegates on holiday.

The main proposal is for the introduction of directories on microfiche (VDU screens) which will result in speed up. Exchanges are given approximately 56 seconds to handle an inquiry—with microfiche this will take 40 seconds, which means loss of posts and jobs.

Microfiche is only a stop gap for the Post Office which wants to introduce something much more revolutionary; Computerised Information Retrieval System (CIR) under which all entries will be on a computer.

Possible benefits

UPW EC have a three month trial to 'measure the possible benefits to the staff and the business'. They estimate that with full implementation a total of over 2,000 posts may be 'saved'.

With computerised directories and the viewdata (a UK Post Office invention which links the phone to the television) the Post Office eventually won't need directory operators—subscribers will be able to do this themselves from home or the office.

£100M is being spent on this project which could be launched in early 1979. Blackburn Tels, aware of the implications of CIR with viewdata, have tabled an amendment that the Post Office must not give public access to computer records.

This motion should be supported at this conference. However it fails to put forward a policy for opposing the destruction of directory operators in practice—a commitment to no loss of jobs or 'posts' and a drive for a policy of work-sharing on full pay.

The other major change the UPW leadership is backing is the introduction of Automatic Call Recording Equipment (ACRE) which will replace the ticket work at the switchboard.

Reduced

The equipment will reduce the need for the operator to refer to a file for routing details—the call details only need to be dialed once and can be used for both accounting and routing. It will also time calls and automatically release the call when

finished. It can also be used to assess staff levels based on the amount of work received in an exchange.

Although it will cut jobs and posts this system is a non-starter because it will be obsolete before its possible introduction in 1981. System X will see to that.

System X

A recent circular stated that the effect of the introduction of System X on telephone operating staff was 'speculative because no firm programme for the introduction of System X yet exists'. Yet it has been confirmed recently that the Post Office is geared up to start this project in some areas within the foreseeable future.

The effect on operating staff of this new technology is devastating: 80% of their traffic would disappear. Only one engineer out of six presently employed would survive to work on the new system and it should bring the UPW and the POEU together in a united fight. It will also attack postal jobs as the more information that can be transmitted in printed form through phone lines the less will be the need for it to be transported by mail workers.

Joint action

The POEU's recent industrial action would have been won with the UPW membership (who have had a policy of a shorter working week for over three years) fighting alongside.

Tom Jackson at conference this year was only prepared to act as a dead weight on the POEU. "If they get something we want something, there is no question about that", he said.

The policy of the UPW and the POEU should be:

- * No loss of jobs or posts
- * A shorter working week on full pay with the introduction

PHOTO: Andrew Wyard, Report



Right wing UPW leader Jackson

of new technology

* Substantial pay rises protected against inflation (instead of productivity carrots that will leave millions on the dole and low wages)

* End of business secrets within the Post Office and its

suppliers (recently £9M had to be paid back from BICC who operated a cartel with other cable manufacturers)

* No sell out by the Union bureaucracy of jobs and posts

Chrysler—still no call to nationalise

Last week brought fresh confirmation of the importance of the policy of fighting to 'open the books' at Chrysler, as argued for consistently by Socialist Press.

Chrysler senior stewards reported that there are secret government plans for reduction in the intended output of the new four-door Alpine.

The car was due to go into production late next year with a projected output of 130,000 a year.

The stewards claim that the real figure is 60,000.

The company claims the project is still in the planning stage and that no exact production figures could be revealed.

If the stewards' figures are correct, then hopes that the new car will lead to some 2,000 extra jobs at the Coventry plants will be squashed.

Treacherous

The stewards have demanded an immediate enquiry by the Department of Industry. This treacherous call would simply put the whole business into the hands of the capitalist state.

Militants in all the Chrysler plants should call now for the setting up of elected committees to organise an investigation of all Chrysler's future plans.

At the first joint union meeting of national officials and senior stewards since the Peugeot-Citroen takeover of Chrysler's European plants was announced, a four-point plan was agreed.

The plan places four conditions on the takeover of Chrysler UK.

* The British government to have an equity stake in the Peugeot-Citroen group.

* A seat on the Board for a 'British representative'.

* A policy of 'no closure or loss of jobs' in the existing Chrysler UK plants.

* A tougher planning agreement to replace the one with Chrysler.

The meeting rejected demands for a BL takeover of Chrysler UK and nationalisation of the company.

The attacks on nationalisation have now also come from the Executive of the AUEW and from Moss Evans of the TGWU.

In other words these people who argue within Leyland that it is necessary to maintain competitiveness against other capitalist manufacturers are making sure that this competition is maintained so that they can play one group of workers against another.

It is no wonder that Chrysler workers wouldn't find anything very attractive in the Leyland combine committee's call for the takeover of Chrysler by Leyland, considering the same combine committee that put this forward is central to the "participation" speed-up schemes and generally supports all the attacks of Leyland management.

Tying Chrysler in with only Leyland also makes it clear that this would be nationalisation of only part of the industry—leaving the components firms to cream off all the profits—and continued competition from Fords.

By even making the call, the Leyland combine recognise this but won't go the whole way to challenge capitalism's requirements by calling for the nationalisation of the whole motor and components industry without compensation and under workers' management.

IMMEDIATELY after a 200-strong mass picket mobilised on the gates of the Hickson and Welch chemical plant in Castleford had demonstrated the ability of strikers to stop ASTMS and ACTS scabs, strike leaders demonstrated their determination to sell-out the strike.

Under cover of a change in the attendance bonus and the setting up of a "high powered committee" to discuss a productivity deal they moved in to obtain a return to work.

Strikers, who had seen the action as a fight for a wage increase in excess of Phase 4 limits, were incensed at this betrayal, though stewards argue that they have won "the right to negotiate" with management.

TGWU's SECRET DEAL TO CUT GARNERS PICKET LINES

As the strike at Garners Steak Houses this week enters its eighth month, support continues to flow in to the strikers.

During the week the numbers of tourists in Central London has diminished somewhat and the numbers entering the picketed restaurants has been reduced to a trickle.

The picketing has been maintained with some significant new support. On Thursday night 24 August, a large 20-strong delegation from the Executive Committee of the CPSA voted to come down to the picket line and they spent some hours covering a number of different restaurants.

Further afield, strike committee member M. Mahboob found widespread support for the strike when addressing a number of meetings of labour movement bodies in Scotland.

Communist party

Brother Mahboob visited, amongst others, leaders of the Communist Party in Scotland.

It is to be hoped that this will place pressure within that party to increase the very

limited levels of support which it has been giving to the strike up to now.

It is to be hoped also that the efforts of the Greater London Association of Trades Councils and its liaison committee will eventually yield more pickets and other support.

This week there was little sign of extra support from this quarter though we understand a circular has now been sent out to trades councils in the London area.

The Brent Trades Council delegation was conspicuous by its absence on Friday evening, 25 August.

The key body for winning support for the strike is still the Number 1 Regional Committee of the TGWU.

The limits that the bureaucrats are placing on their support is clear from the minutes of the meeting held earlier in the month, which are now being circulated.

The pressure being put on the TGWU leadership by the strike was clearly reflected in the discussion. The strike was called 'another Grunwick', 'a political issue' on which 'possibly some industrial action' would have to be taken by other groups of workers, particularly in the public supply sector'.

The meeting also heard references to a previous resolution that we give full support but were we giving enough?

The answer to this point time after time by Regional Organiser Les Shorter and Regional Secretary Sid Staden must have sounded like a broken record.

They said 'we are not getting the support of our members with the pickets', that 'there has not been much response from other branches', and 'our members were not giving the support'.

The reason for this is not the unwillingness of the members to fight, but the refusal of the bureaucrats to lead.

This refusal is shown clearly in the resolution that was passed by the meeting calling vaguely on trade groups 'to obtain support from their membership' without demanding any specific commitment.

Even the specific commitment of Regional Committee members to 'visit' the pickets on Tuesday or Wednesday evenings has not been carried out since the Regional Committee meeting.

Only the Building Trade Group has continued to send its regular delegation.

The biggest bombshell in the

Regional Committee minutes is the revelation of a secret agreement with the police 'that there should be a maximum of six pickets at an establishment at any one time'.

This secret agreement, which typifies the refusal of the bureaucrats to take the steps necessary to win the strike, has not been revealed to the strikers nor indeed any of the pickets.

The police have just been allowed to harrass pickets and pick off individuals without any serious opposition from the bureaucrats.

It is presumably this same agreement which lies behind the rather strange statement in an otherwise unspectacular Time Out article on 18 August that 'mass picketing has been ruled out'.

It is the stepping up of support for the strike, and not its diminution that will win it now.

It is open campaigning and not 'secret diplomacy' that will be the means to do this.

Support must now be built in branches for picketing at specific restaurants on particular nights.

The day of action on 30 September called for by the strike committee must gain support as wide as possible in the workers' movement, especially in TGWU Region 1.

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report



Demonstration on previous Garners Day of Action

SOCIALIST PRESS



Fords claim: watch your leaders!

Australian workers rise against Tory attacks

The vicious Tory government of Malcolm Fraser stands on the point of being overthrown by a massive upsurge of anger by the Australian working class.

But the leaders of the Labour Party, fearful of coming to power on an offensive they might not be able to contain, and the union leaders are struggling to divert the class opposition to Fraser into peaceful demonstrations and protests.

Fraser's government was brought to power after the Governor General exercised the historic right of British imperialism to dispense with bourgeois democracy and ordered Labour PM Whitlam out of office.

Fraser was elected in subsequent elections on the basis of promises that the government would reduce taxation, reduce state intervention and leave the capitalists to attack the working class unhindered.

Savage

The budget they introduced on August 15 is possibly the most vicious attack on the gains of the working class to be introduced in an advanced capitalist country since the war.

Income tax rose by 1.5%, a state levy on petrol brought a price jump of 16 cents per gallon and the state health insurance scheme (introduced by Whitlam) was promised with the axe.

Sharp tax rises were imposed on consumer goods, tobacco, beer, and spirits.

Old age pensions are only to be increased for those who subject themselves to the misery of

a means test.

Unemployment benefits, previously linked to inflation, will now only rise for those with unemployed dependents.

Trade war

At the same time the government, which had based itself on unfettered capitalism, introduced drastic trade war measures to protect the home grown capitalists against foreign competition.

The response of the working class was immediate. Dock workers in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide staged a 24-hour strike against the budget.

Demonstrators mobbed Fraser as he arrived at a Melbourne hotel for a business lunch, and 5,000 workers joined a Labour Party demonstration one week after the budget.

A breakaway section

attacked the Sydney stock exchange.

But the Labour Party and trade union leaders—who could command immediate support for a general strike to bring down the government—have shrunk back, terrified by the response.

Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union bureaucrats have called on the Australian Council of Trade Unions to organise only protest action against the budget.

But telephone and telex workers have already outstripped this timorous response. Members of the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association, facing a massacre of jobs over new technology, have banned repair work for the past four weeks.

Power

As other capitalists in other countries, have found to their

cost, this crucial sector have the power to threaten industrial production.

There are 12 hour delays on phone calls between towns, phone calls and telex messages out of the country have come to a virtual standstill and business has been seriously disrupted.

Anti-union act

Fraser responded by threatening to de-register the union—under the Australian equivalent of Heath's Industrial Relations Act, which would lead to a head on confrontation as the government moved in to freeze the assets of the union.

Fraser has also threatened to invoke a special clause against the union which could result in fines or imprisonment against the leadership.

The outright spirit of confrontation in which Fraser has approached the dispute has

allowed the union leadership small room for manoeuvre. Fraser has announced his determination to withstand 'black-mail' whatever the cost.

"If the union's recommendation is not overthrown the government will use all the resources available to it, and the powers available to the government are indeed considerable".

Fraser is himself facing a political crisis after the sacking of Reginald Withers (chiefly responsible for getting Fraser elected as head of the Liberal Party) for trying to influence electoral boundaries.

Withers' sacking was followed by that of Robert Dunstan, a Victoria state minister, who rang the Melbourne papers to protest that Fraser was killing the building industry and sacking his most loyal ministers.

"The man has gone mad. What does he want to be—the next Pope?"



Malcolm Fraser

The £20 increase and 35-hour week claim submitted by Ford workers last week indicates both the militancy of shop floor workers on wages and the dangers they face of betrayal at the hands of their leaders.

The claim if conceded would drive a coach and horses through Chancellor Healey's vicious 5% Phase 4 pay limits.

No panic

But Healey himself shows no sign of panic. At the weekend he referred sneeringly to last year's sell-out settlement by Ford union leaders, who abandoned a 34% claim to end up with a miserable 12.4%.

And union officials have again linked the Ford claim to the huge profits currently being amassed by this multi-national, rather than to the necessity to defend the living standards of the membership.

This version of the "special case" argument is designed as was last year's claim to ensure that any concessions won by Ford workers are confined to Ford alone and not used as the basis for more general claims throughout the motor industry



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard. Report

Hunger protest for PoW status

As we go to press the courageous Irish republican hunger striker Willie Gallacher is on the 48th day of his liquids-only fast in the barbaric Long Kesh concentration camp.

His father, Brendan

Gallacher has sent telegrams to both Irish Prime Minister Lynch and to the head of British imperialist repression, Labour leader James Callaghan in a desperate bid to secure a re-trial for Gallacher, who was framed in 1976 for the bombing of a British Legion Hall in Strabane. Willie Gallacher's hunger

strike began as a protest against brutal beatings by screws at Long Kesh, and has taken up the struggle by the 300 Republican victims of H Block in Long Kesh, who are demanding the restoration of prisoner of war status stripped from them by Labour's torture chiefs.

As a result of their refusal to wear prison clothing or do prison work—a sign of criminal status—the Republican prisoners are being held in brutal con-

ditions of indescribable filth and hardship.

Gallacher is reported to be in a state of severe weakness. His struggle against British imperialism must be supported by every self-respecting socialist and trade unionist, and the fight redoubled in the labour movement to force the restoration of PoW status, a complete withdrawal of British troops from Ireland and an amnesty for all political prisoners.

—much of which is supposedly registering financial losses rather than profits.

If Ford workers are to prevent a repetition of last year's sell out they must insist that the social contract is challenged, the claim pressed in full, and that the attempt to argue it on the basis of Fords' profits be thrown aside.

Those union leaders and convenors who reject this course must be pushed aside.

In this way Ford workers can give a lead to the whole working class.

Losses

The basis for pay claims must be an assessment of the amount needed to catch up with the losses inflicted by three years of wage controls and inflation.

And the catching-up claim must be linked to a cost-of-living clause to provide increases to compensate for inflation as assessed by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

A revolutionary leadership prepared to fight for the nationalisation without compensation under workers' management of the motor and components industry must be constructed in Fords to carry through the fight for this programme and oppose the inevitable moves by Todd, Reg Birch and others to ditch the £20 per week claim.

NURSERY MARCH

A demonstration demanding the restoration of the axed South Oxford Nursery will march through the streets of Oxford on Saturday September 2.

The struggle against the closure of the Nursery by the Tory council led to a nationally significant six week occupation by parents and local trade unionists earlier this year.

This occupation failed to

force a retreat on the nursery closure but had a decisive impact on the council's plans to axe the South Oxford Middle School, which is on the same site.

Anxious to avoid an even bigger confrontation, Education minister Shirley Williams ordered an about-turn on this closure—at considerable cost to the

council.

The preservation of the school means that the "saving" from the nursery closure is now negligible.

Now parents, backed by many local union bodies, will be demanding that the nursery facilities on the site be reinstated, and the jobs lost by the closure filled.

The march starts from the South Oxford Nursery at 11 am.

STILL AVAILABLE

THE TOOLROOM STRIKE AND THE FIGHT TO END WAGE CONTROL

A Workers Socialist League pamphlet drawing out the political lessons of the national strike by Leyland toolmakers in March 1977 which brought the downfall of the Labour government and the emergence of the wage-cutting Lib-Lab coalition deal.

Available, price 25p plus 10p p&p, from:
WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

FUND

WITH three days to the end of the month we have only received £365.05 towards our £600 fund target.

No time must be lost in fighting to raise the rest of this sum.

Our paper depends on this regular source of income.

All donations should be sent to:
Socialist Press Monthly Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

WSL

Coventry

'Defend the S.U

Toolmakers'
FRIDAY Sept 1st, 7.30.
The Elastic Inn
Near Pool Meadow Bus
Station.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

London

'Save St Mary's Hospital'

WEDNESDAY Sept 6,
7.30 pm.
'Earl Of Derby' pub,
opposite St Mary's Hos-
pital, Harrow Road

CONFERENCES

WESTERN SHIP-REPAIRERS

Labour movement conference called for 30 September. Details from the Action Committee,
29, Gaywood Close,
Ford Estate, Birkenhead.

BETHNAL GREEN HOSPITAL

Delegate conference called by Bethnal Green unions and Stepney Trades Council.

THURSDAY Sept 14
Details from Bethnal Green hospital occupation.