



## THORPE CASE AND PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

The Thorpe case at Minehead is far from being just another scandal.

Evidence at the hearing—which will determine whether Thorpe goes for trial for incitement to murder and three other others join him in the dock jointly charged with conspiracy to murder—has already gone far beyond the confines of those charges.

Names being drawn into the case take in leading bourgeois politicians in all parties, and leading establishment figures at the very centre of state power.

And whatever the innocence or guilt of defendants (which will be decided by a jury if the case goes to trial) even the uncontested evidence already presented is producing a shattering blow at the concept of 'parliamentary democracy'.

Whatever the outcome of this hearing and any subsequent trial, the implications of the evidence being presented is of near-Watergate proportions. The case could present the ruling class with major problems of how to sustain illusions in democratic laws and institutions.

### Annihilation

If a trial of the defendants should coincide with a general election, that could spell annihilation for the Liberal Party—the junior party of capitalism, and a party for which the capitalist class has a particular use.

But the implications go well beyond the confines of the Liberals. Already the names of Henry Kissinger, Reginald Maudling, Frank Soskice (now Lord Stow Hill), David Steel and David Ennals, Minister of Social Services have come up at the trial.

Lady Falkender, private political secretary to Harold Wilson, has been named as receiving a letter from former Liberal MP Bessell describing his interviews with two journalists writing a book.

Lord Goodman—a figure at the very heart of the capitalist political establishment—has been brought in on hearsay evidence. The prosecution

# A GLIMPSE INTO THE SEWER

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Thorpe's coalition mate Callaghan

immediately went to the extraordinary lengths of stating that Goodman was nothing to do with the case.

But the most startling revelations were contained in letters from Thorpe to millionaire 'patriot' Jack Hayward.

Hayward is not a member of the Liberal Party. He is the man who ran the 'I'm Backing Britain' campaign of jingoism in the 1960s and now runs a business in the Bahamas.

£100,000

He was the single biggest contributor to Liberal Party funds in recent years. Cheques for more than £100,000 were referred to in court.

Thorpe's letters have not been challenged by the defence. In them he shows complete contempt for election expenses rules.

He also shows the way that the Liberal Party persuaded leading capitalists to support it on an 'anti-Labour' ticket, and the way that it would be possible for any outsider to 'buy' a coalition government.

The Liberals during the recent 1977-78 coalition with the Labour leaders held more sway over political decisions than the Parliamentary Labour Party or the National Executive of the Labour Party. Yet the Liberals were completely indebted to one businessman.

International meetings with Kissinger—far from conforming to the media notions of diplomacy—were concerned with the more solid question of business.

A letter from Thorpe on 10 April 1974 says:

"1) Kissinger: We had an extremely useful and friendly talk at the American Embassy. I gave him a full brief and he has shown definite interest... Ironically I had a session with Nixon at the reception following Pompidou's memorial service but didn't think I could quite raise Freeport on that occasion."

Freeport was Hayward's home, referred to later in a letter from Thorpe as 'the Freeport project'.

Here is Thorpe's attitude to his electors:

"Your extremely generous contribution of £50,000 made it possible for me to have the closed circuit TV which enabled me to sew up North Devon for good while doing a national TV campaign".

And his attitude to election expenses:

"Delicately I would like to ask for two cheques! My reason is this. Each candidate is limited to a total sum for his individual campaign. If he exceeds it by one penny he can be unseated!"

"In my case I fought a national and a local campaign from Barnstable. There is therefore an overlap of some expenditure which I would prefer not to have to argue about!"

"Accordingly Nadir Dinshaw, who is Rupert's godfather and who is conveniently resident in Jersey, has agreed to settle bills which fall into this ambiguous category."



Thorpe under police escort

"Accordingly it will be immensely helpful if you could send me two cheques, one for £40,000 for the Liberal Party General Election fund and £10,000 payable for Nadir Dinshaw."

Tory backers were also approached:

"Eight of us are going to see those companies who have been life Tory Party's chief backers financially and suggest that they pressurise the Tories to come round in favour of electoral reform by the next general elections, a) since it would mean that there would never again be a socialist majority in its own right and b) it gives Liberals next time a powerful incentive to return a Tory MP where no Liberal is standing or where his chances are remote. Marks and Spencer are the first converts."

In other words the capitalists most firmly behind the Tories were nevertheless prepared in 1974 to finance a coalition designed to ensure that any

Labour government was totally neutralised from carrying out any reforms or socialist policies. In 1977 that coalition came about.

Given the way that Thorpe collected finance, it could as easily have been the CIA that was building the Liberal Party in Britain.

The evidence emerging in the hearing is little more than a glimpse into the sewer of bourgeois democracy and its institutions.

The evidence in this case should be carefully and thoroughly followed by all workers.

### Illusions

The state builds illusions in Parliamentary democracy to persuade the working class that its interests can be pursued through the ballot box and that gains can be won by peaceful means.

The Thorpe case is providing a concrete example of what is evident to Marxists: namely that all Parliamentary democracy is a method of subduing the working class—by fair means or foul.

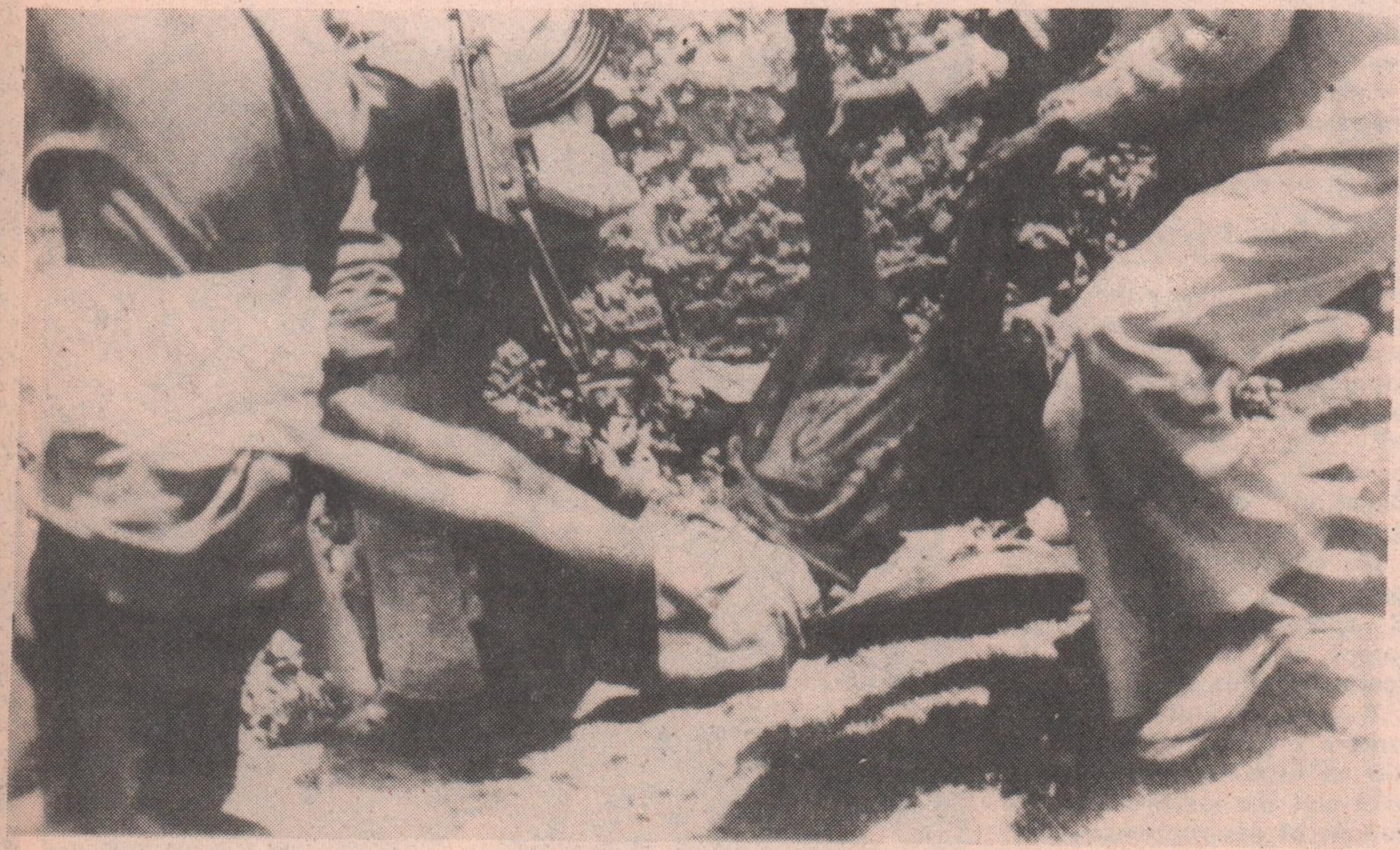
Just as the Watergate revelations were turned by the media and US politicians into an indictment of one man, so the Thorpe case is being focussed on one party and one or two politicians (the former deputy treasurer of the Liberals Malcolm Holmes is also charged with conspiracy to murder).

It already stands however as an indictment of all capitalist politicians and the Parliamentary system in which they fester.

A workers government would replace the paraphernalia of Parliamentary "democracy"—which in any event is no more than a thin disguise for rule by the employing class—with the direct and open democracy of a system of workers' councils, with elected representatives paid the average workers' wage, and subject to recall at any time.

It is only through building a revolutionary party which starts from the need to take the working class to power that the working class can sweep aside the sewer politics, business dealing and the whole Parliamentary facade.

## Stalinist hand on the trigger



Eritrean child victim of Stalinist-backed napalm bombing raid

The latest offensive by the reactionary Ethiopian military regime against the Eritrean national liberation struggle began on 18 November and was briefly reported in the last issue of *Socialist Press*.

This offensive, as Amdemichael Kahsai of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front told a London press conference last week, is aimed at destroying the crops of the Eritreans during the current harvest season.

It also includes large contingents of Cubans, mainly working heavy artillery, and of Russian advisers behind the front line.

The use of phosphorous bombs, napalm and other anti-personnel devices have already been reported.

The main claim during the first week of the fighting from the Ethiopian government has been the capture of the road from Eritrea's capital to the

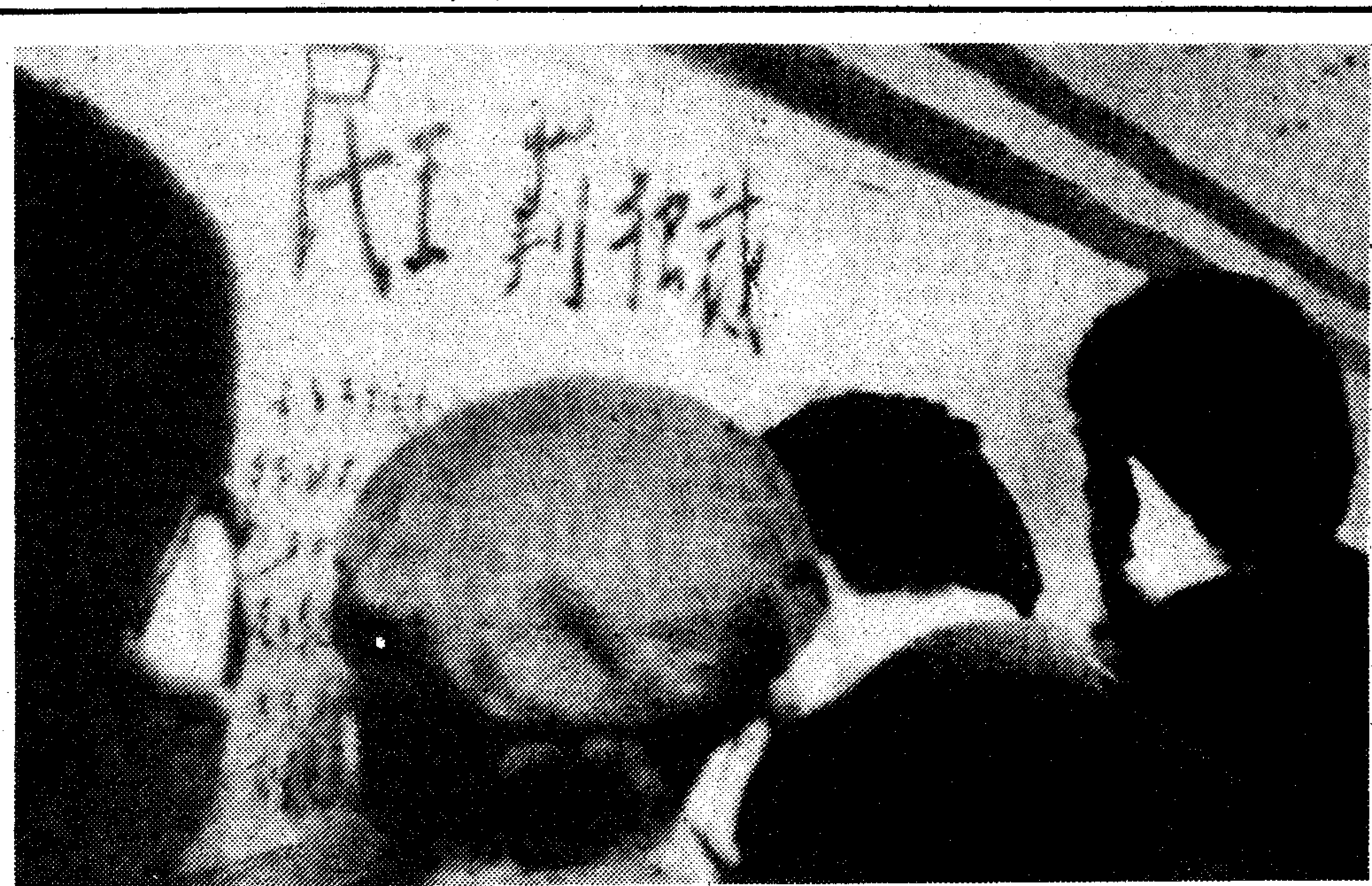
seaport of Massawa, a road entirely controlled by the liberation forces since 1975.

Amdemichael Kahsai made it clear to his London press conference that the EPLF was quite prepared to negotiate with the Ethiopian government but only on the basis of the recognition of the independence of Eritrea.

### Disgusting role

Drawing attention to the disgusting role of the Cubans and Russians, Amdemichael Kahsai said that the South Yemenis, who had previously helped the Ethiopians, had now withdrawn this support and criticised their previous position. He called on the Russians and Cubans to do the same.

It is to be hoped that this call will be taken up throughout the international workers movement.



Chinese workers read Peking wall poster denouncing Mao as a fascist dictator

## A "Peking spring"?

In Peking now, according to American journalists, the only people wearing Mao badges are foreign tourists.

It is a measure of how fast the brittle fictions of Stalinism can disintegrate.

The range and vigour of the wall posters now appearing in the capital—and surrounded by crowds of readers—suggests that the bureaucracy is so split that its rigid control is slipping fast.

The messages put up, and the rumours circulating include:

\*explicit calls for the rehabilitation of "China's Krushchev", Liu Shao-chi.

\*demands that Mao's

instruction appointing Hua Kuo-feng Prime Minister be rescinded but also...

\*defences of Hua.  
\*attacks on Mao's former bodyguard Wang Tung-shing, the political police chief who betrayed and arrested the "gang of four" in October 1976.

\*questions so obvious as to have been prohibited for years, such as "Ask yourself: is it possible that Chairman Mao didn't know that Chiang Ching (his wife) was a traitor?" (This last on a poster reportedly written by a railwayman. During the cultural revolution railway workers played a key role in spreading news and strike action against the Maoists throughout the country).

Ten years after the "Prague spring", the crisis of Chinese Stalinism is producing a "thaw" in this much vaster nation.

At the Central Committee meeting expected this week there will be desperate attempts to close ranks.

But there can be no Soviet tanks coming to the rescue of Chinese Stalinism.

For this reason all factions of the bureaucracy will tend to be drawn towards the protection of the army chiefs.

If the masses are to find a way forward, the struggle for the building of workers' councils as a focus of organised power independent of the bureaucracy is crucial.

# CIA flop shows Iran dilemma

Forced for the moment to writhe in impotent fury and unable as yet to help a great friend in his hour of need, President Carter has turned to vent his frustration on those advisers who misled his administration on the state of Iran.

The CIA was apparently still claiming that the Shah's dictatorship was firmly secure even while the mass demonstrations broke out across the country in August

Such reports may have resulted from simple incompetence, independent political motivation or the two factors combined.



Not smiling now—Carter

But Carter's complaint to Brzezinski, the State Department and the CIA (that he is 'dissatisfied with the quality of political

intelligence') shows clearly enough the dilemma of imperialism.

Anxious to preserve their dominance over Iran at almost any cost, the imperialists have no desire to find that they have placed all their bets on a loser.

### Advance warning

Perhaps the CIA was able to clear its name a little by giving advance warning on the scale of Saturday's demonstration in Frankfurt against the Shah's dictatorship.

Some 10,000 Iranians, Turks and Germans marched to the US consulate in Frankfurt to protest against the full blooded support for the Shah given by American imperialism.

As sections of the march moved to attack the building, 500 riot police were sent in to smash up the demonstration and over 200 protestors were injured.

In Iran itself, the new military government has carried on the full tradition of even more brutal attacks against continuing mass demonstrations in all the major cities.

While General Azhari was describing the strike in the oil-fields as a 'crime against the nation', his troops outside parliament were sent in by the lorry-load, armed with machine guns and backed up by nine Chieftain tanks, to 'control' a demonstration by 200 youth in the bazaar.

### Limited strike

In protest at recent killings the bourgeois nationalist leaders of the National Front and the Ayatollah Khomeini called for a limited general strike on 26 November.

But the development of the struggle points with increasing urgency to the necessity for the formation of armed workers defence squads to protect strikes and demonstrations against the military.

Such a policy and the necessary socialist and democratic demands to mobilise the masses in the fight for a workers and peasants government in Iran can only be fought for through the construction of a Trotskyist leadership in opposition to the bourgeois, Stalinist and Islamic misleaders.

## Coup no. 200 in Bolivia

Juan Pereda was military dictator of Bolivia for three months—a not exceptionally short time by the standards of Bolivia's long line of dictators.

In the 200th coup since Bolivia's independence in the early 19th century, he was overthrown last Friday by the army chiefs of staff headed by

General David Padilla.

Pereda had seized power from Hugo Banzer in July after the annulment of the fraudulent presidential elections in which he had emerged as "victor".

The immediate occasion for the present coup was a threatened armed clash in the capital La Paz on Friday.

This was expected to result from a mass "march for democracy", organised largely by former nationalist president Siles Zuazo's Democratic and Popular Unity (UDP).

The march was to protest against Pereda's announcement ten days ago that the postponed elections would not take place until May 1980.

Pereda himself had tried to line up a mass counter-demonstration and had ordered the army to stop the march.

It was largely feared that this would provoke a new revolutionary upsurge that led the army chiefs of staff to dethrone Pereda and announce that the presidential elections would take place "immediately" so that the new president could take office by August 1979.

But the new coup, giving the impression of making a concession to the mass struggle, and reflecting the political disunity of the armed forces will almost certainly unleash a new upsurge of mass struggle.

The urgent task before the Bolivian workers and peasants is to expose in this coming struggle the pretensions of the "left" nationalist leadership and replace it with a leadership which represents their independent interests.

## Zimbabwe: no secret deals!

In a move warmly endorsed by Tory leader Margaret Thatcher, Callaghan last week announced he was sending a 'personal emissary' to Zimbabwe.

Cledwyn Hughes will be joined by Stephen Low, US ambassador to Zambia, and Sir Anthony Duff, Deputy Secretary at the Foreign Office.

The role of this Anglo-US team will be to explore the possibilities of an all-party conference on the future of Zimbabwe.

These messenger boys of imperialism have before them a comprehensive round of 'fact-finding' which will take them to not only Zimbabwe but to all the "front line" states, Nigeria and South Africa.

Their mission will be to,

apply behind-the-scenes pressure on the Patriotic Front leaders and their backers, to come to terms with the Smith government and establish a 'stable' regime—stable that is for the interests of Western imperialism.

As Callaghan said in the Commons last week, Hughes will conduct his talks with "as much privacy as possible".

The capitalist press is once again bubbling over with hopes that these talks will lead to a split in the Patriotic Front—the exclusion of Robert Mugabe and the inclusion of Joshua Nkomo in a deal which will betray the aspirations of the Zimbabwe masses for the establishment of genuine national independence.

Making Hughes its 'Man of the Week' the *Financial Times* was full of praise for Hughes who in his position of Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party played:

"a crucial and still largely unsung part in securing the Lib-Lab pact, which guaranteed the government's survival..."

"If there is even a hint of compromise in Rhodesia Mr. Hughes is the man to find it" enthused the FT.

### Come to aid

The British working class must come to the aid of their African brothers and sisters.

Trade union and Labour Party branches must repudiate this latent imperialist mission.

There must be a campaign for the recall of Hughes and the removal of the right wing Labour leadership.

Last Wednesday saw the deadline for Nicaragua's military dictator, Anastasio Somoza, to quit the Presidency and leave the country.

The deadline had been fixed by the Broad Opposition (FSLN), the Marxist guerrillas who maintain close connections with bourgeois forces in the Broad Opposition Front.

The FSLN having drawn in fresh layers after the offensives of last August and September, mounted two successful bank raids and an armed attack on the National Guard near the border with Costa Rica.

### Referendum

Attempts at "mediation" by the US (backed by Guatemala and the Dominican Republic) have resulted only in tentative proposals for a referendum early next year on whether Somoza

should stay or a new national government be formed.

Carter's henchmen have also proposed a package of phoney liberalisation measures to accompany the referendum.

### United front

The Broad Opposition Front have made only two real conditions for acceptance of the proposals, firstly that Somoza leave the country and secondly that the Organisation of American States send a large delegation of observers to supervise the referendum.

No combination of popular fronts or bourgeois alliances or US sponsored referenda can protect the interests of the Nicaraguan working class.

A genuine united front of workers organisations must be built to mobilise for a general strike and the establishment of councils of action composed of elected representatives of workers and peasants.



Sandinista guerrillas

# ISOLATED SOMOZA CLINGS ON TO POWER



INTERNATIONAL



State terror chief Villa

# Spanish coup bid: the plot thickens

Numerous sedative statements by the Spanish government and army authorities have failed to solve the alarming mystery of last weekend's attempted coup d'etat.

Officially only two officers have been arrested.

The principal of these is Lieutenant-Colonel Tejero Molina of the Civil Guard (the provincial para-military police), who was dismissed a few months ago as Civil Guard Commander of Guipuzcoa province, the most militantly nationalist of the Basque provinces.

### Notorious

Tejero Molina was notorious in Guipuzcoa for encouraging the men under his command into extreme examples of repressive zeal.

He was removed to merely bureaucratic duties after publishing an open letter to the King in the fascist newspaper *El Imparcial* protesting against "democratisation".

The official version of last

weekend's plot is that it is the work of this well-known "dissident" and a handful of "crazy" and powerless friends who are supposed to have plotted "Operation Galaxy" in a cafe of that name.

But there is growing public suspicion that this "crazy" band is the officially revealed tip of a much bigger and more serious iceberg.

A number of reports speak of up to 200 military and police officers being involved in the plot.

It may also have been supposed to coincide with the demonstration of 125,000 Franco supporters who met in the Plaza de Oriente in Madrid the day after the arrest of the plotters to honour the third anniversary of Franco's death.

The size of the demonstration seems to have been deliberately exaggerated (to 300,000) by the Madrid police spokesman.

One of the main activities of the Francoist crowd was the cheering of the armed police sent to "control" the demonstration—an enthusiasm which was clearly reciprocated by

many of the police.

In Barcelona the same weekend an army general was placed under house arrest for publicly attacking the Defence Minister Gutierrez Mellado.

And there were new reports of unrest among the armed police and Civil Guard especially in Euskadi (the Basque region) where last Monday ETA members shot a further twelve policemen in one raid on their barracks in Basauri (Bilbao), killing two of them.

The government seems reduced to near desperation over the growing success of ETA's present terrorist campaign against the police.

### Repression

The Interior Minister, Francoist butcher Martin Villa has made a rush visit to Britain to consult Merlyn Rees and Roy Mason who are regarded as Europe's mentors when it comes to the repression of militant armed nationalist movements.

All these developments point to the growing danger of a new counter-revolution in Spain.

The man charged with reassuring the nation against this obvious danger is army Chief of Staff.

He is the man who in July made a public speech, while on an official visit to the military dictator Videla in Argentina, clearly implying that if necessary the Spanish armed forces would not hesitate to assume power.

If some of the army generals were, as is rumoured, implicated in last weekend's plot, then they seem now to have decided to delay any further move until after the constitutional referendum on December 6.

The government has imposed a ban on all public demonstrations until after the referendum in an attempt to repress the growing opposition to the reactionary constitution, especially in Euskadi and Catalonia.

This reactionary ban has met with not so much as a whimper of protest from the Communist

Party and Socialist Party leaders.

In fact both leaderships, having helped to organise the recent "anti-terrorist" demonstrations, have greeted the new warnings of the possibility of a military coup with new moves to demobilise the working class.

### "Remote"

Socialist Party leader Felipe Gonzalez, greeted the news with a statement which echoed the line of the Suarez government: "The possibility of a military coup exists but it is very remote".

Santiago Carrillo, General Secretary of the Communist Party, (whose newspaper *Mundo Obrero* last week went daily) as usual went much further.

The CP referred to the Galaxy Plan as "an attempt at military insubordination" and Carrillo added:

"In the event of a serious military coup the CP and the Socialist Party and the trade unions would put themselves on the side of the King and would call a general strike."

He added that the "Basque problem" could not be properly solved as long as France continued to give refuge to known terrorists.

There is evidently no limit to the lengths to which the Stalinist leadership is prepared to go to give unequivocal support to the successors of Franco.

The CP leaders of course, wish to avoid a new Francoist military coup.

But their political plan is to avoid it by a totally subordinate alliance with the "democratising" Francoist bourgeoisie and by an uncompromising fight to prevent the working class from any expression of its independent interests.

In this way the Stalinists of Spain today, like the Stalinists of Spain or Germany in the 1930s, or the Stalinists of Chile in the 1970s pave the way for counter-revolution

**TU DERECHO ES VOTAR.  
VOTA LIBREMENTE.**

Hypocritical government poster urges workers to 'vote freely' while demonstrations urging boycott are banned

# Portuguese fascists mobilise--workers' leaders betray

The wave of ultra-right wing activities in Spain in the last two weeks has also had its reflection in Portugal.

In the northern city of Oporto last Friday night several hundred armed, black-shirted fascist thugs marched through the streets attacking and setting fire to offices of the Socialist and Communist Parties and shouting for the return of the dictatorship.

This serious development reveals the acute dangers which have been produced by the deliberate demobilisation of the working class by the Stalinist and reformist leaders.

And the same thing is reflected in the nature of the new non-parliamentary government formed by the military President Eanes.

### Reactionary

The composition of the cabinet announced last week by Premier designate Carlos Mota Pinto (former state industry official under the Salazar dictatorship) confirms the reactionary direction of recent political waves.

Mota Pinto's cabinet is a government of "techno-

crats", not publicly known as members of any political party, but most of them with a solid reactionary pedigree.

In particular Sr. Vaz Portugal lingers on from the previous government, rejected by the National Assembly in October, as Minister of Agriculture.

### Return of land

He has been responsible for trying to step up the return of land occupied by the peasants in 1974 and 1975 to its former owners.

This counterrevolutionary policy was legislated by the Socialist government of Mario Soares which fell in July. Attempts to implement it under the last Prime Minister were met by militant resistance from the peasants in the southern agricultural region of Alentejo.

While refusing to mobilise the whole working class against these reaction-



CP leader Cunhal

ary governments, the Portuguese Communist Party has to a limited degree taken the side of the Alentejo peasants.

And once it heard the composition of the proposed Cabinet, the CP began to make critical noises, eventually announcing that it would

oppose the government when it was presented to the National Assembly for a confidence vote on December 9.

Undoubtedly this new oppositionist stance of the CP accounted for its surprise 53% victory in municipal elections in Alentejo last week.

### Hollow threat

This was a profound shock to the government and makes military President Eanes' threat to call general elections if the new government is not confirmed in office look a little more hollow.

The CP, however, has just as much to fear in an election in which it might make gains, as one in which it might lose.

Election victories would enormously increase the pressure on the CP leaders to take action to defend the rapidly eroding gains of the 1974-75 revolution.



Portuguese SP leader Soares

# Long Kesh 'like Saigon 1968'

—US Congressman

One of the most prominent bourgeois journalists in the USA has caused a storm by denouncing Britain's barbaric repression in Ireland.

Jack Anderson, in an article syndicated to a number of US papers, declared that Britain was: "trampling on the rights of Irish citizens in a manner reminiscent of Oliver Cromwell's iron-fisted rule more than three centuries ago."

## Catholic leader

British diplomatic staff were forced to respond to the article, which also quoted a Catholic leader who had compared:

"the horrors of H Block [Long Kesh] with the tiger cages of Vietnam, where American-trained South Vietnamese captors interrogated prisoners, or the North Vietnamese torture cells, where American POWs were brutally mistreated."

Anderson's article drew heavily on reports from two American capitalist politicians, Republican Hamilton Fish and Democrat Joshua Eilberg, who recently visited British-occupied Northern Ireland.

Both men agreed that

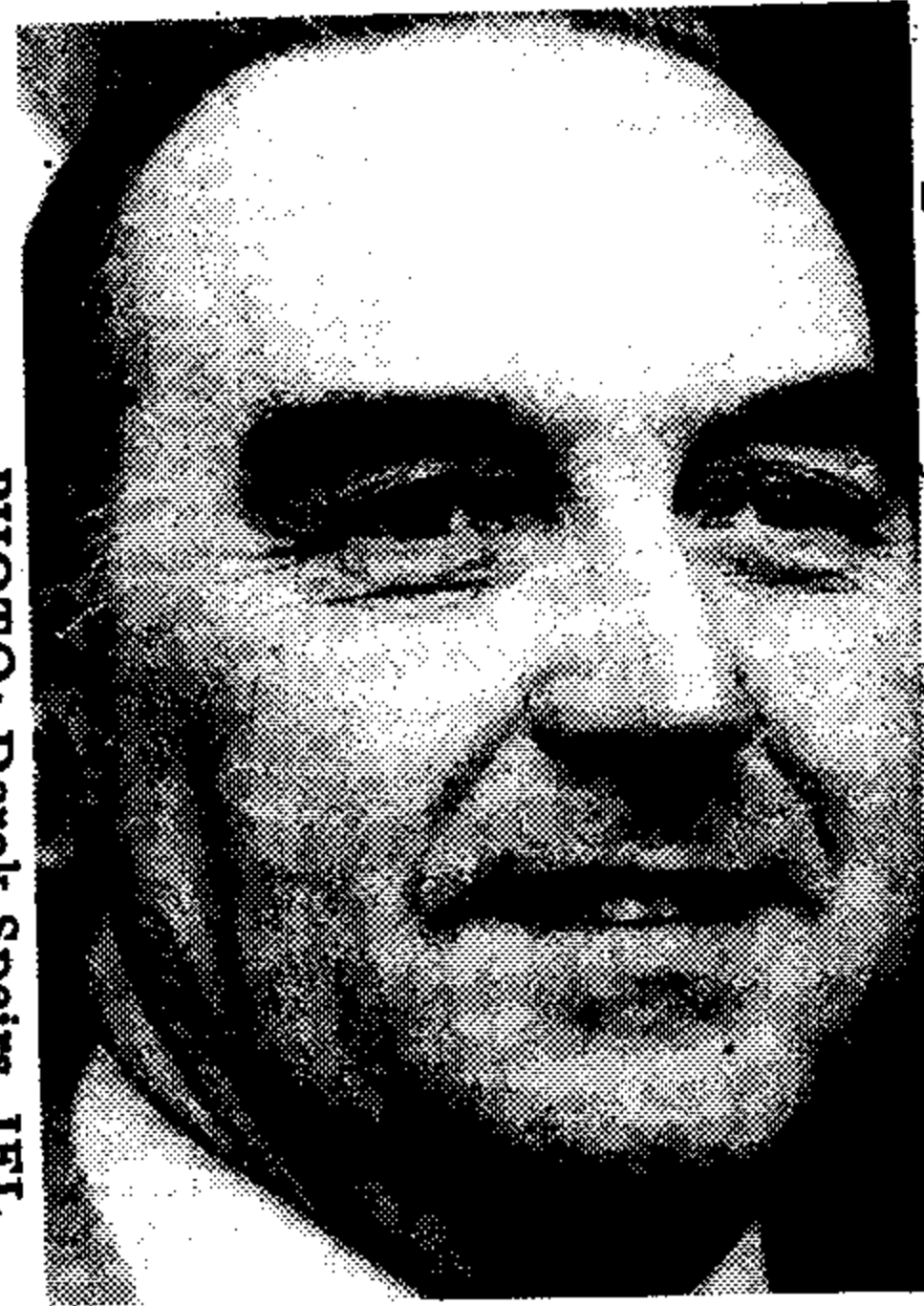


PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL

Mason

conditions in the Long Kesh concentration camp were "worse than Saigon 1968".

Such views are increasingly shared by prominent Irish Americans, including Longshoremen's union leader Tommy Gleason, who recently proposed a black on British trade in solidarity with the struggle in the North for the full restoration of Prisoner of War status for republican prisoners.

The British ambassador, Peter Jay, hit back at these damaging statements with a press release alleging that the conditions at Long Kesh had been "self inflicted" by convicted murderers and bombers claiming that:

"Political status is not justified for criminals con-

victed under the law".

The bloodstained Labour government and its agents internationally are forced more and more often to reiterate such statements as increasing sections of the workers' movement and even capitalist politicians wake up to the fact that a war of national liberation is going on in the North of Ireland.

## Oppressor

Those that take up arms in the struggle for an end to national oppression must obviously stand in breach of the "laws" drawn up by the imperialist oppressor nation.

Their fight—however misguided its tactics—is not a criminal act but part of an entirely legitimate struggle for the right of the Irish people as a whole to determine their own future.

The criminal role is that played by the British Labour leaders who, in the most obscene coalition with the Tory Party and with Ulster Unionist politicians, have unleashed the full savagery of the British army on the Irish population in

# IRELAND

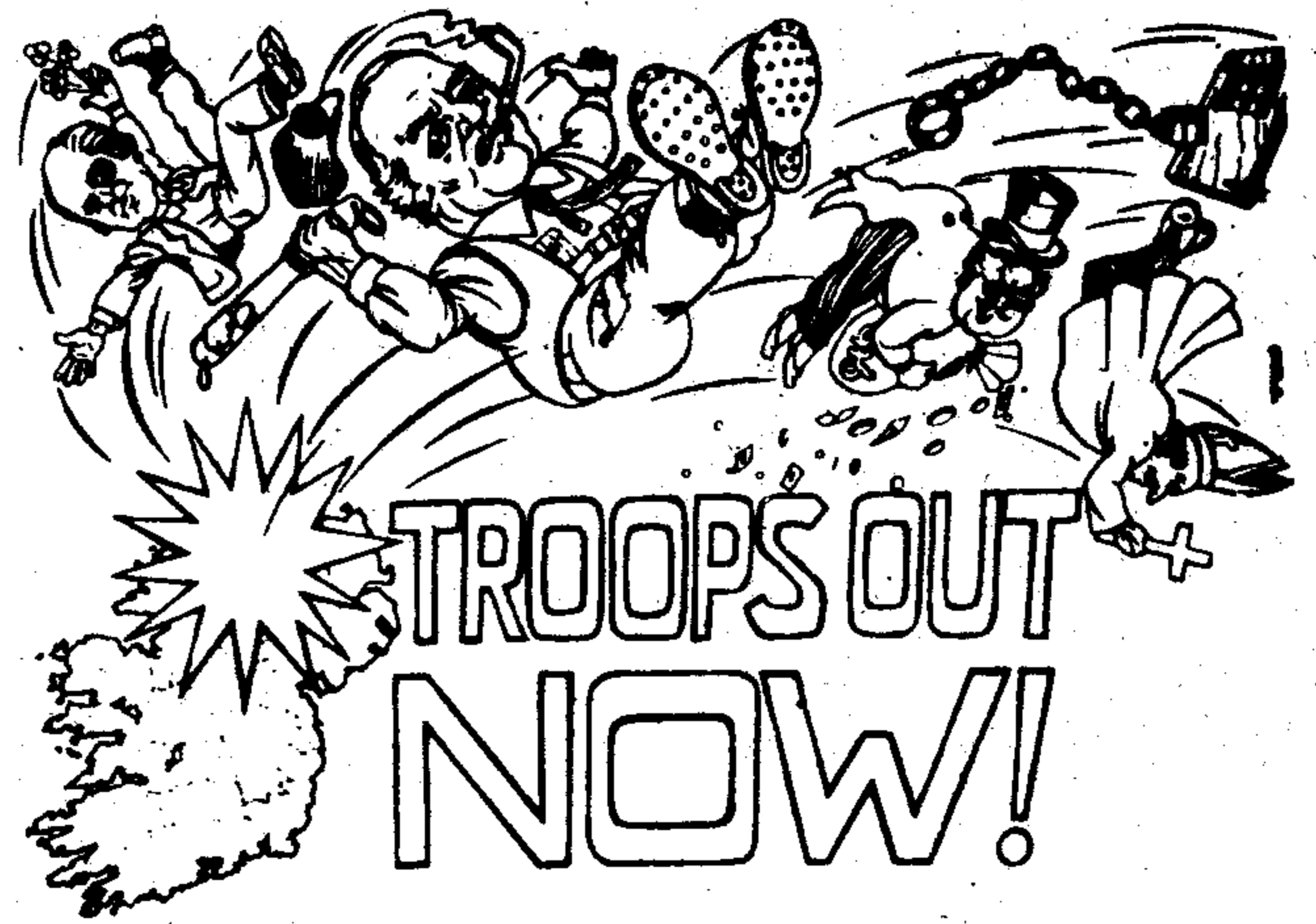


PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL

The recent Sinn Féin Ard Fheis. Opponents of imperialism must obviously break British laws.

the six counties.

Prominent in all this is Arthur Scargill's MP, Roy Mason, who as an NUM-sponsored MP acts as chief minister for torture in the North.

The fact that US Congressmen from the two bourgeois parties have now

openly condemned the repression in Ireland should immediately be used in a bid to shame the Labour 'left' and British union leaders into taking up a serious fight on this issue, and fighting for the removal of Callaghan's pro-imperialist cabinet.

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# NAC pressed to fight the cuts

In an important turn into the trade union movement, the National Abortion Campaign brought some 350 delegates to a conference last weekend.

But the plan to simply provide a platform for 'left' speeches from sympathetic union bureaucrats did not quite go according to plan.

A WSL leaflet which pointed out that the star speaker, NUPE leader Alan Fisher, is a bureaucrat who has betrayed his members time and again, was attacked by Terry Marsland of the Tobacco Workers Union, who said it made her "upset" to see him described this way.

But it was not only the WSL leaflet which upset this planned cosy gathering of 'lefts', Stalinists, Socialist Workers Party members and IMG feminists.

They were also dismayed at the WSL amendment to NAC's otherwise meaningless "action

proposals", which pointed out that the fight for abortion rights

"is inseparable from the fight to defend and improve the NHS as a whole, a fight that should be based on policies of

a) occupation of threatened services  
b) supporting strike action  
c) elected committees of trade unionists and users of the health service to conduct workers' inquiries into the running of the NHS".

When this amendment was discussed in the workshop sessions it won substantial support in spite of concerted opposition from those who opposed putting any form of demands on the bureaucrats on the platform.

## Carried

Eventually the section declaring the abortion issue inseparable from the fight against the cuts was carried as part of the "action" proposals which included calls for demonstrations, day schools and pressure groups.

Earlier the conference had heard NUJ National Executive member Aidan White implicitly blame the rank and file of the union for the scandalous decision of its NEC to oppose the conference.

"Rank and file demand is one thing they (the NUJ leaders) will not ignore", he declared—failing to explain how it was that the same NUJ leaders had actually flouted a decision of the union's Annual Delegate Meeting in order to oppose the NAC conference.

White went on to speak and vote against the WSL amendments to the resolution.

Mel Read of ASTMS spoke

strongly on the need to force unions not simply to adopt policies on abortion, but to do something about them once adopted.

And Dr. Judith Gray (MPU/ASTMS) spoke on the campaign for day care abortion facilities on the NHS using the dangerous argument that such facilities are "cheaper".

The real point about day-care abortions is that they are safer because they are performed earlier. But they must be seen as part of an expansion of health care, necessarily involving greater expenditure.

It was perhaps the silences that said most about the International Marxist Group at their rally last week.

Not that the speakers were not loud and proficient.

Not that they failed to impress the almost exclusively middle class audience at the Camden Centre.

But the speakers, supposedly addressing the topic of the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Fourth International were unable to attempt any examination of the practical record or the problems and splits in the International since 1938.

And there was no mention of any fight being carried out today by the IMG or any section of the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth

No such concessions will be forced from the capitalist class or their Labour agents by the method advocated by Tribune Les Huckfield, however.

One step further away from action than even NAC's "action proposals", he suggested a campaign of letter writing to MPs to ward off a possible future private member's bill!

In the final session of the conference Socialist Press supporter Ron Giles spelled out a very different perspective for the abortion struggle and shot down Alan Fisher's demagogic claims to be the champion of women and the under 5's by

citing the way Fisher himself had talked out discussion of nursery facilities at the last NUPE conference!

Though the hardened block of CP-SWP-IMG feminists succeeded in preventing NAC committing itself to any fight for tangible policies in the struggle against the cuts, the demands advocated by the WSL won considerable support in the workshop discussions, and point the only serious way forward in the fight for free abortion on demand.



Fisher

# IMG's significant silence

International (of which it is a section) for the demands and principles of the Transitional Programme.

Instead USFI leader Ernest Mandel offered the prospect of an international campaign for a 35-hour week (which would win instant endorsement from the British TUC) and US Socialist Workers Party speaker Nan Bailey offered simply an endless string of partial and democratic demands, without a single mention of a socialist policy.

Odd man out on the platform was an Iranian speaker, who offered a cogent analysis of the development of mass struggle in Iran, a clear call for the building of a Trotskyist party, and a ringing denunciation of international Stalinism.

Yet this speaker, who clearly represents some of the most determined layers within the

Iranian mass movement, failed to see the contradiction between his analysis and that presented by Mandel—who dwelt at length on the fact that the Italian, French and Spanish Stalinist parties have "rehabilitated" Trotsky and Bukharin, and who boasted of the attendance of a Stalinist union delegation at the recent conference of the Spanish USFI section.

Mandel conspicuously avoided any attempt to examine the role of these Stalinist parties in relation to the class struggle in their own countries: nor did he attempt any assessment of the role of international Stalinism as a whole.

Such evasion is not an isolated mistake; it typifies the approach of the USFI. The result is that while revolutionary elements are drawn towards the

USFI hoping to find political leadership, they are offered simply impressions and organised opportunism.

A high point of this method is the British IMG.

The platform sensibly omitted any reference to the IMG's work in the British class struggle, though veteran Trotskyist Harry Wicks showed how far he has moved in recent years by trying to compare the IMG's opportunist Socialist Challenge to the early 1930s issues of the US Trotskyist paper *The Militant*.

While the rally attempted to show the USFI as the continuity of Trotskyism, its silences and its statements combined to point once again to the need to reconstruct the Fourth International on the basis of a practical and theoretical reaffirmation of its method and programme.

PHOTO: Labour Weekly

Huckfield

# The price hikers



Currency dealers at work—inflation has fallen due to stabilisation of the pound

Four and a half years of a right wing Labour government implementing Tory policies have doubled the cost of living.

The government's own, warped, Retail Prices Index, which (by lumping together all retail prices including top luxury goods and services) always understates the price increases that most affect the working class shows a 97.7% rise since Labour came to power in 1974.

This increase is four times that in West Germany and twice as much as in the USA, Japan and France.

And it has taken place in a period when successive Phases of wage control have limited pay increases to £6, 4½% 10% and now 5%.

Small wonder workers fail to believe their eyes or ears when regaled by the press and the mass media with claims that their living standards are now improved.

Nor does the Labour Party's house journal *Labour Weekly* carry much conviction with its latest centrespread, headlined "The Price Fighters", which insists that "Labour is pulling Britain out of the economic

ditch".

## Big business

The only section of "Britain" that is benefitting is of course big business. The rate

## Cryer sidles out

Tribunite Bob Cryer has followed the example of co-thinker Brian Sedgemore, and resigned from Callaghan's government.

For this step—dissociating himself from the decision to turn over the Merseyside KME cooperative to private industry—he will no doubt be awarded renewed 'left' credentials.

He even hinted that Healey's planned use of sanctions to enforce the 5% pay limit had something to do with his decision.

But Cryer is not planning a serious fight against either policy. His resignation is strictly a protest action, designed to put himself in the clear while actually allowing the Callaghan cabinet to cruise on regardless.

Like Sedgemore he has shown that there is one thing more unpleasant to him than government policy: the prospect of an all-out fight in the labour movement to remove and replace the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

of profit of British industry, though still chronically low, has according to *F.T.* figures been markedly increased over the last period by Callaghan's tax cuts, wage controls, subsidies and laughable "price controls" that take as their main criterion the "right" of the employer to a guaranteed profit.

## Subsidies

Meanwhile over the last four years hundreds of millions of pounds have been dished out in subsidies by Labour leaders to hire the wallets of the food monopolies and attempt to keep bread and other prices artificially low.

That charade has now come to an end. But the fraudulent talk of price controls as a means of protecting workers' living standards carries on.

The only way in which price controls could operate would be if the major industries were nationalised under the management of elected workers committees, as part of a planned, socialist economy.

Without such planning, the unprecedented successful imposition of price controls on particular private employers would affect profitability, interfere with cash flow, and could even prompt closures.

The unsuccessful imposition of price controls on the other hand has been shown, time and again to be no more than the undercover device used to slash workers' living standards.

## Wage controls

The Labour leaders make much out of the current fall in inflation—and attribute it to wage controls.

But the reality is that the cutbacks in government spending on social services and education, combined with the improved standing of the pound in the money markets—cutting the price of imports—and the slump in world trade (caused by the recession) have had the decisive impact on prices.

In other words the low inflation rate "given" with one Labour hand, is in reality based on the slashing of public services, the forcing through of speed-up, and the creation of mass unemployment on the other.

The only defence of workers' living standards in such a crisis is through the struggle in this pay round for every section to break the 5% limit, and protect their pay increases against inflation through the fight for a sliding scale of wages.

Under the sliding scale, cost-of-living increases would be met by automatic wage rises, calculated in each case on the basis of a price index drawn up by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives taking taxation and other factors into account.

Such a system of payment of course runs directly counter to the need of the capitalist class to increase the exploitation of the working class through cuts in real wages.

As such it is a policy that forces workers to look for a solution to their problems beyond the confines of capitalism, towards the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of the system and a planned, socialist economy.



# LP minions challenge Phase 4

You may think you've got financial problems.

But spare a thought for the poor old Labour Party. While straining every nerve to give credibility to the European elections and the Devolution proposals, its coffers are all but empty.

Last week the National Executive voted to spend £85,000 on campaign work in Scotland and Wales and in an effort to get the necessary votes for the formation of the new Edinburgh and Cardiff Assemblies.

And it is to consider a further £100,000 expenditure on the European Assembly elections.

But, though bad enough, this is not all. Labour Party staff are up in arms over their wages and conditions.

to mention the total lack of any socialist perspective from the Party leadership) is a key factor in ensuring that the Party's real membership is only 250,000 and that only 77 agents are employed to cover 624 constituencies.

What is the answer, according to the reformists? For Huckfield, it amounts basically to pleading for state aid to assist the Labour Party in building up the European elections.

Lamenting the fact that "in many constituencies the Labour Party has become so professionally middle class that it doesn't know how to talk to working people", he proposes the setting up of factory branches.

The fact is that no matter how it is organised, the Labour Party remains hog-tied to the savagely anti-working class policies of Callaghan and Healey.

Its growing alienation from the working class could only be reversed by a decision by some of its so-called "socialist" left wing to launch a campaign throughout the Party and the unions for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership and the adoption of a programme of socialist policies.

But, lacking any genuine alternative policies to put forward and frightened of a conflict with Callaghan, the 'lefts' drift on while their party lurches towards bankruptcy.

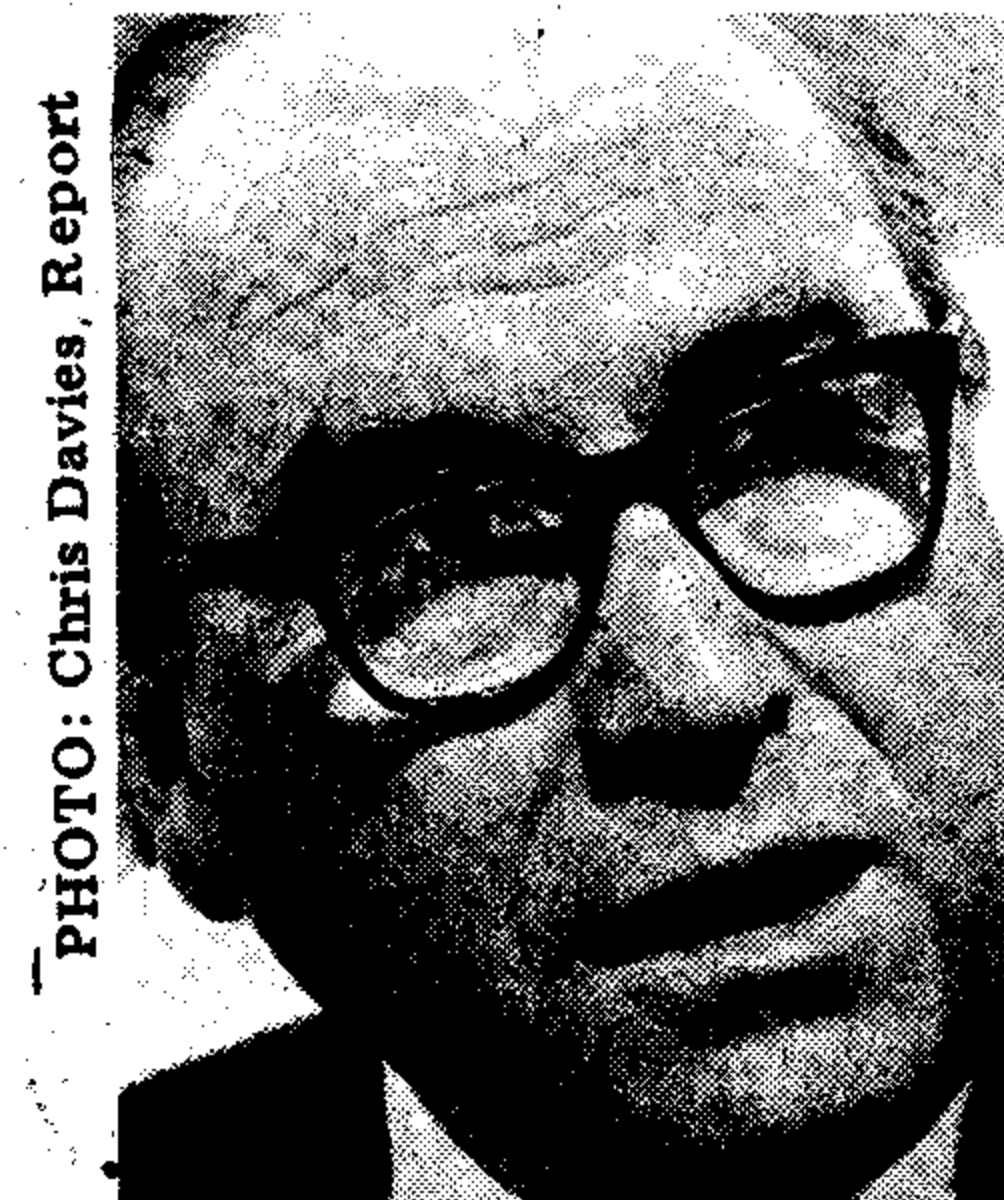


PHOTO: Chris Davies Report

## Europe supremo Jenkins

They have already rejected a Phase 4-busting offer of a 5% rise now and another 5% in April.

And they have begun to take militant action—which has already hit the production of *Labour Weekly*.

Tribunite Les Huckfield points out in this week's issue of that journal that the parlous wages and conditions of Labour Party full-time workers (—not

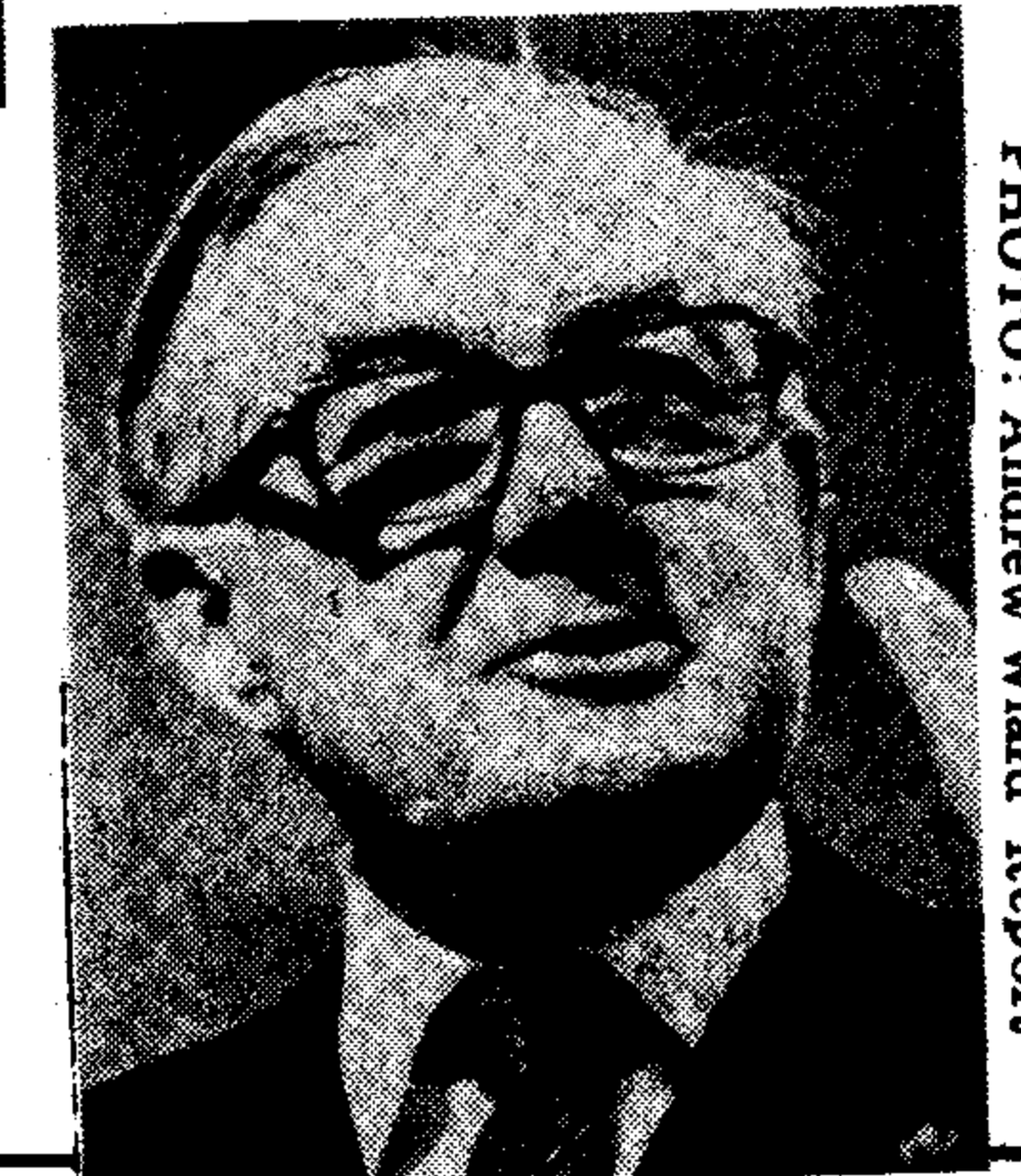


PHOTO: Andrew Ward Report

## Heffer flickers

Where the mass movement of the working class failed to produce even a flicker of life from left MP Eric Heffer, the decision by the TUC bureaucrats to reject a new pay deal with the government has prodded him into action.

Well, not quite action!

Almost

Challenging the reactionary rant of TUC chairman Tom Jackson, he made a carefully phrased call for what is almost free collective bargaining (or almost wage control—according to your point of view!):

"The 5% policy has been broken. We ought to get back to the sensible position of free collective bargaining, and at the same time recognise that the claims ought to be kept in reasonable bounds".

Heffer conveniently omitted to say what bounds he would define as "reasonable"—whether such bounds are related to defence of workers' living standards, or maintenance of capitalist profits.

The only thing we can be certain of is that Heffer will not figure in the leadership of any struggle against the 5% policy. At best he will be dragged, grumbling and prevaricating, behind the movement of the working class.

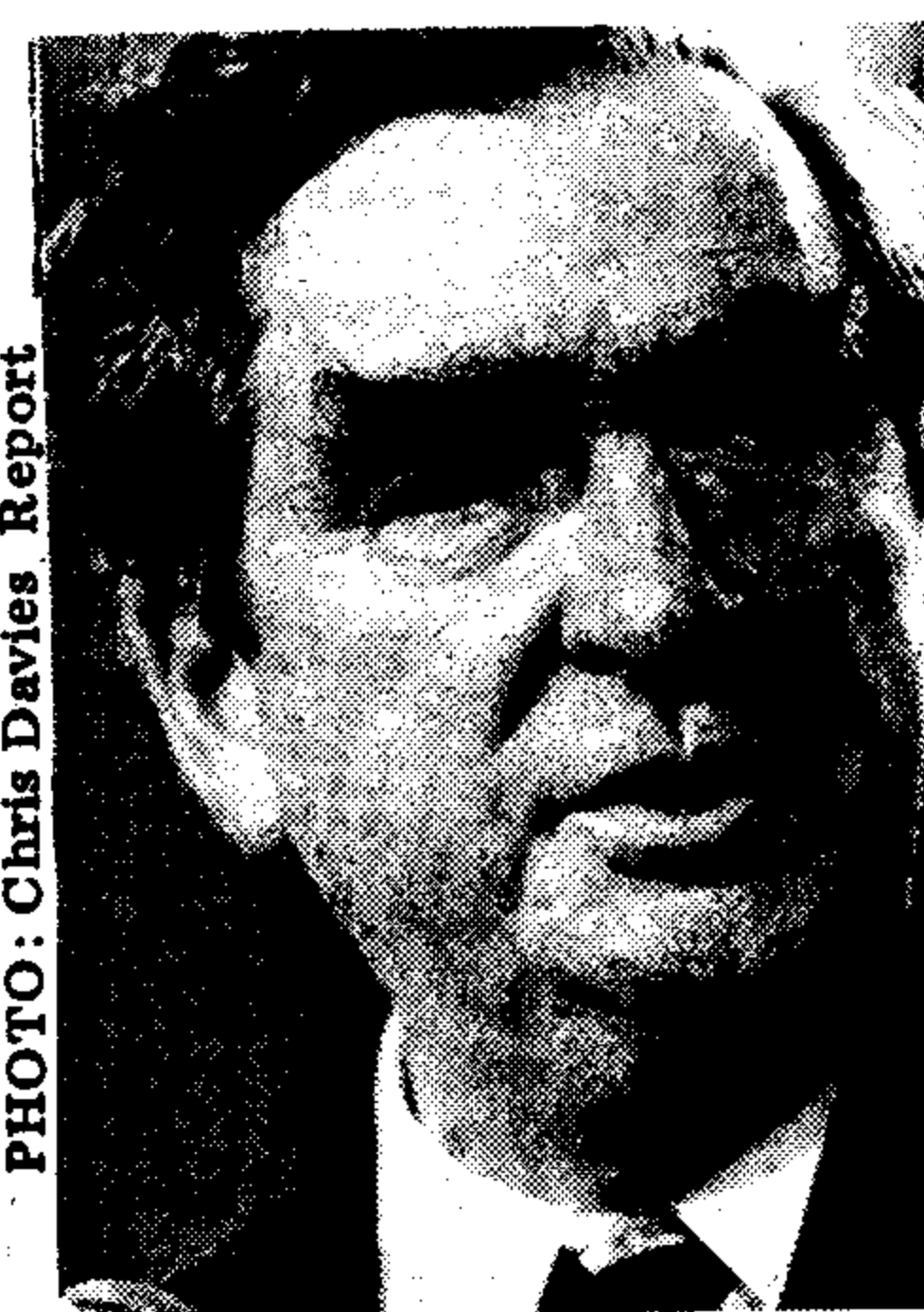


PHOTO: Chris Davies Report

Healey

# PRESS GANG

# Freedom of the boss

Had it been the NGA, NATSOPA or SLADE that was threatening to shut Times Newspapers from tomorrow (Thursday) until management agreed to increase by 50% the workforce, every Labour Cabinet Minister still at liberty would have by now 'inter-vened' to save management's neck.

It is of course a fantasy beyond the wildest dreams that the leadership of the Fleet Street print unions would permit members to go onto the offensive. But the strike by management who intend to shut down the *Sunday Times*, *Times*, and the *Literary and Educational Supplements*, has given an opportunity for the press, whether owned by Lord Thomson or not, to demonstrate its objectivity, detachment, etc.

Where now are all the hysterical shrieks about the public's right to know? About the freedom of the Press?

*Socialist Press* is of course not the least bit surprised by their absence. Those weapons are kept in the arsenal for use against the working class, not the capitalist. But the false image of the press as playing an independent role between capital and labour is so carefully and endlessly peddled, not least by the press itself, that it still carries some weight among confused workers.

When a machine room chapel closes the paper for

one day, or one week, who writes the story about it? Certainly not the Father of the machine room chapel.

When the management shuts the whole group indefinitely who then writes the story? The answer, in the *Sunday Times* (November 26), is Denis Hamilton, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief.

The paper does carry a report of the negotiations written by a journalist, but the centre page is handed to the senior management for his own farewell.

Hamilton writes with nostalgia about the old Lord Thomson and gushing admiration for his present boss the 'young' Lord Thomson. He describes as 'malicious nonsense' statements that Thomson is interested in the papers only to maximise his profits. He displays a lofty paternalistic charity for the workers he intends to throw out of work.

"It is very natural that those working in the old technology should be dismayed, even understandably outraged at the thought that they and their hard-learned craft should be swept away. In practice, of course, individuals cannot and should not be swept away. They must be dealt with most humanely".

Dispensing with 500 years of history and every change from feudalism to capitalism, Hamilton writes

"They could no more resist the electronic advance than the monks writing books could resist hand-set type".

Last week *Panorama* attempted to portray in a

few fleeting images something of the inner conflict of the *Times*. It took the lofty view of "a plague on both your houses, but especially that of the workers".

On radio later in the week, Victor Matthews, owner of the *Express*, *Standard* and *Star*, was explaining how the role of newspaper owners precisely was to maximise profits. (Does Hamilton consider this 'malicious nonsense'?)

Two weeks ago the Editor of the *Evening Standard* resigned after Matthews instructed that no editorial on foreign affairs should be permitted to appear unless he had personally vetted it.

In a fit of daring the *Sunday Times* permitted Paul Foot, former *Socialist Worker* Editor, about 350 words to comment on the *Panorama* programme, 'balanced' by an equal length piece from Paul Johnson, the Tory Party's second favourite convert.

Foot drew no lessons except that the struggle reflected 'class antagonism' and that Lord Thomson is extremely rich.

Capitalism is a social system based on private ownership and wage labour. It is for that reason that the privately owned press finds no contradiction between hysteria when workers shut down newspapers, and grim satisfaction when management carry out the same action.

The 'independence' of the press is the independence of a dog on a lead. It can go as far as it likes providing it does not want to go too far.

# THE BIRTH OF AMERICAN MARXISM

1978 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the emergence of the Trotskyist movement in the United States. The Socialist Workers Party which today claims to represent that tradition offers no more than a hollow mockery of the fighting spirit of that early movement. This article is the first in a series in *Socialist Press* which will examine the early history of the SWP, the party so central in the 1930s to the launching of the Fourth International.

By Graham Bond

## The October 1917 Russian Revolution marked a turning point for the American Radical movement.

The Bolsheviks had proved in action the possibility of the conquest of power by the working class and the validity of Marxism within the class struggle.

Before October 1917, the American Radical movement had been dominated by tendencies who had turned their backs on the class struggle and Marxist theory.

The Lassalleans had split on the eve of the Great Rail Strike of 1877 from the Working Men's Party of the United States and the First International of Marx and Engels, to seek reform by the ballot box.

The Anarchists, (disciples of Bakunin and Nechayeff) had also split from the First International and founded the Anarchistic International Working People's Association—known as the "Black International".

### Collapsed

Under the leadership of John Most, who preferred anarchistic terror tactics and discarded Marxist theory, this grouping collapsed after the arrest and hangings of the Haymarket martyrs.

The International Workers of the World (the "Wobblies") who advocated Anarcho-Syndicalism had led great strikes and carried out tremendous struggles of unionisation. They had hundreds of thousands of followers but rejected Marxist theory. They were unable to grasp the political tasks involved in overthrowing capitalism.

By 1912, the Socialist Party left wing, which stood for industrial unionisation, had lost its majority to the opportunists, who saw an electoral road to political change. The right wing—just as their forerunners the Lassalleans—turned away from the class struggle, in their quest for votes.

### Class struggle

Eugene B. Debs, who voiced the opinions of the rank and file more than anyone else, always stood for the class struggle. But all his energies were devoted to external agitation; he never



Painting of striking coal miners, metal miners, steel workers and railroad workers.

used his influence in the internal struggle against the right wing.

Debs did not believe in factions. Yet the left and right wings of his party were in a perpetual fight over

conflicting programme, which expressed conflicting class interests.

Workers who had joined the Socialist Party in good faith were becoming demoralised by the growth

of the middle class invasion. They left the Socialist Party in their thousands.

As James P. Cannon said in his pamphlet "E.V. Debs, the Socialist Movement of His Time", page 25:

"The strength of capitalism is not in itself and its own institutions; it survives only because of barriers of support in the organisations of the workers. As we see now in the light of what we have learned from the Russian Revolution and its aftermath, nine-tenths of the struggle for socialism is the struggle against bourgeois influence in the workers' organisations, including the Party".

At the 1912 convention, the Socialist Party right wing led a witch-hunt against left wing radicals and pushed through an amendment to the constitution:

"Any member of the Party who opposes political action or advocates crime, sabotage, or other methods of violence as a weapon of the working class to aid in its emancipation shall be expelled from membership of the Party.

"Political action shall be construed to mean participation and administrative work along the lines of the Socialist Party platform."

### Sharp divisions

Prior to the Russian Revolution these two tendencies had dominated the American radical movement. They had been separated organisationally and had sharp divisions in their activities and fields of work.

The revolutionary left wing of the Socialist Party was strengthened overnight by the Bolshevik Revolution.

The American Socialist Party found its ranks swelled by thousands of militant workers. Many of them came from the IWW, with their eyes on the Soviet Republic which had shown a way out of capitalism's system of wage slavery.

All the genuine militants rallied behind the writings of Lenin and Trotsky.

They had their own official organ called "The Revolutionary Age" which expounded the works of Bolshevism. Its editor was Louis Frainer.

John Reed, an American socialist journalist, took part in the Russian Revolution, and reported its events in a book called *Ten Days That Shook the World*. Reed also popularised the revolution to a much wider public field in *The Liberator*.

The majority of the membership of the left-wing of the Socialist Party were foreign born. Under the impact of October 1917 the foreign language socialist movement within the USA grew rapidly.

The Red Guard detachment



The foreign born of the Socialist Party were organised into Language Federations which were almost autonomous. There were as many as 30,000 Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Finns, etc. At their head was Frainer, N. Hourwich and C.E. Ruthenberg.

Because of their autonomous nature the Federations did not want a centralised Party, or even to be organised into local branches without a national structure or autonomous rights.

### Minority

Such an arrangement would mean they would lose the block votes of the Federations and thus the control of the Socialist Party left wing.

The native Americans were in a minority which was led by J. Reed and B. Eitlow.

In September 1919 at the underground national convention of the Socialist Party left wing a three-way split took place.

The Federationists who wanted control formed the Communist Party of the United States. Native born Americans who stood for a more Americanised party with an indigenous leadership, formed the Communist Labor Party. This split with the Socialist Party cut the two Communist Parties off from thousands of radical socialists who were revolutionary in their sentiment but not yet ready to follow the left wing in a split.

These forces did not stay with the right wing either. They dropped out in discouragement at the three way split.

The two Communist Parties emerged with identical programmes. To make matters worse they now both felt the brunt of the persecutions of the American bourgeoisie.

### Deported

During the Palmer raids thousands were arrested and imprisoned and thousands of foreign-born revolutionaries were deported.

The two Communist Parties were forced underground, which cut them off from the working class.

In accordance with the decision of the Executive Committee of the Communist International the two parties held a joint underground convention in Bridgeman, Michigan in the Spring of 1920.

The CPUS united with the CLP to form the United Communist Party, and sent a declaration to the Second Congress of the Communist International:



the Putilov plant in action during the Russian Revolution

"1. To work together at the Congress as a single group.

2. To ask the ECCI to instruct the elements who refuse to recognise a complete unification to unite on the bases of the Communist International.

3. To subordinate ourselves on the question of unification to the decisions of the ECCI."

Because of their isolation from the working class in the underground movement there was a development towards sectarian positions.

A strong anti-parliamentary and anti-trades union faction was developing.

The 1920 convention adopted a resolution on the trade union question which called for the boycott of the American Federation of Labour.

It said: "Any member who had to join the AFL should work in it as a communist worker in a bourgeois congress—not to build it but to break it up."

Many of these ideas were inspired by Frainer who was an influential spokesman, allied with the Dutch and German ultra-lefts.

"This struggle must be waged ruthlessly and it must unflinchingly be brought as we brought it—to a point when all the incorrigible leaders of opportunism and social chauvinism are completely discredited and driven out of the trades unions."

The American unification, on the insistence of the ECCI, was complete by the following year, in the Spring of 1921.

Ruthenberg and Gitlow were in prison. Frainer, Reed and other leading members were at the Second Congress of the Communist International.

James P. Cannon, who was elected at the previous convention, was joined on the Central Committee by Jay Lovestone, Winstone and Bittelman.

### Legalisation

This new leadership began a struggle for the legalisation of the movement.

This was the only way to reach the American working class. But the resistance of the foreign born members was too great for this to happen overnight.



Jay Lovestone

Foster began to develop the trade union activity on a broad scale under the name of the Trade Union Education League, financed by the Profintern.

Cannon, Lovestone, Bittelman and Winstone came to an agreement with the remainder of the Socialist Party left wing who had since formed the Workers Council—to form the Workers Party, which became the legal expression of the UCP.

But some of the diehard undergrounders could not accept legal work through the Workers Party. 3,000 of them left to form the Proletarian Party.

This departure did not heal the rift. There was still a strong sectarian influence in the party ranks which developed into the "Goose Caucus". This caucus gave support to the forming of the Workers Party. But they would not accept it as the legal expression of the Communist Party.

In November 1921, under the guise of the Workers Party Benjamin Gitlow stood for Mayor of New York City.

After six months effort

Communist Party? The Cannon-Lovestone leadership thought not. They became known as the 'liquidators faction'.

Both Cannon, representing the liquidators and Katterfeld for the Goose caucus (who got their name by cackling like geese at meetings) went to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International and were both afforded equal representation on the American commission. The Russian delegation consisted of Zinoviev, Bukharin and Radek.

### Turning point

Cannon, who was chairman of the Workers Party, managed to meet Trotsky for one hour, to put forward the case for the liquidators.

This, according to Cannon was the great turning point in the long struggle for legalisation of the Party.

At the end of the meeting Trotsky said he supported the liquidators and was sure Lenin and the other leaders would do the same.

The result of discussion on the American Commission was unanimously in favour of the liquidators.

They also recommended that the party advocate work for the construction of a labor party based on the trade unions.

In August-September John Pepper arrived from the Hungarian Communist Party and was assigned to work with the Hungarian Federation of the US party.

### Manipulated

He began on the editorial board of the Hungarian Federation of the Party and was not long in assuming complete control. By February 1923, Pepper dominated the American CP.

Pepper manipulated everyone who stood in his way. He gained credibility by rehabilitating most of the defeated undergrounders, and welded them together into a faction to serve his own ends.

With a faction behind him, Pepper was now in a position to deal with the other leaders—Lovestone, Ruthenberg (now out of prison) and Foster who had now come into the leadership. Cannon was still at the Comintern.

### Legal status

The third national convention of the Communist Party was held on 7 April 1923.

A formal communication



William Z. Foster

was sent to the Workers Party to the effect that the Communist Party had decided to dissolve itself because the Workers Party had developed into the Communist Party. (It was not until 1925 that the name "Workers Party" changed to Communist Party).

This gave them legal status.

Now the "United Front" tactic which until then had been for American Communists an abstract literary exercise could be put into practice in the fight within the emerging "Farmer Labor Party".

While the Communist Party had been struggling for nearly four years for legalisation, the AFL had organised the Labor Party of Cook County and in 1919 had polled 50,000 votes for John Fitzpatrick.

He was president of the Chicago Federation of Labor and chairman of the National Committee for Iron and Steel Workers.

### Adventurism

It was Fitzpatrick who in November 1919 took the initiative in calling for a national conference in Chicago out of which emerged the American Labor Party in 1920.

The Farmer Labor Party was created in 1922. Seeking a broader base, the FLP sent out an appeal to trade unions and leftist political parties.

The Workers Party agreed to attend its convention in Chicago on July 3, 1923.

But after four years of struggle against sectarianism and fighting for legalisation the Party now went overboard wholesale towards adventurism. Under the leadership of Pepper and the influence of Foster—who had worked with Fitzpatrick in the steel strike of 1919—they jumped in at the deep end of the Farmer Labor Party convention.

By hook or by crook they made sure they had the majority of delegates at the Chicago convention.

They even sent some of their members posing as Flower Arrangement Society delegates or delegates from Health and Sports Societies and Dance and Choral Societies.

At the Convention the AFL trade union delegates representing sections of workers found themselves in the minority—outnumbered by a flood of disguised communists.

Fitzpatrick repudiated the conference but the Workers Party took over.

The result of this Pyrrhic victory was to send a chastised Fitzpatrick back to join a block with the labour bureaucracy and to destroy the tolerance of the AFL for the Workers Party.

The developments which came out of this escapade threw into question the Workers Party's whole method of work and how Communists should approach American workers.

The protracted struggle on this question was to last six years. It reflected the contradictions of different class forces and political factions.

The struggle was one between the petty bourgeois and the proletarian tendency. Pepper, Ruthenberg and Lovestone represented the New York intellectuals, without experience in the class struggle.

### Severe consequences

Foster and Cannon, however, were both formerly IWW members representing the workers of the mid-west.

But no sooner had some headway begun to be made on this front, with the growing dominance of the Cannon-Foster camp, than developments within the international class struggle intervened.

Within the isolated Soviet state a bureaucratic caste around Stalin was consolidating its grip on political power. In doing so these bureaucrats set out also to transform the Comintern into a tool for their opportunist manoeuvres—with severe consequences for American communism.



Diego Rivera's mural showing Lenin and Trotsky with delegates to the Third International.

Lenin launched an attack upon these concepts with his pamphlet *Left Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, in which, in the chapter "Should Revolutionists Work in Reactionary Trade Unions?" he said:

"... The struggle against Comperses, against Messrs. Jouhaux, Henderson, Merrheim, Legien and co. in Western Europe is much more difficult than the struggle against our Mensheviks who represent an absolutely homogeneous social and political type.

They formed legal groups for holding lectures. To organise these groups, the party was affiliated to the American Labor Alliance, which became the legal platform for the UCP.

In 1921 William Z. Foster joined the UCP. He was a former IWW syndicalist and secretary-treasurer of the National Committee for Organising Iron and Steel Workers.

Foster had practically led the great steel strike in 1919. He had also gained much influence in the AFL.

he was ruled off the ballot by the Board of Elections, because he was serving a jail sentence.

The American economy was now on the upturn. It was the beginning of a period of boom which was accompanied by a political relaxation. Persecutions were over. A more liberal mood prevailed in the USA.

With the programme of the Communist Party, the Workers Party came to the forefront as the real CP in fact, if not in name.

The question now arose—did they need an illegal

### FURTHER READING

"The First Ten Years of American Communism" by James P. Cannon, Pathfinder Press, 1962.  
 "The History of American Trotskyism" by James P. Cannon, Pathfinder Press.  
 "Trotskyism Today" supplements 4,5 and 6.

# WEIMAR: WARTS AND ALL

The Hayward Gallery is currently showing a large and stimulating exhibition called 'Neue Sachlichkeit and German Realism of the Twenties'.

This is just one part of an ambitious and timely presentation sponsored by the Goethe Institute of major cultural facets of the ill-fated Weimar Republic.

Following on from the massively popular film 'Cabaret', this whole programme of visual arts, architecture, music, theatre, poetry and films may yet elevate the thriving Weimar cult to a full-blown fad.

While avoiding simplistic (and defeatist) parallels, there is no doubt that the current capitalist crisis, governmental instability and growing political polarisation serve to induce a broader interest and comprehension of 'Weimar Culture' than hitherto.

## Distrust of novelty

While in Weimar's grim austerity, the romantic, messianic, idealism of Expressionism was rejected for a concern with everyday tangible experience, now the Op art, Pop art, kinetics and cool Hockney of Britain's swinging '60s have turned to a distrust of the headlong pursuit of novelty.

The Whitechapel Art Gallery's exhibition 'Art for Society' attested in an uneven way to the growing concern of artists to direct their work in social and political directions, stimulating a re-examination of past political artists, particularly of the twenties.

Last year's exhibition of the photo montage work of John Heartfield at the ICA was a milestone in this rediscovery process.

## Study of people

The terms 'Sachlichkeit' (objectivity) and 'Realism' are useful only for differentiating this movement from earlier modes: the central theme of most artists in this exhibition is a study of people.

But the meticulous attention paid to details and textures generally serves to reinforce a denigration of bourgeois values as encapsulated in individuals and their surroundings, and a statement of bestiality as a norm.

A giant of this exhibition is Otto Dix, at last receiving the prominence he deserves. His large canvases record in stunning detail the bloated, the mercenary, the putrefying and the war-cripples.

An early work of his depicts three soldiers composed of artificial limbs and virtually held together by spare-part surgery, nonchalantly playing cards, their strap-on appliances rendered more shockingly by the montage method of the work itself.

'Drawing for Grosstadt',

Tom Winters reviews the art exhibition 'Neue Sachlichkeit and German Realism of the Twenties' currently showing at the Hayward Gallery, South Bank, London until January 14, 1979.



Max Herrmann Neisse in the background—by Christian Schad

has a central panel of jazz-decadent high-life flanked on either side by war victims on crutches and venal leering prostitutes.

Most of Dix's depiction of women rests on this stereotype, suggesting a hardened misogyny and a Protestant element to his social criticism.

Stylistically, the grotesque linear quality of Dix, plus his concern for detailed representation is reminiscent of Grunewald's 'Crucifixion'.

## Sheer ugliness

But his scorching portrayal of sheer ugliness, (see the old man's varicose legs in 'Mismatched Lovers!') places him in a category of his own.

Three other portraits are cooler but razor sharp in their characterisation, bordering on caricature.

## Sinister night-life

The ashen-face of "journalist Sylvia von Harden" casts a cold and penetrating gaze from a marbled table against a lurid red background—with monocle, cigarette and dubious gender, a monument to Berlin's sinister night-life.

In a strikingly different and expressionist work, the fragile figure of the "Poet Ivar von Lucken" is wafted up by the window's angle to ethereal heights.

George Grosz, (who worked in close liaison with

Dix during this period in the Rote Gruppe) is well represented in this exhibition with many large aggressive brush-drawings of war cripples, profiteers and sullen unemployed.

He brilliantly used a futuristic scrambling of forms to dissect and reveal the political realities of the Weimar Republic. Of particular interest were his water-coloured drawings, which seen directly, are as bright and dynamic as early works by Kandinsky.

Rudolph Schlichter shares with Grosz a sharp draftsmanship, but focussing on resigned and burnt-out individuals like "Unemployed Waiter".

Four portraits display a bold and free use of water-



Disabled Soldier—by George Grosz

colour on wet paper; however, his heavy oil-portraits like "Oscar Maria Graf" are less successful.

Of particular merit are the many drawings by Max Beckman called simply 'Hell'. Executed in 1919, these dynamic and highly condensed compositions recount almost journalistically the instability, deprivation, criminality and social breakdown of that revolutionary year.

Electrically charged and angular, they relate more than other artists to the Expressionist tradition.

Some, like the depiction of Luxemburg's torture in the hands of the Freikorps, were used as the basis for larger paintings, but without significant improvement.

## 'Snap shot'

A near-photographic sense of realism is achieved by Chris Schad. In a series of portraits, individuals isolated in a crowd, stare out grimly without illusions, while other figures are cut off the picture so as to emulate 'snap-shot' photography. (Full circle since the early photographers who rigidly adhered to conventions of painters' composition!)

An artist who perhaps most approximates the label 'New Objectivity' is Hans Mertens, who is represented by several 'still life' near monochrome paintings of banal household objects presented in a rigorous, and satisfying composition.

The concern for surface appearance; the belief that appearances can instigate a greater potential for visual drama than abstractions has led many of these artists towards photography as a standard of representation

or point of departure for their work.

It is therefore pertinent of the organisers of this exhibition to have included a substantial section of contemporary photography.

Much of this is concerned with patterns and textures in everyday life, and some landscape photographs that dramatically contrast the metropolis with the countryside, have their painterly counterparts.

Of special interest are some book and magazine covers designed by John Heartfield for the German Communist Party.

While not all artists associated with Neue Sachlichkeit were 'left wing' the overall direction of the movement certainly was.

The exhibition leaves no doubt of the artists' intention of producing a popular and accessible form of communication concerned above all with man himself and his created environment—the industrialised city.

While the form of this work is static and not concerned with innovation, the content involved a language consistent with philosophical materialism and the experience of the working class.

This approach or movement has scarcely advanced since its decisive eclipse by the fascists taking power in 1933.

## Unique opportunity

This exhibition offers a unique opportunity to study both the painting style and the Weimar Era that stands behind it—warts and all.

The exhibition closes on 14 January, 1979. On Mondays the price of admission is reduced to only 20p.



Unemployed Waiter—by Schlichter



The family as we know it today is often suggested as being representative of the natural order of things.

This myth has been ably exploded by Engels in his book—*The Origins of the Family Private Property and the State*.

He shows quite clearly, that the family unit and roles taken up within it are not rigidly fixed but change in line with the development and requirements of society.

The "nuclear family" in which married parents in each single isolated household undertake the full responsibility for child-rearing and domestic labour has developed in response to the requirements of capitalist economy.



Social waste

The social waste of such a system—in which each household then needs its own cooking, washing, cleaning, gardening and entertainment facilities rather than relying on planned, socialised amenities—is obvious.

So is the profits to be made by whole sections of capitalist industry by perpetuating the arrangement.

But more important for capitalism is the way in which this system, by oppression of women within the isolated household, provides a cheap means of providing male labour for exploitation in the production process.

Thus basic chores, such as washing, cooking and child-care are given to women in order to liberate men for production.

The burden of these mundane tasks on women is today an ever increasing one, as the effects of public spending cuts force more and more social and health care problems back into the home.

This has meant in practice that women have become doubly oppressed.

Under conditions of general exploitation of the working class, women also remain oppressed in the domestic situation.

### Complex question

The question of the family and the role played by women within it is a very complex one.

Two basic inter-related questions have to be tackled: the oppression of women and the disciplining of the class.

Neither can be completely resolved on its own.

Although it is necessary to challenge the backward ideas of many workers, including women as to the role of women in the family, the main thrust must be against capitalism itself.

The material and technological pre-requisites for liberating women from their daily chores certainly exist.

It would be a very simple step to provide state nurseries, communal catering and laundry and an

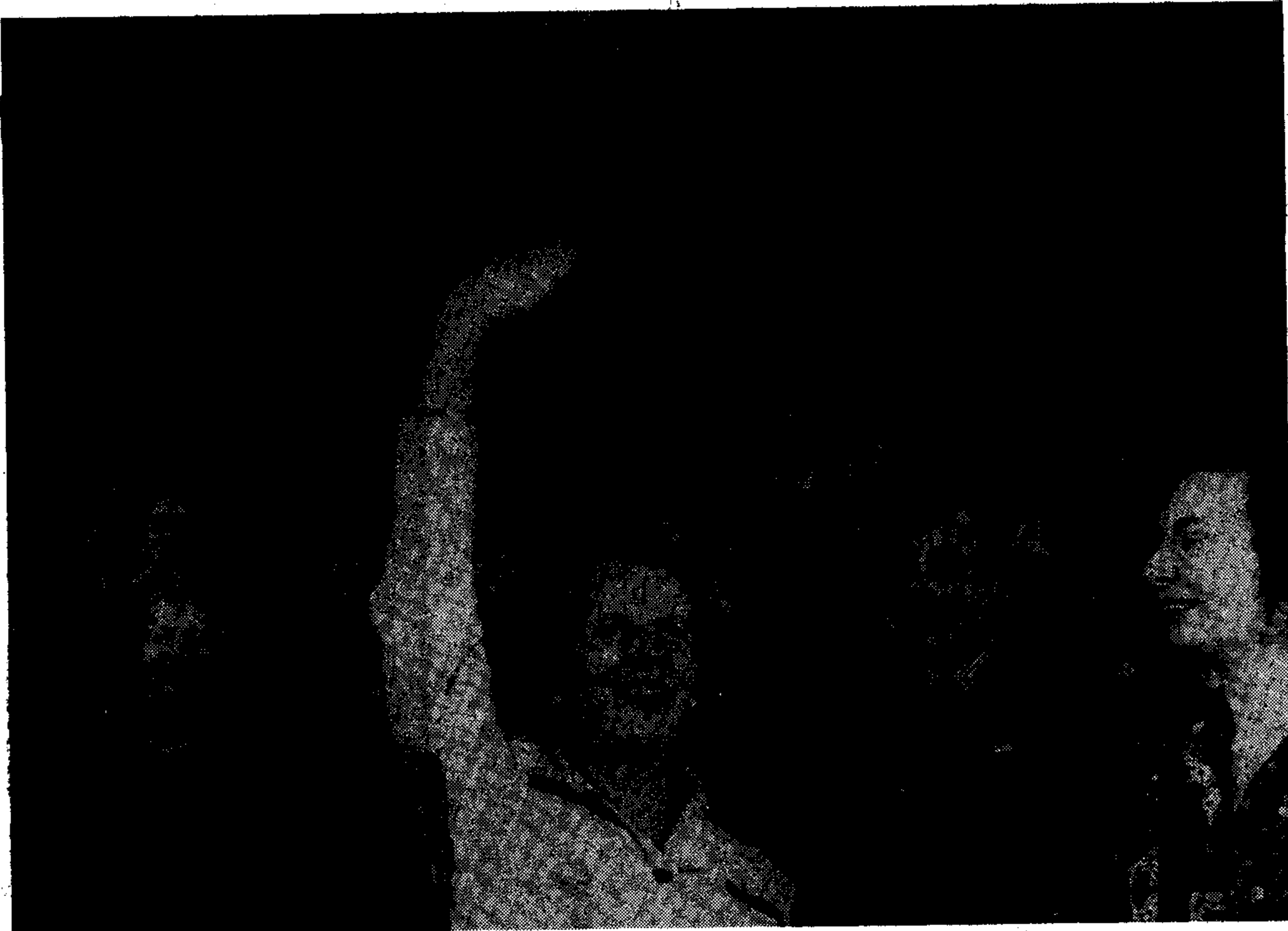
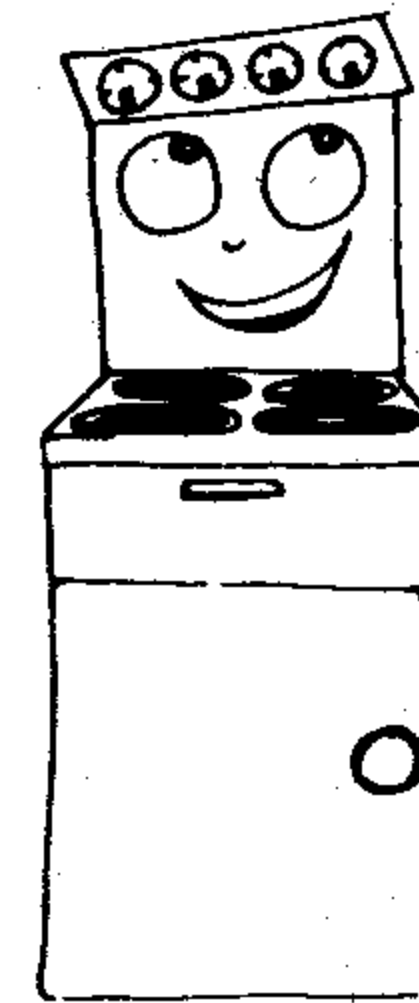


The full burden of cuts falls on working women

# HAPPY FAMILIES?



By Ron Steel



Thatcher—leading priestess of the cult of the family

improved health-care system.

But the resources for such a change remain tied up in the system of private ownership, which today, in fact, is in the process of dismantling even the limited facilities which do exist.

There is no way in which any of these facilities can be extended under capitalism, particularly capitalism in crisis.

### Socialist economy

The oppression of women, as with the general oppression of the working class can only be overcome by liberating the means of production from private ownership and establishing a planned socialist economy.

It is hardly surprising that in this period of economic crisis, there are moves being made to

strengthen the family.

In a climate of worsening conditions of pay and employment for the working class, the class begins to increase its awareness of its own strength and under a revolutionary leadership could well fulfill its role of overthrowing capitalism.

Developments in this direction have to be halted.

One method used by the defenders of capitalism—whether Tory or Labour—is to strengthen the propaganda on the subject of the family.

The capitalist class is now moving onto the offensive. The question of the family is being increasingly linked to that of 'law and order'.

### Central plank

A number of Tories have taken up the question and a

conference is being held to discuss them in detail.

Labour Party members are not far behind and often make proposals just as reactionary.

Callaghan has made the family and law-and-order a central plank in the next election campaign and his voice is echoed at every level of social democracy.

One working party, consisting of Sheffield councillors, predominantly Labour Party members, have produced a report, dealing with the subject of vandalism.

This report raises a number of important points worth quoting:

"There is a need to examine the family unit and to ask whether in the later stages of the 20th century it is beginning to break down. What measures, if any, can be taken to restore family unity?"

A number of possibilities are suggested. The first suggestion is that mothers should be paid a salary to stay at home to look after their children, to bring families closer together and hopefully to keep an eye on the potential vandals.

The report goes on:

"But surely the role of a mother is the most important part of family life . . . it is felt that the present child allowance should be ended and in its place the mother would be given a salary if she wished to stay at home to continue to look after the children.

"On the other hand, of course, she could choose to go out to work but then there would be no child allowance nor state salary."

### Reactionary demand

These suggestions raise the question of whether or not women should be paid "wages for housework".

This is a demand which has been taken up and



Also campaigning in defence of the family, Callaghan

fought for by sections of the feminist movement, where it has been applauded as a progressive development.

In fact, it is a reactionary demand, which in practice would only reassert that the role of women lies in the domestic situation, one of the sources of oppression, and accepts their permanent isolation from the organised workers' movement.

The demand of wages for housework, seemingly "progressive", becomes a diversion away from the real source of oppression, and, by shackling the woman more strongly to the home and domestic labour, has the opposite effect, in the long term, to what is desired.

### Penalised

The report from Sheffield, however, places the demand in an even more reactionary context, calling for those who refuse to stay in the home to be penalised.

The report goes on to say that the parental role is of paramount importance in "fashioning and forming opinions in young minds" and that logically, therefore, parents should have overall responsibility for the problems of vandalism and hooliganism, including actual sharing of punishment with young offenders.

As already stated, the family and law and order are two topics on the lips of many a prominent Tory.

The fact that the cry is now widely taken up by social democrats highlights the fact that the Labour Party or government has nothing to offer the working class.

Beginning from the assumption that vandalism is a problem stemming from the family and not a symptom of capitalism in crisis, with massive youth unemployment and low wages, the Labourites see the answer as being in the family.

This suits them very well.

It enables them to duck, yet again, the real issue at stake—what kind of society can resolve the problems facing the working class?

### Day to day struggle

For men and women to be fully liberated the working class must overthrow capitalism.

In the day to day struggles for women's rights the reformists of the Labour Party must be challenged and removed and a party built capable of leading the working class to power.

Social revolution alone can liberate the resources to provide for a progressive change in which the claustrophobic bourgeois family unit will little by little be replaced by a wider social unit, in which human relationships are allowed to develop free from the fetters of domestic labour and exploitation.

# INDUSTRIAL NEWS



The House of Holland mass picket

## HOUSE OF HOLLAND NEW MASS PICKET CALL

December 11 has now been named by the House of Holland Strike Committee as the day for the next mass picket of the firm's strike-hit warehouse.

The success of the first such action two weeks ago has given the strikers much needed encouragement following week after week of bureaucratic evasion and

duplicity by their TGWU full-time officials since the dispute began over two months ago.

Although such treatment of recognition strikes is typical within the TGWU, the bureaucracy's manoeuvres around this one take some beating.

Following the usual pledges of all out support beforehand once the strike started and the workers

sacked, this turned into outright hostility to the strikers and their demands.

The company's recognition 'agreement' with USDAW, at one time correctly derided and dismissed by Geoff Hulett (the union's Oxford District Officer) as a ploy to keep out union organisation, was subsequently seized on as a reason for now saying the issue was an "inter-union dispute".

The shopworkers union, however, could produce no evidence of any members in the company.

Another tactic has been to deliberately confuse the question of which of the union's districts is responsible, leaving the strikers stranded between the Northampton and Oxford offices.

In addition, the officials have instructed the workers' union branch secretary to resist calls to convene a meeting, isolating them further from the union machinery.

A strike committee delegation confronted Regional Secretary Mathers a month ago but his reassurances have proved to be worthless.

Meanwhile, his officials bitterly oppose the mass pickets call.

### Owner

House of Holland's owner, Mrs van der Ploeg, challenged by pickets last week, said she would rather join them on the dole than give in, a phrase familiar to many involved in recognition strikes over the past few years.

If she is to be made to eat those words the campaign for blacking must be stepped up.

Support for the next mass picket can improve the conditions for such a campaign.

## Why join the WSL?

Quite frankly, we're unique!

We're the only movement that fights patiently and relentlessly for the building of a Trotskyist party capable of mobilising the working class in the struggle for state power and the establishment of a socialist society.

In doing so, the WSL alone does not shrink from head-on battles with the existing leaders of the working class — whether these be 'left' talking Labourites union bureaucrats, or Stalinists of the Communist Party.

In these battles we set out to prove to workers both in theory and in practice the necessity for a new leadership and for a programme of transitional demands which, starting from today's problems and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers in

struggle to grasp the need for socialist revolution.

For this reason, though we are smaller than some self-styled 'revolutionary' groups, the WSL has featured in the forefront of pay struggles in British Leyland, in the fight against the sale of jobs by TUC leaders, in the struggle against the cuts, in unionisation struggles, and in the fight against bureaucratic dictatorship within the unions.

This method of approach — rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, and any form of concession to the counter-revolutionary reformist or Stalinist bureaucracy — is of course essential for the working class not only in Britain but internationally.

In taking up international issues the WSL points out not only the obligation of British workers to support the Irish liberation struggle and revol-

utionary struggles such as those in Iran and Southern Africa, but also the necessity for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of socialist revolution.

The WSL is not the biggest movement on the left in Britain nor is it the easiest to be a member of. But in its approach to both theory and practice it is the only really serious revolutionary movement.

When you look at the struggles now under way and the problems faced by the working class, the necessity for a principled leadership is unmistakable.

WHY NOT JOIN US? Fill in the form below for more details, or approach your local branch, who will gladly supply more information about our programme, policies, and perspectives.

## Picket blinded—£25

The TGWU's scandalous treatment of the Garners strikers was highlighted by several events last week.

With heavy fines being imposed on strikers and their supporters for such heinous crimes as obstructing the highway, Mrs Margolis (wife of Garners boss Cyril) received a paltry £25 fine at Marlborough St. on Monday.

After several adjournments because of her refusal to attend the hearing, she pleaded guilty to common assault in an incident in which her blow had caused a striker to lose partial sight in one eye.

As the *Daily Telegraph* pointed out last week, the nature of the charge precludes any chance of extensive damages being won by the injured striker—Jalil Khan.

Whilst an example among many of the class nature of British justice the incident is a further indictment of Region 1's agreement with the police to curtail the right to picket.

The refusal of the TGWU to mobilise a single substantial delegation to the picket line alongside this agreement with the police to limit numbers to six a restaurant, has disarmed the strikers and given the police official sanction to harrass and arrest the strikers.

### Tribune picket

The final act of treachery in this process is the union's refusal to pay the fines of those arrested—leaving individual supporters to carry the financial burden of such fines.

To the embarrassment of the Regional leadership, eight "left" MP's including Martin Flannery, Dennis Skinner, Jo Richardson and Audrey Wise picketed Oxford Street Garners on Tuesday lunchtime—more than the agreed limit.

Flannery's protestations (intended as the usual token gesture of support) that the police's arbitrary limits on picketing was 'intimidation' pinpointed the depth of the TGWU's betrayal and, to the obvious embarrassment

## Fine!

of the *Morning Star*, took a position to the left of the Communist Party.

The day of mass picketing called by the Greater London Association of Trades Councils on 8 December represents an important step.

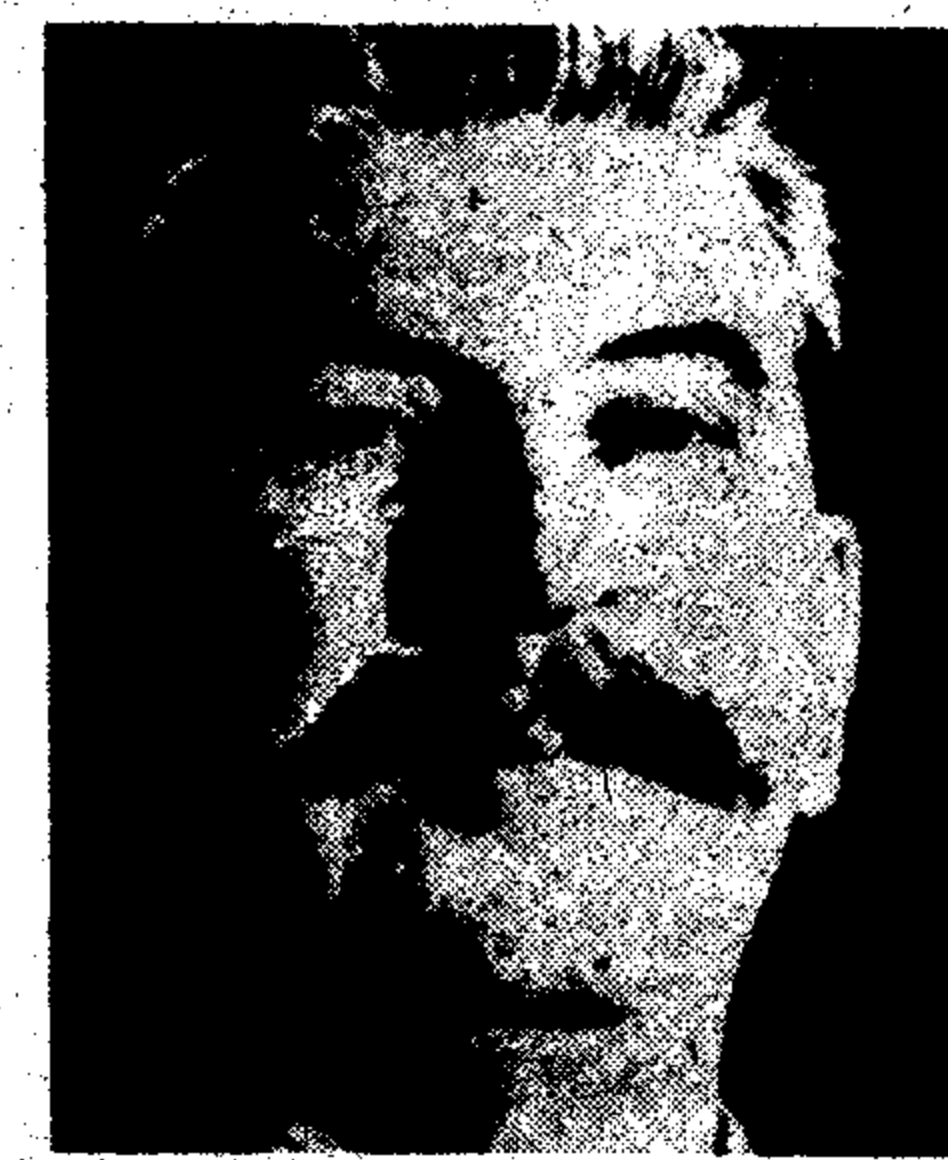
Although not decisive in itself such a mobilisation provides a valuable morale booster to the strikers and focuses the attention of wider layers of the labour movement on the strike.

If supported by large numbers it will also challenge by its effectiveness the union's refusal to mobilise mass pickets, organise secondary blacking and pay the strikers adequate finance.

Because of the potential threat of such mobilisations GLATC, headed by Stalinist Stiller, and Region 1 headed by Stalinist Staden will do their best by planned inaction to ensure that the action on December 8 is a flop.

Success on this day will therefore help strengthen the strikers fight not only against the company but against their own leadership.

## 'Communists' Against Revolution



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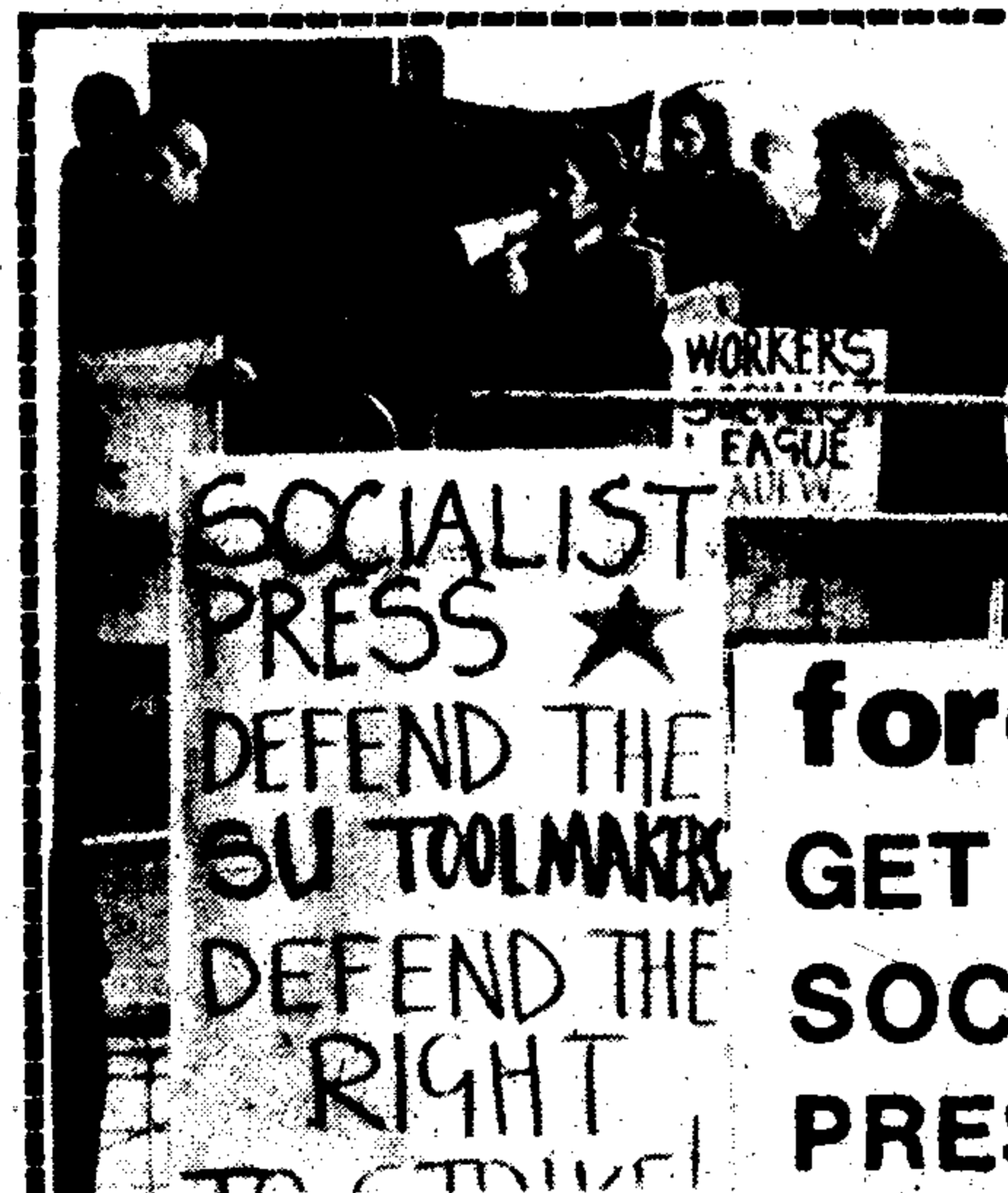
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# Convenors hatch BL pay sell-out

A major sell-out on wages is being hatched in British Leyland.

Despite the vote of the Combine Committee a month ago for plant-by-plant bargaining, and the two-week strike by the Drews Lane plant demanding plant bargaining, attempts are being made to transfer all negotiations to national level.

A meeting of the BL Cars Joint Negotiating Committee (LCJNC) was held last Thursday—at which all participants were sworn to secrecy.

## Full advantage

At it, the company took full advantage of the willingness of the right wing and Communist Party to accept a deal at any price, and made a modified offer.

This includes an offer to pay the nationally agreed premium rates (for overtime and night shift) from February 1, 1979.

Yet the company are obligated to pay these rates from November 1, 1978 quite irrespective of the pay review!

They also say they will pay a 5% increase on the basic rate,

backdated to November 1.

But both of these "offers" would be conditional on full acceptance, by all BL car plants, of the so-called "parity" proposals and the highly contentious new grading structure.

## Hamstring

The new grading structure involves the acceptance of a rigid corporate wage set-up which would hamstring individual plants in the future, and put negotiations into the hands of national officials.

But the LCJNC voted 26-1 to meet again this Wednesday and receive the same proposals in written form.

This decision flatly contradicts existing Combine Committee policy, and has effectively ended plant-level negotiations.

## Plans are clear

This will please the Longbridge convenor, Stalinist Derek Robinson, who has long advocated corporate bargaining.

The right wing and the CP are clearly determined to avoid

a strike on pay at any price. Their plans are clear.

Wednesday's LCJNC is likely to endorse BL's offer and pave the way for a BL convenors' meeting where the predominance of convenors from skilled sections is likely to produce a further endorsement.

The whole miserable sell-out will then be put to a ballot of the entire BL cars workforce.

This plot must be fought. Plant bargaining must be defended.

## Strike action

The plant claims now submitted must be answered by the company—and separated from the "parity" plan and premium rate increases.

If there is no improvement on the 5% action must be taken. The company's common offer to all BL car plants must be answered by common strike action to defeat Phase 4 and defend jobs and conditions.



BL workers at the Cowley Assembly plant who submitted the first plant claim

# DEFEAT AT INK FIRM

The militant six week strike at the Usher Walker printing inks factory in East London ended last Tuesday.

And the sell-out arranged by NATSOPA bureaucrats ensured that two days later the entire union chapel leadership was sacked from their jobs.

## Reinstatement

The strike began as a fight against threatened redundancies and for money the company is withholding after a previous dispute.

But it soon turned into a fight for reinstatement into NATSOPA after the union bureaucracy expelled 27 strikers; and a fight for the jobs of eight men who were then sacked.

These demands appeared to have been won when, last Monday, union bureaucrat, Dave Hutchinson, told the strikers that the union had reinstated every man both to NATSOPA and to their jobs.

## Probationary

Although the original demands of the strike had not been won, the strikers agreed to return to work, with a number demoralised.

But when the men returned to work they found that what had actually been agreed between Usher Walker and NATSOPA was re-employment,

not re-instatement.

This meant that certain benefits such as sick pay and holiday pay were lost because the 8 men, now "new" employees, had to enter a six month probationary period of employment.

The chapel decided to fight for re-instatement and asked for individuals not to do any overtime.

An official overtime ban, without the Executive Committee's approval, breaks Rule 32 in the NATSOPA rule book!

On Wednesday trouble flared again when the firm's three truck drivers refused to work without NATSOPA supervision.

Usher Walker threatened instant dismissal despite the fact that the three men were desperately trying to find a solution to the problem.

On Thursday the company carried out the threat and sacked all three men.

This situation was made doubly serious by virtue of the fact the three men—Burton, Barratt and Durham—were the FoC, Deputy FoC and chapel secretary!

To have confronted management in this way so soon after a six week strike and shortly before Christmas was a grave tactical mistake.

Many of the workers in the chapel were demoralised and a

motion for strike action was defeated by 34 votes to 26.

## Disciplinary action

The three sacked men have since said that they do not wish to return to work after a vote which effectively endorses their sackings.

Nevertheless, when a temporarily elected FoC met scab NATSOPA official Hutchinson, the following day, he pressed for official backing for their re-instatement.

Hutchinson replied by saying that the three men had both legally and morally 'sacked themselves'.

He also said that any strike action on their behalf would bring disciplinary action by the union.

More expulsions of the remaining militants would give Usher Walker the chance to totally destroy union organisation on the site.

The task of the remaining militants in the factory is to continue to pressure the NATSOPA bureaucracy to support the three sacked men and to begin to re-organise the union in the factory.

The last week has seen an enormous defeat for the workers at Usher Walker.

It is the job of militants in the factory to ensure that it is only a temporary defeat.

# Sanctions divide NUJ

Journalists on provincial papers have stepped up sanctions in their campaign against the five per cent pay limit.

But the inadequacy and divisive nature of the action is already becoming apparent.

Already journalists at Bolton have been dismissed by management for operating the sanctions. The only advice they have received from the NUJ is to hold fast, sit at their desks and 'refuse to accept' that they are sacked.

On some papers the sanctions are being stringently operated and biting. In Bristol the evening paper has been reduced to an emergency edition as management concentrate on the prestigious morning paper.

On others the sanctions are being operated in such a way that management is little inconvenienced.

The pattern suggests that those chapels which argued most strongly for strike action are now the chapels implementing the sanctions to the best effect.

These include a ban on telephones, an end to night work and all flexibility and a stubborn insistence on finishing each job to the satisfaction of the journalist before the next one is begun.

But the employers—who have applied for permission from the Department of Employment (!) to pay 7%

pay rises have not been shifted by the sanctions.

Only an all out strike with a call to printers for support is likely to shift one of the most intransigent sets of employers substantially.

Sanctions could bring a small increase in the offer which will not bring a decisive shift in the living standards of the NUJ members concerned.

The employers' proposals to 'weight' any offer in favour of the better paid journalists must also be rejected.

**Ambulance crews in the W. Midlands have been suspended following the imposition of sanctions in pursuit of their claim for the solution of pay anomalies dating back to reorganisation of the service in 1974.**

Before reorganisation

negotiations conducted at different stations had resulted in differing wage rates and conditions.

Now W. Midland ambulance crews are asking for a general rounding up of wages and conditions to the best obtaining in the area.

The Area Health Authority claim that this would break the government's pay limit.

In a direct move to step up

confrontation the management has deprived the W. Midlands of ambulances. The crews demands have been rejected and without waiting for the dispute to reach the stage of strike action management told ambulance-men to drop their sanctions (which included refusal to report back to base by radio and fill in report sheets) or be suspended.

The TGWU made the dispute

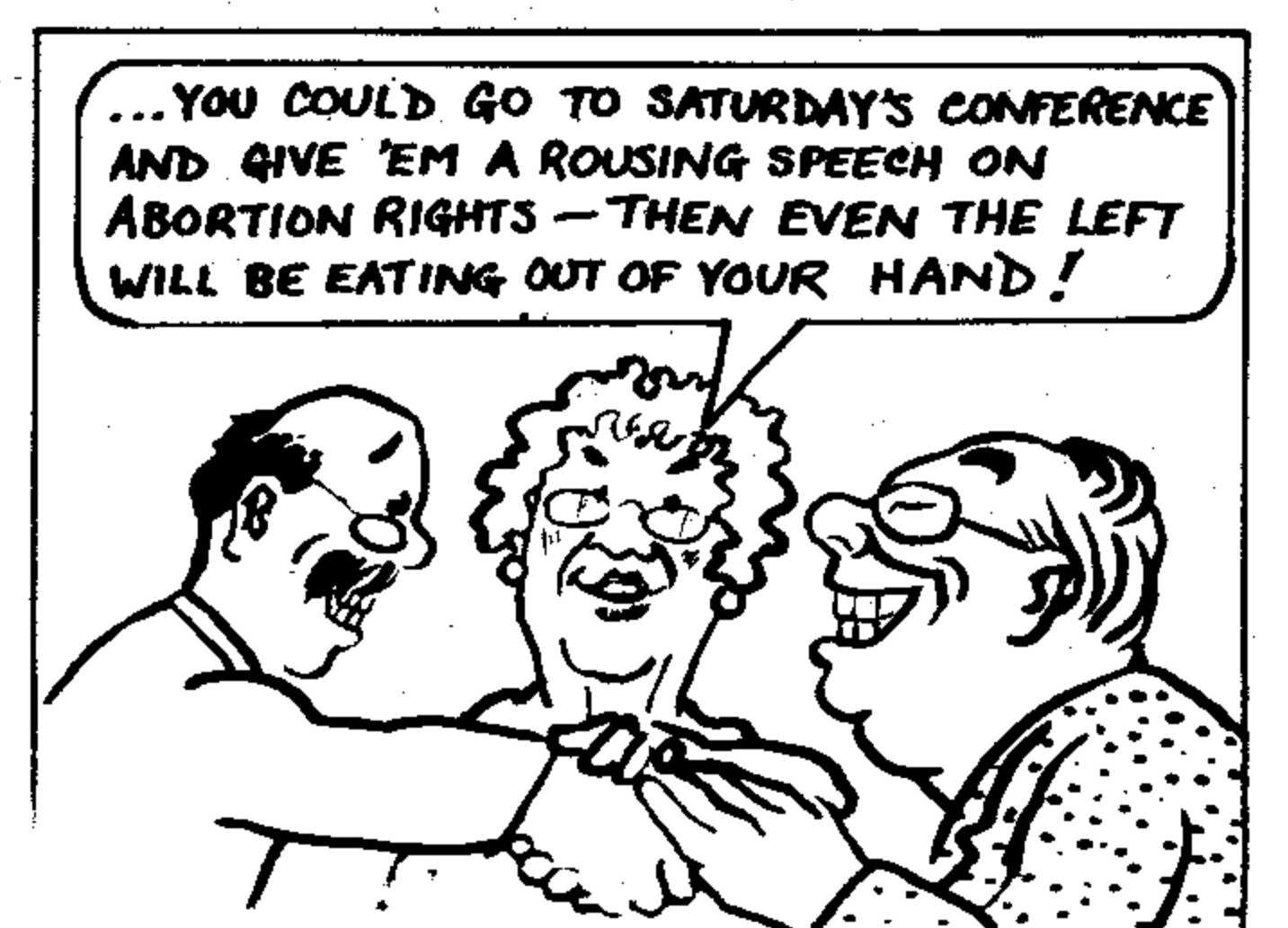
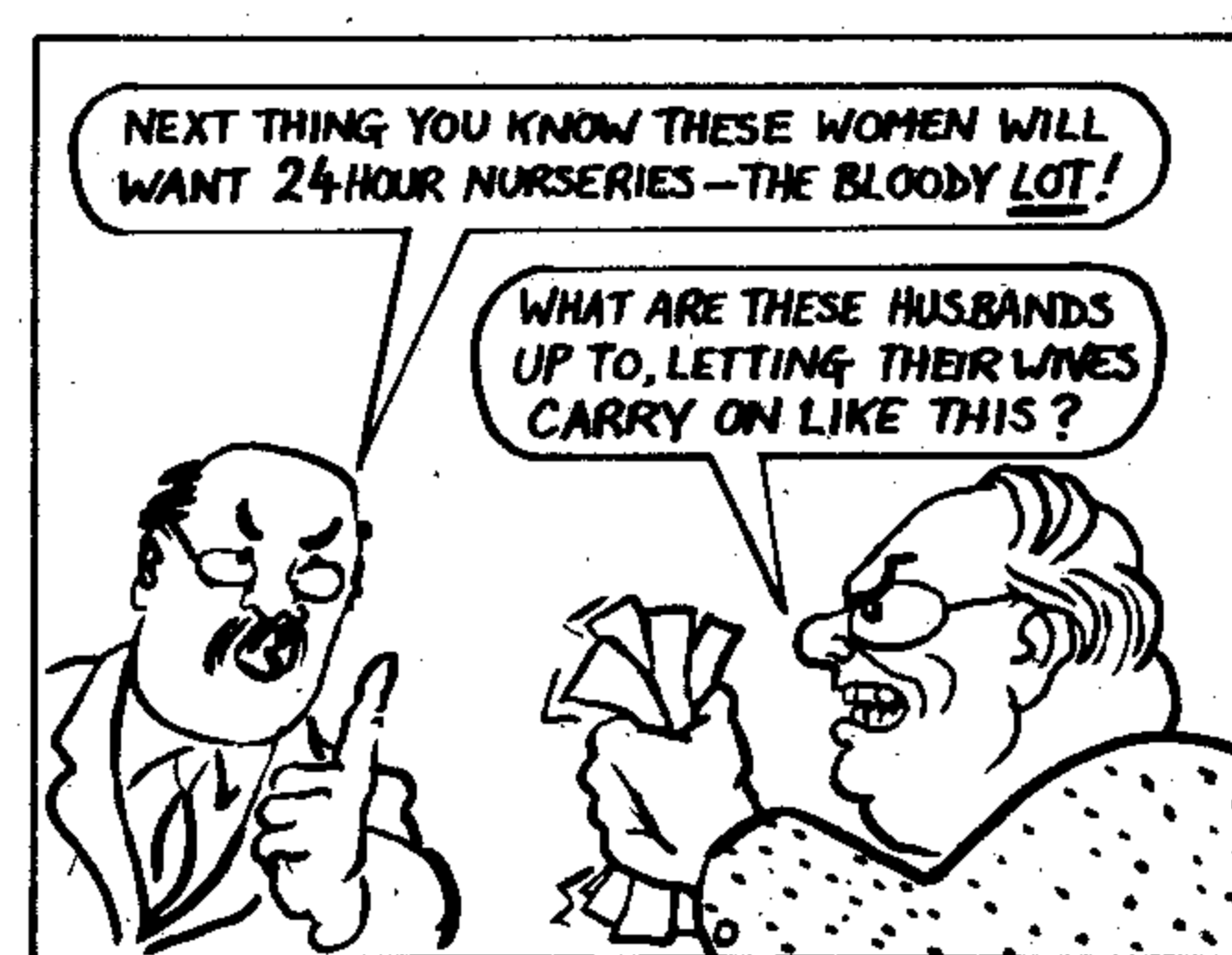
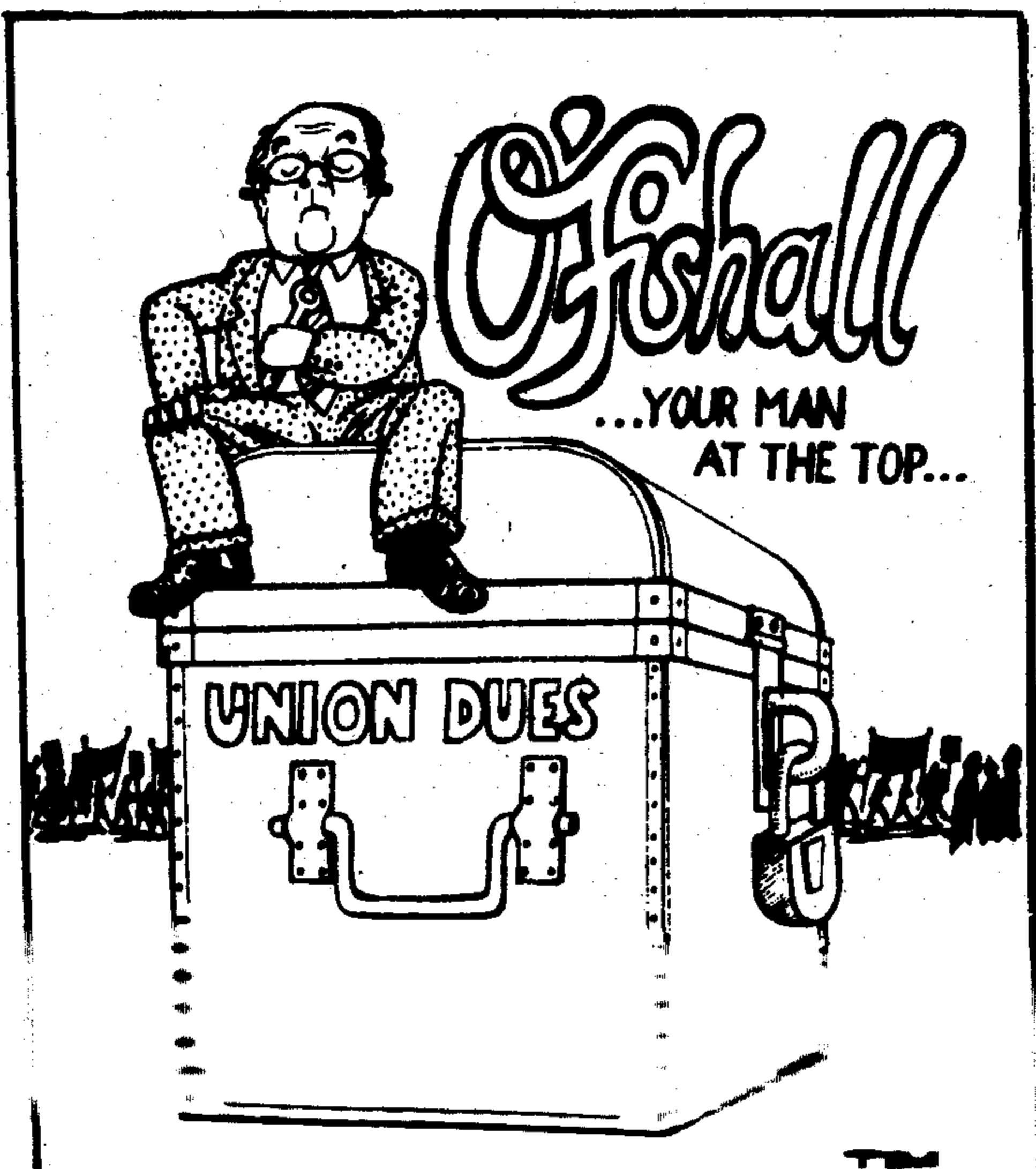
official but NUPE did not follow suit. In last week's *Socialist Challenge* former NUPE full-time official Chris Adamson explains that having failed to persuade NUPE to follow the TGWU he resigned his job.

## Stark contrast

This principled action stands in stark contrast to that of the

Secretary of the Birmingham Trades Council who as chairman of the AHA was responsible for suspending the ambulance crews!

The crews have stuck firm for over a week now in the face of this intimidation. It is important that this fight be linked to that of other workers in the W. Midlands area—especially the bakery workers.



# SOCIALIST PRESS



# THE TIMES BATTLE LINES DRAWN

## BLACKING VITAL IN BAKERS' FIGHT



Maddox

Determined steps have been taken by the Bakers Union in a bid to force employers to concede to their £10 pay demand.

Last weekend, in an almost unprecedented move, a recall delegate conference voted unanimously to expel 2,000 members who have been scabbing on the dispute.

This step has challenged head-on the threats by employers to tear up the closed shop agreement if strikebreakers were expelled.

And it spells out clearly that the union is determined to break from its history of right wing collaboration with management which has left bakers' wages and conditions as some of the lowest in the country.

This stand had the immediate effect of pulling out an additional 400 workers on strike in Peterborough.

scroungers, infested by spies, deserted by cowards, betrayed by scabs, bled by leeches and sold out by their leaders.

"But notwithstanding all this, it is today the most vital potential power this planet has ever known and its historic mission of emancipating workers of the world from the thraldom of the ages, is as certain of ultimate realisation as the setting of the sun. Yours fraternally, Sam Maddox."

### Supporting action

Bakers have already shown their readiness and capacity to withstand police and scab violence.

Now they must intensify demands on other sections of workers for supporting action—particularly blacking action in the docks, which could rapidly halt supplies of grain to the flour mills, and thus put a stop

to the most profitable aspect of the employers' operation.

In every area TGWU branches and stewards' committees in particular should be pressed to take up this fight and to demand their leadership and road transport and docks' stewards organise immediate and total blacking of grain and flour shipments until the £10 pay claim is conceded in full, without strings, to the satisfaction of the bakers' union.

The example of the bakers' struggle must also be taken into the fight in NUPE and other public sector unions on the supposed "Low Pay" campaign.

### Fisher's hope

'Left' demagogue Alan Fisher and his less-left cronies are sitting on their hands on a pay claim for over 1 million

local authority manual workers while a mere 25,000 Bakers carry forward the fight against Phase 4.

Fisher's hope is that he can postpone action until after the bakers' action is over—and thus take the steam out of the £60, 45-hour week claim for his own members.

### Councils of action

Public sector workers must fight this sell-out and discuss ways of linking up alongside bakers and other sections in the struggle against wage control.

This should include the setting up of local councils of action, drawing delegates from all local labour movement organisations and bodies, with the aim of spreading and strengthening the struggle against government pay policy and the TUC bureaucrats whose actions now tacitly defend it.

### Flying pickets

At the same time the union leadership has freed resources for stepping up of flying pickets on flour mills in a bid to cut the supplies that have enabled scabs to continue substantial bread production.

There are signs that increasing numbers of smaller bakeries are settling for the union claim in order to revert to normal production.

Meanwhile last week Bakers Union president Terry O'Neill, speaking to reporters denounced the way in which other union leaders have left their struggle isolated.

"Too many national union officers are more interested in wining and dining, in trips to Europe and America.

"They are more interested in fancy meals than they are in getting down to looking after the interests of their members.

"... some union leaders are siding with the employers, hoping we will be smashed."

(Newsline)

O'Neill went on to call on other low paid sections of workers in the textile trade and in the hospitals to take action alongside the bakers.

### Firm call

General Secretary Sam Maddox has issued a firm call in a letter to every striker, urging solidarity and renewed efforts to force the employers to their knees.

"Ten thousand times has the trade union movement stumbled and fallen and bruised itself, and risen again, to be seized by the throat and choked into insensibility: enjoined by courts, assaulted by thugs, charged by military powers, shot down by regulars, discriminated against by the press, frowned upon by politicians, repudiated by renegades, preyed upon by



Results of IRA bomb campaign: 64 shops wrecked in Dungannon

## Marches defend PoWs

In a massive show of opposition to the British military occupation of Ireland, thousands of demonstrators marched last week through the streets of London, while thousands more defied a government ban to join a similar march in Armagh city.

The marches centred on the demands for the restoration of political status to Irish republican prisoners of war and for the withdrawal of British troops.

During the same weekend the deputy governor of the notorious Long Kesh concentration camp and top screw in charge of 'H' Block—in which over 300 republican and socialist prisoners are being subjected to barbaric torture—was killed by IRA gunmen.

These events, coupled with a renewed bombing campaign in the six counties have brought home clearly the fact that the war of liberation in Ireland is very much alive.

The London demonstration, called by the Prisoners Aid Committee, was

substantially bigger than the last such mobilisation on 9 July of this year.

But there was still a marked shortage of banners from the organised labour movement.

The fight against British repression in Ireland is clearly still not being taken up within the unions by many of the left groups who mobilised their own members for the demonstration.

Without such a turn, the prospect of materially affecting the reactionary stance of the Labour leaders and assisting the fight to force a withdrawal of

British troops from Ireland is minimal.

With this in mind, the WSL contingent carried placards and shouted slogans directed at the need to fight British imperialism in Ireland by fighting for the removal of torture chief Roy Mason and the Labour leadership.

In this way the necessary fight for the restoration of political status and for the self-determination of the Irish people can be seen in its proper connection with the struggle for a revolutionary leadership in the British working class.

Plans to shut down the Times, Sunday Times and Literary and Education Supplements were well advanced as we went to press.

The NGA refused to enter into negotiations with the Times management 'under duress' but have left their members rudderless.

Other print unions have been talking hard and conceding ground fast. But nothing looked likely to stall off the management lock out of close on 4,000 workers—and no strategy for fighting this has been put forward by any of the chapels concerned.

If Times Newspapers do shut then it is likely to be a long time before they reopen.

ing becomes widespread the composing room becomes a small back-up service, dealing with copy which comes into the building from outside sources only. The NGA will have nothing left to sell.

Programme to defeat the lock-out:

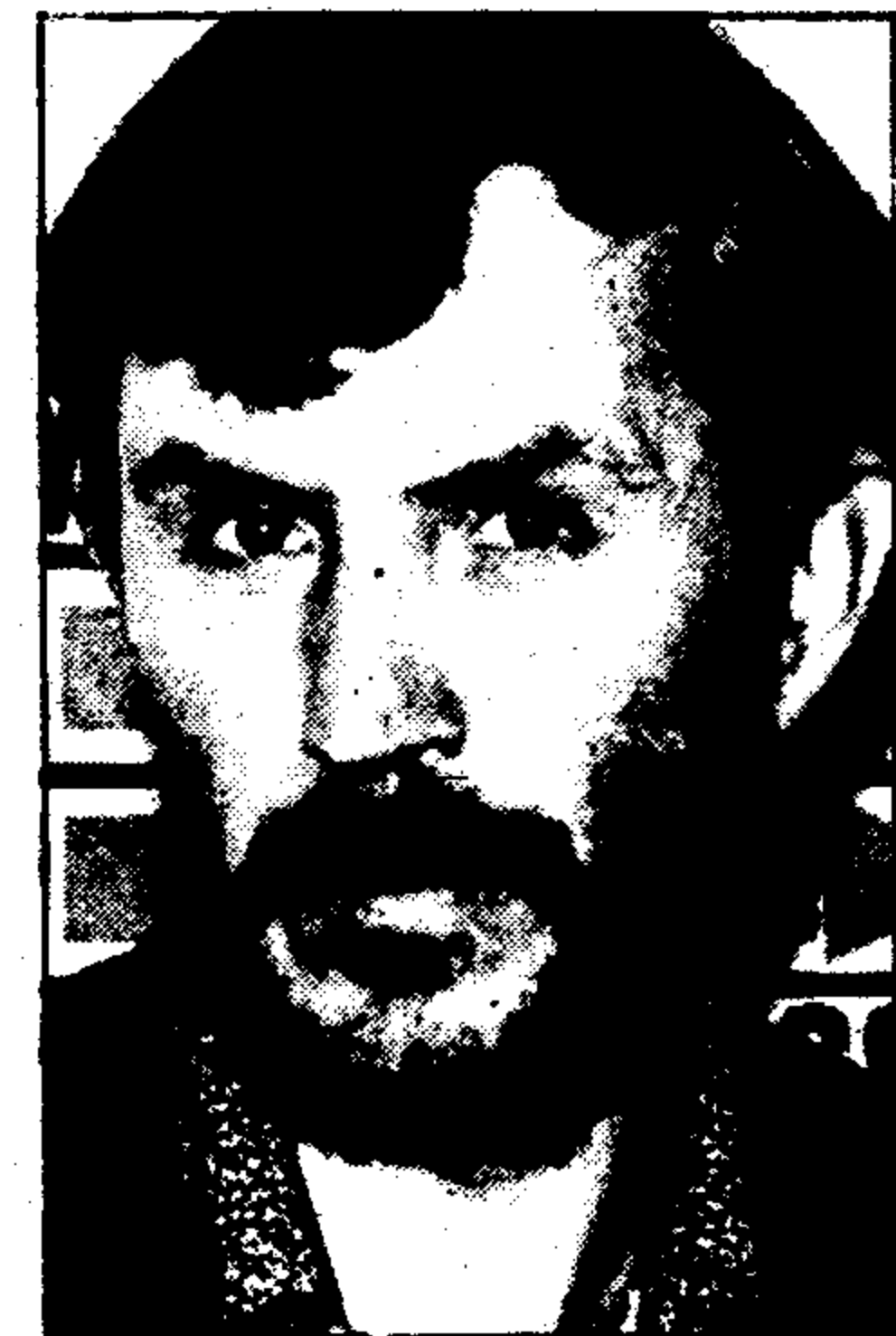
\*Occupy Times buildings: throw out management. Produce a labour movement paper.

\*Call supporting strikes throughout Fleet Street.

\*Demand work sharing on full pay—no loss of jobs.

\*Open the books of Times Newspapers to elected committees of trade unionists.

\*Demand nationalisation of the Times under workers control with no compensation for Lord Thomson and other owners.



Jake Ecclestone

The employers are trying in one bound to jump over the top of the technology introduced into provincial newspapers—not by adopting more advanced technology, but by adopting a more complete destruction of jobs.

Times Newspapers is demanding 'single stroke keyboarding' in which the journalists or advertising staff type their stories directly into the computer.

Although therefore the Times proposals for job cutting are 10% overall, their effect in the NGA compositors would be to axe more than 50% of the workforce.

The NGA are slower to respond to the management carrot of massive redundancy payments simply because for them this is the ultimate betrayal.

Once single stroke keyboard-

The unions are now divided and in retreat. Nowhere has a single call for principled opposition been raised.

This does not mean that the unions collapse at once. Journalists on the Times have declared themselves behind the NUJ's inadequate policy of not negotiating on direct input (another name for single keyboarding) until the NGA has agreed to sell out their own jobs.

But Jake Ecclestone, Times FoC and the nearest thing Fleet Street has to a militant in the NUJ, is contaminated with compromise and 'reasonable' deals.

At the union's annual conference this year, discussing new technology, it was Ecclestone who spoke for the National Executive, against a call for workers control of the means of production.

Now the unions are faced with precisely that choice. The only single weapon there is against a management lock-out is to occupy the plant and to print a labour movement paper under the direct control of the workforce.

Only an immediate occupation of the Times, with management excluded from the building, can begin to show the way forward for Times workers. The question is not so much new fangled technology as old fashioned attacks by the employers.

Once in occupation Times workers must put forward a programme challenging management's right to destroy their jobs and leading to the expropriation of the newspapers from Lord Thomson and his ilk.

## Fund

The November Fund now stands at £584.51—just £15.49 short of our target for the month of £600.

With one day of the month to go after this issue is published readers and supporters have a last opportunity to ensure that we go well over the top.

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