

SOCIALIST PRESS



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**IRAN: Who
are the
Fedayeen?
Centre pages**

NF HIT PROLL MEETING

A 300-strong meeting organised in defence of Astrid Proll was disrupted by a violent attack from 40 National Front thugs last Wednesday.

The Front members chanted and heckled as soon as the meeting—opposing moves to send Proll back to the murderous state forces in West Germany—had opened.

As Proll supporters attempted to make them leave the meeting, fighting broke out, and police intervened. In typical fashion they arrested not only one of the hecklers but also a young Indian man who had tried to defend the meeting against attack.

Proll—alleged to be a former member of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist gang in West Germany—has already suffered two years jail without trial in Germany.

Action is urgently needed to stop the Labour government sending her back to face further ill-treatment.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Low Pay Rally

Saturday 3 March
2.30p.m.—5.00p.m.

Ambassadors Hotel
Upper Woburn Place
London WC1

Credentials 25p

CAMDEN: ALL-OUT STRIKE WINS £60 FOR 35 HOURS

Two key events took place in the public sector pay struggle last week.

On the one hand the hundreds of thousands of workers involved in only "selective" actions were offered a miserable 9% plus £1—an offer endorsed by Alan Fisher of NUPE.

But on the other hand 2,000 workers in Camden who have been on all-out indefinite strike were offered almost the full £60/35 hour week claim.

The Camden settlement will go into pay packets straight away. It provides a £17.00 per week across the board increase for workers in grades A-G. This includes two-thirds of the Camden borough labour force in parks, roads, lighting, swimming

pools, etc.

Dustmen, the highways and road sweepers, however, who comprise the other one-third of the labour force lose out on the settlement.

Supplement

For them the deal allows the Camden Supplement—the £13.10 which Camden Council have conceded in excess of the national offer—to be offset against their existing bonus.

This means that for example a refuse collector obtains a £12.00 increase from £78.63 to £90.64; a loader goes from £70.93 to £81.61.

Despite these bonuses being sold short—and the full claim could almost certainly have been won had the action

continued, as the Workers Socialist League argued—the Camden settlement is a major victory within the low pay struggle.

It is significant that this victory only came after public sector workers broke away from the divisive policy of selective action and embarked on an all-out indefinite strike.

The message is absolutely clear. The Camden settlement must be used as an example and built upon throughout the country.

35 hour week

The weaknesses in the Camden settlement can be guarded against and the full claim won nationally.

This means not only the cash increase but also the 35 hour week.

The derisory national offer of 9% plus £1 must be rejected.

Yet Alan Fisher, who started the campaign with the militant statement that "50% of nothing is buggar all" now says that the unanimous decision of the NUPE Executive to recommend rejection of the offer is a "personal tragedy" to him!

Leaders of the TGWU and GMWU are recommending their members to accept a national offer miles short of the initial joint claim—and COHSE leaders have failed to offer any lead on which way members should vote.

Yet to be mobilised

This retreat from the claim by union leaders takes place under conditions where the membership in many areas has yet to be mobilised in any serious sustained action to win their demands!

The offer must be rejected and the demand raised for all-out strike action to win the full



Barnet dustmen picketing Brent transfer station

claim.

The Workers Socialist League has pointed consistently to the weakness of the official leadership.

We have stressed the need for a new leadership not tied to the coat tails of Callaghan and Healey, or dedicated to preserving in office the present wage-cutting Labour government.

Rights of workers

A leadership is needed that will start from the right of workers to restore and improve their living standards, their conditions of work, their social services, health service and education.

It is because this is our starting point that Workers Socialist League members and supporters have given clear and strong leadership wherever they have been involved in this struggle—particularly in Camden and in the London hospitals.

The crucial question is to build this type of alternative leadership throughout the public sector unions and the labour movement as a whole.

For this reason the Workers Socialist League has called a special conference for public sector workers on Saturday 3 March.

We want to bring together

the experiences so far in the fight against low pay and to discuss the policies necessary both to win the £60/35 hour claim and to defend and extend the social services as a whole.

Such policies include:

*All out indefinite national strike action for the full claim.

*Stop all cuts in public services! Occupy hospitals, schools, nurseries and other facilities threatened with closure!

*Open the books of the local authorities to elected trade union committees, to show how private suppliers, contractors, banks, etc., feed off the public sector, and the need for them to be nationalised, without compensation, under workers' management.

*Improve the crumbling NHS and social services! Restore all cuts and protect the service against inflation through a sliding scale of spending!

For a crash government programme of public works!

*Kick out the scab Callaghan/Healey cabinet! Demand that those 'left' Labour MPs who claim to oppose their wage cutting policies take up this fight in the Labour Party and trade unions.

*Build a principled socialist leadership in the labour movement!



A section of the audience at last Saturday's highly successful Red Youth Rally in London which was attended by about 100 young workers, students and school students. The rally was followed by a film and a disco. A full report of the rally will appear next week.

VOTE NO TO PUBLIC SECTOR SELL-OUT!



INTERNATIONAL

Turkey: the "lull" before the storm

"It is the silence before the storm" writes our correspondent in Turkey.

The silence is predominantly from the left. On the one hand the supposedly "democratic" Ecevit government has used its renewed martial law powers to suppress all left-wing publications in Istanbul.

On the other hand Ecevit's supporters in the trade union and labour bureaucracy refuse to raise even a whisper of

Fragile 'peace' in Chad

Peace has returned to the capital city of Chad, as the real civil war bites still deeper into new areas of the country.

In N'Djamena last Monday, a ceasefire was signed between the troops loyal to President Malloum and the forces supporting Prime Minister Hissene Habre.

Once again, it was the French army and the Sudanese government which dictated these affairs of state.

In formal terms, the ceasefire reconstructs the facade of the 'Government of National Reconciliation', that had been shattered by the recent in-fighting.

But in reality, the balance of power has shifted decisively.

With only 400 soldiers under his command in the capital, Habre was able to seize control of most of the city extremely rapidly.

Depressed by long years of experience with the incompetent officers of the state army, the French military 'advisers' in N'Djamena were delighted by the discipline and efficiency of Habre's 'Northern Armed Forces' (FAN).

In the minds of the imperialists, the success of FAN has bred fantasies of crushing the liberation struggle through the agency of these renegades from the rebel army.

A former leader of the FROLINAT himself, Habre has risen to power swiftly in N'Djamena. But he has barely begun the far greater task of defeating the liberation struggle which he deserted and betrayed.

As the clients of imperialism fought out their private battles, the armies of the FROLINAT advanced further towards the capital.

They captured Adre, a key border town on the eastern frontier with the Sudan, controlling the highway between N'Djamena and Khartoum.

Other towns in the east fell, and the fate of still more in the western and central provinces is disputed (one of these—Massakori—is barely a hundred miles from the capital).

The French army has been given new hope in its imperialist mission. But at the same time, the FROLINAT has been able to strengthen its positions while the fragile state apparatus of Chad has been cracked down the middle.

storm

protest against this and other forms of state repression.

The right wing, however, is far from silent. The fascists whose series of terrorist murder attacks recently succeeded in forcing the imposition of martial law over major areas of the country are stepping up their violence in a bid to have the clampdown extended nationally.

Among the latest murder victims was the editor of a leading liberal daily paper, causing alarm among the liberal middle class.

Fascists preparing

The fascists are clearly preparing further risings along the lines of their brutal massacre of religious minorities in the town of Karahannmaras.

But the silence has also been broken by Suleyman Demirel, leader of the right wing Justice Party—who has called on the people of Turkey to overthrow the Ecevit government.

Ecevit's response was to describe Demirel's statement as "a sad declaration for our democracy". Meanwhile he has himself proceeded with new anti-working class measures



Turkish troops—martial law period extended

including tax increases as well as an extension of martial law.

In the aftermath of the Shah's fall from power, the attention of imperialism has been increasingly focussed on the need to stabilise Turkish capitalism.

But the delays in piecing together the massive economic package necessary to bale out the bankrupt Turkish bour-

geoisie reflect uncertainty as to whether Ecevit is capable of carrying out the massive repression of the working class that the imperialists require.

The imperialist powers will be eagerly watching the progress of the fascist offensive and Demirel's anti-government campaign in the next few weeks before finally putting their mohey on their chosen winner.

But for the workers' movement neither the preservation of Ecevit nor the horrors of military or fascist rule offer any hope: the only way forward must be through the fight for armed workers' militia, a political break from Ecevit by the unions, and the demand for a workers' and peasants' government.

No solution to Italian crisis

Italy's Prime Minister for the last two years, Giulio Andreotti, has had to give up even sooner than predicted in his efforts to form a new government, excluding Communist ministers but with the needed CP support in parliament.

The task was hurriedly entrusted by Socialist Party President Pertini to veteran bourgeois politician Ugo La Malfa, leader of the tiny Republican Party.

This party was formed after the end of fascist rule by a section of the bourgeoisie opposed to the clericalism of the Christian Democrats.

At 75, La Malfa has been on the stage of Italian parliamentary politics for over 30 years.

He has many times before been a vocal spokesman for some of the most unpopular anti-working class policies of the Italian capitalist class.

But this is the first time since the war that the ruling class has called him—or any other non-Christian Democrat—in to take the head of a proposed government.

This is a sign of the twin crises of Italian politics—the crisis of bourgeois parliamentary rule and the crisis of the Communist Party.

The present government crisis sprang from the CP's refusal to go on supporting the Andreotti government in parliament.



Berlinguer

The reason for this shift of tactic lies in the Berlinguer leadership's increasing problems in keeping the support of its base at a time when the government it supports imposes growing burdens on workers and threatens even more.

The CP leaders, of course, dare not admit that they have changed their line under intolerable pressure from the working class since their increasingly difficult job is to control this pressure.

"National unity"

Their withdrawal of support was publicly justified not by reference to any working class criteria but just the opposite.

Enrico Berlinguer accuses Andreotti of betraying not the working class but the policies of his murdered predecessor Aldo Moro, architect of the CP-Christian Democratic alliance.

And the CP's solution to the government crisis is, of course, not the formation of a govern-

ment representing the interests of the working class but the admission of CP ministers to a coalition government of "national unity".

Despite the novelty of La Malfa it looks very unlikely that he can get the Christian Democrats to agree to a form of CP participation in the government new enough for the Berlinguer leadership to try to use it to hold back their rank and file with promises of a "partly Communist government".

In fact the traditional working class supporters of the CP are showing less and less interest in the charade which goes on in parliament.

They are showing themselves determined to move into action irrespective of the wishes or the appeals of their leaders.

Strikes

This week saw a sudden re-acceleration of inflation to around 25% a year and the beginning of what is planned to be a series of short country-wide strikes in the all-important

engineering industry in support of a new three-year wage contract.

It is in this sharpening atmosphere that either La Malfa—known for his strong views in favour of wage policy and the ending of Italian workers' limited "sliding scale" which gives some compensation for inflation—will try to start a government, or else elections will have to take place.

Either way, the options of the Italian capitalist class, and of their Stalinist protectors at the head of the CP are now more limited than ever.

There is no sign in this situation, however, that the leaders of the so-called autonomous unions or the dissidents in the CP are capable of offering a programme on which to lead the working class against Stalinist class collaboration.

This underlines yet again the urgency of constructing a working class leadership which bases itself on the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.

Spain election

As we go to press Spain's second general election since the death of dictator Franco is about to take place.

Public opinion polls confirm that the two major parties in the election will be Adolfo Suarez' governing Democratic Centre Union (UCD)—an alliance of the "enlightened" Francoists and the most opportunist sections of the old petty bourgeois "opposition"—and the reformist Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) led by Felipe Gonzalez.

The predictions are that the PSOE may come out on top but without a parliamentary majority.

Its leaders have not ruled out in those circumstances entering a class collaborationist coalition with the UCD.

This—or any other collaborationist government set-up would be supported by Santiago Carrillo's "Eurocommunist" CP which once again looks on the way to getting about 10% of the seats.

These important elections (to be followed in a month by municipal elections) will be fully analysed, beginning in next week's *Socialist Press* by an on-the-spot correspondent.



Andreotti

Masses resist French sackings

'Mobilising the resources of our national solidarity to bring humane solutions to the social consequences' of 'rationalising' the steel industry.

That was how the French prime minister, Raymond Barre summed up his proposals for enforcing 22,000 redundancies in the industry.

His audience—an all-party delegation of parliamentary deputies—left him as a group of very worried men.

Massive as they are, these job losses being threatened now are only a fraction of the total number sought by the French capitalists.

And workers have responded with violent anger to the barrage of attacks from the bourgeoisie and its government.

The regional strikes called in the steel industry on February

16 were supported by dockers, miners, carworkers, teachers, postal and railway workers and many other sectors. Whole towns and cities were closed down by the strikers.

Hundreds of thousands of workers marched on various local demonstrations. In many towns these were the largest seen since 1968—in some cases even larger, and on a scale never matched before.

This latest wave in the movement against mass unemployment has already spread beyond the main steel-producing regions of Lorraine and Nord-Pas du Calais into traditionally less militant areas such as the Ardennes around Sedan.

In the Loire region, the mobilisations at Saint-Etienne and Roanne were larger than any previously known. In the first town, 100,000 workers took strike action, and half of these came on the protest

march. Unemployment in the region has risen by 22% over the last year.

Unprecedented

The vast scale of this action has thrown the union bureaucrats on to the defensive. At Valenciennes in the north, the pessimistic predictions of the Stalinists were disproved by 50,000 or more workers in an unprecedented display of solidarity.

In Lorraine, the union leaders made frantic preparations for scores of protest gestures and gimmicks. Only in this way could they dissipate the strength of their members into diversionary backwaters.

Now the CP-led union federation the CGT, has struck out militantly with the bold proposal of a national petition of protest to the government.

While the reformists and Stalinists are struggling desperately to maintain their hold over the mass movement, groups of militants are already breaking beyond the limits imposed by the bureaucracy.

At Longwy—focus of the movement in Lorraine—workers moved in to attack the local police HQ after being driven out of a television relay station.

Already important moves have been made towards linking the French struggles with parallel developments in neighbouring Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

It is essential that this initiative be firmly removed from the control of the bureaucracy, and directed towards a genuinely proletarian movement capable of providing a socialist solution to the capitalist crisis of the steel industry.



INTERNATIONAL

IRAN: Marxists must fight for soviets as well as constituent assembly

It is commonly agreed that the Iranian revolution has resulted in a situation of *dual power*—in which the forces of the oppressed masses stand clearly opposed to the crisis-ridden apparatus of the state.

The key question is now to consolidate the independent organisations of the working class and construct soviet-type bodies as part of the struggle to press forward to the socialist overthrow of Iranian capitalism.

In this the fight for democratic demands including the establishment of a constituent assembly plays an important but not exclusive role.

But the new Iranian Socialist Workers Party, section of the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International restricts itself almost entirely to this demand, and puts forward no call for the building of workers councils or soviets in the continuing mass struggles.

The following extract from an Iranian SWP statement illustrates this position. It is reprinted from *Socialist Challenge* of February 15.

The fight to establish a democratic regime, which has been the central fight in this century, has never been so close to being won...

The next step for all the workers and toilers can be summarised in one sentence: forward to the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly.

The present victory was won by the oppressed of Iran and it is the result of the stubborn and self-sacrificing struggle of tens of millions.

The future government that can free Iran from the evils of imperialist domination the terror or autocracy and historical backwardness must also be decided by the people themselves.

Only the masses themselves, through discussions leading to decisions, can offer a real solution to the crisis forced upon our society by imperialism and absolutism.

The immediate convocation of a fully representative constituent assembly, in which all critical forces can participate, is the *only* way that the will of the people can find true expression.

Thus an assembly that represents the sovereign people will not be responsible to any authority but the people themselves and will recognise no power of others.

It should be based on direct, equal and secret ballot. Literates and illiterates should have voting rights. The high school youth who have displayed so much daring and self-sacrifice should vote.

The soldiers, those sons of the workers and peasants, who have solidarised with the revolution, should have the right to vote. All the women and men of this land should be able to participate in elections to a constituent assembly.

The mass struggle organisations which shattered the rule of the autocracy should oversee the elections.

No government appointed from above can bring freedom to Iran and no such government can defend the gains of the revolution against the imperialist powers and reactionary forces.

This is possible only by relying on the power which made possible—the power of the masses—and by expanding and deepening the mass struggles,



The Petrograd Soviet, 1917

such as the occupation and protection of factories by the workers, expansion of the armed reservations in the neighbourhoods and the opening of secret files of SAVAK crimes, the opening of the books of the imperialist firms by the workers, the exposure of the crimes of the Pahlavi terror over the last 25 years, and bringing those responsible to the justice of the workers, and toilers.

The constituent assembly, the expression of the people's will, will defend and support all these struggles and through democratic discussion will decide the big and the small questions and from that of nationalising imperialist mines, companies and banks, to ending the national oppression of Azerbaijan, Kurdistan and Baluchistan, to winning equal rights for women, to guaranteeing freedom of expression and assembly, to workers' control of the factories.

It is only through the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly that the people can be sovereign.

The central question facing the constituent assembly will be deciding on the future of government. The Socialist Workers Party proposes the establishment of a workers' and peasants' republic, that is a government that supports the struggle of the workers and toilers of city and countryside.

From this glowing account one might conclude that the Constituent Assembly is capable of solving all problems, and that the demand for soviets is superfluous at this stage. This holds the danger of offering a purely parliamentary road to the Iranian masses.

An editorial from *Socialist Challenge* of February 22 makes this position more explicit still:

"The decisive question at the moment is the organisation of the masses at every level: into workers, soldiers and peasants committees; into political parties; into trade unions and peasant organisations; and into workers and peasants militias. Before such organisations are developed abstract slogans for a Soviet Republic mean little—what is soviet power without soviets?"

What is soviet power?

Contrast the Iranian SWP's talk of democracy without soviets with the clarity of the Comintern's *Theses on Bourgeois Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (1919).

14. The dictatorship of the proletariat, is like the dictatorship of other classes in that, like any dictatorship, it originates in the necessity of suppressing by force the resistance of the class which is losing its political power. The fundamental difference between the proletarian dictatorship and the dictatorship of other classes, that of the large landowners in the Middle Ages and that of the bourgeoisie in all civilized capitalist countries, consists in this, that while the dictatorship of the large landowners and the bourgeoisie forcibly suppresses the resistance of the overwhelming majority of the population, namely the working masses, the dictatorship of the proletariat is the forcible suppression of the resistance of the exploiters, that is, of the minority of the population, the large landowners and capitalists.

The essence of Soviet power lies in this, that the permanent and sole foundation of the entire State power, of the entire State apparatus, is the mass organization of those very classes which were oppressed by the capitalists, that is, the workers and semi-proletarians (peasants who do not exploit labour and who are always forced to sell at least part of their labour).

The masses, who even in the most democratic bourgeois republics, where in law they had equal rights, but in fact were prevented by a thousand ways and tricks from taking part in political life and making use of democratic rights and liberties, are now drawn into continuous, unhampered, and decisive participation in the democratic administration of the State.

15. The equality of citizens, regardless of sex, religious belief, race, nationality, which bourgeois democracy always promised everywhere but in fact never carried out, and could not carry out because of the rule of capitalism, has been made a complete reality at one stroke by the Soviet regime, or the proletarian dictatorship, for only the power of the workers, who are not interested in private property in the means of production and in the struggle for their distribution and redistribution, is able to do this.

16. The old democracy, that is, bourgeois democracy and parliamentarism, was so organized that it was the working classes who were most alien to the administrative machine.

The Soviet power, the proletarian dictatorship, on the other hand, is so organized that it brings the working masses close to the administrative machine.

The merging of legislative and executive power in the Soviet organization of the State serves the same purpose, as does the substitution of the production unit, the workshop or factory, for the territorial constituency.

17. The army was an instrument of oppression not only under the monarchy; it is still that in all bourgeois republics, even the most democratic.

Only the Soviet power, as the only established State organization of the very classes oppressed by the capitalists, is in a position to abolish the dependence of the military on the bourgeois command and really fuse the proletariat with the military, to arm the proletariat and disarm the

bourgeoisie, without which the victory of socialism is impossible.

18. The Soviet organization of the State is designed to give the proletariat, as the class which was most concentrated and educated by capitalism, the leading role in the State.

The experience of all revolutions and all movements of enslaved classes, the experience of the world socialist movement, teaches us that only the proletariat is in a position to unite the scattered and backward strata of the working and exploited population and carry them along.

19. Only the Soviet organization of the State is able to destroy, at one stroke and completely, the old, that is, the bourgeois apparatus of bureaucracy and judiciary, which under capitalism, even in the most democratic republics, remained and had to remain, being in fact for the workers and the working masses the greatest obstacle to making democracy effective. The Paris Commune took the first world historical step in this direction, the Soviet regime the second.

20. The abolition of State power is the goal of all socialists, including and above all Marx. Unless this goal is reached true democracy, that is, equality and freedom is not attainable.

But only Soviet and proletarian democracy leads in fact to this goal, for it begins at once to prepare for the complete withering away of any kind of State by drawing the mass organizations of the working people into constant and unrestricted participation in State administration.

The Iranian SWP's position and method of approach is also clearly different from that spelled out in the Trotskyist Transitional Programme which shows the links between democratic demands and the transitional demand for soviets.

Backward countries are part of a world dominated by imperialism. Their development, therefore, has a *combined* character: the most primitive economic forms are combined with the last word in capitalist technique and culture. In like manner are defined the political strivings of the proletariat of backward countries: the struggle for the most elementary achievements of national independence and bourgeois democracy is combined with the socialist struggle against world imperialism. Democratic slogans, transitional demands, and the problems of the socialist revolution are not divided into separate historical epochs in this struggle, but stem directly from one another. The Chinese proletariat had barely begun to organise trade unions before it had to provide for soviets. In this sense, the present programme is completely applicable to colonial and semi-colonial countries, at least to those where the proletariat has become capable of carrying on independent politics.

It is impossible merely to reject the democratic programme; it is imperative that in the struggle the masses outgrow it. The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India.

As a primary step, the workers must be armed with this democratic programme. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers. On the basis of the revolutionary democratic programme, it is necessary to oppose the workers to the 'national' bourgeoisie. Then, at a certain stage in the mobilization of the masses under the slogans of revolutionary democracy, soviets can and should arise. Their historical role in each given period, particularly their relation to the National Assembly, will be determined by the political level of the proletariat, the bond between them and the peasantry, and the character of the proletarian party policies. Sooner or later, the soviets should overthrow bourgeois democracy. Only they are capable of bringing the democratic revolution to a conclusion and likewise opening an era of socialist revolution.



Trotsky

THE GREAT CAMDEN BREAKTHROUGH

Socialist Press talks to Camden dustmen's steward John Seymour.

On Friday you were one of the handful to oppose the Camden Council's offer. Why was this?

Yes, over 1200 council workers met in the town hall on Friday. I think about 20 people out of those present voted to reject the offer recommended by our branch secretary on behalf of the strike committee.

I was one of those 20. Let's get it straight. I recognise that for many of the lowest grades this offer by Camden is a fantastic breakthrough.

When two-thirds of the borough's workforce are getting a £17 rise and a 35 hour week its odds on that any mass meeting would vote for a return to work.

I fought against the deal on the strike committee and voted against because in no way did the offer give the £60 basic-35 hour week to the other third of the borough, who are on bonus.

For them the only pay rise above the national offer was the rise in the bonus due to the 35 hour week coming in.

A dustman's pay will go up from £70 to £81. Had it been an across the board settlement we would have got £104.

What they are doing for grades such as mine is making up earnings by increasing the bonus rather than the basic.

We came out for £60 basic not £44, and the bonus should have been left alone.

We only get that bonus for extra work, achieved by redundancy and "rationalisation" in the past.

This offer means that extra work increasingly becomes "normal" work if we are to earn a decent living wage.

Why did the strike committee finally accept an offer that they rejected last week?

In Socialist Press last week I reported how the Labour Group had changed from originally offering "a guaranteed £60 weekly wage and a 35 hour week" to offering a "guaranteed £60 minimum earnings".

This was now interpreted as meaning that those who had a bonus that already took them over £60 would only get that bonus consolidated and not added on top of a £60 minimum.

On Friday, there was uproar in the strike committee when this was reported back from our negotiating team.

We felt that the Labour Group had gone back on their word.



Cressy Road dustmen with John Seymour (second from right)

They were now putting an offer which didn't concede anything like the full claim and which clearly tried to split the workers.

On Saturday there was a public meeting, at which our full time official Mike Taylor and Labour Councillors, answered questions from 200 strikers.

I think this hostility shifted the councillors a bit.

On Monday morning when we went into negotiations again, they indicated they would offer £60 basic plus bonuses—calculated on the national rise, not on Camden's. This was a big advance.

That evening the Labour group met again. About 50 strikers lobbied the meeting.

This time they wouldn't accept a delegation into their meeting so we knew something was up.

We learned at 11 p.m. that night that Bethell had put a nine point policy which really repeated the previous offer—and carried it 23 votes to 7.

Most of the strike committee were very bitter.

Next day the position began to change.

Arguments were now being put forward that the national offer was about to be settled at

Analysis of wage rates uplifted by means of a Camden supplement to £60 plus existing differentials between grades A-G.

	Grade A	Grade B	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	Grade H
Basic pay (Nov 77-78)	37.40	37.80	38.30	39.70	40.80	42.00	43.25
Assume a 10% pay award (78/79)	3.74	3.78	3.83	3.97	4.08	4.20	4.32
Supplement	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Camden supplement	13.86	13.82	13.77	13.63	13.52	13.40	13.28
London Weighting	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.67	6.67
Total	66.67	67.07	67.57	68.97	70.07	71.27	72.52

N.B. In addition to London Weighting the following allowances would also be added—where applicable:— shift allowance, un-social hours, foul linen, dirty money, running repairs and tool allowance.

a much lower level than Camden's.

Strike committee members began to argue that we had to get what we could before it was all over.

This was backed up with a moral argument that the higher paid—meaning dustmen and caretakers, etc., should be prepared to make sacrifices for the low paid meaning non-bonus earners.

Our secretary implicitly backed these arguments up by saying that Camden would withdraw their offer if we didn't accept by Friday.

How did you respond to these arguments?

They were all wrong. The national negotiations looked like offering 9%.

But I thought that the still escalating strikes in the public sector showed that Fisher and co. would find it really hard to sell the deal.

I didn't think the struggle for the full claim was coming to an end.

Secondly it is wrong to say that dustmen, etc., should accept a lousy deal for the sake of others—we are all low paid in the public sector.

I argued that we all came out for the £60 with the dustmen leading the way and that we should all stay out until all workers got a good deal.

Thirdly, as far as I knew the Council had never stated that they would withdraw their offer.

So my position was that Camden was in the spotlight and we should provide a lead by rejecting the offer and press ahead on the full claim.

When an employer makes such a big concession it's time to press ahead and escalate the action.

So how did the mass meeting come about?

Those who supported my position found themselves quickly outnumbered on the

strike committee.

Once the secretary started to capitulate then acceptance spread like wildfire.

This was finally compounded by a member of the Socialist Workers Party putting forward the idea of holding a mass meeting on Friday to "discuss the claim".

This was really stupid. It was a set up for a return to work. Anyone with an ounce of political sense could see that.

The secretary and chairman jumped on the idea, and the news spread round the borough that a mass meeting to go back was to be held on Friday.

Why did you object to the mass meeting?

We had called a mass meeting which would almost inevitably vote to return to work.

Everyone on the strike committee knew that. And we had called it before the council had ratified the Labour Group offer.

We had called it before all the loopholes had been ironed out.

This was a massive weapon in the hands of the councillors and they knew it. They were uncontactable all day Wednesday.

And when we finally met them on Thursday we were in a weak position to argue anything because they knew a mass meeting had been called.

How did your depot react?

At a mass meeting on Friday at 8 a.m. the general feeling was that they would have to grudgingly return to work, although they weren't very happy with the offer.

Most voted at the town hall to return to work.

I will be holding a meeting of my men on Monday to discuss clear-up money [SP: the council have offered £180 over three weeks to clear up the backlog of rubbish] and the

problem of not breaking the picket line at Brent Transfer Station where we tip our refuse.

How are you going to continue the struggle for £60 for a 35 hour week?

I still believe that workers in the public sector will reject the national agreement.

With ambulancemen on the brink of strike action and with many of the boroughs digging in that sell-out can be smashed.

We should maintain our strike committee throughout the national struggle and use our victory—a victory for indefinite strike action—as the model for other workers.

It's more vital than ever that joint strike committees are built and pledged to a policy of extending indefinite strike action and demanding that these bureaucratic traitors call national indefinite strike action for the full claim.



**Area 2
ready
to stay
out**

A mass meeting of Camden home helps voted early in the strike to seek complete exemption from the strike call.

Socialist Press 137 carried an interview with Camden home help shop steward Christine Cressley, who made the point that her section (Area 5) was the only section of home helps prepared for all out indefinite strike action with trade union-controlled emergency cover.

This aspect of her statement has been challenged by Shirley Kerslick, steward for Area 2, who tells Socialist Press how support for all-out action was wider than we had recognised.

What was your objection?

It was inaccurate. It states that Area 5 was the only area geared to all-out strike. That's rubbish. Area 2 was geared to it long before the strike. They all agreed to do their own emergency cover.

The Thursday before the mass meeting, as my home helps turned up for pay, I stood at my pay desk and ticked each individual home-help off, for or against, whether they would abide by an all-out strike decision on Tuesday. The majority were for.)

On Wednesday after the strike decision was taken I spent all day at the office—and like Christine got an emergency list and whittled it down. I also ensured that no referrals were being given to my members. It was left up to the home-helps to decide who the emergencies were, not the supervisor.

So we were geared to strike action and we had begun to implement emergency cover.

What do you think of the way the exemption was handled?

It was a mistake to call a mass meeting of the home helps because it was obvious what was going to happen, other areas were completely disorganised and still working.

They swamped the people who were organised, you couldn't get a word in—any fool could have seen what was going to happen.

Secondly, the women who were lobbying the strike committee meeting should never have been allowed into the strike committee meeting to sit-in on the discussion and shout at the people they didn't agree with. The vote was then taken to exempt home helps under a lot of pressure.

We accept Sister Kerslick's point that we underestimated the level of organisation amongst the home helps.

It is clear that more than one section was ready for strike action.

This of course still doesn't mean that numerically there was a majority of home helps in favour of staying out.

But it certainly indicates the opportunists of the International Marxist Group.

In Socialist Challenge of 15 February, NUPE Branch Secretary and IMG member John Suddaby said that the decision to exempt home helps from the strike amounted to shedding "an albatross of social services and old people".

He went on: "We should have considered more carefully about bringing them out—there are so many complications".

This scandalous statement comes from a member of an organisation which distributes "Campaign for Action in NUPE" leaflets pledged to "the full development of women in the union".

We'd like to know how the IMG plans to "develop" women workers by sending them back to work at the very point in struggle when women workers can be drawn into trade union and political activity!

Strike leaders unite forces

A joint meeting of public sector strike committees in the London area last week decided to step up the fight for all-out strike action in pursuit of the £60/35 hour week claim.

Called on the initiative of the Cressy Road dustmen's strike committee, the meeting was chaired by dustman John Seymour, and brought together delegations of refuse and sewage workers and home helps from Camden, Hackney, Southwark, Harrow, Tower Hamlets, Barnet and Greenwich.

The discussion showed how damaging is the policy of "selective" action, which isolates and divides the public sector workforce.

The meeting decided that a priority was to establish and expand the work of this new joint committee in the fight for all-out action.

It voted unanimously to: *Campaign for rejection of the 9% offer.

**WSL
9%
insults
low
paid**

*Fight to extend all out action in London.

*Demand this be made national policy until the £60/35 hour week claim is won in full.

The committee will meet again at Friends House, Euston Road, on Thursday March 1 at 7.30 p.m.

AHA CLOSURE PLANS HIT CANCER PATIENTS

Kensington, Westminster and Chelsea AHA have announced their plans to close down St. Columba's Hospital on Hampstead Heath in four weeks time.

The hospital is a small terminal care unit which takes in cancer patients from several parts of London to give them the specialised treatment required.

It is ironic that this particular hospital is planned for the axe, in the midst of a huge press campaign attacking hospital strikes which are claimed to endanger the lives of cancer patients.

So great is the pressure on this district of the AHA to make cuts that they have attempted to force through the closure in a particularly bureaucratic and callous way.

Having been recently foiled in their attempt to close Hereford Lodge, another small hospital in the area because of the resistance organised by the District Joint Shop Stewards' Committee they have been forced to look elsewhere.

Fearing a similar reaction from local hospital workers—who have so far fought successfully against the closure of St. Mary's general hospital, Harrow Road, they have avoided announcing the normal six months consultation period by calling this a 'temporary closure' although they have no intention of opening St Columba's again.

Workers and stewards at St. Columba's are holding meetings this week in which they are preparing action to fight the closure.

Occupation

It is obvious that an occupation of the hospital under workers' control is the only move which will save this hospital, along with supporting action organised amongst local hospital workers and other trade unionists.

This attempted closure must not be seen in isolation.

St. Columba's has been singled out partly because of the successful resistance to cuts in other parts of the district.

The AHA are forced to make cuts through the Callaghan government's policy of enforcing strict cash limits in the Health Service, and they are not particularly concerned who is affected by the cuts—the old, the very young (they have already begun closing Paddington-Green Childrens Hospital) or even the dying.

A passage from the AHA financial bulletin shows what little concern there is for the sick and dying when balanced against the requirements of maintaining capitalism:

"St. Columba's hospital provides a service for the dying. Only 20% of the patients come from within Kensington and Westminster and Chelsea. It was considered, therefore, high on the list for temporary closure."

Workers at St. Columba's and in the local District JSSC must spread the fight to save this hospital and force the trade union bureaucracy to lead a national campaign against the vicious policies of the Callaghan government.



PHOTO: Ian MacIntosh, IFL

Workers at St. Bartholomew's Hospital voting for strike action on 15 February

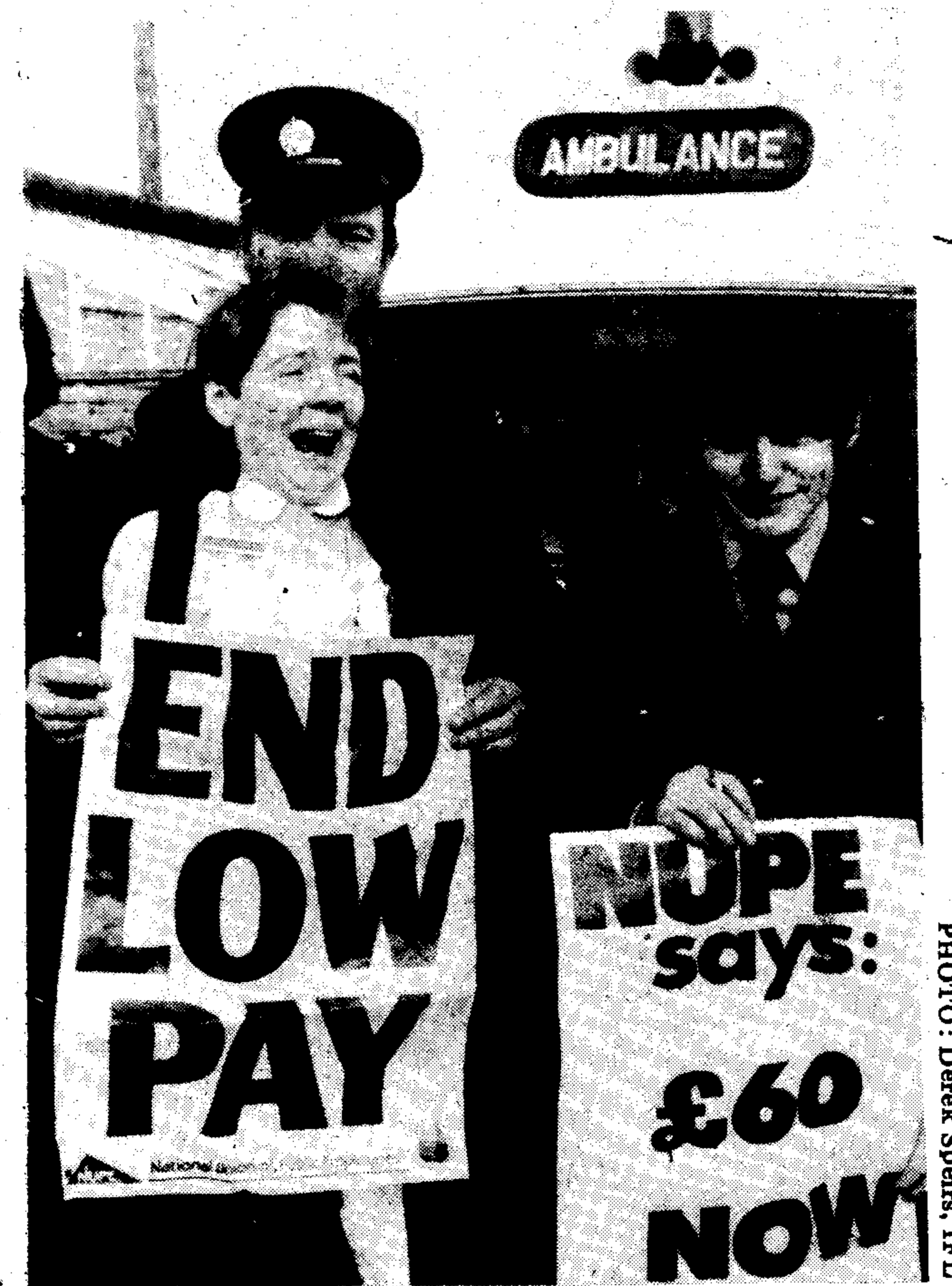


PHOTO: Derek Speiser, IFL

NUPE ambulancemen in Belfast

Ambulance drivers head new round of action on pay

The strike by ambulance drivers in London, Manchester, Somerset and Aberdeen last Wednesday has sparked off a new round of action over pay amongst health workers.

Over two thirds of the London service had a complete stoppage and this quickly spread to other areas of the country—although the Aberdeen drivers had begun their action two days earlier.

By Wednesday morning, two London children's hospitals—Great Ormond Street and Queen Elizabeth's, Hackney, had pledged to come out for three

days over pay and in support of the ambulance drivers, and the Westminster Hospital had a complete one-day stoppage.

Sabotage

It is now obvious that health workers are determined to fight for a substantial wage increase—despite the repeated attempts of their own leadership to sabotage and isolate the struggle, with their policy of "selective action".

The leadership of the "low pay campaign" is now hopelessly split, caught between the forces of their own membership on the one hand and a confrontation with the government on the other.

Although up to now they have managed to maintain a united front in attempting to sell out the wage claim, they are now in a hopeless dilemma, with NUPE recommending rejection of the 9%, GMWU and TGWU calling for acceptance, and COHSE making no recommendation at all.

Step up action

Health workers must sweep aside this indecision and step up the action in pursuit of the full pay claim.

It is now vital that the main weapon of the bureaucracy—that of isolating individual strikes and demoralising the membership—is fought against through the building of joint strike committees.

A step in this direction has been taken by the Kensington, Westminster and Chelsea area JSSC who have called an all-London meeting for health service stewards on Friday 2 March to coordinate future action on pay in the health service.

The conference is at Westminster Hospital and is being supported by Westminster Trades Council.

The conference can help to maximise the strength and determination of health workers in rejecting the 9% offer and fighting for the £60/35 hour week claim. It must prepare for a campaign of coordinated, indefinite strike action in London hospitals, with emergency services, and supplies being controlled by local strike committees.

Next step: all-out action

A North London ambulance driver talks to Socialist Press

Can you describe the background to the one-day strike on 20 February?

The strike was originally planned from a national meeting of stewards in Birmingham, held at the beginning of February.

Following this, the NUPE full-timers and convenors did nothing to plan for the action, or even to inform the members of what was happening.

Following pressure from the press, a meeting of convenors in London voted against the action and the NUPE leaders said it would be unofficial. Nevertheless, the individual stations voted against this recommendation and decided to come out.

We discovered by our own efforts that there was action in other areas, notably from the beginning of the week in Aberdeen as well as Manchester and Somerset.

What happened then on 20 February?

In London over 50 of the 72 stations voted to come out. The numbers were built up

by the press to excuse the use of troops, but the reason why not everybody came out was because of the confusion sown by the convenors and NUPE full-timers.

In general, this strike was more militant than the 22 January Day of Action, because we knew we were against the officials and all the rumours of a settlement at 10%, as well as just as the claim itself.

What happened at your station?

Despite the views of our convenor, picketing started at midnight and continued throughout most of the twenty four hours.

What do you think is the next step?

Obviously it is necessary now to do everything to build up action for the claim and against the sell-out.

It seems to me now that there must be mass meetings to organise this, even though the officials have been trying up to now to prevent them taking place.

PRESS GANG



Even the royal family has its division of labour.

While the Queen toured the Middle East liberating British drunks and thieves from foreign jails (and receiving presents that if sold could settle the public sector workers' claim in full) her son, Prince Charles, applied himself to sorting out the problems of British capitalism.

His speech at the Savoy Hotel on the shortcomings of British management was the sort of populist waffle that is the stock in trade of Labour and Liberal leaders.

Folksy advice to management to speak to their workers more nicely and not to be grumpy might not seem to have much bearing on the contradictions between labour and capital but it is a theme which has a long history.

The speech, made during a period of unrelenting witch-hunts against all members of the working class threw the press into a quandary.

On the one hand newspapers have a policy of never carping about the main characters in the royal soap opera. On the other hand they generally feel obliged to defend managers against this kind of criticism.

The speech was the front page lead story in the *Express*,

Mirror, *Star*, *Sun* and *Daily Mail*.

The *Daily Express* attempted to resolve this contradiction by praising Charles for saying something about the crisis while deferentially suggesting that he might have let the unions off a bit lightly.

The *Mirror* (Charles the pale pink Prince) praised him. Only the *Sun* launched into the attack with the blunt headline: Charles puts his foot in it.

In its editorial comment (A proper Charlie) the paper said: "Sadly when he talks about complex industrial problems, the Heir to the Throne simply doesn't know what he is talking about."

By the next day positions had firmed up. The *Mirror* led on a story headed Brother Charles, about council workers who called off a work to rule for his visit because of his speech.

While the thunder of this row rolled up and down Fleet Street raising important issues of the Heir to the Throne and Royal Impartiality, the woman herself was living it up in the Middle East.

She covered her legs with Islam modesty and her boat Britannia with gold and silver. While British workers were

being told to tighten their belts she gave away to the heads of six gulf states solid silver salvers worth £15,000 each—a total hand-out of £90,000.

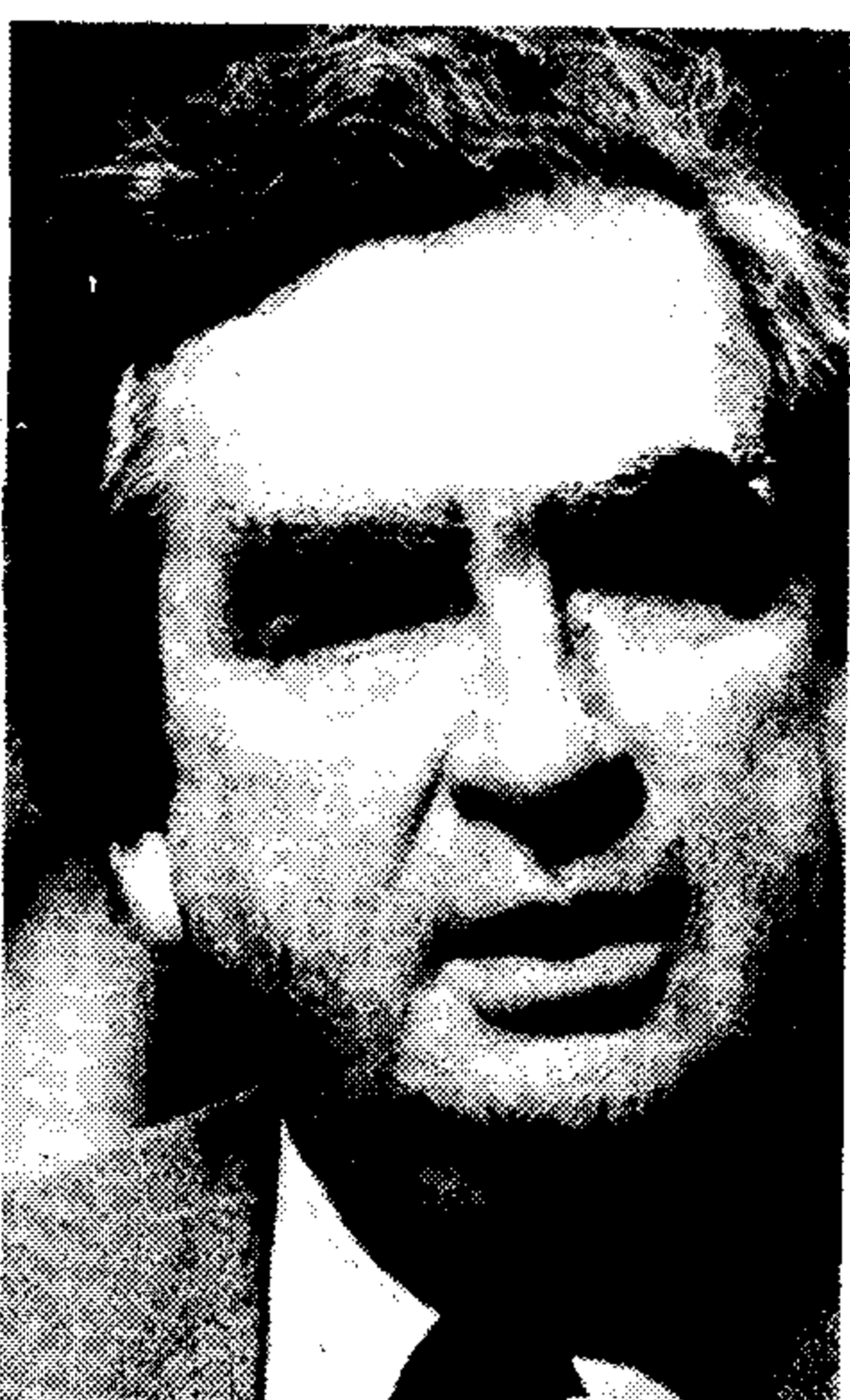
In return she received—according to the *Mirror* and *Express*—a gold palm tree studded with pearls, a gold fruit bowl on a stand of diamond encrusted horses; two gold necklaces with amethysts and sapphires, a diamond studded watch, a ruby brooch, a goldmesh dress and matching handbag, a gold coffee jug with two goblets studded with stones, a double string of pearls as big as marbles and a two foot high solid silver model of a fishing boat.

Prince Philip had to make do with three gold swords decorated with rubies and diamonds.

Next Thursday is Maundy Thursday—a day on which the Queen traditionally hands out pennies to the British poor. Unfortunately she has run into a slight problem of communication.

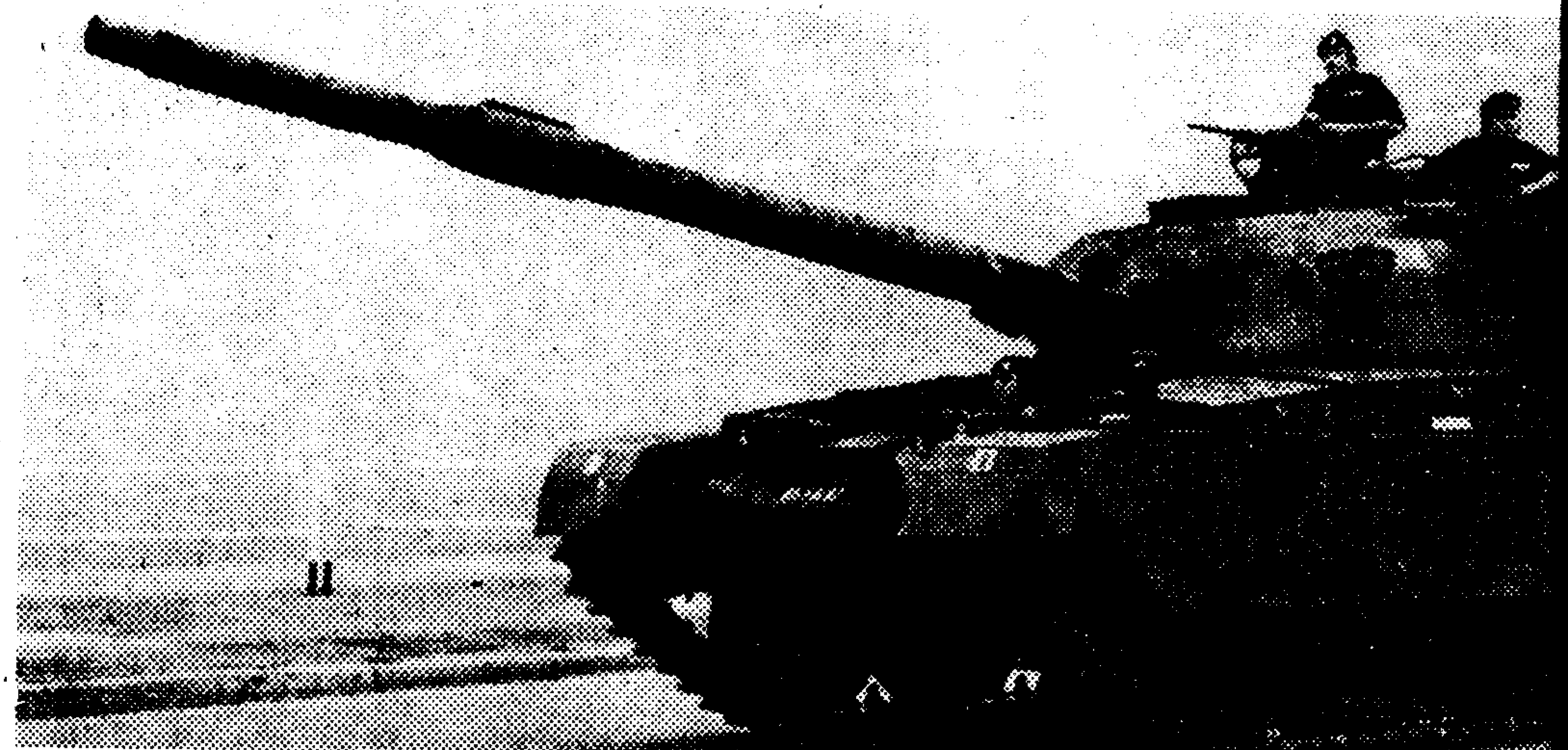
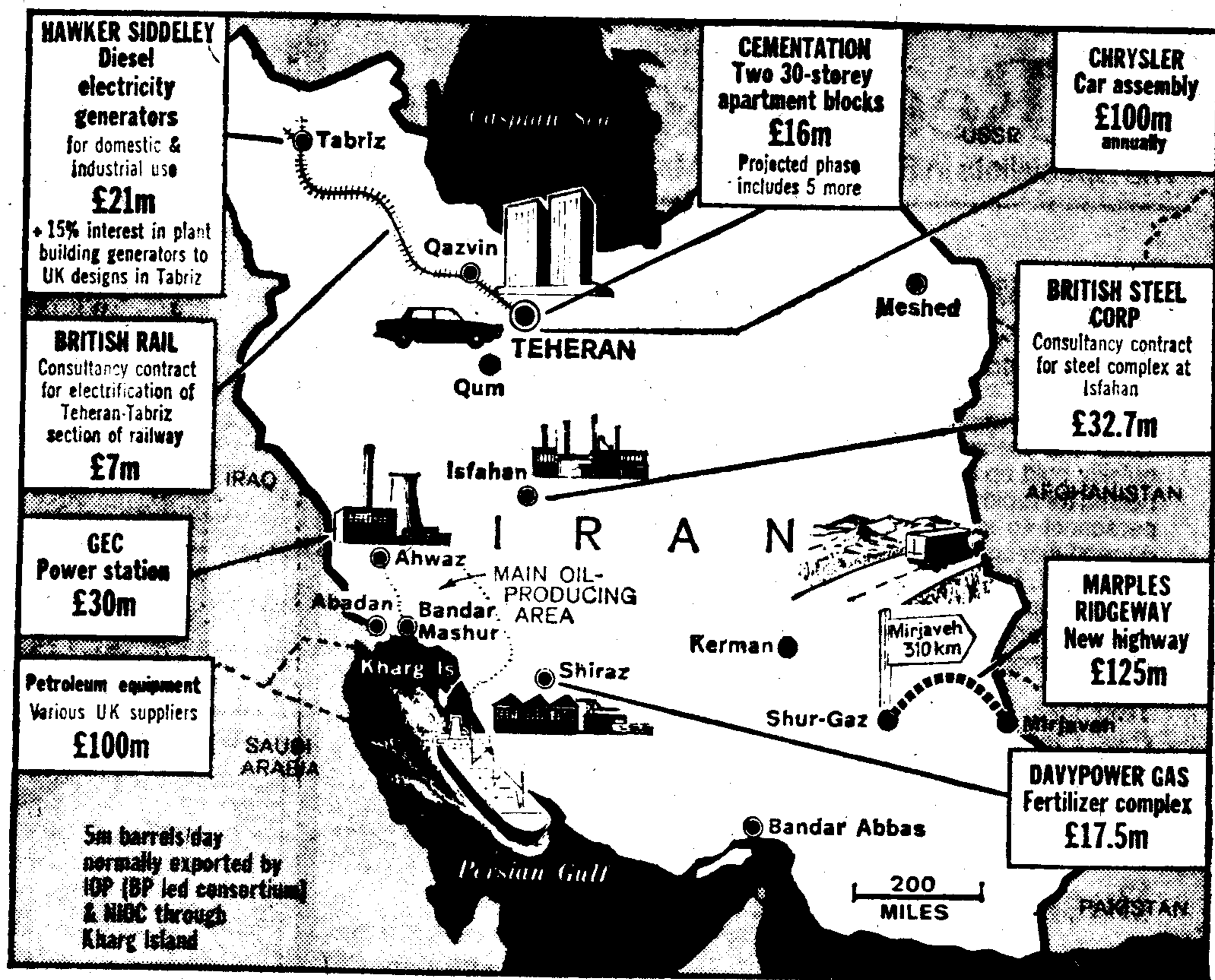
That is how to explain to hundreds of thousands of low paid workers why they should accept a measly few quid while the Queen and her Arab dignitaries give each other baubles worth more than £1 million.

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Healey

How the re the confide



Chieftain tank courtesy of the

Scarcely an aspect of the economics and politics of the imperialist world has been untouched by the Iranian revolution.

In the economic sphere its reverberations have already reached the international oil trade, the currency markets, the price of gold, some of the world's biggest banks and the arms industry.

The ultimate economic effects of Iran's revolution will be determined by the political outcome of today's revolutionary struggle.

Effects

Some of the serious effects of what has already occurred, however, will not be quickly reversed.

First and foremost, Iran's economic importance to imperialism has been as a supplier of oil, most of which was marketed internationally through a consortium of the American, British and French oil monopolies.

Before the oilworkers' strike, Iran produced six million barrels of oil a day—about 10% of the world's total production.

Israeli oil

Virtually all Israeli and South African oil imports, most of West Germany's and a significant share of Japan's were from Iran.

In the short term the cutback in Iranian production to well under one million barrels a day has already produced a crisis in the world market, but it will not be for a few weeks that the cutback has its effect on oil available in the fiscal markets. Already the 'spot' (immediate delivery) price has shot up.

The racist South African government, before placing new secrecy restrictions on

information about oil, announced last week that in the last few weeks it had to pay 80% more than the official OPEC price for 'spot' purchases of oil.

Some high-ranking officials of the Carter administration have been publicly stating that the new oil crisis is worse than the four-fold increase in prices which OPEC imposed in 1973/4.

Shortfall

Saudi Arabia, as well as some other gulf states have raised their output to compensate for some of the lost Iranian supplies.

But this still leaves a large shortfall—and most of the producers would rather keep an appreciating asset under the ground than swap it for a fistful of US dollars which look unlikely to do anything but fall.

The new tight supply situation means that the OPEC countries are beginning to see the opportunity to raise oil prices this year by more than the 14% already agreed.

Two gulf states already last week were able to raise their prices well beyond the ruling official OPEC price. And Saudi Arabia's extra production is already charging the higher price which was not supposed to operate until October.

No policy

Of course, there is always the possibility that Iranian's oil supplies will resume.

The Khomeini/Bazargan government doesn't yet seem to have established any serious oil production policy.

Its initial position is to encourage production and exports to resume—but this seems less a policy on production than an effort to impose its authority on the powerful and militant oil workers.

That the government seems so far to have failed in this aim is shown by the fact that last week the oil workers refused to resume production until they were directly represented on the Revolutionary Council.

The Khomeini/Bazargan government's oil policies might be deduced from the statements of some prominent Khomeini followers.

They have said that the policy will be to stabilise production at about half the previous level (2.5 to 3 million barrels a day).

Cancellation

This, they say, is all that would be necessary to pay for imports after the cancellation of the expensive arms contracts.

Many of these were cancelled or put into abeyance by the Bakhtiar

regime. And it now seems impossible that they will be renewed.

The full value of these contracts—for Britain, the USA and West Germany—amounted to many billions of dollars.

The arms trade with Iran became a billion-dollar business for imperialism in the 1960s when the Shah's regime was first built up as a military agent of imperialism in the Middle East. But the real arms bonanza didn't come until after the increase in the oil price in 1973.

Iran's huge increase in revenue enticed arms salesmen from all parts of the imperialist world to Tehran bearing immense bribes for the Shah's officials.

One of these has admitted taking a bribe of \$1 million to "facilitate" a deal with the Labour government for the purchase of Chieftain tanks. In fact British exports to Iran rose by 1,100% from 1970 to 1978 (see chart).

Tens of thousands of jobs in the imperialist economies (perhaps as many as 80,000 in Britain alone) are the result of these arms deals.

Their end will precipitate major new struggles on jobs, especially in the government ordnance factories and various sections of the engineering and vehicles industries.

In Britain the firms and plants most affected will be

the Royal Ordnance factory, Leeds (which produces Chieftain tanks and where most workers belong to the T&GWU), the Jarrow naval shipyards, British Aerospace (\$ 800 million of anti-aircraft missiles), SwanHunters and Vosper Thornycroft (both building ships for the Shah).

The end of the arms deals will also imply a significant worsening of the balance of payments.

The cancellation of contracts for arms so far amounts to \$8 billion along with a further \$4 billion of other goods.

Among these are Avenger kits sold by Chrysler for assembly in Iran. This deal was worth \$200 million to British Chrysler and was an essential part of its rescue

Fedayeen leaders see

Some of the most militant demands being placed on the Iranian government come from the Fedayeen (the Organisation of Iranian People's Fedaii Guerrillas).

Fedayeen forces now estimated at 150,000, claim to have played a leading role in the fighting at the air base in East Tehran which sparked the collapse of the Shah's army and in the attack on the US Embassy in Tehran.

They now have a policy of

holding onto their weapons and calling for the dismantling of the army, replacing it with a 'people's army' with elected officers, and for elected workplace councils.

The Fedayeen have had hundreds of members killed or imprisoned since they launched their 'armed struggle' against the Shah in 1971 and have obviously become a pole of attraction for young Iranian militants working for an alternative to the Tudeh party.

But the role of the Fedayeen which describes itself as Marxist-Leninist, could become crucial in defusing the working class struggle against Khomeini. Its militant history gives the group a credibility that the Tudeh party lacks—yet the Fedayeen still holds Stalinist theories, complete with an advanced two stage theory of revolution, popular frontism and opportunism. Its sole criticism of the Tudeh Party (which it calls reformist) is based on the fact that the Tudeh Party rejected guerrillaism.

'Socialist'

The Fedayeen describes the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, Vietnam and all other degenerated and deformed workers states as 'socialist' and explains the support of Chinese and Moscow bureaucracies for the Shah as ill advised attempts to persuade the Shah to change his policies.

Today the Fedayeen support Khomeini, seeking to distinguish between him and the mullahs. Last week they planned a march to his headquarters "to break down that wall [erected by the mullahs] so that we could speak to him directly."

Khomeini, who does not share a reciprocal respect for the Fedayeen, branded them extremist opportunists and said he would not meet them. In line with their support for Khomeini the Fedayeen called off the march. Yet even after this incident a spokesman told the *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent in Tehran:

"Because Khomeini is anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorship and has popular support we go along with him, but unfortunately he is surrounded by a wall of mullahs who are preventing people from having direct contact with him."



Savak chief, Nassiri, and

In fact Khomeini has made his anti-communist credentials quite clear and his Prime Minister, Bazargan has put on record his readiness to use force against the Fedayeen "if they disturb the order and security".

Split

The Fedayeen was founded in a split with the Tudeh in 1963. Bijan Jazani, their first leader was sentenced to 15 years in jail in 1967—four years before the Fedayeen turned to guerrillaism.

While in prison he wrote and smuggled out many works which are now used as the theoretical cornerstone of the Fedayeen. Jazani was later murdered in prison by the Shah's forces.

Extracts from the books reveal the bankrupt popular front approach of the Fedayeen to the Iranian revolution. Their strategy was to use guerilla war to rouse the masses (which the Fedayeen regarded with deep pessimism).



General Motors plant



Armed masses in the streets

Revolution in Iran shakes dependence of imperialism



British Labour government

operation two years ago. Already Chrysler has laid off 1,500 workers in Britain as a result of the ending of this trade with Iran.

But these direct effects of the Iranian revolution are possibly less significant than the indirect effects which this economic convulsion has produced.

Fears

Finance capitalists have in the last week expressed increasing fears for the roughly \$12 billion which is Iran's debt, incurred by the Shah's government, to banks in Europe and the United States.

With the Revolutionary Council of striking workers still in control of the Central Bank, there is little chance that due payments



Khomeini's homecoming speech

on these loans will be made in the near future if ever. There is much talk of the possible retaliatory freezing of the estimated \$10 billion of official Iranian assets

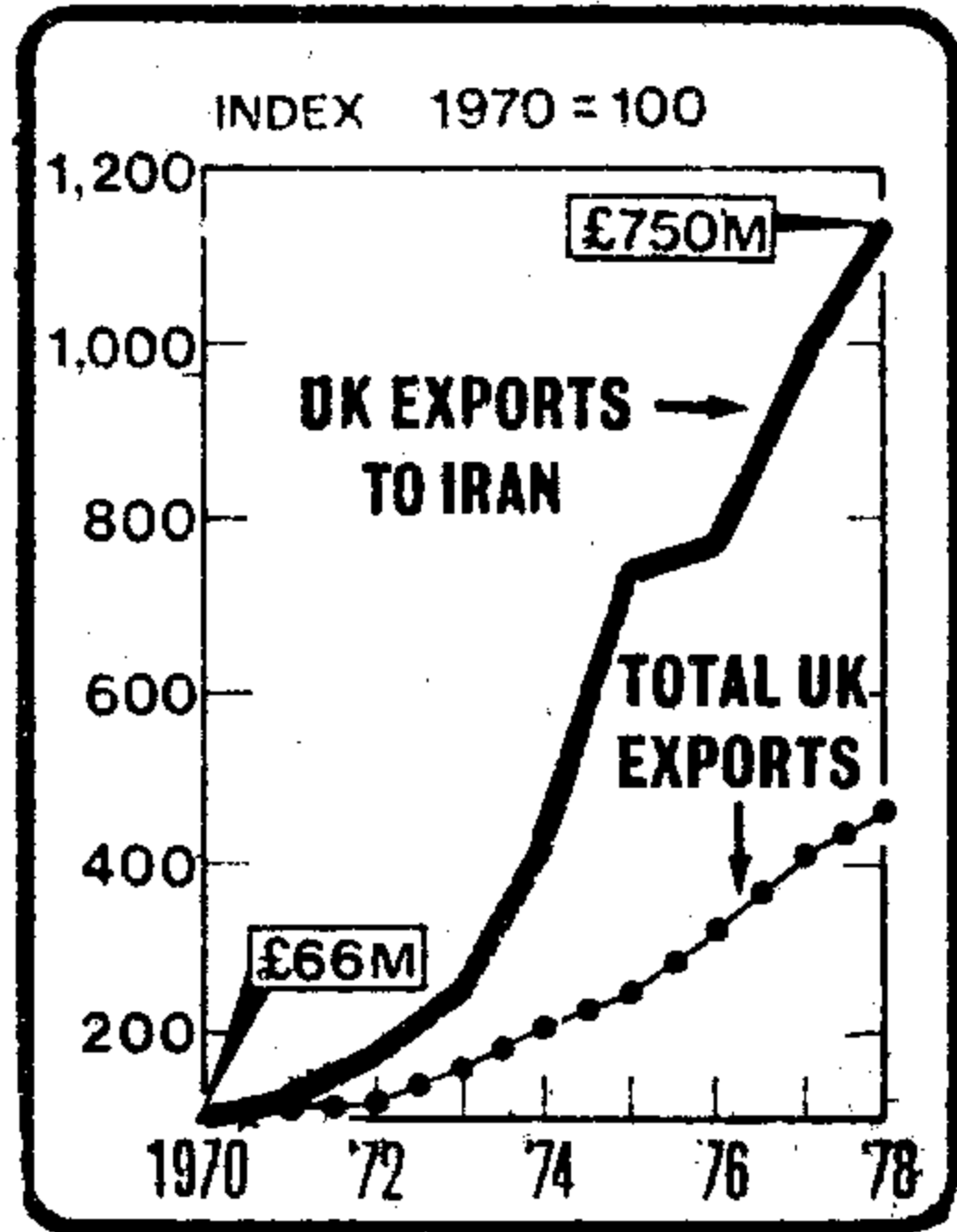
estimated to be in imperialist banks.

But this would be a desperate measure which might provoke other countries to withdraw funds.

Yet Iran's default without retaliation could have even worse effects in the form of bank panics and failures.

Already Dow Chemicals have got a court order to freeze the US assets of a small Iranian bank for non-payment of due money. And this may set a precedent for their US companies.

They may try the same tactics of asset freezing or confiscation in relation to the penalty clauses in the cancelled arms deals.



Anti-Shah demonstration in London

If it were the direct effects of the revolution on, say, oil prices which was the most important consideration, then the biggest oil importer—such as Japan and West Germany—would find their currencies most severely hit.

But, on the contrary, the first effects have been to further weaken the dollar in relation to the yen and the Deutschmark.

What this suggests is that the effect of Iran's

economic situation on the imperialist economy is to magnify the imbalance which already existed independently of the Iranian crisis.

The Iranian revolution has already, only two weeks old, had the effect of sharpening the capitalist world's economic crisis.

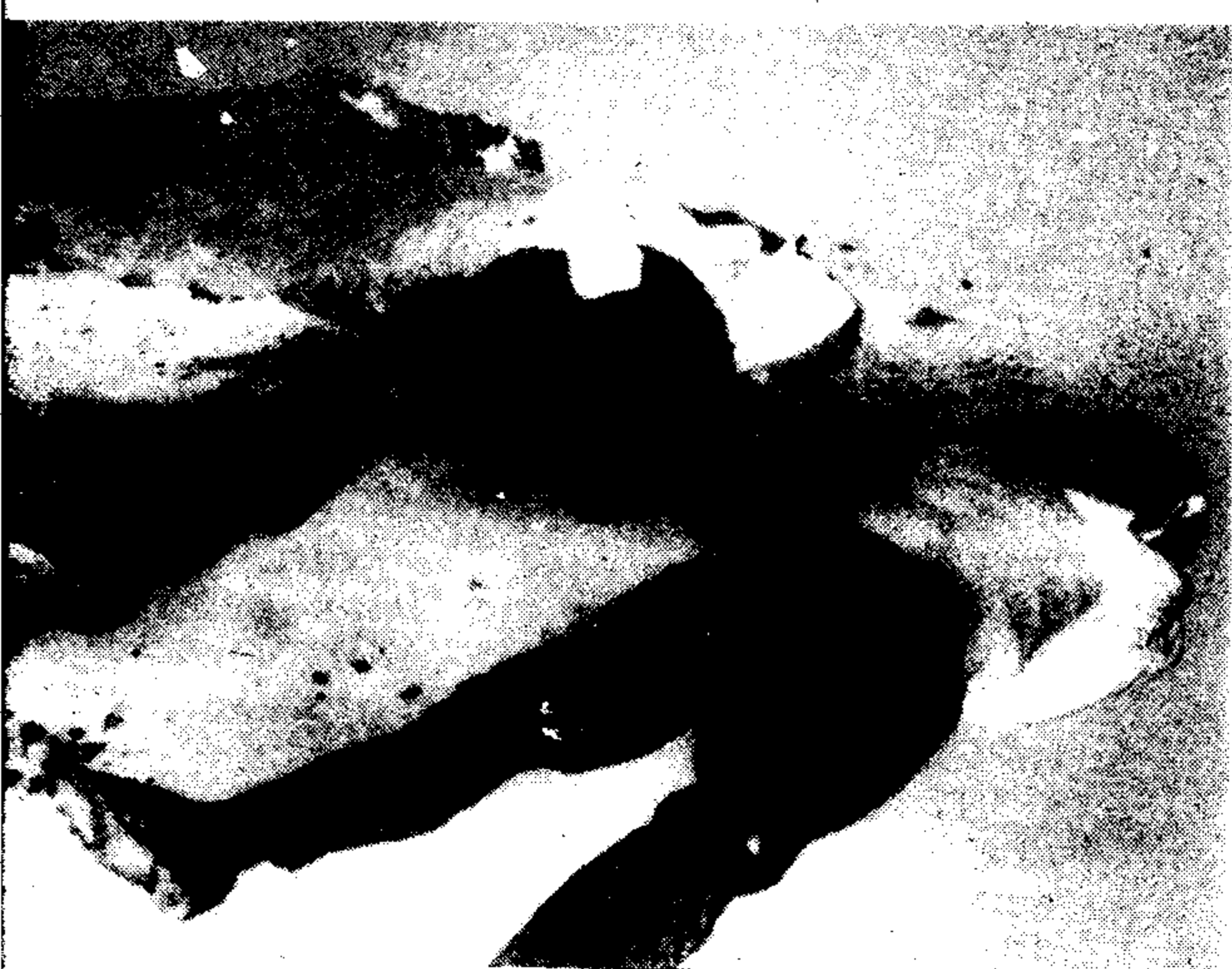
But the most basic reason why the imperialists tremble at the sight of the Iranian revolution is not either the immediate or feared direct economic

consequences.

The real cause of their terror is the sight of one of the most powerful, internationally supported, well armed regimes in the world reduced to dust in a few months before a mass movement of workers, peasants and students, armed until the last moment with little more than an unshakable determination to rid themselves of tyranny and oppression.

That is enough to turn any imperialist's blood cold.

Work unity with Iranian bourgeoisie



Executed generals by the Islamic Revolutionary Council

In 1973 the Fedayeen published in Iran Jazani's pamphlet, *The Socio-Economic Analysis of a Dependent Capitalist State* which stresses that the role of a working class vanguard to unite with the national bourgeoisie against imperialism for a two stage revolution—the first a national revolution, the second a 'people's revolution'.

Exploitation

"In so far as this is a class system based upon the exploitation of a great majority by a small minority, the deepest and most fundamental of its contradictions is that which enables the growth of the system and the continuation of exploitation.

Since the relations of production in this system are based on capitalism, there seems to be a tendency among some Marxist elements to believe that the principal contradiction in Iran today is that between labour and capital. If this is the case

then our country is on the verge of a socialist revolution and the working-class together with its allies forms the basis of the revolution. But this is an erroneous belief.

The contradiction between labour and capital, with its social manifestation of a confrontation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, cannot be the principal contradiction of the system prevailing in Iran.

For this reason our society is not at the stage of a socialist revolution, ie it is not a revolution where the slogan would be the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and the expropriation of all private capital. Moreover, the need for the reconstruction of the national economy, and the need to uproot dependent industries and to end the economic domination of imperialism immediately after the people's triumph make it imperative that our society should go through a necessary

period of transition before the establishment of socialism.

To sum up: because of the necessity of anti-imperialist struggle, because of the progressive nature of part of the bourgeoisie, and since it is imperative to go through a period of transition before socialism, the principle contradiction of our society, mainly the contradiction upon which the present class system is based is that between the people and its enemies.

The economic manifestation of this contradiction is that the exploited as well as the strata and classes under imperialist oppression are on the one side, and on the other side there are the domestic exploiters dependent on foreign domination, and foreign capitalists who have an all-pervasive control over Iran.

The social aspect of this contradiction is that there are the workers, the peasants, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisies and the national bourgeoisie on the one side, and on the other side, there are the comprador bourgeoisie, whether in the form of private capital or Government sector; foreign capitalists and imperialist powers."

In an earlier passage Jazani seeks to explain the treachery of the Soviet and Peking bureaucracies in supporting the Shah, which of course he does not call treachery.

"They manage to capture a considerable portion of the market from the international monopolies.

They help their economic growth by expanding economic relations with Iran.

They may also believe that with the expansion of such economic relations they are

(a) helping towards the economic independence of Iran, and (b) that by the expansion of the public sector (eg steel industries, etc.) they are helping to create "socialist" as against "capitalist" tendencies in the system.

We believe that if the socialist states are swayed by such considerations then they have no objective understanding of the ruling system in Iran and they have also failed to pay due attention to global transformations relating to countries like Iran."

Having delivered this mild criticism to these 'socialists' Jazani urges them not to move towards outright opposition to the Shah:

"The revolutionary movement in Iran does undoubtedly suffer as a result of the socialist countries' friendly relations

with Iran, because of their approval of the regime and their economic relations with it. In the present stage of our struggle we expect the following from the Soviet Union, China and other socialist states:

1. We are in no way in favour of a propaganda war between Iran and the socialist states since we would not be the beneficiaries of such a war; neither do we expect these states to break diplomatic relations with Iran.

2. However, we demand that the socialist states refuse, at any price, to approve the regime's programmes and its internal as well as regional policies; and that they further refuse to adopt a friendly stand towards the basest dictatorship in the region. The continuation of the economic relationship

with Iran is in no way dependent upon such a stand.

3. We expect the socialist pressure groups in the socialist states, as we expect similar groups in the West, to protest against crimes committed by the regime and to make public opinion aware of what happens inside Iran."

Such passages from the leading theoretician of the Fedayeen are a clear statement of their hostility for permanent revolution which demands that the masses struggle for a socialist revolution against Khomeini's new regime.

Forces which pull behind the Fedayeen in practice will be pulled behind Khomeini and the strengthening of nationalist bourgeois forces. They could well end up on the receiving end of bullets from the religious leader whose power they support.



The takeover of the Niaravan Palace

Forging the link between art and revolution

ГОРДОСТЬ СОВЕТСКОЙ КИНОМАТОГРАФИИ

The first ever comprehensive exhibition of the work of the Soviet artist, Alexander Rodchenko (1891-1956) has been mounted at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford. Rodchenko was a leading member of the Constructivist/Productivist movement in the decade following the Bolshevik revolution. The exhibition covers his paintings, drawings, photographs, furniture design and posters and street art. It includes work never exhibited before, including paintings held by the Rodchenko family in Moscow. It will stay in Oxford until March 25

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 turned upside down not just the property relations of Czarist Russia but its social fabric in every sphere.

In art, no less than in politics and the family the revolution led directly to an explosion of development in which Soviet artists no longer took as their point of development the artistic revolution of Picasso and the Cubists but the proletarian revolution of the Bolsheviks.

The most conscious of these artists attempted to forge a direct unity between the new Soviet power and their work.

To do this it was necessary to destroy the old idealism, the sanctity and humbug of the art gallery—to demystify the artist and his/her subjectivism and to assert the functional nature of the artist/designer.

Cosy decoration

Rodchenko wrote in 1920: "The art of the future will not be the cosy decoration of family homes. It will be just as indispensable as 48-storey skyscrapers, mighty bridges, wireless, aeronautics, submarines which will be transformed into art."

The development from painter to anti-painter covered a span of no more than five years from the revolution—a period of rapid and revolutionary change.

Rodchenko had been influenced first by Aubrey Beardsley and Gauguin and from 1915 onwards by the Futurists. But the group of artists, designers and architects—of which it must be remembered Rodchenko was only a part—rejected each of these in turn.

First edition

Ossip Brik, critic and writer, writing in the first edition of LEF in 1923 (the quarterly periodical: Left Front of the Arts) attacked those who adopted the title 'constructivist' but rejected its disciplines:

"Instead of 'composition' they say 'construction', instead of 'to write' they say 'to shape', instead of 'to create'—'to construct'. But they are all doing the same old thing: little pictures, landscapes, portraits. There are others who do not paint pictures, and work in production, who also talk about material, texture, construction but once again out come the very same age old ornamental and applied types of art, little cockerels and flowers, or circles and dashes.

"There is a consumer who does not need pictures and ornaments, and who is not afraid of iron and steel. This consumer is the proletariat. With the victory of the proletariat will come the victory of constructivism."

Detached art

This drive against 'painterliness' was directed against those who wanted art to be detached, superior and important in the sense of being mystically significant.

In 1921 Rodchenko and Varvara Stepanova (an artist married to Rodchenko) produced a 'productivist manifesto'.

Among its ideological aims was:

"To make intellectual production truly participate in the building up of communist culture, as an element equal in value with others".

And amongst its political aims:

"Establishing contacts with all the productive centres and main bodies of the united soviet

institutions which make communist life a practical reality".

The manifesto also formulated slogans, the first two of which were: "Down with art, long live technical science" and "Religion is a lie. Art is a lie".



Mayakovsky

The dangers of proclaiming proletarian art by decree have been pointed to by Trotsky. He attacked the Oktiabr and Kuznitsa as seeking to become monopolistic representatives of the artistic interests of the proletariat. He refused to condemn artistic creation to the dustbin and make do with political generalities about artistic creation when that creation was not taking place.

"Of course it would be splendid if we had, to supplement our Communist political writing, the Bolshevik world outlook expressed in artistic form. But we haven't and that is not accidental. The heart of the matter is that artistic creativity, by its very nature, lags behind the other modes of expressions of a man's spirit, and still more of the spirit of a class.

"It is one thing to understand something and express it logically, and quite another thing to assimilate it organically, reconstructing the whole system of one's feelings, and to



Rodchenko's poster for Eisenstein's film, Battleship Potemkin, 1925

find a new kind of artistic expression for this new entity.

"The latter process is more organic, slower, more difficult to subject to conscious influence—and in the end it will always lag behind.

"The political writing of a class hastens ahead on stilts, while its artistic creativity hobbles along behind on crutches."

Clearly the attempt to dump painting was futile and the raising of photography over painting one sided and distorted but the drive of the productivists to break from bourgeois art justifies itself as a movement by the fact that artistic creation did take place under its manifesto.

A manifesto is not art, yet the manifesto did not remain, in the case of Rodchenko, a banner without creation.

Rodchenko became an abstract artist who then rejected the mysticism of the abstracts.

His painting developed towards the principles of construction. He declared that only line in art reflected reality.

"Line has bid a red farewell to painting".

Next he sought retreat from 'painterliness' in canvasses of plain colour.

Finally he broke with painting altogether and turned to photography, opening up a dazzling era of work in which photomontage predominated.

Productivist Art flowered in the 20s. Even as the bureaucracy of Stalin was eating its way into the heart of the Soviet system, so was the art of that Soviet system beginning to find an authentic voice.

Trained designers

Rodchenko went to Vkhutemas—an engineering workshop which trained designers not to become famous artists but to work in industry.

In 1923 he began a long and fruitful collaboration with the poet Mayakovsky—starting with the cover design for Mayakovsky's poem 'Pro Eto'—'About This'.

In 1924 Lenin died: In 1926 Mayakovsky wrote a poem against bureaucratic interference "Conversations with a Tax Inspector about Poetry".

Workers' overalls

In these years Rodchenko designed furniture, crockery and a set of workers' overalls. He and Mayakovsky began covering the streets with copies of advertisements—for the Soviet air industry, for cigarettes, for baby's dummies ("suck them till you're old") and for films by Vertov, Eisenstein and others.

The art had come to the people. The foremost poet of the revolution and the most politically direct of its artists were designing advertising posters, book covers and news kiosks.

The link between Rodchenko and the cinema was strong. His posters for 'Battleship Potemkin' are direct, challenging and vivid. The Productivists redesigned type faces paring away serif frills to get the simplicity and directness they wanted.

In 1926 Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party and in the years that followed art was forced to serve the needs of Stalin.

Rodchenko's photographs continued to develop, taken from sharp distorting angles or many full face prints to express the variety and reality of the sitter.

In 1930 Mayakovsky committed suicide and Rodchenko's photograph 'The Pioneer' was officially criticised.

The following year he was expelled from the Oktiabr on grounds of formalism. Stalin's Social Realism had arrived.

In one sense the Constructivist-Productivists, by denying any independent role for the artist, had reduced their ability to fight this direct subservience of art to serve the bureaucracy.

Continued work

Although Rodchenko fell into disfavour he continued to work and during the early 1930s photographed the construction of the White Sea Canal.

Capitulation would be the wrong word. Rather, the revolutionary political expression which gave the Productive artists their impetus was on the retreat and Rodchenko—not a Trotskyist and without a political comprehension of the reaction that beset his work—

was forced back with it.

He took up painting again and continued to produce quantities of vivid photography. But his art could not help construct a communist society because a communist society was no longer on the agenda. When he died in 1956 (three years after Stalin) his best work was more than 30 years behind him.

There are signs that Rodchenko is being rehabilitated in the Soviet Union.

Allowing his family to release pictures for the Oxford exhibition was an oblique mark of bureaucratic approval.

But the productivists will never be rehabilitated in the Soviet Union until political revolution is on the agenda there.

The Constructivists and Productivists expressed revolutionary optimism and the hope of ending the isolation of artistic creation from the masses. That is a revolutionary goal incompatible with Stalinism.



Cover for Mayakovsky's poem 'Pro Eto' (About This). The woman was his lover, Lilya Brik.



Rodchenko wearing a worker's suit he designed. Photograph by Mikhail Kaufman, 1921

A centrist writes on the revolutionary party

Mark Hyde reviews *Marxism and the Party* by John Molyneux, published by Pluto Press at £2.95

Mr Molyneux attempts to present the basic ideas of Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Gramsci on the revolutionary party and then to comment on their practical relevance today.

With Tony Cliff as editor of this book it is fair of the reader to assume that it has the seal of approval of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), particularly since favourable references are made to the writings of other SWP members such as Chris Harman and Duncan Hallas.

A study of Mr. Molyneux's book should then, provide some guide to the ideological underpinnings of this tendency.

It is not possible to take up every error and misconception contained in this work—space is too brief.

But certain central points must be made.

Throughout the book the importance of scientific theory and programme is minimised—the significance of the party as the material organ of class consciousness is thus undermined; in its place stands a glorification of the working class and its consciousness in its present form.

Mere organising

Essentially, the task of the party is reduced to merely *organising* workers in a more permanent way, for tasks which they are already assumed to have recognised in the day-to-day struggle.

This method emerges most sharply when Molyneux addresses himself to the theory of Lenin (and Kautsky), that socialist consciousness must be brought to the working class "from without".

From attacking the notion of Kautsky (and at first accepted by Lenin) that "from without" can only mean the "bourgeois intelligentsia" as the "vehicle of science", Molyneux goes over to blur the distinction between the scientific knowledge of the *revolutionary party* (consisting of the most advanced workers who have risen to the level of Marxism and the best elements of the bourgeois intelligentsia who have come over to the working class) and the spontaneous consciousness generated in the course of the class struggle itself.

Deprived of role

Though Molyneux makes frequent genuflections to "orthodox" phrases about the party as a "vanguard", he "need to understand the totality of social relations" and admit that the latter



Rosa Luxemburg

can only come from "a much wider sphere than the factory", he therefore deprives the party of its role as the genuine theoretical and political leader of the proletariat.

Thus we read of: "... workers spontaneously rising to much greater heights than trade unionism and trade union politics ..."

Necessary

Self-consciously defending himself against the accusation that he is about to overthrow the whole of Leninism, Molyneux asserts

that a revolutionary party is still necessary because:

"... this consciousness does not develop gradually ... On the contrary, it takes giant and sudden leaps forward and can suffer equally catastrophic shipwrecks. Nor does the consciousness spread evenly through the class, so the consciousness of the advanced socialist workers must be organised and centralised to increase to the maximum its influence within the ... class as a whole."

Now, no one has ever denied that when the work-

ing class is driven into conflict with capitalism the development of the revolutionary crisis creates the conditions for sharp changes in consciousness.

And only a fool could fail to see that the proletariat in struggle constantly draws conclusions about the role of the state, the different political parties, etc.

Yet a revolutionary programme of action for the overthrow of the capitalist system, and revolutionary consciousness as such, is *far more* than the sum total of these experiences.

The consciousness of the Marxist (as opposed to a centrist, SWP-type) party, is *far more* than that of the "advanced socialist workers"; or, as Molyneux puts it, "workers achieving socialist consciousness spontaneously".

The task is not merely to "increase to the maximum" the "influence" of this "spontaneous consciousness".

The consciousness of the revolutionary party is that to which Molyneux can only pay lip service in other sections of this book—the complete body of knowledge of scientific Marxism. Lenin could give leadership to the Russian revolution not because he *shared* the consciousness of the "advanced socialist workers"—but because he *fought* this consciousness.

Adventurist

If the Bolshevik party had merely sought to "increase the influence" of these "advanced workers" the Russian revolution would have prematurely broken its neck during the adventurist upsurge of July 1917.

While paying close attention to every mood in the proletariat, every shift of mass opinion, while encouraging every progressive trend, the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership, were able to maintain the *independence* of the party from *all pressures including the pressures of the advanced workers themselves* (though these of course had their effects in the ranks of the party too).

Dialectics

And this was possible because Bolshevik strategy after April 1917 was not based on tail-ending the advanced workers (the 'old Bolsheviks', including Stalin had done this before Lenin's return to Russia).

Rather the strategy could not be separated from Lenin's study of dialectical materialist philosophy (which Mr. Molyneux seeks to represent as a form of idealism), from the study of the nature of the imperialist war, of the development of capitalism in Russia, as well as (eventually) from Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution.

It is a happy coincidence of course, that Mr. Molyneux's separation of Marxist theory from the tasks of party organisation, and his view that the revolutionary movement has only to do what workers do spontaneously in a more systematic way, provides a rationale for the current practice of the SWP which never tires of giving workers in struggle "assistance" and patting them on the back in the hope of easy recruitment, while refraining from any *sharp struggle for programme against the present consciousness of the class*.

Quiescence

In times of relative quiescence in the class struggle tendencies which play this game appear oh-so-advanced, but in times of upsurge act as a drag on the movement.

Molyneux's opposition to the Marxist programme is clearest when he talks about Trotsky's "dual legacy".

There is, we are told, a "qualitative difference" between Trotsky's defence of Leninism against Stalinism up to 1933, and his struggle for a new (Fourth) International from 1933 onwards.

"Pitiful"

The first was basically a good thing; the second a "pitiful gathering", based upon the Transitional Programme which he calls a "false method"—"a fixed system, in isolation from and in advance of mass struggles".

Molyneux crows (with complete disregard to the real part played by Trotskyists in leading mass struggles in many countries):

"... its demands—for a sliding scale of wages, for the opening of the books of big business, for the nationalisation of the banks, for the workers' militia—were never taken up by the workers".

Mr. Molyneux does not bother to explain how socialism will be achieved *without* such measures!

Actual experience

Molyneux's tirade deliberately conceals the fact that the Transitional Programme was based upon the actual revolutionary experience of Russian Bolshevism and the early Comintern (which first spoke of a system of "transitional demands").

Further, the experience of every mass revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat has confirmed its method, right up to the present day.

What was the publication of capitalist accounts in Portugal and Iran but the "opening of the books"? What were the seizures of arms in those countries but the first instinctive strivings towards workers' militia?

Centrists like Mr Molyneux serve to conceal the lessons of such experiences from the working class and thus obstruct the development of revolutionary leadership.

No programme

A "fixed" programme may, of course, be revised in the light of experience (as was the Bolshevik programme in 1917) but what Molyneux puts forward is *no programme*—but instead a recipe for continual adaptation to the existing consciousness of the working class.

A natural complement of this view is the relegation of the task of building a centralised International to the dim and distant future, in favour of "collaboration wherever possible" today—the long-time justification for the SWP's sordid series of blocs with centrists abroad.

If Molyneux's book causes anyone to begin a serious questioning on the nature of the revolutionary party, then at least it will have served one useful purpose.

But the task then is the study of the *actual* works of the great thinkers he seeks to "summarise" in order to discover the *actual* theoretical gains that have been made and their value today, rather than their distorted reflection in the cracked mirror of centrism.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Letter: from hard-up Cowley workers

"From the hard up workers on ADO 14/71" at British Leyland's Body Plant

International sell-out attempt at Dunlop

French and Italian union bureaucrats last week turned up to reinforce the efforts being made by all eleven unions in Dunlop's threatened Speke plant to head off any serious action to prevent its planned closure.

And once again leaflets distributed by the Workers Socialist League exposing the way in which the struggle is being shunted down blind sidings by Speke convenors were subjected to witch-hunting attack by TGWU Executive Council Chairman Stan Pemberton.

The WSL has stressed from the beginning the fact that the union leaders accept that the 'viability' of Dunlop as a capitalist employer is paramount—and that therefore they must also accept the company's conclusion: that the 2,400 jobs at risk in Speke must be sacrificed in order to

preserve profits.

If any worker doubted this position it was amply confirmed in a statement by the TGWU's Rubber and Chemicals officer, 'left' talking John Miller. Speaking to the *Guardian* (20 Feb) he pointed out that:

"We do accept the need to streamline the industry and make it more efficient, and we would probably accept that there would be difficulty in maintaining all 2,400 jobs at Speke [!], but as efficiency increased there is a possibility of attracting new products to the plant."

No denial

Conspicuously Pemberton's attack on the WSL leaflet at the previous mass meeting had avoided any denial that this is the position of union officials and convenors.

Instead he merely set up a clumsy smokescreen of anti-Trotskyist bluster in the hopes that no worker

would see the pathetic protest policies behind it.

Last week's mass meeting saw a similar display, with Pemberton soft-peddling his nationalist demand for import controls to keep out 'foreign' tyres in deference to the French and Italian union bureaucrats on the platform.

They in turn paid Pemberton the courtesy of avoiding any reference to occupation of the plant to prevent closure, and helped set the scene for the continuing campaign of 'lobbies' and 'talks' lined up by the Speke convenors.

One such lobby was the futile Communist Party February 14 lobby of Parliament, at which a mere handful of people had turned up to implement the 'revolutionary' policy of handing valentine cards to MPs!

WSL leaflet

This fiasco is to be 'followed up' by a demonstration on March 10 called by the Stalinist-led Liverpool Trades Council.

Pemberton then turned his full fury against the WSL leaflet which called for the meeting to adopt a policy of occupation, and demanded that Pemberton use his position as national chairman of the TGWU to press for a national trade group meeting at which a joint plan of action against closure and sackings at Speke and other threatened tyre plants could be hammered out.

Yet though bombastically declaring that "if you want these elements [the WSL] to lead you, I will be only too glad to stand down", Pemberton failed to explain where he stands on these policies.

Nor would he respond to the demand on him to join with local 'left' Labour MPs Eddie Loyden (who has verbally supported occupation) and Eric Heffer in a fight to kick out the anti-socialist Callaghan-Healey



Heffer

Labour leadership and reverse their policies of wage cuts and mass unemployment.

But he was quick to argue against one member who, drawing the logical conclusion from the convenors' do-nothing policy on the Speke closure, suggested that the pickets now manning the gates should be withdrawn to allow the company to restart production.

However in deference to the international bureaucrats on the platform, Pemberton failed to answer the same member's suggestion that the picket line be transferred to the docks—to stop imported tyres from entering the country!

We say clearly:
NO to import controls!
YES to occupation!
NO to Dunlop's "viability"!

YES to an elected trade union committee to open Dunlop's books and show the need for nationalisation without compensation under workers' management!

NO to sackings, "voluntary" or compulsory!

YES to work sharing among the whole workforce without loss of pay!

DEAR EDITOR,

After we have suffered two prolonged and arduous years of so-called 'bonus deals', British Leyland management's latest tale of woe is to inform us that our parity payments have been suspended because of the lorry drivers' dispute.

This dispute incidentally gave the drivers an increase of over 14%. It makes our measly 5% look non-existent—even if we don't mention the Ford workers' rise.

We are sick and tired of our livelihood being dependant on the whim of outside influences. We now ask our union officials

to stop their preoccupation with consorting with management. We demand a decent living wage. And we demand our officials do the job for which they were elected.

This means preserving the living standards and working conditions of their members, not being blackmailed by the wolf-criers of management.

Yours fraternally,
 B.J.

*We recommend the brothers concerned consult the panel below and join us in the fight for such a leadership! Ed.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

WSL: we offer a lead

Whichever way you look at the struggles and problems now facing the working class throughout the world, one thing stands out above all: the necessity for a principled leadership capable of leading the struggle for state power and the establishment of a socialist society.

The massive revolutionary upheaval that has now toppled the seemingly impregnable might of the Shah of Iran and which is now already coming into conflict with the restrictions placed upon it by its Islamic "leaders" serves as a vivid reminder that socialist revolution is not only possible, but essential if the apparatus of capitalist repression and exploitation is to be destroyed once and for all.

But such a revolution requires a conscious Marxist leadership. And the fight to construct such a leadership is inseparable from the fight in the day-to-day struggles of the working class internationally for the principles, method and demands of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme. The Workers Socialist League has time and again proved to be the only movement in Britain that fights patiently and relentlessly on such a perspective.

We alone are the movement that does not shrink from even head-on battles with the existing leaders of the working class — whether these 'leaders' be open right wingers, 'left' talking Labourites or Stalinists of the Communist Party.

Of course this policy has made us no friends in the trade union and Labour bureaucracy, or amongst the opportunists and centrists of the British 'left'. But it has meant that the WSL has consistently offered the most powerful lead to workers in struggle.

In each struggle we set out to prove to workers both in theory and in practice the necessity of a new, revolutionary 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.

This is why the WSL has featured at the forefront of pay struggles in British Leyland and the public sector, in the fight against redundancies and closures, in struggles against the cuts, unionisation fights, and the fight for democracy in the labour movement.

This method of approach — rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy or concession to the labour bureaucracy — is of course essential not only in Britain but *internationally*.

In taking up international issues in the labour movement the WSL stresses not only the obligation of British workers to support the Irish liberation struggle and revolutionary 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; but its approach to both theory and practice make it the only really serious revolutionary movement.

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.

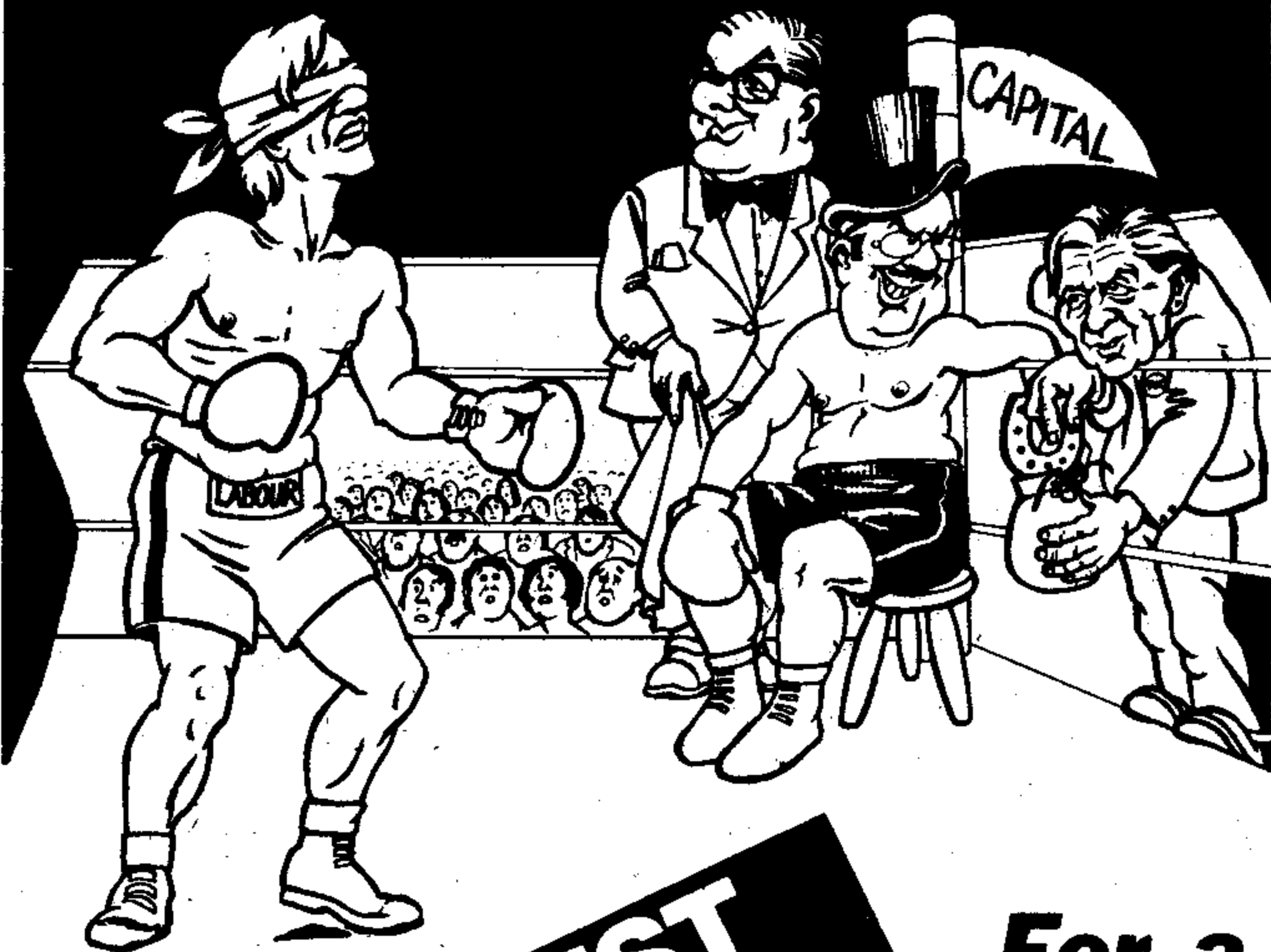
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Press Civil Service pay claim Down with P.R.U.

Just like Garners strike nears crunch the Tories!

Members of the Civil and Public Services Association and the Society of Civil and Public Servants last Friday staged a national one-day token strike in support of a pay increase.

The two unions are demanding that the government pay increases of between 25% and 30% in line with findings of the Pay Research Unit, a supposedly independent body whose job it is to look at wages in the private sector and come up with a decent average for civil servants.

Negotiations over civil servants' pay have been governed by the vague idea of 'fair comparison' for twenty odd years, and at the last three CPSA conferences motions to get rid of the PRU and allow the membership to determine the claim have been put forward by the left in the union.

Each time, however, the motions have been defeated by a margin of around two to one.

It is not surprising that important sections of the membership are hostile to the PRU. It is a rather shadowy body whose activities are almost impossible to monitor.



SCPS members lobbying 'left' Labour MP Joan Maynard on pay in 1977

union leaders to say clearly what they know of this mysterious body.

More importantly the fight must continue to turn the union away from such bodies and towards the principle of membership control over the drawing up of pay claims.

At the centre of any serious fight to defend living standards must be the independent mobilisations of the membership.

The key focus for defence of living standards must be a measure of real incomes against inflation not some vague comparison with increases gained in the private sector.

There must be a fight for the establishment of rank and file committees which would monitor inflation and show to the membership the sort of information needed to frame wage claims which would regain and defend living standards.

Cost of living clause

Any pay claim seeking to do this would need to include a cost of living clause which would guarantee wages against inflation as assessed by rank and file committees.

Moves towards such committees can take place at the same time as the struggle to break from the PRU continues.

For now, the fight is on for the current claim.

A leaflet given out by the two unions in Coventry, where a demonstration and rally of 100 CPSA members took place, reported that:

"Now Mr Callaghan is offering us a staged programme based on the PRU findings but not the full PRU recommendations. So far, he will not even tell us how many stages we are going to get, or when we will get the full PRU recommendation implemented."

At rallies up and down the country CPSA leaders reflecting the members' anger attacked the government attitude.

In London CPSA President Len Lever said that the unions did not feel bound by the TUC/government concordat until it had been discussed at their conferences.

"Leadership"

At the Coventry rally National Officer Geoff Lewtas promised "We will give leadership to this campaign... we will not settle without referring any offer to the membership".

From Monday the unions embarked on selective strike action at 20 key government computer centres but workers at the Department of Employment and the Department of Health and Social Security have not even been asked if they would like to be involved in strike action.

The CPSA NEC are using the argument that "we don't want to hit the public" to restrict the planned strikes.

The vote for the one-day strike (by a margin of 2-1) came when the NEC circulated branches with a motion which read "Are you in favour of a one-day strike? Will you give the NEC authority for a campaign of industrial action to achieve the full claim?"

Develop links

An accompanying leaflet specified a one day strike, action at 20 computer centres and a national overtime ban.

The overtime ban which has been applied, only seriously affects Department of Employment members when extra work comes in, for example, at the time of a major lay-off. Except in such conditions it is generally irrelevant.

There is feeling in some sections of the CPSA membership that the union leadership despite its strong words want to avoid action which could win the claim—particularly while the local authority workers are in dispute.

The civil servants' claim is based around April 1. A clause in a standing agreement states that after six weeks any pay award would not be backdated. Clearly this will be used by the right wing to present a sell-out deal.

CPSA/SCPS members must campaign for all-out strike action to win the full claim.

They must develop links with other unions in struggle against wage control as for example was begun last Friday in Coventry when local NUPE members joined the demonstration and spoke on their own claim at the rally afterwards.

Statements by government ministers last Friday showed their determination to resist the CPSA/SCPS claim. David Owen, the Shah of Iran's friend, responded to the strike by saying "I have great pleasure in crossing this picket line" as he went into the Foreign Office.

DEFEND SACKED NOTTS JOURNALISTS
NUJ Mass Picket
Nottingham Evening Post
All day on March 3

CPSA members Steven Green and Tim Dennis speak to Socialist Press about their pay struggle.

Tim: Callaghan's speech in Parliament on Thursday put the nail in the coffin for the union members and finally disposes of the myth of the government being the ideal employer.

It also shows that this government's attitude is no different to the Tories' who on the eve of the national strike in 1973 sent out a letter from Lord Armstrong, Head of the Civil Service, threatening loss of pension rights, flexi-time, etc. This Thursday we got an almost identical letter with the same threats and a last minute plea. The only effect it had was to increase the militancy.

Steven: At the rally in the afternoon we were welcomed by Terry Lightfoot and his Jazz Band! The president of the CPSA, Len Lever, chaired the meeting and made it clear that this was not a debating society but he would consider speeches from the floor.

That said, we were treated to four self-congratulatory speeches devoid of any policies on how to win the strike.

Tim: Heckling mounted when £12,500 per year Ken Thomas, General Secretary of the CPSA (and co-signatory of the 'Concordat') waffled on. He said "We can't accept staging (of the wage rise) unless we know the nature of the staging."— He quickly wound up and sat down.

As we go to press the TGWU leaders are about to declare their position on a Day of Action for March 24 in support of the 13-month old Garners strike.

The preservation of TGWU Regional officials' agreements with the police on restricting picketing and their desire to see this strike ended as soon as possible, points strongly to the prospect of open sabotage, with a refusal to give official backing.

The Strike Committee has correctly declared its intention to go ahead with the action, without this backing if necessary.

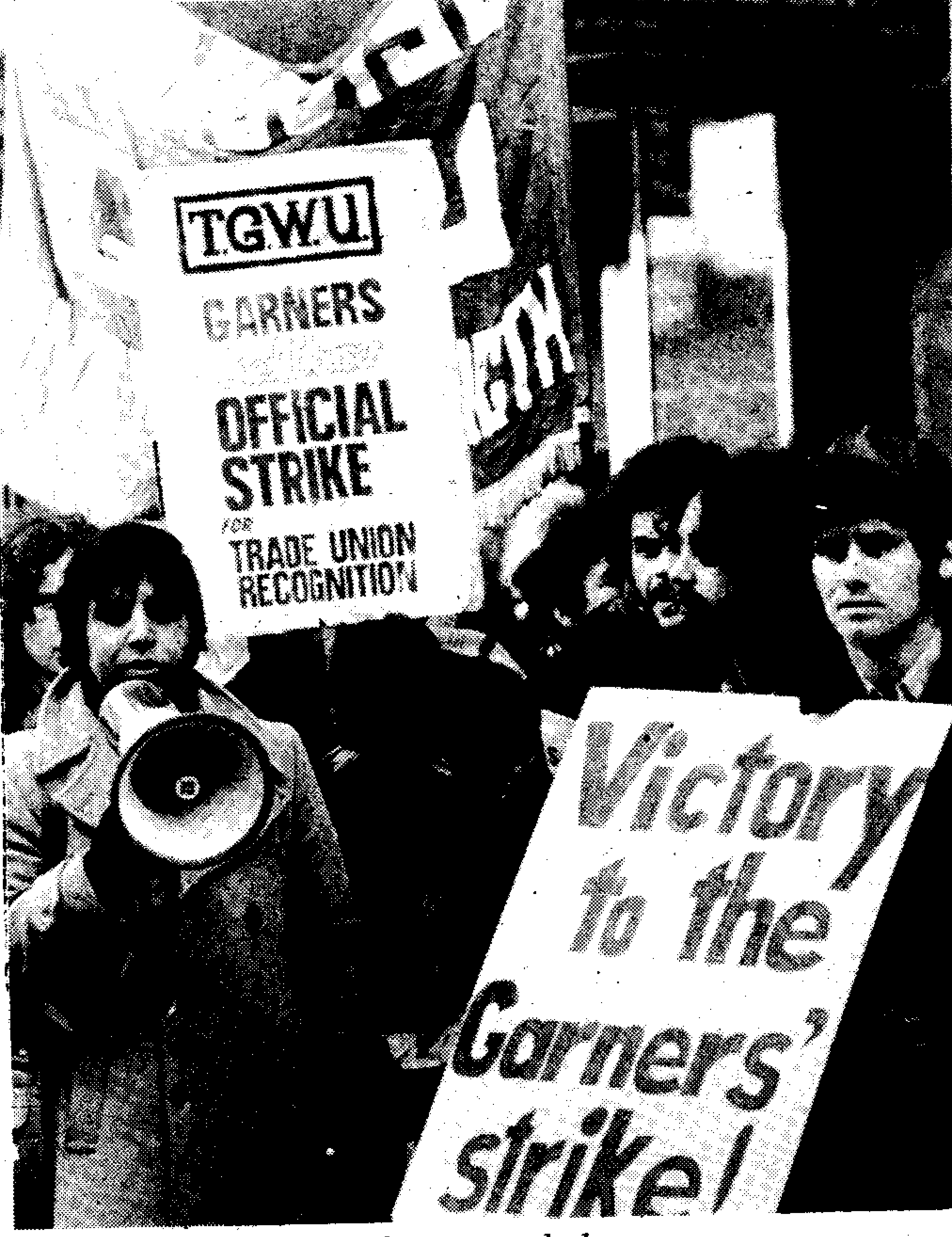
Such a focus is vital at this stage to maintain and develop support for the strike.

It is likely that the Strike Committee may come under heavy pressure, yet it must stick to its guns.

If the TGWU Region 1 'leaders' refuse to lift a finger in support then this must be faced and drawn to the attention of the entire labour movement.

Strikers are now denied access to telephone facilities in the union offices at Henrietta Street, and have actually been, on two days, locked out of the premises originally made available as strike committee rooms.

An open conflict with the bureaucracy is clearly coming to a head.



Garners pickets: help always needed

PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

'Detective work'

It is made up of half union and half government sponsored nominees. On the union side the nine civil service unions which sit on the Whitley Council jointly put forward their nominees.

The union rank and file have no idea who these people are!

The government nominees are less shrouded in mystery only because of 'detective work' carried out by militants in the CPSA.

The November 1978 issue of the rank and file magazine 'Redder Tape' lists the government nominees as a director of Marks and Spencer, Lief Mills, the general secretary of the National Union of Bank Employees, Lady Pike, an ex-Tory MP, Lord Shepherd, Deputy Director of the Sterling Group of companies and Professor Rodney Crosley, a professor of mathematics.

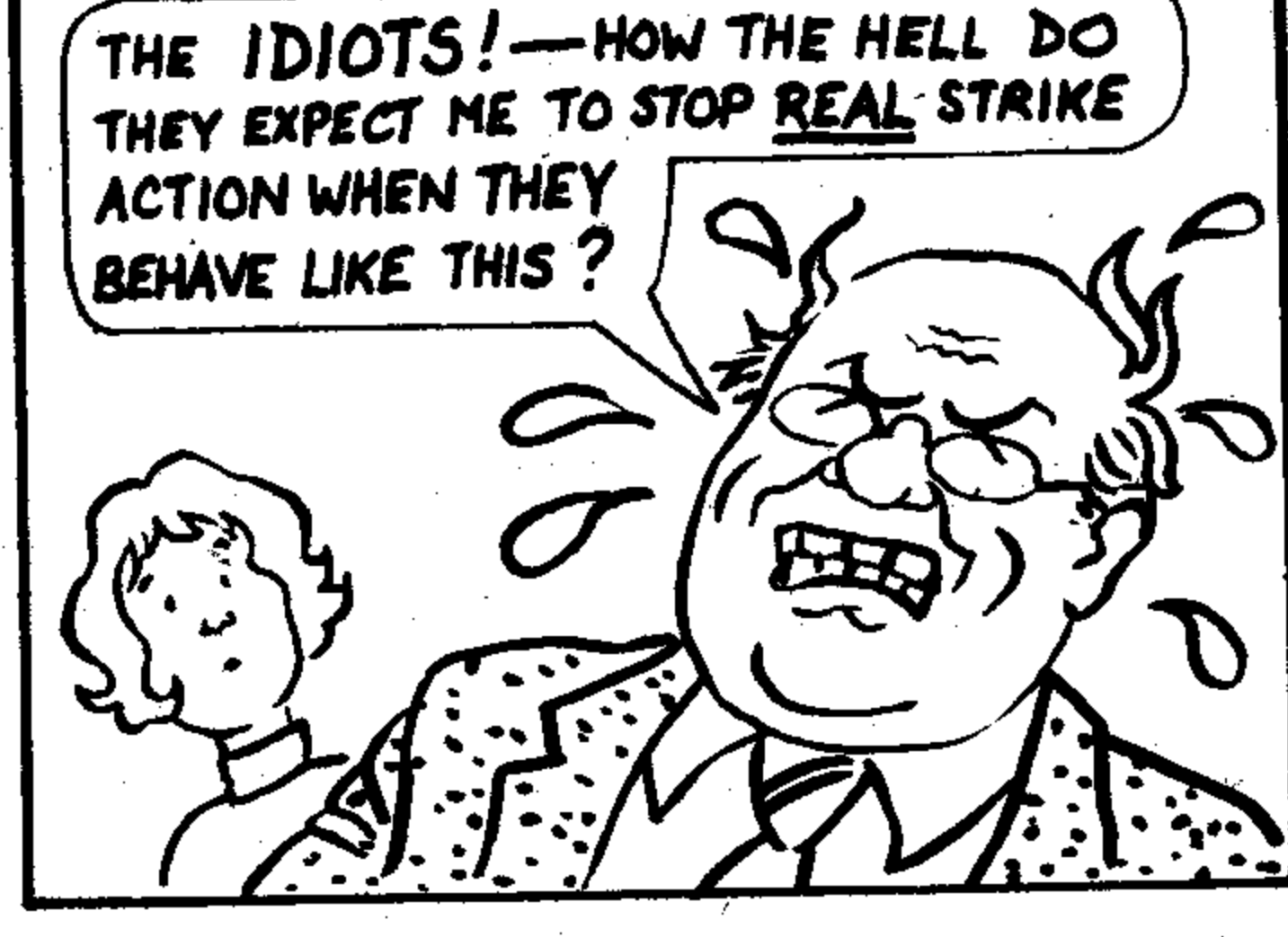
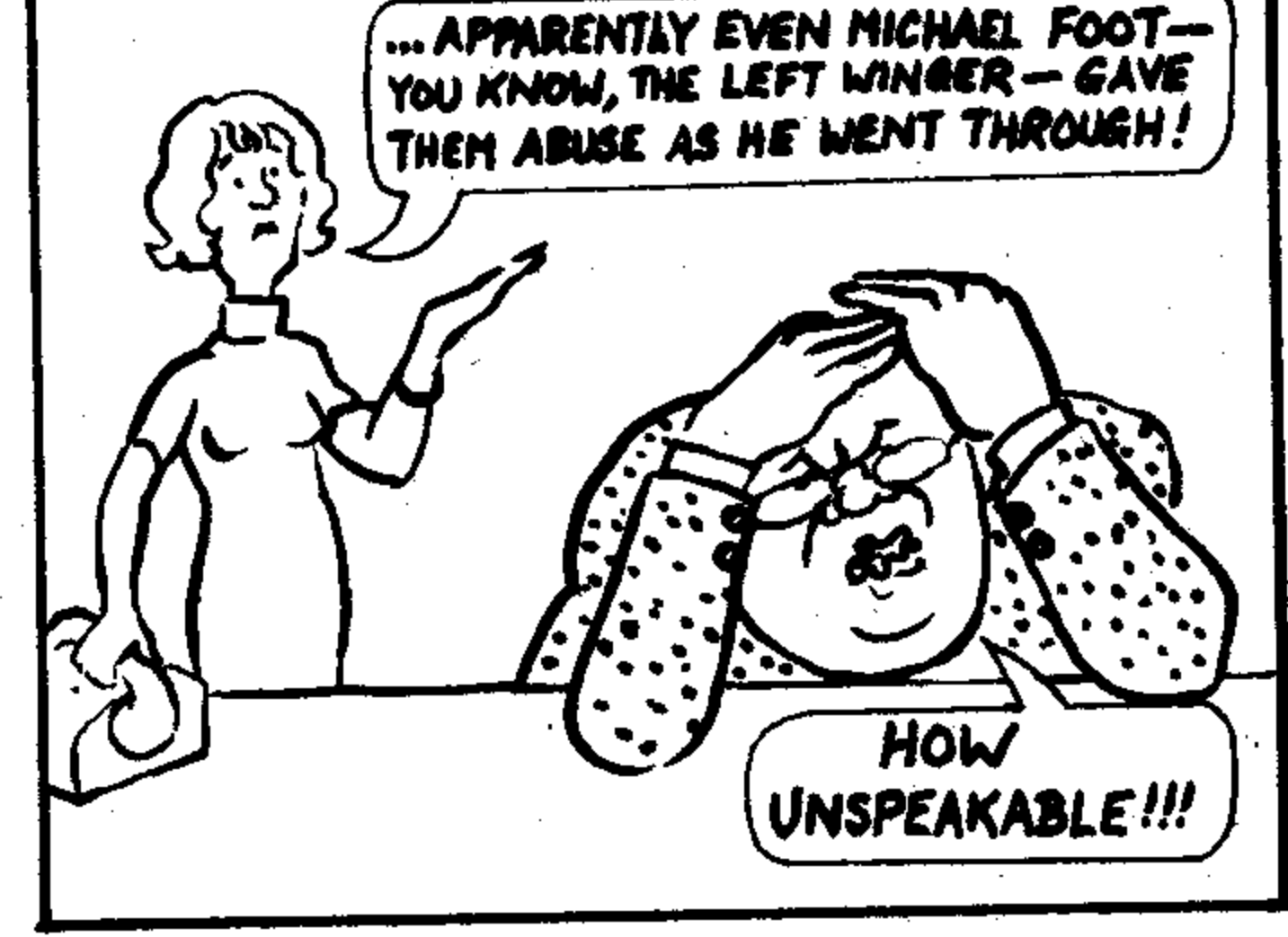
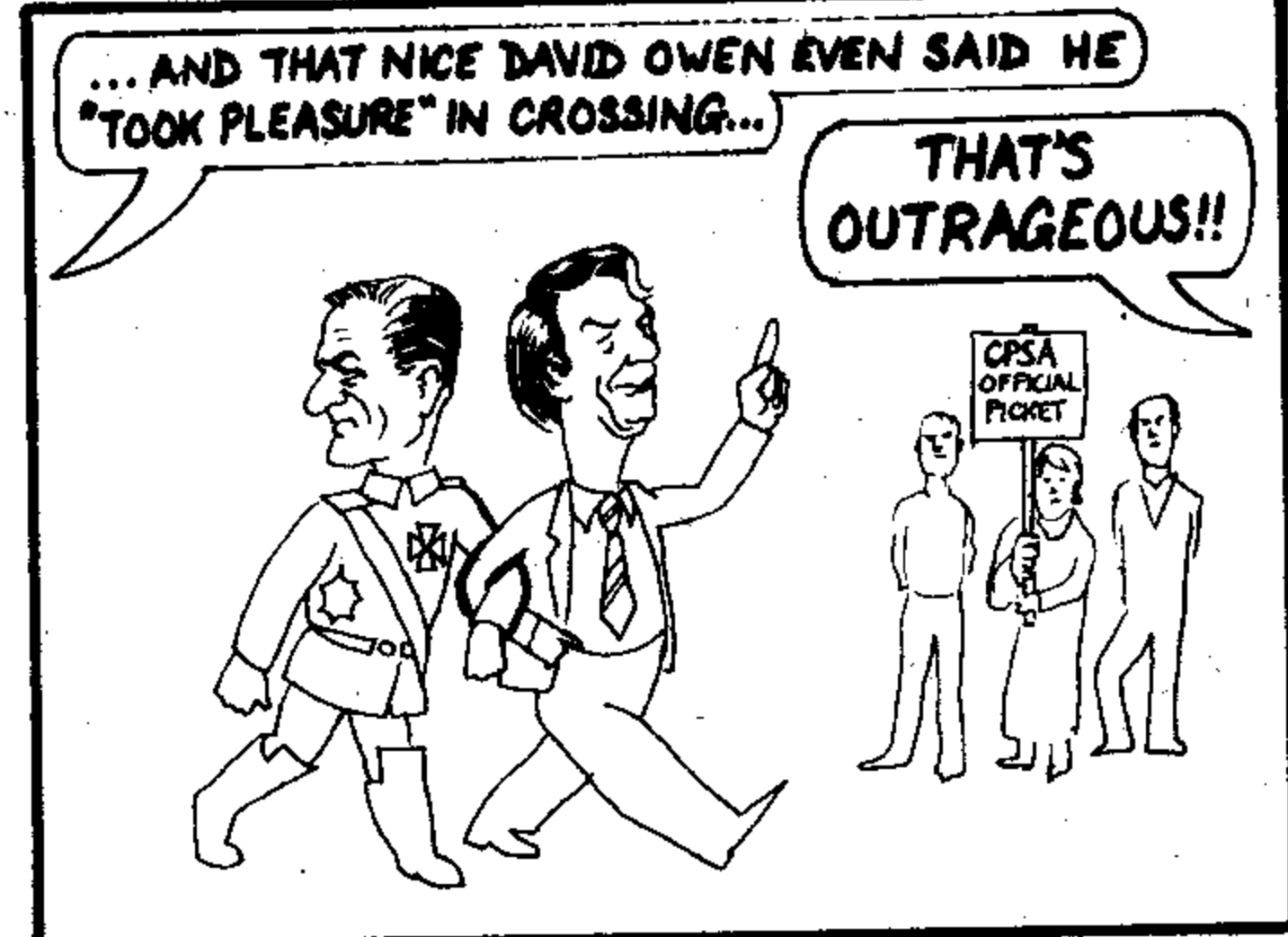
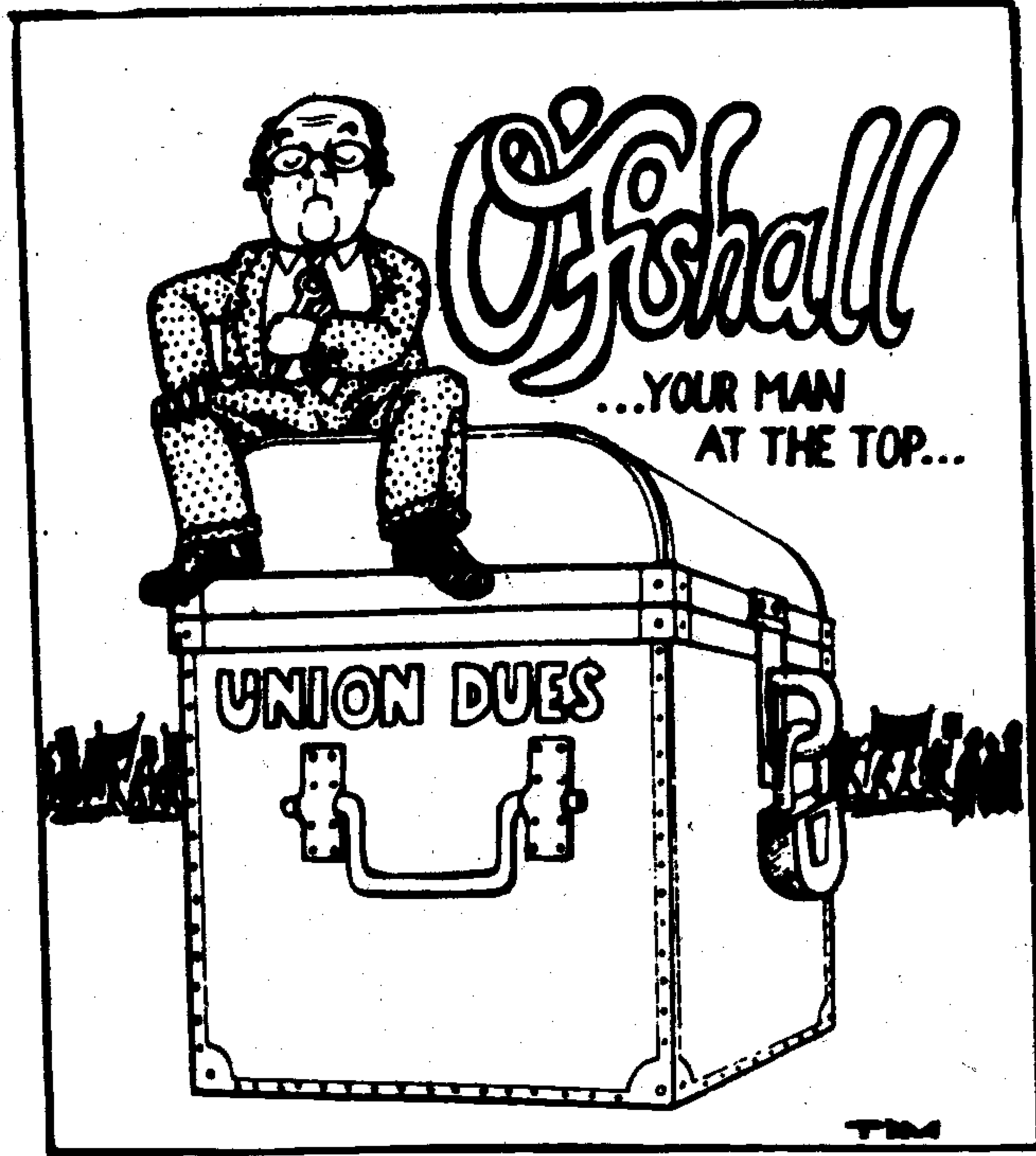
The PRU brief is to investigate comparable wages in the private sector; and civil servants pay is negotiated on the basis of their findings.

No rank and file union member has any idea which companies in the private sector are investigated. If the union leaders know this information they certainly don't let on about it.

Expose PRU

Militant civil servants must continue the fight to expose the inner workings of the PRU.

Demands must be placed on



SOCIALIST PRESS



THE CHALLENGE TO KHOMEINI GROWS



New dictator Bazargan

As the new government under Medhi Bazargan puts on a brave face and attempts to restart oil exports to the imperialist countries, there are vivid signs that the working masses will reject any attempt to stabilise Iranian capitalism.

The crucial demands for the disbanding of the standing army and for a government of workers' councils are spreading rapidly amongst workers and youth.

Last Friday the left wing Fedayeen-e-Khalq called a rally around these slogans and in direct opposition to Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Council. It attracted an eager crowd of over 100,000.

And during the weekend this initiative produced an echo from even the Islamic guerrilla group, the Mujaheddin-e-Khalq, whose leader Massoud Rajavi, speaking at another large rally, took up the Fedayeen's demands—in particular their call for the replacement of the standing army with a "People's Army".

The Mujaheddin had hither-

to been regarded by the press as entirely governed by Khomeini—but this latest development indicates the tensions that must be growing among his followers.

Thousands of them clearly took up arms against the Shah in the expectation that his downfall would herald the end of exploitation and oppression—only to find the Bazargan/Khomeini regime seeking to reconstruct the armed forces, restart oil production and exclude the masses from any form of political control of society.

Rubber stamp

Now vague talk of a referendum to rubber-stamp the power of Khomeini's 'Revolutionary Council' and empty promises of eventual elections to a constituent assembly confirm clearly that the new regime is intent above all on "normalising" capitalist exploitation in Iran, and stemming the huge revolutionary movement which shattered the power of the Shah.

But the last week's events show that thousands of armed Iranian workers and youth have

other ideas. They see in the crisis of the Iranian capitalist state their historic opportunity to press forward to socialist revolution.

The confusion of the politics of the Fedayeen, and even greater confusion of the Mujaheddin mean that these groupings cannot offer a consistent lead to this revolutionary movement.

But clearly in and around these groups are forces which must be won to the Trotskyist programme in the fight for a conscious revolutionary leadership.

The central demands in such a programme must be:

*Down with the dictatorship

of Bazargan! For immediate elections to a constituent assembly.

*Build workers' militias! Disband the standing army!

*Build workers' councils in every area, drawing delegates from every working class organisation and rank and file soldiers.

*Occupy and expropriate the banks and capitalist monopolies!

*Land and cheap credit to the tillers!

*Equal rights to women and minorities: self determination for the Kurds and Azerbaijanis!

*For a workers' and peasants' government!

IRANIAN STUDENT SOCIETY

Labour Movement Conference on Iran

(sponsored by Leeds Trades Council) Saturday 3 March 2 p.m.

Leeds Trades Council Club, Saville Mount Leeds 7

Chinese step up attack on Vietnam

A task force of up to 200,000 Chinese troops, allegedly advancing in human waves across minefields, continues to press its punitive "raid" into Vietnam.

Vital Vietnamese road, rail and telecommunications links have been broken, and wholesale economic disruption caused as thousands of panic-stricken refugees flee south from the war zone.

Reactionary deals

The Peking Stalinists, fearing the growing mass demands for improved living standards, have attempted to "solve" their crisis by turning to reactionary deals with imperialism.

In such deals they offer themselves as a loyal ally against the Soviet Union—and in attacking Soviet-backed Vietnam they hope to prove this.

But the Hanoi Stalinists hold an equally reactionary position. A combination of nationalism and bureaucratic determination to crush all forms of opposition led last month to the indefensible Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea (Cambodia).

Nationalism

And within Vietnam itself the virulent nationalism of the Hanoi regime has

led to sustained attacks on the language rights of the 1½ million Chinese population in the country.

Black market

The inability of Stalinist bureaucrats to establish a planned socialist economy has also opened up huge economic problems in Vietnam. Last year's crackdown on the Chinese minority was related to the flourishing Chinese-led black market North and South, which had cornered the majority of the rice market.

In retaliation the Chinese cut off 80 aid programmes worth an estimated \$300 million per year to Vietnam, whose agriculture is also

facing catastrophic disruption.

Such divisions and conflicts serve only to weaken the international working class and strengthen the hand of imperialism.

Workers must demand the immediate withdrawal of both Chinese and Vietnamese troops to their own borders.

But there is no likelihood of stability or socialism in that region until a Marxist-led political revolution achieves the overthrow of the chauvinist bureaucrats in Hanoi, Moscow and Peking.



Hanoi Stalinist Giap



Peking Stalinist Deng

Clear out Britain's licensed killers

Eleven members of a vicious pro-imperialist Protestant murder gang in Belfast were last week sentenced to a total of 42 life sentences for their campaign of bestial torture and

murder against the Catholic population.

The 'Shankill Butchers' had waged their own savage war against victims deliberately chosen at random in order to strike terror into the hearts of Catholic workers and youth and

intimidate anti-imperialist forces.

At least some of the eleven 'butchers' are known to be members of the reactionary Ulster Volunteer Force, a terrorist group dedicated to preserving the stranglehold of British imperialism over the occupied six counties.

Assassins

But while these vicious assassins suffer the consequences of their barbaric actions, other murderers and torturers are not only left free to continue their intimidation and repression, but are actually backed up by legal sanctions and the power of the state.

These licensed terrorists of course include the British imperialist army, the RUC, and the prison screws at the Long Kesh concentration camp.

Troops out

To bring an end to their savage activities the British labour movement must join actively with Irish workers to force the immediate withdrawal of troops and ensure the right of the Irish people to determine their own political future.

FUND

As we go to press we are still £146.65 short of our monthly target of £600. With only three days to go to the end of the month, the situation is serious.

We just cannot afford to go short on the monthly fund. Every penny is urgently needed to sustain the paper. All readers and supporters of Socialist Press should consider whether they can make a contribution to this vital fund and help us achieve our target.

Meanwhile, our thanks to those who have sent in money this week including our Danish supporters who have sent us £15.

All donations should be sent to:
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