

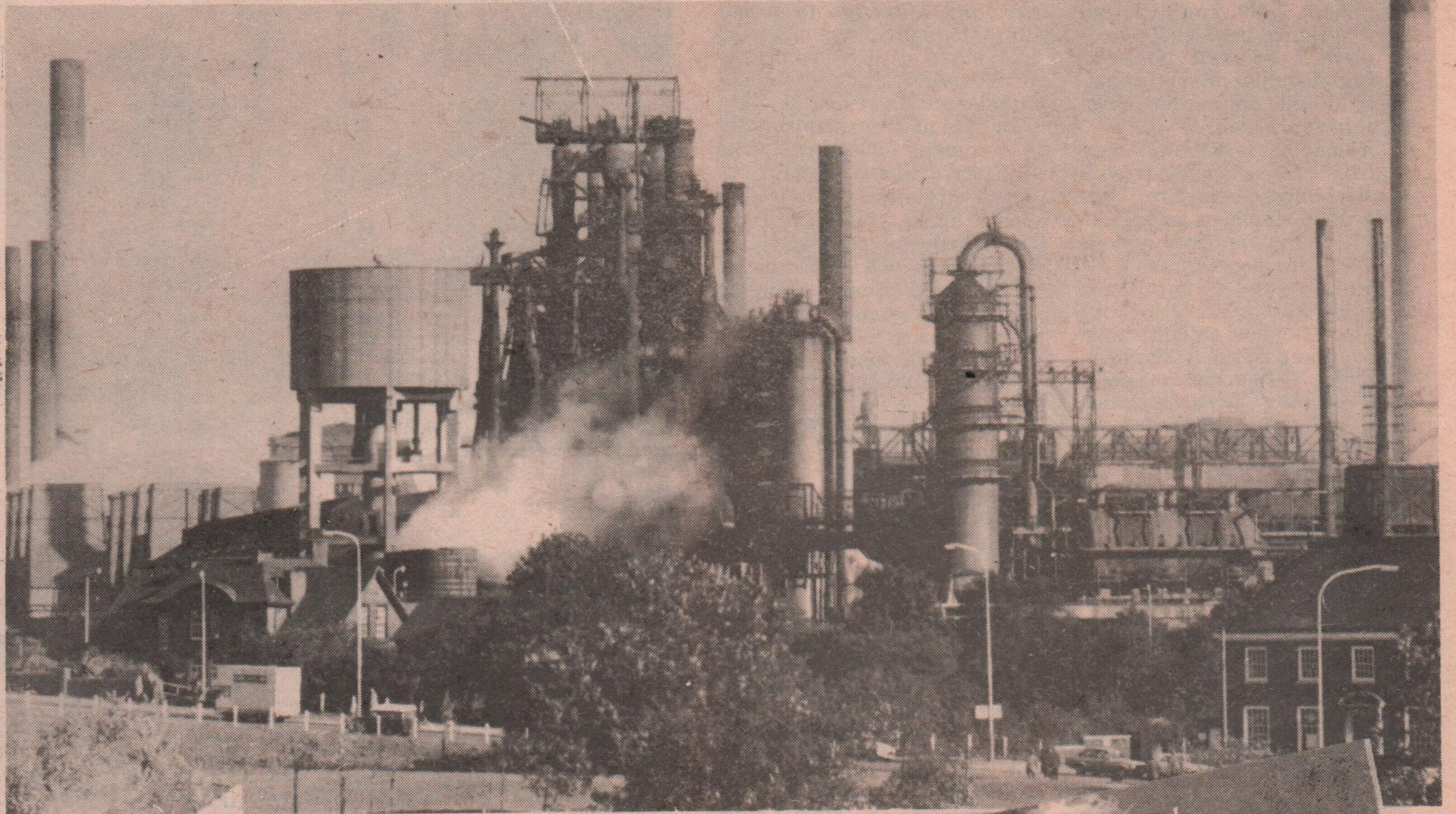
# SOCIALIST PRESS



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The split in  
the USFI—a  
letter and  
reply  
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# STEEL STRIKE THREAT TO TORY RULE



The threatened Corby plant

If the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation carries out its threatened national strike on January 2, the ensuing battle will amount to a frontal challenge to the political and economic policies of the Tory government.

The strike has been called as an angry reaction to the British Steel Corporation's insulting 2% pay offer, which was announced simultaneously with proposals to sack another 32,000 steelworkers in a new wave of closures throughout the industry.

## Viability

The danger for the Tories is that for the first time a right wing union leadership has been forced to fly in the face of the massive financial crisis facing the employers and to declare their determination to defend their members' living standards, regardless of the "viability" of the Corporation.

And this defiance, reflecting shop floor militancy, could well inspire thousands of other workers to take up the fight against Tory policies in industry and the public sector.

The ISTC, representing half of BSC's 180,000 workforce, is



Staggered—Joseph

on its own in a position to bring steel production to a halt.

The result could be the first national steel strike since 1926.

Within days, production of cars, components, domestic appliances and other engineering products would begin to grind to a halt.

## Dilemma

And the Tories would be faced with an acute dilemma. With the ISTC leaders already rejecting out of hand any marginal improvement on the offer, or a new productivity deal, they would have to choose between two evils:

\*They could sanction an increased offer to the ISTC—which would spur on workers throughout the public sector and in other allegedly non-profitmaking sectors of industry to struggle in defence of their living standards.

\*Or they could instruct BSC to stand firm, and face a crippling strike which would immediately emerge as the focus of resistance to the Tories' battery of attacks on the whole working class.

Already ISTC leaders are threatening to mount pickets on docks and steel stockholders to prevent the movement of scab steel supplies.

The strike could thus provide an advanced demonstration of the impracticability of upholding the proposed new anti-picketing laws—or produce pitched battles between workers and police that would rapidly spread in scope, drawing support from wide layers of the labour movement.

There seems little doubt that both BSC and the Tory government are staggered by the ISTC strike call.

## Easy meat

After years of the most cringing collaboration with every cutback, closure, and speed-up attempt by management, and with six "worker directors" helping to carry them through on the BSC board, the steel unions must have seemed easy meat for a rock-bottom

wage offer.

As ISTC leader Bill Sirs admitted:

"Our cooperation in closure of steelworks has apparently been interpreted as a sign of weakness."

In fact the GMWU, with 13,000 members in the steel industry, has lived up to management expectations and denounced the ISTC strike call, pledging itself instead to "negotiate" on the derisory 2% offer!

But after making increasingly militant threats of action to prevent the closure of the Corby steelworks—action that has not yet taken place—the ISTC executive clearly feel unable to sell a 2% pay offer together with a string of new closures and redundancies to an angry shop floor membership.

## Betrayal

Now that they have called the strike, and named the date, only a brazen and humiliating betrayal on their part or a retreat by the employers in the next two weeks seem to offer a way out.

The strike call transforms the scene for thousands of workers. It offers a much needed lead for action to defend jobs and living standards in other "non viable" industries.

Indeed there could scarcely be a clearer example than BSC of the way in which the crisis of profitability is forcing the capitalist class to destroy whole sections of the productive forces and massively step up the exploitation of the workforce, in order to compete with its rivals.

BSC itself stands to lose £350 million in the current financial year. Antiquated equipment means that it only produces 108 tons of steel per man-year as against 180 in France and over 200 in Germany.

It is so uncompetitive that, with the value of the pound making imports even cheaper, BSC is finding itself wiped out of even the home market.

Ford in Britain, for instance, is planning to cut its use of

British steel from 70,000 to 26,000 tonnes next year—replacing it by cheaper imported steel from Europe.

Overall, BSC expects demand to plummet next year to 15 million tons—against a productive capacity of 22 million tons. Only two out of 14 centres are making a profit.

Hence the hell-for-leather scramble by BSC management to axe the workforce by over 50,000 and shut down the least profitable and least utilised plants, while the bankers and steel users continue to cream profits off the backs of steel workers.

Nor could a programme of import controls hope to preserve jobs in steel: it would merely inflict additional unemployment on workers elsewhere. British workers should instead link up with workers overseas in a common struggle against their exploiters.

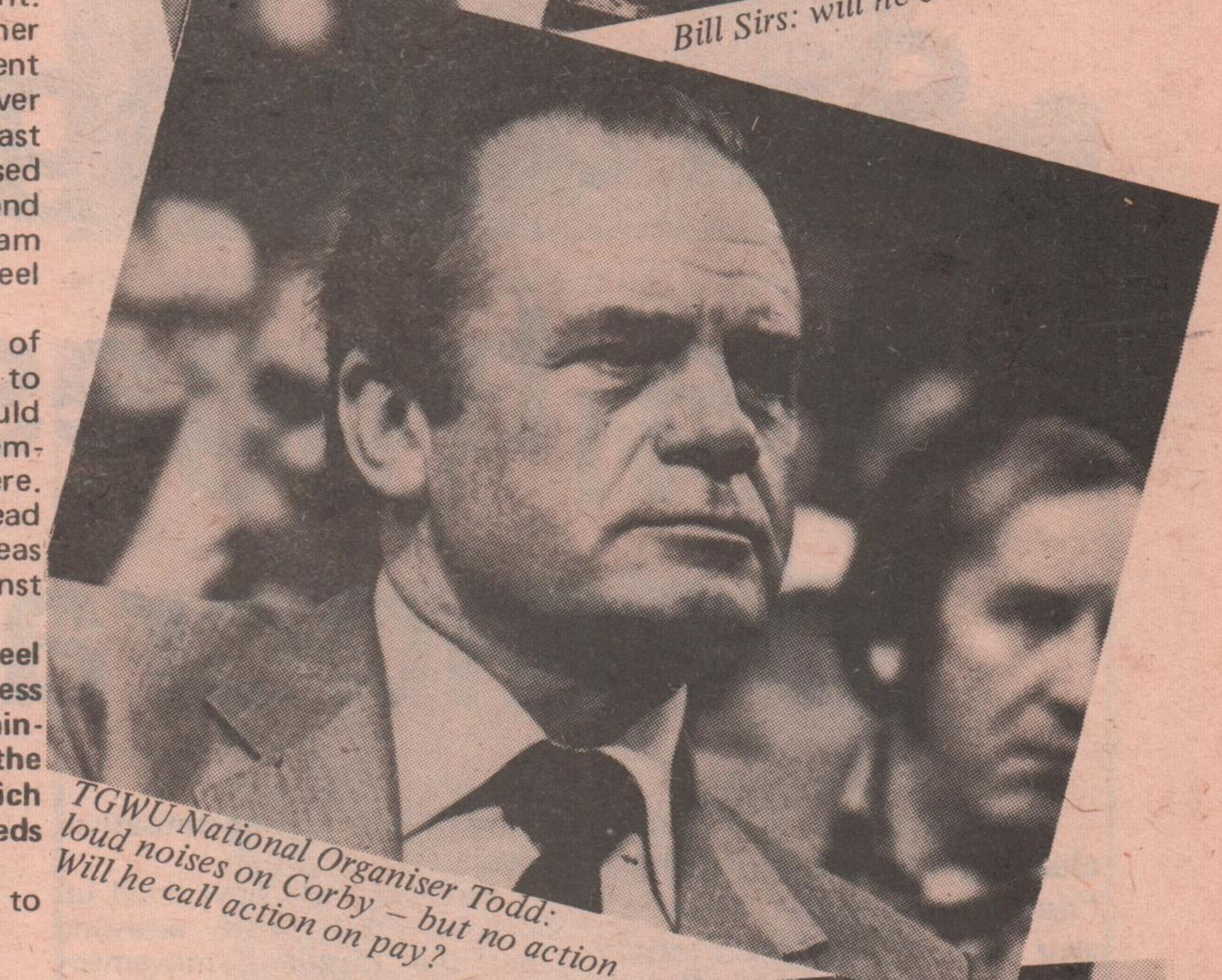
The falling demand for steel is not because there is less social need for goods containing steel: it is the result of the capitalist system, which produces not for social needs but simply for profit!

For workers to kowtow to

Cont'd p.11, col.1



Bill Sirs: will he chicken out again?



TGWU National Organiser Todd: loud noises on Corby — but no action Will he call action on pay?



Mass pressure on ISTC leaders for action

# KHOMEINI STRUGGLES TO IMPOSE DICTATORSHIP

## No peace for new Bolivian President

From back page

ayatollahs into conflict and these disputes have undoubtedly given a spurious boost to Shariat-Madari's present standing with the opposition movement in Azerbaijan.

Khomeini's 'Revolutionary Council' has responded with considerable alarm to this sudden development among the largest of the oppressed nations within the borders of Iran.

While the imprisoned demonstrators have been released, no less a figure than failed prime minister Bazargan has been despatched to negotiate on the demands which have now been extended to include some form of autonomy for the region.

## Two Iranian socialists released

WITH AN international campaign still under way for the release of 14 socialists from the Iranian HKS (section of the United Secretariat), two of those imprisoned have been released.

According to Intercontinental Press Mohammed Poorkahvaz was released from Karouni prison in Ahwaz on November 22, and Kia Mahdari on 27 November.

The fight for the release of the remaining 12 must now be taken up with renewed vigour by the workers' movement.

Alongside this repetition of the trips made by Khomeini's diplomats to Kurdistan, there have been attempts to regain control by more direct methods.

A force of Khomeini supporters seized back the radio station over the weekend, only to be ousted in turn apparently by troops declaring their allegiance to Shariat-Madari.

As this mass struggle has opened up in Azerbaijan, there is every indication that the truce in Kurdistan will be succeeded by a renewed offensive from the nationalists against the armed forces of the state.

With all these mounting problems Khomeini has still failed to move towards a resolution of the crisis flowing from the occupation of the US embassy in Tehran.

The students in occupation have demonstrated their at least partial independence from Khomeini and posed the obvious question of how far they are holding the hostages against the US government and how much they are demanding at the same time from the 'Revolutionary Council' itself.

The international confrontation with Carter's administration has now forced the US imperialists to display signs of concession on the central question of the Shah's extradition, which open up the road to a compromise.

### Kennedy

Kennedy's opportunist denunciation of the crimes and brutality of the Shah has been followed by Brzezinski's statements denying any opposition to trying the Shah in some 'international forum'—so long as the hostages are released first.

These moves are obviously linked (through United Nations chief Waldheim's hints of some "new initiative") to the statements by Qotzbadeh that if the Shah moves out of the US, the Iranian authorities would be



Demonstrators outside the US embassy

content with the return of his fortune to Iran and some international trial.

This scenario depends on the agreement of some third party to act as host, and the US imperialists are scarcely enthusiastic about the offers received so far for the Shah—from Sadat, and the Lebanese fascist militia in their statelet along the

Israeli border.

### Economic war

While these manoeuvres continue, the battles on the economic front roll steadily on—to the exclusive advantage of finance lawyers who are constantly putting forward new writs and appeals in every conceivable direction.

But the resolution of the conflict will not come from these economic methods. The forces building up within Iran

clearly show that Khomeini's regime has only a very short space of time in which to make fundamental changes of direction before it collapses under the pressure from all sides.

The fate of the US agents held hostage in the embassy will be determined within this process and not by wheelings and dealings inside the UN or legal wrangles in the courts of the bourgeoisie.

But the central question remains, as it has done from the beginning of the mass agitation against the Shah's tyranny: what programme can resolve the Iranian crisis, and what force can fight to implement that programme?

To that, there is only one answer: it is only the *working class* of Iran, led by a Trotskyist party fighting for the international programme of socialist revolution which can rescue all the oppressed masses of Iran from the threats of world imperialism and the counter-revolutionary power of religious and bourgeois reaction.

**\*Seize all the banks and major capitalist holdings. No compensation—for workers' management and a planned socialist economy.**

**\*Build workers militias and factory committees. For soviets to replace the committee and tribunals of Islamic reaction.**

**\*Against unemployment—for a massive programme of public works.**

**\*Against national oppression—for the rights of self-determination of the Kurds and all other oppressed nations.**

**\*Against sexual oppression—full democratic rights for all women and homosexual men.**

**\*For proletarian internationalism—every possible assistance to the international struggles against imperialism.**

**\*Down with Khomeini and the 'Revolutionary Council'—for a workers and peasants government in Iran.**

**\*Defend the Iranian revolution against imperialism and reaction!**

**\*US workers fight for the Shah to be sent back!**

Any hopes on the part of imperialism and the Bolivian ruling class that the new government of nationalist President Lydia Gueiler would be able to demobilise the working class were totally shattered last week.

The Gueiler regime has lost no time in showing its willingness to act as the agent of imperialism.

Ten days ago it introduced a series of austerity measures for which the International Monetary Fund has been pressing for some months.

The price of petrol was raised by 130% at a stroke (and public transport prices went up equivalently), the peso was devalued by 18% (putting up the prices of all imported goods) and, as a concession, a few prices of basic necessities were frozen.

The measures provoked an immediate wave of demonstrations and strikes.

Barricades were erected in workers' districts of the capital La Paz, as demonstrations were violently attacked by the police.

In protest against the doubling of bus-fares, buses were set on fire by workers.

It is reported that the COB (the central trade union federation) expelled the bus workers' union when it called a strike against the bus burnings.

Latest reports suggest that Gueiler has been forced by the pressure to withdraw some of the price increases.

But this must be a move of desperation and already gives a sign that the life of the Gueiler regime is unlikely to be longer than the very short average life of her predecessors.

The COB leaders, however, show themselves as always completely hostile to leading the mobilisations of workers towards the establishment of a workers and peasants government.

Instead, they are only too ready to negotiate a sell-out with the agents of the bosses.

# Scrubbing off the traces of 'democracy'

Bureaucratic spring cleaning has wiped Peking's "democracy wall" clear of any trace of proletarian democracy and political opposition to the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

But Chinese workers are now "free" to express themselves on another wall, provided by the Peking municipal committee.

Posters can be displayed here—at a safe distance from the city centre—after registration with the authorities, who must also give permission for the poster to appear!

### Suppression

This new act of political suppression has been expected since the standing committee of the National People's Congress demanded "resolute action" against those subversive forces responsible for posters which attacked the Party leadership.

Xidan—"democracy wall"—has been used as a symbolic pawn in the power struggle within the Peking bureaucracy. In the past, Deng Xiao-Ping has

isation' or 'democratisation' measures.

But Deng has now lined up with his rivals, clearly assessing that the 'dissident' movement no longer has any value for his ambitions and is fast becoming a threat to every section of the bureaucracy, including himself.

This tactical about-turn offers yet another vindication of the Trotskyist analysis of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracies.

Whatever the limited gestures it may make for its own

reasons, no section of this parasitic caste can open up through its leadership the development of genuine proletarian democracy in China.

That struggle can be waged to the end only by the building of a revolutionary party which asserts through its programme and leadership the revolutionary independence of the working class from the political dictatorship of the Stalinist bureaucracy.



Deng (left) with Chairman Hua

# IS CHRYSLER US A DEAD DUCK?

After a catastrophic month of November for car sales, the future of the giant US Chrysler Corporation looks more bleak than ever.

Despite cut-price offers by every major US motor manufacturer, car sales plunged by 22% for General Motors and 24% for Fords—while Chrysler was worst hit of all.

And in the truck market Chrysler's sales were down by a disastrous 54%—far worse than the 33% drop suffered by GM and Ford's 24.6%.

Chrysler—\$750 million in the red on its 1979 operation—is therefore in an extremely weak position in pressing its appeal to the Carter administration and to Congress for Federal cash assistance.

While Carter—not wanting to carry the can for 158,000 Chrysler redundancies in election year—has proposed that \$1.5 billion be made available on condition Chrysler raises a similar amount independently, US bankers and Congressmen are not so keen.

The Senate has amended the Carter proposals to offer only \$1.25 billion, on condition that Chrysler raises \$2.75 billion—



Miller

half of it from imposing a three year wage freeze on Chrysler workers!

Even United Auto Workers leader Fraser—who has already donated \$400 million of members pay and benefits to the Chrysler relief effort—has had to come out against such a wage freeze, which has also been denounced by Treasury Secretary William Miller.

But even without the wage freeze the Senate's plan is a non-starter—since there is no way Chrysler can raise \$2.75 billion from hostile bankers in the midst of a sales slump.

For Chrysler workers the answer must be to prepare to occupy threatened factories to prevent their closure, demanding that the UAW in Chrysler, Fords and GM take action to secure a programme of work sharing on full pay, to operate across the motor industry.

### Nationalise

Such a policy, the only defence of jobs in the industry as a whole, is clearly incompatible with the private ownership of the US car monopolies: it cries out for the nationalisation of the entire US motor industry, its suppliers, dealers and bankers, without compensation and under workers' management.

And this, in turn, points to the need for the US trade union movement, led by the UAW, to break from Carter, Kennedy and the capitalist Democratic Party, and build a labour party to carry through a socialist programme in the USA.

# PORTUGAL: THE PRICE OF TREACHERY

"A dark prospect for the Portuguese people".

That judgement on last Sunday's right wing victory in the Portuguese general election came from the party which relatively made the biggest electoral gains—the Communist Party led by Alvaro Cunhal.

The Democratic Alliance (AD), composed of three capitalist parties (the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and Monarchists) got 45% of the votes.

With 129 seats it will now have a majority of eight over all other parties in this parliament, which will last only eight months until the next normally scheduled elections.

## Reactionary

But despite this short time and the small majority the AD look set to redouble the existing attacks on the wages and conditions of workers and to undo more of the gains made by workers and peasants after the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in 1974.

The new Prime Minister, Social Democrat leader Francisco Sa Carneiro, is an accomplished political opportunist and experienced reactionary.

He was a "democratic" oppositionist in Caetano's fake parliament, and then became a minister in General Spínola's government in April 1974.

But he cleverly distanced himself from Spínola's right wing coup attempts, and went into opposition to build his political party which he rechristened the Social Democrats in 1976 in an effort to displace Mario Soares and the Socialist Party as the recognised Portuguese section of the so-called Socialist International.

## Best-equipped

When Callaghan and Brandt made it clear that they thought Soares was best-equipped to betray the Portuguese working class, Sa Carneiro moved rapidly into the far right-wing alliance which he now heads.



Portuguese workers celebrate the anniversary of the 1974 coup

In the run-up to the election Carneiro has set out his policies clearly.

In the economic field they will be modelled on those of Thatcher in Britain—public spending cuts, redundancies (unemployment is already 13%), support for the capitalists and measures to cut real wages (which have already fallen by 10% in the last 3 years).

And, just as in Britain Thatcher's economic measures were foreshadowed by those of Callaghan and Healey, so in Portugal Sa Carneiro's policies are only an extension of the ones initiated by Mario Soares' minority Socialist Party government between 1976 and 1978.

Soares, smarting under his Party's loss of 8% in the popular vote (27% compared with 35% in 1976), in effect acknowledged the affinities of his policies with those of Sa Carneiro by publicly acknowledging that the election result gave the AD a "legitimate right" to govern.

But they did not, he added, give the AD a legitimate right to change the constitution.

So Carneiro has said he will use his majority to change the "socialist" clauses in the Portuguese constitution which talk of the "transition to socialism" and the "building of a classless society".

It is now only through formally clinging to these formulae that Soares, who had so much to do with the 1976 constitution, can try to perpetuate his links with "socialism".

And, ironically, Soares now blames the part of that Constitution which establishes the voting system (which he and his party devised for their own benefit) for the fact that the AD has won a majority of seats with a minority of votes.

## Undermined

But the results show that Mario Soares' reputation today as a "socialist" or a defender of the working class in Portugal has been deeply undermined—indeed almost totally destroyed.

His party's catastrophic performance was very largely the result of voters in working class areas throughout the country deserting the SP and voting instead for the CP.

The CP's share of the poll increased dramatically from 14% to 19%, which now certainly makes the CP the majority party of the Portuguese working class, given the large petty-bourgeois vote still going to Soares.

Just as Soares' losses are the result of his support for anti-working class policies, so the Stalinist gains result from a very agile combination of verbal "opposition" to these policies—coupled, however, with a complete failure to mobilise the full strength of the working class against them.

In particular the Stalinists have been scrupulously careful to combat

any pressure on them (when together with the SP they controlled a parliamentary majority) to form a government without capitalist parties.

When the combined votes of the CP and SP defeated the Mota Pinto government last summer, both parties studiously avoided any reference to the obvious conclusion that they should form a joint government.

## "Opposition"

Instead they meekly accepted another government (that of Pintassilgo) appointed by military President Eanes.

So, though the CP has gained a lot of votes from its "opposition" stance, its Stalinist leaders share responsibility with the Socialists for preparing the way to power of the new reactionary regime.

Only now, with the workers' parties safely in a minority, has the CP started calling for an alliance with the SP against reaction.

The Stalinist-dominated trade union federation, too, the CGTP (Intersindical), whose leaders have stood by paralysed for over three years as the real wages of workers have tumbled and unemployment has grown, has now started saying darkly (but deliberately vaguely) that "the Portuguese workers will know what to do" against the new reactionary threat.

## Combat reaction

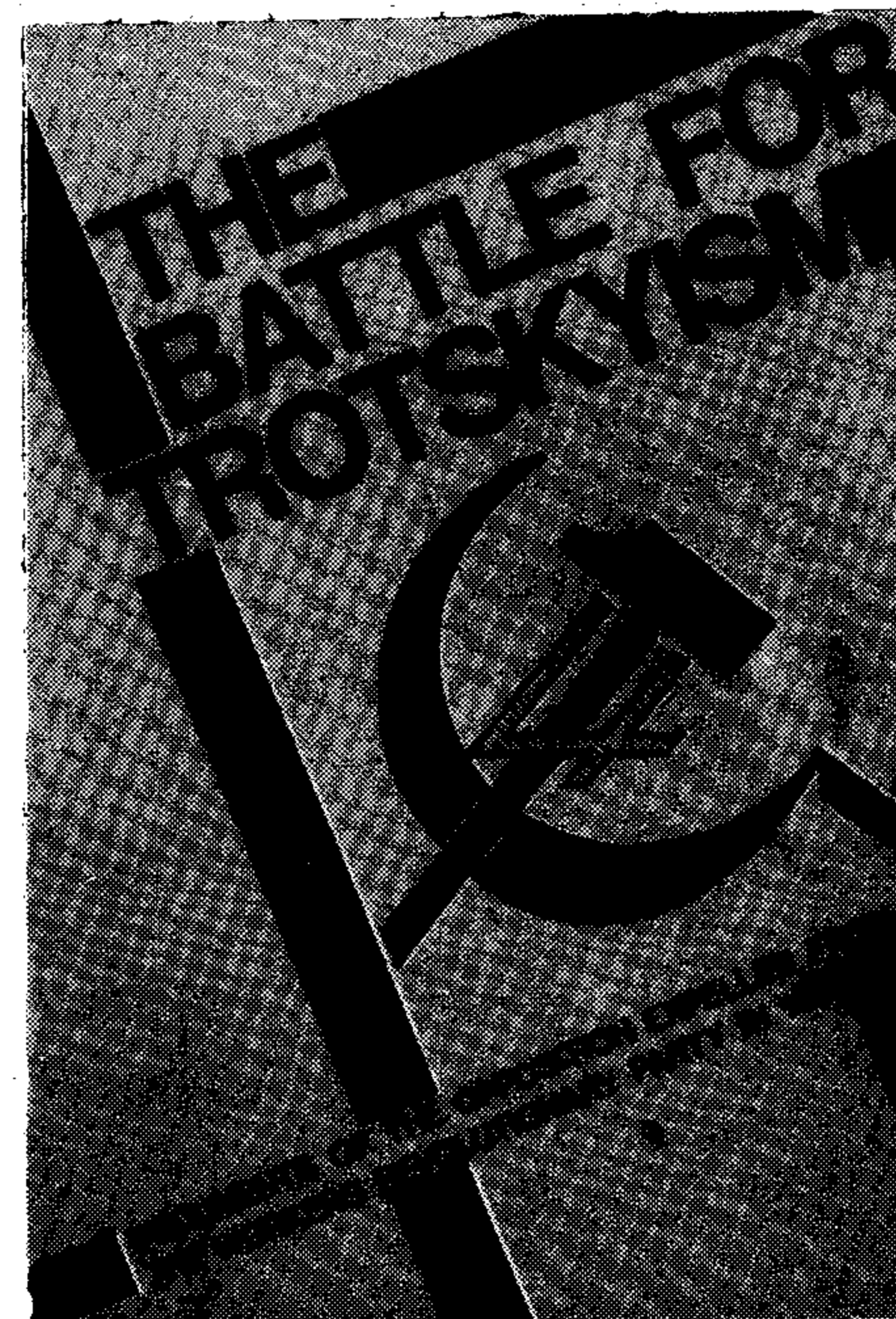
But all the workers' leaders refuse as adamantly as ever to take up a programme of demands which will meet the needs of the working class and peasants and combat the daily growth of reaction.

Such a programme and a revolutionary Trotskyist party to fight for it are, in the aftermath of the elections, more urgently needed than ever.



Mass mobilisation after the fall of Caetano

# OUT NOW!



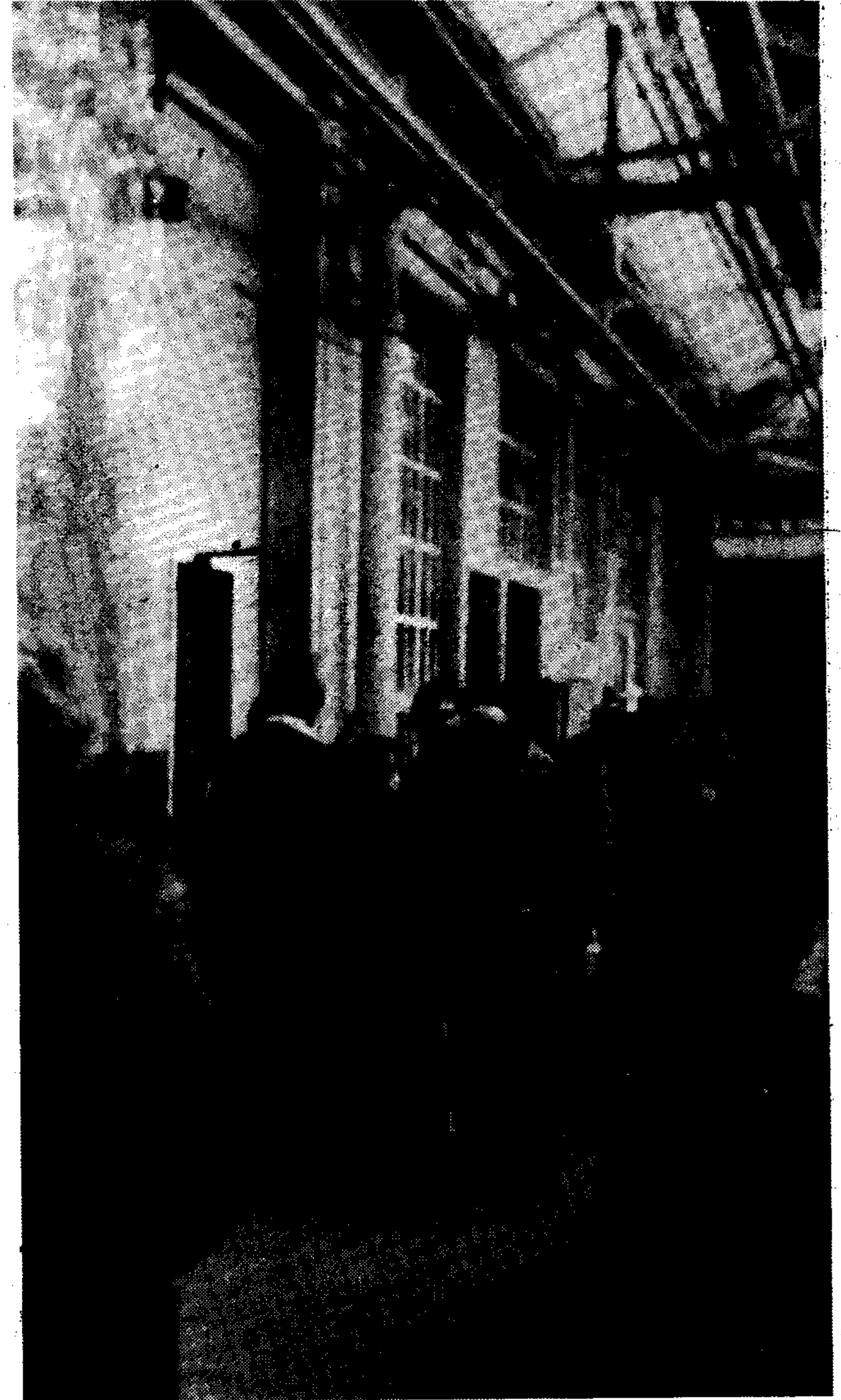
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Soares



Inside the occupied plant



# Workers move in at Meccano

Over 900 workers at the Meccano plant on Merseyside a week ago took over the factory and are holding a 'work in' with a view to the setting up of a workers' cooperative.

The move was in response to management's sudden announcement on Friday November 30 of the closure of the plant without any notice.

A positive sign in the struggle has been the apparent willingness of the leaders of the six unions to question management claims that the factory was making a loss.

This was evident during the interviews with the press, at which representatives of *Socialist Press* were present.

AUEW convenor Bernard Riley and Metal Mechanics union convenor and secretary of the joint stewards committee John Lynch spoke of the workers' attempts to obtain an independent report on the financial state of the firm.

They declared themselves in favour of a full trade union investigation into company claims that the plant is not viable.

This is a refreshing departure from the seemingly endless round of closures on Merseyside where workers have time and again been sold out by leaders unwilling even to question capitalist viability.

The workers at Meccano must press home this policy by demanding that all books and accounts of the firm, together with its parent company Airfix, be handed

over to the elected trade union committees responsible for carrying out this investigation.

Access must also be demanded to the books and accounts of the banks, suppliers and retail networks that 'service' the company.

## Interest payments

The latest company report states that although the firm claims to have made a loss of £920,000 in the last six months and the parent company made a loss of £659,000 as a result of this, these figures were dwarfed in the same period by colossal interest payments to the bank of over £1 million!

A worrying development came on Monday December 3 when officials of the main union at Meccano, the GMWU, (consisting overwhelmingly of women workers) were reported to be in favour of ending the occupation of the plant in favour of the 'work in' tactic.

This—like that of attempting to set up a cooperative—is a dead end that must be rejected. The establishment of a cooperative within the existing capitalist crisis would inevitably mean that the interests of the Meccano workforce—the right to a job, a living wage and good working conditions—would be sacrificed in a vain effort to compete in the anarchic jungle of the capitalist market place where all is relegated in the hell for leather scramble for profit.

## Nationalise

For every successful firm there is another that must go to the wall.

The clear need is for the toys industry, as part of the

engineering industry as a whole, to be taken out of the hands of the profiteering employers, and placed under the *social* ownership of the working class.

In practice this means the *nationalisation* of the toy industry, without compensation, under the management of elected trade union committees, as part of a socialist planned economy.

The press has also tried to direct workers' attention to the large number of 'foreign' imports, a position which is being opportunistically played upon by trade union and Labour Party 'lefts' who are calling for import controls as substitute for serious action to defend jobs at Meccano and elsewhere.

## Strike action

Nationalisation will not be won by alliances with British capitalists which simply palm off unemployment on to the backs of workers overseas.

Nor will it be won, in Parliament either, as these traitors maintain.

It can only be brought about by demanding that the union leaders organise national strike action in support of the occupation throughout the industry. The demand that dockers black all Airfix goods must be extended through a vigorous campaign of flying picketing to bring the parent company to a standstill.

Those Labour lefts such as Heffer and Loyden who have visited the plant to register their verbal support must be pressed to carry the fight into the Labour Party.

This means fighting to remove the right wing Callaghan leadership and all those who say we have to

allow the Tory government to remain in office for its full term and who oppose action to bring them down.

They must be forced to campaign for the extension of the fight against closures such as at Meccano into a generalised action to force the Tories out of office.

To facilitate this struggle it is necessary to build local committees of action consisting of delegates from all labour movement bodies.

Such committees can prepare the action to support and extend the occupation and bring down the Tory government

through mass strike action.

\*Extend the occupation through national industry-wide strikes!

\*Open the books of the company, the banks and retailers to elected trade union committees, to reveal the need to nationalise the toys industry, without compensation, under workers management, as part of a socialist planned economy!

\*Work sharing on full pay!

\*Build councils of action!

\*Oppose all import controls!

## WSL Rally SUCCESS

The continuity of the struggle for the political principles and method fought for by Leon Trotsky formed the theme of a successful rally called by the Workers Socialist League last Saturday.

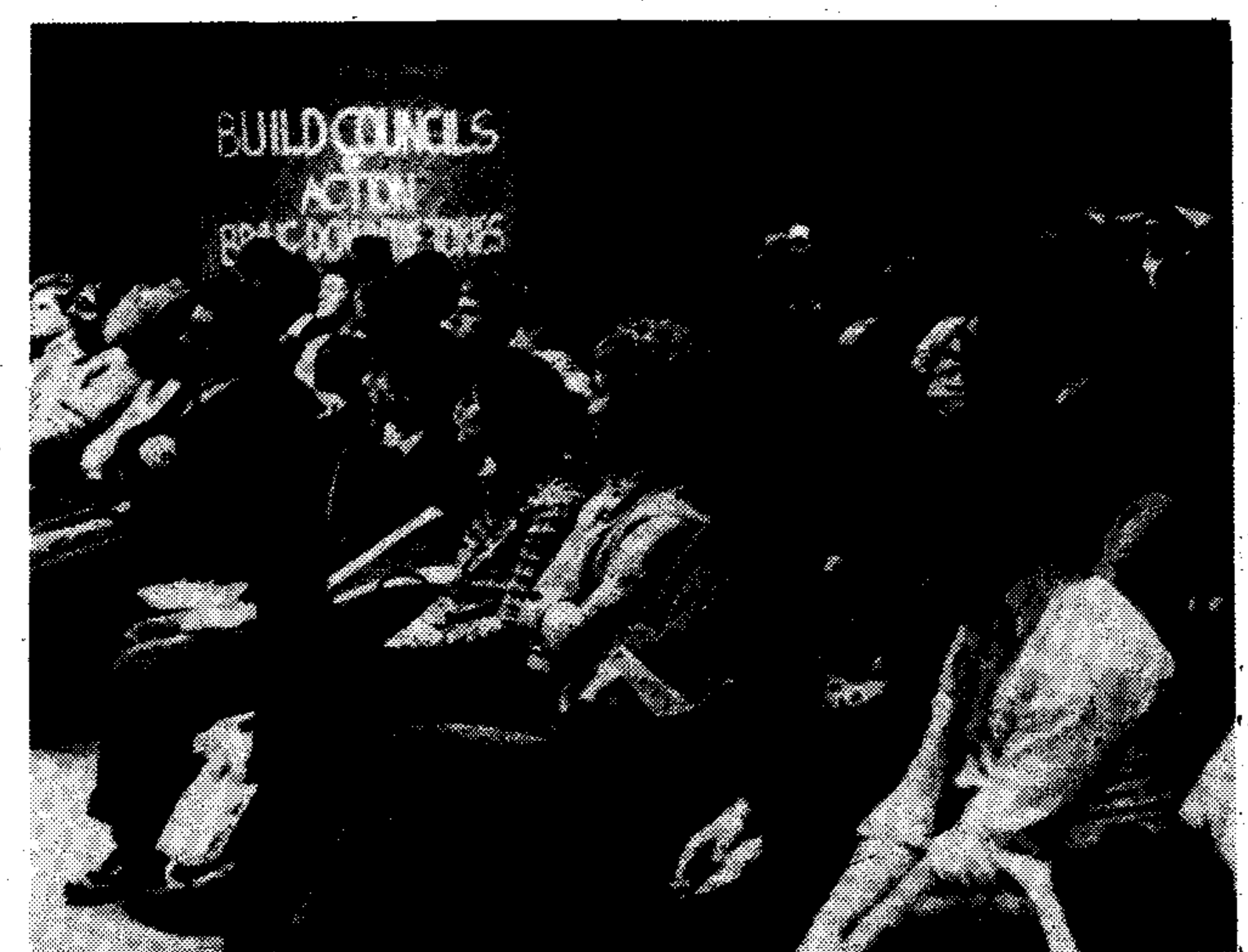
Over 150 men and women workers, youth and students from all parts of the country attended the rally, which celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Trotsky's birth, and the 5th Anniversary of the founding of the Workers Socialist League.

Platform speakers explained the relevance of Trotsky's life and work to revolutionary

workers today, and then went on to examine the WSL's struggle for Trotskyist politics in the trade unions, among women and among the youth.

*Socialist Press* editor John Lister after outlining the current political situation invited all those wishing to fight for revolutionary leadership in the workers movement to consider joining the WSL.

A film on Ireland *The Patriot Game* concluded the rally, which also saw a collection of over £90.



Part of the audience at the Rally



British troops



Haughey (left) with Lynch

# Fianna Fail plays nationalist card in bid for poll success

"I condemn the Provisional IRA and all their activities".

With these succinct and memorable words to the press, Ireland's new so-called "republican" Prime Minister Charles Haughey stepped easily into the still-warm shoes of retiring British puppet Jack Lynch.

Despite media speculation that Haughey might change Lynch's position of cringing subservience to British imperialism and acceptance of the partition of Ireland, the new Prime Minister made it clear that he would maintain the latest agreements on cross-border "security" drawn up between Lynch and Thatcher.

And though he may make a few more noises on the ruling Fianna Fail Party's policy of calling for a British declaration of intent to withdraw from the

occupied six counties, there is no evidence that his "republicanism" will extend any further than this smattering of green rhetoric.

## Assistance

There is no doubt however that with nationalist sentiment running strong in the South, the 1970 court case in which Haughey was accused—and acquitted—of gun-running for the IRA materially assisted him to clinch a six-vote victory in the leadership election over his more wooden rival George Colley.

Fianna Fail itself has been in sorry disarray following a disaster in the European elections and a catastrophic defeat in the Cork by-election.

Worried FF politicians no doubt hope that Haughey's charisma and nationalist image

can retrieve a measure of electoral popularity that Lynch's reactionary economic policies and deals with imperialism have helped to sacrifice.

But of course Haughey, a multi-millionaire and a property owner, has like other Irish capitalists a personal interest in restraining the revolutionary struggle in the six counties and anti-imperialist movements in the so-called "Free State".

At present the principal target of such struggles is the ousting of British imperialism from the occupied North.

But Haughey, his fellow Irish capitalists, and the imperialists know full well that were this to be accomplished by mass action of the Irish working class and small farmers, the dynamic of the struggle would lead in the direction of the expropriation of capitalist exploiters and landlords and the establishment of a

socialist united Ireland.

It is to forestall such an eventuality and stem all forms of revolutionary struggle that the British army maintains military rule in the North, and the Irish state machinery operates a vicious battery of repressive legislation against the republican and socialist movement.

## Two-faced

Yet while in practice doing everything possible to oppose the national struggle, the Fianna Fail leaders—political descendants of two faced "nationalist" compromiser De Valera—still use the fraudulent image of Irish nationalism as a means of securing popular electoral support.

As the unrivalled leader of the Fianna Fail De Valera balanced for decades on nationalist rhetoric (based on his republican activities of 1916) with the most sordid back-door deals with British imperialism and clerical reaction in order artfully to bridge the divide over the six county partition that had erupted into the bitter civil war of 1922.

## Apron strings

The whole of Irish history has shown that the national struggle cannot be carried through by capitalist politicians—who are themselves tied by their class interests to the apron strings of imperialism.

Nor can it be carried through under the leadership of forces which—like the republican movement—fail to recognise the necessity of mobilising the working class, North and South, in the struggle for national liberation and socialist revolution.

For all their talk of establishing a "decentralised socialist republic", Sinn Fein leaders have only recently re-emphasised their opposition to Marxism.

In a major interview published in *Republican News* (November 3) Sinn Fein Vice



# Journalists' 'no' to offer, no action!

Provincial journalists have been urged by their chapel leaderships to reject a 14.5% offer from the Newspaper Society.

The journalists—who struck for seven weeks last year to drag the final offer up to the same level as has been offered this year—do not only face a cut in their standards of living.

The employers have thrown out every single other claim on hours, holidays and other issues. On maternity/paternity pay the Newspaper Society has arrogantly told the negotiators that if the Government changes the law to attack women's rights, then the Newspaper Society want the right to unilaterally worsen their conditions in the agreement.

But the stand taken at a meeting in London at the weekend against the offer has a distinctly hollow ring. The negotiators urged FoCs not to discuss industrial action when discussing the offer which is due to be implemented from January 1.

Mike Bower, regional

organiser, told the meeting that he wanted unanimous rejection by chapels even if they were not prepared to take action.

Proposals that the discussion by chapels should include discussions about action were heavily defeated and a proposal from Peter McIntyre (Oxford) that chapels should be asked for a mandate to call a fresh meeting with strike action an alternative on the agenda failed to get a seconder.

## Not fooled

The membership which well knows that nothing is won without a fight, is unlikely to be fooled. Chapels for whom the seven week strike is still too recent a memory are liable to reject an approach which prevents that action can be hived off to a separate discussion.

Many chapels have already reported big votes against acceptance and the role of the leadership should now be to fight for strike action as the only possible means to win the 30% claim, shorter hours, longer holidays and improved maternity leave.

By and large the same people who opposed last year's strike and who were dragged into it by the membership have again held sway over the delegate meeting.

But honest militants who declared themselves ready to strike again this year, were given precious little direction. In a craven capitulation to what they call "the mood of the membership" the SWP-dominated Journalists' Charter put out a leaflet calling for a work to rule.

The leaflet noted that the one thing the Newspaper Society were terrified of this year was a repeat performance of last year's strike, and concluded that a work to rule could get more out of them!

Work to rules have a notorious history in the union of ineffectiveness and have led on numerous occasions to strikes over victimisations which bury the original aim of the action.

There can be no concessions to 'moods'. Only a strike can protect the standard of living of the membership. That is what militants must fight for.

President Gerry Adams went out of his way to combat what he regards as a "red scare" against the republican movement:

"First of all there's one thing which should be said categorically—there is no Marxist influence within Sinn Fein, it simply isn't a Marxist organisation."

"I know of no one in Sinn Fein who is a Marxist or would be influenced by Marxism . . ."

"I think its very important that we trace this back to the first person who started this, which was Roy Mason—who said on the one hand we weren't political but were Marxists . . ."

"We tend to see it as more serious than the descriptions used before. As the struggle progressed those things were seen to be lies . . ."

"We see this as a more significant development than the gangster or Mafia connotations . . ."

So for Sinn Fein leaders it is worse to be called a Marxist than to be called a gangster!

The IRA has likewise branded statements linking the armed struggle with Marxism as "an attempt to discredit the cause of Irish liberation".

But the fact is that without a programme, a policy and a revolutionary party dedicated to the mobilisation of the Irish working class, in alliance with the small farmers, the national struggle itself in Ireland is unwinnable, and the 'socialism' of Sinn Fein amounts to little more than the utopian parliamentary 'socialism' of the British Labour Party.

The Workers Socialist League, as a Trotskyist organisation, stands foursquare behind a Marxist programme and strategy to win the Irish war of liberation, and carry through the struggle for a workers' republic.

Within this context we give unconditional but critical support to the anti-imperialist struggles currently led by the republican movement, and defend them unconditionally against the repression of the British and Irish state machines.

We stress that the Irish war must not be seen as an issue confined within the borders of Ireland itself.

It is an international responsibility of the world's workers' movement—and in particular of the British workers' movement—to mobilise maximum practical and political solidarity with the liberation struggle and fight for the defeat of British imperialism.

And it is a bitter, but unavoidable fact, whether or not Sinn Fein cares to admit it, that the bulk of those prepared to brave the hazards of raising this struggle in the British workers' movement at this point of time are Marxists, committed to the struggle against the reactionary labour bureaucracy and for the independent interests of the international working class.



British workers movement has duty to support Irish struggle

# TROTSKY'S TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME

In this last of our occasional series on the work of Leon Trotsky to mark the centenary of Trotsky's birth, Dennis Austin examines the central importance today of The Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution. The accompanying extracts from Leon Trotsky on the Transitional Programme for Socialist Revolution published by Pathfinder Press at £2.20.



Trotsky

The Transitional Programme or The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International is the founding document of the Fourth International and the work most crucially relevant to revolutionaries all over the world.

And while it is not possible to bring out all aspects of The Transitional Programme within the scope of this article, there are certain key questions which need to be stressed.

First of all it must be realised that Trotsky did not produce the Programme in 1938 as a result of some sudden divine inspiration, or in order to revise any of the basic positions of Marxism and Leninism.

### Preserve gains

He wrote the Transitional Programme in the context of the need to preserve the gains made by the Russian Revolution and the need to pose a solution to the huge crisis of leadership in the workers' movement, following the betrayals of both the Second and Third Internationals.

Moreover, he based the Programme solidly on the most fundamental principles of Communism.

In this sense the Trans-

itional Programme is part of a continuity of revolutionary strategy that begins with the ten demands at the end of Chapter Two of *The Communist Manifesto*, continues through Lenin's *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It* (September 1917), through the decisions of the first four World Congresses of the Communist International, and through the documents of the Left Opposition at the start of Trotsky's fight against the counter-revolutionary degeneration of Stalinism.

After 1933, when the full implications of the decay in the Third Inter-

national had been shown beyond doubt in the defeat of the German working class by Hitler, Trotsky stepped up the development of a programme and method that would arm revolutionaries for the necessary struggle to build a principled leadership in the workers' movement.

### Participation

Right from the start he emphasised the need to test out programme in practice:

"A new International cannot be prepared without practical participation in the unfolding events. To counterpose a programmatic discussion to the revolution-

ary struggle would of course be false. It is necessary to combine the two".

(Declaration of the Bolshevik Leninist Delegation at the Conference of Left Socialist and Communist Organisations, 1933).

In June 1934 Trotsky produced "A Programme of Action for France", anticipating many of the demands of the Transitional Programme four years later.

In writing the 1938 Programme, Trotsky bore firmly in mind the "Theses on Tactics" adopted by the Third Congress of the Communist International:

"In place of the minimum programme of the reformists and centrists, the Communist International puts the struggle for the concrete needs of the proletariat, for a system of demands which in their totality disintegrate the power of the bourgeoisie, organise the proletariat, represent stages in the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship, and each of which expresses in itself the need of the broadest masses even if the masses themselves are not yet consciously in favour of the proletarian dictatorship..."

### Guide

It is vital to stress the place of the Transitional Programme in the continuity of Marxist and Leninist development in order to see it for what it is—the guide

for building a bridge between the present objective conditions and present consciousness and the socialist transformation of society."

Those who argue that it is irrelevant or "out of date" today are thus junking more than 130 years of accumulated knowledge and experience.

That is not to say that the Transitional Programme is some sort of fixed dogma to be woodenly applied in a routine way.

### Method

The key element is the transitional method, a method which by its very nature implies intense dynamic contradictions between the needs of workers and the needs of capital.

"During a transitional epoch, the workers' movement does not have a systematic and well-balanced but a feverish and explosive character. Slogans as well as organisational forms should be subordinated to the indices of the movement. On guard against routine handling of a situation as against a plague..."

(Transitional Programme)

Thus it is necessary for revolutionaries today to take up additional demands which reflect changes in objective conditions since Trotsky was assassinated in 1940.

The WSL, for example, fights for such additional demands as the opening of the books of industries nationalised since the war and of post-war social services, in order to raise the question of workers control.

Likewise we fight for sliding scales of public expenditure determined by independent bodies of workers to protect health and education facilities that were conceded by capitalism only during the post war 'boom' period.

### Democratic demands

Not all the demands in the Transitional Programme are transitional.

Many are basic democratic demands designed to defend and extend the right to organise independently, both economically and politically.

Trotsky shows how it is essential for revolutionaries to be at the forefront of the fight for democratic rights, but that at the same time this fight must be led by revolutionary methods, which pose independent working class action as opposed to the collaboration offered by reformists and Stalinists.

In the crucially important discussions with leaders of the American SWP (appended to the Pathfinder

edition of the Transitional Programme) Trotsky spells out the need to fight for transitional demands as well as democratic ones.

It is vital to take what capitalism can concede—but only as the basis for forcing concessions which will set a time-bomb ticking away within capitalism itself:

"We can't stop only with the day-to-day demands of the proletariat. We must give to the most backward workers some concrete slogan that corresponds to their needs and that leads dialectically to the conquest of power". (April 1938).

And again in May 1938:

"Not one of our demands will be realised under capitalism. That is why we are calling them transitional demands. It creates a bridge to the mentality of the workers and then a material bridge to the socialist revolution.

"The whole question is how to mobilise the masses for struggle".

### Objective situation

In these discussions with SWP leaders Cannon, Schachtman and Dunne, Trotsky discusses in depth how to concretise and fight for some of the principal demands of the Programme—especially the sliding scale of wages and hours and the call for workers' defence squads.

Time and again he emphasises the need to base programme on the objective situation:

"Naturally if I close my eyes I can write a good rosy programme that everybody will accept.

"But it will not correspond to the situation, and the programme must correspond to the situation.

"I believe that this elementary argument is of the utmost importance.

"The mentality of the



Pitched battle in Trotskyist-led unionisation fight, Minneapolis, 1930s



# NAL

ings of Leon Trotsky to McGilvray discusses the programme in the fight to be free from discussions with the reformists. The points are taken from "The Transitional Programme" by Leon Trotsky.

class of the proletariat is backward but the mentality is not such a substance as the factories, the mines the railroads, but is more mobile and under the blows of objective crisis, the millions of unemployed, it can change rapidly".

Trotsky also places the building of the revolutionary party at the centre of the forging of The Transitional Programme.

### Labour party

The party's programme represents a common understanding of events and tasks by the vanguard of the working class.

Only the revolutionary party can lead the fight for transitional demands and then actually bring about the socialist revolution:

"This [the Transitional Programme] brings the reader only to the doorstep. It is a programme for action from today until the beginning of the socialist revolution." (June 1938).

It is the task of the party also to steer a course between the twin dangers of "sectarian abstraction" and "opportunist adaptation".

Thus, in the discussions on the Programme, Trotsky devotes a great deal of attention to the need to build a Labour Party in the USA.

This remains a key question of international significance for revolutionaries to this day, a question more-over which is directly linked to the fight for the Transitional Programme.

### Sectarianism

Arguing that his supporters should not pre-judge the nature of such a party,

Trotsky is especially severe on a sectarian approach to this question.

"Of course if we had any real choice between a reformist party or a revolutionary party, we would say this is your address [meaning the revolutionary party]. But a party is absolutely necessary... To say that we will fight against opportunism, as of course we will fight today and tomorrow, especially if the working class party had been organised, by blocking a progressive step which can produce opportunism, is a very reactionary policy, and sectarianism is often reactionary because it opposes the necessary action of the working class".

The culmination of the transitional approach is seen by Trotsky as the demands placed on the reformist and Stalinist leaders that they break with the bourgeoisie and form a workers' government.

### Collaboration

This demand must be raised in close connection with the necessary programme of transitional demands which such a government must be called on to carry out.

By cementing this connection it emphasises the dangers of class collaboration and shows workers the need for a government that will genuinely represent their independent interests.

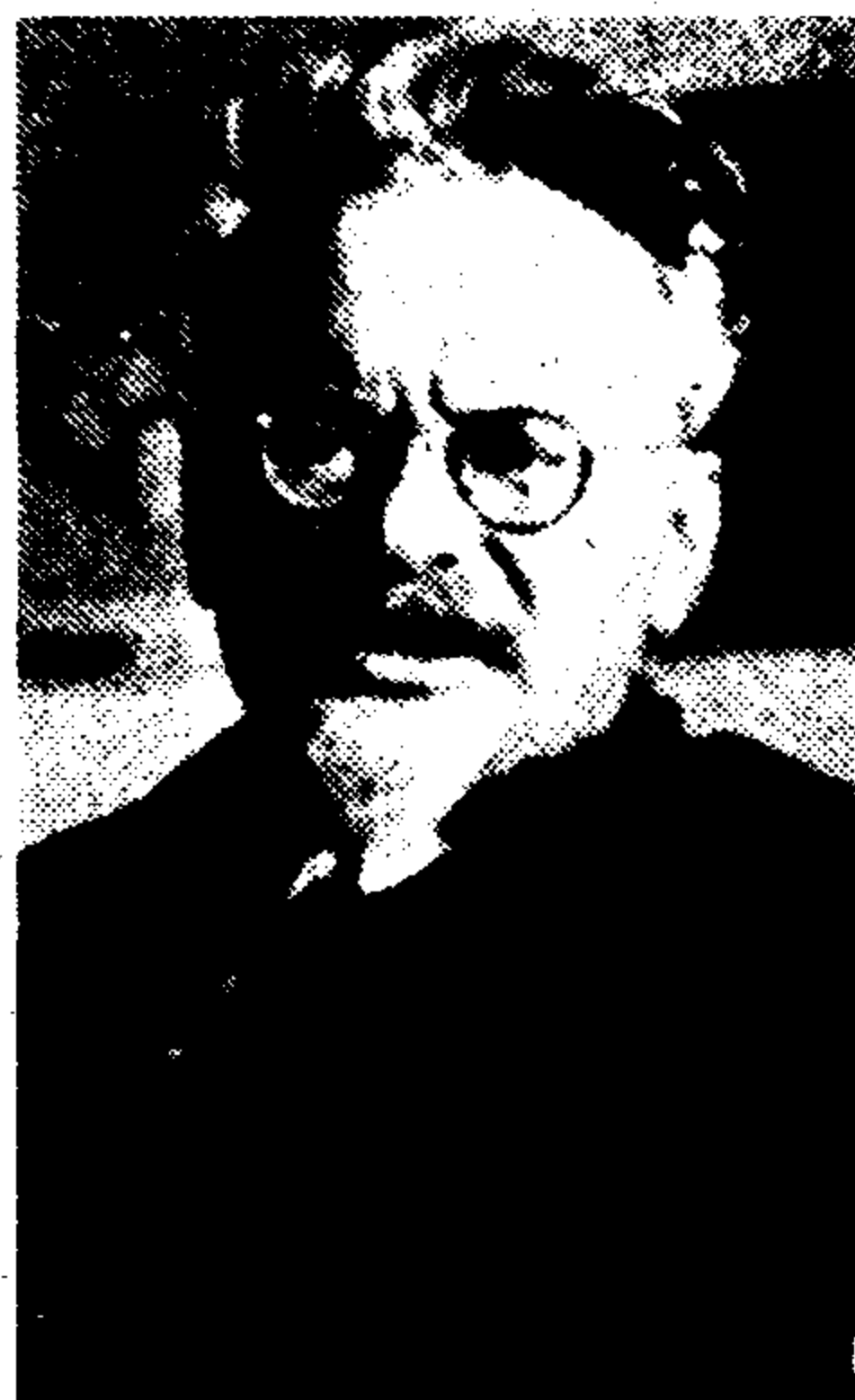
The reality of life under capitalism is that the ruling class is engaged in a continuous fight to increase profits by making workers pay for the crisis through unemployment, cuts, speed-up, attacks on wages, and so on.

### Leadership

The strength of the Transitional Programme is that it starts from the necessity to reverse this process and from the necessity to solve the crisis of leadership in the workers movement itself:

"The programme for the class cannot fall from heaven. We can arrive only at an understanding of the necessity. The programme is the articulation of the necessity, that we learned to understand, and since the necessity is the same for all members of the class, we can reach a common understanding of the tasks and the understanding of this necessity is the programme". (Trotsky, June 1938).

# Open the books!



Yes, the capitalists do [open their books] in two instances: when the situation of the factory is really bad, or if they can deceive the workers. But the question must be put from a more general point of view. In the first place, you have millions of unemployed, and the government claims it cannot pay more, and the capitalists say that they cannot make more contributions—we want to have access to the book-keeping of this society.

The control of income should be organised through factory committees. Workers will say: We want our own statisticians who are devoted to the working class. If a branch of industry shows that it is really ruined, then we answer: We propose to expropriate you. We will direct better than you. Why have you no profit? Because of the chaotic condition of capitalist society. We say: Commercial secrets are a conspiracy of the exploiters against the exploited, of the producers against the toilers. In the free era, in the era of competition, they claimed they needed secrecy for protection. But now they do not have secrets among themselves but only from society.

### Workers control

This transitional demand is also a step for the workers' control of production as the preparatory plan for the direction of industry. Everything must be controlled by the workers, who will be the masters of society tomorrow. To call for the conquest of power—that seems to the American workers illegal, fantastic. But if you say: The capitalists refuse to pay for the unemployed, and hide their real profits from the state and from the workers by dishonest book-keeping; the workers will under-

stand that formula.

If we say to the farmer: The bank fools you. They have very big profits. And we propose to you that you create farmers' committees to look into the book-keeping of the bank. Every farmer will understand that. We will say: The farmer can trust only himself; let him

create committees to control agricultural credits—they will understand that. It presupposes a turbulent mood among the farmers; it cannot be accomplished every day. But to introduce this idea into the masses and into our own comrades, that's absolutely necessary immediately...



James P. Cannon

# The strategic task

... What are the tasks? The strategic tasks consist of helping the masses, of adapting their mentality politically and psychologically to the objective situation, of overcoming the prejudicial traditions of the American workers, and of adapting it [their mentality] to the objective situation of the social crisis of the whole system.

In this situation—taking into consideration the little experience and then viewing the creation of the CIO, the sit-down strikes, etc.—we have the full right to be more optimistic, more courageous, more aggressive in our strategy and tactics—not adventurist, but to advance slogans that are not in the vocabulary of the American working class.

What is the sense of the transitional programme? We can call it a programme of action, but for us, for our strategic conception, it is a transitional programme—it is a help to the masses in overcoming the inherited ideas, methods, and forms and adapting themselves to the exigencies of the objective situation. This transitional programme must include the most simple demands. We cannot foresee and prescribe local and trade union demands

adapted to the local situation of a factory, the development from this demand to the slogan for the creation of a workers' soviet.

These are both extreme points, from the development of our transitional programme to find the connecting links and lead the masses to the idea of the revolutionary conquest of power. That is why some demands appear very opportunistic—because they are adapted to the actual mentality of the workers. That is why other demands appear too revolutionary—because they reflect more the objective situation than the actual mentality of the workers. It is our duty to make this gap between objective and subjective factors as short as possible. That is why I cannot overestimate the importance of the transitional programme.

You can raise the objection that we cannot predict the rhythm and tempo of the development, and that possibly the bourgeoisie will find a political respite. That is not excluded—but then we will be obliged to realize a strategic retreat. But in the present situation we must be oriented for a strategic offensive, not a retreat. This strategic offensive

must be led by the idea of the creation of workers' soviets to the creation of a workers' and farmers' government.

### Soviets

I don't propose that the slogan be launched immediately for soviets—for many reasons, and especially because the word has not the significance for the American workers that it had for the Russian workers—in order to proceed from this to the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is very possible and probable that in the same manner that we observed the sit-down strikes in the US, we will observe in a new form the equivalent of soviets. Probably we will begin by giving them a different name.

In a certain period soviets can be replaced by factory committees, then from a local scale to a national scale. We can't foretell, but our strategic orientation for the next period is the orientation towards soviets. The whole transitional programme must fill up the gaps between conditions today and the soviets tomorrow.



# For a labour party in the United States

It can become a reformist party—it depends upon the development. Here the question of programme comes in. I mentioned yesterday and I will underline it today—we must have a programme of transitional demands, the most complete of them being a workers' and farmers' government. We are for a party, for an independent party of the toiling masses who will take power in the state.

We must concretize it—we are for the creation of factory committees, for workers' control of industry through the factory committees. All these questions are now hanging in the air. They speak of technocracy, and put forward the slogan of "production for use". We oppose this charlatan formula and advance the workers' control of production

through the factory committees. Lundberg writes a book, [America's] Sixty Families. The *Annalist* claims that his figures are false. We say, the factory committees should see the books. This programme we must develop parallel with the idea of a labour party in the unions, and workers' militia. Otherwise it is an abstraction, and an abstraction is a weapon in the hands of the opposing class.

The criticism of the Minneapolis comrades is that they have not concretized a programme. In this fight we must underline that we are for the bloc of workers and farmers, but not such farmers as Roosevelt. (I do not know whether you noted that in the official ticket he gave his profession as farmer). We are for a bloc only with the exploited farmers, not exploiter

farmers—exploited farmers and agricultural workers.

We can become the champions of this movement but on the basis of a concrete programme of demands... Then we have to introduce five or six demands, very concrete, adapted to the mind of the workers and farmers and inculcated into the brain of every comrade—workers' factory committees, and then workers' and farmers' government. That's the genuine sense of the movement...

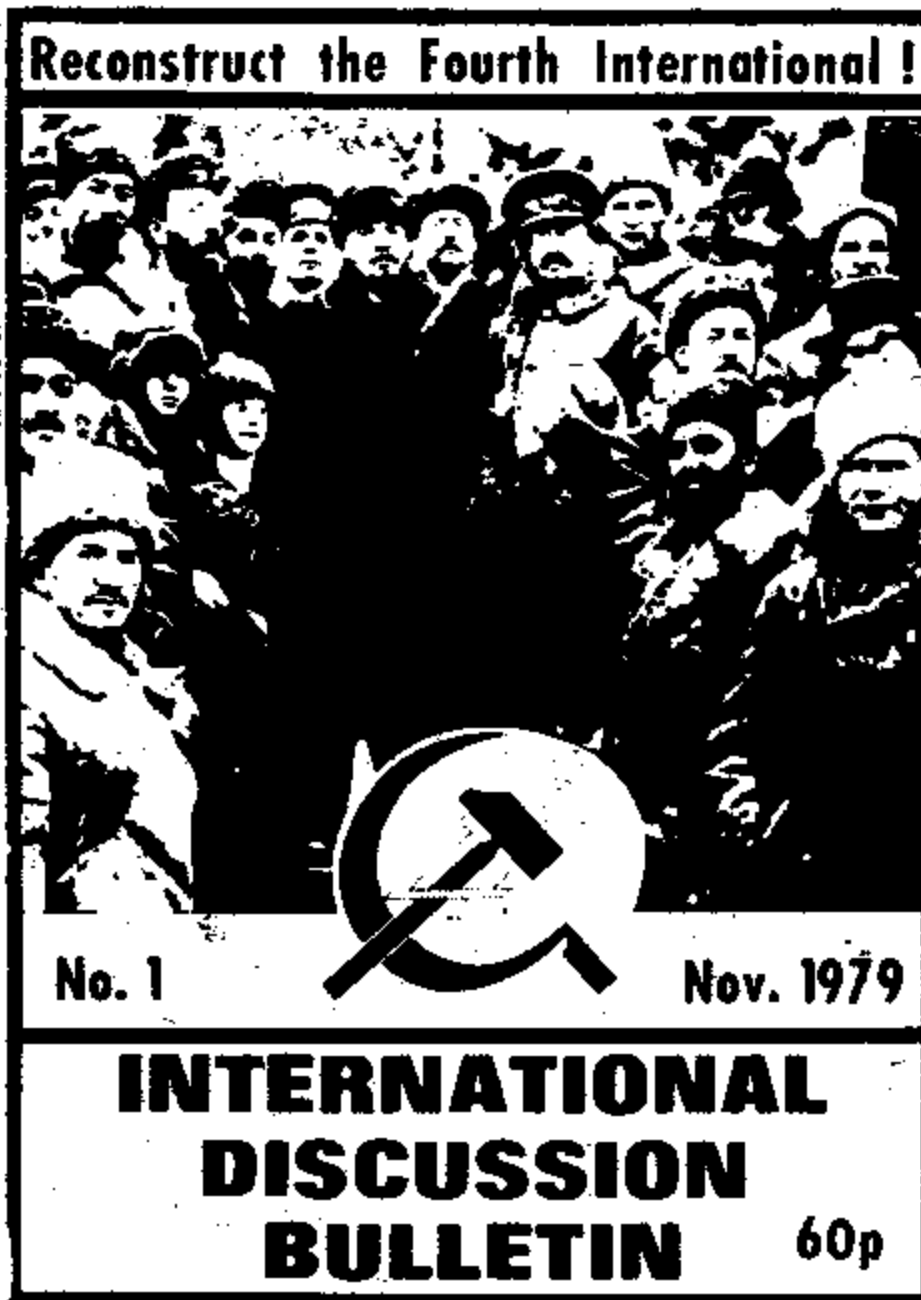
Naturally we must make our first step in such a way as to accumulate experience for practical work—not to engage in abstract formulas, but to develop a concrete programme of action and demands in the sense that this transitional programme issues from the con-

ditions of capitalist society today, but immediately leads over the limits of capitalism. It is not the reformist minimum programme, which never included workers' militia, workers' control of production.

These demands are transitory because they lead from the capitalist society to the proletarian revolution, a consequence insofar as they become the demands of the masses as the proletarian government. We can't stop only with the day-to-day demands of the proletariat. We must give to the most backward workers some concrete slogan that corresponds to their needs and that leads dialectically to the conquest of power...

## The Transitional Programme in today's class struggle

Submitted by the Workers Socialist League as the basis for discussion for the formation of a principled International Tendency. Available in the first edition of the International Discussion Bulletin, (price 75p including postage) from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.



# USFI SPLIT: THE FORM

## A letter from the IMG

London  
November 28

Dear Comrades,  
Please find enclosed our reply to your article in Socialist Press on the split in the Fourth International. We hope that this can be published as soon as possible in order that the record can be put straight on questions which you evidently had inadequate information about when you published your article.

Comradely greetings,  
Phil Hearse

The article published in Socialist Press (14.11.79) contains allegations against the Fourth International and members of its British section, the IMG, which are quite untrue.

We protest in the strongest possible terms against the publication of what amount to crude falsifications in this article.

First, you state that members of the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency were "bureaucratically expelled" from the International and that the Bolshevik

Faction "pointed to the expulsions from the USFI as unmistakable evidence that the majority would not allow a democratic world congress".

The fact of the matter is that the expulsions from the French section of leaders of the LTT and the Bolshevik Faction took place only after these people had signed a public appeal together with the OCRFI for a conference to "re-organise" the world Trotskyist movement.

This action, taken after the comrades had disloyally attended a meeting of the "international bureau" of the OCRFI, was quite incompatible with continued membership of the International and its French section.

How is it possible to consider as loyal members of the International people who sign a public appeal together with an opponent organisation aimed at attacking and splitting the International, and who refuse to rescind this action in front of the Congress of the French section?

Would the WSL, for example tolerate in its ranks members who signed a public appeal against the wishes of the WSL

leadership attacking the WSL and calling for a conference to reorganise the British Trotskyist movement because the WSL was "dead"?

Would you consider that a loyal act? Would you tolerate such people in your organisation? Obviously not.

Then how can you attack the leadership of the French section for defending the elementary norms of democratic centralist functioning? What is "bureaucratic" about that?

Second, you argue that cde John Strawson, a leading member of the LTT in Britain carried out an "eleventh hour climb down" which prevented "mass expulsions" from the IMG.

This too is a crude falsification. John Strawson did not "climb down" on his political positions; he defends identical positions today as he did before the split.

What he did do was refuse to go along with the splitting act of the French LTT and Bolshevik Faction leaderships, and oppose their flagrant breach of national and international democratic centralism.

Comrade Strawson pointed out, correctly in our view, that the differences over Nicaragua were not differences of a fundamental programmatic nature.

To be sure, turning a sectarian face against the Nicaraguan revolution poses big dangers of being drawn behind pro-imperialist forces.

But the political line actually defended by the Bolshevik Faction amounted to an ultra-left sectarian position, not fundamental programmatic breaks with Trotskyism—whatever the future course of those comrades who have separated from the FI.

Therefore the split is an unprincipled split, which flows from incorrect positions on the programmatic basis of the unity of the party.

As the World Congress showed, the LTT was able to defend its positions. This gives the lie to the accusations that the leadership of the FI is a "rotten bloc".

The Fourth International is the only democratic centralist International where differences can be discussed out, including between components of the majority leadership.

This brings up the conference being organised by the OCRFI, the LTT and the Bolshevik Faction.

This conference has no political basis of agreement. The only thing which brings these forces together even for a conference is hostility to the USFI and a desire to split up and destroy the Fourth International.

Since there is not the slightest possibility of this conference setting up a new organisation, it represents not an attempt to "reorganise" or "reconstruct" the Fourth International but a simple retreat into "national Trotskyism".

How is it possible to "reconstruct" the Fourth International by attending a conference which is simply a cynical manoeuvre, an unprincipled combination with no future? What construction of the Fourth International is taking place outside the ranks of the Fourth International itself?

We have seen a number of conferences of "all those adhering to Trotskyism" before, organised by Lutte Ouvriere.

They always finish with no

common resolutions, no agreement on action. This new conference, like those organised by LO, is merely a smokescreen for those who want not an international, but a situation where they maintain absolute freedom from international constraints in their own country, "national Trotskyism" pure and simple.

The expulsions and split in the Fourth International were in fact provoked by grave breaches of democratic centralism.

For us, the building of an international democratic centralist organisation is a fundamental point of the Trotskyist programme.

Is this not also a fundamental plank of the WSL's programme?

And if so, how can you possibly continue to give public support to an operation precisely aimed at not forming an international organisation and designed as an alternative to doing so?

In this light we urge you to withdraw your public support for this conference.

# ... AND THE CONTENT

## We reply:

### WE REPLY:

It certainly appears to be the case that there were some factual inaccuracies in our article in SP 175, for which we apologise.

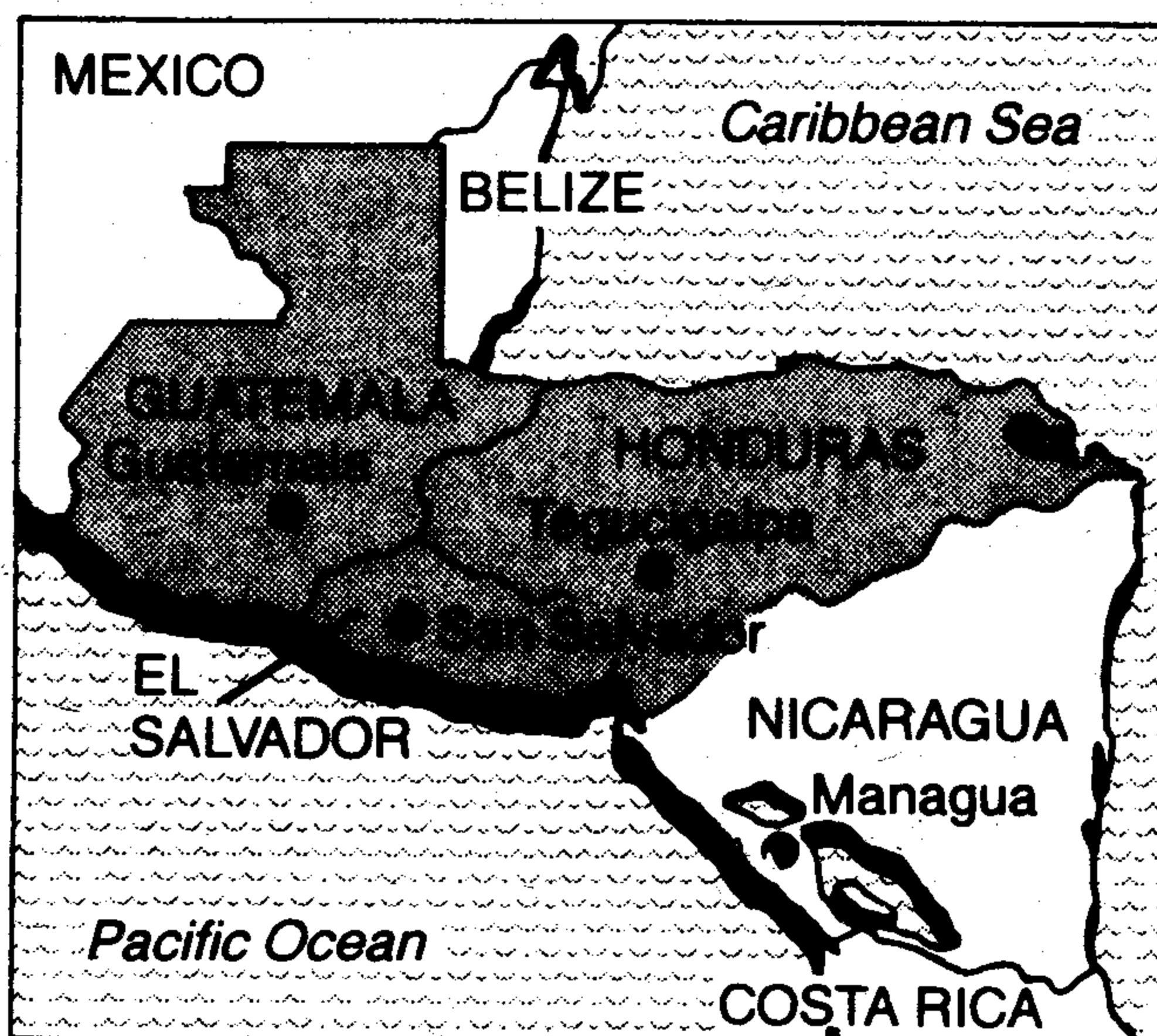
The decisive events in pressing through the split in reality took place at the October 1 meeting of the United Secretariat, in which a series of truly horrific political positions were adopted as policy by the USFI majority, against the opposition of the Bolshevik Faction (led by Nahuel Moreno) and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency.

Overturning the inadequate, but comparatively "orthodox"

resolution on Nicaragua passed by the USFI on July 4, the Secretariat made it unmistakably clear that it opposed the building of a Trotskyist party or even a Trotskyist faction within the petty bourgeois FSLN in Nicaragua, declaring instead that "By explaining its programme and ideas the Fourth International [USFI] places itself firmly on the side of the FSLN's battle to ensure the victory of the socialist revolution." (emphasis added).

Indeed the USFI also declared itself opposed to the agitational demand for the removal of the capitalist ministers from the Nicaraguan Government of National Reconstruction:

"To focus political interven-



USFI's 'no-go' area for Bolshevik Faction

tion today on the slogan "all bourgeois ministers out of the government!" would likewise succumb to the sectarian temptation of applying an abstract schema."

The USFI went on expressly to declare its support for the bourgeois GNR and its faith in its ability to carry through the necessary policies.

Not content with political support for a bourgeois government, the same meeting of the USec went on to support—albeit with formal reservations—the FSLN's expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade.

The Brigade had been organised by the Bolshevik Faction, and was accused by the FSLN of organising trade unions and calling for independent workers militias.

The USec position in effect echoed the statement which had been handed by a USFI delegation to FSLN leaders in Managua on September 3, which declared:

"All activities which seek today to create divisions between the mobilised masses and the FSLN are contrary to the interests of the revolution. The FSLN was right to demand that the non-Nicaraguan members of this group—which

defined itself above all as a military organisation—leave the country."

The October 1 USec meeting also went on to instruct Trotskyists in Nicaragua to "cease all activity", liquidate their organisation and to act:

"as loyal militants in the framework of the organisation which led the overthrow of Somoza and leads this revolution [the FSLN]. . . to defend the fundamental ideas of revolutionary Marxism."

It threw out a resolution from the LTT, which condemned both the USFI's failure to attack the Nicaraguan bourgeois junta, and the grovelling endorsement by the American SWP of Castro's speech to the Havana non-aligned conference.

And, in another resolution, the USec specifically raised the threat of expulsion against the Bolshevik Faction should it refuse "immediately" to implement these liquidationist policies.

Repeating its condemnation of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, the USec's resolution on this issue laid down the ultimatum: "The members of the BF and the organisations they lead must immediately halt any

activity in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras except for that decided upon by the leading bodies of the Fourth International. They must place themselves under the discipline of the United Secretariat." (emph. added)

It was in the wake of these decisions by the USFI that Moreno, speaking both for the BF and the LTT, made a statement—at that same October 1 meeting—denouncing the liquidationist policies of the majority, and the attempt to use the facade of "democratic centralism" in order to impose them upon militants of the USFI, arguing that:

"Trotskyist militants can under no circumstances abandon the fight for class political independence against petty bourgeois currents which, like the FSLN, practise collaboration with the bourgeoisie, or give political support to a bourgeois government of any sort.

"Under no circumstances is there justification for abandoning the absolute imperative to build, in whatever tactical way, a section of the Fourth International.

"Democratic centralism can find its political content only in the building of the Fourth International in every country, and cannot give political authority to administrative measures tending to the pure and simple destruction of political positions and positions gained in struggle which constitute gains of the battle for the Fourth International."

In our view such a political stand—for all our differences with Moreno's positions on a host of other issues in the near and more distant past—is a legitimate one.

### Public factions

In particular it is worth noting that while the IMG and the USFI now rather inconspicuously beat the drum for democratic centralism, the USFI for years tolerated a situation in which contending public factions (the Mandeliste International Majority Tendency and the pro-SWP Leninist Trotskyist Faction) argued and fought for opposing policies in the class

struggle, sold rival newspapers, and recruited members to mutually antagonistic, competing organisations—each of which claimed adherence to the USFI!

The new-found and touching respect for democratic centralism—for all cde. Hearse's rhetoric—has nothing whatever to do with Leninism, and everything to do with imposition of a reactionary and liquidationist political line on dissenting USFI militants.

There seems little doubt from subsequent information that, with regard to the form of events cde Hearse is correct.

The expulsions from the USFI took place within the letter of democratic centralism, and only after they had signed a joint declaration with the OCRFI.

But in reality, the refusal of the USFI to postpone the XIth Congress to allow a discussion on the Nicaraguan events, the expulsion threats—raised less than a month before the Congress—and the attempts to forcibly liquidate Trotskyist forces in Nicaragua into the FSLN, amounted to bureaucratic and organisational measures to suppress discussion and force through a revisionist policy.

### Starting point

Nor do we agree that the issues at stake were "not differences of a fundamental programmatic nature."

For us the struggle for independent Trotskyist parties is the very starting point of the Marxist programme, and the defence of the political independence of the working class a central issue of principle.

It is completely disingenuous of cde. Hearse to attempt to turn the tables and argue that the "sectarian" positions of the BF did not amount to a fundamental break with Trotskyism.

He knows that the issue at stake throughout has been the rank opportunist capitulation of the USFI majority to the FSLN leaders, which does, in our view, amount to a class betrayal.

As for the political line subsequently argued by John Strawson within the IMG, or by the remnants of the LTT



FSLN leaders uncritically supported by USFI





Mandel



OCRFI leaders Lambert (right) and De Massot



Castro

within the rump XIth Congress—or the outcome of that Congress—we have no information on which to base a judgement. But the Workers Socialist League has consistently argued that the USFI is not, and was not, “the” Fourth International, but merely one of the fragments of a post war Trotskyist movement confused and divided by repeated crises.

Our attempts to initiate a discussion with the USFI on the political and programmatic issues involved in these crises—in order to create a political basis for a principled reconstruction of the FI—have themselves been successively blocked by the USFI leadership which earlier this year pulled back from an agreement to circulate and discuss the WSL document *The Poisoned Well*.

Is it therefore surprising to comrade Hearse and the USFI leadership that the Workers Socialist League should welcome the calling by the BF, LTT and OCRFI of an open conference in 1980, the declared task of which is to oppose the liquidationist politics of the USFI majority which we have always opposed and which specifically refers, in its initial documents, back to the lessons of the split of 1951-53?

When will the USFI show itself ready seriously to discuss such issues?

How long can comrade Hearse and the IMG maintain their discredited argument that the historical lessons of the ill-prepared splits and opportunist fusions in the post-war Fourth International have no

relevance to Trotskyists in today's class struggle?

Until they abandon this reactionary view and cease their efforts to block vital political discussion, the rump USFI, now dominated by the arch-Castroite SWP, will remain an *obstacle* to the clarification of Trotskyist forces on a world scale.

For this reason any reconstruction of the FI must at present take place “outside the ranks of the Fourth International itself”, if by “the Fourth International” comrade Hearse intends to signify the USFI.

The future political evolution of the OCRFI, BF and LTT is for us a question for which there is as yet no final answer.

They do not hide the fact that major political issues divide them. The conference is convened to give them and other militants the chance to assess the level of agreement that does exist.

The WSL intends to participate in this, and to argue, as stated, for our programmatic positions and historical analysis in that open conference, without in any way solidarising with the politics of the three convening organisations or retreating on our fight for the reconstruction of a democratic centralist Fourth International.

And if the USFI were really confident of its political positions and opposed to sectarianism it would take up the invitation of the BF, LTT and OCRFI to participate in that conference, rather than castigating us, and the USFI's own erstwhile political allies and partners for taking part.

# Quadrophenia: an attempt to escape routine

## Reader's letter

London  
19 November

Dear Editor,  
I wish to make a number of critical points on the article by P. Tickell (SP 175) on Quadrophenia.

The modern ‘revival’ of the mod scene means many youth will be divided among the various musical trends.

On some streets it is battles of the two, both exploited and used by capitalism via the music rags to divide our class.

What the movie is about is the attempt to escape the stereotyped, boring, dull routine which dominates the majority of youth.

The hum-drum life is exposed for its destructive and demoralising effect. The youth turn to their music to find independence from bourgeois control. This process is ignored or left as a side issue.

The lesson of the tragic death of Keith Moon is that The Who recognise the inability of youth to find any way forward in cult followings.

As a group whose base rested generally on a “political (in the narrowest sense) analysis” of the situation, they need to have their finger on the pulse of today's generation.

The reviewer's attitude is supposed to represent an understanding of the world.

But in reality it becomes a cruel slamming of a good film. Descriptions of Ken Russell as simply a ‘crackpot’ give no real view of the impression, and meaning of Russell's work.

The ‘intermittent’ reality is rubbish. The job, home, mates and whole routine of Jimmy (Phil Daniels) is real.

Many youth face and suffer such oppression.

The role of police to beat up Mods—and cde. Tickell they *do!* They don't appear as a ‘joke’ in the film although obviously not as Trotsky would see them. (Incidentally the court scene is funny, although not very realistic).

The two camps of people do exist. The older sections of workers weren't particularly apathetic, but many could not understand their sons and daughters.

This created a division which exists in the ‘family unit’ today.

It is part of the contradiction in the family.

An important factor to the film is the concluding scene.

Many—including cde. Tickell—believe that Jimmy, the confused ultra-Mod, kills himself.

However, the shot shows only the *bike* going over the top of the cliff.

I feel it was the disgust and rejection of a commercialised disillusioned young worker to the mod scene.

We are left at the beginning of the film—a Mod walking on the beach, alone and disillusioned (further evidence of the film's

strength).

In fact to a communist the question must be the inability of spontaneous, (un)conscious movements to satisfy our needs.

The Socialist Youth League, political supporters of the WSL, should be cde. Tickell's alternative.

Only through the channelling of aggression, annoyance and hatred of ‘control’ into a revolutionary youth movement can this repressive apparatus and reactionary society be crushed.

Yours fraternally,  
NJ

P.S. In cde. Tickell's view the area and scenery were ‘lacking... authenticity’.

The film was however shot in the Shepherds Bush area of London.

The White City housing estate—where the streets are shot—is reputed to be the GLC's worst housing estate. The Nazi Graffiti, is unhappily, also very real.

The question of ‘blues’, barbiturate pills, is also left aside in the article. Many youth feel they need drugs to co-exist with capitalist pressures. This question should be examined.

# Unemployment used to attack conditions

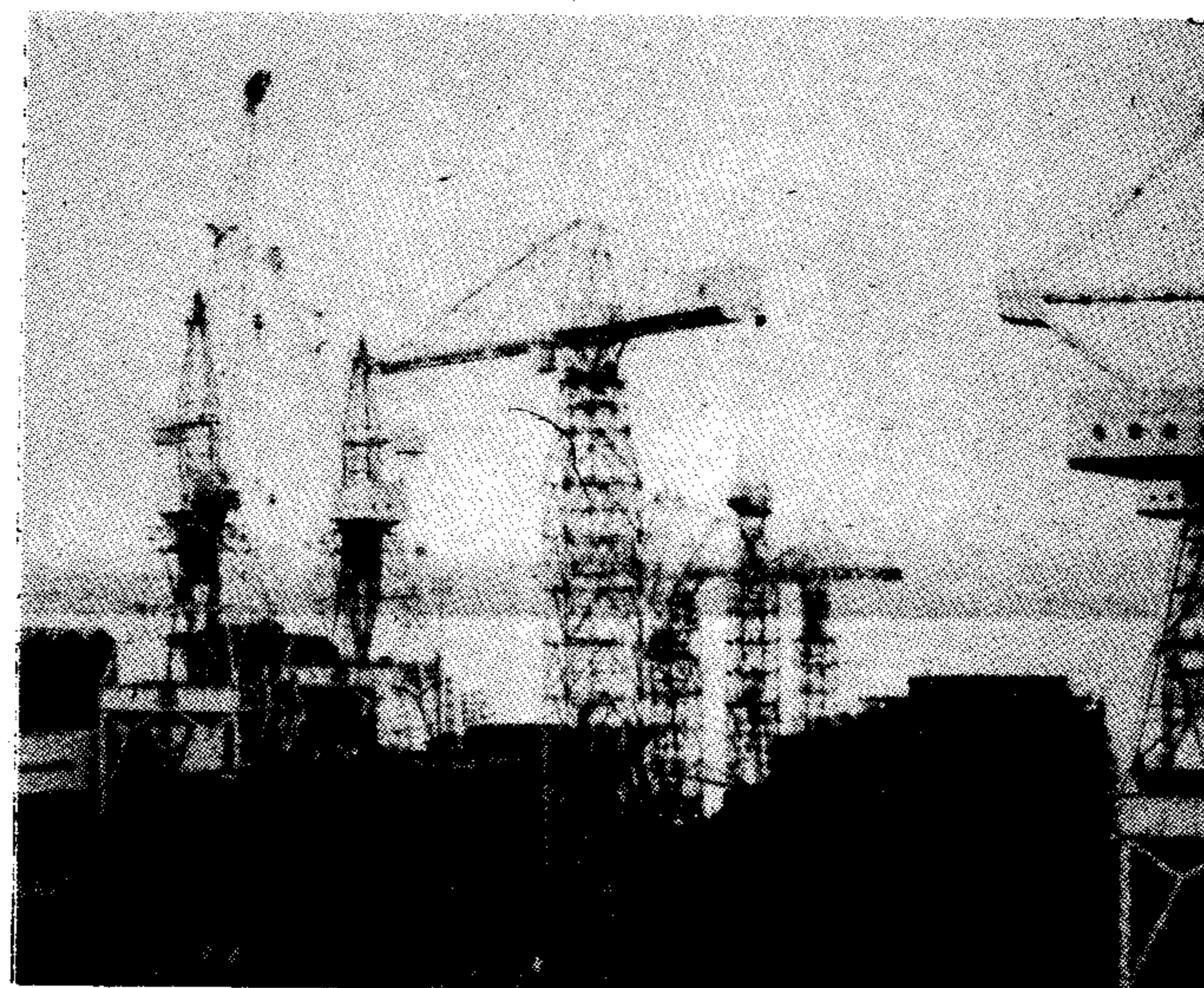
The high level of unemployment now prevailing in the West of Scotland provides the conditions for employers to intensify exploitation of their workforce through the imposition of vicious agreements on wages and working conditions.

An example of this is the agreement concluded between the Ayrshire Marine Constructors and the Chicago Bridge Constructors on the one hand, and on the other hand the trade union officials supposedly representing the interests of the men employed in building an oil rig at Hunterston, Ayrshire.

## Blackmail

The extent to which the officials from the unions involved (including the Boilermakers) will capitulate and concede to the employers is spelled out in clause after clause.

Demarcation—essential to the maintenance of skills, differentials and jobs is thrown out of the window: “As far as possible, skilled men will do the work for which they are most qualified by training and experience but all must carry on with semi-skilled or unskilled work, if there is



no craft work for them to do.”

To try to blackmail men into abandoning industrial action to defend themselves an “allowance” of £250 will be paid twice a year to employees who have “no lost time at Hunterston due to industrial action within the six months period prior to payment”.

As for wages, night work is to be paid at time and a quarter for the first ten hours and only after that has been accrued on each shift is payment increased

to time and a half.

On top of all this, there is a list of jobs which must continue to be done outside “in adverse weather conditions”.

For this, there is *no* extra payment specified!

Indeed, the agreement is as remarkable for what it omits as what it includes.

As well as there being no conditions money, no travelling money is allowed—despite the site being at some distance from any major centre of population.

Nor is there any money specified for working at heights—although the rig will go as high as 300 feet.

As the site builds up and more men are employed, the bitterness at such terms must surely increase both against the management who have imposed this agreement and against the servile trade union officials who have so abjectly accepted such terrible conditions for their membership.

Such workers are not alone. Throughout the country, reformist union leaders readily accepting employers' arguments that the membership must “sacrifice” in order to preserve profits—and therefore “defend jobs”, are busily agreeing to speed-up, closures, and a massive erosion of real wages.

It is vital that the bitterness against these officials is not allowed to turn into cynicism towards the trade unions themselves, or demoralisation.

Rather the fight must be taken up in every industry for the construction of a principled, revolutionary leadership, prepared and able to fight tooth and nail for the independent interests of the working class, against the betrayals of the bureaucracy and the blackmail of the employers.



# CHARING X SELL OUT

The engineers at Charing Cross Hospital decided at a meeting last week to end their six week strike and return to work without their two victimised colleagues.

These two engineers have now been suspended on full pay pending the outcome of their appeals against dismissal.

They were sacked for implementing the policy of their union by working to rule as a protest against cuts in services and dangerously low manning levels.

The strike that followed was in defence of jobs and services at the hospital.

Management's provocative actions and breaking of agreed procedure made clear their intention of breaking the unionisation of the engineers to limit the degree of opposition to the cuts programme.

During the dispute a vicious witch-hunt was mounted by the Fleet Street press culminating in a stage managed counter-picket by doctors, nurses and blanket draped cancer patients, no doubt spurred on by management's deliberate threats to close down the hospital.

The role played by the union bureaucracy at district and national level during the strike amounts to a major sell out.

### Support

The North London District AUEW failed to organise the necessary support for the strike, while the national executive refused even to call for the immediate reinstatement of the sacked engineers and refused to make the strike official.

Instead they ordered the strikers back to work. The line taken by the

AUEW leadership shows their eagerness to respond to Fleet Street's lies and their inability to give even a limited lead in the fight against the cuts.

The results of this strike will strengthen the position of the Charing Cross management within the hospital and will encourage others to follow suit in attempts to destroy trade union organisation.

### STILL AVAILABLE

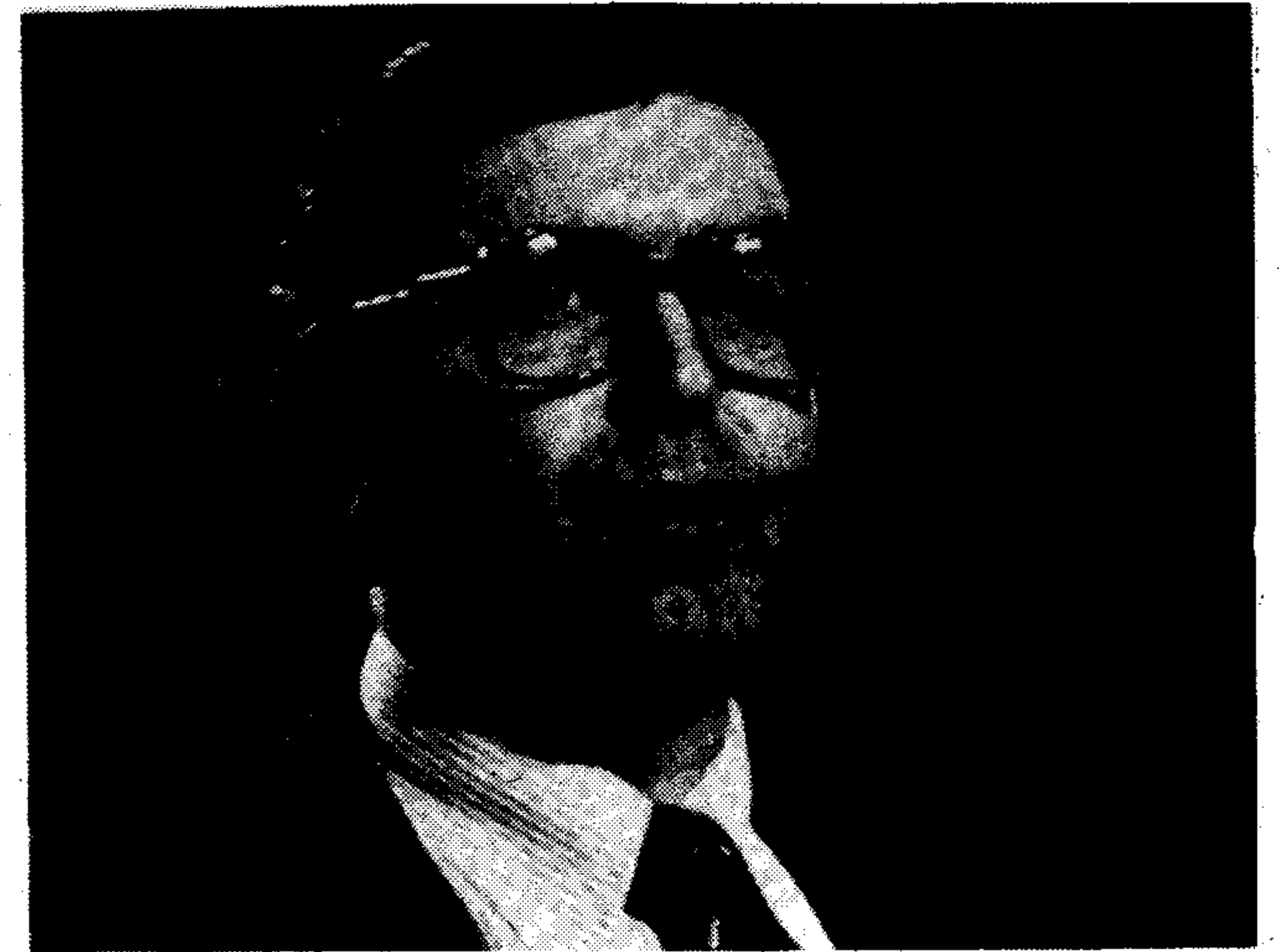
Socialist Press supplement "Fighting the Cuts". Price 15p including postage from Socialist Press, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

# TORY ASSAULT ON NHS WORKERS

In a double hammer blow at health workers and the National Health Service Tory Ministers last week announced plans for organised strikebreaking and for the development of private medicine.

Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkin, clearly heartened by the vicious scab-herding that eventually broke the Charing Cross Hospital engineers' strike, has issued a circular to Health Authorities calling on them to use "volunteers" to do the jobs of strikers.

He declared full government support for any health authority that used such scab labour during a strike, and called for the pay of workers who refused to cross picket lines to be stopped.



Jenkin

### Troops

These Tory guidelines are coupled with detailed plans, drawn up last winter, for military strikebreaking and with other, less publicised directives already sent to Area Health Authorities.

One of these recently publicised by *Labour Weekly*, calls upon administrators to spend thousands of pounds installing facsimile transmission machines and outside telephone lines to enable rapid and direct communications in the event of strikes.

Such expenditure, at a time of huge cash cutbacks in the NHS—indicates clearly where the Tory priorities lie.

But the response of trade union and Labour leaders has

been mealy-mouthed. COHSE leader Albert Spanswick complained that the new measures would "undermine responsible trade unionism".

### Scab force

And Stan Orme, Shadow Social Services Secretary, persisted in using the euphemism "volunteers" to describe the Tories' planned shock force of scabs, moaning that:

"This type of approach could lead to conflict between volunteers and full-time staff".

With the Tories on the war-path, scabs at the ready, and union officials already on the defensive, hospital workers who take action against the cuts or in defence of their living standards must look in each area to the building of councils of action, drawing in the organised labour movement to strengthen and extend their struggles.

Meanwhile, in a move designed to secure the whole-hearted support of consultants and doctors for further devastation of the NHS, the Tory Health Services Bill proposes to

end the phasing out of pay beds in NHS hospitals and ease controls on private hospitals.

This move, which will enable consultants to line their pockets as NHS patients line waiting rooms has predictably been welcomed by the fat cats of the BMA.

But the Bill also includes tighter regulation of cash limits on health authorities—aimed to prevent authorities defying government cutbacks.

### Abolished

Area Health Authorities, introduced under the last Tory government, may also be abolished.

And hospitals are urged to engage in their own fund-raising activities in order to make good government cash cuts.

So, for the Tories, it's back to the pre-NHS days of charity hospitals and private care for the wealthy.

And for the working class the answer must be mass strike action to bring down the Tories.

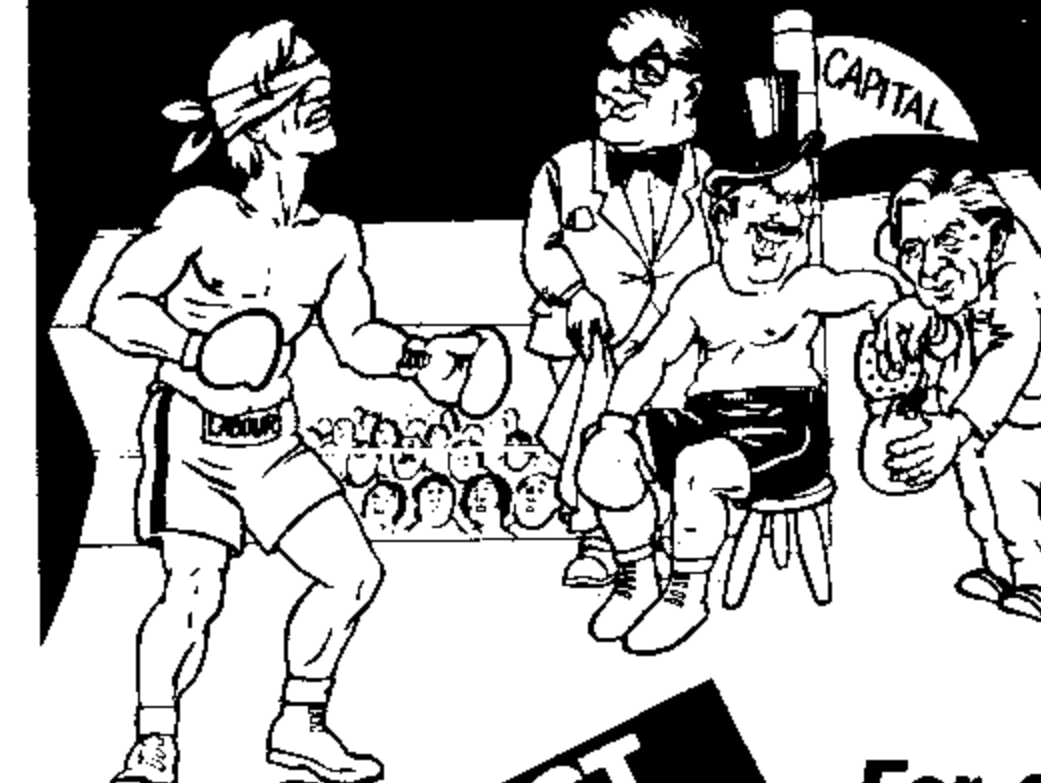
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# YOU SHOULD JOIN US!

With workers by the thousand taking to the streets to oppose Tory policies there is plainly no lack of militancy in the organised working class.

Yet the existing trade union bureaucrats and Labour leaders—whether right or 'left'—have no perspective to offer those workers prepared to fight in defence of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights.

These can only be defended through policies which start from the independent interests of the working class, which, as an international class, has nothing to gain and everything to lose from attempts to restore the profitability of their "own" employing class.

In a period where the contra-

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dictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale closure and destruction of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed which, in today's struggles fights to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist movement fighting day in and day out to build such a principled leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally.

We invite all readers of Socialist Press to seek more details of the WSL and its work and to join us in the struggle for socialism.

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# BL workers face new sell-out

Another major betrayal is in store for BL workers—this time on wages.

Last Friday the Leyland Cars National Joint Negotiating Committee again failed to reject management's insulting offer on the annual pay review.

The offer, due to be paid on November 1, gives 5% to the vast majority of BL workers and 10% to the skilled workers in Grade 1.

## Agreements

In return for this the deal demands the surrender of every significant protective agreement won by BL workers over many years—lay-off entitlement, mutuality, and seniority agreements.

This offer is in reply to the claim by the BL unions for £24 per week across the board and a cost of living clause.

At last Friday's meeting, BL management made it absolutely clear that they would not alter or improve the monetary offer.

They even refused categorically to apply an across-the-board principle—something which had been insisted on by the convenors' conference which had endorsed the original



Robinson claim.

Faced with this, the obvious step was to reconvene the convenors' conference, to consider what action should be taken.

But nothing was further from the minds of the National Officials who dominate the committee.

They voted down a motion moved by Bob Fryer from the Cowley Assembly Plant calling for a convenors' conference, and threw out also a similar motion moved by Jack Adams from Longbridge.

They then decided to leave aside the 5% offer and negotiate on the 85 pages of strings and penalty clauses attached to it!

This move can only be seen as tantamount to acceptance of the 5%.

Two more meetings are fixed for this week to "negotiate" on these clauses.

The meeting was dominated by the aftermath of the Robinson victimisation.

Robinson who was a senior member of the LCJNC was excluded from the meeting—but not (as might be expected) by management but by Ken Cure, Executive Councilman of the AUEW.

According to the Morning Star Cure instructed Robinson not to attend and appointed Arthur Harper from the Drews Lane plant to take his seat.

Harper took the principled view that he would not take the position of a victimised convenor.

But he was clearly lost for an argument when Robinson himself pressed him to go ahead and take it!

Meanwhile Robinson, in a state of bravado, has been sounding off at the National Union of Students conference, predicting all-out strike action at Longbridge and throughout BL if he is not reinstated.

While such a speech might drum up recruits for the Communist Party in the NUS, nothing could be more likely to infuriate Longbridge workers and antagonise serious militants in BL prepared to wage the necessary fight for Robinson's reinstatement.

# STEEL STRIKE

From front page

BSC's latest pay and closures ultimatum would simply pave the way for further attacks in the future as the crisis continues to run out of control.

Now, in BSC, British Leyland, and all other firms where "viability" is quoted as the reason for wage-cuts and sackings, workers must stand firm and fight for their independent interests against this government of bankers' and asset-strippers.

Steel workers must prepare now for mass battles.

In every area ISTC members must elect strike committees and at once seek the active support of other unions (and labour movement organisations) in the formation of councils of action to defend, extend and develop the pay strike, and mobilise the maximum forces to protect picket lines against the forces of the state.

Within the strike committees and councils of action it will be necessary to scrutinise, challenge and combat at each step the manoeuvres of the ISTC and TUC bureaucracy, who time and again in the past have shown themselves to be putty in the hands of the

employers.

Such a challenge can only be mounted by a revolutionary leadership with a programme which starts not from the problems of the employers but from the needs of the working class.

This means fighting to develop mass strike action to bring down the Tory government, fighting for the removal of the labour traitors who began the slaughter of the steel industry, and creating conditions for the establishment of a workers' government, to carry through policies leading to a planned socialist economy as the only defence of jobs and living standards.

\*Full support to the pay strike. Defend living standards!

\*No closures! No redundancies! For work sharing throughout BSC without loss of pay!

\*Open BSC's books to elected trade union committees to reveal the profits made by bankers, contractors and users from BSC's "losses".

\*Bring down the Tories!

\*For a socialist planned economy!

## Steel militant sacked

IN WHAT appears almost a carbon copy of the Derek Robinson sacking, ISTC Branch Secretary Brian Molyneux was sacked last Thursday for distributing a pamphlet putting forward an alternative to the BSC closure plans.

300 workers at the Stocksbridge plant in Sheffield have now come out in defence of Molyneux after a mass meeting decision.

The victimisation follows hard on the heels of the sacking of Stocksbridge ISTC member Joe Herbertson, who fought the closure of the laboratory at the plant.

ISTC officials claim to be pursuing this issue "at national level". But it is clear that without the solidarity of Stocksbridge workers, management would still be enjoying an open season on militants at the plant.

## Vauxhall victimisations

In the aftermath of the defeated 11-week pay strike by workers at Vauxhall Ellesmere Port plant, management have been putting the boot in with a vengeance.

Having forced workers to accept vicious strings including flexibility of labour and tighter shop floor discipline, management have gone on to sack two shop stewards.

Isolated strikes by 80 AUEW

members in support of their steward, and by 200 body shop workers to defend a TGWU steward had been called off by the end of the week, and the shop stewards had taken the opportunity to put the case into proceedings—only to be sacking them out of the plant.

Industrial workers must see after their own interests. Now is not the time to fight. But when they stand up to such victimisation there will be no end to management attacks on shop floor conditions and trade union rights.

## One-day strike call

THE CUTS campaign in South Yorkshire—which initiated the November 28 mass lobby subsequently annexed by the Labour Party—has called on the local Association of Trades Councils to organise a one-day strike on Monday February 18.

And campaign leaders have asked the TUC to call a 24-hour national stoppage against the cuts.

These calls should be supported but they remain restricted to the objective of "forcing the government to change its policies".

The real task is to force the government out of office.

# 40,000 more civil service jobs to go

Last week the government announced a savage 8% cut in civil service jobs.

There will be a loss of 40,000 jobs over the next three years.

This is on top of 20,000 jobs already cut by the 3-month recruitment ban imposed by the Tories soon after they were elected.

The government have said that although most of the cuts will be achieved by natural wastage they cannot guarantee that there will be no redundancies.

The work of one-quarter of the jobs to be cut will be contracted out to the private sector. In line with Tory policy 'law and order' departments bear the smallest reduction.

The Department of Transport is the most heavily hit, with a 17.7% cut and a loss of

2,480 jobs.

The Department of Industry will be cut by 13% resulting in a loss of 1,290 jobs.

There will be cuts of 10% in the Departments of National Savings, Environment, Employment and the Civil Service Department.

Civil service union leaders see it as a partial victory that the government has only proposed an 8% cut instead of the original 10, 15 and 20% options.

This is no victory! As the Tories have made clear, these cuts are just the beginning of an all-out attack on civil service jobs.

Lord Soames said that the cuts announced last week were only "the savings which it has been possible to identify reasonably quickly" and "the search for greater economic efficiency will go on and the general trend

in the size of the civil service from now on will be downwards".

In the next six months more cuts will result from major reviews being carried out in the Departments of Health and Social Security and Environment, the Ministry of Defence and the Inland Revenue.

The review in the DHSS threatens thousands of jobs and represents a major attack on the already inadequate social security system.

## Scrap benefit

The review plans to scrap state sickness benefit for the first eight weeks of illness and transfer this responsibility to the employers.

If this proposal is implemented there will be a loss of 5,000 jobs while thousands of workers will find themselves deprived of sick pay or engaged in prolonged wrangles with employers to obtain their entitlements.

Other proposals are to end the maternity grant and death grant from April 1980 and to abolish earnings related supplements to sickness and unemployment benefit.

Supplementary benefit postal reviews and home visiting are also threatened, meaning that many old and disabled people will be denied benefits to which they are entitled.

## Strikes

On December 7 when the cuts announcement was made there were strikes and walkouts by CPSA and SCPS members in several parts of the country, demonstrating rank and file opposition to the cuts.

It is now vital that CPSA, SCPS, IPCS, CSU and TGWU (representing industrial civil servants) immediately organise joint national strike action to reverse these cuts and, alongside other sections of workers, spearhead mass action to bring down the Tory government.

## MINERS TAKE THE MONEY

The wild celebrations by Margaret Thatcher and the Tory press last week seemed strangely misplaced.

They were overjoyed that the miners voted—narrowly, and with the decisive votes coming from foremen and technical grades—to accept a ten-month, 20% pay offer.

This, said Thatcher, showed that workers would return to sensible wage bargaining.

But since when have the Tories regarded 20% as a "sensible" settlement?

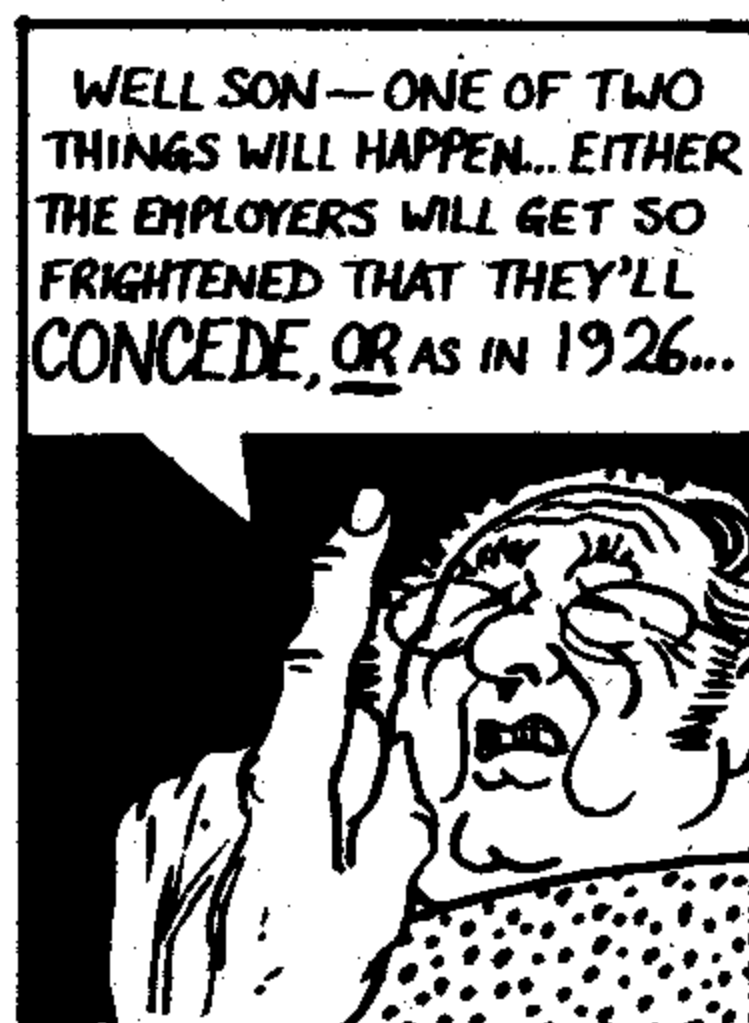
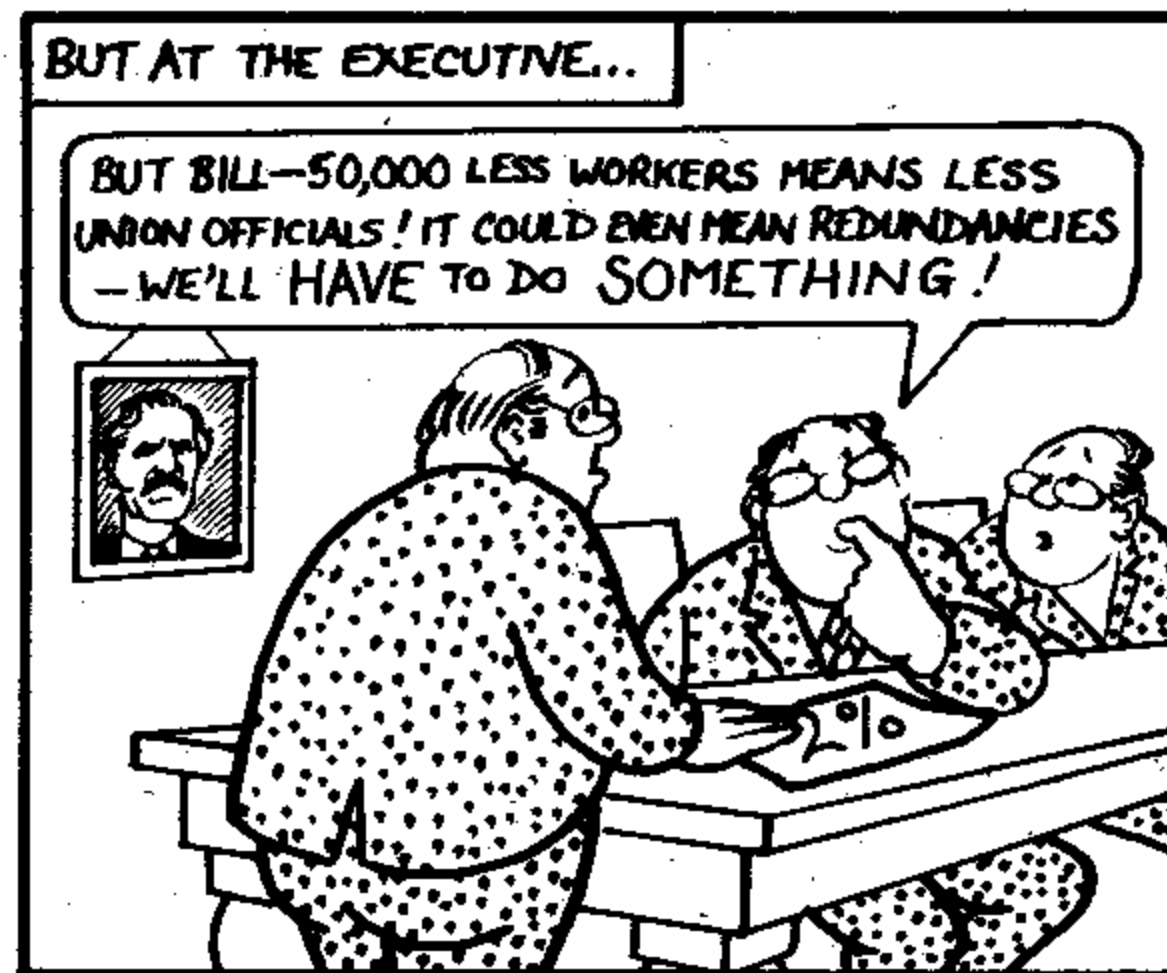
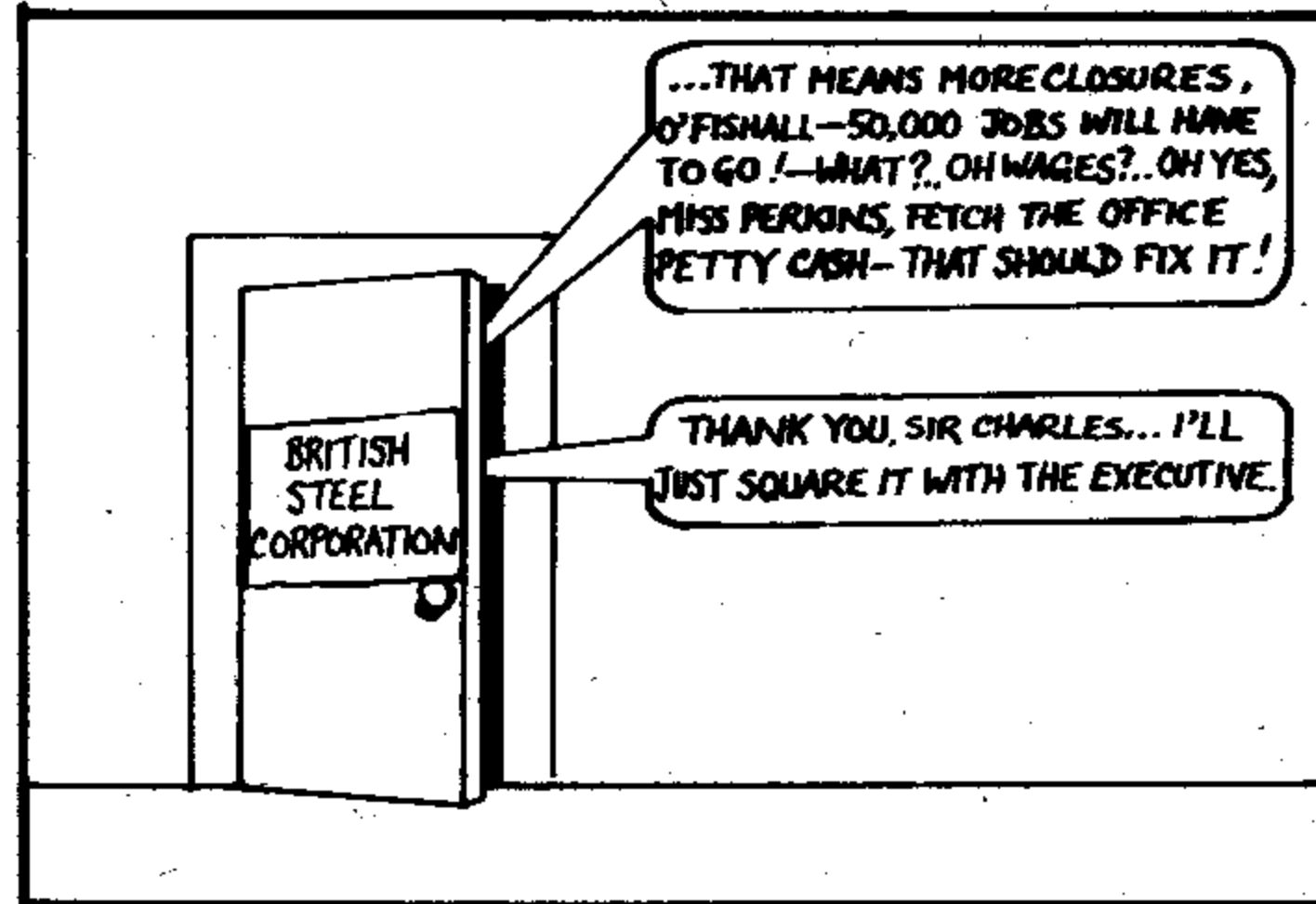
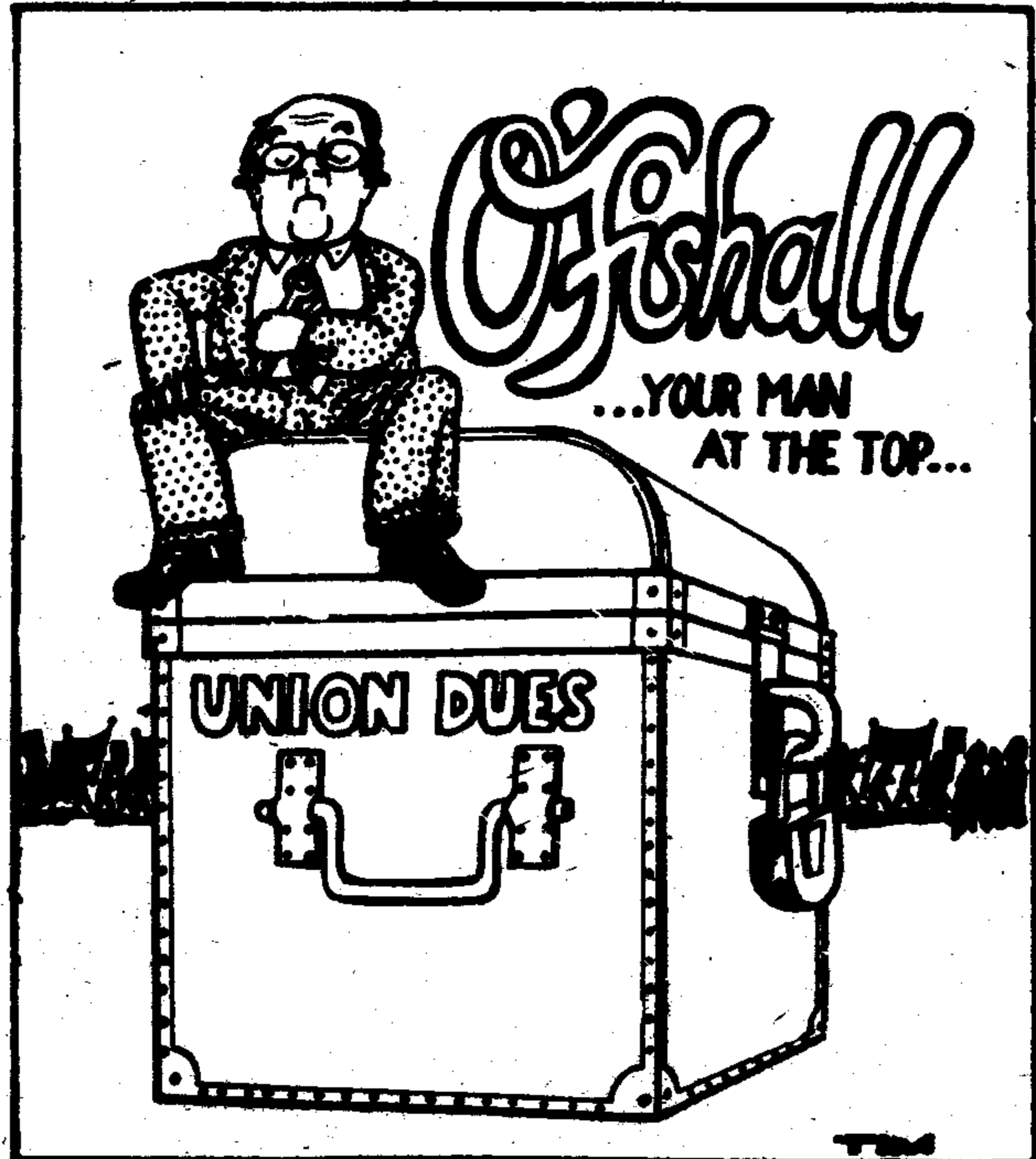
And, with the next pay review due for November 1980, and the NUM Executive declaring themselves in advance of the ballot to be ready to settle for



Gormley

only another 5%, many miners clearly decided that now was not the time to 'open the box' of Gormley betrayals, but to take the money.

The Tories have thus climbed down before a powerful section of workers: and the miners are holding their strength in reserve for next year. Not much for Thatcher to celebrate!



# SOCIALIST PRESS



## Students to strike against Corrie

The National Union of Students conference has called for a one-day strike by all NUS members on the day of the final reading of John Corrie's anti-abortion Bill.

The Bill, which restricts the time limit for abortion to 20 weeks—a limit even attacked by the Tory government as "too low"—and sets out to destroy charities like the British Pregnancy Advisory Service, which currently provide a third of legal abortions, is being rushed pell-mell through its committee stage by fanatical Tory and Labour anti-abortionists.

The National Abortion Campaign has called on the TUC to call a one day strike to oppose the Bill, and this will now be assisted by the firm stand of the NUS.

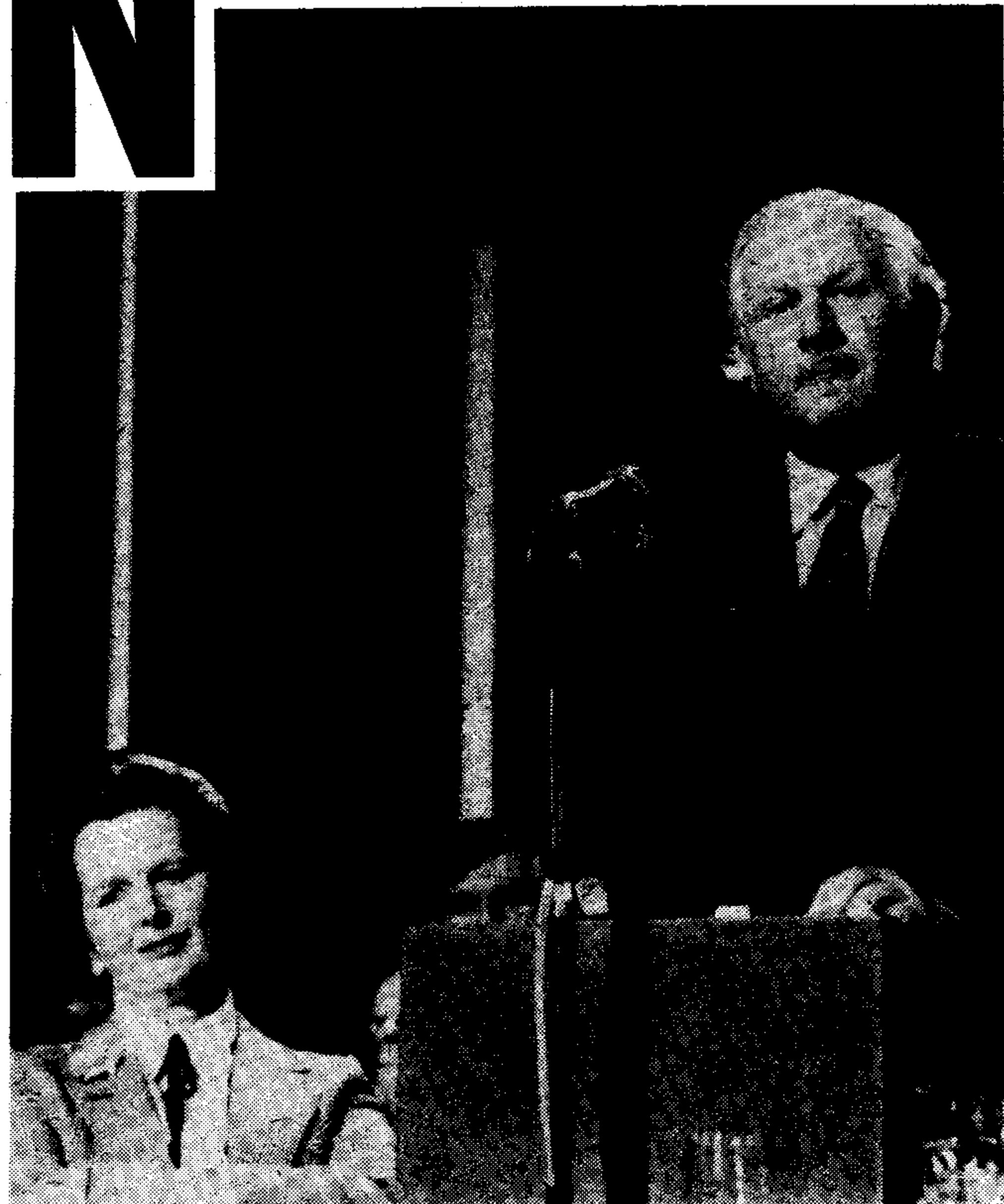
But with a solid Tory majority in Parliament and numbers of reactionary Labour MPs committed to an anti-abortion position and hostile to women's rights, the passage of the Bill seems assured.

The fight for abortion rights must therefore be directed not solely at Parliament but into the health service trade unions and the wider labour movement which must pledge themselves:

- \*to take action including strikes and occupations to defend existing NHS abortion facilities against cuts or closure;
- \*to continue to provide abortions irrespective of the Corrie Bill;

- \*to mobilise full scale supporting action to defend charities and clinics attacked under the Bill;

- \*to fight for the defeat of the Tory government and for a socialist policy of incorporating such abortion facilities into an expanded NHS.



Prior with Thatcher

struggles against Phase 4 of wage controls.

GMWU leader David Basnett attacked the Tories for bringing in new laws—declaring that what was needed was "commonsense and compromise".

Yet while union leaders have shown themselves ready to compromise down the line on the jobs and conditions of their members, the Tories, and employers driven on by the economic crisis, do not share this approach.

### Encouragement

Every weakness and retreat by the union leaders encourages them to press home their attacks with renewed fury.

With TUC leaders already in full flight, the Tories know that they can also count on Labour's reactionary right wing to do their best to damp down resistance to the new laws.

The Callaghan/Healey leadership was second to none in denouncing "secondary" picketing last winter: and the TUC/Labour Concordat contains many proposals similar to the Tory Bill.

### Labour traitors

The struggle against Prior's Bill is therefore linked to the fight to remove the Labour traitors and for a principled leadership in the unions.

There is no doubt that the Tory measures will be resisted in practice: but the fight must be taken up at once within the workers' movement for all out action to bring down the Thatcher government to prevent basic trade union rights being once more threatened by Tory legal restraints.

# TORIES PLAN TO SMASH PICKETS!

Pickets—mass pickets, solidarity pickets, effective pickets—are, along with the closed shop, the main target of the Tories' new anti-union Bill published last week by James Prior.

Picketing would be legal only if carried out by:

- \*employees outside their own workplace;

- \*union officials with their members at their own workplace;

- \*sacked workers picketing their former employer in a reinstatement fight;

- \*strikers picketing places where their employer gives them work.

Illegal, under the new Bill, would be lorry drivers picketing docks, miners picketing power stations, workers picketing plants other than their own, and labour movement support for unionisation disputes such as Garners, Grunwick or Desoutters.

And, if the Law Lords overturn a scandalous judgement made last year by Lord Denning against the NUJ, Prior may tighten the Bill still further by an amendment designed to make sympathetic strikes and blacking action illegal.

### 80% vote

The attack on the closed shop takes the form of insisting that new closed shops can only be established through an 80% vote in a secret ballot, and of a wide-ranging "conscience" clause to enable almost any would-be anti-union scab to seek extensive court damages if he is sacked for refusing to join a union.

There are specific proposals to make unions liable for damages in cases where the



Murray

union presses an employer to sack a non-union member.

In addition the Bill offers unions government cash aid to conduct postal ballots during strikes or internal union elections or decision-making.

Any union leadership that accepted such a pay-off would of course be consciously handing over control of its affairs to the witch-hunters in the press and mass media.

In addition, Prior's Bill abolishes the right of a woman to return to her own job after taking maternity leave, and imposes a series of new requirements on her before she is allowed to return to work at all.

### No obligation

Employers with a payroll of less than six staff are no longer obliged to take back women after maternity leave—and larger firms are now obliged only to offer a "suitable alternative" to her old job.

Other measures strip away the obligation of an employer to

provide the "general level" of terms and conditions for a given job, and introduce new restrictions on union recruitment, on expulsions from unions, and a new series of technical regulations, enforceable by tribunals or the courts.

### Major attack

The Bill is a major attack on trade union rights, but carefully framed in order to hit the workers' movement hardest where the TUC leaders have already shown themselves to be weakest—in the area of picketing rights.

In responding to the new measures Len Murray bleated that they were "wretched, irrelevant, dangerous and unfair".

But rather than threatening concerted trade union action to defeat the Tory government that is proposing them, Murray merely threatened that the TUC would consider withdrawing its own reactionary 'Concordat' proposals, drawn up by union and Labour leaders last winter in a vain bid to stem the mass

# Khomeini struggles to impose dictatorship

Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic' is now gasping desperately for its survival. Opposition to the rule of the 'Revolutionary Council' is spreading daily on a mass scale.

The campaign against US imperialism has not succeeded in uniting the nation behind Khomeini's leadership, while it has opened up new discussions of strategy and orientation among the class confusion of the mass movement which overthrew the Shah.

### State apparatus

Unable to build up a stable state apparatus through which to exercise his dictatorship, Khomeini is now losing hold of the means of control which were formerly at his disposal.

Last week's referendum on the constitution of the 'Islamic Republic' showed the extent of the crisis facing Khomeini's regime from within Iran.

Abstentions were massive, probably in the region of 50% of the total electorate.

In the regions occupied by the oppressed nations within Iran, the rate of abstentions was much higher, as active boycott campaigns were fought through.

### Wrecked

The governor of the south-eastern province of Baluchistan confessed that he would regard a 5% turnout as a 'success'. Polling stations were wrecked and local government offices occupied.

In Kurdistan, abstentions were almost total as the nationalists rejected the last minute concession of clauses supposedly guaranteeing the rights of national minorities.

And in Azerbaijan, mobilisations against the referendum escalated rapidly into a direct conflict with Khomeini's central regime.

Demonstrations led to an occupation of the radio station



Bazargan

in Tabriz, and the broadcasting of demands for an end to the constitutional proposals, the release of some 100 demonstrators arrested over the preceding days and the execution of foreign minister Qotzbadeh for his 'systematic censorship'

and distortions of reality as director-general of radio and television services.

It is to the Ayatollah Shariat-Madari that the movement in Azerbaijan has turned for political leadership.

Shariat-Madari has always maintained a solid base of mass support in his north-western region, where his religious leadership has been unchallenged by Khomeini's power in other areas.

### Attacks

Now living in Qom and subjected to attacks from fanatical Khomeini supporters, Shariat-Madari has never made any secret of his 'moderate' political positions: full support for a state structured on the model of bourgeois parliamentary democracies where the religious leaders would play no direct part in secular affairs.

These positions have of course brought the two

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## FUND

It's going to be a tough fight if we are to raise our £750 fund target by the beginning of the Christmas holidays. But it is something we must fight to achieve. So far we have £325.30 in hand, including a donation of £20 from comrades in Denmark.

But there are many areas we haven't heard from yet. With the days ticking by to Christmas it is essential that a major effort is made to raise the outstanding £424.70.

All donations should be sent to:

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31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR