

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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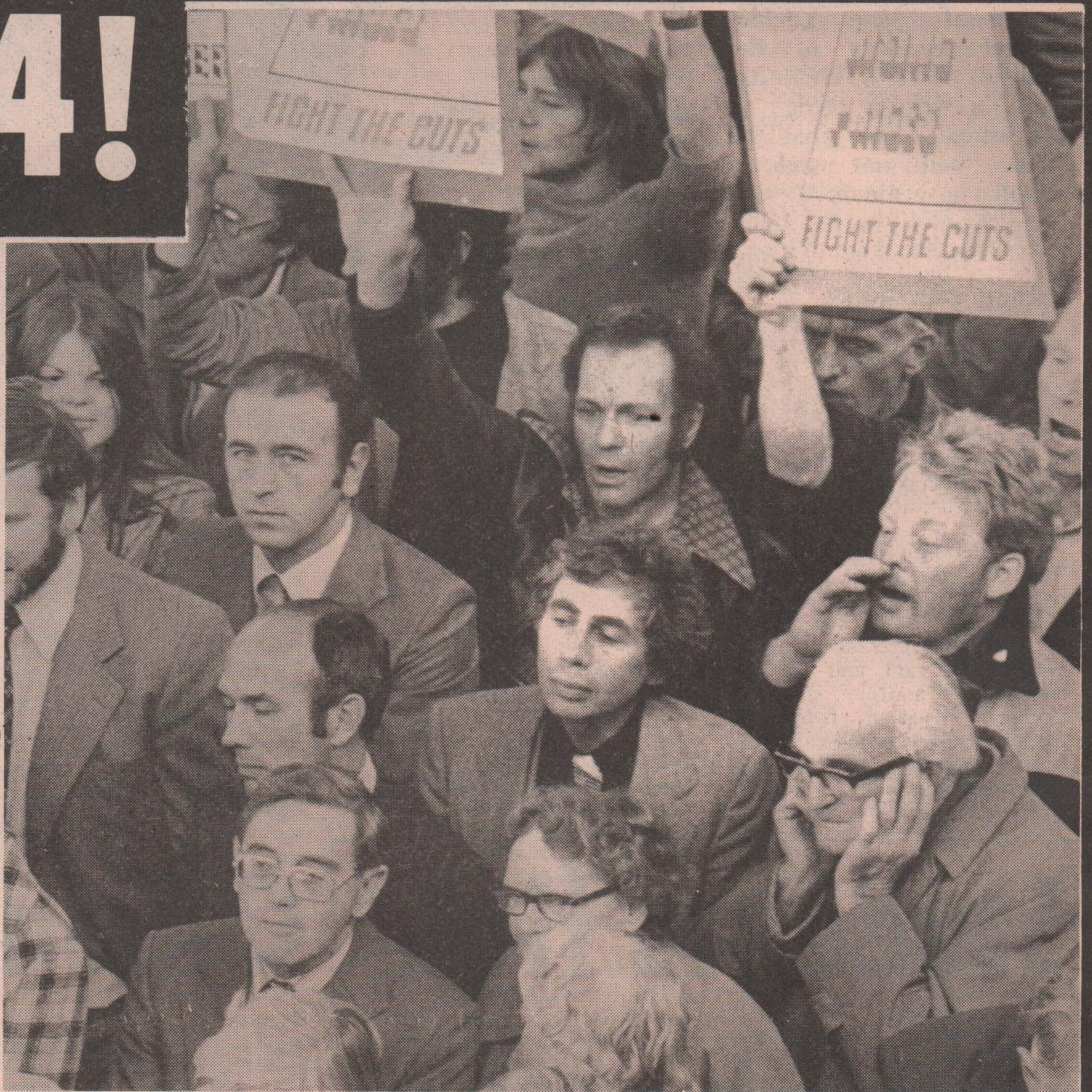
Inside:  
The crisis of  
working class  
leadership

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## ALL OUT MAY 14!

# FORCE A GENERAL STRIKE!

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



The strike action by thousands of workers that will take place on May 14 will be a blow in the eye for Len Murray and his fellow TUC bureaucrats.

Murray argued from the start that the only "action" the TUC wanted on May 14 was a few lunch-time meetings. Indeed these leaders *do not want* to defeat the Tories; they are simply aiming to pressurise the government into a change of policy. Their most ambitious demand is for Thatcher to "open the door of Number Ten" to a suitably obsequious delegation of TUC bureaucrats!

The reality is that these same union leaders who time and again argued in favour of wage controls and against strikes to prevent cuts and closures under Callaghan—supposedly in order to "save the Labour government"—are equally dedicated to saving the *Tories* from the anger of the working class.

Throughout the 14-week steel strike, TUC leaders brushed aside appeals from the Welsh TUC and steel strike committees and actively fought to *prevent* the spread of strike action to other sections, which could have led to a full-scale general strike against the Tories.

Union leaders have blocked struggles in defence of jobs and conditions in British Leyland: and they have sat back tamely as the Tory hatchet men demolish social services, health, housing and education.

With Prior's anti-union Employment Bill now cruising through Parliament, the TUC's verbal opposition to the legislation has been shown up as a fraud by the decision of the AUEW to take Tory cash to run postal ballots.

The TUC leaders are not alone in opposing working class action to bring down the Thatcher government: this is

also the position of James Callaghan and the Labour leadership, who have consistently argued for workers to focus simply on reelecting a Labour government in five years' time!

At the same time Callaghan and his shadow cabinet—right and 'left' wing alike—have *refused* to pledge themselves to reverse the Tory cuts in public spending.

This is because they can see all too clearly that the Tory attacks are driven on by a mounting economic crisis, engulfing capitalism at home and abroad. The last Labour government responded to this same crisis with a succession of Tory policies: cuts, closures, wage controls and mass unemployment—the very policies that opened the door for a Thatcher election victory last May.

They know they would do just the same again. They would do the same because they face the *same* stark choice: either attempt to manage and 'reform' a bankrupt and decaying anarchic capitalist economy, or take steps to mobilise the working class in action to overthrow capitalism and establish a planned socialist economy.

As a *reformist* leadership, tied hand and foot to capitalism, there is no doubt as to the choice of the Labour and TUC bureaucracy: this is why they are sacrificing the interests of the working class to the interests of private employers.

The Tories could be defeated. The working class, given leadership, has the power to bring production to a halt and drive Thatcher from office.

What scares Callaghan and Murray is that feeling this same power would give workers the confidence to drive out their present right wing leaders, test out those who posture as "socialists", and move forward to the establishment of a genuine *workers government* prepared to implement socialist policies.

That is why Murray wanted only lunchtime stoppages. And that is why even while fighting in each area to develop action against the Tory attack, we raise the demand on the TUC leaders to call a General Strike to bring down the Tories. Only the exposure of the existing treacherous leaders of the working class, linked to the construction of a principled revolutionary leadership, can offer a way forward to the working class.

## Print lock-out: Call out Fleet Street!

The ranks of the National Graphical Association have been shocked back into action 21 years after the last national stoppage in the provinces.

The national lockout declared by managements from the British Printing Industries Federation and the Newspaper Society has unleashed a militancy that they had not expected from the rank and file of the membership.

From Carlisle to Wolverhampton to Brighton printers have been struggling to prevent scab newspapers being taken

through their pickets. In other centres they have become increasingly angry at even small free distribution 'fact sheets' produced by managements as a propaganda weapon against the NGA.

For the past 20 years printers have seen their skills stripped away. They have seen membership slump as thousands of jobs have gone to the wall—largely without a struggle.

### Isolated

The battles of Fleet Street have been reflected in only isolated struggles in the

provinces.

But the effect of 21 years peaceful coexistence have taken their toll and in many centres pickets have not gone up, other sections of workers have been told to continue reporting for work and chapels have failed to link up their struggles.

The managements have been meeting divisions within their own ranks. Some senior officers of the BPIF have not locked out their own print shops, fearful of the effects of the 2,000 or so interim settlements that rival managements have signed.

The toughest stand has been taken by the Newspaper Society which has long been, among the

vanguard of employers federations committed to a decisive blow against trade union organisation.

### Suspended

The lockout was expected to reveal a deep division between the union leadership, which had called a programme of selective action against the employers, and the membership—which the employers calculated was ready to settle.

Minorities of NUJ chapels are now either suspended or refusing to cross picket lines in Carlisle, Wolverhampton, the

Shropshire Star, and Oxford. At Newbury, NUJ members have refused to work on any scab paper but have not been suspended.

Slade has given support and now has more members suspended for refusing to cooperate with scabbing than it has ever had on its own account.

But the biggest blow against the NGA membership has come from within the trade union ranks.

NATSOPA and SOGAT both submitted joint claims with the NGA and then advised their members to settle.

Now Bill Keys has issued a statement that if the NGA win

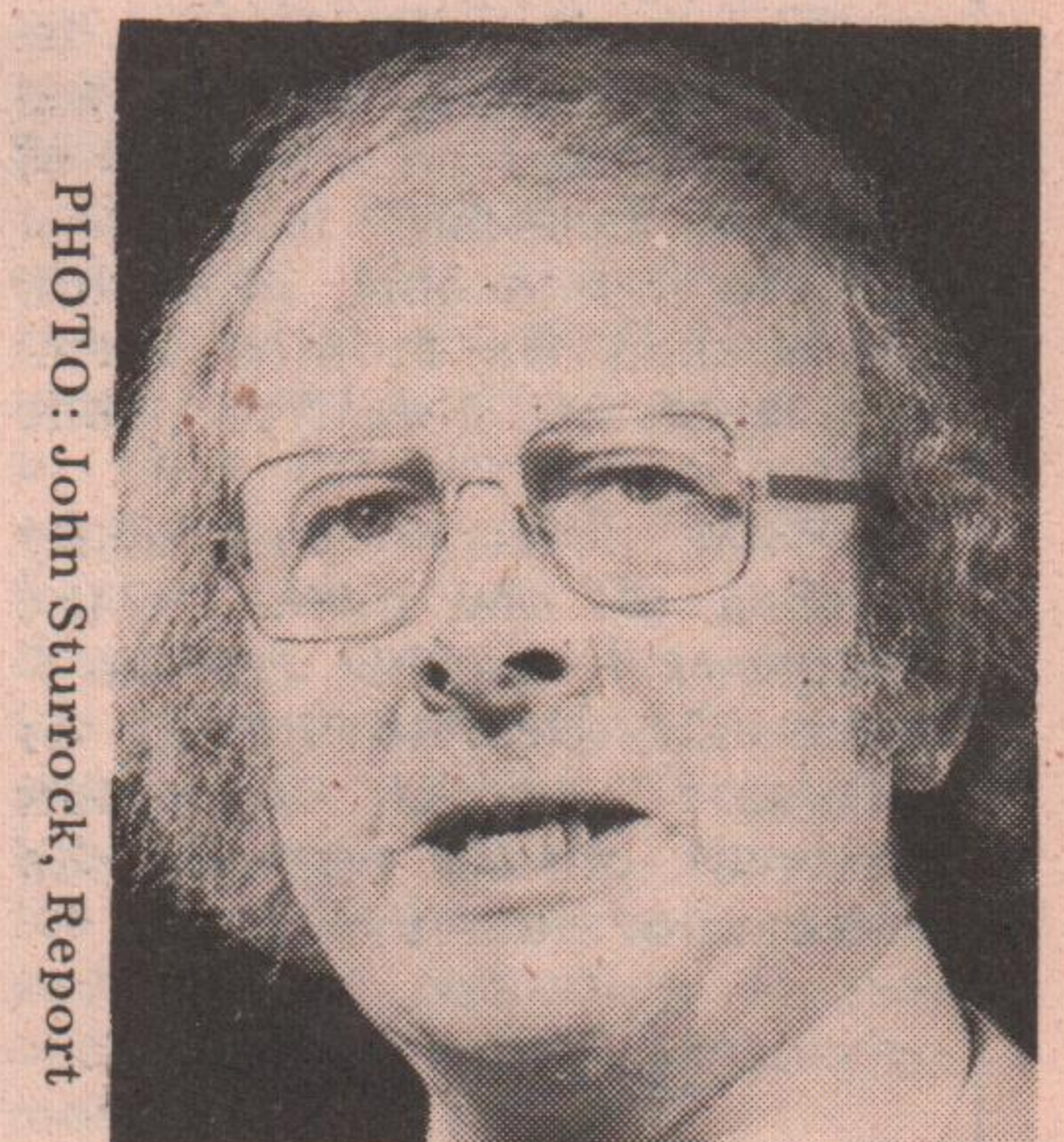


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report  
NGA leader Joe Wade the £80 minimum earnings claim SOGAT will immediately submit a differential claim and

Continued p.11, col.6



# Bolivian TUC leader signs deal with army chiefs

In what must surely be one of the most explicit acts of rank treason in the post-war history of the workers' movement, Juan Lechin, general secretary of the Bolivian COB (TUC), has made a written pledge to the armed forces that the COB "will not seek a socialist government."

In return for this the armed forces have agreed not to stage a coup to oust the bourgeois regime of Lidia Gueiler.

This infamous pact far surpasses any other betrayals forged by the wretched Lechin who, in his 35-year career as a leading bureaucrat of one of the most militant proletarian forces of the world, has established a record that makes his European counterparts appear as mere novices.

The decision to capitulate on this, the central programmatic issue of the COB since its foundation in 1952, was taken without any reference whatsoever to the rank and file and marks yet another stage in Lechin's isolation from the working class, a process that has been accelerating since the attempted coup by Colonel Alberto Natusch last November.



Soldiers fire on crowds in La Paz

Then Lechin was forced to call a general strike but managed to call it off after eleven days in favour of negotiations between the 'democratic sectors' (i.e. the bourgeois political parties) and the rebel soldiers.

However, the miners union (FSTMB) refused to heed the call to return to work, condemned the parliament as 'anti-worker' and continued their strike, which resulted in the removal of Natusch five

days later. Since then the weakling, unelected Gueiler government has lived in daily crisis and constant threat of another 'hard-line' coup.

By Christmas Natusch's



senior colleagues had barged their way back to senior posts, twice openly staging preparations for a takeover.

The new Commander in Chief, General Luis Garcia Meza a close ally of Natusch, was said late last week to be ready to launch "a real pinochetazo" and far supercede the 300 deaths resulting from the November coup when he was army commander.

Garcia's clique held back because of the lack of 'international (i.e. US) support' but they have put great effort into reinforcing the military-peasant pact that kept the army in power for most of the 1960s.

This was considered an absolute necessity in view of the growing radicalisation of the peasantry.

Last Monday the senior commander decided the best strategy would be to wait until 6 August, the date of the inauguration of the new president following the June elections, before taking power.

Rank and file organisation against the coup in the first four months of the year has been extensive and taken the form of the establishment of 'Committees in Defence of Democracy' throughout the country.

These committees have been set up to defend the constitutional democracy of the bourgeois parties but they pose a real threat to imperialism since they are organised on the basis of strike action, blockades and active physical resistance.

Accordingly, on the same day as Garcia and his cronies were reviewing the calendar for the best date to strike, the new US ambassador in La Paz, Marvin Weissman, had a private meeting with Lechin to try and find an acceptable compromise. There is no doubt that he got it.

By taking this step Lechin has not only suppressed the essence of the COB programme, he has also shown the military that the Bolivian working class is led by people ready to go to any length to avoid a confrontation—the 'gorillas' of the Miraflores barracks could not have hoped for better encouragement to take to their tanks.

Garcia made this absolutely clear when he went on to state blandly that 'civilians are incapable of ruling Bolivia'.

Of course the US and Gueiler are overjoyed at this unexpected bonus for it was only a few weeks ago that the biggest workers demonstration seen in La Paz since the 1952 Revolution made a mass protest at the murder of Luis Espinal, the editor of the left-wing paper *Aqui*, by Garcia's death squad.

The strength of this mobilisation had impressed the army and frightened the bourgeois politicians.

It should also have served as a warning to Lechin that the working class will not suffer traitors.

As author of this flagrant capitulation, as a time-serving ally of the bourgeoisie and collaborator in the imperialist designs for "constitutional democracy" Lechin must be purged from the COB and the FSTMB along with all his lackeys.

The interests of the proletariat are directly opposed to those of bourgeois democracy and the working class must build its offensive against the forces of the right on the basis of a revolutionary programme that rejects any proposition of a popular front with the capitalists which, in whatever guise, is the quickest and surest road to a massive and bloody defeat.

## Students fight French racist laws

During the last week university campuses in France have been turned into a battle ground against the racist laws recently introduced by the Giscard government.

In mid-January, changes to existing immigration laws, drawn up by Christian Bonnet (the Minister of the Interior) were enacted, giving effect that anyone considered to constitute a 'threat to public order' could be refused entry to French territory and that anyone arrested in France who was considered a public threat or whose papers were for any of a number of reasons 'irregular' could be deported.

Having gone this far the state, in the form of the Projet Stolern, is now tightening up organisationally on immigration by replacing the existing Residence Permits and Work Permits by a single card.

This card will have to be renewed every year and renewal can be refused on a number of grounds including insufficient or irregular income, ill health, more than six months unemployment, and threat to public order.

What has particularly sparked off the revolt on the campuses is another law, however, the Decree Imbert of February which imposes stringent criteria on who can and cannot study in France.

### Hunger strike

In its effects it is similar to the Tory increases in fees for overseas students in Britain.

Universities at Grenoble, Caen, Rennes, Lyon, Nice and Pans-Jussieu are particularly affected. At Lyon 29 students,

most of them from overseas, are staging a hunger strike around the demand 'repeal of the Bonnet and Imbert laws'.

A move to coordinate these actions has now been made by students at Grenoble.

Coinciding, as they do, with strike action by lecturers assistants over job security, these actions have paralysed the universities concerned.

On top of the three laws above, the spring session of the French parliament has before it further proposed measures, the Projet Ornano, relating to the tenement blocks where the majority of migrant workers live.

### Racist wardens

For years these have been a site of struggle, where the residents, organised into their own residents' committees, have been fighting for decent living conditions and security of tenure against the large companies that own the tenements, and their racist wardens.

Ornano is seeking to strengthen the hand of the tenement owners, through legislation, against the residents' committees.

The Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the bureaucrats of the main trade unions of course offer no lead whatsoever in these struggles.

On the contrary, at every twist and turn they do all they can to derail the opposition, placing themselves firmly on the side of immigration controls.

The vital thing now is for these struggles to be linked through joint action committees and for the fight for supporting strike action to be taken up in confrontation with the bureaucracy.

## Chilean unions call for help

### Open Letter from CODES (Chilean Committee for Trade Union Rights).

The CODES wishes to draw your attention to the beginnings of a fierce repression in the Chilean universities.

The students of the State Technical University (UTE) have been holding mass meetings and electing their delegates in a democratic way over a considerable period.

### Intimidation

The university authorities appointed by the dictatorship have refused to recognise student leaders of the student centres.

From the start these students have been the target of all kinds of intimidation by the 'security services' of the above university.

\*Towards the end of October the student centres decided to organise a 'cultural week'. The authorities forbade the holding of these sessions, denied them access to the university and threatened with expulsion all students who attended them.

\*Despite these threats and intimidation, the attendance figure was close to 400, something which reflects the indomitable will of the students to seize their rights.

\*The authorities reacted by suspending Lia Rojas and Ricardo Campos (two Student Centre leaders), for six months despite repeatedly declaring themselves in favour of discussion. 'Anonymous' pamphlets threatening another two student leaders have also been circulated.

\*This situation has prompted CODES to call on the general public and all democratic and student organisations to solidarise with the struggle of the students for their legitimate rights and demand that the decree of November 19 which



Pinochet

arbitrarily suspended the two students be rescinded. The public should also be alert to the question of the safety of student leaders.

CODES-France Write to: Senor Eugenio Reyes Tastest, Rector de la Universidad Tecnica del Estado (UTE), Santiago, Chile.

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## Tunisia gets new PM

President Bourguiba's ministerial reshuffle in Tunisia and the appointment of a new prime minister Mohamed Mzali have relaxed momentarily the threat of instability resulting from the power vacuum created by the sudden ousting of Medi Noura—prime minister for the last decade—incapacitated by a stroke.

These new appointments and the conditional freeing of eight trade union leaders imprisoned since the general strike of 1978 have been hailed by Western observers as signs of an impending

'liberalisation' of the regime and has mainly served to clean up Bourguiba's image abroad.

### Facade

But the 'liberal' facade is less than skin deep. The recent execution of 14 "mercenaries" who took part in the Libyan-backed raid on Gafsa has brought about several condemnations of the regime by western humanists and liberals and proved extremely embarrassing for Bourguiba's apologists.

His 'progressive' face can only be preserved in the absence of serious political opposition. The scope for such public relations work is therefore extremely limited.



INTERNATIONAL

# EMPLOYERS BALE OUT OF NICARAGUAN JUNTA

Renewed imperialist threats and the upsurge in political mobilisation throughout Central America as well as in Nicaragua itself have obliged the petty bourgeois FSLN rapidly to consolidate its political control in Nicaragua.

This has led to the first major schism in the FSLN's alliance with the bourgeoisie.

Last week Alfonso Robelo, the millionaire member of the ruling Junta resigned his post, rapidly following in the footsteps of ageing conservative figurehead Violetta Chamorro.

Chamorro left to set up house in Panama; but Robelo intends to continue the political defence of the domestic capital through his Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) which has remained practically dominant since its leader's miraculous conversion to 'sandinismo' in the early months of the revolution.

Robelo's exasperation with the youthful guerrillas reached its peak when the MDN was given only one seat on the 47-seat Council of State, Nicaragua's new unelected legislature which 'came into being' on 4 May.

The FSLN has taken only six seats for itself—but has packed the new parliament with



Robelo and Chamorro with FSLN's Ramirez and Panamanian President Royo

nominees from the Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS's).

There can be little doubt that the Council will tow the line of Sandinista leaders Ramirez, Borge, Hassan,

Wheelock and others.

Robelo, who has recently stopped selling his extensive capital holdings and become increasingly vociferous in defence of 'enterprise', also accused the FSLN of using the 180,000 workers involved in the literacy campaign to spread its propaganda throughout the countryside.

There is no doubt that, following the example of Cuba (which has heavily supported the campaign), the FSLN leadership is using the literacy 'Crusade' as a major political weapon both to strengthen its presence in the disparate and still largely uncontrolled peasantry (which continue to derive its leadership principally from the priesthood since there is a vast shortage of rural administrators) and to discipline and militarise the youths who have gone to teach them to read and write.

But Robelo's departure was not spurred by mere individual whim. It comes at a time when the domestic bourgeoisie, encouraged by US imperialism, is increasingly coming into conflict with the Sandinista apparatus.

the Nicaraguan capitalists' organisation, is pushing the Inter-American Press Association to take up the case as a means of eliciting greater support from Washington.

The Sandinistas are not, however, only exerting pressure on the bourgeoisie.

They have been escalating their attacks on independent working class organisations to an equal degree, and in a manner typical of a petty bourgeois bonapartist regime desperately attempting to hold imperialist capital in check while at the same time suppressing mobilisation for full social revolution.

## Closed down

At first the attacks on independent organisation were directed largely against the Maoist Frente Obrero (FO), the paper of which, *El Pueblo*, was closed down and members arrested for being 'counter-revolutionary'.

The first phase of repression came last October, the second this March when members of FO were accused of being CIA-backed.

Now similar charges are being made against members of the Communist Party, and its union front—Central de Accion y Unidad Sindical (CAUS)—more than a score of arrests have been made and concerted efforts are being made to finish off CAUS for good.

There is no doubt that the CIA are alive and overworked in Managua and that they are endeavouring to divide the workers' movement.

But the charge of aiding imperialism is becoming little more than a formal gesture to cover over suppression of the working class.

The Stalinists in Nicaragua have a record no better than that of their counterparts throughout the world, but the CAUS-led strike of 2,000 factory workers for a pay rise last month reflects the very real pressure on the regime from the working class.

The FO itself, although small and under constant threat from the FSLN, has led an important sugar workers' strike and even the Sandinista-sponsored peasant union (ATC) held a major demonstration to demand formal expropriation of land 'intervened' after the overthrow of Somoza.

In response to this the FSLN is speeding up its plans to impose direct controls on the unions, using the CST to isolate independent bodies.

Dockers, sugar and banana workers have recently been integrated into the CST and agreement has been made to integrate further confederations, those previously attached to the Christian Democrats and the imperialist ORIT, to form a single body—Unidad Sindical.

The FSLN has adopted a foreign policy that closely mirrors its domestic oscillations.

The frantic search for financial aid for the crippled economy has entailed simultaneous missions to imperialist and workers' states.

'Fraternal relations' with Cuba have been matched by encouragement of Mexican and Venezuelan overtures to offer oil concessions.

This pragmatism is very much in the same vein as that practised by the FSLN in its search for allies before the overthrow of Somoza.

But while the leadership may be at one over this 'necessary pluralism' it is coming under considerable pressure from the FSLN rank and file itself to provide material aid to anti-imperialist struggles in Central America, particularly El Salvador.

Borge has been obliged to reprimand members of the Sandinista army for leaving the country to fight alongside the Salvadorean government to condemn a major 'international communist conspiracy' and further sour relations between Managua and Washington.

Yet Borge has restricted himself to 'warning' the US about intervention in El Salvador—clearly insufficient action even for his own troops.

It is clear that the course of events in Nicaragua is closely bound up with the struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala in particular.

But it is also directly determined by Carter's cold war policies as imperialism searches desperately for means to maintain its offensive.

The departure of Vance may well allow the 'hawks' of the Pentagon more space for their designs in Central America. But this will force the bonapartist FSLN regime into an increasingly tight position from which it will be incapable of extracting itself.

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## No sowing

But the cotton and coffee growers have deliberately held back from sowing in March and April, and there have been great shortages of beans, eggs and meat, with many traders indulging in speculation.

A major industrial dispute has developed in *La Prensa*, the liberal daily owned by the Chamorro family, who have fined the pro-FSLN business manager with the result that the workers came out in demand of his reinstatement.

The dispute is politically important since the bourgeoisie is making it an issue of 'freedom of expression' and COSEP,

# Letter: Don't get us wrong!

Dear Comrade Editor,

As authors of the document on the rebuilding of the Fourth International referred to in the report on the WSL conference in SP 194, we feel that a number of false impressions could be created by the brevity of the report and its consequently misleading presentation of our positions.

In the first place, we should point out that since the document was not voted on, nor was it the intention of the authors that it should be, then there was no test as to whether it only had the support of 'a small minority of comrades'.

Our purpose was to direct the movement towards a consideration of the difficulties in our past positions, many of which we have ourselves been directly responsible for formulating.

The second false impression which could be taken from the SP summary is that our purpose was to precipitate an immediate and ill-conceived process of fusion with the forces of the Parity Commission. We trust that those outside our ranks will not be deceived into the notion

that there is a section of the WSL which completely ignores the weaknesses and errors of the positions of the OCFI, the LTT and the Bolshevik Faction!

What we were aiming at was to provoke a long hard look at the attitude we in the WSL must develop towards the world Trotskyist movement and its history.

We consider that we must look at the consequences of the overt degeneration of many of the fragments of the former International Committee. It is necessary for us to draw some conclusions from the evident way in which the WRP is now manipulated by the forces of the state and/or the extreme right in its attacks on the revolutionary movement, and from how the Spartacists have transferred to workers picket lines their dangerous activities as provocateurs.

It is no longer possible for us in the WSL, in our view, to take any kind of 'linear' view of the development of the world Trotskyist movement, when the most 'Pabloite' positions today are taken by

those who had in the past opposed them, in the WRP, the Spartacists and the American SWP.

Our attitude towards the world Trotskyist movement must begin not with the attitude of carping criticism so beloved by the sectarian ranters, but with an acknowledgement of the strengths of organisations with which we may nevertheless retain important differences.

Thus we must frankly assert the great achievement of the USFI, and *nobody else*, in building an international Trotskyist movement. We must accept the main questions of the development of the Fourth International, including the fight against Pabloism, takes place at this time in and between the Parity Commission and the USFI.

Only by discussing the implications of these incontrovertible facts can we in the WSL begin to understand, for example, the entirely principled behaviour of comrade Pat Hickey and other IMG members in the current Leyland struggle and the conscious wrecking antics of the

Spartacists.

Only by beginning a discussion in our movement of the wider implications of the facts of the development of world Trotskyism will it be possible for the WSL to avoid the sectarian pitfalls to which we have to some extent succumbed in the past.

We remain entirely convinced that the enormous strengths of the WSL and its unparalleled and proven ability to fight for leadership in the working class will best be further developed in such a discussion. Only in this way can the great gains flowing from the setting up of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee be developed into a major step in the resolution of the crisis of the world Trotskyist movement.

Yours fraternally,  
William Booth  
John Mahon

# Voters reject Tory cuts

Widespread Labour gains in last week's local authority elections amount to clear evidence of the anti-Tory mood in the working class, and the widespread opposition to the Thatcher government's cuts in public spending.

The swing to Labour compared with last May's General Election was some 5% on a 40% poll—but even this would be enough to return a Labour government in a general election with a 10-20 seat majority in Parliament.

Major setbacks for the Tories included loss to Labour of control in Leeds—a showpiece city of swingeing Tory cuts—Birmingham, Glasgow and Aberdeen. Worcester council went Labour for the first time ever:

and even the gerrymandered Bradford council saw Labour take control.

In many instances the vote amounted to an explicit rejection of the Tory policy pressed by Environment Secretary Heseltine—of cutting spending in order to hold down rates.

In Preston the Tory council had actually cut the rates—only to be thrown out of office. In Newcastle, and other areas even huge Labour rate increases announced during the campaign failed to deter solid Labour support.

But it is quite clear that the predominant vote was for social services and education and against the Tory cuts rather than an endorsement of Labour's policy of jacking up the rates and rents paid by the working class.

The next few months will be

a test of the willingness of the newly elected Labour councillors to put their anti-cuts words into practice in conflict with a Tory government hell-bent on carrying through a demolition of social services.

## Battle plans

Despite Tory press reports of Labour "drawing up battle plans", the basic line of resistance to cuts "within the law" will remain unchanged—and it is a line which avoids the necessary full-scale confrontation with the Thatcher government.

Trade unionists and Labour Party members must not ease up on the fight. The demands "No cuts!" "No rate and rent increases" "Bring down the Tories" must be struggled for as hard as ever against Labour

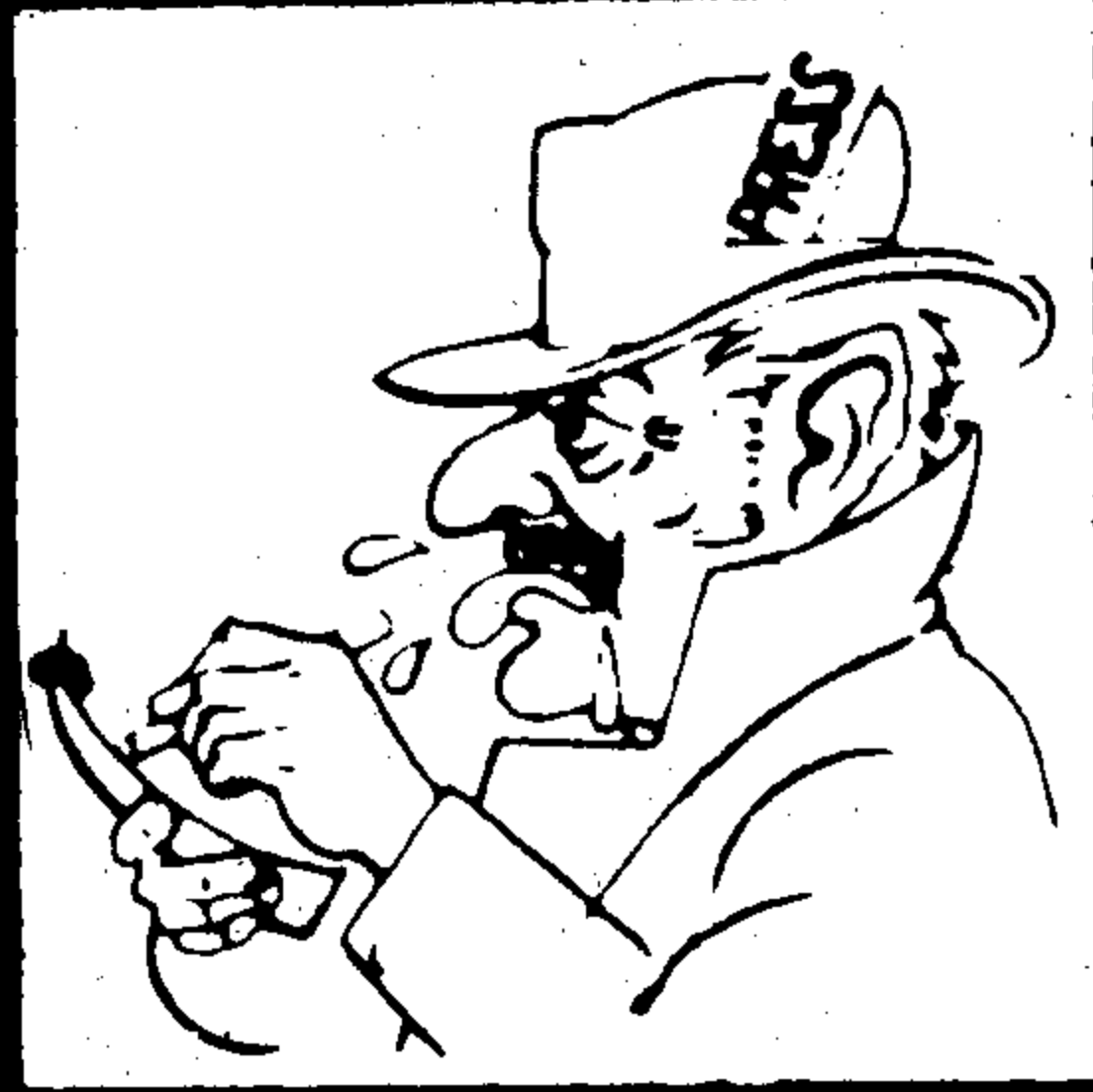


Thatcher

councils which, if left to their own devices, will undoubtedly seek a quiet life by simply placing the bill for maintaining even existing inadequate services squarely on the backs of the working class.

# ... put Labour on the spot

## PRESS GANG



A tough week for figure-heads. The Dutch royal family handed over the baton from mother to daughter as police fought a pitched battle with some of Amsterdam's thousands of home'less outside.

Meanwhile Queen Elizabeth—who went to Switzerland "because she has not been here before" in the words of her Press Officer—was whisked past the obedient masses with a heavy police escort, complaining that she was being driven too fast to receive her proper tributes.

This has not been good copy for Fleet Street. Monarchs are supposed to be safe reliable pages of turgid homage—a proof that the masses still have proper respect for authority.

The *Daily Mirror* in a fit of daring turned John Pilger loose on the Queen's tour of Switzerland. Complete with jokey picture captions ("Swiss role: The Queen inspects the ever-ready Army of Switzerland") Pilger poked fun at the spectacle.

"The Swiss have made her feel at home. There are dogs and horses here, too, and a seeming-

ly endless supply of nodding dignitaries with sweaty hands outstretched and over dressed wives at the ready for propulsion into the Royal presence.

"Wisely she has brought the Duke who is somehow able to show interest in snow and mountains and tell jokes in German and is obviously delighted to be in a country which he would probably describe as having its finger well and truly out.

"The last strike was 35 years ago and much of the population seems to be in permanent training for a Duke of Edinburgh Award, or war."

But Pilger sticks to safe ground, being more cutting about the Swiss than their parasitic visitors.

The *Telegraph* published a picture of a 'British Army out of Ireland' banner being unfurled in front of the Queen and complained that over zealous police and circling helicopters had "added intensity to what is otherwise a pleasant visit to a nice country".

A personal piece by Colin Welch in the *Telegraph* took up the cudgels on behalf of Queen Beatrix of Holland.

He expressed 'peculiar horror' at the riots and put it

down to the folly of monarchs abdicating at all.

He mourned the fact that: "Amsterdam was to a dangerous extent handed over to scruffy, dirty rabble, disaffected youth, to a not exactly retiring or over gentle police force and to the media."

His conclusion (that monarchs should remain decently old fashioned and Orange) is shared by the *Telegraph's* leader writer, who described the response to both royal events as "ugly dismaying pimples".

"Who are these pink and purple haired monsters with Apache hair cuts who have sprung up amongst us? . . . There appears to be a sort of Yobintern which assembles various nasties and then moves them, by the chara' load, to the point of attack.

"The response we should give is no response at all. They are not misunderstood. They are the least deprived people in the world."

The *Telegraph* closes, as all good articles on monarchs should, on appeals for more authority. Anti-royalism sounds frighteningly like a death knell to its tender ears.

## Socialist elected in Leeds victory

On what basis are you campaigning in the local elections in Leeds?

I seconded the resolution moved by Neil Taggart calling upon the Labour Group on the council to oppose all cuts. I made clear in my seconding speech that I also opposed rate rises. From this resolution came the campaign in the District Labour Party against the cuts.

What have the cuts been like in Leeds?

Leeds has the worst library facilities, the worst social services and the lowest education expenditure per head of the major local authorities. Lord Bellwin has already carried out the policies which other local authorities are beginning to carry out.

Now the Labour Party is pledged to expand social services and education.

In particular it is pledged to provide nursery education places on demand and a massive expansion of day care facilities which are at the moment only available to the most deprived families. We also intend to pour more money to help the inner city areas and the elderly.

Where is the money going to come from?

Leeds has received rather more money from central government than expected and has a very low level of services. George Mudie, the leader of the

Socialist Press supporter GARTH FRANKLAND has just been elected Labour councillor for Chapel Allerton ward in Leeds along with Cedric Clarke and Neil Taggart.

He spoke to us just before the elections.

Labour Group expects to be able to carry out his pledges without too much conflict.

But I think that with the results of Clegg and the rapidly rising inflation it will be impossible to achieve even the most modest expansion without enormous clashes with central Tory government. The new laws the Tories are bringing in to restrict local government will be used against us.

Central therefore to our local defence must be a struggle against the Tory government and for its removal.

What is the position of the other candidates to your above position?

Both Neil and Cedric have said that they are determined that the present position in Leeds is reversed—and if it means a fight for the removal of the Tory government so be it.

What is the position of the Tories in Leeds?

They have gone wild because they are due to lose power. They have issued a leaflet accusing the Labour Party of being full of Marxists and Communists.

May Sexton, a former councillor and a former supporter of the Anglo-Rhodesian Society has called for the expansion of Chapletown Police Station to deal with the "problems" in our area especially in the lower end of the ward which is a heavily mixed area.

What is the position of other 'left' organisations?

The Communist Party have stood a candidate against us but fail to put forward any programme for expansion or how to deal with the Tories.

A group called Resistance has put up some candidates in other areas of Leeds fighting against the cuts and for a sliding scale of public expenditure—but they too fail to present a policy against central government.

The political division came out clearly at a recent cuts conference in Leeds called by NALGO and the Trades Council.

The International Marxist Group defended a formulation in the main resolution which called for 'occupations to stop and delay closures'. The CP and the IMG helped to defeat an amendment which I supported to delete the words 'and delay'.

# Special Conference: Callaghan's safety valve

Under pressure from Labour and trade union activists to step up the fight against the Tories, Labour's NEC has instead decided to stage a one-day rally on 31 May under the misleading title of a "Special Conference".

This "Conference" will be confronted with a flabby and largely meaningless resolution clearly drawn up by the NEC 'lefts' and eagerly endorsed by Callaghan.

No amendments or counter-resolutions will be allowed.

As *Labour Weekly* has admitted, the resolution, for all its superficial puffs of anti-capitalist rhetoric:

"contains no new policies, though some areas are toughened."

The essential unanimity between the right wing Callaghan leadership and his supposed 'left' wing opponents on the NEC has been exposed in a joint statement based not upon socialist policies but upon

the reform and expansion of capitalism.

\*After five years of mass unemployment under Wilson/Callaghan governments, the resolution hypocritically proclaims that "the restoration and maintenance of full employment" is "the highest priority for the next Labour government".

\*After the ignominious collapse of the price controls introduced under Wilson, it pledges once again to introduce "a comprehensive and powerful system of price controls".

\*While talking gamely of

"international agreement" and of peace, the resolution nails its colours to the mast of nationalist trade war and class collaboration with a pledge "not to allow manufactured imports to continue to destroy our [!] industries and jobs."

\*It calls for "extending public ownership and planning the economy", while—with the exception of North Sea Oil and sections "hived off" by the Tories—studiously avoiding any pledge to actually nationalise major industries or the banks. Instead it restricts itself to seeking a "significant public

stake—and a degree of control" over various industrial sectors. This amounts to little more than further Callaghan/Wilson-style government cash handouts to private employers.

\*And in a section headed "Policy for Peace", the resolution, tongue in cheek, condemns the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan with a ringing and hypocritical declaration of "universal respect for the rights of all peoples and self-determination"—a "universal" respect which of course successive Labour leaderships and governments have refused to extend to the Irish

people in their ongoing struggle for national liberation.

As an exercise in tub-thumping, whistle blowing and anti-Toryism the Special Conference will undoubtedly prove a success for the Labour leadership, whose document will inevitably be endorsed.

But, as the NEC has already decided, as a basis for hammering out a coherent socialist policy for full-scale mobilisation to bring down the Tory government it is a non-starter.

Far from offering "Peace, Jobs and Freedom" to the working class, the conference

resolution expresses the desire of Labour's leadership to preserve their own peaceful co-existence with capitalism, their own well-heeled and influential jobs and their own freedom to flout the wishes and ignore the interests of their rank and file in successive treacherous social democratic governments.

The absence of the slightest challenge to such policies from the "socialists" on Labour's NEC confirms that a constituent alternative to Callaghan can only be developed in the fight for a revolutionary leadership in the workers' movement.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

# PREPARE TO BRING DOWN THE TORIES!



## The Working Class and its Leadership.

### 1. Wages

For all the Tory attacks and plans, the most powerful factor dividing and weakening the working class is the treachery of its own trade union and Labour leaders.

Initially under the guise of "saving the Labour government", and now masked by a smokescreen of anti-Tory demagoguery, these leaders have worked unceasingly to hold back and isolate struggles that have erupted.

Their success in this has been greater in some respects than in others. On wages, for instance, the Thatcher government came to office during a comparative "lull" on pay after the winter's struggles had established 10-15% as the "going rate" for settlements.

PHOTO: Andrew Wiaard, Report



It was not until the autumn of 1979, therefore, that the issue of wages came to the fore, bearing all the hallmarks of last year's confrontation.

Those employers able to pay up set out to avoid a repeat of those bitter strikes by offering substantial increases before strike action raised its head.

Thus in Fords a 28% settlement was reached; NUJ members received a record-breaking 14.5%; miners achieved a 22% deal and local authority manual workers have settled for 13½%, all without strikes. In Vauxhall, only the Ellesmere Port plant resisted a 13%-with-strings offer and, isolated, were eventually forced back to work.

Meanwhile the stand by the Engineering Employers Federation against a Confed claim including the demand for a 35-hour week began to crumble in the face of the solid response to the inadequate and partial action that was called by the leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Though the eventual settlement was far short of what could have been won through all-out action, the breakthrough on hours, the extra days of holiday and the increase in basic rates mark a significant step forward by engineering workers, which has deepened the crisis of the employers both in Britain and internationally.

Elsewhere, however, a few employers have taken a more pugnacious stand. In particular, Peugeot, the new owners of the Talbot/Chrysler concern, sat out a prolonged pay strike by workers at Stoke and Ryton, while union leaders sabotaged blacking action. The result was a substantial defeat for the Chrysler workers, who eventually returned for the original offer of only 5%—followed up by a management offensive on union rights and conditions.

In BL, too, management, pleading bankruptcy, has refused to offer more than 5% to manual workers (10% to

## 2. The crisis of leadership

This is the second and final section of the document on British Perspectives that was adopted at the Fourth Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League on April 4-6 1980. For reasons of space a number of the final sections of the document relating to the tasks of the WSL in the next year have been omitted from this published version.

skilled men)—tied to a 92-page package of strings.

This "offer", which could have been thrown out at once by mass meetings throughout the corporation has been the subject of three months of delays and prevarication by right wing union negotiators, who cannot decide whether they are more afraid of a strike or of the hostility they would provoke by accepting the deal.

Their decision to call a ballot on the offer under management-dictated terms is an elaborate means of passing the buck for their betrayal back to the workers on the shop floor, and of isolating the striking steelworkers.

And of course in the steel industry the derisory 2% pay offer tabled by BSC is little

more than a provocation designed to test out the position of the right wing steel leaders.

While Bill Sirs, Hector Smith and Co. have consistently accepted BSC's calls to restore profitability, they have not been able to carry their policies of object class collaboration into the rank and file.

The Tory/BSC combined assault on jobs and living standards has provoked a surge of militancy which now threatens to escape the control of the bureaucracy, and which we are fighting to develop towards the call for a general strike to bring down the Tory government.

### 2. Jobs

Indeed it is the spillover in steel from the wages issue to jobs which is the most embarrassing and frightening for the

trade union bureaucracy, for it is on the jobs front that they have so far been most successful in inhibiting struggles.

The reason is clear: it is in general possible through simple trade union struggle to force concessions on wages. But when an employer insists that he must axe jobs in order to survive, or when a government slashes jobs in the public sector, the confrontation takes a much sharper form.

To challenge an employer's "right" to sack workers is effectively to challenge his "right" to own the means of production; to call for the retention of the full labour force by a crisis-

ridden firm is effectively to embark—willy-nilly—on a fight for the sliding scale of hours in which the work available is divided between the whole workforce.

Such a struggle is outside the scope of reformist union leaders, but, as a necessary demand which provides a means of bridging the gap from today's consciousness of the working class to the consciousness required for socialist revolution, it forms part of the programme of transitional demands fought for by Marxists.

We call for a conscious policy of work-sharing on full pay, backed up by the occupation of threatened plants or public service facilities, and the opening of their books to elected trade union committees in order openly to challenge the "rights" of the employers, and turn this struggle towards suppliers, bankers and distributors.

For the union bureaucracy the case is very different. They have sacrificed thousands of their members' jobs rather than wage any such struggle against the capitalist class or the government.

Civil service union leaders have sat back and isolated even the spontaneous struggles that have opposed cuts in manpower and services. In the shipyards, Confed leaders have actively cooperated with sackings and closures, arguing that they offer the only way of defending any jobs.

In BL the Confed went even further and campaigned alongside Michael Edwards, the Tory leaders and the press for a "yes" vote to 25,000 sackings and speed-up on the shop floor. In the steel industry ISTC

and Blastfurnacemen's leaders have been at the forefront of agreements for cuts and closures right up to the present strike. Yet the willingness of workers at Corby and Shotton to fight for their jobs is indicated by their militant role in the strike.

Nor has it been only officials that have done the dirty work: at Dunlop (Speke) TGWU chairman Stan Pemberton and the "Action Committee" played the key role in sabotaging the jobs fight, and running instead a circus of gimmicks and protests along the lines of the "community politics" of the ROSAC campaign at Corby.

Throughout the public sector and especially in the NHS, union leaders have combined verbal opposition to the cuts with practical opposition and obstruction of action to stop the cuts. Only from the anger and pressure of their members have the leaders of NUPE and COHSE nominally pledged themselves to a policy of occupation against hospital closures. They have yet to wage an officially-led struggle of any sort in resistance to the cuts. The occupations that have taken place—such as the EGA, Hounslow and St Benedict's—have begun from the rank and file and in no way from union leaders.

Elsewhere, too, limited localised actions in defence of jobs have taken place—significantly at the Robb Caledon shipyard, which for several weeks took unilateral sanctions in opposition to the British Shipbuilders' closure plans; only to be isolated by Stalinist leaders in the other shipyards under threat; at the Corby steel works (where the refusal of union leaders to fight handed the jobs fight over to the bizarre community politics of the ROSAC campaign, while thousands of workers throughout the town showed their solidarity); and at the Meccano plant on Merseyside, occupied to prevent its sudden closure.

### 3. Viability

In arguing for struggles to defend jobs, the main stumbling block remains overcoming the "viability" argument, through which reformists insist that in order to save jobs at a plant it is necessary for that plant to be made profitable.

In a period of world-wide recession, whole areas of capitalist industry cease to be profitable and all sections face a drastic cut in profits.

We must press workers to start not from the problems confronting a bankrupt employer but from their own



independent class interests.

The demand for the 'opening of the books' of a particular firm, along with its suppliers and creditors is thus not necessarily designed to prove that the company can pay up, or keep on its workforce. We do not peddle the SWP line that "they can afford it!"

Indeed in the next period we can expect increasing numbers of bosses to produce figures to show that they are bankrupt in capitalist terms and that "therefore" the workforce must sacrifice jobs and living standards.

The open the books demand is the key to exposing the anarchic way in which the capitalist system works as a whole—the way in which the "losses" in one sector are the profits in another: and the haphazard way in which production takes place solely for private profit and in no way to satisfy social needs.

The opening of the books of supplier companies shows the exploitation of workers in every field of industry. In fighting to uncover such information the demand must be raised for occupation of the factory and office buildings concerned: thus in every way the 'open the books' demand links in to the fight for workers control over particular plants and the workings of industry as a whole—with full access to all the necessary facts and figures.

This links in to our strategic demand for nationalisation without compensation under workers' management, as part of a planned socialist economy.

In the fight for such a perspective we stress the need for sections in struggle to link up with other sections of workers in *councils of action*, to generalise and extend strikes and occupations, fight for the removal of the Tories, and press forward the fight against the reformist Labour leaders and for a workers' government.

In the public sector, too, the "viability" argument makes itself felt, as Labour "lefts" such as Ted Knight and others argue in favour of rate increases as an alternative to spending cuts.

Such rate increases will not only hit workers, but will also provide the basis for a monumental right wing backlash from infuriated middle class householders, forced to shoulder a massive increased burden of taxation.

At the same time the raising of rates seeks to avoid a confrontation with the Tory government: a confrontation that must take place if the cuts are really to be halted.

#### 4. Cuts

Our demand is for Labour councils to *refuse* to make cuts, to *refuse* to raise rates, to over-

spend as necessary and demand the necessary finance from the government, and to fight to mobilise full-scale supporting action from the working class to counter any government reprisals. The only cuts that should be considered are cuts in interest payments on bank and other loans, and cuts in spending on "law and order".

In the health service we also call on AHAs—unrepresentative management bodies though they are—to follow the stand taken by Lambeth AHA in refusing to implement wholesale spending cuts.

But we place no faith in such bodies to withstand the Tory government and press the fight in health unions for action to defend services, manning levels and working conditions against attack, through strike action, occupations and supporting action as necessary. We fight to force the union leaders to call national strikes in support of sections in struggle against the cuts.

Similarly in education and the social services we must consistently pose concrete demands for the defence of jobs and services. The development of locally-based anti-cuts committees, drawing in trade unionists, tenants' associations, parents' action groups and school students around demands for the occupation of nurseries, community centres and other facilities threatened with closure—linked with supporting strike action, and for immediate walk-outs in response to announcements of redundancies or cuts in staffing, create the basis for a political fight against the reformist leadership in the trade unions.

Our experience in the South Oxford Nursery Campaign has already provided invaluable in developing interventions into new areas which come into struggle. We must continue to deepen our experience of such practical struggles in order to sharpen the edge of our programme of demands and develop politically those new layers who are drawn around us.

And to build broad support for cuts struggles within the labour movement in each area we fight for workers' inquiries to expose the impact of health and other public sector cuts, to show the scale of unmet needs in each area, to reveal the huge profits made from the NHS and local authorities by suppliers (most notably the drug companies) contractors and bankers, and to draw up workers' plans for an expanded welfare state under workers' management.

The scale of the protest marches on November 7 and November 28 1979 (despite the virtual absence of NALGO and NUPE members in comparison to the 1976 march), showed the potential that exists for widespread action against the cuts.

But the refusal of the public

sector unions to advance this fight is shown equally clearly by the TUC's pathetic response—calling a national demonstration on March 9 and a half-hearted "day of action" for May!

These dates are themselves carefully chosen in an attempt to separate completely the fight on the cuts from the steelworkers' struggle on pay and jobs.

Against this must be set the call by Yorkshire Trades Councils for a one-day General Strike on February 18, and the mounting militancy on jobs in South Wales, which has already forced a major one-day stoppage and is still pressing for more action.

#### 5. Basic Rights

Nor is the TUC's record any better on the question of defending democratic rights. TUC leaders continue to chat amicably with Tory leaders as Prior's anti-union laws go forward.

And while thus conniving at the Tory attack on the closed shop, the last year has seen union officials prove yet again that they refuse to use the power of the unions to defeat the tin-pot anti-union employers.

The 1978 betrayals of unionisation battles at Desoutters, Grunwick and Trust House Forte hotels were followed by the 1979 sell-outs at Garners and Sandersons.

And in other instances where democratic rights have come under attack the response of the union leaders has been in some instances to make perfunctory protest gestures (Corrie Bill, racist laws) or, in some cases (in particular on the question of Ireland) actually to reinforce the attack. The censorship of news of the war in Ireland, and the repression of anti-imperialists under the PTA is complemented by the muzzling of discussion on Ireland by the bureaucracy within the ranks of the labour movement itself, and the role of the Labourites in introducing the PTA during the 1974 Wilson government.

The next period will see further Tory moves against long-established democratic rights. The extensive state surveillance of political opponents, as exposed in recent reports on phone-tapping and bugging, will be stepped up, alongside a domestic "Cold War" witch-hunt against communists and socialists of every sort.

New laws to restrict demonstrations are already being planned: and the Tories' failure to carry their reactionary "Protection of Information" Bill will not deter them from taking other legal and more insidious steps to intimidate journalists and trade unionists who might

seek to expose state preparations for class war.

The muzzling of the Director of Public Prosecutions—prohibited to speak to the Parliamentary inquiry into deaths in police custody—and the cover-up in the Blair Peach case run alongside the strengthening of the police and its special detachments.

The fight to defend and extend democratic rights, and against all forms of racist and sexual discrimination remains very much at the forefront of the tasks to be undertaken by revolutionaries in the months ahead.

#### 6. Victimisations

Even in workplaces where unionisation is well-established, the need to press through attacks on working conditions, coupled with the evident weakness and collaboration of trade union officials, have persuaded employers to press ahead with victimisations of leading trade unionists.

As the tidal wave of cuts and closures in the London hospitals began to gather pace, a succession of NUPE militants in West London hospitals were victimised; NUPE officials intervened, not to mobilise solid action in their defence, but to persuade them to take their cases through tortuous and time-wasting appeals procedures and ACAS.

The outcome was a succession of defeats inflicted on hospital workers more by their leaders than by management.

And at the Charing Cross Hospital, where a determined strike took place in response to the victimisation of two skilled maintenance workers, a national press witch-hunt, combined with conscious strikebreaking moves by doctors in the hospital were only a part of the opposition faced by strikers: the other side of the attack came from the AUEW Executive, which instructed them back to work!

This treachery from the union leadership is surpassed, however, by the attempts of the TGWU bureaucracy to carry through its own victimisation of a succession of militants—not only the Cowley 9, but also Colin Carty, deputy convenor at Export Packing Services, Banbury; and two lorry drivers from the giant 5/35 Branch (who had led an occupation of the union's Regional Office in a bid to force trade group secretary Alan Law into calling all-out strike action).

It was the successful Cowley 9 Defence Campaign which proved the key to rolling back these attacks and defending the basic rights of militants within the TGWU. The Campaign won support from over 200 leading militants throughout the Union, convened a highly successful conference in Cowley, and created impossible conditions for the bureaucracy to carry through their planned expulsions and banning from office

The dropping of the charges against all but one of the Cowley 9 created conditions for an initiative from the Cowley Assembly Plant leadership in defence of Colin Carty. The outcome was a personal intervention from Moss Evans, who overruled the Region 5 Committee to vindicate Carty and restore his credentials. Shortly afterwards the charges against the lorry drivers were also quietly dropped.

But elsewhere victimisations are proceeding. The sacking in Southampton of shipyard militant 'Ginger' Pearse, who had successfully campaigned for rejection of a new productivity deal, was carried through by management with the assistance of EETPU officials, brought into the area to hold back action in his defence.

And in BL, of course, the sacking of Combine Committee Chairman Derek Robinson was coupled with moves by the AUEW Executive to sabotage the necessary all-out strike in his defence.

Amid the ironic spectacle of the TGWU bureaucracy having failed to victimise the Cowley 9 offering to call official action in Robinson's support, the AUEW leader eventually intervened to call off the struggle and set up an "inquiry" which has effectively damned Robinson even while formally declaring in his favour.

There is no doubt that the atmosphere of witch-hunt and victimisation will continue in the unions in the next period of Tory government, as management in every sector look to ways of stemming the growing upsurge of anti-Tory militancy and breaking the spirit of the working class.

Nor is there any doubt that in such cases the key role in such attacks will continue to be played by the trade union bureaucracy, who themselves fear nothing more than the development of the independent strength of the working class and any kind of consistent revolutionary opposition.

In short, there is not a single arena of working class struggle where the sabotage and confusion wrought by the labour bureaucracy does not play a role in assisting the Tory offensive. The fight for the most basic rights calls in today's class struggle for the construction of a new, revolutionary leadership in the labour movement.

We must understand that the working class is facing massive problems without the development of such a leadership. Old methods of struggle have become hopelessly inadequate to today's conditions.

The effect of the betrayals of the leadership which we have catalogued, also have an accumulative effect. In short, it is a period where, despite the readiness of workers to struggle, there can be major setbacks and defeats for the working class.

We do not say that this outcome is inevitable. We do say that a revolutionary movement

must be steered against such events and must learn to be patient in the light of them.

Historically, major outbreaks of class struggle have often been preceded by periods where the working class appeared on the retreat.

Failure to understand that such a period is one possibility, where the attacks of the employers and the government appear to be successful, will demoralise our comrades in the way it can also demoralise layers of militant workers.

A clear grasp of this danger will ensure that the movement remains strong, undismayed and ready to lead to the offensive when the inevitable explosion reemerges.

#### Crisis in the Labour Party 1. The Crisis of the Right Wing.

The rejection by both the working class and the capitalists of Callaghan's reformist strategy for the crisis precipitated the May 1979 election, and paved the way for the return of the Tories.

Callaghan had staked all on a government-subsidised revival of capitalism at the expense of working class living standards. Wage controls, rationalisation of industry and public spending cuts were thus coupled to huge cash handouts to private industry, in the vain hope that this would provide an "expanding economy" within which, eventually, a few reforms could be conceded to the working class.

This approach relied heavily on the ability of the trade union bureaucracy to police their members, while employers were to be enticed by government grants into so-called "planning agreements" and new forms of class collaboration, such as "worker participation".

But after three years of TUC-enforced wage cuts and the biggest fall in working class purchasing power for a century, anger exploded at the announcement of a 5% limit for Phase 4.

As shop-floor militancy threatened to escape the control of the bureaucracy, Callaghan found himself isolated by the TUC and defeated at the Labour conference. As he clung desperately on to his pay limits in the face of impossible odds, the uselessness of Callaghan's government to the capitalist class was clear: the Tories began an all-out offensive to prepare the ground for an election.

The 1979 election campaign saw Callaghan and the right wing still nailing their colours to the mast of wage controls, in a Manifesto that offered nothing to any potential Labour voters.

The entire Labour campaign was sustained only by frantic puffs of anti-Tory rhetoric, which connected with many workers' fears of a Thatcher government.



The Tories, on the other hand, in a shrewdly mounted campaign, cynically exploited the cuts, the unemployment and the inflation that they were to increase, and wooed the middle class and backward workers with anti-union and racist propaganda, backed up with promises of tax cuts. The result was a Tory parliamentary majority of 43.

Only after the defeat, crawling from the wreckage, came the Labour 'lefts', who in the period up to the election had refused to lift a finger to fight for the removal of Callaghan or to publicly oppose his manifesto.

Detecting the shift of mood in the Party's rank and file that had emerged at the previous conference and in the winter's pay battles, Benn deserted the sinking Callaghan cabinet and joined the growing chorus of belated 'left' critics.

Callaghan suffered repeated NEC defeats from May to October, when the Party conference inflicted a further major defeat on the right wing—this time on Party democracy.

But with local Labour Parties increasingly under pressure from a militant working class seeking a means of struggle against Tory cuts, closures and anti-union laws, the problem that faces the right wing is how to reassert their authority.

A successor to Callaghan must be found. And the fear of the capitalist press and the Labour right wing is that it might be a 'left' winger, who they feel will be susceptible to pressure from the rank and file. The dilemma is how to repress the left without splitting the party, since the danger that many right wingers fear is that they will wind up simply cutting off their nose to spite their face.

This is because in combatting elements within the Labour Party that are pressing for socialist policies, for Party democracy and for an end to the line of the reactionary Callaghan-Healey leadership, the right wing only has a choice of unsatisfactory options.

They could launch a full-scale McCarthyite witch-hunt against any socialist element that stirs within the Party. Some are plainly looking to this option, despite its evident disadvantages.

The results of this would be unpredictable: in some areas Party organisation would be reduced to a flimsy shell of time-worn careerists and right-wingers, incapable of mobilising the electoral support on which the PLP rests. In other areas the witch-hunters themselves could be defeated, and the position of Labour militants could be consolidated.

Or, in line with the idea floated by bloated Eurocrat Roy Jenkins and given a cautious welcome by shadow

minister William Rodgers, Labour's extreme right wing could simply proceed to split the party and attempt to establish along with Liberals and possibly a few 'left' Tories, a new 'centre' party free from any embarrassing links with the working class or socialist rhetoric.

This, too, is a major gamble, which would effectively hand over control of the Labour Party itself to the left wing and could well throw its advocates into a political limbo—denied votes from both working class Labour supporters and from hard line Tories.

This is plainly what concerns right wing spokesman David Owen in opposing this scheme and calling on the right to fight it out inside the Party.

The re-emergence of the tired old report by Labour's former National Agent Reg (now Lord) Underhill is another expression of this dilemma facing the would-be-witch-hunters.

"Militant" is an obvious target for the extreme right wing because of its considerable support, particularly within Labour's youth movement, and its ostentatious socialist and even Trotskyist rhetoric.

For veteran anti-Communists like Underhill, the fact that Militant's outward political face is combined in practice with a stubborn refusal to carry out or support any serious struggle within the Labour Party for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership is seen not as a reason for soft-peddling on a witch-hunt, but as evidence of Militant supporters' perfidious and devious tactics!

The refusal by Militant even to lobby the January NEC meeting where Underhill's report was to be raised once more affirmed their refusal to struggle against the Labour bureaucracy.

It echoes their stance in the 1950s and 1960s when Grant and Co. endorsed the expulsion of Trotskyists of the Healy group, and the Young Socialists majority.

But for the fake lefts of the Tribune group, the opportunist search by the Militant for a group of MPs to support their positions within the party offers an alluring prospect of a 'left' cover.

Benn, Heffer and others, along with the left-talking NUPE leader Alan Fisher have repeatedly used the Militant in efforts to repolish their tarnished image as radical 'socialists'.

The political crisis of the Labour bureaucracy offers a vital chance for socialists to struggle for a principled programme within the party. But a precondition for such a struggle is the fight by all Labour

activists against all right wing witch-hunts, and against bans and proscriptions on socialists.

Instead the fire must be directed at the crypto-Tory right wing that stands opposed to the fight to bring down Thatcher, and unashamedly committed to a programme of class compromise and betrayal.

And in demanding that they wage a serious struggle for the removal of the right wing, it is possible to expose to workers the empty demagogy of many Labour 'lefts'.

## 2. The Lefts' Balancing Act

The onset of mass struggles against the Tory government—in particular in the winter months—has brought a change in the outward behaviour of Labour's 'lefts'. They have begun to appear on picket lines and, in some cases, to call on strikers to defy court rulings.

Heffer at the recent Young Socialists unemployment rally called upon anti-socialist right wingers to leave the Labour Party. And, in a very significant move, the most left of the 'lefts' Arthur Scargill, appears to have ended his long-term fence-sitting exercise and to have begun the serious if belated preparation of moves through the Labour Party to oust butcher Mason from his NUM-sponsored Barnsley constituency.

Such developments should come as no surprise to WSL members who have followed our consistent analysis of the Labour 'lefts' as forces that emerge at times when the working class moves forward and that seek to contain that forward movement within Parliamentary, reformist channels.

It is conspicuous that, even after the lessons of the defeat of Heath, Labour 'lefts' such as Allaun and Heffer still now call for the Tories to be 'brought down' not by industrial action, but by mass protests. And Benn chose the middle of the steel strike to get up and deliver an eight-point speech spelling out an entirely reformist perspective.

Yet the changed mood in Labour's rank and file means that the 'lefts' feel obliged to take a number of stands against the right wing—creating the impression of an ongoing struggle, and unwittingly improving the conditions in which Marxists can fight for a clear programme and perspective.

Why are the lefts—apparently so eager to respond to the mass movement of the working class—so reluctant to mount a political challenge to Callaghan? The answer is that they know full well that they have no real alternative policies to put forward.

Themselves reformists, tied to the illusory notion of legislating socialism piecemeal through parliament, they can offer workers only more

'radical' sounding versions of Callaghan's own class collaborationist policies.

Where Callaghan proposes wage controls linked to cash handouts to industry through the NEB, the Tribuneite 'left' propose no wage controls, but even more cash handouts to industry, through the NEB.

Where Callaghan opposes nationalisation, of basic industries, the 'lefts' also oppose complete nationalisation, but advocate 'state shareholdings' in major industries.

And where Callaghan calls for sacrifice of workers' living standards 'in the national interest', the 'lefts' idea of the 'national interest' leads them to propose a nationalist policy of import controls, in an attempt to export unemployment overseas.

It is necessary to expose the political bankruptcy of these 'lefts' to the growing number of working class militants who in the next period will look to Benn, Heffer or Skinner as an alternative to Callaghan.

Such exposure requires both propaganda for a consistent programme of transitional demands, and the placing of demands on the 'lefts' which can reveal the limits of their political opposition to Callaghan, and show workers the necessity for a new, revolutionary leadership.

At a time when thousands of new members are joining the Labour Party looking for a lead in the struggle against the Tories, we can expect that the conditions for such political intervention will remain good in the months ahead.

Not until the outcome of Callaghan's inner-party inquiry—and possibly not even then—will the right wing make any definitive move against socialists within the party. They must prepare the ground carefully for any splits or witch-hunts if they are not to risk losing crucial union block votes and affiliations in the process.

## Stalinism

The fact that Communist Party members played the leading role in setting up and running the right wing witch-hunt against Fryer and Thornett in Cowley, while at the same time heading off any serious political fight in defence of Derek Robinson, spells out unmistakably the way the rightward evolution of the CP has continued under its "Eurocommunist" leadership since our last conference.

We noted in our 1979 Perspectives the way in which at Garners the Stalinists had been engaged in 'every one of the bureaucratic manoeuvres designed to hold back mobilisation of the forces of the trade unions and to collaborate with the police'. And our document drew attention to the crucial role played by Derek Robinson in averting a possible move for occupation of the threatened BL plant at Speke.

Since then, the Garners strike has been finally sold out, and the CP's long line of betrayals on jobs has extended,

with the capitulation of the CP-led stewards at BL's Park Royal plant to Edwardes' closure plan, and the abject failure of the Stalinists in the shipbuilding industry to support and spread the struggle against closure by the workforce at the Robb Caledon yard.

The rightward movement of the CP has also been noticeable in ASTMS, where the sizeable Stalinist votes were cast in favour of Clive Jenkins' increasingly right wing policies, and in the CPSA, where the 'Broad Left'-led Executive offers as little lead against the cuts as any other union bureaucracy.

But the reactionary role of the Stalinists could scarcely be more clearly demonstrated than in the AUEW in the wake of the victimisation of leading Stalinist Derek Robinson. With 350 branches readily joining in a rank and file condemnation of the treachery of Duffy and the Executive Council, the key question is clearly to press home the political offensive.

Yet the CP only in the vaguest terms took up the correct campaign by the SWP for a ballot under rule to remove the entire Executive. And instead of pin-pointing the betrayal carried out by Duffy and the EC, Robinson toured the country giving the impression that official action in his support was a foregone conclusion, even while the EC postponed its decision and dropped heavy hints that it intended to do nothing.

Meanwhile, the CP-led 'Broad Left' in the AUEW has

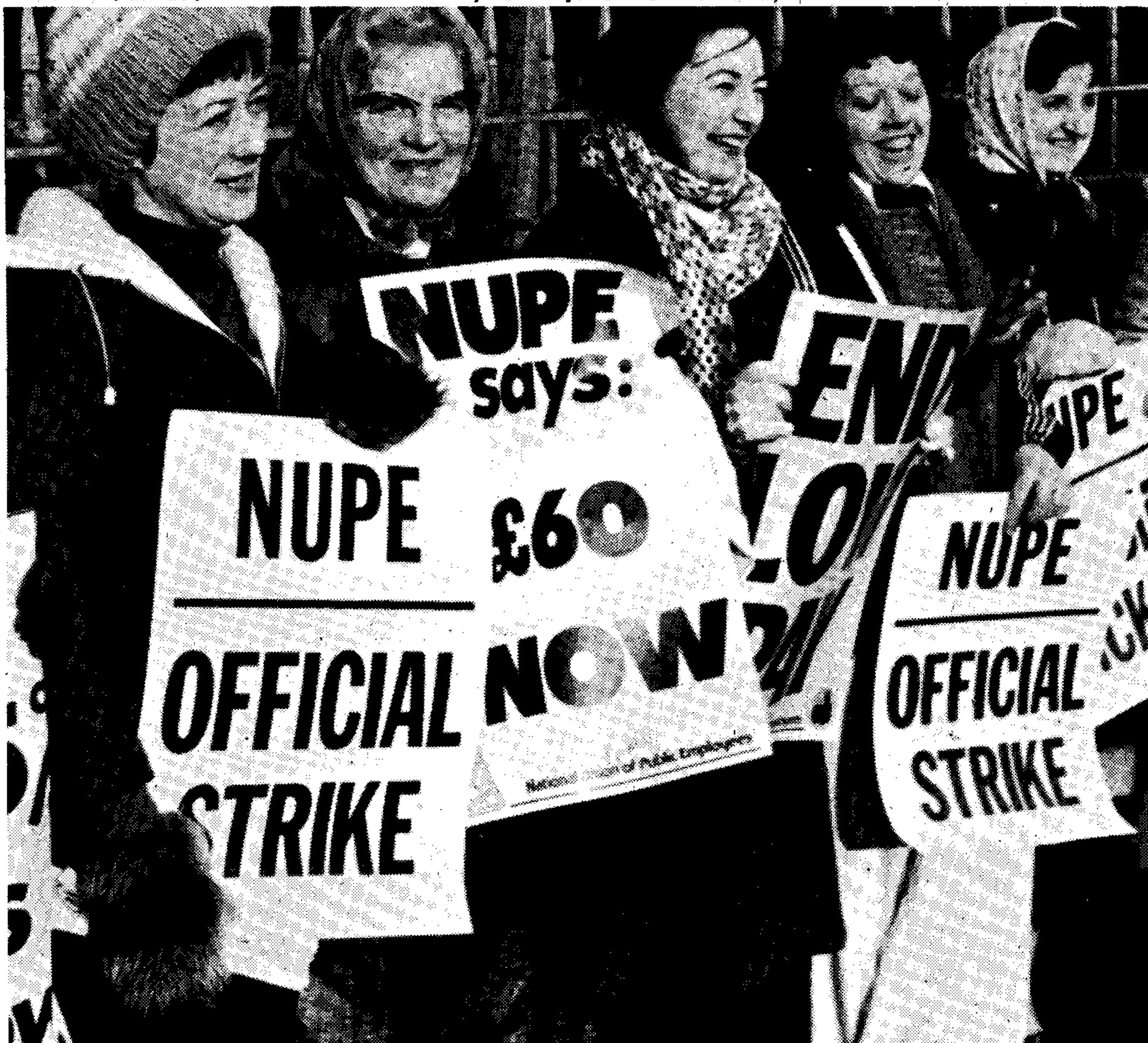


PHOTO: Derek Speirs, Report

Low pay strikes in 1979

PHOTO: Laurence Sparham. IFL



Sparse attendance on Stalinist demonstration, February 1979

been conspicuous only by its absence, and Broad Left darling Bob Wright—supposedly the left wing alternative to Duffy for President—has failed not only to campaign against the sell-out but even to appear at rallies called to support Robinson.

Small wonder in this overall picture of collapse and betrayal that the CP has once again been forced to record a further decline in membership and a continuing crisis for the *Morning Star* in the midst of a period of working class offensive.

The strident nationalism of its campaign for import controls and the empty rhetoric and bureaucratic repression of the LCDTU conferences and the Student Left alliance with the Liberal Party are unlikely to provide the basis for any revival of the CP's fortunes in the next period—particularly if the AUEW bureaucracy do in fact succeed in striking a major blow at BL trade unionists by completing the betrayal of Robinson.

Indeed, so agonising is the crisis facing the Stalinists—particularly in the wake of the Afghan invasion, and on the question of Ireland—that the CP now obviously stands in fear of losing support not only in a leftward direction towards centrist and revolutionary politics, but also towards the hardline Kremlin mouth pieces of the New Communist Party.

The NCP, however, has yet to develop far beyond the restricted numbers that it took from the CP—with little in the way of policy or perspective to offer militant workers.

**Bring down the Tories! For a workers government!**

In fighting for General Strike action to bring down the Tories, we call at present for the return of a *Labour* government, but not one where Callaghan and Healey are simply allowed to return to the policies of 1974/9.

This is why we call on workers in Labour Parties and union branches to put down demands on the Labour 'lefts' to campaign for the removal of the Callaghan-Healey leadership, and for its replacement by leaders prepared to implement socialist policies.

We do not make such a call in the belief that a reformist government, however left, can implement socialist policies in an era of capitalist crisis, but for the education of the working class in practice at a time when a demand for a workers government appears an empty abstraction.

We combine this with propaganda and agitation for a system of transitional demands for the defence of jobs, wages and social services, and with the struggle to mobilise independent working class action on such demands.

Within such struggles we fight to direct workers to the building of independent organisations to take forward the fight for their class interests—elected strike committees, price committees, open-the-books committees, workers defence squads and councils of action.

We stress that as such bodies emerge and grow in scale and

scope they will come to represent the class strength of the working class, through which it can and must challenge the power of the capitalist class and the bourgeois state machinery.

As soon as such a development becomes a possibility, it will be essential to combine demands on the Labour leaders with the fight to make them responsible to the councils of action, and to call for a government based not on the rigmarole of parliamentary democracy, but on the tangible power and living demands of the organised working class.

Insofar as any 'left' is prepared to take up some or all of these demands and fight in the interests of the working class, we offer him or her critical support.

But at the same time we stress that the fight for these demands as a whole requires the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class—a task from which 'left' reformists shy away, and which requires the building of a mass revolutionary party.

And we contrast to the class collaboration, confusion and betrayal of simply another Labour government under a Callaghan or a Benn the call for a *workers' government*, a government responsive to the needs and demands of the workers' movement, answerable to its organisations, and committed to the struggle for workers' independent interests.

If we resolutely and successfully press the fight for a revolutionary party we are convinced that in the course of the coming struggles and political experiences growing sections of workers will come to recognise with us that the only consistent workers' government is, in fact, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and that the only real solution to their problems is to fight, with us, for the overthrow of capitalism to bring that about.

**The General Strike Demand**

The eruption of the steel strike and its spill-over into the struggle against closures forced even sections of the bureaucracy to talk of a possible General Strike.

The Welsh TUC—to the horror of its big British brother—actually called a General Strike from January 21, only to abandon it and substitute a January 28 'day of action' and the threat of further prolonged action from March 10—by when they hope the pay battle will be safely over.

*Socialist Press*, however, took up the initial call by the Welsh TUC and brought the demand for a General Strike to the centre of the WSL intervention around the steel strike. It is therefore important to be clear on the way we see this demand not as empty propaganda, but as integrally linked to our agitational work and to the development of the class struggle itself.

Limited and inadequate though their demands were, the fact that the Welsh TUC were forced to the length of calling for a General Strike indicated the kind of pressure on the

bureaucracy from the rank and file. Other union leaders' responses showed the same.

ISTC leader Bill Sirs, forced to admit that the steel unions are engaged in a political fight with the Tory government, warned of a possible "holocaust". A general strike, he said, would be a "very frightening" possibility, if BSC went ahead with its closure plans.

And right wing railwaymen's leader Sidney Weighell told the *Financial Times* that "he was coming under great pressure from his members to fight the associated threat to railway jobs, particularly in South Wales, where about 3,000 were at risk. But trade union action confined to South Wales would not be enough to stop BSC's plans," he added. "It's a 1926 situation."

It is not unusual for even right wing trade union leaders on occasion to call and direct massive strike action in pursuit of a pay demand. What has scared Weighell, Sirs and the TUC bureaucracy is the idea that this pay battle could grow into a national battle on jobs, producing a full-scale showdown with the Tories which union officials would find hard to wriggle out of or control.

The central role of BSC's sackings plan in fuelling steelworkers' militancy was shown clearly by the militant response of workers at the doomed Corby and Shotton plants to the strike call.

They saw the national strike as a means of waging a battle against closure and striking a major blow at the hated Tory government. With other sections of workers pressing their leaders to take action alongside the steelworkers in defence of jobs, an opportunity arose to fight throughout the labour movement for a General Strike with the clear objective not simply of delaying the BSC closures, but of bringing down the reactionary Tory government.

Weighell has admitted that "our members were demanding for action a ballot of South Wales miners also showed overwhelming support for a strike. Other railwaymen and miners would undoubtedly have followed their lead."

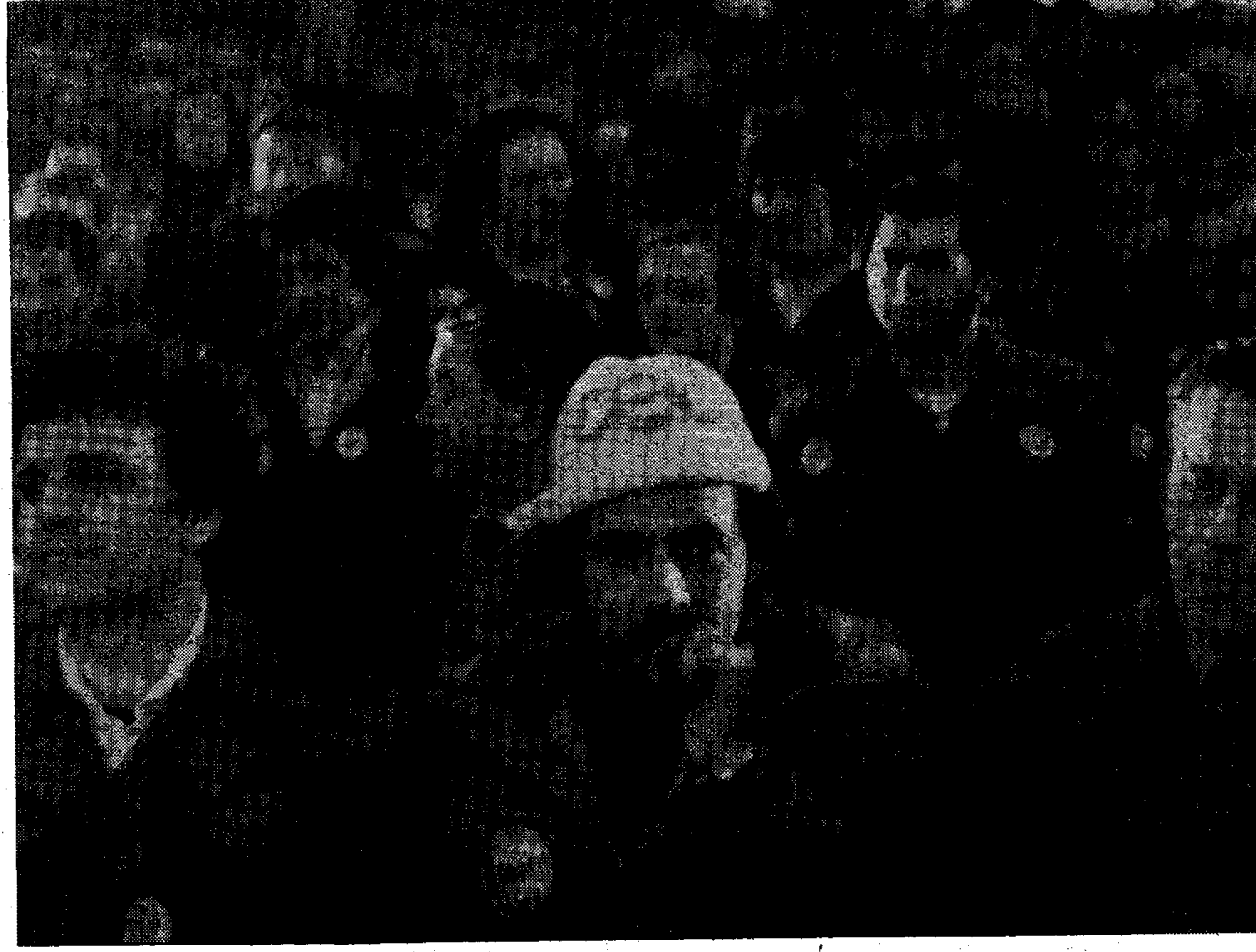
Were more generalised action to spread it would offer a lead to countless thousands of workers in other industries under Tory attack:

—2 million public service workers, whose pay rise this year is pegged far below the cost of living by Tory cash limits, and who face cuts, closures and speed-up on every side;

—Civil servants, who face a steady erosion of manning levels and an endless tide of cuts;

—workers in every industrial sector whose wages are under attack from Tory-fuelled inflation, and whose unions are once more under attack from Tory legislation;

—women workers, facing the worst impact of the cuts, the worst unemployment, and Tory attacks on their rights at work and on the right to abortion;



Mass rally in Cardiff on day of action called during steel strike: WSL fought to turn Welsh TUC general strike call into action to bring down the Tory government

—Immigrant workers, confronted by new Tory racist legislation;

—the unemployed—condemned by Tory recessionary policies to a lifetime on the scrapheap or, at best, to a job on rock bottom wages.

There is not a worker in Britain without good cause to rally behind a determined General Strike to bring down this government.

But, of course, it is not possible to look to such a development to a General Strike at any time. The right conditions have to be present.

And a defeat for the steel workers, for instance, could create a setback for the struggle, in which the General Strike demand would become quite inappropriate.

The General Strike is for us in a sense a strategic objective, to be prepared for in our agitational work, and to be brought to the forefront as a demand only when it offers an opportunity to materially advance the struggles of the working class to a new level.

We reject formal and propagandist calls that simply call for a general strike without regard to the fight to *develop* such a strike from workers' actual struggles. It is of course a general truth that the Tories' policies will only be defeated

through the mobilisation of a General Strike to bring down the government.

But as Marxists fighting to mobilise the working class in revolutionary action, we must direct our main efforts not at empty repetition of abstract truths but at developing the independent struggles and forms of organisation of the proletariat—in particular councils of action.

In this we must develop a conscious political leadership in conflict with the various elements of the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracy, and create the material conditions to accomplish our strategic aims.

The adoption of the General Strike demand as our central focus in the course of the steel strike in January 1980 does *not* therefore, commit the WSL in any way to retaining it as an immediate demand from now on, regardless of events.

While we of course continue to struggle for the perspective of the full-scale mobilisation of the working class in a General Strike action, and the struggle within such a movement to assert the political independence of the proletariat in the form of

councils of action and the fight to construct the revolutionary party, the outcome of the steel strike will decide whether the General Strike call remains at the forefront or becomes a less prominent component of our agitational work.

The most dangerous development would be one in which WSL members and branches effectively cast aside the vital agitational struggle for transitional and democratic demands, substituting instead an SLL/WRP-style fetish around the General Strike demand and a package of maximum demands.

Our general orientation in relation to the government will therefore remain that of 'Prepare to bring down the Tories'.

The next period of struggle—whatever the outcome of the steel strike—will require a flexibility in tactics, and a readiness to maintain consistent agitational work in combination with specific demands related to the requirements of a particular turn in the class struggle.

The WSL has, in our view, developed a cadre that is capable of consciously grasping this need and carrying out the necessary fight.

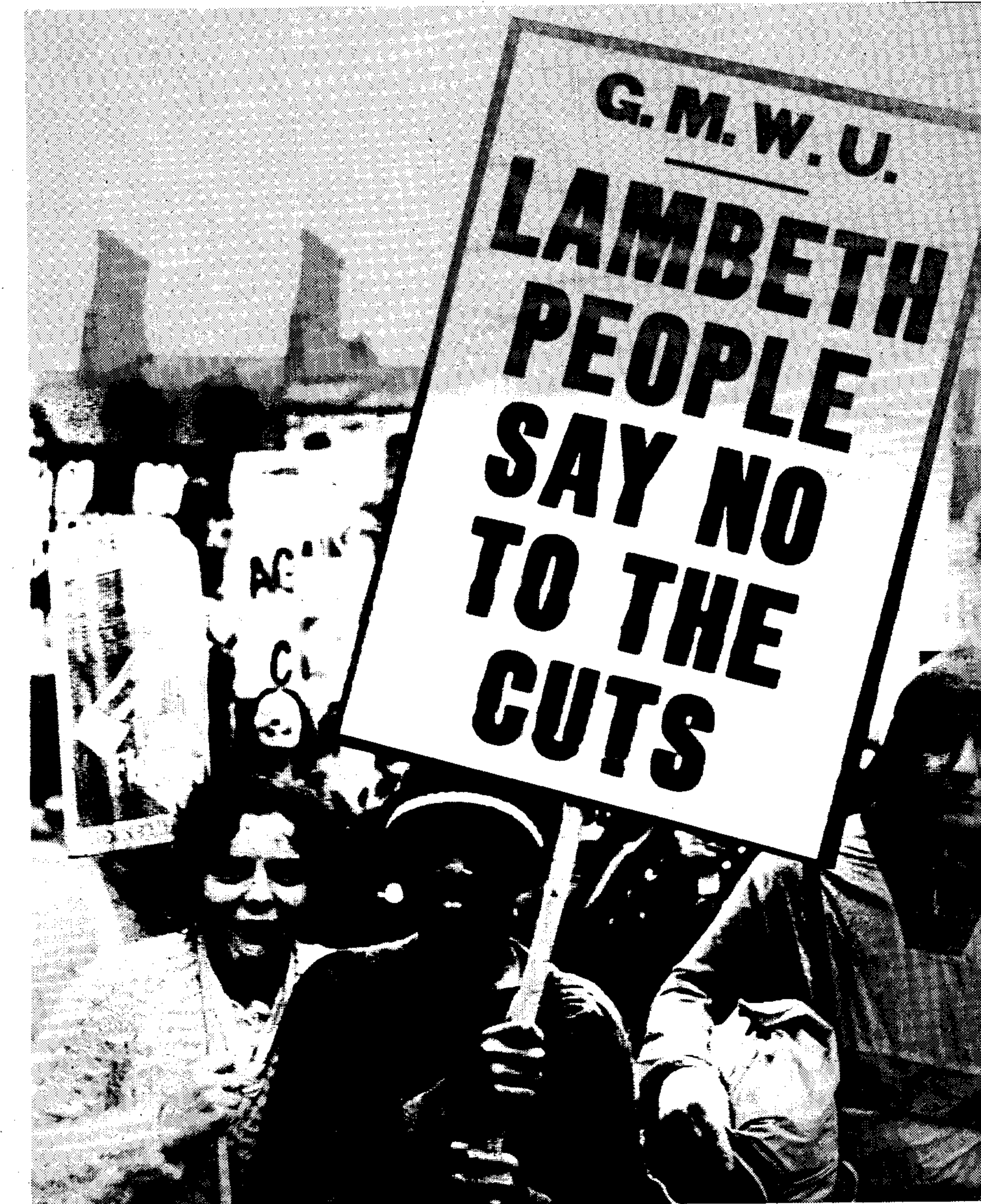


PHOTO: Mark Fisher. IFL



# CPSA

## WHY WE CALL FOR A BROAD LEFT VOTE



Losinska



CPSA General Secretary Ken Thomas

To an even greater extent than most other unions, the CPSA is split into 'left' and 'right' factions.

The Broad Left has proved an important organisational focus for opposing the Thatcherite policies of the Moderate/Daylight grouping led by Kate Losinska, but how have the 'lefts' stood up to the tests of the last 12 months?

When the Tories came to power the first attack on the civil service came in the form of the 3-month ban on recruitment (a 2 1/2% cut in staff).

In response to this and various other rumblings about cuts and selling off sections of the civil service to the private sector, the National Executive of the CPSA came up with a system of sanctions (overtime bans, bans on temporary promotion and on casuals, etc).

WSL members in the CPSA fought for a policy of strike action, arguing that sanctions were divisive and simply gave the initiative to management.

### Suspensions

Management in the DHSS duly took the initiative and began suspending members, first of all at Breckfield in Liverpool and then at Kenington, Nuneaton and the Department of National Savings in Glasgow.

With sections of the membership showing their willingness to support suspended colleagues, the NEC was caught between growing militancy on the one hand and management intransigence on the other.

Faced with this, the left cover of many on the NEC began to crumble.

With 552 members suspended in Glasgow, union vice-president Peter Coltman (a Stalinist) and Terry Adams, a

full-time official and Militant supporter, engineered a back-to-work deal.

The NEC voted 12-10 in favour of the deal with no consultation with the Glasgow branch.

Finally the settlement was presented to the 3,500 strong branch as a fait accompli and the full-timers were brought in to knife the struggles at Kenington, Nuneaton and Finsbury Park.

### Tatters

Since then the sanctions campaign has remained in tatters and the management and central government have gained in confidence to pressure further attacks on civil service workers.

Thatcher and Howe have announced plans to cut nearly 100,000 jobs, with more in the pipeline.

Over this year's pay claim the NEC lefts again crumbled when management unilaterally changed the review date by five weeks.

This meant that the bureaucracy was able to sew up the deal before seeing if members were willing to stick out for the full claim.

Revolutionaries and militants in the CPSA must ensure that the Broad Left increases its majority on the national leadership; and there is no doubt that victory for Losinska and her cronies in this year's ballot would be a major set-back.

But CPSA members must also look critically at the programme and practice of the left-talkers—in particular the dominant coalition of Militant, Communist Party and Tribunites.

Such a line up can only crack and give way when the

going gets tough—and there is no doubt that the year ahead is going to be very tough for the CPSA rank and file unless the current leadership crisis is resolved and a principled fighting programme is adopted.

As a minimal starting point the Broad Left must kick out all those who use it as an electoral platform and yet refuse to fight for its existing policies or even Annual Conference policies.

## Broad Left's record

There is a long history of factional struggles in the CPSA. The right wing had absolute control of the union in the fifties and sixties and the left only started to re-emerge in 1970.

The Broad Left started as an NEC caucus which was controlled by the Stalinists and Tribune supporters.

It functioned solely as an election machine. The first Broad Left conference, held in Manchester in March 1977, forced the left to cooperate in a more open and democratic way.

A national committee was elected, a newspaper Broadside was published and regional Broad Left groups were set up.

The Redder Tape group was started in 1972 by SWP supporters and others on the left.

It produced a paper and stood candidates in CPSA

national elections though its main aim was to organise the rank and file in the branches.

Though attempts have been made to have an active campaigning Broad Left it has never been anything but an election machine.

The only major campaign the Broad Left has waged since its inception was the campaign in 1977 against the victimisation of a full time officer, Militant supporter Terry Adams.

The present Broad Left NEC's record over fighting the cuts in the past year, has been abysmal with the complete sell-out of suspended members in DHSS Kenington and Nuneaton and DNS Glasgow.

### No lead

They have given no lead on the pay campaign and have recommended acceptance of a staged settlement.

The annual Broad Left conference has now become a mirror image of the union

conference where militant resolutions are passed and then nothing is done about them for another year.

Stalinists and Tribunites attend the conference solely to get on the Broad Left election list for the NEC and take little part in policy making.

Last November's conference passed a resolution from the Oxford group which called for a policy of all out strike action against the cuts and for occupations of offices threatened with closure.

The Broad Left NEC have done nothing to implement this resolution since the conference.

The Merseyside group put forward a resolution against immigration controls which called on CPSA members to black all work in connection with immigration controls.

Militant supporters argued against the resolution saying that it was "too advanced" for the membership and impossible to implement. They succeeded in voting down this resolution

as well as another calling for the election of full time officers.

Redder Tape consider themselves a principled rank and file alternative to the Broad Left bureaucracy.

They have organised campaigns and produced a regular paper. When the Gibraltar dispute was sold out in 1977 they organised an occupation of the union headquarters.

Last year they held a cuts conference and they did campaign against this year's pay settlement by leafletting branches. However the organisation is dominated by the SWP policy of rank and fileism which ignores the necessity to expose the left union leadership.

They fetishise unofficial strikes and are reluctant to fight for leadership positions in the union.

At the last Redder Tape conference, which was poorly attended, there was much confusion even between SWP members or election strategy. One delegate said: "We have credibility by not standing", while another argued that "The important thing about elections is to take part in the campaign and not necessarily win."

A decision was made to stand Redder Tape candidates in the 1980 election against the Broad Left, and a list was drawn up.

However two of the best known Redder Tape supporters, Mike McGrath (who was on the NRC for a year in 1976-77) and Bobby McLean declined to stand as they didn't feel they had a strong enough base in their workplaces.

Over the last three years many of their original supporters have gone over to the Broad Left and one of their founder members is now a full time officer.

In this year's elections CPSA members must vote for the Broad Left list, as it is essential that the anti-union right wing "moderates" do not get in.

But if the Broad Left are elected, a renewed fight will be necessary to get them to organise all-out strike action against the Tory cuts and Employment Bill.

# WSL programme for the CPSA

**Union democracy:** For the election of all full-time officials! What right has Ken Thomas got to get up in public, launch witch-hunts and speak against Conference policy? Elected branch officers must have the right to take part in all negotiations between full timers and management.

### No fraud officers!

**DHSS:** No more fraud officers! Take on extra staff to campaign for claimants to take up the £340 million of benefits which are unclaimed each year. Step up investigation of tax evasion and profit-swindling by private companies. Open the books of the State Pension Scheme Bank.

**Employment Bill—keep up payments to strikers.**  
**Pay:** Break with Pay Research Unit now! For a sliding-scale of wages linked to inflation as assessed by elected committees of civil service trade unionists. This must be coupled to a big rise in basic pay bringing the lowest scale up to at least £80 per week.  
**Cuts:** Create more jobs not fewer! As Thatcher's policies bite, the services provided by CPSA members are more and more urgently needed. Defend jobs and the interests of claimants and users of the civil service with strike action against the cuts. Fight closures with occupations and supporting strikes. Build links with local campaigns and claimants' unions.

**Wages:** Secure the work on full

pay! The 35 hour week demand is important but is not an end in itself. Only a true sliding-scale of hours can soak up the unemployed and protect the conditions of CPSA members.

### Inquiry

**Immigration:** No to immigration controls! Set up a major inquiry into CPSA members' involvement in implementing such laws. Black any such work. Black racist instructions in all DHSS codes, etc.  
**Fascism:** CPSA branches must take a lead in setting up workers defence squads to drive off fascists leafletting dole offices.

**Ireland:** Campaign in the labour movement at local and national levels to raise the demands for troops out, for self-determina-

tion and for political status for the H-block prisoners.

**Women's rights:** Fight for free abortion on demand and commit the CPSA to oppose all state nursery cuts and join campaigns for a massive extension of state nurseries as opposed to workplace creches. The majority of CPSA members are women—they are part of the working class not an autonomous section of society with their own special "problems" and "issues".

### Reaffiliate

**Labour Party:** Reaffiliate to the Labour Party! Use our political control to kick out Callaghan and Healey as one part of the battle to destroy reformism in

the working class.

**Links with other unions:** For a united front with the other civil service unions, especially the SCPS! But no to a merger with the SCPS. CPSA members have shown a growing willingness to fight and management caucuses within the union can only sap this strength.

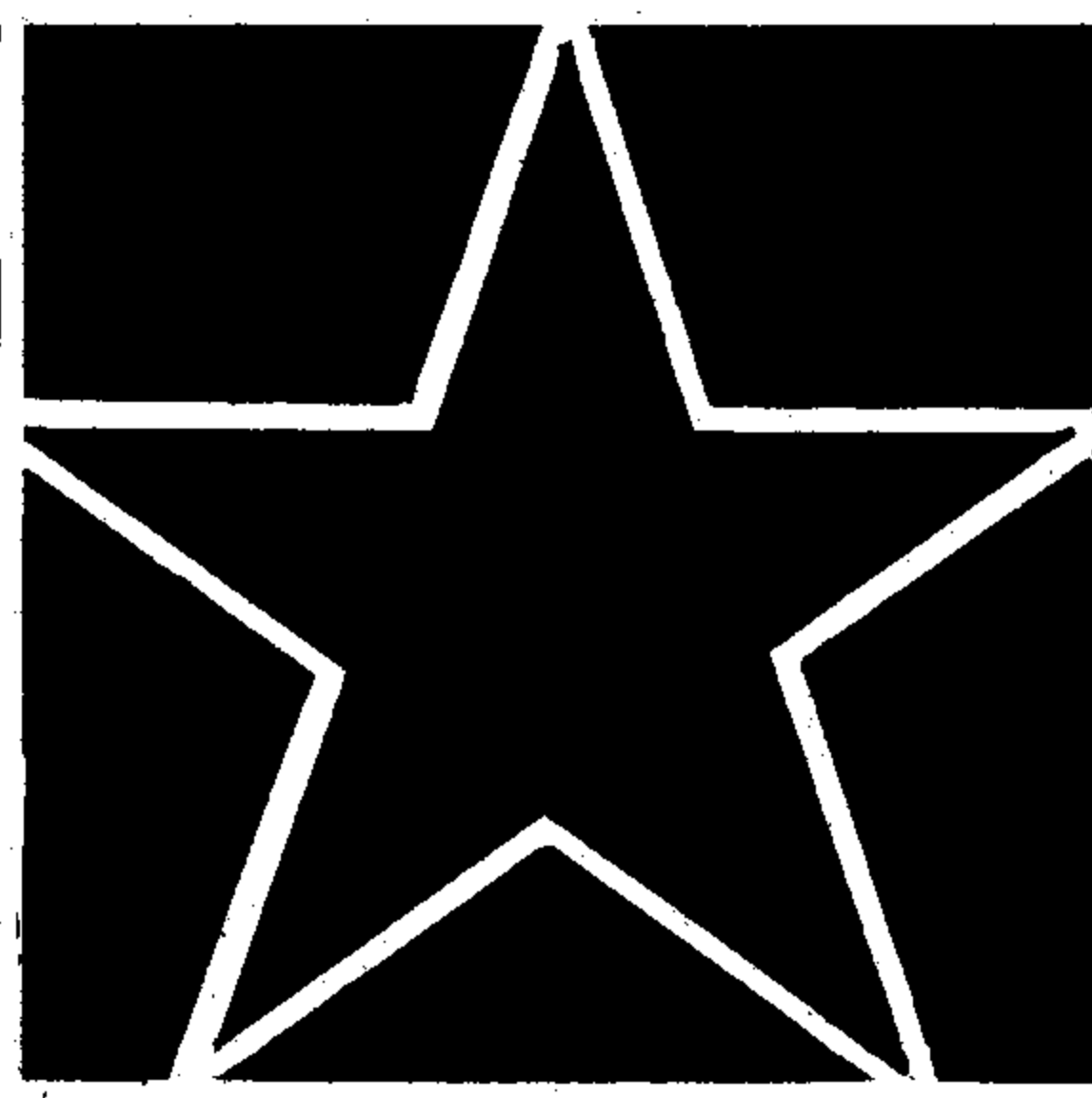
**Workers control:** Only a civil service run by the workers themselves can meet the needs of those workers and the rest of society.

As government employees this means a fight also for a workers' government growing out of councils of action thrown up in mass struggles against both Tory attacks and Labour sell-outs.

# SYLL

SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE

## 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE



**SATURDAY 17 - SUNDAY 18 MAY**

FOSSE COMMUNITY CENTRE MANTLE ROAD, LEICESTER

DISCUSSION                      FILMS                      3 LIVE BANDS

- \*The Fight Against the Tories
- \*Anti-racism
- \*National Union of School Students

- \*Ireland
- \*Oppression of young women and gays
- \*Youth in struggle around the world

Socialist Youth League members up and down the country are now campaigning for the Second Annual Conference of the SYL, to be held later this month on the weekend of 17-18 May.

Transport arrangements are being finalised from major cities in England and Scotland and the SYL National Committee, which is organising the conference, is checking through the arrangements to ensure that this is the best ever conference of the SYL.

A new version of the document which outlines

the policies of the SYL has been drafted and will be discussed at the conference and voted on.

Three films have been booked for showing during the weekend.

The first of these deals with the role of the trade union leaders in selling out the Grunwick strike for union recognition.

The second shows how TV and the media treat men and women differently, reinforcing the roles that society allots to them.

The third film, which will begin a discussion on

the struggles of youth and workers in other countries, shows the plight of tin miners in Bolivia.

On the Saturday night a Red Social has been planned with 3 local bands lined up to play.

The conference is going to be an important event for the SYL. It will enable members from all over the country to get together, share their experiences and discuss how we are going to build the movement and, of course, have a good time as well.

You should be there...

### TRANSPORT FROM ALL AREAS

Cost: includes accomodation, transport to and from conference and admission to conference and social: £2 (Leicester youth) £3 all others.

If you would like to come or would like more details phone 0533-857828



# NUR climbdown on pay strings

Railwaymen's leader Sid Weighell breathed again last week as the NUR Executive voted 25-3 to accept a marginally rejigged sell-out pay-with-strings deal.

A few days earlier Weighell had been heavily defeated in an attempt to win support for the two-stage 20% pay offer, for which he had already publicly pledged acceptance.

### Installments

At issue was the fact that the new money was to be paid in two instalments—16% and 14%—and tied to a savage series of changes in working practices which threaten to wipe out thousands of jobs in the freight,

parcels and administration sectors.

British Rail management stood firm on the strings, but readily agreed to pay the whole increase in one stage—at a total increased cost of only £120,000 on the £220 million deal!

This "concession" linked to the relatively high level of the cash settlement, was enough to swing the 21-6 NUR Executive vote for rejection to the 25-3 vote for acceptance.

The agreement excludes compulsory redundancies. But it is clear that the thousands of existing "vacancies" will never be filled if the deal is implemented while management steadily whittle away the numbers of jobs available on the railways.

As the impact of the changes in working practices—so readily



Weighell

accepted by their leaders—makes itself felt on the shop floor workforce this pay deal will go down as a major landmark of betrayal.

# JOIN THE WSL!

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 contradictions 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.

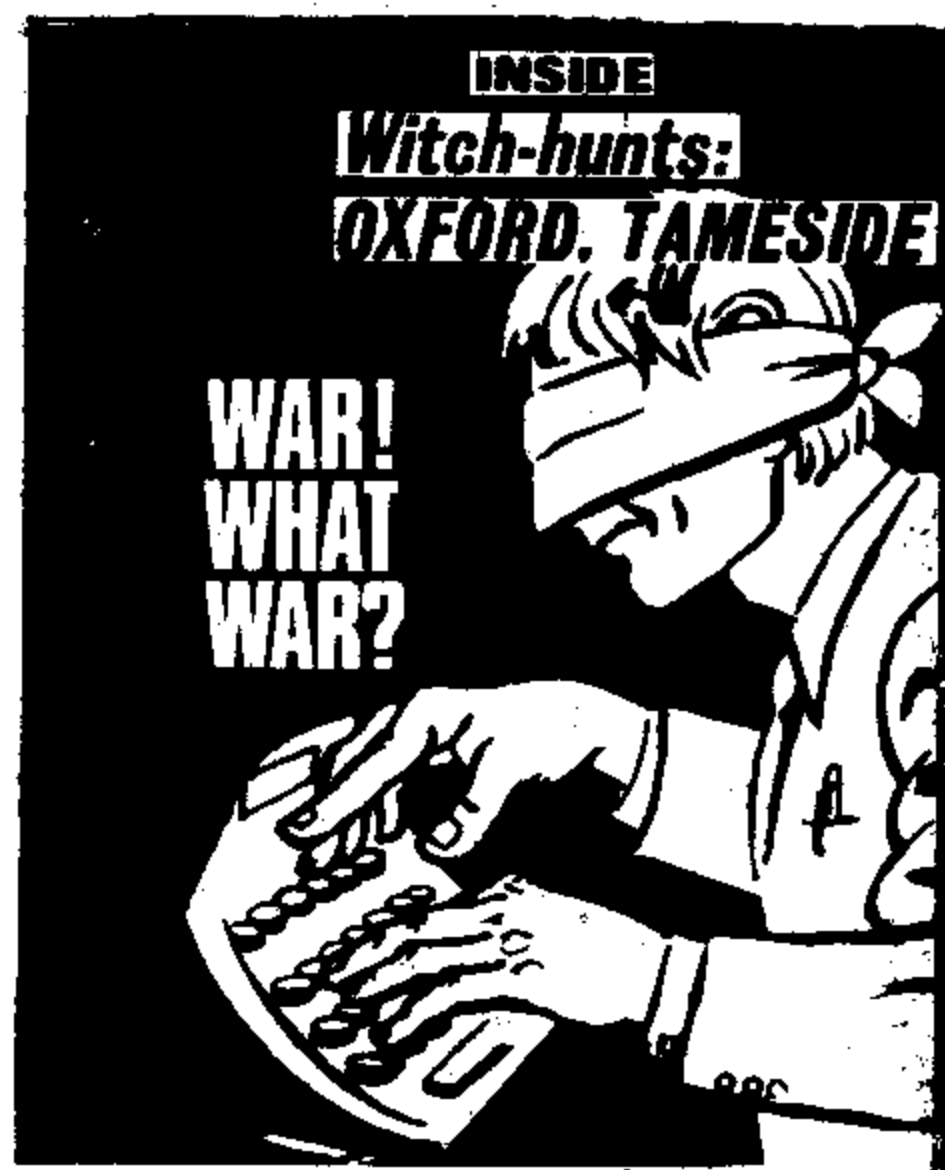
The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist movement fighting day in and day out to build such a principled leadership in the working class in Britain.

Internationally, we are affiliated to the newly-formed Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, which fights for the reconstruction of the Fourth International and the building of revolutionary parties in every country to lead the struggle against imperialism and against the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

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.

### NOW AVAILABLE

Labour movement bulletin on Ireland with background articles on witch-hunts in Oxford and Tameside. 25p including p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277 London WC1V 6XX.



A labour movement bulletin on IRELAND No. 3, March 1980 10p

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name .....

Address .....

Send to WSL: BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

# Bonus for Edwardes!

In the wake of the 14 week steel strike and the management crackdown on British Leyland workers the Tories have taken further steps to bolster the confidence and prestige of capitalism's most conscious and vicious managers.

Sir Charles Villiers' replacement as chairman of the British Steel Corporation is to be Mr. Ian MacGregor, a Scottish tax exile, industrialist, financier and gangmate of Sir Michael Edwardes.

In a deal likely to set a new pace for the appoint-

ment of nationalised industry chiefs, MacGregor is to be "transferred" from his present US job at Lazard Freres for nearly £2 million.

He will return to British industry, ending a period in which he has commuted from New York to assist Edwardes in BL Board meetings.

His task will be to press home BSC's programme of closures and redundancies. As he put it:

"It is a question of how many can survive the holocaust, how many jobs can be saved."

There is no doubt that after taking these unprecedented steps to enlist a ruthless axeman, the

Tories will stand four-square behind him in the inevitable confrontations with the steel unions.

Meanwhile discussion has grown among top Tories as how best to reward the doyen of all hatchet-men—Sir Michael Edwardes.

Appointed by the last Labour government, Edwardes has proved a model of Tory management ideals. Utterly inflexible and skilfully utilising the media and the trade union bureaucracy to confuse and divide and demoralise the BL workforce, he has rail-roaded through a succession of policies that could never have been achieved by more traditional methods.

How much is such a vicious piece of work worth to the British capitalist class?

At present Edwardes only receives a miserable £57,200. Yet a figure of £100,000 is now being floated as a reasonable rate for the job.

Such an increase in pay would no doubt anger Edwardes' fellow nationalised industry bosses—who are paid from £40,000-£50,000.

But it would be in keeping with the Tory notion of "incentives"—perhaps encouraging others to grasp the nettle and wage all-out war on the unions in the hopes of similar rewards!

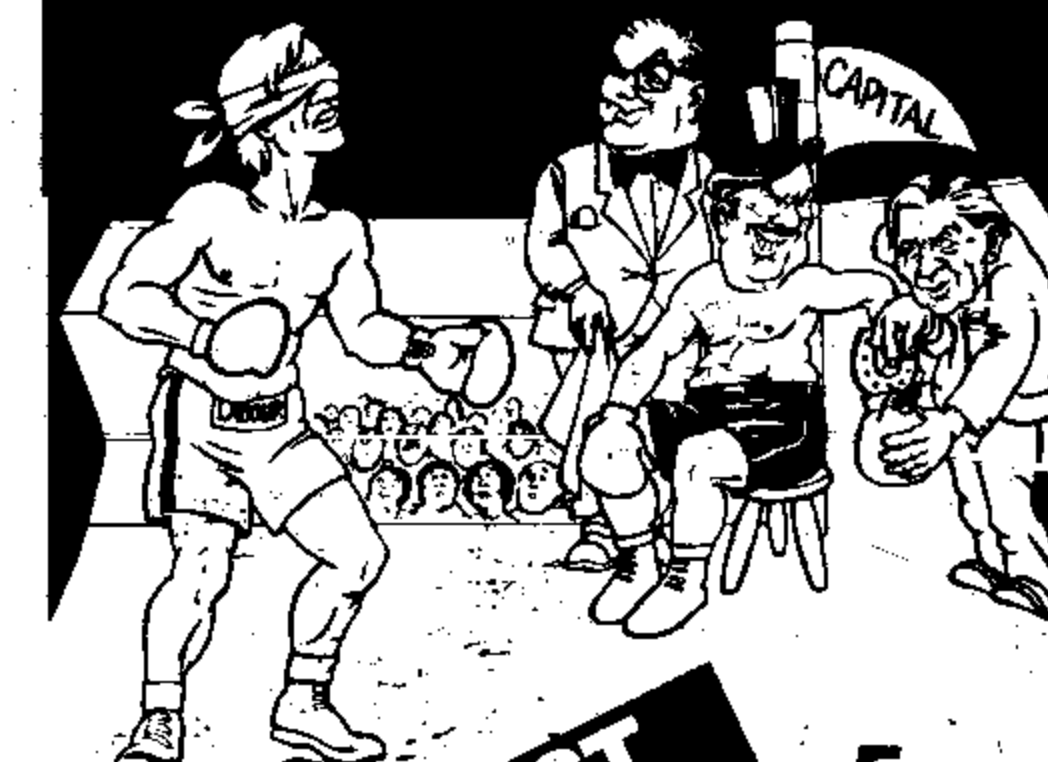
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# Duffy ducks pay claim, no fight on Tory law

## Print lock-out

### Front front page

In a display of dragooned block-voting which makes a parody of any concept of democracy within the labour movement, the AUEW's policy-making National Conference has adopted a package of policies bearing all the hallmarks of the extreme right wing Duffy leadership.

Resolutions committing the union to a £120 or £115 per week claim were thrown out by 29 votes to 23. Instead—by 29 votes to 23—the union's leading body voted to table a vague claim for a "substantial" increase.

And the AUEW became the first major union to break ranks on the forthcoming Tory anti-union laws—flouting TUC policy by declaring itself willing to take Tory cash to run postal ballots. This decision plainly turned the stomachs of even two of Duffy's stalwart 29 votes, since it was carried by the reduced margin of 27-24.

Duffy's consuming anti-communist crusade took a further step forward with the railroading through by 29 votes to 23 of a resolution on amalgamation offering the three other sections—foundry, construction and TASS—a 'take it or leave it' package including the election of officials by postal ballot.

### Stalinist-led

TASS, led by Stalinist General Secretary Ken Gill has consistently stood out against the election of officials. Duffy clearly hopes that the new ultimatum will drive TASS away once and for all.

The split certainly has nothing to do with the principle of electing officials: indeed Duffy's stated preference is for a merger with the EETPU, in which none of the officials other than the General Secretary are elected!

Indeed the AUEW leadership's contempt for democracy was also illustrated by the reactionary package of proposals

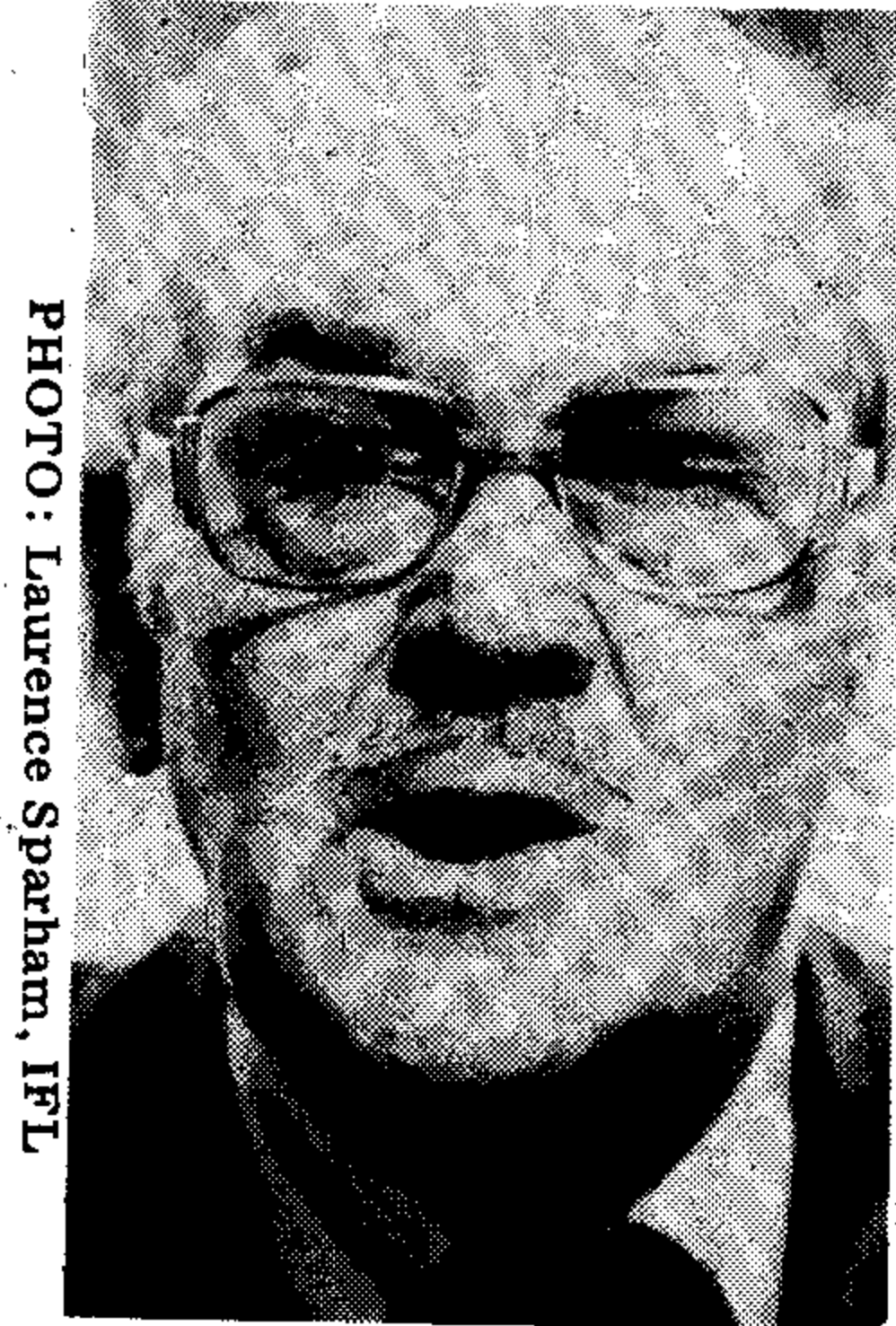


PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

### Duffy

submitted to the Labour Party's internal inquiry—endorsed by 29 votes to 23—and by the consequent reversal of the union's stand in support of the democratic reforms carried by last year's Labour Party conference.

But even Duffy and Boyd feel free once in a while to permit a harmless spot of 'left' posturing, and resolutions (in line with Callaghan's own "anti-Tory" facade) calling for the renationalisation without compensation of state firms sold off by the Tories were unanimously carried!

And a resolution calling for industry-wide ballots on national wage agreements with British Shipbuilders was opposed by executive member Harold Robson and defeated.

### Setback

The only significant setback for the union's witch-hunting leadership was the humiliating defeat of its attempt to win a mandate for supporting the admission of the Engineers and Managers Association into the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

Clearly wanting to welcome some more kindred spirits to the fold of the Confed—which last year campaigned in favour of

Michael Edwardes' package of 25,000 redundancies and plant closures in BL—General Secretary John Boyd tried in vain to secure the defeat of a resolution instructing the executive not to support the EMA application. It was carried by 51 votes to one.

### Management

The fact remains that AUEW members in their struggle to defend jobs and wages confront not only the employers backed by the Tory government but also a union leadership that regard their role as essentially an extension of management in the pursuit of profitability in industry at the expense of their own members.

The answer to this can only lie in the struggle to construct a revolutionary leadership in the AUEW based on a programme for the defence of the independent, international interests of the working class.

call strike action over it. The effect of this is to side with management against the NGA while buying off opposition within his own union. Both NATSOPA and SOGAT have told their members they are not to get involved in any support.

The NGA leadership, while talking tough, is permitting local settlements on a hopelessly inadequate basis with the majority of the strings still attached.

Moreover despite sporadic supporting action hitting one Fleet Street paper after another Joe Wade and the NGA executive have turned their backs on the most obvious and badly needed action—the complete close down of Fleet Street.

The employers would be unlikely to stand up to this action for more than a few days. Fleet Street printers must be called out to bring this lock-out to its knees.

A national lockout committee must be elected to control the officials but in most areas this will first mean establishing local committees independent of the union bureaucrats who are doing so little to win the dispute.

Members of the NUJ and other print unions must give maximum backing. The long history of scabbing between print unions—most recently by the NGA in the journalists' strike—has enabled the employers to launch this attack.

If the employers are not decisively defeated the closed shop itself is at risk. All print unions must unite in a determined and physical confrontation with scab publications.

THE UNCERTAINTY of the employers can be seen from the fact that the Birmingham Post and Mail management—one of the toughest in the Newspaper Society—cancelled its lockout within five days after fears that the Wolverhampton scab paper would hit its circulation.

Wolverhampton has seen the biggest clashes on picket lines with massive police violence against pickets and determined scab drivers charging through the lines. NGA officials have been among those arrested.

In some areas police—including special forces—have also turned out in strength and the level of violence by police is already noticeably higher than during the journalists strike in the winter of 1978/9.

In Portsmouth management has hired helicopters to bring scab papers through the pickets. This echo of the attack on print unions in the USA is a symbolic challenge to the NGA, which the union must meet. The local chapel occupied the print room for 24 hours but left when a court order was obtained.

# BL workers fight on against strings

Despite Edwardes victory engineered for him by the leaders of the AUEW and the TGWU, in imposing the 5%-with-strings pay package on BL workers, matters are not settled in British Leyland.

BL workers were betrayed but not defeated. They are in a militant but frustrated mood.

Since the strikes were betrayed management have played a tactical game around the introduction of the 92-page document of strings.

In some plants where they have felt safe they have gone ahead.

### Notice

In some plants they have held back, while in others such as Castle Bromwich they have used the two week notice of

intent "negotiated" by Moss Evans of the TGWU.

This last tactic may yet lead to further strike action in Castle Bromwich this week when the two weeks' notice runs out for the elimination of the paint sprayers' "toggling up" allowance.

### Persuaded

In the Cowley Body Plant the paint sprayers, after three days on strike, were told that the Castle Bromwich workers had accepted the company's terms and were persuaded by their leadership to go back to work and dress up in production time.

Meanwhile strike action has broken out in the Cowley Assembly Plant over the secondary issue of bonus back pay.

One of Edwardes' tactics in imposing his ultimatum was to offer a £100 bonus payment to

anyone who clocked in on 8 April and accepted the new conditions.

This turned out to be no more than £60 to £70 and workers struck in an angry mood.

The strike may well continue this week, with the issue broadening to embrace the package as a whole.

BL workers must fight to resist every move of management to impose any aspect of the strings.

### Unacceptable

They must say at every point that the Edwardes package remains unacceptable. All existing agreements must be defended. Strikes which break out must be spread to the other plants where similar conditions exist.

# APEX jobs fight

The union which sat back and allowed the Grunwick strike go to isolation and defeat has taken a firm stand in defence of jobs!

But of course things aren't exactly what they seem.

There are certainly some tub-thumping and militant speeches emanating from the unlikely vocal cords of Ray Grantham, General Secretary of the white collar union, APEX.

But the jobs he is defending are not in industry or the public sector: they are the well-paid jobs of full-time officials in the civil service union the CPSA, all of whom are APEX members!

What has rattled the cage of Grantham and his bureaucratic membership?

### Re-election

They are up in arms at the fact that no less than 31 motions on the agenda of the CPSA conference call for full time officials to be subjected to regular re-election.

Any hint of such accountability is of course anathema

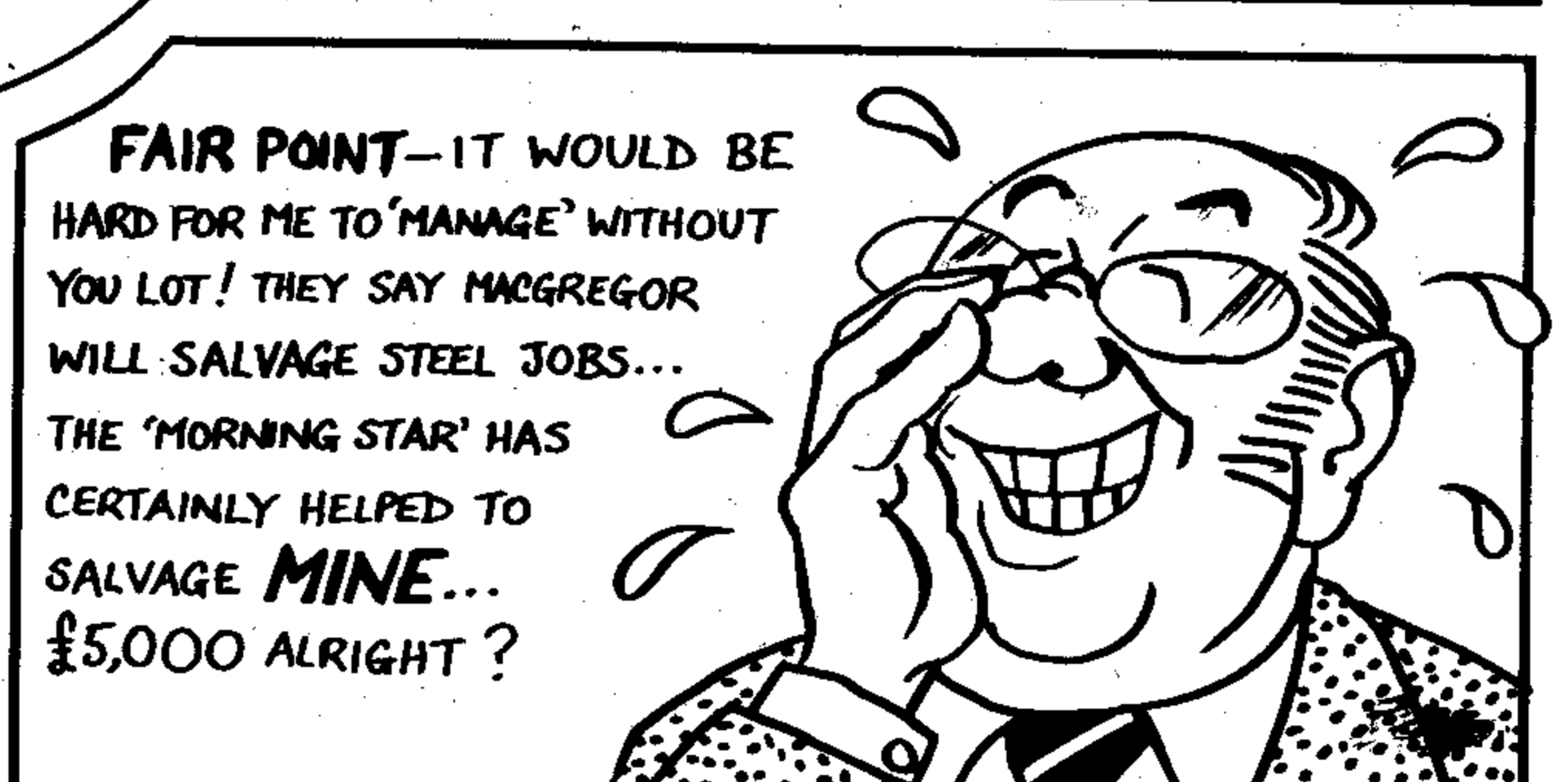
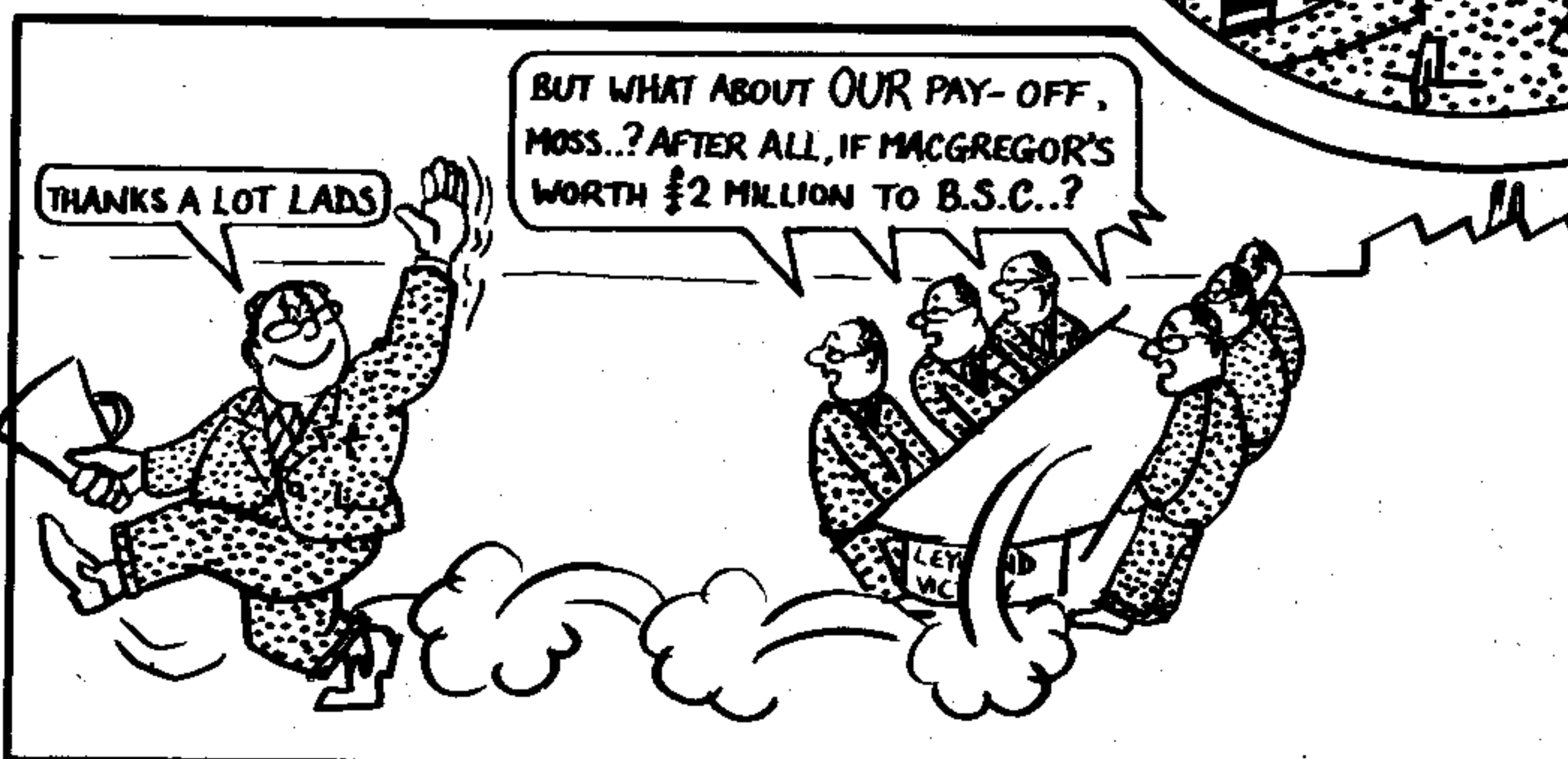
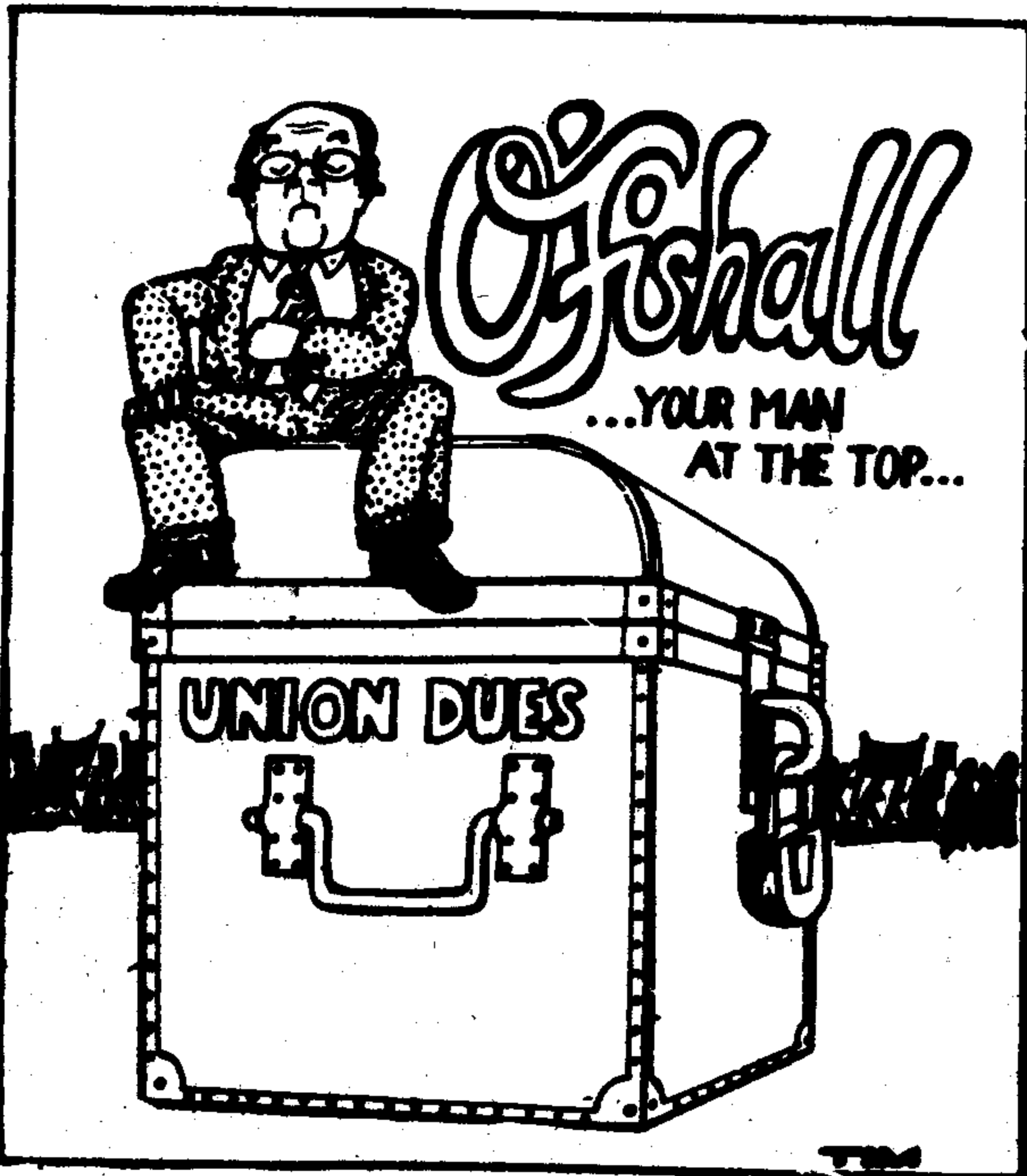


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

### Grantham

both to the CPSA officials and to Grantham, who is one of the foremost opponents of democratic reforms in the Labour Party.

But there should be no complacency among CPSA bureaucrats. When an extreme right winger declares "We shall defend our members by whatever method is appropriate—including industrial action if necessary" it is time to start looking for the forthcoming sell-out!



# SOCIALIST PRESS



## West Bank struggles flare

Last week was not a good one for the crisis-ridden Zionist regime in occupied Palestine.

The ultra right wing Begin government has only kept in power after a series of defections and damaging statements by ministers by the need to preserve unity in the face of the Palestinian 'common enemy'.

May Day demonstrations in Tel Aviv saw 150,000 workers chanting 'Begin go home'.

They were mostly organised by the pro-Zionist Labour Party and the state organised so-called trade union federation, the Histadrut.

The demonstration was described as 'the largest anti-government protest in the history of the state'.

It reflected the growing feeling against the 100% inflation rate and the desperate inability of the Begin regime to resolve it.

The only answer of Begin and his supporters has been to launch murderous attacks on the Palestinians.

At the end of last month a group of ultra-Zionist desperadoes went on a rampage around the town of Ramallah in the West Bank.



Begin

On May Day an Israeli army officer shot dead a 17 year old Palestinian youth in Antaba, also on the West Bank.

After a series of demonstrations and riots in the area the Israeli cabinet was discussing a new group of repressive measures including deportations, prison without trial and, no doubt, further measures yet to be revealed.

Israeli West Bank military governor Ben Eliezer declared that there was 'a greater readiness to provoke and confront' the Zionist forces by West Bank Palestinians.

This was followed by the attack on 2 May by Palestinian guerrillas on a group of settlers in the West Bank town of Hebron, where the Zionists have been making a particular effort to take over the Palestinian town.

They killed two and injured 40, without loss to themselves.

This was followed by the deportation of the Mayors of Hebron and Halhoul.

These deportations have added another twist to the protest movement, with demonstrations of Palestinian youth in Halhoul, Ramallah, El Bireh, Nablus, Jenin and Jericho.

There is no doubt that the Zionist leaders are prepared to use the utmost repressive force against such resistance: but the forward movement of the dispossessed Palestinian people in their struggle against the racist settler state has plainly gained strength from the weakening of imperialist control following the fall of the Shah.

Hence the urgency for Begin to cobble together with his Egyptian lackeys a scheme to buy off the bourgeois and petty bourgeois Palestinian leaders with a measure of "autonomy" in a West Bank ghetto area under the thumb of the Zionist state.



Egyptian stooge Sadat

# Iran's masses face twin onslaught

The clashes between US fighters and Iranian air force planes high over the Straits of Hormuz last week served to highlight the continuing threat of imperialist military aggression against Iran.

A US fleet is still hovering menacingly in the Gulf, yearning for the opportunity to restore its tattered prestige in the wake of the disastrous "rescue" mission in which eight hand-picked butchers were killed.

## Press campaign

US military "hawks" in Washington are meanwhile spearheading an orchestrated chauvinist press campaign designed to create conditions for Carter to unleash an outright military assault on the defiant Islamic regime which has cocked a snook at American imperialist might.

Such moves are not without resistance at home. An anti-war movement is already underway in the US, fuelled by memories of the horrific Vietnam war and growing popular hostility to the oil monopolies which stand to gain most from the forcible restoration of a pliable pro-

imperialist regime in Iran.

It is also clear that Carter's European allies are more than slightly hesitant at the prospect of further military adventures in Iran, which they fear could not only prove a disastrous failure, but also trigger an upsurge of anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles throughout the Gulf region and the Middle East.

But the biggest guns pointed at the Iranian masses are at present mounted on US aircraft carriers, bombers and battle cruisers, those being actually used to most lethal effect are in the hands of the Iranian military and Islamic fundamentalist forces under the direction of President Bani-Sadr and the Ayatollah Khomeini.

The Iranian army continues to prosecute its bloody war against the oppressed Kurdish minority in western Iran, with the bombardment of the capital Sanandaj—leaving at least 200 dead.

## Repression

Bani-Sadr has threatened to call on "36 million people of this country to be present in Kurdistan and defend the one and unity of the country".

Similar threats and actual

military repression are the principal means through which the struggles of Iran's other oppressed minorities—the Turkomans, Azerbaijanis and Arabs—are being held in check.

## Lumpen mob

But the street violence of the lumpen mob brought into play by Bani-Sadr has been employed most ruthlessly employed in the attempts to crush the secular left-wing forces of the Fedayeen—whose power bases in the universities have come under vicious and bloody attack.

As the Fedayeen—which has consistently supported the struggles of national minorities and of the working class, and thus rapidly expanded in size and influence since the fall of the Shah—fought back, Bani-Sadr declared that he would lead "the people" onto the campuses to crush the left wingers.

The left has responded by anti-government demonstrations proclaiming Bani-Sadr to be "worse than the Shah".

With economic chaos and devastation growing daily in Iran—oil exports are now at a virtual standstill from the giant Kharg Island terminal—the regime is clearly divided on how best to handle the crisis.



Carter

While Bani-Sadr continues to look for means of strengthening the central state machinery to restore stability and towards a reconciliation with US imperialism Khomeini still seeks to exploit the hostage issue as a diversion from the material problems facing the Iranian masses.

Either way the Iranian workers and peasants face a future of violent repression and exploitation at the hands of Iranian and foreign capital.

The way forward must be through a turn to the strengthening of the factory and neighbourhood committees that have sprung up since the overthrow of the Shah, and the construction of a revolutionary leadership on a socialist programme of democratic and transitional demands to mobilise the masses and oppressed minorities in the fight for a workers and peasants government in Iran.

# NUT no action on victimisation

With one member sacked and over 50 members having been sent home without pay for refusing to teach oversized classes, the National Union of Teachers is still steadfastly refusing to call all-out action to defeat Nottingham's Tory council.

In a ballot in February over 200 schools declared their willingness to take action to force the reinstatement of Eileen Crosbie, then under suspension for refusing to teach a nursery class of 40 children with only one nursery nurse.

But the NUT leaders had no intention of calling them all out. Instead they called for a succession of lightning strikes and token stoppages that have only served to confirm to management that the union bureaucracy is utterly spineless.

## "No cover"

At Easter even these actions in defence of Eileen Crosbie were called off. Instead the policy of "no cover" action was introduced.

The authority responded promptly. Eileen Crosbie's sacking was announced, and teachers taking "no cover" action were immediately victimised!

Yet while scab labour is

brought in to run schools in the absence of locked-out NUT members; while Eileen Crosbie remains sacked; and while teachers having voted for action are forced to witness the whole debacle from the sidelines, NUT national and divisional leaders continue to bleat that they are willing to negotiate!

## Determination

Nottingham's Tory council reflects the determination of the Thatcher government to press home its attacks on education standards. Eileen Crosbie is quite right to point out that:



Eileen Crosbie

"It is not just important for me that the union wins this, but for every teacher in the country."

NUT leaders, too, in their own way recognise the national importance of the Nottingham fight. They know that if they give a lead to teachers for all-out action to defeat the Tory attack in this one town, then members throughout the country will demand similarly resolute action to defend their jobs and conditions.

This would disrupt the NUT bureaucracy's course of collaboration and coexistence with management: and could prompt wider struggles, embracing NUPE and other public sector unions, against the Tories.

## Leadership

Yet without such a fight there is no way the attacks can be halted. If the NUT leaders refuse to lead the struggle, a new leadership must be constructed that will do so.

\*NUT must strike to stop the cuts! Demand supporting action from other unions!

\*Force the reinstatement of Eileen Crosbie!

\*Defend education standards; for a sliding scale of spending to keep pace with inflation!

\*Bring down the Tories!



Bani-Sadr

## Fund: urgent help needed

With the April Fund closing over £300 below our target of £750 and only £150 received towards the second half of our £3,000 Special Fund in the past month the situation is now extremely serious.

Clearly it just is not possible to maintain our publications and develop our work nationally and internationally if we do not receive the finance necessary to carry out such work.

We must therefore ask our readers and supporters to think very seriously about making a financial contribution to the Socialist Press Monthly Fund and to our £3,000 Special Fund. Let's not find ourselves in a position where we are unable to carry out our work simply because we have not got the money to do so.

Please send a donation to:

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Socialist Press 100 Club: 28 April, 1st, 82; 2nd, 22; 5 May, 1st, 39; 2nd 66.