

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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## POLAND

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# TUC '80:



The most reactionary Tory government since the 1920s will have smiled warmly last week at the antics of the most servile TUC Congress in recent memory.

But any worker looking for leadership in the struggle to defend jobs and union rights, halt the cuts in public services, and protect living standards, will have looked on aghast as the TUC declared itself committed to the "four Cs":

\* *Capitulation* to the Tory anti-union laws.

\* *Collaboration* with British employers in pleading for import controls and a change of course by the Thatcher government.

\* *Control* of wages and rigid policing of the union rank and file in a revamped 'social contract' under the next Labour government.

\* *Callaghan* and his right wing clique as the leadership of the Labour Party.

In a week of evasion, manoeuvre and compromise, a mere 40 minutes was allocated to discussion on how to respond to Prior's so-called Employment Act, which came into full force on Monday of this week.

### Frontal Attack

The Act encompasses a frontal attack on the closed shop, picketing rights, the right to strike, and rights at work: and it seeks to increase still further the power of the Tory press and mass media to influence union elections, by promoting postal ballots.

Yet no union had called for the necessary policy of defiance of the Act and all-out action to defeat the Thatcher government.

Small wonder, therefore, that the resulting composite motion passed by the TUC, vaguely talking of "a sustained and vigorous campaign of non-cooperation" with the Act, was so hollow that even the right wing AUEW and EPTU leaders felt able to vote for it.

### Tory Cash

The fact is that AUEW President Terry Duffy has already made it clear that his union officials will cooperate with the Act, and even intend to take Tory cash to run their postal ballots!

Meanwhile, as the bosses' government steps up its offensive against the basic organisations of the labour movement, the union leaders are looking not for ways of defeating Thatcher and driving her from office, but for ways of forcing her into a "U-turn".

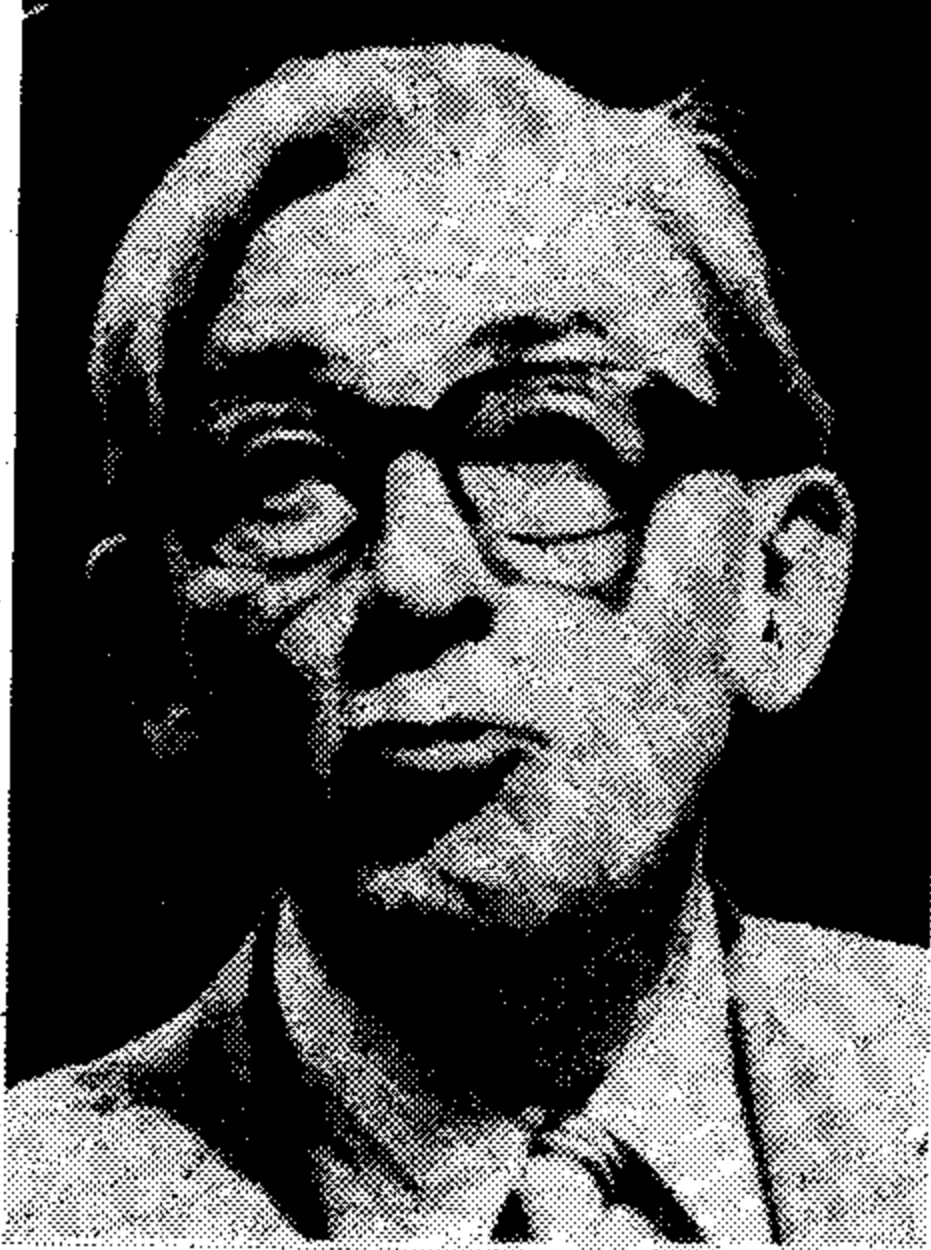
To do this they have turned not to a mobilisation of the millions of workers already suffering the effects of Tory policies, but to disillusioned sections of employers, who may be angry that their cash hand-outs to the Tories have brought not instant profits but mounting recession.

TUC General Secretary Len Murray called upon, of all bodies, the Confederation of British Industry to:

"come out of its political

# ON THEIR FEET FOR WAGE CONTROL . . .

# ON THEIR KNEES TO THATCHER!



Murray

corner and face the consequences for its own members of the government policies, and join us in getting the government to think again."

CBI members had "learned the hard way" that Tory policies meant cuts in profits and cuts in investment, whined Murray.

### Import Controls

And to show that their concern for the plight of British capitalists is far greater than their interest in the plight of the unemployed and those workers facing speed-up as a result of the capitalist crisis,

the TUC also pledged itself even more stridently than before to a nationalist policy of import controls to protect British manufactures against "foreign" competition.

In case any workers believed for one moment that the TUC while throwing in the towel on union rights and jobs would be willing to fight on the wages front, the Brighton Congress proved them three times wrong:

\* The standing ovation given by the platform and the bulk of delegates to Callaghan's explicit call for a new social contract and five years of wage controls under a new Labour government was backed up by a resolution to that effect, carried by 5.3 million votes to 3.6 million.

\* Len Murray's speech reiterated that, while opposed to "crude" (undisguised) wage restraint, the TUC delegation to visit Thatcher in the next few weeks would discuss pay policy along with "anything with anybody at anytime"—in other words, would offer a social contract to the Tories as well as a Labour government.

And while the TGWU cast its 2 million votes against the "social contract" proposals, TGWU leader Moss Evans declared that he would attend the TUC talks with Callaghan.

In other words, as their members battle to defend their

living standards against runaway inflation, the TUC leadership are even now lining up with Callaghan to prepare a new full-blooded five-year package of wage controls under the guise of "a planned economy".

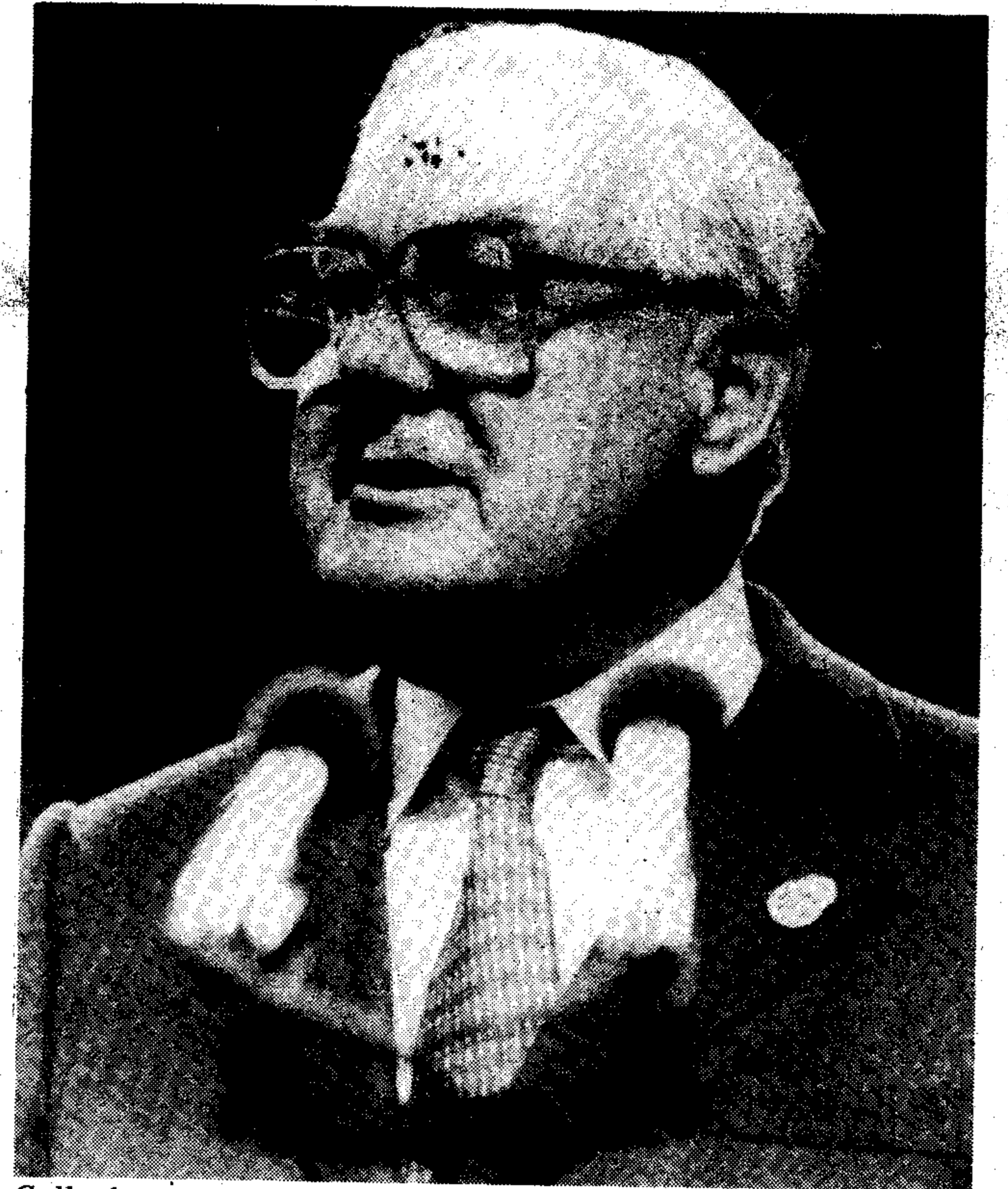
### Propaganda

Such reactionary moves can only assist the Tory propaganda drive designed to persuade workers that "excessive pay demands" are the cause of mass unemployment, and underline the fact that workers will get no lead from the union bureaucracy in the pay battles this winter.

But while they refused to fight the Tories—with not a single lead for action in a whole week of hot air and arm-waving—the union leaders eagerly threw their weight behind Callaghan's bid to restore the dominance of Labour's right wing.

Callaghan's lengthy speech, spelling out his unabashed adherence to the self-same reactionary policies that lost Labour the 1979 election, drew wild applause from the platform and a large majority of delegates—while others sat in angry silence.

Pulling no punches, Callaghan dwelt at length on the need not only to uphold but to extend and tighten up the



Callaghan

Concordat drawn up between the Labour government and the TUC to restrict picketing and strikes during the pay battles of 1978-79.

"What we must know is within what code of discipline will you (the unions) work, and how are you to make it effective?"

In particular Callaghan suggested that unions should give powers to "special bodies" to control the actions of the rank and file and thus enforce the reactionary deals struck between top-level Labour and TUC leaders.

Of course there is no way that such deals could be maintained if the membership of the unions or the Labour Party were able to express their feelings in a democratic way.

This is why the Callaghan gang has consistently set its face against the democratic reforms to the Party constitution proposed by the left wing, and why he has been supported in this by a growing body of worried trade union leaders.

### More Afraid

The union bureaucrats are far more afraid of the strength and militancy of their members than they are of the Tory government. They are deter-

mined not to lose their control of the rank and file on which their power and privilege depends.

The standing ovation for Callaghan makes it clear that the prospects of a majority of union block votes being cast in favour of the Party reforms on the election of the leadership and control of the Manifesto are minimal.

### United

In their capitulation to Thatcher and their search for a new social contract, the TUC leaders Labour's right wing stand united against the interests and independent struggles of their members on the shop floor of industry, in the public sector and on the growing dole queues.

The fight to stop the Tory offensive requires above all the struggle for a new, principled revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The Brighton Congress, which itself has done nothing to advance the class struggle, has at least served to underline this harsh fact.

We urge workers seeking a way forward against the Tories to join with Socialist Press supporters and the Workers Socialist League in the struggle to build such a leadership.





- INTERNATIONAL

# GAINS IN GDANSK

The publication of the full agreement signed by both the Central Strike Committee in Gdansk and the Polish government makes possible a much closer analysis.

It is at once clear that while major gains have been made by the strikers, the bureaucracy is seeking means to manoeuvre in order to limit these gains and later eradicate them altogether. Yet the continued militancy of growing sections of Polish workers have already cut off one line of attack by the bureaucrats—which was to attempt to restrict the new independent unions to specific geographical areas around the Baltic ports.

## Conceded

The agreement specifically concedes the right to form independent unions:

"It is considered useful to establish new self-governing trade unions to be an authentic representative of the working class."

These, it is conceded, will be established by the Central Strike Committee. This is important because in Gierek's first offer the elections would have been organised by the state-run official unions—as in the case of the elections that followed the 1970 strikes.

Now the strike committees can choose whether to become "the founding committees of the new self-governing unions" or to operate as workers' councils or committees.

The right to strike is guaranteed—as it was for a short period, after the struggles of 1956.

But the chief restriction on the new unions is the subject matter they are to be allowed to deal with. The agreement specifically states that the unions "will not play the role of a political party".

"The new trade unions should have real possibilities for publicly giving their opinion on key decisions determining the living conditions of working people."

"The principles of distributing the national income for consumption and accumulation, the distribution of the social consumption fund for various purposes (health protection, education, culture), the basic principles of remuneration and wage policies, and particularly the principle of automatic wage correction in conditions of inflation, long term economic plans, investment and prices policies."

To discuss these topics the

unions will have their own publications.

But it is clear that future struggles will take place both over action on such questions, and over the attempt by the bureaucracy to limit the political development of the workers in their new organisations.

## Gone Beyond

Indeed workers have already gone well beyond these restrictions by having displaced Gierek and many other bureaucrats, by fighting on for further changes in management and in government, and by having, for the first time in a Stalinist state, forced the release of political prisoners by mass strike action.

The agreement safeguards the interests of the bureaucracy when it declares that "Censorship should protect the interests of its 'economic secrets'". And the only unambiguous paragraphs conceding access to the media are in relation to the Church.

But another clause suggests that the matter will by no means rest there, since it concedes that:

"The necessity was stressed of full respect for the freedom of expression of convictions in public and professional life."

The Central Strike Committee shows its political strength in the demands it has incorporated into the agreement to benefit the poorer peasants.

Clauses relating to access to equipment and ensuring profitable production for poor peasants are included.

## Alliance

While there is of course a danger that rich peasants could emerge as the basis of a restorationist movement seeking to overturn nationalised property in Poland, the danger would be far greater if the workers do not seek to establish a firm alliance with the poorest layers of peasants, offering them a way forward against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Much of the agreement focusses on economic demands, some of which, as in the case of pensions, go much further than simple economic concessions.

The strikers have extracted a pledge, for instance, "ensuring" an adequate number of places will be provided at creches and kindergartens "for children of working women".

Other demands relate to improved housing, a shorter working week and more holi-

days. While the Tory press in general supports the settlement and the extension of new loans to prop up the tottering Polish bureaucracy, the capitalists have pointed out that the only way the economic concessions can be paid for is through increases in productivity.

Such a "solution" tacitly accepts the continuation of bureaucratic control and mismanagement in Poland, and the continued isolation of Poland and the deformed and degenerated workers states from the advanced capitalist economies.

But this is also the starting point of the Gdansk agreement. The central strike committee ironically joins with the bureaucracy in a final plea for greater effort by the working class;

"MKS [Central Strike Committee] appeals to workers affiliated to it to proceed after the end of the strike with actions to increase productivity, conserve materials and energy, and a sense of discipline at every workplace, co-operating to this effect with the managements of enterprises, work establishments and institutions."

The British Communist Party, itself a Stalinist party, has lined up cautiously with the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy against the independent struggles of the working class.

The caution is the result of the CPGB's ostensibly "independent" Eurocommunist positions, and its desire to keep well in with the liberal petty bourgeois friends in Britain who oppose the cruder dictatorial measure of the Stalinist regime.

This is why the Communist Party daily *Morning Star* presented a position that while appearing to support the strikes in practice led workers back towards the Gierek bureaucracy.

## Back to Work

At each turn by the bureaucracy aimed at getting the strikers back to work with only limited gains, the *Morning Star* supported the steps taken by Gierek.

On August 20, an editorial declared support for Gierek's



Women shipyard workers in Gdansk

# Stalinists back Gierek

call for a solution through "discussion and dialogue, compromise and agreement" declaring that:

"Any other course would only make worse an already difficult (!) situation."

## No Support

The *Star* also—forgetting about the huge new bank loans on the way—complained that the "Polish authorities and people" had received no support from the British establishment.

The next day the *Star* printed Gierek's speech—in which he confined his offers to a few economic concessions and a call to the official unions to change. He also attacked the alleged role of "anti-socialist groups".

But a week later Gierek was forced to make much more substantial concessions. The *Morning Star* obediently followed him—describing his August 24 speech as "momentous".

But Gierek was still offering only new elections in the official unions, as well as economic

concessions.

The *Star* had no complaints with this. Indeed August 29 saw a half page article by CP Industrial organiser Mick Costello extolling the role of "Trade Unions Under Socialism".

Costello welcomed "the tone of Comrade Gierek's speech", and clearly declared his support both for the official unions in Poland, and for those in the Soviet Union:

"We must express our confidence in the ability of the Polish working class, its union (!) government and P.U.W.P. [Polish CP] to overcome the difficulties that have arisen in this context."

"It is against this background that it is imperative for our trade union movement to strengthen its relations with the unions in the Socialist countries."

## General Strike

Costello's statements were written well before the Polish government had conceded independent trade unions: indeed

they come at a time when there was a developing General Strike movement in Poland based on just such a demand.

## Confidence

If the British CP had had their way, Polish workers would have simply gone back to work without the Gdansk deal, welcoming "the tone of Comrade Gierek's speech" and expressing "confidence" in their Stalinist bureaucratic rulers.

In this context the British CP gave its full support to the planned TUC visit to the "official" Polish unions.

Polish workers have shown in practice their contempt for such bureaucratic monstrosities posing as unions: in supporting their struggles, British workers should draw the appropriate political conclusions about self-styled "Communists" who preferred the status quo under Gierek.

# Crackdown on Corsican militants

The arrest of a Corsican nationalist, Leonelli, and his subsequent confessions have led to the imprisonment of scores of nationalist militants in the island itself and in Marseilles.

This police operation, masterminded by the French intelligence services, has created severe turmoil amongst the different opposition forces in the island.

## Reactionary

As usual, all the reactionary newspapers—most prominent the Nice-based *Nice Matin*—have triggered a vicious witchhunt against Corsican nationalists, calling for reinforcements to be sent to an island already saturated with police squads, army units and special branch brigades.

The press has branded those nationalists who have confessed their involvement in the bombings—none of which has killed anyone—as "terrorists" and "psychopathic killers".

At the same time, the "clans"—the traditionally powerful class of Corsican land-

owners and businessmen—have launched a campaign "protesting against violence" but whose real aim is two-fold.

Firstly the two main clans, Rucca Serra and Giacobbi, acting under orders from the French ruling class will exploit every bombing to denounce the "autonomists" and the "anti-French" elements.

And secondly they will try and minimise the impact of the economic recession on their followers and allies—the petty bourgeoisie, shopkeepers, hotel owners—whose illusions in the clans as protectors of their interests are rapidly decreasing.

As for the left parties—CP, SP and CPU (legal autonomists)—their demands for the past decade have posed no real threat to French domination in the island.

## Reforms

Their demands have merely been limited to puny reforms which they hoped the French ruling class would grant in order to whittle down any growing opposition.

On the contrary the French

bourgeoisie in alliance with local capitalists has reacted arrogantly, dismissing every demand however minimal, formulated by the reformists.

Even under pressure from their own base those reformists and Stalinists are still steadfastly refusing to mobilise the working class and overthrow French domination.

Instead they have made semantic changes in their rhetoric and, for the first time, even dared use words like "autonomy".

But words like "independence" will still be banned from their speeches and resolutions.

Their allies, the CPU, profess openly their allegiance to France and after their last congress in August, were warmly congratulated by the daily *Le Monde* for their "courageous stand".

The only group to pose a threat to French domination in the island is the National Front for the Liberation of Corsica (FLNC).

Recruiting mainly among rural nationalists (i paesani) the Front enjoys support from the

working class and the peasantry.

And it is for this reason that the French ruling class had been increasingly strengthening the forces of repression, precisely to sever that link between the Corsican population and the Front.

Despite a well-planned campaign of bombing and sabotage, the Front has achieved very little.

Their acts of violence against military or commercial targets have left the ruling class unscathed.

They have become mere routine operations, and don't even help the Front to score political gains.

Apparently in their communiqués to the press or leaflets to the population the nationalists don't bother to explain the political significance of their acts.

Of course their main objective is the overthrow of French domination. But so far they have not claimed adherence to any political line.

Rouge, weekly paper of the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) recently claimed to have received a copy of the Front's paper *Ribellu*, where

the front outlined their programme and tasks.

They correctly demand the expropriation of all land belonging to French colonialists; but nevertheless they do not extend the agrarian reform to the land owned by local clan chiefs and businessmen.

The Front also stresses the need to build a society where all forms of exploitation would be eliminated.

This will remain an abstract formula without a full political programme of transitional demands.

## No Campaign

The Front also regularly greets "all brothers in prison" victims of French repression—but without organising a political campaign for their release.

The solidarity organisations, grouping prisoners' families, have limited objectives and can only provide moral support for the prisoners.

Like its political opponents, the Stalinists and reformists, the Front uses dangerous concepts like "national unity"

denying the existence of a class struggle.

At the same time it never uses the word "socialism" claiming that "the people are not ready yet".

Finally its major weakness remains its determination to act as an underground organisation. It does not see the need to operate openly in order to reach the organised labour movement in Corsica and in France itself.

It does not see the need to give a political structure and political education to its cadres in order to build a revolutionary party.

Without these basic requirements, the National Front for the Liberation of Corsica cannot create conditions for liberation from French domination.

Making a break from dead-end guerillaist tendencies, and armed with a full, political programme of transitional demands, it should take the struggle into the French labour movement.

Only in this way can Corsican militants bring to an end 200 years of exploitation and oppression.





# INTERNATIONAL

# El Salvador

# STALINISTS

# SEEK 'UNITY'

# WITH BOSSES



*El Salvador poor: no common interest with bosses*

The principal forces of the left in El Salvador, unlike those in Nicaragua, developed around and out of Stalinism.

Important elements were radicalised by the crisis of Christian Democracy in the late 60s and early 70s—but these were largely concentrated in the peasantry and student movement.

The leading cadres of the guerilla forces and mass organisations set up in the mid-70s were primarily dissidents from the Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS).

Since its establishment in 1930 the PCS has remained an unremarkable and stoically pro-Moscow Stalinist organisation.

But nearly 50 years, of illegality have prevented it from exploiting to the full its projected alliances with the 'national bourgeoisie' in order to 'develop the forces of production', institute bourgeois democracy and ease the tiny, super-exploited neo-colonial state into socialism on the back of 'industrialisation'.

### Nationalistic

The founder of the PCS, Agustin Farabundo Marti, is today celebrated for campaigning alongside Sandino in Nicaragua.

Yet it is rarely, if ever, mentioned that Marti broke with Sandino over the 'merely nationalistic, and non-revolutionary nature' of his struggle against the US marines.

Marti was executed the following year after the disastrously-led 1932 insurrection, and the FPL guerillas have adopted his name in their full title, evoking the 'inter-

Second in a series of background articles by Don Flint on the left wing groupings currently engaged in the struggles in El Salvador.

Last week's article looked at the general lines of policy of the Mass Revolutionary Coordination (CRM) formed on February 28, and its parallels with the Nicaraguan FSLN. This week attention is focussed on the Communist Party.

nationalist example' of his decision to join Sandino, rather than that in his criticism and subsequent break from Sandino's narrow nationalism.

Thus one of the few positive lessons yielded by the early Salvadorean communists has been cast aside and Marti's memory and myth utilised in much the same manner as is Sandino's.

In 1969 the PCS formed the Democratic National Union (UDN) and joined with the MNR and Christian Democrats in forming the National Opposition Union (UNO) in a fruitless effort to contest the elections that had been traditionally rigged by the army since it came to power in 1931.

The platform of UNO was for minimal reforms and 'greater democracy'; it posed no threat to the ruling oligarchy and had nothing to offer the masses bar abject confusion, monstrous illusions, and cul-de-sac abstentionism from all polls except that in 1972.

By the time UNO had self-righteously and indignantly withdrawn from the 1977 presidential poll, the alliance was already a dead duck and the PCS in tatters as a result of a series of splits.

The first of these, in 1969,

resulted from the party's open support for the military invasion of Honduras which came to be known as the 'Football War' but in fact stemmed from the overspill of large numbers of Salvador's many migrant workers and nationalistic rivalry within the Central American Common Market.

However, the loss of many of its most experienced cadre did not deter the CP from pursuing its popular front strategy of seeking alliances with the capitalist class.

### Enriched

As late as the Spring of 1979 it celebrated the tenth anniversary of the founding of UNO as 'enriching the popular movement' with its programme that

"voiced the democratic aspirations and structural changes required by the great majority of the people, grouped them behind it, and forced a polarisation in the electoral confrontation . . ." (El PCS Celebro Su Septimo Congreso, May 1979 p.3)

In case the lessons of this strategy were lost on its supporters the Central Committee spelt

them out explicitly "The bourgeois democratic path to solving the political crisis has today to be an inseparable part of substantial socio-economic reforms . . ." (ibid)

The practical consequence of such positions was the call for 'anti-fascist unity' for 'the removal of the fascists from the government' (ie 'fascist individuals from the government, not the government itself') (PCS leaflet, 18 June 1979 p.4)

This required the "steadfast struggle of the workers, of the people in general, of all democratic sectors, led calmly (serenamente) and in unity, without sectarianism or adventurism, to erect the solid barrier capable of stopping the fascists." (PCS leaflet, 1 May 1978 P.4.)

It was therefore, perfectly logical for the CP to enter the colonels' junta in October 1979 taking five cabinet positions (ministries of labour, education, economy and the presidency).

The experience was totally disastrous, even in the PCS' own terms. Its political credibility crumbled as government troops slaughtered hundreds of workers and peasants with the implicit stamp of approval of the 'party of world proletarian revolution' and in the cause of 'greater democracy'.

CP ministers were kidnapped and held hostage by striking workers, and in the face of total disintegration, the PCS scurried out of government along with the social democrats early in January 1980.

By the end of the month, still operating under the name of the UDN, the party had joined the Mass Revolutionary Co-ordination (CRM) announcing its entry with the ominous headline: "unstoppable advance of Popular Unity."

### Marriage Broker

The CRM was described as the "first step in the construction of a broad front of popular forces against the military dictatorship . . . which demonstrates the maturity attained by the revolutionary organisations and by the popular movement in general". (Voz Popular, 122 21 January 1980 p.1)

The role of the CP as marriage broker for the popular front is in itself unsurprising but its principal achievement

has been to overcome the distrust and outright opposition of the 'revolutionary left'.

It is reported that within the CRM the CP is still treated as 'rightist' despite the fact that its leading light, Jorge Shafik Handel, has gained a place on the Unified Revolutionary Leadership (DRU)—the centralised guerilla command, ostensibly the radical arm of the alliance (ie roughly analogous to the Nicaraguan FSLN high command compared to the broad political front).

The right wing orientation is borne out in the PCS' desperate search for international allies which almost outstrips the bourgeois effort in this quarter, declaring that it is "necessary to gain the friendship and aid" of the right wing Venezuelan regime (which actively supports and arms the junta) and

"at least get the benevolent neutralism of the Costa Rican government . . . despite the anti communist attitude of President Carazo." (UDN leaflet undated, Spring 1980).

Sitting on the DRU with Shafik is Salvador Cayetano Carpio ('Marcial'), who is Commander of the Popular Liberation Front (FPL), and a leading member of the Popular Revolutionary Block (BPR), and one of the principal figureheads of the Democratic Revolutionary Front (DRU).

### Veteran

Cayetano, a man in his 60s, is a veteran militant, a union leader of many years standing and, until 1970, secretary general of the PCS.

It was Cayetano who led the split in 1980 to form the FPL in 1971 and the BPR in 1975.

The critiques of the PCS made by these forces ostensibly go beyond mere guerillism and therefore deserve some scrutiny.

In next week's *Socialist Press* we will examine them in some detail.



*After a recent street riot*



*Victim of right-wing violence*



# The reformist dream of "peace"

Last week's TUC Congress debate on military disarmament highlighted the attempts of reformism to defend British imperialism, through politically disarming the working class.

The Congress motion on peace and disarmament called on the general council to take a new initiative to alert the trade union movement and the public to the need for abolishing nuclear weapons and for reducing arms spending in general. It went on to call for a

future Labour government to be committed to cancel the £5 billion Trident missile order, to remove US Cruise missiles from Britain, and to use savings from a cut in defence spending for relieving youth unemployment.

In moving this vague and toothless motion, TGWU delegate Larry Smith urged that the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) be "revitalised".

NUM President Joe Gormley seconded. Pointing to moves by the NUM leadership to organise an international conference of mineworkers' unions on peace

and disarmament, Gormley declared that the unions "should be willing to give a lead to convince the people of the world that only peace can guarantee the future of mankind".

The working masses of the world, including the British working class, need no convincing of the necessity for peace. They need a fighting programme that shows the way forward in the struggle for peace and plenty.

The reformists of the labour movement, both left and right, together with the Stalinists, offer no such programme.

What they do offer is the criminal illusion that capitalist militarism can be destroyed without a socialist revolution. Just how this pie-in-the-sky dream is to be fulfilled is not spelled out.

But the reformist calls for disarmament and peace do not only fail to give a practical way forward. They are in fact an *attack* on the political independence of the working masses.

They seek to turn the working class away from its historic task of *overthrowing* the decaying capitalist system of oppression and exploitation.

In place of international working class solidarity against world imperialism and its war machine, the reformists put forward national class collaboration in defence of "British" interests.

## Militarism

Militarism and wars are just as much the products of capitalism as unemployment, starvation and military-police dictatorships. To call on the bourgeoisie to lay down its arms is as utopian as asking the capitalists to hand over their plunder to the exploited masses.

Capitalism rests on production for private profit. The main productive forces are held by powerful monopoly cliques (banks, multinationals). Capitalist states are pliant tools in the hands of these cliques.

The magnates of monopoly capitalism stand *above* the official organs of state power (government, courts, armed forces), controlling these organs from their commanding heights in the economy.

The opportunist labour bureaucrats scurry around the footstool of state power, creating support for it within the working class.

The imperialist powers and their agents are armed to the teeth in order to protect the power and profits of monopoly capital.

The growth of class struggle and the sharpening of rivalries between capitalist nations under the impact of economic crisis are the driving forces in the current military build-up.

## Revolution

Without working class revolution that tears state power and domination of the economy from the hands of monopoly capital, wars are inevitable.

Calling for disarmament without linking it to the socialist revolution is not just utopian. In the hands of reformists and Stalinists it is a weapon aimed at *blocking* the necessary preparation for the working class revolution, at paralysing the revolutionary will of the working class and demoralising it in the face of a supposedly all-powerful bourgeoisie.

In order to disarm the bourgeoisie, the working class

must be armed and led in an insurrection to seize state power.

The working class will have to remain armed to protect its dictatorship from capitalist, counter-revolution and so pave the way for planning and organising the economy to meet the needs of the people, not the profits of the bourgeoisie.

Only the unfolding of workers' revolution on a world scale—including the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies in the degenerated and deformed workers' states—can lay the basis for world disarmament and peace on the basis of material plenty possible under planned world economy.

## Obstacle

To achieve the workers' revolution, a revolutionary programme and leadership must first be built in the working class. An immediate obstacle to this is the slogan of disarmament peddled by the reformists and Stalinists.

Revolutionaries must fight for a programme of transitional demands around the question of capitalist militarism to be taken up in the working class.

The first condition for a successful fight by the advanced workers against the grip of the existing leadership over the working class, is that they be armed with such a programme.

**\*No to the armaments programme! No cuts in public services! For a massive job-creating programme of useful public works and services under workers' control.**

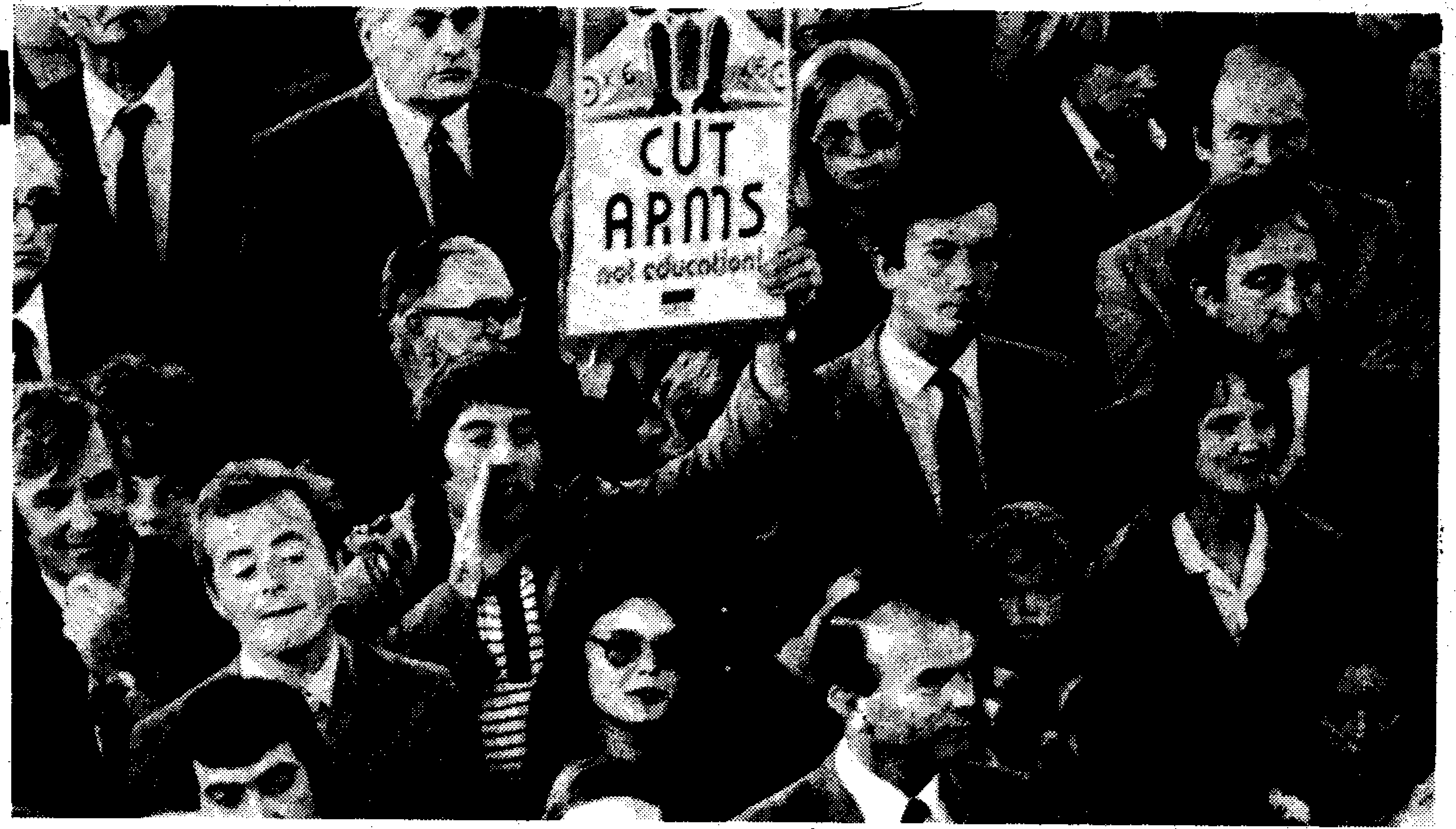
**\*Nationalise the arms and nuclear industries and their suppliers under workers' control.**

**\*Build workers defence squads against police, army and fascist attack.**

**\*Disband the capitalist armed forces (including US armed forces in Britain). For a workers militia.**

**\*No secret diplomacy**  
**\*Build independent working class action in support of mass struggles against world imperialism, and in defence of the degenerated and deformed workers' states. British troops out of Ireland.**

**\*Prepare a general strike to bring down the bosses government of Thatcher. For a workers government.**



# NUJ delegates duck Tameside fight

Around 100 trade unionists and socialists joined a vociferous lobby of the TUC on Wednesday, demanding the reinstatement of the disaffiliated Tameside Trades Council.

Shouting "Troops Out, Tameside In", they marched on the Congress from the rail station and harangued delegates during the lunch break.

Tameside was struck off the TUC's list of recognised Trades Councils for the "crime" of convening a labour movement conference on Ireland with republican speakers.

But the lobby took place a full 24 hours after the NUJ delegation had ratted on its mandate to demand a reference back of the section of the TUC General Council Report which endorsed the Tameside disaffiliation.

The NUJ Annual Delegate Meeting in April had condemned the TUC move. The union's delegation to the TUC had designated 'left' talking full time official Mike Bower to move the reference back.

But as the crucial clause 88 of the TUC Report was reached in the morning of Tuesday, Bower and his fellow delegates raised not a whisper.

Conference President Terry Parry eagerly moved on—and the disaffiliation of Tameside went by "on the nod".

Questioned later by angry lobbyists NUJ delegates professed ignorance that the section of the Report had been taken—even though it was clearly scheduled for that morning.

Of course the likelihood of this being a simple "mistake" is negligible: nobody gets elected as a delegate to the TUC without being well-versed in following through Annual Reports in union conferences.

The fact is that the delegation clearly had no wish to raise the issue of Tameside and avoided doing so—in defiance of their own mandate.

As a result the TUC has set a substantial precedent in muzzling labour movement debate on Ireland—and hung a threat over every Trades Council for the next period.

The campaign for the reinstatement of Tameside however has won the support of over 46 Trades Councils and dozens of union branches.

It must continue to press for the ending of labour movement censorship on the Irish war and to oppose bureaucratic moves to "reorganise" Tameside Trades Council.



Despite the fact that about 1,500 people turned up to the Beyond the Fragments conference in Leeds on 30th August, a large majority felt that the left was as much if not more fragmented by the end of the day.

Most of these 1,500 seemed to be graduated students from the era of the 1968 radicalisation now cosily placed in professional posts, with time to patronisingly reflect on the fate of the working class.

The structure of the conference, such as it was, consisted of initial and concluding plenary sessions interspersed with workshops on a number of fairly abstract topics.

But what characterised the workshops above all, was their complete lack of concern over the present economic and political situation in Britain.

No one seemed to be interested in fighting the Tories or opposing sackings and cuts in services. Instead these "socialists" slipped gently into the utopian construction of 'radical alternatives' to existing institutions.

A workshop of the Welfare State produced comments to the effect that the working class was not prepared to defend threatened hospitals because they were 'alienated from them' and would rather go without!

Another "socialist" remarked that strikes were an unimaginative form of struggle and were now outmoded. Presumably workers ought to take up street theatre instead!

The emphasis was all on consciousness: the need to get across to the working class the message that capitalism is not in their interests and that socialism is a possible alternative.

Until such time as the

working class manages to cotton on to the fact that it is getting a rough deal from the Tories, the Beyond the Fragmenters will be satisfied with mulling over the problems of alienation and 'lack of communication'.

Naturally the Communist Party 'peaceful roaders' fitted in perfectly with this scheme—their positions indistinguishable from those of the conference organisers.

This was ironic, since the conference's refusal to discuss any practical struggle against the Tories was accompanied by deep hostility to Leninist groups.

One WSL comrade was actually barred from speaking, and more tellingly perhaps, the Right to Work Campaign, which spent the entire day shaking buckets to collect money for their march, came up, with a meagre £35 by the end.

The final plenary session, which appeared to be arranged

so as to cut out any contributions from the floor, did include a report on the situation in Poland.

The conference organisers, after abusing the revolutionary left for its allegedly authoritarian and rigid organisation, bureaucratically produced a statement on Poland, to which no amendments were admitted.

While listing a number of oppressed groups in Poland, the statement neglected any mention of gay oppression, much to the anger of the gay groups at the conference.

The Feminists were equally outraged at the lack of any discussion of patriarchy at the centre of the conference agenda.

Parents were also irate, about the lack of suitable creche facilities.

So the conference ended, with most people feeling frustrated or angry about some aspect of it, and with no constructive practical policies for the future

having been discussed.

The only proposal from the organisers was to have more of the same—yet another conference. Not surprisingly, only about half of those present showed any interest in another day of hot air and bull-shit.

If the conference achieved anything, it must have been to increase the demoralisation of some of the people there who were interested in fighting the cuts and the Tories.

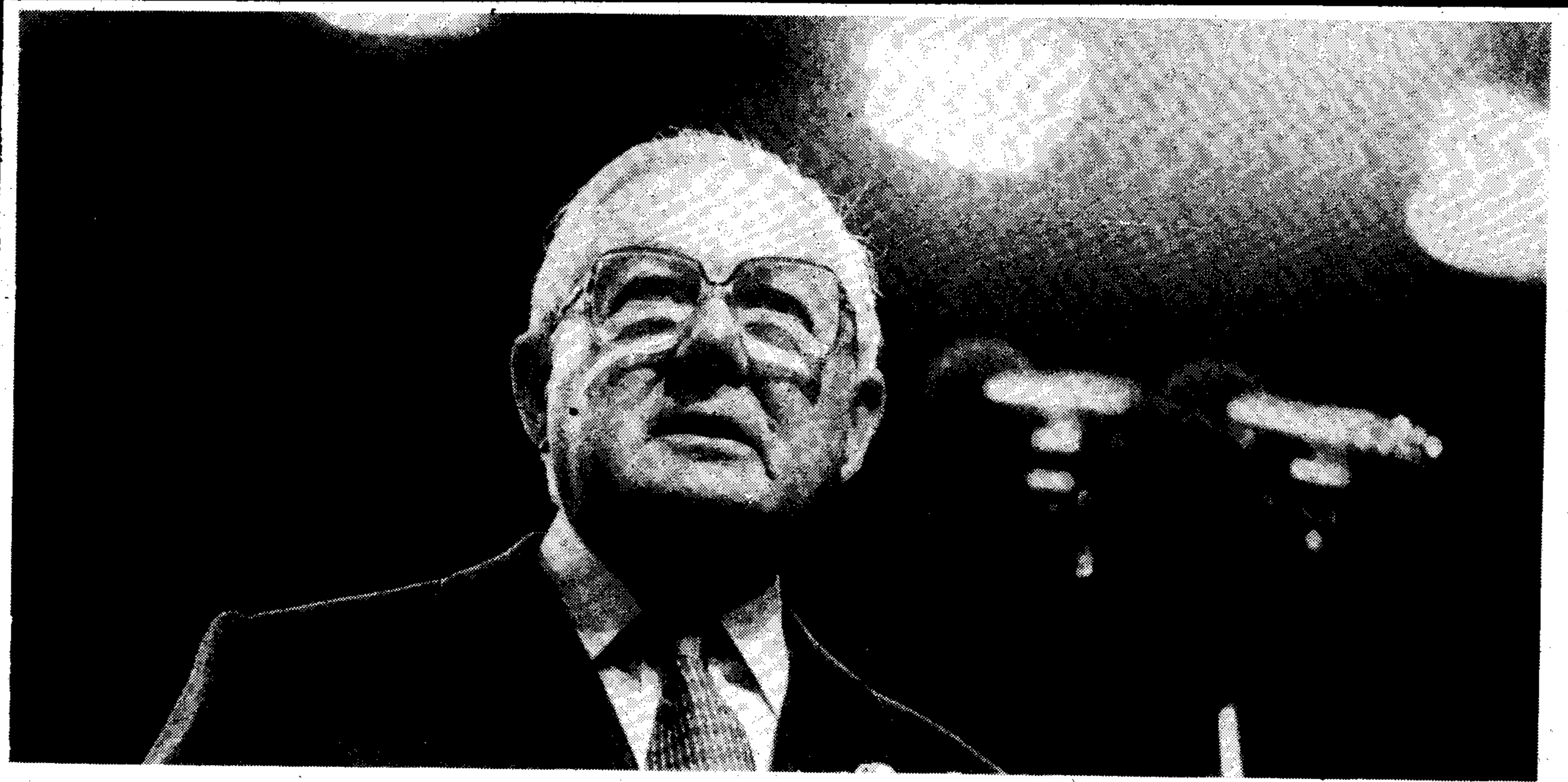
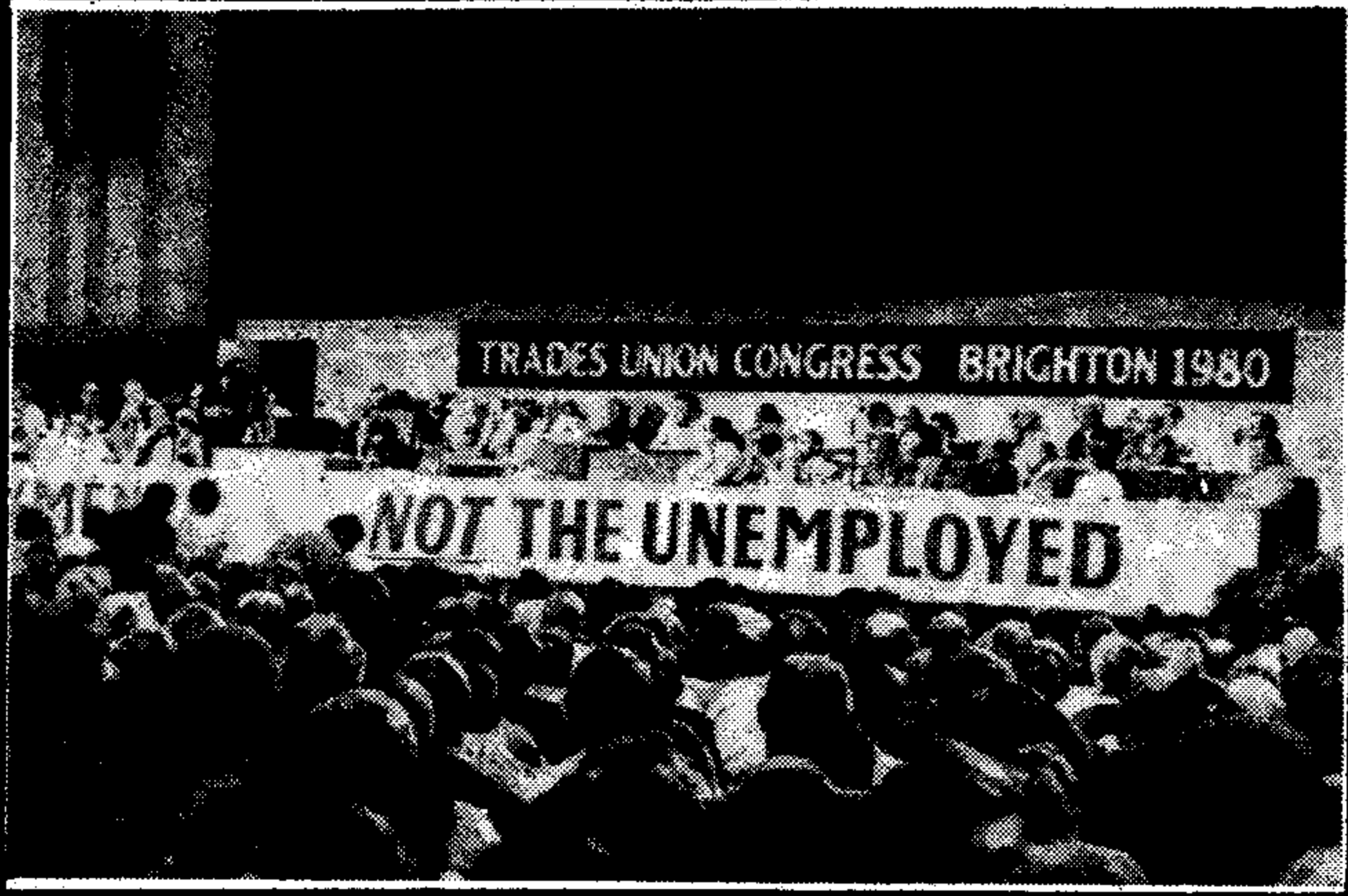
The "Socialists" from whom one might have expected some ideas about revolutionary struggle, seemed to have conceded the fight already, and moved off to cloud cuckoo land instead.

Fortunately the working class does not have to rely on these forces for leadership, but must organise in the labour movement with those who are willing to *fight* the Tories rather than spin dreams and do nothing.

# BACK INTO FRAGMENTS



# TUC 1980



Congress background  
by John Lister

## Keeping them sweet

### Parade of the poseurs

The farcical nature of the "debates" at the TUC Congress was epitomised in Wednesday's discussion on economic policy.

An almost uninterrupted stream of General Secretaries and full-time officials vied with each other in their efforts to louse up the delivery of speeches carefully drafted for them by research departments, while lay delegates sat impotent, mandated only to stay silent and raise their hands politely as instructed.

Cock-up of the day must be Terry Duffy's demand — in the midst of a boring and reactionary speech which confirmed beyond doubt that he is no more than the creature of the Tory press — that:

"We must offer these young people unemployment."

In fairness to Duffy, of course, it is quite true that the policies of Callaghan which he so eagerly applauded the day before would certainly ensure that a returned Labour government would offer youth and workers still more unemployment. But this is not what he meant to say.

ISTC General Secretary Bill Sirs also let the cat out of the bag. Professing concern about democracy, he leapt to his feet to second an amendment by the EETPU on the Common Market, which deleted a statement of opposition to the EEC, and called simply for a referendum.

"My union has no policy on this", confessed Sirs, who, nothing daunted, went on to put his own personal view instead!

Perhaps the lack of an ISTC policy is linked with the decision of Sirs and the ISTC bureaucracy to cancel the union's conference this year in order to dodge the hostility of the members to the wholesale sell-out of jobs after the marathon strike last Spring?

Watching this bizarre display of TV rhetoric, synthetic breast-beating and theatrical arm-waving was a mixed bag of delegates — ranging from the expected platoon of full-time officials to an angry handful of unsuspecting lay members getting their first nauseating glimpse of how TUC Congresses are fixed.

While some delegates sat smugly through the proceedings watching their fellow bureaucrats or their heroes at work, others were more busy in the bars and on the nearby putting greens. Others held court with the leading right and 'left' wing Labourites hawking for support in the Labour Party conference.

But there was, in most cases little else that delegates could do. Meetings prior to the Congress had generally mandated every

delegation — and had selected which delegates were empowered to speak on any issue. Chairman Terry Parry knew he should not call anyone else.

So from that point onwards, the role of a lay delegate in the TUC was simply to spectate, while officials make their rehearsed speeches and bureaucrats cast the card votes.

To help delegates while away the week, the bureaucracy had in many instances offered them lavish accommodation and expenses.

#### £30 per night

Hotel rooms at £30 or more per night were not uncommon; but on top of this, sumptuous lunches and suppers were provided or paid for by the unions; and for those delegates who could manage more, there was a seemingly endless round of union functions, with unlimited free drinks

and food. Many delegates also receive up to £50 pocket money on top of all this.

#### Employers

In case union funds were not sufficient to keep all delegates in the style to which they have become accustomed over the years, major employers such as Rank Hovis McDougall, ICI and others laid on additional receptions for those unprincipled enough to attend.

Such high-living begins to explain how so many delegates could sit with serene smiles and a feeling of well-being through an utterly bankrupt Congress that they were powerless to influence in any way.

For the old regulars, the mainstay of each year's TUC Congress, such "perks" are the main reason to come back year after year. And they want at all costs to avoid any conflict with the

union bureaucrats who look after them so well — at the expense of tens of thousands of pounds in members' subscriptions.

It is obviously with these gluttonous time-servers in mind that the TUC leaders scorned the request by Brighton Trades Council that they should reject the civic reception laid on by the town's Tory council — which is cutting spending on everything except entertaining such conferences.

Meanwhile any newcomers who might object to the corruption and extravagance can be expected to attend only one TUC Congress — and, hopefully be replaced by a more obliging nominee.

The embarrassment that this beanfeast has caused the local Trades Council was referred to in the welcoming speech by its secretary to the TUC. Indeed the matter is compounded by the fact that so many trade union delegations book into high

priced, anti-union hotels.

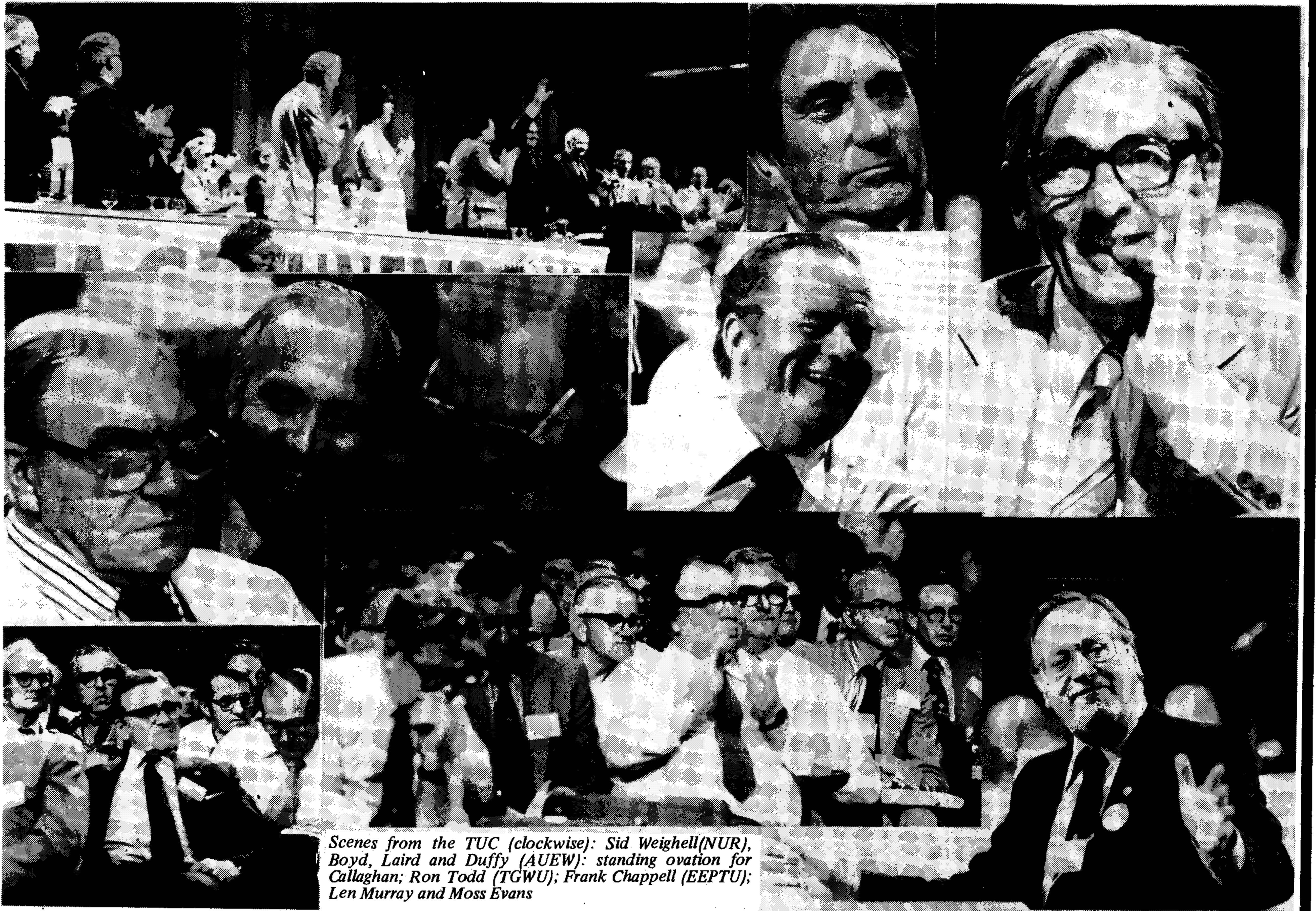
Even the Grand Hotel next door to the conference centre (£30 per night bed and breakfast) has sacked the GMWU steward and crushed the moves towards unionisation.

#### Elite

Of course for the arrogant bureaucratic elite in the leadership of the TUC, it is of no significance that the workers who serve their four, five, six and seven course meals are low paid and denied even the right to join a union.

*But is it not time that socialists in every union began to insist that national level labour movement conferences use only unionised hotels and boarding houses?*

*And is it not high time that the profligate spending of the bureaucrats and their hangers-on was brought under the control of the members, whose subscriptions are being squandered?*



Scenes from the TUC (clockwise): Sid Weighell (NUR), Boyd, Laird and Duffy (AUEW); standing ovation for Callaghan; Ron Todd (TGWU); Frank Chappell (EETPU); Len Murray and Moss Evans





# POLISH WORKERS' LONG STRUGGLE AGAINST STATE

For the Polish 'Spring in October', as it had been hopefully dubbed, turned rapidly into a long, grey winter.

The economy was in a mess, and while an opposition emerged over economic strategy, workers and poor peasants were paying for it.

The central agreement between those who advocated a thoroughgoing modernisation of the economy and those who held back was that there could not be for some time an improvement in workers' living standards; rather the reverse.

## Gomulka

From 1969 Gomulka swung behind the economic reformists. To the established policy of shifting resources to intensive investment and cutting real wages, was added a new system of incentives and penalties relating to the achievement of production schedules. This inevitably meant a further

lowering of workers' living standards and, in any case, was not enough. The only way the bureaucracy could see for obtaining more capital for investment was by cutting home consumption, especially of food, leaving more available for export to finance the purchase of technology and machinery from imperialism.

## Increases

On 12 December 1970 increases were announced on a range of essential items, mainly food; eg. beef (19%), lard (36%) flour (16%), bricks (37%). By a logic which the bureaucracy could scarcely have believed convincing, these rises were declared to be compensated for by reductions in the prices of eg. washing machines, records, television sets. Workers did not, unsurprisingly, accept this as a mere 're-adjustment'—they understood it as a further attack on their living standards and responded by rising as a class against the bureaucracy.

Gomulka might perhaps have felt secure from such a response

because, firstly, he had recently won from West Germany a recognition of the eastern border line of Poland, which should have appealed to the 'nation'; secondly, because the working class had largely failed to respond to the student demonstrations which had spread across Poland in March 1968. The sympathy of the young intelligentsia with Dubcek's 'progressive' movement in Czechoslovakia, and the thwarting of their own 'freedom' in Poland, were ignited by the banning of an allegedly anti Soviet play and the expulsion of two 'dissident' university students in Warsaw.

A 4,000-strong Warsaw student demonstration was brutally broken by the militia. The following day 10,000 students fought the militia on the streets.

For about a week students demonstrated in Warsaw, Lodz, Poznan, Katowice, Wroclaw and Cracow. Extreme physical repression against the demonstrators was increased when young workers—'hooligans' began to participate. (In its campaign against the

movement the bureaucracy also resorted to a crude anti-Semitism to discredit its opponents—listing student trouble-makers with Jewish names; one party leaflet pointed to the concentration of Jews in the pre-1956 PUWP and police. The tiny remnant of Jews left in Poland after Hitler's holocaust were made to seem a huge malignant force in society; once again, claims of a 'Zionist conspiracy' served the forces of reaction. By such principled methods 'order' was restored in Poland; general oppression increased.)

## Working Class

The struggle of the students in March 1968 did not rouse the working class. When workers and intellectuals fight together as they did in Poland and Hungary in 1956 it is always on the basis of the revolutionary strength of the proletariat although it sometimes appears empirically—as in Hungary—that the workers move into struggle behind the movement of the intelligentsia. But in 1968 the

Polish workers as a class stayed on the sidelines. When the proletariat rose in December 1970 to defend its own basic interests the intellectuals were largely silent.

On the recently industrialised Baltic coast, workers' opposition to attacks on their living standards had been building up for some time prior to the announcement of price increases. Isolated strikes occurred as they did in other industrial centres.

In Gdansk, workers in the naval shipyard struck. An elected delegation was arrested when they set off for Party headquarters to protest at the rise. Insurrection broke out in the whole region, to be violently crushed during the following week.

On Monday 14 December, several thousand Gdansk workers marched on the city, singing war hymns and the Internationale. Fighting broke out as the militia and police tried to prevent the demonstrators from reaching Party headquarters. The next day striking dock-workers joined the street fighting. Party and police

buildings were attacked and the fighting reached levels which led to the importing of massive reinforcements to swell the state forces. Death, injuries and arrests followed. A curfew was imposed in the three linked coastal towns of Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot. When the forces of repression won the streets, shipyard and dock-workers occupied their factories, surrounded by tanks and militia.

The authorities promised wage rises, but the occupying strikers pressed their demands; for wages increases of 30%, improvement in housing conditions, cancellation of the price rises, recognition of the elected workers' committees.

## Central Demand

This last demand is always central whenever Polish workers mobilise around their class interests. There is an immediate sweeping aside of the elaborate system of bureaucratic union and party organisations designed to control the workers, that is to 'represent' them. Workers





Scenes from the 1970 riots

Part two of an article by Geoff Harris.

# STALINISM

spontaneously turn to the building of independent strike committees responsible to themselves and under their control.

The demand for the recognition of these organs of the workers' struggle and for direct meeting between them and high Party officials occurs whenever the class mobilises.

In Gdansk street fighting broke out again and strikes continued. But brutal repression triumphed and by the 18th workers were beginning to return to their jobs.

In Gdynia the events of Gdansk were repeated. The strike committee from the 'Paris Commune' shipyards on the 17th, but the announcement of this was made ambiguously as it also demanded an immediate return to 'normal life'. When, on the morning of the 17th, workers arrived at the shipyards—whether to work or to occupy—they were confronted by closed gates and guns. The militia and the army killed scores of workers in a day of relentlessly savage repression.

On Thursday the 17th, workers in the Warski Shipyards in Szczecin went on

strike: a workers' assembly and its elected committee presented their demands; for strike pay, wage increases, the withdrawal of the price rises, for independent unions, accurate reporting of the strike by press and radio, for no victimization, for an end to bureaucratic privileges, for the withdrawal of troops, for a meeting with their Parliamentary members. 'When we obtain satisfaction we will resume work properly and honestly'.

The workers marched on the city with banners, red flags and the words of the Internationale, and were joined by a large part of the city's population. They arrived in front of the Party building which was surrounded by police. Fighting broke out; party buildings and a bureaucrat's villa were set on fire.

### Fraternisation

Workers fought the militia with chains and Molotov cocktails. There was reportedly a large degree of fraternisation with the army. All the city's

76 shipyards and factories were occupied by striking workers. Szczecin and its central strike committee became the epicentre of the Polish workers' struggle in the month to come. A Yugoslav journalist declared that the city had become 'a true workers' republic in which all powers were exercised by the strike committee'.

Negotiations with the authorities ended on the 20th and the armoured units left the city. For the time being the workers returned to work in response to an appeal from Gierek and promises that there would be no reprisals against their leaders and that they would receive pay for the strike period.

### Industrial Centres

The revolt was spreading across the industrial centres of Poland. Workers in Warsaw's main factories declared that they would come out on Monday the 22nd. Gomulka was faced with a mass movement as strong as, and more threatening, than that which brought him to power in 1956.

The bureaucracy was in ferment and sacked Gomulka and his followers with the blessing of the Soviets.

Gierek became the Party leader and tried to convince the workers that this was what they had been fighting for by offering a few concessions. Although the price increases would remain, they would be frozen for two years—but so would wages. Promises were made of 'democratisation' and 'the real participation of workers in co-management and collective decision-making'.

The lowest industrial wages were to be raised. There were promises that the situation of women would be improved and housing problems—a very real consequence of the enormous growth in the urban population—would be resolved.

The immediate aim of Gierek and his new Prime Minister Jaroszewicz was to induce the workers to return firstly to work and then to the bureaucratic structures that governed their lives. As a concession, the army withdrew from the large centres and the police became more discreet.

In their first speeches on radio and TV, Gierek and Jaroszewicz appealed to all elements of 'the nation' to help restore 'calm and order'.

### Gratitude

The Church was a willing element. Cardinal Wyszynski's Christmas message called on all Poles—Catholic and non-Catholic—to 'work so that the country can produce more bread'. The Party showed its gratitude to the Church by promising the restoration of its former properties in eastern Poland. A Church announcement on February 14th of a 'day of prayers for the nation' recognised 'the necessity of maintaining order and peace at the present time which guarantee the independence of our nation and of concentrating the efforts of the entire society towards working in order to increase the well-being of our country'. And Church and State found themselves united in a campaign for 'Women in the Home', which coincided with the firing of women (60% of Polish women are workers) in order to furnish jobs for young people.

But although Gierek succeeded in temporarily defusing the situation, workers were ready to resume their action should he prove unsatisfactory. They were still demanding 20% wage rises—which would mean the effective cancellation of the price increases which were the immediate origin of the wave of strikes, occupations and street battles.

In the first three weeks of January 1971 strikes broke out again, most notably in Gdansk and Szczecin, taking up the original demands centred round wage rises, the abolition of the new production norms and the formation of free trade unions based on the elected workers' committees. A vital part of the bureaucracy's strategy was to reduce the workers' councils that had emerged in December to being merely 'improved' versions of the former factory committees which were, in turn, mere degenerate descendants of the organisations forged by the

workers in the fire of 1956.

Workers correctly saw this strategy, which was consciously and rigorously pursued in early January, as an attack, and this was a prompting factor in the new wave of strikes.

In Szczecin shipyard repair workers went on sit-down strike and were joined by 12,000 workers from the Warski shipyard, and by city transport and railway workers. The shipyards were surrounded by troops, reinforcements were mobilised in readiness around the country, water and supplies were cut off.

The ruling bureaucracy was split on whether to attempt a crushing military defeat on the workers. It was recognised by all of them that they were threatened by a repeat of the December insurrections. Gierek had refused to recognise the workers' committees as 'legitimate spokesmen' (The Party is not obliged to negotiate with just any group of citizens, and even less so under pressure.)

However he opposed the immediate application of the military option—a joint action was already planned with army, airforce and marine commandos—and so played his secondlast trick by humbling himself before the workers.

On January 24th he came to Szczecin, accompanied by leading bureaucrats and generals, and negotiated with a council of 500 worker delegates. He warned of the possibility of Soviet invasion if calm was not restored in Poland. Gierek conceded some of the demands—free election of delegates to workers' councils, discontinuation of the production quotas, reorganisation of the PUPP in Szczecin, and some wage increases. The December price increases remained in force.

### Partial Victory

With their leadership accepting this partial victory the workers returned to work. A similar solution resulted from Gierek's meeting the following day with workers' delegates in Gdansk.

With the subsidence of Szczecin and Gdansk the main thrust of the rebellion was broken. But just as Gierek was hoping that all was over, 10,000 women textile workers—the most oppressed sector of Polish industry—went on strike in Lodz and occupied textile plants to back up their demands for the revoking of the December price increases and for higher wages. The Prime Minister Jaroszewicz and three Politburo members went to negotiate with the workers' delegation, while protests resurged in other cities.

The *Times* reported: "Look this is where we work", the women shouted as the air thickened in the unventilated workshop and condensation dripped down on the heads of the delegation. Some women wept as they asked how they could make ends meet with the higher food prices. Petitions and grievances were handed up in writing and shouted from the floor. The Prime Minister struggled to make himself heard. Then came a revealing moment. 'Do you support us?' cried the Prime Minister. 'Yes' replied the workers. 'Will you help us?' 'No' said the workers, 'help us first'.

The intransigence of the Lodz workers and the threat posed by workers throughout the country led the bureaucracy on 15 February to cancel the price increases made in December. In Lodz some two weeks later a union official speaking at a meeting of chairpersons of factory and workers' councils stressed 'the fundamental importance of restoring the authority of trade unions and of gaining the confidence of large numbers of people. The Polish December' was over.

The workers had gained a substantial victory, but the bureaucracy remained in power with its privileges intact. It had been powerfully reminded, though, of the strength of the working class and its determination to fight in defence of its interests.

### 1976

The uprisings of 1970-71 were prompted by Gomulka finally adopting the strategy of a thoroughgoing technocratic economic reform which the Gierek faction had long been arguing for. Gierek came to power, then, with no option of seeking to finance economic

growth by raising prices and cutting the workers' living standards. The reforms made to the peasantry—the ending of forced quota deliveries and the introduction of a rural health service—might help to stem the sullenly passive opposition which affected agricultural production. An increase in the level of mechanisation and better planning were also necessary if food supplies were to be able to feed the cities, improving the workers' living standards, and also be available for export. Technological developments in Polish industry were no less vital, as was the necessity of increasing the production of other consumer products to cater to a working class that was on the offensive.

With basic food prices frozen for five years as a result of the uprisings of 1970-71, and the impossibility of financing growth by cutting wages, and with the central need of effecting a swift and real increase in the standard of living of the Polish masses, the bureaucracy had little choice but to turn to international credit-sources.

Early in 1971 the USSR had made Poland a loan of \$100 million, but the main source of credit was to be the imperialist banks.

Capital expenditure from 1971-76 rose by a massive 125%. By 1975 Poland's debts from long-term loans amounted to some \$6000 million. (In 1980 they total some 20 billion dollars). Repayment of these debts absorbed increasing amounts of Polish export earnings, with a consequent huge increase in the balance of payments deficit. Capitalist inflation, to which the bureaucracy had made Poland even more vulnerable, made and makes things worse still for the economy.



Gierek

"The credits were to be used to import a new set of means of production for Polish industry which in turn would use the new equipment to export to the capitalist world, pay back its credits and thus generate sustained growth. Institutional economic reforms were to be gradual and small, mostly geared to the most dynamic and export-oriented sectors of the Polish economy.

At the same time increases in real wages were to be gradually tied ever more closely to productivity deals, piece-work, measured day work and bonus schemes". (MacDonald, *Workers Opposition in Poland Critique 7*)

Food prices remained an obvious, though certainly dangerous, point of attack for the bureaucracy. When it announced large increases in the price of meat earlier this year, the bureaucracy was reacting to the fact that meat subsidies cost the Polish government \$2.5 billion annually—almost half the total food subsidy bill which, in turn, is about 6% of the total budget.

The price increases announced on 24 June 1976 were enormous—an average of 39% including 70% on the price of meat. They expressed both the urgency and depth of the economic crisis, and the PUPP leadership's resolve to overcome it by a single harsh blow at living standards. It was hoped that 'consultations' at local level coupled with the presentation of the fait accompli to the workers would induce them to recognise and accept the 'necessity' of the increases.

Workers responded otherwise. Several plants in the Warsaw area immediately went on strike; shipyard workers in the Baltic ports stopped work

on 25 June. A broad strike movement exploded right across Poland—the only important area to remain relatively quiet seems to have been Silesia where the miners—comparatively highly paid because of the importance of continuous coal production for internal use and export—continued working.

Once again the bureaucracy was threatened by workers' power and the threat of the re-emergence of those independent organisations of workers' struggle which had been so effective—and so potentially dangerous to the deformations of the workers' state—in 1971.

Gierek backed down immediately, promising continuation of the price freeze, pending 'study' and 'consultation'. He then proceeded to unleash bloody repression at the centres of proletarian opposition.

Consultations in Radom; thousands of striking workers marched to the Party headquarters, demanding an explanation. After waiting two hours they stripped the building and, defying police attacks, attempted to burn it down. Street battles ensued in which many people died.

### Barricades up

The barricades remained up and fighting continued for three hours after the announcement of the backdown on prices. Reinforcements were flown in and 'socialist order' was restored; several hundred socialists were arrested.

Consultations in Ursus: a fifteen-man committee elected by the 5000 workers of the tractor plant presented wage demands to the factory management. Management refused to talk and sacked the committee-members. The workers took their tractors and blocked the Warsaw-Paris railway-line.

When the militia reacted, the workers ripped up the tracks, built barriers and held the Paris train hostage.

They learnt of the withdrawal of the price rises and many retired feeling they had won a victory. Then the police attacked violently. Six hundred workers were arrested—seven of them later sentenced to 3-5 years imprisonment for sabotage) and 1000 workers were suspended from the factory for three months.

Consultations in Plock: oil refinery workers presented a series of demands. 1500 marched on the Party headquarters singing the Internationale. Hundreds were arrested and sacked. They were allowed to return to their jobs 3 months later only by taking reduced wages.

The success of brutal repression across Poland reduced the victory that had been earlier gained. Satisfied by his 'consultations with the people' Jaroszewicz two days later reimposed the price increases, though at only about half the previous level.

But the bureaucracy's problems remained; the economy is still in a mess; the working class which had three times in the history of the bureaucracy's rule proved its power and militancy, had also proved its contempt for the puppet organisations spawned in the factories by the Stalinists to control the workers.

### Refusal to pay

These factors have again clashed in 1980, and the Polish workers have again engulfed the Baltic ports with their implacable refusal to pay for the bureaucracy's inefficiency and its privileges.

Trotskyists, who have no need of proofs of the revolutionary strength of the working class, will hail that strength and the independent workers' organisations that spontaneously emerge in struggle.

But they must also build the conscious revolutionary vanguard of the Polish proletariat, as a part of the revolutionary vanguard of the world working class.

Then the Polish workers and all the workers of Eastern Europe will rise and overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy which represses it and feeds on its sweat and blood.

### CONCLUDED



# Build Community Councils ?

by Donald McVicar

Anyone living in Scotland with an iota of knowledge concerning the workings of government and politics is well aware that community councils are officially recognised organisations of local government—established by the Local Government Act of 1973.

There are over 90 of these in Glasgow alone and they are concerned with such socially useful tasks as promoting local galas, organising sports teams and bands and complaining about the state of disrepair of the pavements.

These are no doubt very praiseworthy efforts to improve the quality of local life—but are not in any sense the central political questions facing the working class today.

When these councils were established, activists in the labour movement were well aware that they were regarded by the authorities as substitutes for independent working class organisation on such questions as housing, jobs, social security rights etc.

Imagine the puzzlement of workers in Scotland, therefore, when they are faced with the call from the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party to "Build Community Councils".

How can such confusion have come about? There are two possibilities. Either Gerry Healy and the WRP leadership at Clapham High Street are totally ignorant of the Scottish political scene (which is understandable considering the total decline of the Healyites in that area); or they are well aware of

## WRP scraps call for councils of action

the existence of community councils but do not give a damn that their slogans are nonsensical in a Scottish context.

If the latter is the case, then we must conclude that the leadership of the WRP is imbued with an arrogance and contempt towards the Scottish working class that is insufferable.

### Councils of Action

But why do they call for community councils at all? What has happened to the tried and tested revolutionary socialist demand for councils of action (i.e. soviets) put forward strongly and correctly by the Socialist Labour League in the 1970s?

Is this only a difference of nomenclature?

No, there is more to it than that.

"The [community] councils" we are told, "would represent all the people affected by the Tory slump policies, irrespective of their race, religion or past affiliations" (emphasis added).

Can this mean that long serving but recently lapsed members of the National Front will be welcomed on to these councils?

This is no joking matter. The WRP specifically invite reaction-

ary "ratepayers associations" to join their campaign. This slipshod attitude towards serious political questions is extended even further when we consider who is to establish these councils.

Wait for it!  
"Borough councils must initiate the campaign to build Community Councils."

We take it that these are the same borough councils who are closing hospitals, schools, old people's homes etc. throughout the country.

But the WRP leadership have a special concern for the Labour Party led borough councils. They are in "a special dilemma"; they have the "best intentions"; they are trying to "make ends meet".

### Budget Slashed

Our hearts bleed for them. Glasgow workers, seeing the budget for their children's education slashed by £9million in the current year, with school meals up to 40 pence a day, have tougher political skins than the faint hearted petty bourgeois who now rule the roost at Clapham High Street.

They will tell the Strathclyde Regional Councillors that they were elected on a mandate of defending the social services,

that they must refuse to implement either social service cuts or rates increases but instead let the budget go into deficit and send the bill back to the Tories.

But the WRP addresses no such demands to the Labour Councillors. In fact they offer no perspective of struggle to militants either within the Labour Party or the trade unions.

Having lost all confidence in the ability of the working class to transcend the limitations of social democracy through struggling within the established organisations of the labour movement, they search for some formulation, some kind of organisation, *outside* of the movement itself.

Certainly in the course of the class actions now underway it is not inconceivable that some labour councillors—and even whole councils—under the pressure of the mass movement, will go so far as to support the establishment of councils of action to carry through a struggle against the Tory government.

### Possibilities

But to restrict one's perspective to that avenue alone is to be politically blind to the possibilities now opening up within



WSL Rally campaigns for Councils of Action

the workers' movement.

The emergence of councils of action would mark the rise of a dual power situation in the country, emerging out of the independent struggle of the working class to defend their conditions through class action.

To decree that such councils of action must receive the stamp of official approval from borough councils reveals the bureaucratic caste of the architects of the scheme.

And what are the WRP's community councils going to do anyway?

"The Community Councils would negotiate a moratorium on these [mortgage] repayments to stop families being thrown on to the streets."

We trust that the gentlemen who run the Woolwich and the Abbey National will show suitable understanding in such negotiations.

By now readers may have concluded that this latest political stunt by the WRP is little more than political gibber-

ish.

But there is a more serious side to it. To create such a diversion from the fight for strike action and occupations against the cuts at this time when political clarity is essential for workers going into struggle is nothing short of reprehensible.

### Talking Shops

The WRP's "Community Councils", as they are conceived would be nothing more than talking shops dominated by petty bourgeois politicians sounding out their nostrums for the crisis.

They sound remarkably like local replicas of the Political Committee of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

# Looking through Berger's eyes

Tom Sellars reviews "About Looking", by John Berger (Writers and Readers, £2.95)

In terms of his political activity—the only significant criterion—John Berger is not a revolutionary.

He has, however, trained himself to see through the eyes of a particularly perceptive Marxist—a way of seeing that is almost unique to him among writers on the visual arts.

His best-known work to date, the television series and book *Ways of Seeing*, was evidence of his ability to dispel the mystifying and deathly smoke which everywhere obscures the social nature of art.

Not that he looks only at what the professors and auctioneers call art; in this book his eye takes in family snapshots and newspaper photographs, as well as the clothes people wear and the animals they stare at in zoos.

Photography and photographs obviously fascinate Berger—perhaps because they are the most universal and inescapable source of visual representation in the world today; perhaps because bourgeois ideology has taken over as its own instrument the machine which "cannot lie"; perhaps because some photographers have nonetheless used the camera to reveal, consciously or not, aspects of the reality which that ideology shapes, disguises and warps.

Walter Benjamin wrote, in an essay Berger knows well, that the debate about whether photography is an "art-form" was fundamentally misconceived; the real thing to understand was how photography had actually and radically affected all visual art-forms.

It is the same sort of thinking, seeing things as part of a complex whole—a social, human



whole—which entitles Berger's writing to be called Marxist.

Lacking in his writing is the 'marxist' phrase-marking and jargon which is too often the only proletarian feature of self-styled Marxist writing of the arts.

And, fortunately, also lacking (for the most part) in Berger's non-fiction is that pretentiousness and self-conscious sincerity which usually characterises his poems and

novels.

Most of the objects Berger looks at in this collection of short essays are paintings—by Turner, Courbet, Magritte, Lowry and others.

While some of the essays are fairly understandable if you have even a vague idea of the painter in question, many will leave readers at a loss unless they already have a knowledge and recollection of the paintings he discusses, unless they refer

to better-illustrated books—an effort that would generally be worthwhile.

The essays on photography are, however, adequately illustrated, and it may be this which makes them possibly the most interesting.

This lack of illustration is a great pity, because to see these pictures, etc., with Berger as a guide is often profoundly revealing.

He shows them not as

objects of purchase or of mystical reverence or of absurd structuralist analysis, but as human products—thus as social products which find their only life when they are consumed (seen, understood and appropriated) as such.

And because Berger sees things as they exist in their complex and manifold interconnections with other aspects of society, he is very aware that only the destruction of capital-

ism and the creation of a society which would bring forth the free development of humanity could allow for a truly human relationship between people and their products. Until then, what can be done for the visual arts is limited.

He writes of photography: "Today no alternative professional practice (if one thinks of the profession of photographer) is possible. The system can accommodate any photograph. Yet it may be possible to begin to use photographs according to a practice addressed to an alternative future. This future is a hope which we need now, if we are to maintain a struggle, a resistance, against the societies and culture of capitalism."

"Photographs have often been used as a radical weapon in posters, newspapers, pamphlets, and so on. I do not wish to belittle the value of such agitational publishing. Yet the current systematic public use of photography needs to be challenged, not simply by turning round like a cannon and aiming it at different targets, but by changing its practice".

But this passage suggests that 'hope' and 'resistance' is really all that is possible in the larger struggle.

Elsewhere in this book Berger writes of his despair following the defeats of the revolutionary struggles of 1968. This despair of his, and his coming sometimes perilously close to finding in art a unique source of human values protesting against a brutal and dehumanising society, is the non-revolutionary Berger.

Revolutionaries, though, if they take the trouble to read these essays patiently and thoughtfully, will come away enriched, and better able to see some of the things which bourgeois ideology leaves veiled, or distortingly disconnected, or merely blandly unquestioned.



# POLITICAL REALITY

# BROUGHT TO LIFE

John Lister reviews "THE COUP", the novel by John Updike (Penguin, £1.25)

Marxist political analysis is well equipped to dissect and explain the material contradictions that give rise to petty bourgeois military dictatorships in the underdeveloped nations of Africa.

But the strength of John Updike's latest novel *The Coup* is that—while making no pretence of offering a Marxist critique—it synthesises many of these contradictions and presents us with a living, breathing petty bourgeois dictator in the flesh.

He is Colonel Hakin Felix Ellellou. He does not, of course exist, any more than the state of Kush, newly liberated from French imperialism actually exists.

### Distinctive

And yet many of the most distinctive features of both do form the bare bones upon which a number of African states operate today:

"In area Kush measures 126, 912, 180 hectares. The population density comes to 0.03 per hectare . . . There are twenty-two miles of railroad and one hundred and seven of paved highway. . . Among the natural resources of Kush perhaps should be listed our diseases—an ample treasury which includes, besides famine and its edema and Kwashiorkor, malaria, typhus, yellow fever, sleeping sickness, leprosy, bilharziasis, onchocerciasis, measles, and yaws. . . The average life expectancy in Kush is thirty-seven years, the per capita gross national product \$79, the literacy rate 6%. . . The form of government is a constitutional monarchy with the constitution suspended and the monarch deposed."

Ellellou—who narrates the story in the third person—reflects in his life, his beliefs and his relationships the curious blend of ancient past and exploited present, of would-be national independence and actual oppression that create the basis for the confused petty bourgeois regimes of black Africa.

From a tribal background he sought a career in the armed forces of occupying French

imperialism—fought in Vietnam, and rose to a leading position in the colonial administration, before participating in the 1968 coup to oust the aging puppet monarch, and eventually becoming President in 1969.

Professing allegiance to both Islam and to what he believes to be Marxism, Ellellou treads a delicate path between internal and external opponents.

### American Aid

And the other events of his life are sketched in by extended flashback sequences, in which he relates how the administrators of his regime, courted by the offers of lavish American aid while the economy nears collapse in a 5-year drought, begin to turn against him. Ellellou's four totally different wives also reflect the curious contradictions within the economy and society of Kush.

There is his tribal wife Kadongoloimi, much older than himself as living testimony to the old habits and customs; there is Candy—the middle class white American woman met during his days in exile as a student in the USA; there is Sheba, an African woman who Ellellou loves for "her vacancy", as she drifts through each day with music and drugs. And there is Sittina, the Westernised African woman, with whom he eventually goes into exile in France.

Spanning this spectrum is Ellellou's mistress, Kutunda, a tribal woman whom he meets among a party of well-diggers, and who rapidly elevates herself to a career among the administrators of the regime, and an alliance with those that eventually oust Ellellou from office.

### Sardonic

The novel is beautifully written, offering a blend of poetic prose and sardonic comment on the plight of a would-be nation seeking independence of both the imperialists and the Soviet Union (whose secret rocket bases give the Stalinists an interest in preserving a sympathetic regime).

The clumsy and arrogant



# THE COUP

efforts of external 'aid' programmes are exposed, as the angry Ellellou points out to a baffled US envoy that earlier cattle vaccination programmes had helped wipe out scarce forage and water supplies; that deep wells had disrupted nomadic grazing patterns and thus created new deserts; and that the 'foodstuff' handed out in a neighbouring state is in fact cattle-feed which gives humans diarrhoea.

Yet try as he might—through the execution of the old king or the burning of a mountain of US dehydrated foodstuffs, Ellellou cannot escape the economic stranglehold of imperialism. As Interior Minister Ezana points out:

"Interest on present loans, my good President, plus the salaries of our civil service, account for a hundred and eleven percent of the Kush National budget."

Looking on the bright side, Ezana goes on:

"These debits are in fact credits, for they persuade the capital-holding countries to hold us upright"

This insight is echoed later after Ellellou's downfall by the US government representative Klipspringer:

"The thing about indebtedness . . . is it's the best insurance policy you can buy. The deeper in debt the debtor gets, the more the creditor will invest to keep him from going under. You guys were taking an incredible risk, not owing us a thing all those years."

### Tentacles

But while imperialism reaches out with its countless tentacles to embrace the petty bourgeois leaders of the underdeveloped countries, the very backwardness of the economy means that possibilities of an alternative are at best limited. As Ellellou points out:

"A state such as Kush is too thin to be administered except by gestures. When we effected the Revolution we discovered a strange thing. There was nothing to revolutionise. Our Minister of Industry looked for factories to nationalise, and there were none. . . There was poverty but no oppression; how could this be?"

distinctly losing venture. The cost of the armies, the administrators, the flags, the forts, the bullets, the roads, the quinine, the imported knives, forks and spoons, quite outweighed the grudging haul of raw materials and taxes elicited from the unprincipled, evasive chiefs and stubbornly inefficient populace."

In the end it is the discovery of oil in Kush—a new source of wealth, which heralds the palace coup that ousts Ellellou and sees the installation of a pro-imperialist regime.

### Insight

*The Coup* is a novel, not a political tract. But in vivid, often amusing and mordant language, Updike offers the reader an insight into the problems, the realities of neo-colonial Africa.

The American author actually succeeds through the medium of the novel in becoming a convincing petty bourgeois African dictator.

*The Coup*—despite its cover illustration—is not so much a novel of action as a novel depicting the restrictions on the possible actions of petty bourgeois nationalist regimes.

Updike, himself, no doubt would draw from the evidence he presents a profound scepticism as to the prospects of ever liberating the masses of black Africa and the neo-colonial countries.

But he does not impose this view on his novel. In this respect, Updike as a real artist offers the reader not a predictable predigested and reactionary lesson in imperialist "reality" but a challenging journey into the unusual, which provides for Marxists implicit evidence of the need for the world socialist revolution.

"Indeed even for the imperialists Kush was a disaster: "none showed a profit. On paper, colonialism was a

Makers of

Modern

Marxism

By Terry Eagleton

### STILL AVAILABLE

This Socialist Press pamphlet contains articles by Terry Eagleton on marxist theoreticians from the time of the Comintern to the present day—Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, Benjamin, Marcuse, Sartre and Althusser. Price 65p including P&P from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX



Poverty and disease—a fact of life in Central Africa





# Journalists vote for strike action

**Provincial journalists have opened another chapter in their impressive record of militant struggle over wages.**

A mass meeting of members on London Provincial papers last week overturned the sceptics in their leadership by voting 160-98 for an all-out strike over London 'weighting' (extra cost of living payment).

The strike vote brought in quick succession a shift from the NGA leadership towards limited support for London members already locked out, and an offer of new talks from the employers' body, the Newspaper Society.

The NUJ's emergency committee promptly delayed the strike for a week but authorised it to go ahead from next Monday, September 15.

Meanwhile members continue a series of disruptive sanctions—including in some offices, refusing to work with dirty phones or imperfect typewriters (virtually all of them).

The Newspaper Society was under a commitment to review rates for a London allowance. But in response to the union's claim for £1000 for all provincial newspapers within 12 miles of Charing Cross, the employers offered only an extra £4 a week—£2 of which would be absorbed into wage packets already over the basic minimum.

Members set up an elected action committee which does not have control over the dispute but which has succeeded in blocking conciliatory moves in the union's structure.

It did not however stop officials from the NUJ hatching up a disgusting scabs' charter with the NGA.

Circulars prepared by both unions told NGA members to cross picket lines and NUJ members not to try to stop them!

In return, the NGA offered a complex and meaningless set of guidelines on blacking copy.

In most offices these meant nothing at all. At best the flow of copy was slowed.

When journalists at Croydon were locked out NGA members stayed in and NUJ members were told not to try to stop them!

The strike vote changed that. To attempt to head off the drive towards a strike the NGA

leadership immediately instructed members at Croydon and at Walthamstow (where a lock-out also took place) to stop work on the publications.

The NGA's determination to control the tap flow of support is clear, from the fact that printers at the Kilburn Times (where a journalists' strike has been in progress for two weeks) are crossing a picket daily, and even drove the vans out through a large picket in the early hours of Friday morning.

If the employers do not make a very substantial shift this week NUJ members must go into battle and tear up the scabs' charter, agreed by their leaders. NGA members must refuse to break this strike.

# Oil rig builders face sack threat

The struggle to defend decent safety standards at the oil platform building yard of Ayrshire Marine Constructors at Hunterston, Ayrshire, has erupted into an all-out battle with the management.

Since the yard opened there has been continual strife with the American management of the Chicago Bridge International, a partner in the yard with Phillips Petroleum.

Now Phillips have declared their intention to remove the section of the rig that has been constructed if the men refuse to accept the conditions dictated to them by the management.

## Meeting

This intention was made clear after an emergency meeting at Brighton on the eve of the TUC conference between Phillips and the national officers of the two unions involved, the Boilermakers and the GMWU.

The present dispute arose over a management refusal once again to adhere to the recommendations of the safety representatives on the site.

The management then refused to pay the men involved for the time that they would not work in an unsafe situation.

The bosses have taken a tough line and are determined to allow no change in the present working agreement, the dreadful terms of which have been spelled out in previous issues of *Socialist Press*.

The shop stewards and their convenor, Ronnie Munro, have expressed their determination not to be blackmailed into giving in.

At a meeting on Thursday last in the Magnum Centre, Irvine, the workforce reaffirmed their decision to fight on, despite the lack of official union

backing.

How far the management can actually carry out their threat to tow the rig away is doubtful. There are precedents for such an action. In December 1976, Shell removed two large concrete production platforms from Ardyne Point, on the opposite side of the Clyde Estuary, and took them to Norway for completion.

But this time, the stewards point out, the sheer physical problems of moving the platform are so large that it is unlikely Phillips will rush into taking such action.

Even so, this is the most crude form of blackmail and the 900 workers have shown courage and determination in confronting a ruthless management.

Pickets have now gone up at the gates and a strike centre established in Irvine. The maximum pressure must now be exerted by the trade union movement to ensure that the leadership of the Boilermakers and the GMWU make the strike official.

The stewards are also looking to an emergency meeting of the onshore liaison committee, which includes representatives of shop stewards of all six platform yards in Scotland.

They are looking beyond this to a delegate conference of shop stewards in the industry to mobilise maximum support and black all work for Phillips, especially that done at Kishorn.

Finally, they need immediate financial and moral support and the address to send this to is The Shop Stewards Committee (Hunterston Dispute), c/o Irvine Trade Union Centre, Ardrossan Road, Irvine, Ayrshire, Scotland.

Last Friday over 250 workers joined a mass picket outside the site. Police held back after being reminded that the Employment Act is not yet in force.

Meanwhile all 900 workers have been issued with dismissal notices.



Phillips drilling rig

## Mersey health cuts

In a new wave of health cuts planned for Liverpool, the Area Health Authority has voted by a 1 vote majority to axe 115 geriatric hospital beds and 30 dermatology beds in Newsham hospital, and a total of 300 beds in the area as a whole.

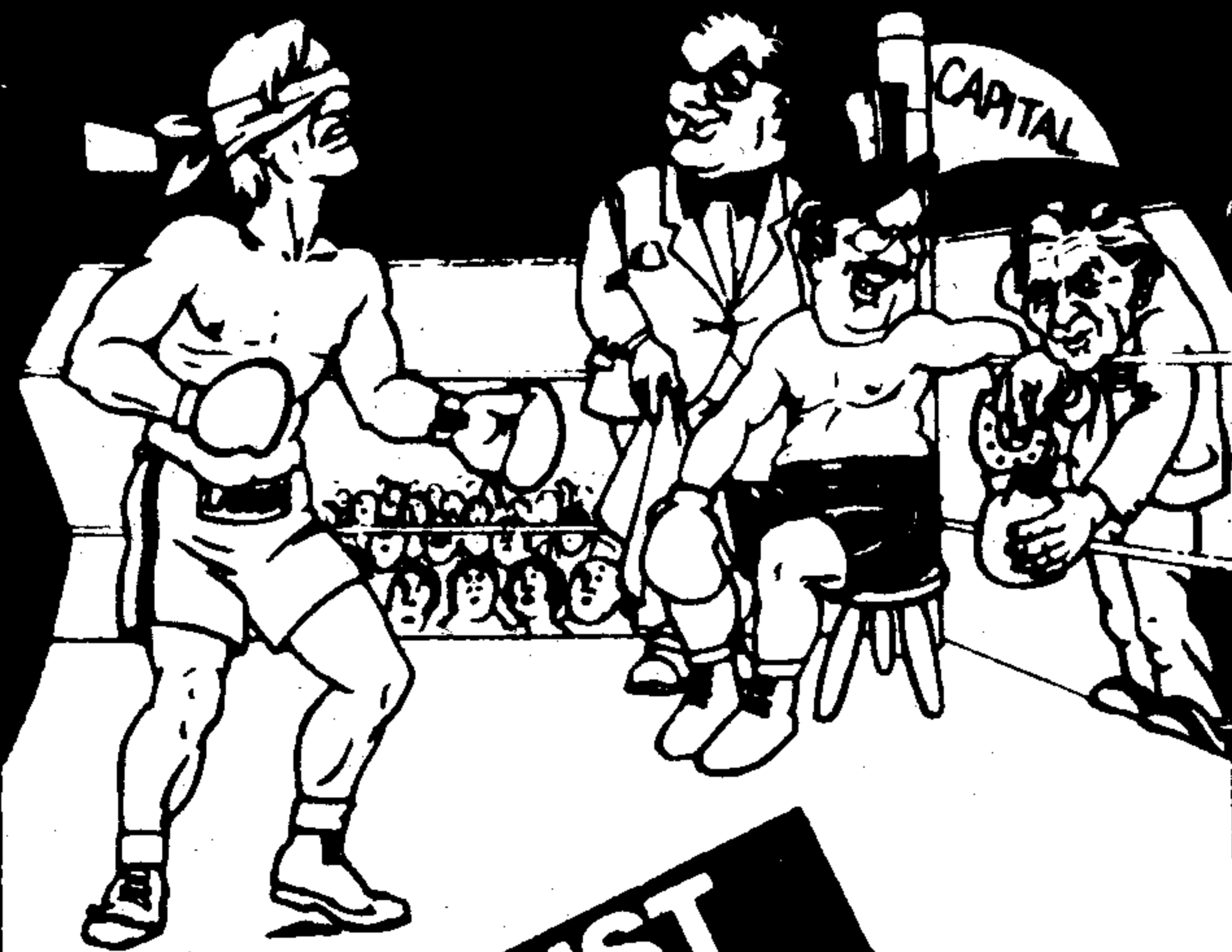
The Area Medical Officer, in a predictably puny protest, has threatened to retire early if the cuts are forced through.

But NUPE Divisional Officer Colin Barnett has nothing more positive to offer.

He has proposed not strike action to stop the cuts or occupation of the threatened facilities, but to set up joint union/management working parties in each hospital—to investigate alternative savings "without cutting jobs or services".

Insofar as this means anything, it must point towards speed up for ancillary workers and still further collaboration between unions and management, destroying the basis for independent working class action to stop the cuts.

**DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!**



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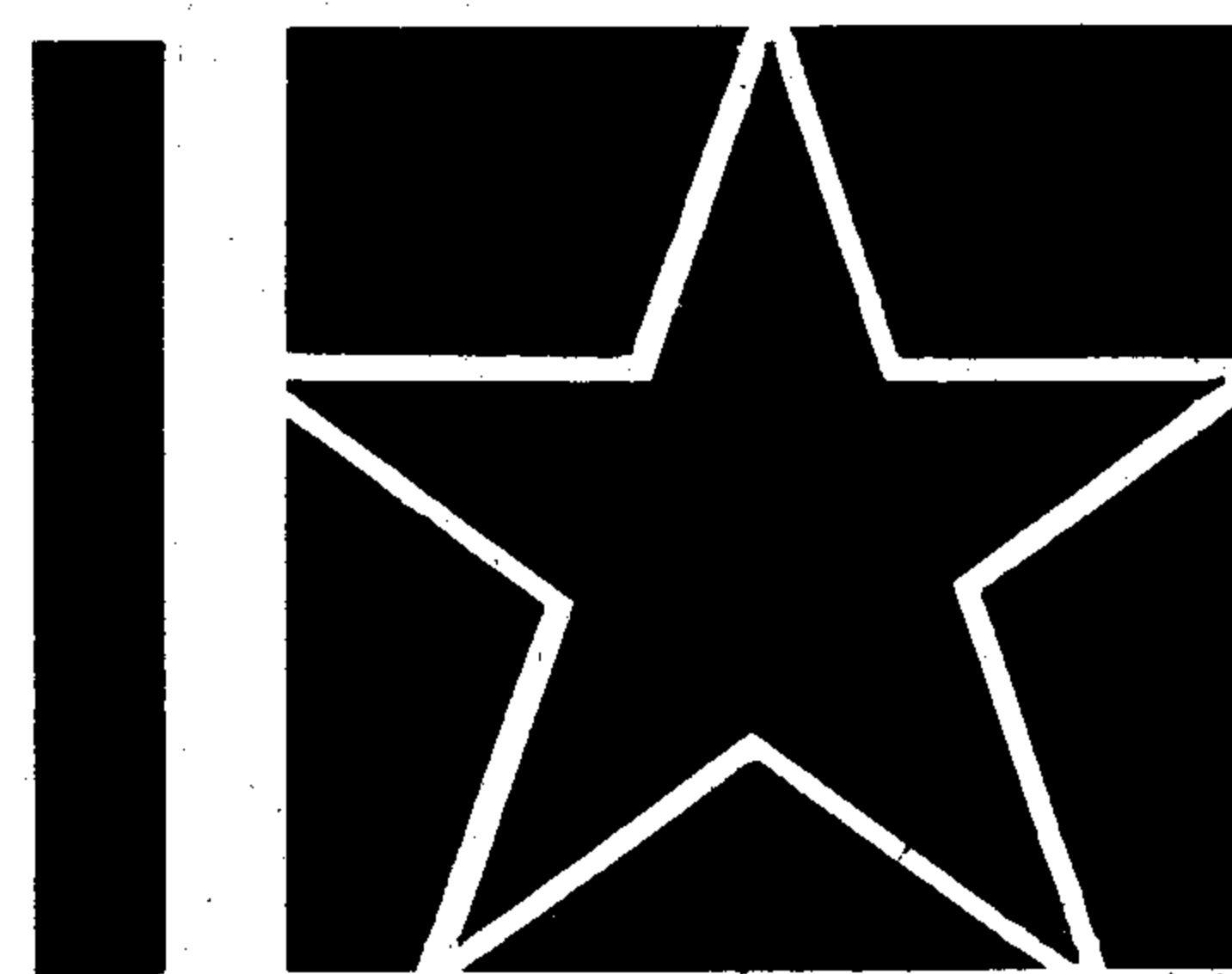
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**JOIN THE WSL!**

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.

**Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.**

**Name** .....

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



# Hotpoint, Leyland BIRMETALS bosses crack whip LOBBY CALLS FOR ACTION

Workers at Hotpoint's plants in Peterborough, Swinton and Llandudno have been banned from smoking by management, who argue that it interferes with "new production techniques".

The attack comes alongside the axing of a number of fringe

benefits for the 5,000 strong workforce, and a management ultimatum that productivity must be increased by 30%.

This is at a time when the three factories are on short-time working - Peterborough and Llandudno on a 3-day week, and Swinton on 2 days.

Management of the GEC subsidiary claim that their package of cutbacks will save £500,000 per year; but it is

clear that they intend to make far more through a growing programme of speed-up for the already reduced workforce.

Meanwhile a similar attack is underway on BL workers at Pressed Steel, Swindon, where management have attempted to drive up production by ten per cent for no extra money.

A package of measures flowing from Michael Edwards' notorious 92-page document has been rejected by a mass meeting of 400 press shop workers.

Particularly resented is the new "chit for a shit" rule, requiring press shop workers to obtain written permission from a foreman before they can go to the toilet!

Workers who work faster to complete their work assignments in less than the allotted time now face an official warning if they are caught sitting down for a few minutes' rest!

One worker was even suspended for three days for having a cup of coffee without permission.

Others complain of being directed to sweep up if there is no other work to do.

And safety standards have been thrown aside in the hell-for-leather drive to increase exploitation.

BL and Hotpoint stand as a grim warning to all workers of the kind of regime the Tories wish to bring about, using the threat of mass unemployment and the anti-union laws to bludgeon workers into submission.

## O'FISHALL

O'Fishall is on holiday - attempting to recover from the wild excesses of the Brighton TUC, where he was one of those with a private bar in his hotel suite!

Meanwhile his place has been taken in this issue by Albert Spanwick, General Secretary of COHSE, offering a song on the lips of so many bureaucrats in Brighton last week.



Oh I do



like to



be beside



the seaside!

A delegation from the 12-week struggle at Birmetals in Birmingham lobbied the TUC last week demanding action to force their reinstatement.

700 workers were sacked after they refused to fill the jobs of strikers.

But it has become clear that the sackings were deliberately arranged by management to avoid making redundancy payments.

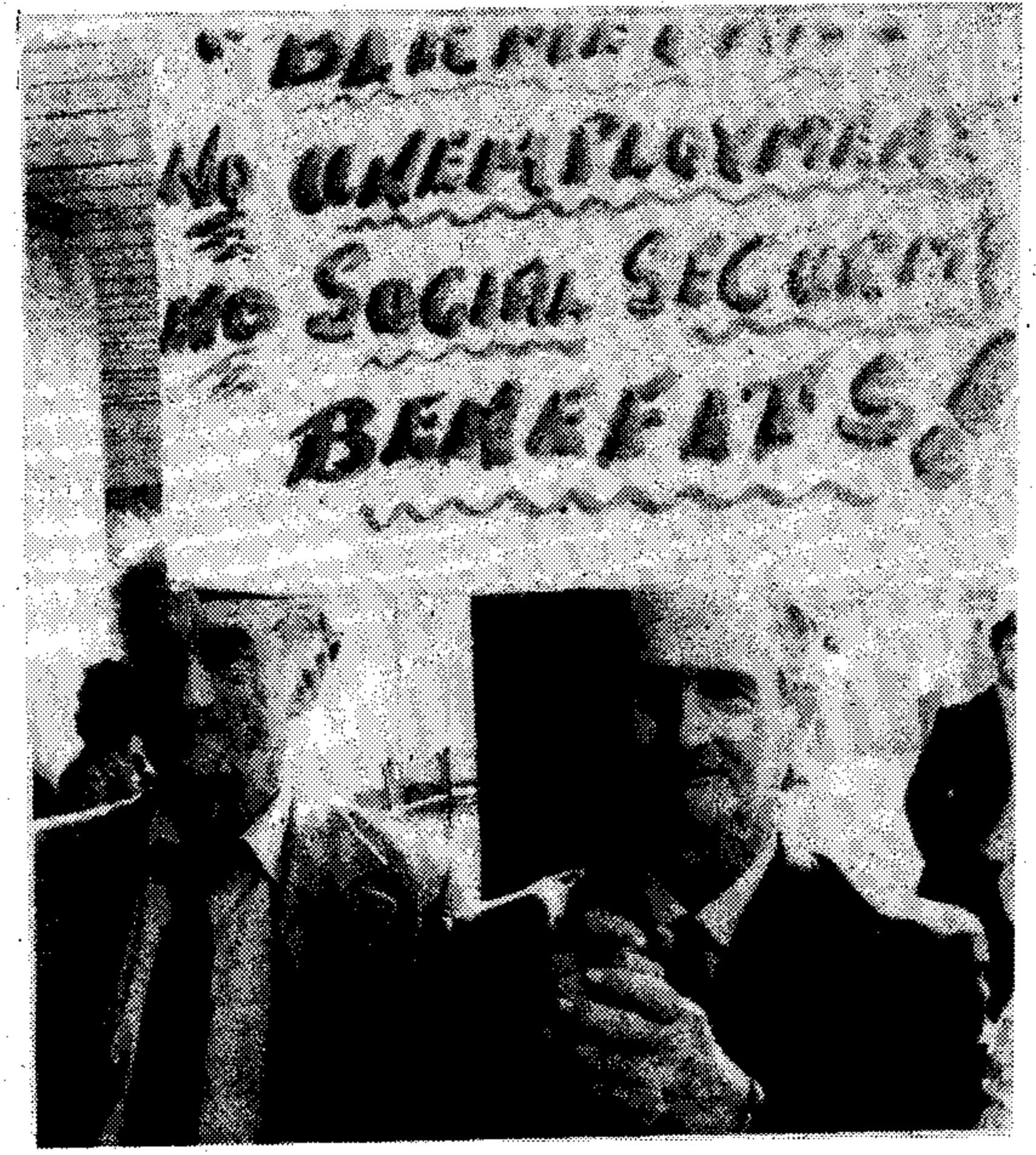
Since then, the sacked workforce has been refused social security payments on the grounds that they are 'on strike'.

Their picket of the plant demanding reinstatement has been strengthened by the TGWU District Committee call on drivers to respect the picket lines. So, even though management and office staff continue to do the work of sacked shop-floor workers, no completed work is being taken out of the

plant. The struggle is an important one in the fight against redundancies and the Tory offensive on union rights. As one lobbyist told *Socialist Press*:

"If the union leaders let Thatcher win this one, they may as well wrap up and go home."

Donations and messages of support should be sent to Birmetals Action Committee, 357 Adams Hill, Berkley Green, Birmingham 32.



## NUPE co-ops duck cuts fight

Sooner than fight savage Tory cutbacks in the school meals service, leaders of NUPE and other public sector unions in Dorset are looking to set up co-operatives, using the existing kitchen facilities.

Under the new plan, kitchen staff would work for the same rates of pay and under the same conditions as before.

The difference, according to NUPE official Paul Dunn, is that:

"There will be none of the expensive administrative costs."

In other words, the local authority clerical staff (NALGO members) who administer the finances of the existing school meals system would lose their jobs - while the new 'co-operatives' would presumably rely

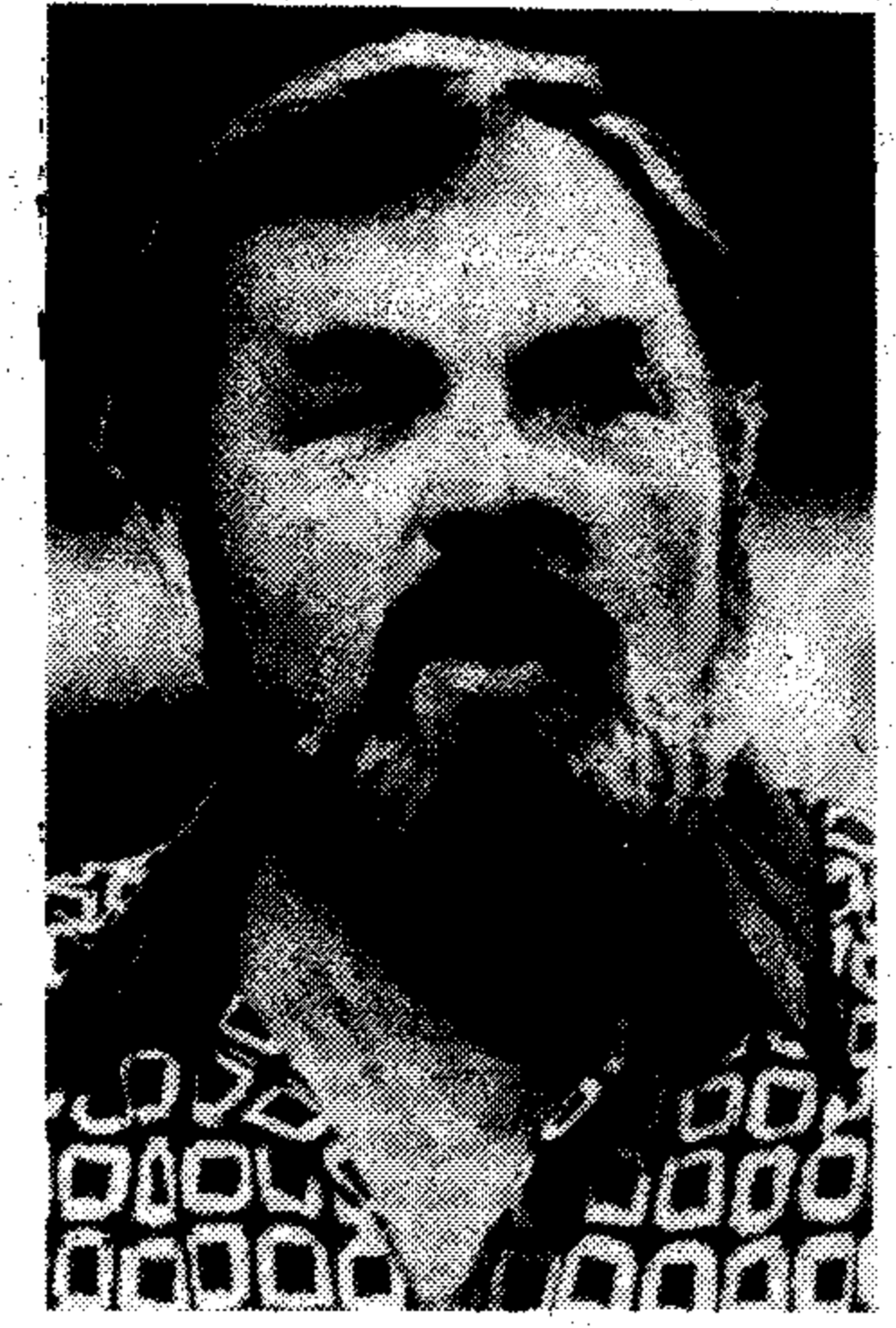
upon 'voluntary' labour to administer their own accounts.

NUPE is therefore seeking a means of "saving" the jobs of its own members - at the expense of conceding, indeed almost advocating, the loss of NALGO jobs!

### Skating Round

Such attempts at simply skating around rather than fighting the Tory offensive on the public services opens up acute dangers of dividing the labour movement and allowing the main cuts to be carried through with no real resistance.

NUPE members must demand that their leaders break from this divisive policy and lead an all-out campaign of strike action and occupations to halt the cuts.



TUC words but no action on cuts: NUPE Official Ron Keating.

## More Teeside closures

The first week of September saw the axing of yet another 150 jobs on Teeside at the BTP Tioxide factory in Billingham.

Another 585 workers at the plant face short time working or lay-off by September 15.

Meanwhile Whessoes in Darlington are to make 40 white collar staff redundant, and more than half the 136 workforce at the British United Shoe Machinery plant in Skelton are now on short time.

These continuing cutbacks, on top of the rundown of Southbank steelworks, the closure of Middlesbrough docks, the closure of Consett steelworks and Hepworth's clothing factories, have brought unemployment in the North East to the astronomical levels now current in Scotland.

In Hartlepool, the unemployment rate is now over 17%.

But until the Tory government is brought down by mass working class action, the empty protests of trade union and Labour leaders offer nothing to the growing army of unemployed in the North East and elsewhere.

### NOW OUT!

#### 'Merseyside Factory Closures'

A pamphlet prepared by NW Area Workers Socialist League. Drawing lessons of Speke, Dunlops, Meccano.

30p inc postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

## OCCUPY TO STOP BOWWATERS CLOSURE!

Bowwater, the newsprint giant, donated £10,000 to Tory Party funds in 1979-80.

But when the firm asked the Tory government to help meet the costs of running its ultra-modern paper mill in Ellesmere Port it received the same blunt message as so many other firms faced with the Joseph axe: "no dice".

Now management have announced the closure of the plant - the largest of its kind in Europe - with a loss of 1,600 jobs and a further 3,400 in forestry, mining and other related sectors.

### High Pound

Tory policies - high energy prices, a high value for the pound, high interest rates, and a refusal to subsidise British industries - have led Bowwater to follow Reed in closing down production of newsprint.

As a result, 96% of the British newsprint market will be filled by imports: and some of the logs earmarked for Bowwaters

will be sold off to Scandinavian paper mills!

A confused campaign to "save Bowwaters" is under way, focussed at present exclusively on protest action to change the government's mind.

### Occupy

But an ASTMS delegation to the TUC last week declared themselves willing to fight for

occupation of the plants if all else fails.

It is vital that the energies of ASTMS, SOGAT and other manual unions involved are directed now towards occupation and supporting strikes throughout the print and paper industry if this attack on jobs is to be defeated.

Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement

Public Meeting

GLASGOW

Partick Burgh Hall off Dumbarton Road

Thursday September 18 7.30pm.

CUTS CONFERENCE

Stirling University Students Union

10a.m. - 4p.m.

Called by Glasgow Campaign against the Cuts Speakers include Ted Knight (Lambeth council leader)



# SOCIALIST PRESS



## FUND

As our Treasurer set off for his well-earned holiday, a further belated £118 arrived for our August Fund! While we welcome all donations, it is crucial that our monthly fund reaches its £850 target on time - when bills have to be paid. Meanwhile thanks to SP subscribers for £6 in donations this week. Total so far for September is £194. Please send donations - however large or small - to: Socialist Press, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

# POLAND: THE POLICE CHIEF TAKES OVER

The replacement of Edward Gierek by police chief Stanislaw Kania as Polish Communist Party leader took place as strikes continued to spread throughout the country demanding the extension of the gains won by the Gdansk strikers and the ousting of local party chiefs and management.

Most of the industrial plants in the 200,000-strong city of Bialystok came to a halt demanding changes of local leaders.

Sulphur miners and sulphur process workers in the South of Poland also struck, demand changes in local government.

And isolated strikes broke out in North Eastern towns as well as Lodz, Kalisz, Sielice and Tarnow.

### Farmworkers

Workers on a state farm in Lubaczow are reportedly on strike demanding an independent farmworkers' union.

The breadth and continuity of the strike wave underlines exactly why the Stalinist regime has been obliged to give concessions.

Indeed it is now clear that the country was within a hair's breadth of a General Strike: Silesian miners walked out on the Friday before the momen-

tous settlement in Gdansk.

The Silesian strikes-taking place in his old power base-put the final nails into Gierek's political coffin even before his heart attack. Now Kania 30 years a career bureaucrat in the Polish Stalinist apparatus, faces the difficult task of re-establishing control over a militant workers' movement.

### Changes Heart

As a step towards this the Polish Parliament has witnessed a sudden change of heart by MPs who have now-after the event-hastily begun to criticise the past. The Parliament has duly endorsed the concessions made by a beleaguered regime.

And alongside the new words are a clutch of scapegoats. One was the luckless Gierek. Another is the Minister of Information, removed last week, and reportedly under investigation for holding £400,000 in his personal account at a London bank.

He allegedly owns a Mediterranean island, a private sheep farm, 10 limousines and has no less than 900 pornographic video cassettes stowed in his office!

If even a part of this is true, it is clear that the remainder of the party leadership must have known about it-presumably falling over stacks of pornographic cassettes each time they visited him!-and that many top



Negotiations in the Lenin Shipyard

bureaucrats must live in the same way.

But new man Kania has at once made it clear that he intends to uphold the political positions of the bureaucracy. He is no liberal, and no revolutionary.

He declares that:

"Socialist Poland's international position is a great achievement of the policy of our party. The line of the consistent, stable foreign policy of our

party."

This "consistent foreign policy" is of course the policy of "socialism in one country" and collaboration with capitalism. It is a policy of appeals and indebtedness to imperialist bankers, and opposition to the independent struggles of the working class.

Fearing the loss of its own bureaucratic privileges, the Polish bureaucracy has consistently opposed revolution

nary movements both within Poland and throughout Europe.

Instead it has actively scabbed on major strikes-including particularly shipments of Polish coal during miners' strikes in Britain and fascist Spain.

Kania however faces a daunting task. He admits that he looks forward to the time when:

"Polish workers will again speak of the Polish United

Workers Party [Polish CP] as their party."

Such a statement is a damning indictment of 33 years of Stalinist rule and burgeoning bureaucracy.

Kania of course cannot and will not change the nature of the Stalinist state apparatus, which is organised to protect and perpetuate the privileges of the bureaucracy in the deformed Polish workers' state.

His appointment has been welcomed by the Kremlin Stalinists (to whom, as former chief of the secret police he is well-known) precisely because they know he will miss no opportunity to check the revolutionary movement and restore the stability and authority of the state.

He will endeavour to do this in the first instance by drawing strike leaders into the bureaucracy. Ominously Lech Walesa of the Gdansk Strike Committee has announced that he will no longer work in the shipyards-even though his reinstatement was one of the major gains of the strike.

Instead he is moving into his own government-supplied office, and is holding meetings with Cardinal Wyszinsky and the Central Committee of the official trade unions.

But with the regime issuing increasingly sombre warnings to the thousands of workers still on strike, Walesa still feels far from secure: according to a West German newspaper he still fears arrest, declaring "my head is already on a block."

The gains that have been won in the struggles are very real and historically unprecedented: but it is only through carrying through the complete political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and the establishment of a revolutionary government of workers councils that Polish workers can protect these gains.

In this task they require above all a revolutionary, Trotskyist party with a clear grasp of the nature, historical development and contradictions of Stalinism and the need for its political overthrow.

## DEFEND ADWEST STRIKERS!

The Tory anti-union laws are now in full force: and in particular Prior's reactionary restrictions on picketing now make it illegal to mount a mass picket.

It is under these conditions that strikers at Adwest Engineering, Reading, now in their 18th week of strike action for reinstatement and union recognition, have called for labour movement solidarity in their mass picket on Monday September 22.

### Reinstatement

The strike-for the reinstatement of the TGWU convenor, shop stewards and other workers victimised for taking strike action-has pinpointed the refusal of the TGWU leadership to confront tinpot anti-

union employers.

Now it has become one of the first test cases of the effectiveness of the Tory anti-union laws in deterring militants from giving active solidarity to workers in struggle.

### Left Groups

Previous mass pickets have attracted around 100 trade unionists. A larger mobilisation-including substantial contingents from the larger organisations of the left, the Socialist Workers Party and International Marxist Group-is vital this time to defend this strike and defeat the Tory anti-union offensive.

Donations to the fund for the strike-which has still not been made official by the TGWU-should be rushed to D. Broderick, 46 Berkley Road, Reading. Cheques and POs should be made out to J. Dhoot.



## Battle at King Henry's

PHOTO: Steven Willett

23 workers at King Henry's Bakery, Levenshulme, Manchester, have been on strike for 2 months, demanding union recognition, after the sacking of their convenor.

Management have used scab labour against the strike. Mass pickets have been held every Tuesday and Friday morning.

On Friday August 29, around 180 pickets clashed with police as they attempted to stop a car that came speeding

towards the picket line.

The crowd managed to liberate several pickets arrested by police.

The Bakers Union is calling on all trade unionists to support the mass pickets, from 6.30am-9am on Tuesdays and Fridays.