



# POLAND ON THE BRINK



Negotiating the 21-point Gdansk agreement

**Who runs Poland?**  
That is the stark essence of the latest confrontation between the new union, Solidarity, and the Stalinist bureaucratic regime in Warsaw.

While the government rules out any concessions on Saturday working the leaders of the working class "declare" a five day week with no loss of pay.

The gauntlet has been thrown down. Will the government pick it up? If it fails to do so, the consequences may be as grave as if it does.

Solidarity was built on the base of the massive struggles by Polish workers which erupted last summer and brought the country to the brink of a general strike.

The government was forced to concede a 21-point document making economic and political concessions to workers' demands. One of them was an end to Saturday working.

Since then only a handful of the 21 points have been conceded in practice. Meanwhile the worsening shortages of consumer goods and even basic foodstuffs and medicines in the shops have made the agreed wage increases appear almost irrelevant. Living standards are falling even while nominal wages are going up.

Polish workers who fought to secure independent unions now look for material benefits from their struggles: and the most tangible gain that they can

hope to secure in a beleaguered Polish economy is additional time off work.

Hence the working class pressure on Solidarity leaders to carry through a confrontation with the bureaucracy—even while Russian tanks wait on Poland's borders and the Warsaw Stalinists warn that no concessions can be made.

According to the Warsaw leaders, the implementation of a five day week could cost up to £2,500 million a year in lost output, and require an extra 500,000 workers.

### Reluctant

This is clearly an exaggeration: the bureaucratically mismanaged nationalised economy is already subject to huge delays, bottlenecks and lay-offs.

New government plans involve a cut in the workforce of 1.5 million to improve productivity.

But it is true that the Polish economy—some £25 billion in hock to Western governments and bankers—can ill afford to implement a five-day week at this point.

This is why Solidarity leader Lech Walesa—now off for more detailed consultations with the Pope and other Church leaders—has been so reluctant to press this—or any other—issue.

He knows that any significant demand at this point calls in effect for the removal rather than the reform of the present bureaucracy.

But the demands of the Polish workers and the strength

they felt in last year's struggles have achieved a momentum which Walesa cannot completely control.

This has flowed into the political field as well. The British mass media now echoes with open criticism of the bureaucracy, with television programmes presented by media workers wearing Solidarity badges.

Plans for the launching of Solidarity's own newspaper are being pressed forward in open challenge to the state censorship and dictatorial suppression of opposition exercised by the Polish regime.

Time and again workers are taking strike action to force the removal of particularly hated Stalinist bureaucrats in local government or management posts. More and more the apparatus of the police state is coming under attack.

### Power

The political power of the Stalinist bureaucracies in Poland, the other East European states, and the Soviet Union itself rests not as in the capitalist countries on the private ownership of banks, factories, and other means of production: it rests solely on the ability of the parasitic caste who administer the nationalised economies to suppress the organised independent strength of the working class.

Once the bureaucracy's power to crush dissent and political criticism is destroyed,

the road is open to the working class to politically overthrow the Stalinists and take control of the nationalised industries in the struggle for socialism.

### New loans

The Stalinist leaders recognise this all too well. This is why, despite the huge military, economic and political problems that would ensue, there is no doubt that the Kremlin leaders would sooner invade Poland—and some Warsaw leaders sooner invite them in—than witness a political revolution in Poland that could rapidly extend throughout East Europe and the USSR itself.

The capitalist leaders recognise this, too. This is why they are falling over themselves to offer new loans, cheap food supplies and renegotiation of debts to avoid precipitating major struggles in Poland.

But the Polish workers movement does not grasp this.

Solidarity lacks a developed Trotskyist leadership that is prepared to spell out a revolutionary, internationalist programme for the mobilisation of workers throughout the deformed workers' states in the struggle for the overthrow of Stalinist bureaucracy and the establishment of the power of workers' councils.

In the meantime Poland teeters on the brink: the brink of mass struggle, and the brink of a possible Kremlin invasion.



Bureaucrats must crush independent voice of working class

# Show of strength as police bust squat



Dress rehearsal for Kilner House eviction: police evict Huntley Street squatters, 1978

On Sunday last the squatters of Kilner House, a large block of flats in the Oval in South London belonging to the GLC, celebrated the 100th day of their occupation in protest against the GLC's plan to sell the flats.

The celebration took place not inside the flats but outside, because two days earlier the 100 or so squatters had been removed by a huge force of police.

There can have been little short of 1,000 police with axes, riot shields and other equipment to drive out the 30-40 last ditch squatters who held out to the end behind an internal barricade on the upper floors.

The bust was not unexpected—indeed the timing had been leaked from a source inside the GLC. And it followed the abor-

tive attempt a couple of weeks before by the under-Sheriff of London to serve a court order on the squatters to get them to leave.

He said he'd come back with more police. And he was as good as his word.

Against such a large force there was little point to physical resistance once the barricade (and most of the doors of the block) had been destroyed by police axes.

So the rest of the eviction took place with only two arrests—one supporter outside for obstruction, and a highly indignant *Evening Standard* reporter who was later diplomatically released.

The police did, however, take time to check the squatters on the computer records before they were allowed to leave the building and one was taken away on an alleged motoring offence.

Squatters were insultingly handed a piece of paper as they left with the address of the nearest homeless aid agency; but of course they were not given cheques for £19,000 to £23,000 which would have allowed them to buy the flats which for many of them had become their homes.

After the police vandalism, however, they will need a lot of repair and decoration before anyone will buy them at any price.

And the GLC direct works branch of UCATT has already said its members will block the work.

The squatters and their supporters now hope to block the sales until the Tory GLC council is, they hope, defeated in the May elections.

But already they have made a significant protest against the scandal of homelessness and council house sales.

PHOTO: Andrew Wiazd (Report)



# 1980: Year of French crackdown



French police carrying out identity check under new laws

## Economic crisis shakes Begin

The new year has brought no respite for the Israeli government with one major crisis and political scandal following another.

Prior to Christmas the government narrowly survived a no confidence vote by 57 to 54 votes resulting from the announcement that the inflation level was around 130% and forecast to rise to reach an annual average of 160%.

The economic downturn was complemented by political scandal concerning the receiving of bribes by the Minister of Religious Affairs and further aggravated by the expulsion of the Palestinian mayors of Hebron and Halhoul.

The expulsion even provoked criticism from many Zionist sources including militant Moshe Dayan.

This reflects firstly a recognition of the difficulty of repressing the resistance of the Palestinians and secondly disagreement over how best to combat that resistance.

All present opinion polls show that the Labour Party under its new leader Shimon Peres would win any election held in the near future and indeed the possibility of the Begin-led coalition holding out until November have never looked slimmer.

### Leaving

A further blow to the Zionist establishment was dealt by the release, prior to Christmas, of new statistics showing that in the face of 130% inflation, Israelis have been leaving the country in droves.

33,000 more Israelis left the country than entered in the first ten months of 1980, compared to a figure of 14,000 in the same period the preceding year according to the Central Bureau of Statistics.

Also a 40% drop in Jews moving to the so-called 'safe haven' of Israel, against the previous year, was recorded.

Against this background the West Bank has witnessed a massive wave of Palestinian nationalism publicly displayed through strikes and demonstrations, many centred around the expulsion of the two mayors and most viciously attacked by the Zionist occupation forces.

However the rousing welcome for Mayor Bassam Shaka of Nablus on his return to the West Bank last week shows that this popular feeling refuses to be cowed by Israeli repression.

Shaka lost both legs in a car bomb explosion last June shortly after a meeting with the then Israeli defence minister Ezer Weizman, who threatened him with violence during the meeting.

This week has seen the Begin coalition government rocked by a new scandal over an attempt by Josef Burg, Minister of the Interior and Police to hold up the investigation into corruption in his ministry.

Burg summarily dismissed, for insubordination, the Inspector General of Police leading the investigation!

### Brink

The economic crisis combined with the rotten corruption and reactionary outbursts of the ruling Likud politicians has brought the government to the brink of collapse—a journey hastened by the boldness of the Palestinian resistance.

A pay award promised to 60,000 teachers of between 30 and 60%, which if successful would provoke an avalanche of similar claims has added further pressure.

Finance Minister Hurvitz has resigned following the cabinet decision to pay the award and unless this resignation is reversed as we go to press, it will quite possibly destroy Begin's tiny parliamentary majority.

There can be little doubt that such a collapse would return a so-called 'Labour government'.

This might in turn herald some attempt at a shabby land offer to the Palestinians as an alternative to Begin's view that the biblical land of Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) should forever be a part of Israel.

Such an offer does not answer the Palestinian demand for national self determination.

What it represents is a recognition by sections of the Zionist establishment that pure repression, relying totally on the armed forces, may not be a financially viable policy.

### Embarrassment

Jewish workers must be granted sufficient concessions to prevent them entering the arena to combat 160% inflation and therefore threatening the class collaboration on which Zionism and the Israeli state rest.

Many pro-Zionists clearly see Begin's determination to prevent any agreement which may eventually lead to a small Palestinian statelet, as an embarrassment at a time when

the future viability of the Jewish state itself is in question.

The government's policy of sanctioning more settlements on the West Bank has stoked Palestinian resistance at a time when the economy can ill afford its defence bill.

### Defence spending

The desperate nature of the domestic economic crisis is reflected in the decisions in December to attempt to curb internal defence spending.

Defence accounts for 32% of the country's budget—with a further third of the budget servicing and repaying foreign debt most of which is incurred for military purposes.

There is clearly some truth in the joke about whether the country has an army or the army has a country.

Harsh economic realities have pointed the knife at the previously sacrosanct Defence Ministry and these are the same realities behind the Zionists in the Israeli Labour Party who can offer no lead to Arab and Jewish workers.

The Middle East—and in many ways this means the Palestinian question—is central to the problems of US and Western imperialism in general.

In the immediate future we will doubtless hear many different voices preaching the need for some kind of restricted statelet for the Palestinians, liberally sprinkled with warmed-over platitudes about "human rights".

### "Buy off"

Britain and Germany can be expected to favour some such deal due to the possible economic expense of the military Rapid Deployment Force-type alternative.

Some Tory MPs advocate the political 'buy off' in the shape of a restricted state as the cheapest way to guarantee oil and block Soviet influence in the Middle East.

In sifting the genuine support from its opposite, socialists must fight for the overthrow of the Zionist Israeli settler state.

In struggling on this basic question they will find no friends in the Israeli Labour Party or the British Tory Party.

The real disgrace for British workers is that they will find precious few such friends in the ranks of the leadership of the British labour movement either!

**Insidiously Big Brother has used 1980 to gnaw away at everyday rights in France.**

The list of restrictions brought in last year to curtail liberties is an eye-opener.

\*Identity checks made legal.

\*Phone-tapping put on a more organised footing.

\*Detention in police cells extended.

\*Press censorship stepped up.

\*State control of the media reinforced.

The new measures contained in the text "Security and Liberty" which was adopted by Parliament in the autumn, will, when they become law, make it obligatory for anyone to reveal and prove their identity whenever demanded by the police for whatever reason.

A refusal can mean imprisonment from ten days to three months and a fine of from £120-£200.

You would need to go back to the Vichy regime in 1943 to find such draconian police powers.

Not even during the Algerian war did France possess such a legislative arsenal.

1980 will also be remembered as a black year for all those considered "marginal"—immigrants, political refugees, independence fighters, homosexuals, those on remand or the condemned.

Political discrimination is blatant. A mere six months away from the French Presiden-

tial elections advocates of independence or autonomy in France's colonies (representing at least a third of the population in each case) are still barred access to local television.

### Infamous

Also in the document "Security and Liberty" is contained the provision to hold those awaiting deportation in the special prison near Marseille at Arenc.

This was revealed a few years ago as the place where the "bad" immigrants are incarcerated.

When the new infamous document becomes law it will also give even less guarantee of the independence of justice to those on remand and those charged.

The prosecution is to be given more powers and the right of prisoners to appeal is to be greatly curtailed.

These measures have provoked reaction even among the judiciary. There has been a protest demonstration of magistrates and eight of the highest legal authorities have denounced the text.

The temperature has hotted up since about mid November with the growth of 'presidentialism'.

Giscard has meddled in everything which is of electoral interest. He has not only acquiesced in these attacks on personal liberty but has often taken an active part in pressing

them through.

The government censorship of the press has become an issue of national scandal with the prosecution of the director of *Le Monde* Jacques Fauvet.

On 7 November the procurator of the Republic of Paris started proceedings at the demand of Alain Peyrefitte, under article 226 of the Penal Code.

This holds a punishment of one to six months imprisonment and of 500 to 30,000 franc fine for "casting discredit on an action or a legal decision under conditions of besmirching the authority of justice or its independence."

*Le Monde* has long been a thorn in the flesh of the government, continually critical of its policies and charting a somewhat independent course.

The final straw seems to have been the repeating of the material carried in the satirical journal *Le Canard Enchaîné* about the gifts bestowed on Giscard d'Estaing and his family by the butcher Bokassa.

The use of this article of the Penal Code has created a legal backlash and is the source of major discomfiture for the government.

The prospects for 1981 must be one of struggle to make the implementation of these new attacks unworkable and to get them thrown out—along with Giscard himself, who is now trailing Socialist leader Francois Mitterand in the opinion polls.

## NEW STRIKE WAVE IN S. AFRICA

**Strikes in the last few months in South Africa have demonstrated the continuing determination and combativity of the black working class and the deepening crisis of political control facing the capitalist class.**

At the end of October, over 1500 workers at the Wilson-Rowntree sweet factory in East London came out on strike.

The strike erupted in the wake of a wave of factory struggles in the area.

Over the last few months, militancy has fuelled a dramatic growth of workplace organisation in East London industrial area under the banner of the South African Allied Workers Union and the Food and Canning Workers Union.

This reflects a national situation of the growth of workers' organisations.

The whole Wilson-Rowntree workforce, which is organised by SAAWU, walked out in solidarity with a section of workers in dispute over working conditions.

Management responded by sacking the workforce, who joined the ranks of hundreds of other workers sacked in recent strikes at Collondale Canneries, Ray-Lite Batteries, National Converter Industries and other East London factories.

But the determination and organised unity of the Wilson-Rowntree workers broke the employers' attempt to rehire workers selectively (no doubt with aid from the secret police).

A mass meeting was held in the African township in solidarity with victimised East London workers.

Wilson-Rowntree bosses were forced to retreat and to reinstate the workforce unconditionally, a week after the sacking.

This bosses' retreat was soon followed by a police attempt to break working class combativity.

Fifteen East London trade unionists were detained by the secret police.

Factory committees in the

area organised a mass meeting in protest.

Faced with the threat of working class anger escalating into action in support of the victimised trade unionists, the state backed down. All fifteen were released on the day of the mass meeting.

In the country's motor vehicle industry, black workers have continued to take up the weapons of organised strength and class confidence forged in the course of factory struggles throughout last year.

They have also turned to their advantage the bosses' concern to maintain full production during the current boom in vehicle sales.

Last November, there was a two-day strike by 4,000 black workers at the giant Datsun plant in Pretoria.

The entire black workforce came out in support of car assembly workers in dispute over a savings scheme.

Management called in armed police, claiming that workers were damaging vehicles and equipment on the assembly line.

### Successful

But reports indicate that the united mobilisation was successful in securing the demands of the assembly workers.

The most recently reported major strike action involved workers in another strong and strategically important section of the black working class.

Last month, 780 black bus-drivers employed by Putco in Johannesburg stopped work. The immediate cause of the workers' action was the victimisation by management of a fellow driver.

But the underlying build up of militancy is related to an ongoing wage struggle. This had earlier sparked off a two-day strike in July by 1000 Putco drivers in Johannesburg and Springs, who are organised in the Transport and Allied Workers Union (a member of the CUSA union federation) and the Transport and General Workers Union (member of the Fosatu federation).

The July strike had won important concessions, but the drivers' full wage demand had not been met.

Drivers were determined that the return to work was on the basis of a rapid settlement of their wage demand by Putco.

The bosses aimed to defuse workers' militancy by a long series of diversionary negotiations.

In August, a meeting in Soweto of 400 drivers demanded action to force a wage increase. Hesitant union leaders acted to hold back strike action, fearing that it could jeopardise the "progress" being made in negotiations.

### Crisis

The mounting anger of the drivers finally exploded in the December strike.

The outcome of the strike remains unclear from the information available to *Socialist Press*. But what is clear is that the united strength and militancy of the drivers have thrown Putco bosses into crisis.

The wider significance of the strike is that it emerges at a time of escalating militancy and anger in the massive working class community in Soweto and the Johannesburg area, focussed around a range of grievances, including rent increases of 75%.

Meanwhile the President and General Secretary of the black media workers' union MWASA have been served with banning orders in Soweto.

All these strikes show the fighting determination and mobilised strength of the working class. Workers show time and again their readiness to struggle despite the bitter hardships imposed by a vicious class enemy.

By taking this determination forward by independent working class politics, workers will be able to build their defence against each attack and mobilise their strength for the socialist revolution.



# FASCIST LINKS WITH MOBSTERS EXPOSED

Over the last two years a number of Basque nationalists have been killed on French soil, while it has seemed to be impossible for the police to solve the crimes and unmask the killers.

Now however the killers are known. It is clear that international neofascist organisations have been recruiting a 'heavy mob' from among the professional criminal fraternity to carry out their murderous missions.

Four of them have been called to appear in front of the Assize Court in Pau. It has been proved that they carried out several murders on behalf of the extreme right wing in Spain, while French former members of the OAS served to keep the two sides in contact.

It was French gangsters who carried out the Hendaye killings on behalf of neo-fascist groups after being recruited by former OAS killers.

One of the brains behind the gang was Joseph Zurita, a gangster who had previously

been implicated in the Ben Barka affair and who had played an important part in maintaining contact between Spanish neo-fascist circles and professional criminals in the Marseilles area.

It is also widely suspected that Zurita, who had carried out a number of services for the French government, was involved in the Pierre Goldman killing.

Few were therefore surprised when Zurita, after being arrested in October was set at liberty soon after.

'Nouvelles Litteraires' comments ironically that this may have been a little imprudent since two people who had offered to give evidence against him had been mysteriously killed.

It is being widely suggested that Zurita knew too much to be arrested.

While evidence continues to accumulate that the worldwide resurgence of fascist and neo-fascist groupings is being built by means of substantial financial and other forms of support from the ruling class, the CP's *Morning Star* recently

gave front page coverage to a statement by Henri Busch, general secretary of the French police union FASP.

Busch, who had earlier revealed that a very large proportion of the now banned fascist grouping FANE were serving police officers, claimed that there was a major effort in progress to purge fascists from the FASP.

While we give our support to any trade union in expelling fascists and other enemies of the working class, the case of police unions is somewhat special.

In particular as Trotskyists we would always point to the treacherous role of the Communist Party in France at every stage since the Second World War in turning workers' struggles away from the crucial task of destroying the apparatus of the state.

The Stalinists' efforts to portray the French police as capable of eliminating racism and fascism within their ranks serves at this stage only to divert attention from the need to explain to workers and racial minority groups the need to build defence organisations independent of the state.



Marc Frederiksen, chief of the neo-Nazi group FANE

# Bolivian workers resist 'cocaine' junta

After six months in power, the Bolivian dictatorship of General Garcia has proved totally incapable of consolidating its rule and reaching an agreement with the leading imperialist powers over how the country should be made safe for the banks.

The IMF has once again refused to release the final \$17 million of an \$85 million standby loan agreed with the Gueiler regime in November 1979. At that time Gueiler could only obtain the loan through a massive devaluation of the peso and widespread increases in the prices of basic necessities.

Within five days of forming her government she was met by a general strike and blockades of roads by the increasingly radicalised peasantry.

If Garcia and his cronies want to lay their hands on the rest of this money they will have to encounter a similar response from the workers and peasants and this, despite their constant barbaric repression since the July coup, they are not yet prepared for.

## Postponing repayments

While the IMF has attempted to ease the generals' path to the implementation of a vicious economic attack on the working class by postponing debt repayment for a further three months, the fact remains that Garcia continues to face a movement of the working masses that, while suffering a major setback, has not been decisively defeated.

As Bolivia's massive \$3 billion debt goes on spiralling, the dictatorship's options will narrow once more to the point of political crisis.

The continued failure to take concerted action, epitomised in constant haggling within the cabinet as to whether Bolivia is leaving the Andean



Miners at the Siglo XX mining camp

Pact or not, reflects the Bolivian bourgeoisie's political confusion—in a situation where the regime is recognised by the *Kremlin*, but continues to be shunned by the White House.

This impasse may indeed be resolved once Reagan takes office. But it is only the tip of the iceberg of problems for the country's weakening capitalist class which is now led by a political faction whose wealth rests on peddling huge cargoes of cocaine into Colombia and who are not centrally concerned with resolving the fiscal crisis of the state through the traditional mineral exporting sector.

There is growing evidence that the mining sector is now deeply regretting the Garcia coup which has brought tin production to its lowest level for nearly 20 years.

This fall in production is the result of constant and heroic workplace resistance by the

miners who, in the face of the disintegration of the national trade union (COB) leadership, have formed local branch resistance committees, the most important of which are under Trotskyist leadership as, for example, in the massive Siglo XX-Catavi complex.

## Wandering around

While the bureaucrats of the COB wander around Europe trying to pump up social democratic backing for Hernan Siles' bankrupt bourgeois UDP 'Government of National Unity' the comrades in the mines organised a 48-hour strike late in the year which was supported in all the major centres. For this action militants have continued to be arrested, tortured and shot, provoking further sabotage of production.

A COB proclamation from Panama has announced another

strike to take place in the next few weeks, although it appears that this is not the result of coordination between the national leadership and the rank and file leaders, who are now effectively leading the resistance.

It would not be altogether out of character for a man such as Lechin, general secretary of the COB (who in the summer told a military officer in an interview published in a national paper that it was now time for the working class to "leave its aspirations for another day" and that the coup had given him "an insight of the armed forces that I had never properly appreciated before") to regain his vacuous populist rhetoric once out of the country.

This traitor, who told the Bolivian workers to cease all resistance when even the veteran CP bureaucrat Reyes refused to make a similar statement "because I have no mandate

from the working class", will now no doubt throw in his hand with Siles' UDP.

This bourgeois coalition has now been stripped of the CP support it had up to October—following the Soviet Union's decision to recognise the Garcia dictatorship.

There are, unsurprisingly, reports of CP militants ignoring the party line and supporting the resistance committees in repudiation of yet one more vile Stalinist betrayal.

At the same time, the UDP's total bankruptcy was revealed by its Vice-President, Jaime Paz Zamora of the petty bourgeois MIR, on a visit to London last month. He revealed that the coalition's primary objective was to get support for a coup by 'moderate officers' who would then guarantee fresh elections!

This cretinism, whose cost if implemented would include the deaths of hundreds of Bolivian workers and peasants, has served to cause extensive disenchantment inside the MIR itself, the militants of which live out their daily lives in conditions that make a total mockery of their globe-trotting leaders' cynical stratagems.

Nevertheless, Garcia is by no means safe from the varying ambitions of his army colleagues.

The 'grupo institucional' of officers who backed elections and parliamentary rule has been broken up and dispatched to distant garrisons, while the failed dictator and drug addict Natusch has finally been

elevated to a generalship.

Yet the junta continues to be plagued by rumours of rebellions, abusive phone calls from subalterns and the unexpected appearance of tanks in the main square of La Paz.

Many senior officers have taken to setting up home in their barracks while their civilian lackeys contest for control of the cocaine trade in a series of mafia-style executions in Santa Cruz.

## Resistance

These schisms will continue and worsen as the proletariat sustains its resistance and thwarts efforts to realise the Pinochet-style crushing of the working class that Garcia promised in July.

The formation of the resistance committees and the successful two day strike mark a new stage in the recovery of the workers' forces—in alliance with the peasantry which has been severely attacked in the last 18 months. Albeit in characteristic uneven and partial manner, the peasants have sustained their support for the vanguard of the working class and not lost the radicalism imbued by the crisis of the Natusch regime.

In view of this and the continued diplomatic activity of the UDP, the fundamental tasks of international solidarity must be realised through a constant repudiation of deals with imperialism and struggle for the independence of the working class.

## TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

# Defend democratic rights in Turkey

## PUBLIC RALLY

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1  
Thursday 29 January at 7.30 p.m.

Speakers from the Labour and trade union movement.



# Women Workers and the Unions

Sarah Boston is a member of the national executive of the Association of Cinematograph, Television and Allied Technicians.

It appears that she was largely responsible for the report *Patterns of Discrimination* published in 1975 which examined the position of women within the industry and within the ACTT.

Some of the report's findings were typical—one in six of the union's members were women, but only one in seventeen of the shop stewards; in film and TV production 60% of women members were to be found in just three out of the 150 grades covered by the union.

Commenting on the post-war reaction against the employment of women, the report stated:

"women... in skilled grades... have now been almost entirely replaced by men. The division between men's and women's jobs has become more and more rigid in the last twenty years."

And the author comments: "This situation had come about not so much through blatant discrimination, although some employers were guilty of it, but through an acceptance by both the union and the employers that such a situation was an acceptable status quo".

(emphasis added) If the Bibliography included is representative, this book offers a very useful introduction to the subject: only one other book of similar scope is listed.

*Women Workers* starts with the 19th century in a chapter entitled "Their Proper Sphere at Home".

## Separate organisation

One of the main strands that runs through the early history of women worker trade unionists is their fight to join the existing trade unions—in the early 1800s men not only advised a policy of separate organisation but tried to establish them.

It was the textile unions that became the pioneers of mixed unions, and negotiated rates based 'on the rate for the job' and not a rate for the 'sex of the worker'.

The Women's Trade Union League, restructured in the late 1880s helped organise women in many ways—in separate organisations (because there was no other way), in craft unions and in the new general unions.

During the 1890s the women unionists affiliated grew from 2,000 to 70,000. In those days the Women's Trade Union Review had a series of articles on the views of trade unionists on organising women.

John Hendry, organiser of the Scottish Mill and Factory Workers Federal Union made an open attack:

"Women, as we in Scotland say, are 'kittle cattle' and if anyone has lingering doubts on that point which he desires to dispel, let him spend a few weeks in organising work amongst women, and his cure will be complete.

"Women, broadly speaking, from a Trade Unionist standpoint are bad subjects. This is due not a little to the dependent and subordinate position the woman has been so long taught to look upon as her proper place.

"She is difficult to get, and being got is difficult to keep." The National Union of Bookbinders and Machine Rules Special Conference in 1901 considered 'unfair labour' to be women doing men's jobs at rates below the unions' rate.

Resolution to form a Female Section of the union resulted in a divided vote, one delegate arguing against:

Ann McKinley and Bill MacKeith review 'Women Workers and the Trade Unions' by Sarah Boston 326pp, £12.50.



Unemployed women textile workers in 1952



Mary MacArthur with strikers at Millway in 1914

"women of today are of pushful manners and displace men in every walk and profession."

Balsillie from Edinburgh saw the issue more clearly:

"We are between two alternatives—that we get the girls in our power or leave them disregarded for employers to use against us."

It wasn't until 1918 that membership of both sexes was agreed. Some of the struggles in the early years worked both ways—women taking action for increased wages were replaced by scab men or young boys.

Employers were willing to use women as cheap labour until they started demanding higher and equal pay.

The separate union organisations on sex lines highlighted the problems of solidarity and also the sexist ideology that the women's place is "in the home" played its role—especially in times of economic crisis.

These are in contrast to examples of struggles where women took the lead in an industrial dispute and were supported by male trade unionists.

## Dockers' backing

The most telling case is of women workers at a vinegar and pickle factory in 1896 who were assisted by the Dockers Union.

Women in the early days also had, like the women of today, to contend with the treacherous role of the union bureaucracy (although one must take into account the petty bourgeois and liberal layers that they came from—instead of today's social democrats).

Examples are given of betrayal and sell-outs by them and the women's fight against them. Yet though they must be applauded, one of the ways of fighting back in that period might be questioned as a tactic—the forming of breakaway unions.

Today we would certainly argue for challenging the leadership and replacing it with those prepared to fight and not for breaking away from the official trade union movement.

Sarah Boston makes one of the most important observations in the book when she states:

"Against this general picture of disunity of men and women workers the nine days of the General Strike stand out as a remarkable exception. In 1926 men and women workers united on class (our emphasis) lines."

She later makes the point that little attention has been given in trade union circles to the role women played in 1926, mainly due to the fact that the TUC only called out women railway clerical workers. Yet bulletins issued by workers during that period report on many women taking action without any lead or instruction from the bureaucracy.

## Divisions encouraged

The divisions between men and women increased—and were encouraged)during the economic crisis of the 1930s. One of the most telling examples of that period was in 1935 when the General Secretary of the UPW wrote in his annual report:

"Division, segregation, deamalgamation, redundancy and most of all our present ills are traceable to the policy of employing less men and more women."

At the UPW's 1935 conference a resolution for the immediate implementation of equal pay was passed but in the next breath a further resolution deploring the increasing ratio of women to men employed by the Post Office and demanding a halt to the trend.

Male and no doubt some fascist delegates attacked women as the cause of the economic crisis, and Mussolini and Hitler were commended for their defence of the male! The resolution was passed.

The union bureaucracy's role in 1935 in fostering racialist and sexist positions shows 'through even today

Yet UCW leaders attack only left wing delegates and activists—for instance disciplining the members who took solidarity action over Grunwicks.

Also when at a recent conference one woman delegate—out of the vast women membership of the UPW—managed to get to the rostrum to speak there were cat calls, wolf-whistles and even sexist remarks from the union's executive!

The "abnormal" involvement of women in fulltime employment in the two imperialist wars focussed attention on the whole range of issues related to women's rights.

The number of nurseries in Britain increased from 100 to 1,182 between 1939 and 1943. During the second war, women's membership of trade unions increased threefold.

The central role in the decline in the provision of nurseries, without which "equal pay" or "equal opportunity" are meaningless, was played by the trade union leadership.

In 1946 the government cut the grant to local authorities to establish day nurseries from 100% to 50% (in wartime two-thirds of nursery places were in the day nurseries with longer hours than nursery schools).

In 1948 while the government was enacting the welfare state legislation, the TUC General Council opposed calls for the restoration of the 100% grant, and advocated private day nurseries and factory based nurseries that tie the mother to the employer.

"There is no doubt in the minds of the General Council that it would be doing grave injury to the life of the nation if women were persuaded or forced to neglect their domestic duties in order to enter industry particularly where there are young children to cater for."

The lead of the TUC bureaucracy in enforcing bourgeois ideology about the role of women was in direct contradiction to the economic needs not only of married women to earn a wage but also of capital for more labour (the 1940s and 1950s were years of "labour shortage").

This contradiction is referred to by Sarah Boston and merits further study.

The book concludes in 1975 with the chapter "You'll Have



White collar unions' equal pay campaign 1954

to do it Yourselfes".

The latter title illustrates one of the main emphases of this book—the documentation of the role of the leadership of the official labour movement in holding back the development of the fight for women's rights.

At the TUC in 1968 the General Council, despite the fact that it was TUC policy to press for equal pay legislation, was arguing the merits of voluntary methods of implementing equal pay.

The TUC General Council opposed a call for support for industrial action to secure equal pay and in November that year the TUC's women's officer, Ethel Chipcase, said to a conference on equal pay:

"If you want revolution you must do it yourselves." To her dismay, women did. 1968 was the year that women machinists at Dagenham brought Ford to a standstill over grading and pay, in a dispute that is a landmark in the history of the struggle for women's rights.

Equal pay has been the policy of the TUC since 1888—but there was a lack of commitment from the bureaucracy then and today.

Sidney Webb, a Fabian, believed for instance that wage rates based on sex were justifiable.

Mary McArthur's comment about the employers' attempts to avoid equal pay could have been said in 1970 about the Equal Pay Act—but was in fact made in 1916:

"The theory of equal pay for equal work was accepted but in practice we found that the work was scarcely ever recognised as equal. Some simple adjustment was made to machinery—a twist drill, perhaps, was replaced by a flatcutter... and it was declared the work was not the same."

An example of attitudes on legislation in the early days could well have lessons for women today.

In 1877 there were major debates on the question, and the Women's Protective and Provident League (founded in 1874) which had a mixture of feminism, trade unionism and middle class attitudes running through it, had the controversial policy of opposing any factory legislation which restricted the hours women could work or the jobs which women could do.

Their opposition was based on two principles:

1. that women should have, like men, the right to do any job and to work the hours they wished.

2. the way to restrict hours was by organisation not by legislation.

The League was attacked on the last point for being "middle class" and yet experience has shown that trade union organisation has gained better protection for women workers than statutory provision.

Battles on this question between the League and the TUC dominated the period when the Factory Act and the Restrictive Practice was going through parliament and Sarah Boston believes that the women were quite justified in being suspicious of the TUC bureaucracy giving wholehearted support to measures which restricted the hours and jobs women could work and do.

This book gives a valuable account of the struggles of women in trade unions, of the influences of feminism, and the record of leading figures, trade unions and governments on questions of women's rights, pay, grading, training, socialised care of children, health and contraception.

The author also has an eye for the record of prominent leaders like Alan Fisher of NUPE who failed in an attempt to water down a resolution on equal pay at the 1963 TUC and Boyd of the AUEW:

"I never want the women of this country to lose their femininity... I never want to see them performing the hard, heavy, dirty and hazardous jobs which is the common lot of women in certain non-capitalist countries."

But of course in restricting the argument to a purely trade union level ("Unless new machinery is created..."), albeit a kind of trade unionism to which the trade union bureaucracy is hostile, the author denies the need for a discussion of the necessary political programme and organisation to defend and advance the rights of both women and men workers.

Nevertheless this book should be read by all revolutionaries: order it from your local library now or if you can afford it, it would be £12.50 well spent.



# 'Sandinista': —now for 'Permanent Revolution'!

By Colin Morrow

The Clash have always had a reputation as errant lefties.

Right from the time of the first album, when songs like 'Career Opportunities', 'White Riot', and 'London's Burning' began to catalogue the vague politicisation of urban youth, to later songs like 'English Civil War', 'Guns on the Roof' and 'Guns of Brixton' their pre-occupation has been with the growing tensions of capitalist society.

When they played the first ANL Carnival, Joe Strummer, the lead singer, appeared wearing a 'Brigato Rosso' t-shirt.

In Ireland they were stopped and searched by an army snatch-squad, held for an hour face-down on the ground.

More than any of the other 'punk' bands, The Clash have preached a politics of rebellion.

So their new album appears under the title of 'Sandinista', a tribute to the FSLN forces in Nicaragua, and even sports a map of the country in the sleeve notes.

And again, it is an album riddled with 'political' songs.

The new single 'Call up', written at the time of the imperialist war drive, speaks for itself with lines like, 'It's up to you not to heed the call up'.

Other tracks like 'Equaliser' are in the same vein, criticising leaders who only seek to exploit —all to the sound of a positively shimmering reggae backing.

Musically, the album is superb, going way beyond the raw energy of the first album towards a compelling rhythmic density within which sparks of sound flash like electricity from guitars, violins, sirens and bells.

Punk it ain't, 'progressive' it undoubtedly is—a sort of 1980s Beatles White Album without the padding.

It is also undeniably a bargain. At £5.99 for a triple album—and most dealers are selling it at £4.50 to £4.99—it is excellent value, as the band intended.

At the time of the 'London Calling' album Strummer made it clear there would be no rip-off Clash albums, and that too is a political decision.

But the politics remain confused. They offer an ad hoc mixture of militant third worldism—'Washington Bullets'—and sharp-edged urban syndicalism.

The message is clear enough—fight the bosses, defend your rights, don't be conned by slick politicians, imperialism is out to smash you.

They even manage to swipe at Stalinism over Afghanistan—"If you can find an Afghan rebel/that Moscow bullets missed/Ask him how he feels about voting Communist" and to produce an anti-religious gospel song.

But when it comes to *means* the lyrics slide into the mist. So the Clash talk about Chile, but only to point the finger at imperialism.

There is no clue as to any alternative to Allende's road. They mention Poland obliquely in 'Equaliser' in the line 'Stay at home don't check with Rome' but again for politics all we are left with is 'paint strike on the door'.

Sandinista is thus a signpost without direction. In all honesty what the Clash needed for Xmas

was a copy of Trotsky's Permanent Revolution to put some political flesh on the basic bones of 'Clash consciousness'.

There's no doubting the sincerity of their spontaneous anti-imperialism—as the recent interview in 'Sounds' indicated very clearly—but at the moment that is all it is: a gut reaction.

John Lennon had that in 1969—plus all the good intentions in the world. He ended up in a 20-bedroom apartment specially air-conditioned to protect his valuable collection of rare furs, giving donations to the New York Police Department to buy bullet-proof jackets.

The lesson of 'Sandinista'—and of Nicaragua incidentally—therefore, is that *spontaneity* is not enough.

The Clash owe it to themselves to make that leap.

They've done it with the music, so now maybe it's time for the words.

'Sandinista' is an excellent album. But 'Permanent Revolution' would be an even better title for a new record!



Tom Litterick was a social democrat who meant what he said. He believed sincerely that radical measures within a capitalist constitution could bring real and lasting gains for the working class which could end in socialism.

He was amongst the most left of left MPs until his election defeat in 1979.

With only a handful of allies he stood out steadfast against the so-called Prevention of Terrorism Act; he opposed workers' participation at British Leyland; he called for support for strikes; and he was a savage critic of the Healey/Callaghan leadership.

He made a keynote speech at the post-election Labour conference in 1979. 'They said Jim would fix it... Jim certainly fixed it for me.'

### Longbridge

And almost his last political act was to chair a meeting of his Selly Oak constituency in defence of the eight victimised Longbridge stewards.

That does not make Litterick a revolutionary. He was fatally tied to the belief that Parliamentarianism and gradualism could reform capitalist oppression out of existence.

His politics which must ultimately collapse in front of events or be swiftly ditched. Litterick's death means that choice never faced him in its starkest form.

These were not of course, the points that appeared in the skimpy obituaries which appeared in the capitalist press.

Litterick received only a few sorry inches in the *Guardian*. Third or fourth fiddle on the *Times* obituary page. Tom Litterick, former MP for Bir-

mingham Selly Oak, was one of that band of unmentionables within the Labour Party.

The press has one extra reason for hating Litterick. Last year several papers paid out substantial sums in damages after publishing witch-hunt stories about his private life.

Litterick and his wife split up four years ago when Litterick started a relationship with Pat Healey, social services correspondent of the *Times*.

Mrs Jane Litterick had a virtual collapse over the break up and was convicted of arson after setting light to Pat Healey's front door.

Such crack-ups are tragic but not uncommon and are fed by bourgeois notions of possession and ownership within personal relationships.

Tom's death was the signal for the press to take its revenge. Reporters called on Mrs Litterick to record her grief-stricken ramblings.

For four years she has nursed her sense of loss and that pent up resentment poured out in as clear an expression of 'ownership' as the staunchest bourgeois moralist could have wished.

The *Daily Star* led its front page with an interview headed: "Give Me My Husband's Body" and subtitled 'MPs widow in heartbreak wrangle with his mistress'.

His 'mistress' in fact did her best to stay out of any wrangle, sensibly issuing only a brief statement through her solicitor.

But the rantings of his former wife were served up as a funeral fusillade over Litterick's grave.

A sample of the 'evils' of adultery was recorded as follows:

"After being told by her solicitor of his death, she [Mrs Litterick] read in the *Times* that he was to have a private funeral.

A small entry in the obituary column requested no flowers and asked for donations to be sent to the CND.

"I had forgiven what that woman had done to me", said Mrs Litterick, "Then I read that. It was too much."

"Now I am making it clear I will move heaven and earth to get his body back and have it cremated in Coventry."

Litterick's funeral was disrupted by photographers and TV camera crews trying to get pictures of "the two women in his life" and reporters regretting that there was no punch-up.

Even in death the capitalist class loses no opportunity for a defence of its oppressive bourgeois institutions.

It is not too squeamish to trample on the living and the dead to do so.

In doing so they cannot harm Litterick. To have earned the unyielding hatred of the gutter Tory press is perhaps one epitaph of which he would have approved.

# Pictures to set you smiling

## GREAT FAILURES OF OUR TIME

### No. 6 The First Parachute



On the face of it Glen Baxter is an unlikely artist to have an exhibition in even one of London's art galleries. Amazingly, at present he has exhibitions in two.

His pictures are illustrations of storybooks which do not exist.

They are nearly all drawings, reminiscent at first sight of illustrations to boys' and girls' story books of sometime earlier this century—especially those of the 'ripping yarn' variety.

He is a very skilful draughtsman; but the main point of Glen Baxter's pictures is that they are hilariously funny.

Or rather, to judge from the embarrassing contrast between my own mirth and the grim concentration of some other visitors to the exhibitions, they are hilariously funny to some!

It is hard to say more since to explain why something is funny is infinitely more difficult than saying why it is tragic or dramatic or boring.

Glen Baxter's humour is particular and special because it combines various kinds of incongruity.

There is the anachronistic style—the pastiche of pre-war

book illustration; the pictorial wit within the drawings; the way the captions never quite fit the pictures; the verbal wit of the captions themselves, especially in the choice of underused verbs; and finally the contrast between the prosaic events in the drawings and the sometimes grandiose presentation—as with the series on Fruits of the World in Danger or Great Failures of Our Time.

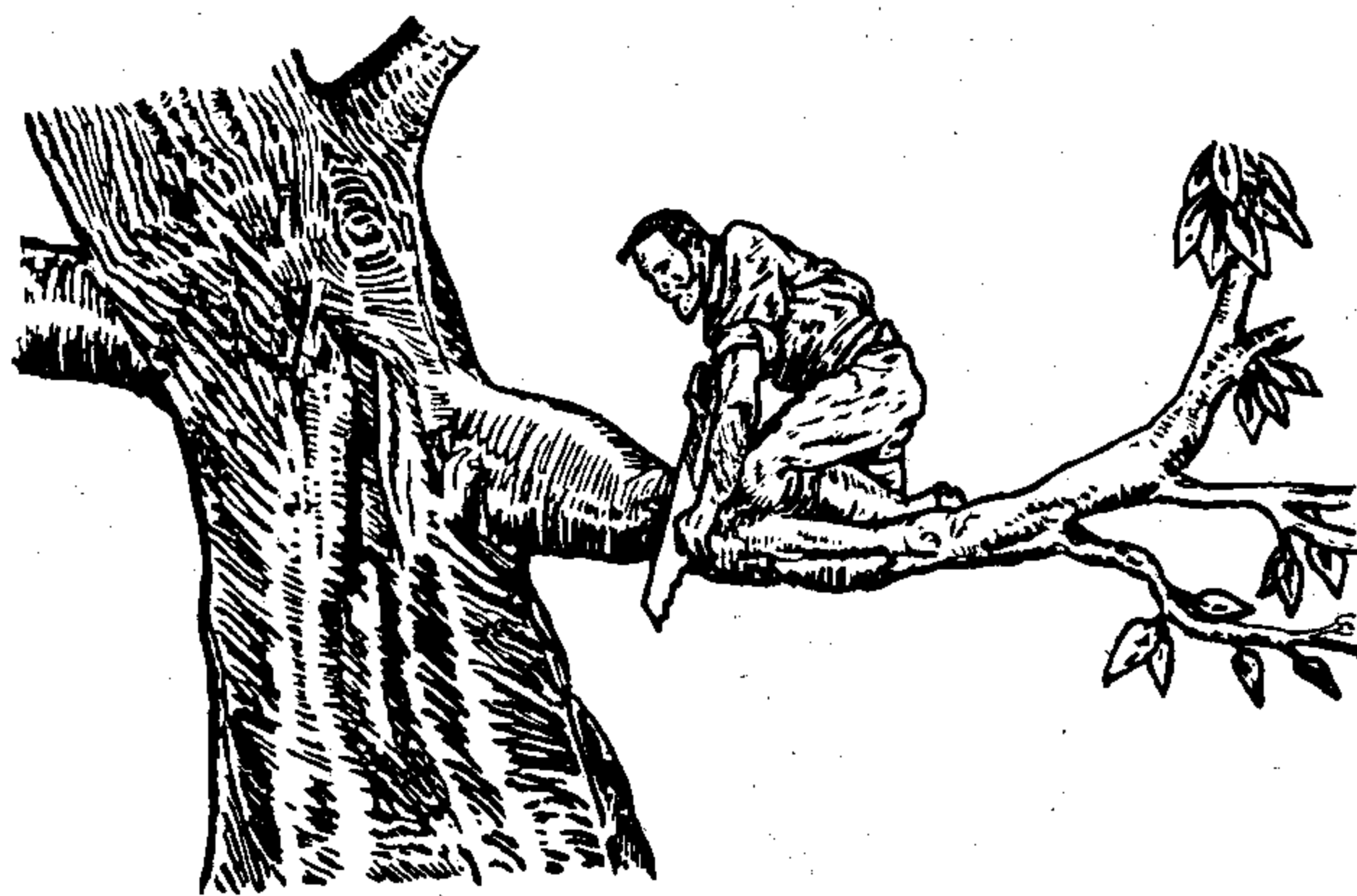
The overall effect is a kind of inspired surrealism—not so much of form as of content.

I think that it is probably this combination of elements which for me at least makes Glen Baxter's drawings quite exceptionally, side-splittingly funny. The only way you can find out if you agree is to go and see them or find one of his two books—'Atlas' or 'The Works'.

If, having done so you don't find them funny at all, then there is nothing I can do except sympathise.

Glen Baxter's drawings can be seen at the Anthony Stokes Gallery, 3 Langley Court, London WC2 (perhaps until next week) and at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Nash House, the Mall, London SW1 until January 25.

By Bob Sutcliffe



Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name .....

Address .....

Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.



# Labour's right wing prepare a break

By John Lister



Foot: if right wing pull out who will he lean on?

The election of former 'left' Michael Foot to the Labour leadership, the leftward shift in policy at the last conference, and the prospects of democratic reforms within the Party have helped produce a resurgence of its popularity—reflected in a 24% lead over the Tories in one recent opinion poll.

It is in these unfavourable conditions that the Party's anti-socialist right wing is forced to contemplate its chances of reversing the decisions of last October's conference.

Shirley Williams has already effectively given up. David Owen and William Rodgers—the rest of her "Gang of Three"—are hanging around to see what happens at the Party's Special Conference before weighing up whether or not to cut loose and drift off into the political limbo of a so-called "Centre Party".

And Roy Jenkins is still eating significant dinners with significant people while searching for the cash to float such a party.

Meanwhile more mainstream right wing MPs have also shown

their readiness to split if the Party refuses to toe their political line. Roy Mason has warned that he would run against an official Labour candidate in Barnsley if he is not reselected for another term.

## Cut and run

And Mike Thomas, the Manifesto Group Labour right winger from Newcastle has predicted that anything up to 50 Labour reactionaries might be ready to cut and run sooner than he is contaminated by socialist policies or called to account for their actions.

The running for a split is being made by the right wing—with rather ambiguous support from the Tory press.

Because behind them they would leave the real Labour Party—the mass membership, electoral support and union financial support.

And the desertion of the right wing would force this apparatus into the hands of the 'left'—at a time when the Thatcher government itself is clearly divided and totally despised by the electorate.

The Social Democratic Alliance predict a new "social democratic" party could be launched by the Spring. Socialists should urge Labour right wingers to join it—and press home the fight in the Labour Party for the kind of socialist, internationalist policies that can resolve the problems of the working class.

## IRA BOMBINGS: A BACKWARD STEP

It is hard to imagine a more stupid time for the IRA military command to embark on a series of bombings in Britain.

In recent months the heroic

struggles of the blanket men of Long Kesh for Prisoner of War status—brought to a high point by the 53-day hunger strike by seven republican prisoners—had forced the issue of the Irish war to the attention of wider sections of the British labour movement.

The struggle for political status of course had rallied mass support in the six counties and in the Irish republic.

But even in Britain where the labour movement is backward on the issue it had brought to the fore discussion on military rule, the rigged no-jury Diplock courts and the political basis on which seven brave men would be willing to forego food and face an agonising death.

Following the deal that

ended the hunger strikes, eyes were on the Tory government's willingness to fulfil its agreement and on the stubborn resistance of the blanket men to any sell-out.

The bombing campaign cuts right across this development. A few feeble fire bombs in militarily irrelevant targets, and a failed attempt to assassinate an almost unknown EEC politician offer nothing to advance the struggle to drive imperialist troops out of Ireland: but they give the Tory press further ammunition to carry forward their witch-hunt of the republican movement and those who defend the right of the Irish people to self-determination.

They underline the refusal of

the republican leadership to turn to the mobilisation of the working class in Britain or in Ireland in the struggle against imperialism.

But these profound shortcomings must not be allowed to stand in the way of the fight for solidarity with the Irish struggle in the British labour movement.

A picket of Downing Street has been called for Sunday 18 January by the Ad Hoc Hunger Strike Committee to highlight the Tory refusal to implement their agreement with the republicans and endorse the blanket men's five demands.

We urge readers to support this picket and maintain the fight for the restoration of political status to Irish republican prisoners.

## LETTERS

### 'H' Block deal

Dear comrade editor,

The assessment (in SP 229) of the end of the hunger strike is in my opinion far too sanguine about the gains made by the republicans in Long Kesh.

There is no doubt that a deal exactly as described in that article (Irish Hunger Strikers Force Concessions) was negotiated between the leaders of the hunger strike and the Northern Ireland office and that deal had been hatched at the meeting between Thatcher and Haughey in Dublin.

#### Not unforeseen

But the failure to implement that deal was not the result of some unforeseen 'breakdown'.

The British government is pulled two ways. Its international reputation is damaged by the fact that it operates the most extensive concentration camps in Europe. An end to the dirty and blanket protests would thus be in the interests of British imperialism.

On the other hand the government is determined to score propaganda points over the Provisionals and to demoralise those who support the nationalist struggle.

#### Victory

Implementation of the agreement would have been hailed as an enormous victory for the hunger strikers, despite the fact that political status was not on offer even in the form of 'special category' status.

Its implementation depended on a complex series of alternate 'concessions' which would have ended with republican prisoners wearing their own clothes, abstaining from traditional forms of prison work and having a large degree of free association and education rights.

It therefore seems to me inevitable that the agreement was not implemented. It had the same degree of predictability as being tricked by a street conjurer and the three card trick.

The British government will continue to seek an end to the H Block protests—but on terms much more favourable to its tough image.

The H Block prisoners are by all accounts divided and angry at the outcome, and supporters in the north and south of Ireland are confused and to some extent demoralised. (The prisoners however remain steadfast: a small handful only has come off the dirty protest).

It cannot be the wish of any anti-imperialist that a single hunger striker should have died. Yet the support which built up behind the campaign was unparalleled in both the north and south of Ireland in the last seven years. The ending of the hunger strike dissipated much of that support without achieving its aims.

Talk of renewing the hunger strikes is wishful thinking. Mass support cannot be turned on and off like a tap. Indeed, although supporting strike action was limited, the fact that strikes took place in the north and (on a larger scale) in the south put real fear into the Thatcher government.

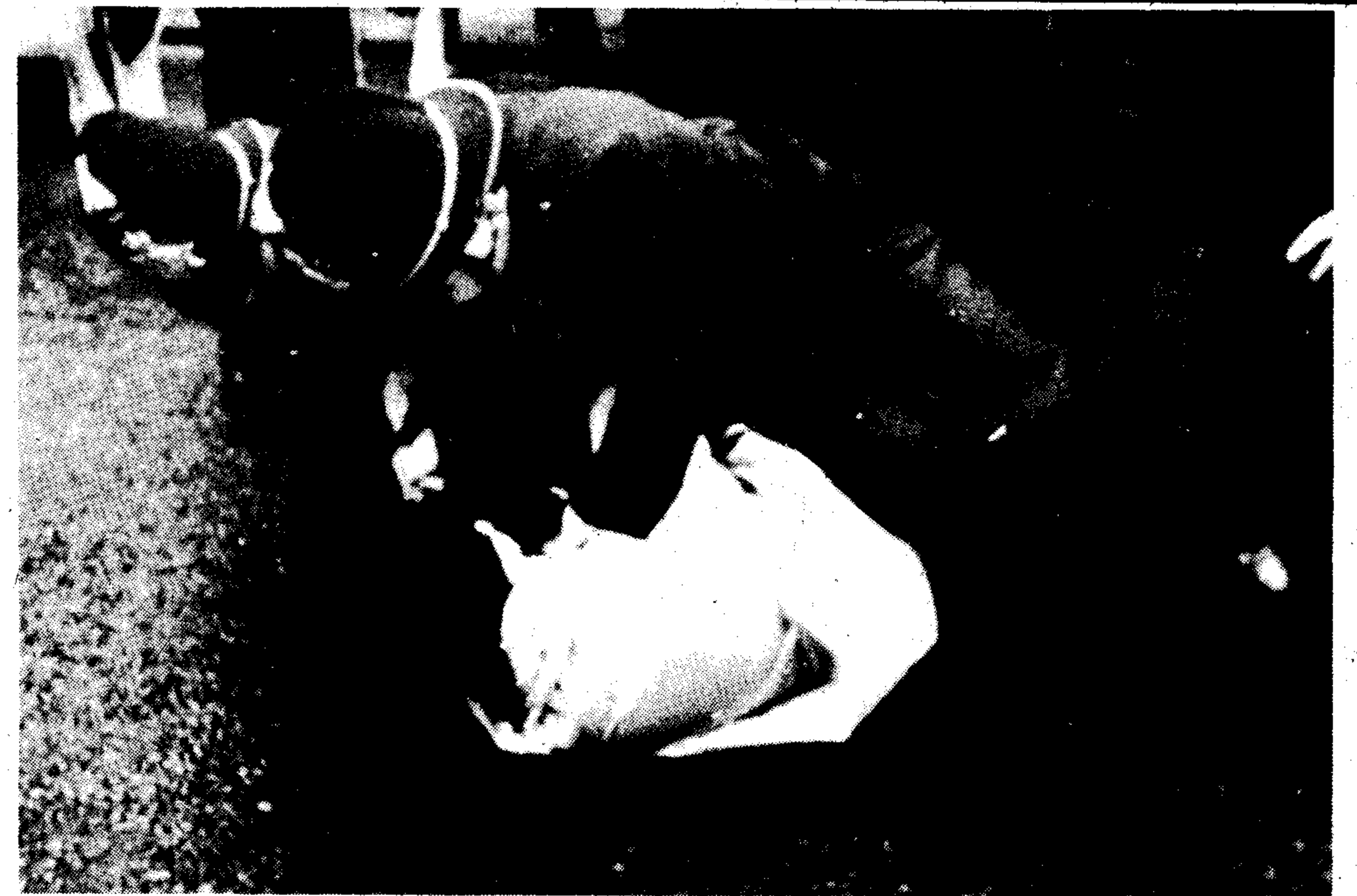
For the Provisional leadership, working class strike action is just a secondary tactic. I suspect that from the point of view of Bobby Sands and the provisional leadership, the real development from the hunger strikes was not the strikes or mass demonstrations but the fact that the British government negotiated with Provisional leadership. Recognition by the enemy has always been a bigger feather in the Provisionals' cap than organised support amongst the trade unions.

The Provisionals have now launched another bombing campaign in Britain—one which will prove as counter-productive to building an anti-imperialist movement as have all previous campaigns.

Tenacity and bravery are indeed the qualities of the republicans in British concentration camps. Yet the outcome of the hunger strikes cannot be separated one whit from the political limitations of a petty bourgeois nationalist movement.

If the British government did not know before it knows now—the Provisionals are more pliable than the working class.

Yours fraternally,  
Peter McIntyre



## More police powers

British policemen, already revelling in their sky-high salaries and the implicit "licence to kill" extended to them by the inquests into the deaths of Blair Peach and Liddle Towers, will be well pleased with the extended powers planned for them by the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure.

In particular they would get even wider power to stop people and vehicles, arrest anyone "suspected" of committing an imprisonable offence, and to search them and their homes without warrant for weapons or stolen property.

The police themselves would be put in control of fingerprinting and photographing "suspects" as young as 10 years old.

The only proposed restraint on police handling of suspects is the police internal disciplinary procedure, the farcical existing procedure for complaints ("investigated" by the police themselves) and the possibility that aggrieved individuals will take complicated and expensive civil court action.

There is a call for courts to exclude evidence obtained by "inhuman or degrading treatment"—but once again the onus of proof lands up on the accused!

The one small "victory" for

civil liberties campaigners is that there is no proposal to strip the accused of their existing right to remain silent in custody and in court.

But with the Tories laying the ground to strengthen the apparatus of the state, there can be little doubt that the Royal Commission offers a golden opportunity to further extend police powers.

**NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN**  
Constitutional Conference  
Saturday 24 January 1981  
10 am. to 5 pm.  
Wolverhampton Poly  
Students Union  
Conference fee £1.50  
(unwaged 75p)  
Further details from NCCC,  
c/o Surrey Docks Child Care  
Project, Dockland Settlement,  
Redriff Road, London SE16.

**Labour Movement Conference**  
*Media Censorship and Ireland*  
convened by National  
Union of Journalists  
Saturday February 28  
Birmingham  
Details from Ron Knowles,  
NUJ, 314 Grays Inn Road,  
London WC1

### Militant scab on 'H' Blocks

Dear comrades,

Nearly 100 people marched through Bradford on 20 December to mark the 'victory' of the republican men and women hunger strikers in the battle for status.

Prominent was the contingent from the Workers Socialist League, which was larger than the tiny contingents from the SWP and WRP.

However the most striking factor about the march was the battle to mobilise support for it earlier in the week.

A motion on Bradford Trades Council to support the march was defeated 20-14 by an amendment put by the 'Militant' tendency and supported by the right wing.

Militant supporters on the trades council argued that the march could not be supported because it 'has no labour movement support' and it 'will be seen as support for the Provisional IRA'.

The march of course was for political status! However Militant would not support that either, preferring to label these heroic, anti-imperialist fighters as "terrorists"—an implicit backing of the Tories' attempts to label the H Block men as 'criminals'.

The Militant amendment was laughable—it contrasted support for the march with the immediate sending of a telegram from the trades council to the Home Secretary and the TUC asking for humanitarian conditions in the H Blocks!

Not so laughable however was the obvious collusion that had gone on between Militant and the most reactionary delegates on the trades council in getting the amendment passed.

So for any worker wanting to fight Tory policies not only for Britain but for Ireland, beware of misleaders of all complexions—right, left or centrist!



# Support grows for Xavier

NUPE members from most of the main hospitals in London are supporting the mass picket outside Great Ormond Street on 13 January.

That is the day of the appeal by Conway Xavier—chairman of NUPE's London Divisional Council—against his dismissal by the hospital management.

The ancillary workers at Great Ormond Street itself will be on strike for the day, including TGWU and GMWU members.

They will be joined in this one day strike by several other

hospitals including Queen Elizabeth, the Homeopathic and the National. Other workers are expected to give their support and an anticipated 1,000 workers will take part.

The membership has been incensed by this blatant attack on union organisation.

Their anger was shown by the spontaneous strike by the Great Ormond Street workers when Conway Xavier was summarily dismissed. This reaction clearly amazed management in the immediate pre-Xmas period.

Although Xavier himself is a key figure in the NUPE health

workers in London—he is chairman of the Area Health Committee—this is not just an attack on him.

This sacking follows the attempt to completely disregard the grievance procedure at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The porters had to strike for three weeks to demand that the management honour the grievance procedure.

These porters are in the same union branch as those at Great Ormond Street who very correctly decided to take solidarity action.

It was following this principled stand that management

moved against Xavier.

At least one of those disciplining Xavier, Fionna Colquhoun, Group Personnel Officer, has experience of this type of 'work' through being a member of the AHA when NUPE militant Bill Geddes was victimised.

As well as repeating their attack on trade union organisation in the run-up to the wage claim, management is also concerned about the 'undermining' of lower levels of management by those involved in union activity.

Xavier, for example is a

deputy head porter. The DHSS, in fact, sent out a secret memo last November, following the arrest of a unit administrator on the picket line at St. Benedicts. He is also the local COHSE branch chairman.

Personnel Officers were asked to send information about the involvement of managerial staff in union activities.

Despite the media witch-hunt against the Great Ormond Street workers, union membership has increased over the last couple of weeks.

Where leadership is given, workers have responded. Xavier has very much based himself on

the mobilisation of members and not on either the 'good sense' of the appeal board or on things like industrial tribunals.

He has been a successful union negotiator and has been part of winning better conditions there than at many other hospitals.

He will campaign for extended strike action in Great Ormond Street if his appeal fails.

It was a weakness that no vote was put at the Health Area Committee either for strike action on 13 January or to support the Great Ormond Street workers should they take strike action after Xavier's appeal.

This must be put right at its next meeting.

## Scots teachers face redundancy threat

The announcement by the EIS, Scotland's biggest teaching union, in its annual review of staffing, that the authorities aim to reduce the number of teachers by 15,000 over the next ten years is anxious news for Scottish teachers.

Using the pretext of falling school rolls in both primary and secondary sectors, their intention is to cut the teaching force by 1,500 every year over the next decade.

It is obviously impossible that this can be achieved without redundancies and, although Strathclyde and Lothian, the largest regional authorities, have

said that there will be no redundancies in 1981, they have made no pledge for the future.

Five regions have still not announced their intentions for the year ahead and this must also put teachers on their guard.

A major strategy in any campaign against such redundancies must be the demand for smaller class sizes, thus not only saving jobs but also promoting better education for the pupils.

Demands for such changes in the contract of service have been advanced at conferences of the union over recent years but have been firmly resisted by a section of the leadership, including the increasingly pro-management chief negotiator, Keir Bloomer.

The most insistent campaign

for smaller class sizes, aiming at official endorsement at this year's AGM, can provide the focus for a fight against redundancies. Any such resolution cannot be open-ended but must demand unilateral implementation by the union of smaller classes by a definite date.

In the meantime any redundancies must be fiercely resisted with industrial action on a national scale to ensure effective opposition. No one region should be left to conduct its campaign against redundancies in isolation.

The improbability of any such fight by the present leadership is encapsulated in the recent response by John Pollock, the union's general secretary, to the Tories' reactionary Education Bill.

Pollock called for protest action by Scottish teachers.

What huge campaign did the man have in mind, you may ask. Wait for it . . . a two minute silence in each classroom to show the depth of our feelings!

Despite the problem of enforcing such a silence upon the pupils, the likelihood of the Tories retreating before such a forceful demonstration is rather slim.

bureaucrats supporting the school meals staff, but suggested approaching teachers individually.

The problem of how to get the support of parents was posed—but most parents are also trade unionists, so to expand the campaign through the trades council and Labour Parties would have that effect.

Margaret Jones, member of the Campaign Committee, suggested a strike of school meals staff to show the parents, teachers and trade unionists in supplying firms what it would be like without a school meals service.

The meeting agreed to start a petition against the cuts.

Neville Davis agreed to let the Campaign use NUPE facilities for sending out letters and to help the Campaign with publicity—but completely avoided the question of strike action.

## Lancs school meals fight

School meals staff in Lancashire are prepared to strike to defend their jobs and the meals service against cuts planned by the Tory county council.

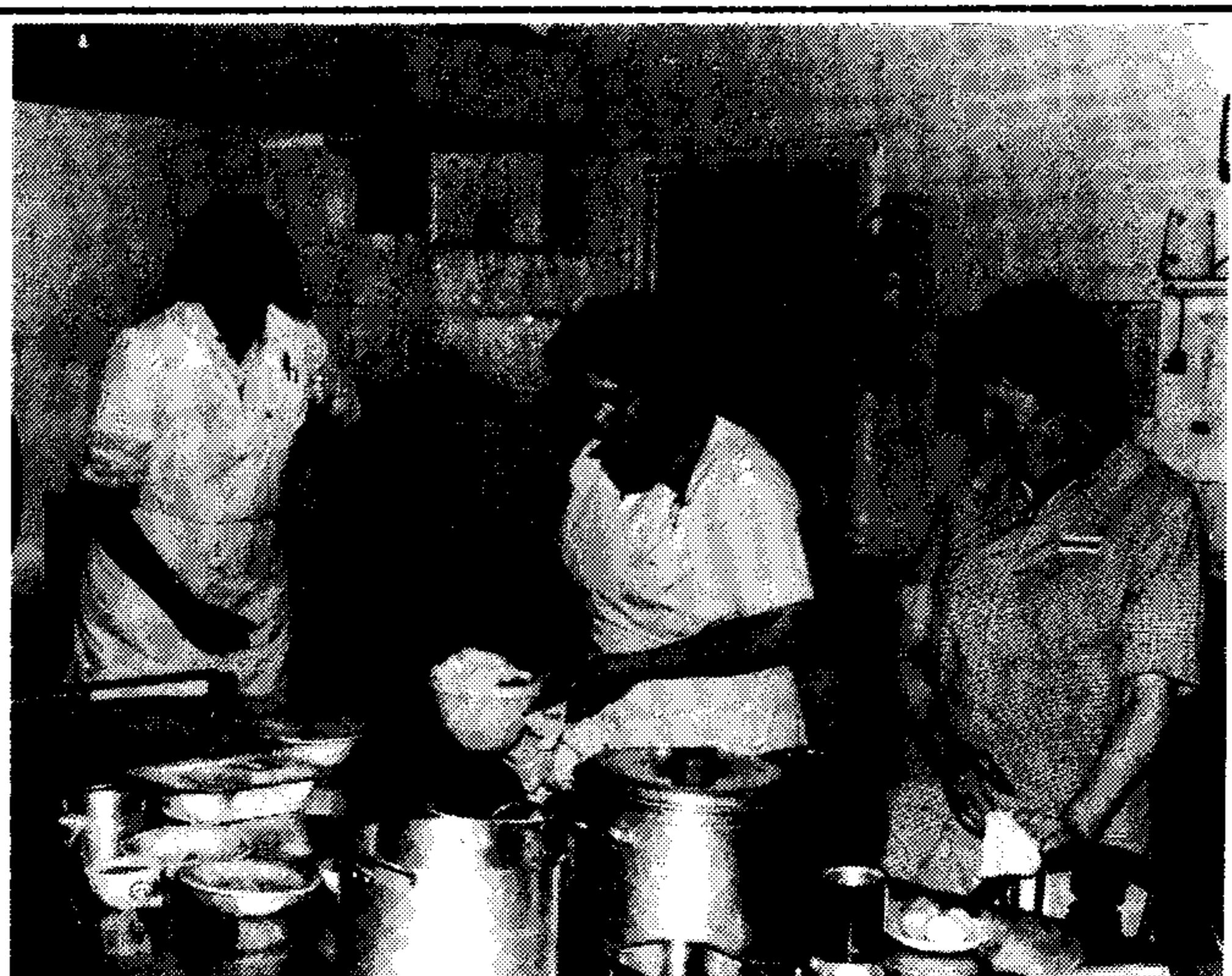
This was made clear at a public meeting on the issue last week in Accrington.

But NUPE official Neville Davies also made it clear that he was not willing to lead such a strike. He argued that they would be isolated—and that they had no experience of strike action.

How they will ever gain such experience was not explained!

It was suggested that they seek support from the trade unions in the industries which supply the schools with food and utensils for preparing school meals.

The teachers present saw no hope of the NUT or NAS/UWT



Serving the Christmas dinner at Longworth

## Longworth solid

After six weeks of work-in action, staff at Longworth in Oxfordshire are solid in their determination to defeat AHA plans to close the 35-bed hospital.

Yet despite the fact that their action is currently the only occupation in progress against the NHS cuts, COHSE leaders have gone no further than formally declaring the struggle official.

They have done nothing to help publicise the struggle nationally, and failed to comply with requests from the occupa-

tion committee to guarantee full strike pay to sections that take supporting action to defend the work-in.

But locally the work-in has provided at long last a focus for action against the cuts, and won broad backing in the labour movement.

Motions of support from trade unions and Labour Parties are particularly important, and donations are needed to the occupation funds. They should be sent to Barbara Russell, Whitebread Cottage, Farringdon Road, Longworth, Abingdon, Oxon.

## Longbridge 'inquiry' stalls for time

"Rigged 'inquiry' won't reinstate the eight" insisted last week's *Socialist Press* lead article, underlining the sell-out terms on which the strike at BL's Longbridge plant had been brought to an end.

Since then the tortuous proceedings of the "independent" inquiry have borne out our prediction to the letter.

In the one week they were in theory granted to complete their "investigations", the inquiry panel has seen only three of the eight workers victimised by management after a militant stoppage on the

Metro track.

Management have taken the precaution of completely switching the charges and "evidence" against one of the accused workers.

But they needn't have bothered: the evidence is irrelevant.

The inquiry is completely fixed. It consists of two BL managers, one AUEW official—whose union is committed to smashing the strike—and one TGWU official, and is presided over by an ACAS official.

Nor is this ACAS man any impartial observer. The 'Arbitration Service' is now run by Pat Lowry, for many years personnel director of British

Leyland!

It was Lowry who supervised the victimisation of Alan Thornett at Cowley in 1974, John Power at BL Service Division in 1979, and Derek Robinson at Longbridge last year!

Meanwhile Longbridge convenor, Communist Party member Jack Adams, sits back hoping that the "inquiry" lasts long enough to defuse the anger of Metro workers at the sacking of their stewards.

The only answer to this betrayal is a fight within the stewards' movement and union branches at Longbridge and throughout BL to prepare all out action to reinstate the eight.

## Scunthorpe marches

Two poorly attended marches took place last Saturday to oppose the closure of Scunthorpe's Normanby Park steelworks.

The first, organised by the Scunthorpe Steelworkers Action Committee heard Stan Sheridan of the South Yorkshire steel strike committee and John Lee from the Consett Action Committee warn of the effect the closure would have on other plants in the area—turning Scunthorpe into a ghost town.

Corin Redgrave of the WRP pointed out to the 200-strong rally that the blame for such a

closure must be nailed firmly on the union leaders who make people think that nothing can be done.

But all Redgrave could propose was the setting up of one of the WRP's cross-class "Community Councils".

*Socialist Press* supporter Dave Ayrton stressed the betrayal of union leaders who last year deliberately isolated the steelworkers and refused to fight to bring the Tories down.

United action should be fought for now around the demand for a General Strike to bring down the Thatcher government, he argued.

No such call to action came from the platform of the "official" march called in the afternoon by the Labour and ISTC bureaucrats.

An impatient audience of some 400 called the bureaucrats' negotiations on redundancy payments "Judas money" and there were calls for occupation.

John Lee from Consett was refused access to the platform despite cheers from the crowd: but he used the mike from the floor to proclaim the need for a new union leadership—to rousing cheers and applause.

## Sit-in stays firm

65 journalists in struggle to prevent redundancies in MacDonald Futura, a subsidiary of the giant BPC publishing combine, continue with their occupation of a sixth floor office.

The fight, officially backed by the NUJ, needs financial and moral support. Contributions and messages should be sent to the BPC Chapel, c/o NUJ Book Branch, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Cheques should be made payable to MacDonald Educational NUJ Chapel.

Meanwhile there was a boost for occupations last week when the determined action by members of the NUS who occupied the P&O ferry Ulster Queen in Liverpool brought an agreement to restore the Liverpool-Belfast ferry service—bringing a reprieve for 600 jobs.

## Pay: from back page

living and the claims submitted by the unions.

Both groups of workers are strongly placed to take strike action. But both face union leaders terrified of defying the Tory government.

Amid a display of 'left' rhetoric, these bureaucrats are hoping against hope that some "compromise" increase will be offered by the employers.

And in Fords, where a tenacious strike against Callaghan's pay limits headed a wave of wage struggles in 1978-79, union negotiators have set out to keep their hands "clean" while doing their best to dissuade members from action.

By themselves rejecting the wage-cutting 9.5% offer but making no call to action and stressing the problems, they have cleared the decks for a disgruntled but leaderless workforce to accept the money on the table.

But none of these retreats will halt or even ease the Tory offensive. Redundancies are once again running at 1,000 per day; cuts in social services and health continue to escalate; and living standards continue to fall.

To fight back, the working class needs a leadership that will start not from the problems of the employers or their own fear of the Tories, but from the strength and independent needs of the working class.

Socialist Press will continue to seek every avenue to pursue the fight for such a leadership.

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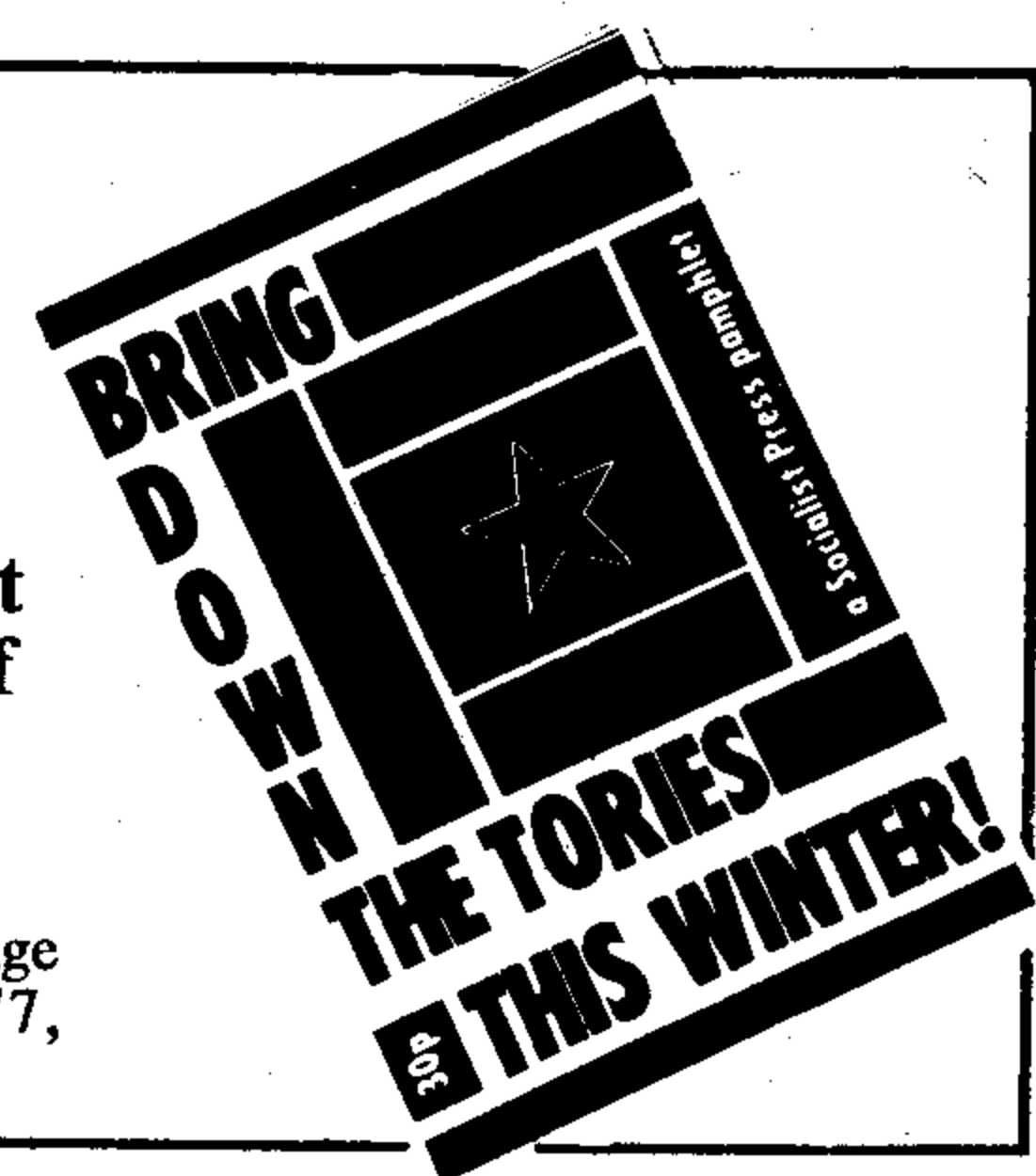
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# PAY: THE WINTER OF BETRAYAL



Mass demonstration against Callaghan's 5% limit: 7½% insults low paid too!

As the National Union of Seamen began their selective strike action in pursuit of their wage demands, their struggle stands out as a beacon amidst a tide of betrayals.

That tide gathered pace the moment that union officials and convenors in British Leyland deliberately steered their £17 pay claim onto the rocks and wrecked the chances of BL workers giving a lead to others throughout the public and private sectors.

Since then, foghorns of retreat have been sounded by one union bureaucracy after another.

### Launched

The Tory government arrogantly launched their 6% pay limit in the public sector—while allowing one exception to sail past in the form of the 13% ten-month deal for the miners.

The 6% figure was today's equivalent of the decoy lights with which Cornish peasants once used to lure cargo ships to their doom on the coast.

Because in demanding increases above 6%, public sector union leaders have been

shown to be more than willing to leave their members stranded.

Two million local authority manual workers are now being recommended by their unions to accept a miserable 7½% pay offer which is barely half the present rate of inflation.

And now NUPE's Ron Keating has gone even further—he has made it clear that health service manual unions are not even claiming more than the same 7½% on offer to their council worker colleagues!

Meanwhile in British Airways, in Steel and Rolls Royce trade union leaders have allowed their members to run aground on the sandbank of a wage freeze.

BA workers are planning a one-day strike against their six

month wage freeze on January 23; but in Rolls Royce the whole of the 7½% pay "offer" is to be financed through productivity strings and has been endorsed by union leaders.

And in BSC, union leaders themselves offered to impose a wage freeze on their members in exchange for less redundancies.

BSC chief Ian MacGregor on the other hand wants more: he is demanding both wage freeze and sackings.

Meanwhile in the gas and water industries union leaders, under pressure from militant members, are sending up distress flares.

The pay offers of 9% and 7.9% respectively fall miles short of both the rising cost of

Continued page 7

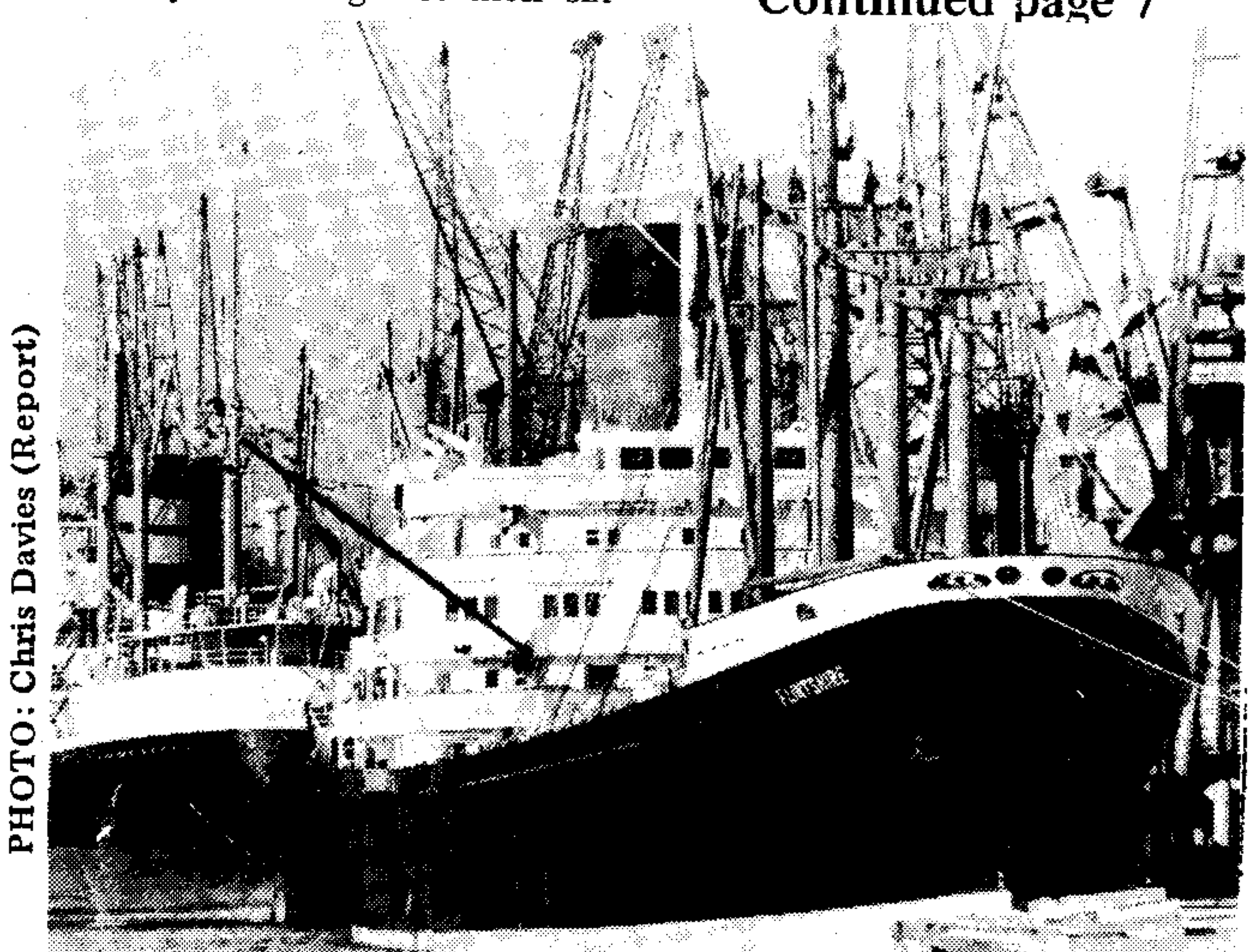


PHOTO: Chris Davies (Report)

# Labour councils must stand against Tories!

After the adoption by 800 delegates on November 1 of a fairly comprehensive programme of action for the fight against the cuts, the Lambeth Steering Committee is planning that the recall conference on January 17 focus on the fight to take that programme into practice.

The problems in that fight have been prominent in the news during the last two weeks. Lambeth Labour Group itself has voted to impose a 20% supplementary rate to compensate for "overspending" and Tory financial penalties.

### Wage cut

Only four Labour councillors are waging a principled fight against this move.

The rate increase amounts to a wage cut for workers in Lambeth. And it flies in the face of the call from the November 1 conference for councils to confront the Tories, reject rate and rent increases, and call on unions to take strike action against any attempt by the Tories to send in receivers or commissioners, or to surcharge

councillors.

True, the Lambeth Labour Group in defending its services is still to the left of many Labour councils, which are obediently carrying out Tory cuts up and down the country.

But the prospect of further huge rate increases in the next financial year, possibly even coupled with cuts in spending, scarcely provides a rallying point for the struggle against the Tories.

There are repeated warnings that we must avoid "another Clay Cross"—referring to the Labour council that was ousted and surcharged by the last Tory government for refusing to implement rent increases.

But precisely what is needed now is a Labour council that will show the same fighting spirit as the Clay Cross councillors.

Local authority workers who take action on the cuts risk their jobs: why should councillors not be prepared to place themselves on the line—and on that basis demand that union bureaucrats mobilise action in their support?

One motion to be discussed at the recall conference correctly emphasises the need to focus on such action by both Labour councillors and trade unions.

Tabled by Leicester TGWU 5/287 Branch it reads:

"This conference resolves to:

1) Circulate all Labour councils, Labour groups and District Labour Parties informing them of the policies adopted at the November 1 conference and calling for no rent or supplementary rate rises this financial year, and no rent or rate rises to compensate for government cuts.

2) To organise through the Steering Committee regional labour movement conferences to discuss a) united direct action in the form of rent and rate strikes to oppose any attempt to make the working class pay for Tory policies, b) united trade union action to prevent closures, cuts in services, and redundancies in line with the policies adopted on November 1.

3) To call on Labour councillors to publicly support such actions in defence of public services."

We urge Socialist Press supporters to back this resolution. Lambeth Labour Left which opposes the rate increase will also be holding a lunch-time meeting around the theme "Labour councils must take a stand."

At the same time the fight

for strike action during the Lambeth Week of Action in February is pressing ahead.

Members of the TGWU, UCATT and AUEW are pledged to strike for the whole first week of February—with emergency cover. They will also picket the Town Hall, calling on other unions to take a stand.

NUPE leaders however have said they will only strike if the council concedes a 35 hour week—a bizarre excuse for avoiding action.

GMWU members have yet to decide—while NALGO is voting on a sectional basis.

The high point of the week is expected to be the demonstration on February 4 from Clapham Common to the Labour Party Headquarters at Walworth Road. The march begins at 1 p.m.

The Local Government in Crisis Conference is open to delegates from trade union branches, shop stewards committees, CLPs, Labour groups and trades councils. For further information ring 01-274 7722 ext 2066.

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So here it is. Your first 8-page Socialist Press.

We don't like it!

Already we are beginning to have to stockpile important articles that should be in this week's issue. We have had to cut short our analysis of political developments in Britain—in the Labour Party and the Tory Party. We have less space to lay out the pages attractively.

We are keen to ensure that the cut in size forced upon us by the latest surge in inflation should be as temporary as possible. You can help.

Already some readers and supporters have begun to pledge additional sums of money to assist our fight to restore the Socialist Press to 12 pages each week.

Coventry WSL branch has pledged a £100 donation. Other

readers have offered us monthly donations.

If we could raise an additional £60 per month in new money we could start the work of restoring the cuts. We could ensure that every issue of Socialist Press between Red Youth and Woman Worker contained 12 pages.

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