

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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## ALL OUT STRIKE NOW!

The longer public sector union bureaucrats succeed in restricting the struggle for the £60/35 hour week claim to a series of "selective" and "sectional" strikes, the greater the danger that the potential strength of this pay struggle will be dissipated.

That is the clear message from a week in which manual workers in local authorities and the health service have time and again shown their willingness to respond to a call for all-out action.

### Defying propaganda

Defying a torrent of vicious anti-union propaganda in the press and mass media, tens of thousands of public sector workers have stepped up their action and pressed their leaders to call an all out indefinite stoppage.

But NUPE and other leaders have instead strained every muscle to restrict strikes to divisive sectional stoppages.

Even where their own feeble plan of selective action has been met by management victimisations—as at London's Westminster Hospital—NUPE leaders have moved in not to strengthen but to call off strikes in defence of those suspended and divert the case to ACAS.

Yet despite this sabotage the strength of the public sector workers is unmistakable. It prompted Callaghan on the weekend to admit the total collapse of government pay policy when he conceded that pay settlements could go as high as 10%.

### Cuts in service

But this is far short of the £60 claim. If that is to be won without causing further massive cutbacks in service, it is necessary to confront two central planks of government economic policy: wage control and public



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

spending cuts.

Indeed the fact that public sector workers have been forced to shoulder the burden of speed-up and job loss in cuts so far is a major factor in their present militant pay battle.

### Kick out Callaghan

To win such a fight the Callaghan-Healey leadership, who have set out from the outset to boost the profits of private employers through their attacks on workers living standards, must be removed from office.

Those 'left' MPs and union leaders who pose as opponents of the Labour government's anti-working class policies must be forced to take a public stand for or against an active campaign to kick out Callaghan and Healey, and to adopt a socialist manifesto for the 1979 General Election.

Such a programme would have to be based on mobilising the working class to carry

through the nationalisation of major industry without compensation under workers' management and the establishment of a planned socialist economy.

But it is clear that at present none of the existing leaders of the labour movement have any stomach for such a confrontation.

### Stony silence

Fisher, Spanswick, Basnett and Evans are holding back their membership, hoping desperately for some compromise formula to get them off the hook, while the Tribune group of MPs maintain a stony silence even on Callaghan's most brazen strikebreaking speeches.

But among public sector workers there is the determination and the power to carry through an all-out struggle for the full claim.

Sections of London dustmen last week began indefinite strike action and elected strike committees to spread the action throughout their areas.

These strike committees

## UNITE STRIKE COMMITTEES BUILD COUNCILS OF ACTION!

must meet together to discuss a common fight against the sabotage of union officials and common plans to mobilise the membership who have not been called out.

All-out strikes, combined with emergency cover under the control of strike committees (on condition that no scabbing is organised by the employers) must be fought for in every area.

### Councils of action

Public sector workers must call on local union branches, stewards committees and workers' political organisations to send delegates to local councils of action in order to strengthen, spread, and organise the strikes and the picketing.

Within these councils of action revolutionaries will fight for the programme necessary to win and defend the basic interests of the working class, and for those demands which can reveal the real nature of workers' existing leadership:

\*£60 minimum for a 35 hour week. Defend wages against inflation through cost of living clauses.

\*No to the cuts! For a sliding scale of public expenditure.

\*Demand a recall Labour Party conference! Remove the Callaghan-Healey cabinet! For a socialist manifesto!



## Cowley 9: 8 vindicated, 1 victimised

After more than a year of "inquiries", "hearings" and bureaucratic witch-hunting, the No. 5 (Midlands) Regional Committee of the TGWU has finally dropped disciplinary charges against eight of the "Cowley 9".

The eight are: Bob Fryer, convenor of the British Leyland Assembly Plant at Cowley; Alan Thornett and Tom White, both deputy convenors at the plant; Tim O'Sullivan and Ivor Braggins, both shop stewards at the factory; and Tony Homer, Andy Brown and Dave Pinnington, TGWU members at the plant.

But the ninth member charged has been victimised by the Committee. Frank Corti, secretary of the TGWU 5/293 Branch at the plant, has been removed from office.

One of the six charges against Corti was that he caught



Vindicated—Thornett

hold of the arm of District Secretary David Buckle at a controversial mass meeting at the plant.

Although this allegation has never been substantiated, it

appears that the Regional Committee has singled out this charge in order to take action against him.

The allegation is astounding when set against other events at the factory.

Two months after this particular mass meeting Corti was viciously attacked by Tommy Quinn—a close supporter of David Buckle—on the plant at a trade union function.

Corti received fifteen stitches in his face and Quinn was convicted of assault at Crown Court.

Despite this, no action was taken against Quinn within the union! The Regional Committee decision to strip Corti of office is pure and simple victimisation in an effort to save face over the Cowley 9 affair.

The same meeting of the Regional Committee considered the findings of a Regional inquiry held at the Export Packing Services factory in

Banbury, near Oxford at the end of last year.

In true kangaroo court tradition, the Committee removed the shop stewards credentials from Colin Carty, deputy convenor at the site.

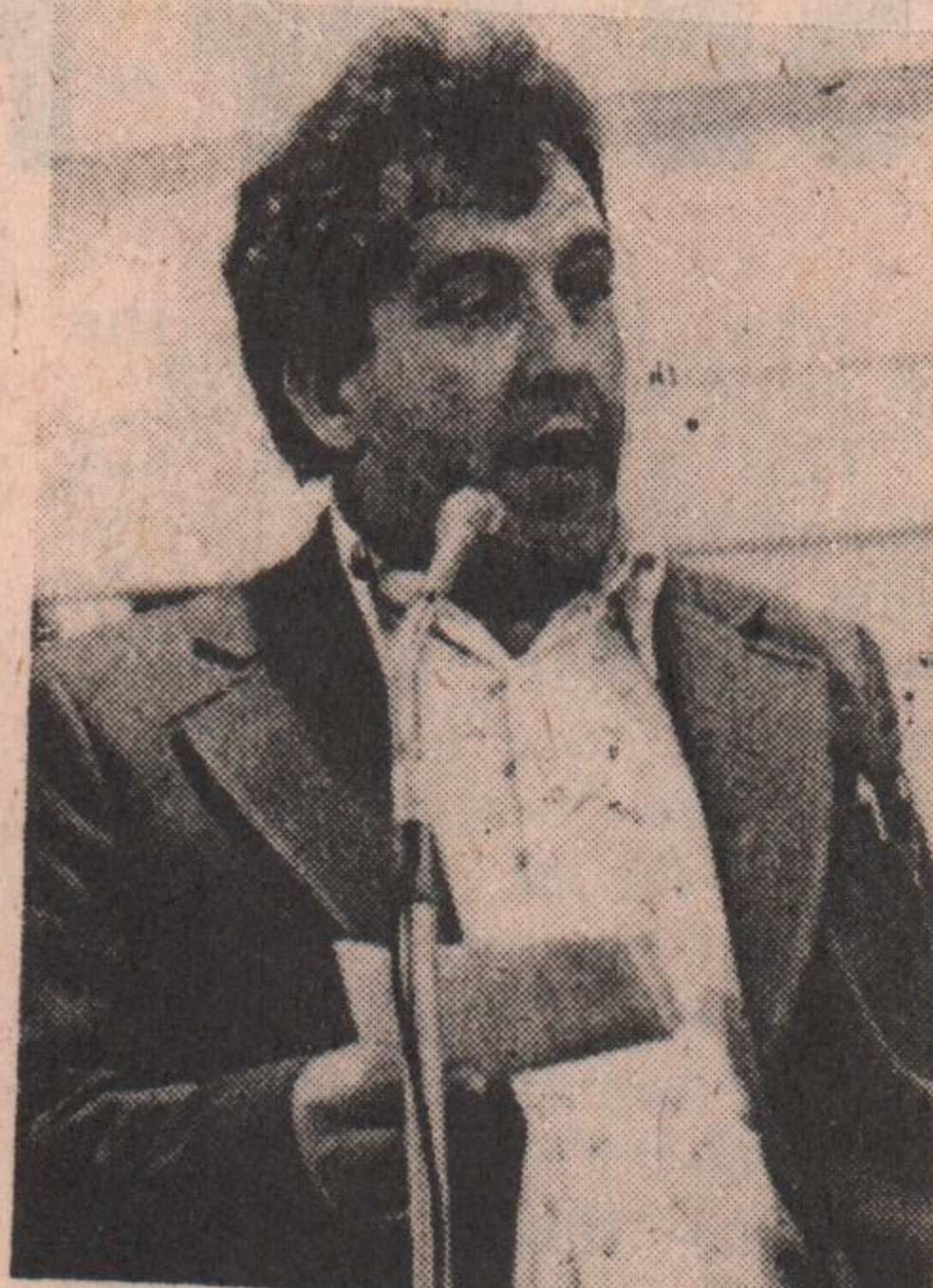
No charges were ever laid against him—as required by the TGWU rule book.

The Regional Committee simply held a general inquiry into "industrial relations at the site" following a five week strike against Stage 3 of wage controls.

Colin Carty is still not aware of any allegations against him, and has therefore been victimised without even the opportunity of saying a word in his own defence!

Indeed he was not even invited to the "inquiry" to answer questions.

These two cases of victimisation must now be challenged throughout the union. The campaign so far on the Cowley 9 has shown that it is possible to halt



Victimised—Carty

bureaucratic frame-ups.

One of those vindicated in last week's decision to drop charges was Alan Thornett, who had originally been recommended for expulsion from the union after a District-level

kangaroo-court "inquiry".

Now eight out of nine already stand completely vindicated, with the TGWU's local, Regional and national witch-hunters and their flimsy frame-up charges exposed for all to see.

The task is to defend the remaining two victims.

### Principled leadership

The TGWU conference in July must take the decision to end witch-hunting once and for all.

Only on the basis of democracy within the union and the exposure of the role of the bureaucracy can a principled leadership and programme be fought for in defence of the interests of the union's two million members.

Drop all charges! Restore to office all those who have been the victims of witch-hunting in recent years! For democracy within the TGWU!



## INTERNATIONAL

## FUNDS FLOW IN FOR ECEVIT Zimbabwe: no secret deals

One million Turkish workers responded last week to a call for a five-minute general strike in protest against a fascist massacre in the Eastern city of Karamanmas.

The strike was called by the 'left' wing trade union confederation DISK—which, however, still supports the bourgeois government of Prime Minister Ecevit and his generals.

The scale of the response—though diverted into a mere protest action—shows that the Turkish working class has the power to fight back against the martial law repression and fascist violence.

The militancy of Turkish workers has been further fuelled by the mass movement in neighbouring Iran. And that mass movement has also prompted the imperialist nations to look

once again at their strategy for Turkey and the whole crucial Middle East region.

After the Guadeloupe summit talks, another summit meeting was held in Bonn to discuss how to stabilise the political situation in Turkey.

Ecevit, who had returned from begging missions empty-handed prior to the fall of the Shah, is now to be given immediate cash aid, beginning with \$1-1.5 billion from W. Germany.

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are also to be invited to participate in raising funds—clearly showing the concern of imperialism and reactionary regimes to halt revolutionary struggles in the region.

Interestingly the Libyan regime of Colonel Gaddafi has also chipped in with a deal to supply oil on credit to the bankrupt Turkish bourgeoisie.

The change of imperialist attitude to the Turkish crisis is

linked also the military strategy. Ecevit's Defence Minister has resigned in protest as a result of an agreement to shift US military outposts from Iran to Turkey.

And in Greece, Prime Minister Karamanlis has warned that this change will endanger Greek national security.

But the granting of cash aid to Ecevit does not mean that the imperialists have abandoned their strategy of imposing an openly dictatorial military or fascist regime in place of Ecevit's unstable "democratic" administration.

Rather the imperialists recognise that at this point they are unable to implement these plans: the working class is as yet too strong.

The fascists however are continuing their terror campaign—now concentrating their forces in the areas outside the martial law zones already established.

This fits in perfectly with their call for complete military rule.

But the reformist and Stalinist leaders of the working class continue to divert the strength of the workers' movement into support for Ecevit, taking no steps whatever to organise workers' defence squads against fascist violence.

Ecevit's "democratic" credentials are meanwhile increasingly tarnished. 500-600 left wingers are under arrest, and 16 left wing papers have been suppressed in Istanbul alone.

The fight must be to break the Turkish CP, the Turkish Labour Party and the trade unions from Ecevit, and the struggle for a workers' and peasants' government.

## BEHIND DENG'S US TRIP

As Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-ping) and President Carter smile and wave at crowds throughout the US, the thoughts buzzing through their heads are more interesting than their statements couched in diplomatic language.

Carter: "Just think of the untapped market of nearly one billion people waiting for American technology and military hardware.

If we can open a flood-gate of exports to China that will ease our economic problems and the trouble here with our own workers".

Deng: "Already I need \$200 million in handouts to complete the objectives of the 10 year plan up to 1985.

I need to get foreign investment to modernise industry, keep the masses happy with some incentives so they keep off my back and also deal with the Soviet Union".

What has been said so far by Deng is to criticise the SALT agreements and to call for a US-China-Japan alliance to develop trade and military defence.

## Worried man

Deng is indeed a worried man. In a 'sounding' done in Peking by the Hong Kong left wing journal *Tong Xiang*, asking the views of people in a commune, a military unit and a hospital, 76% said that constitutional

rights are not respected in China, and 88% were dissatisfied with cultural life.

This discontent has been only too evident over the last weeks.

The sight of poor peasants, apparently in ragged clothes, demonstrating outside the Great Hall of the People while a fabulous New Year celebration was taking place inside highlights the corruption of the bureaucracy.

Several hundred peasants demonstrated against "hunger and oppression".

## Complaints

Some of these were people who have spent months in Peking waiting for their complaints to be dealt with and meanwhile living on their wits.

Several new wall posters appeared as well, some of which reproduced the French Declaration of 1789 and the American Declaration of Independence.

Far from the poor peasants being given any attention, the bureaucracy is at the moment fettering the remnants of the capitalist class.

Rehabilitation of those once called "landlords, rich peasants and counter-revolutionaries, and bad elements" is to include the bitterest enemies of the revolution in 1949.

Particularly favoured are the hundreds of businessmen dispossessed during the Cultural Revolution.

All these are to be reimbursed for all losses.

Even the families of those who have died in the meantime are to get their money.

The hope is that: "the patriotic industrialists and businessmen will contribute particularly to the development of tourism, of services, of exporting and of mixed enterprises."

These will be set up with the help of foreign capital.

The hope is also to encourage the return of overseas Chinese to invest their foreign currency and to run such industries as tourism.

China is desperately short of foreign currency and of any surplus from native industry and agriculture.

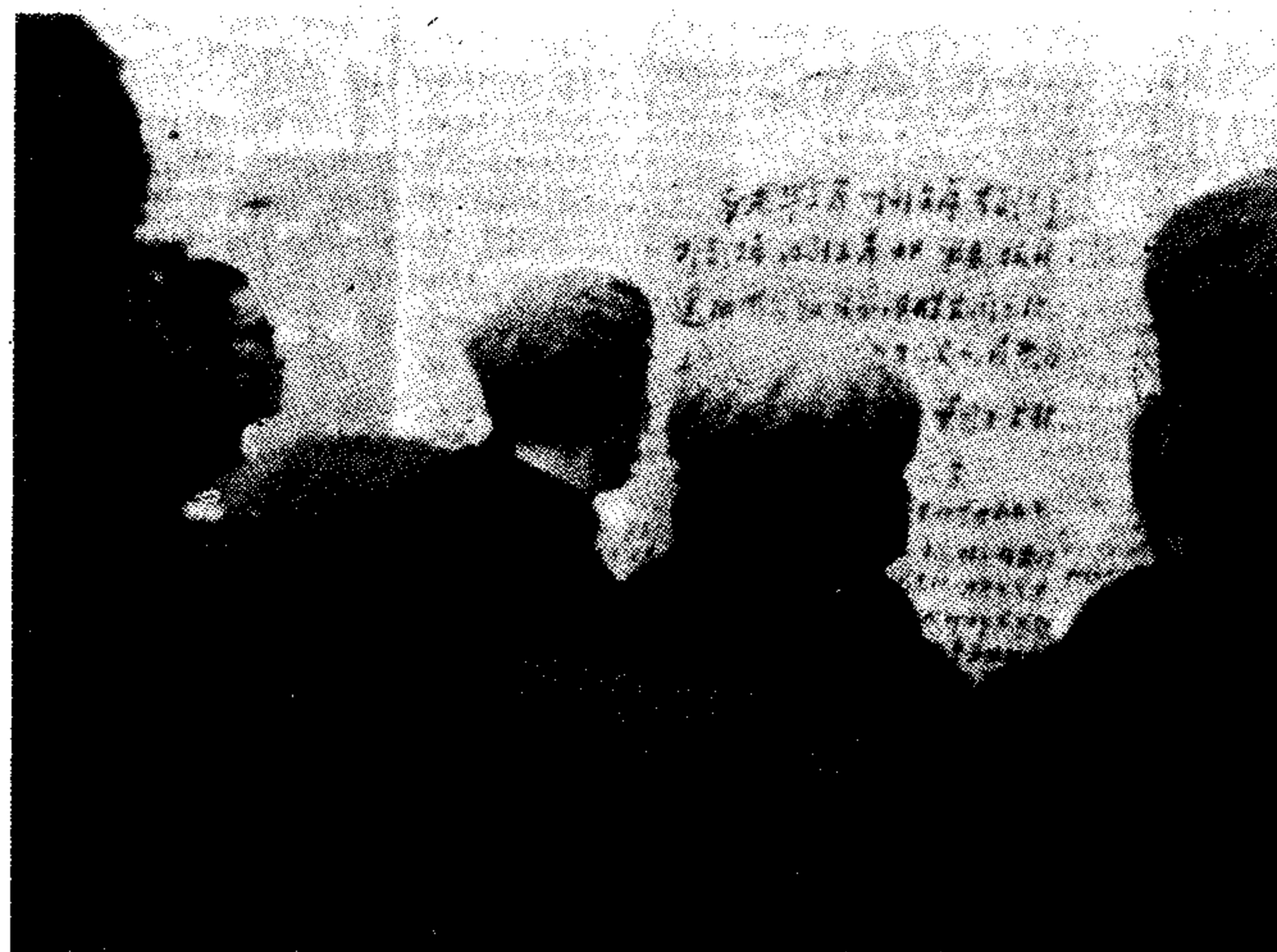
In order to pay for the large amount of things being ordered now this problem

will have to be solved.

However, as the West Germans have just discovered in finalising a five year deal with the People's Republic, they intend giving raw materials, not money, in exchange.

Teng has also tried to consolidate his weak position by removing 22 of 29 regional secretaries since Mao's death.

These desperate manoeuvres by the Peking bureaucracy in the face of the demands of the working class and poor peasantry show yet again the instability of Stalinism and its fear of the development of political revolution that might sweep aside the parasitic leaders, their power and their privilege once and for all, and set a course towards internationalism and workers management of the planned, socialist economy.



Peking workers crowd round wall posters

## COLLAPSE OF FAKE CHILE 'BOYCOTT'

The "boycott" of Chilean goods called in December by the US union federation the AFL-CIO and by ORIT (the Latin American branch of the anti-Communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions) is turning out to be the transparent reactionary farce which we predicted it would be.

So far not so much as a single union has been blacked under the AFL-CIO "boycott".

On January 8 the committee charged with organising the boycott could agree on no action at all and

it now looks as if the proposal has been shelved.

This is in no way surprising since the pro-imperialist leaders who called it in the first place are divided between those who wanted to use the "boycott" to put purely verbal pressure on Pinochet to restore rights to some of Chile's yellow unions, and those who (like US dockers' leader Thomas Gleason) think that even talk of boycott can only "help the Communists".

Both groups remain firmly on the side of capitalism and imperialism in Chile and will be opponents of any serious move in the labour movement for concrete solidarity action

with the authentic Chilean trade unions.

The record of the AFL-CIO and ORIT is one of conspiracy with the CIA and with capitalist groups in Chile to destroy the traditional unions of the Chilean workers (which were politically linked to the Communist and Socialist Parties) and replace them with yellow unions linked to the Christian Democrats.

Their aim now is to gently persuade Pinochet to release the legal straight-jacket on trade unionism in Chile to selectively benefit the Christian Democrat "group of 10" unions and discriminate against any authentically working class unions.

Last year Pinochet's

junta tried to sabotage this by going ahead with rigidly corporatist plans for state-run "unions" and total prohibition of even formal rights to strike and organise.

## Huffing and puffing

Since the AFL-CIO's huffing and puffing about "boycott", however, Pinochet has changed his plans, replaced his Labour minister and made some cosmetic concessions on labour legislation.

The AFL-CIO's client pro-capitalist unions still call this insufficient and want to negotiate a better deal.

But it is probably a move in a diplomatic game at the end of which the AFL-CIO

leaders and ORIT will declare the Pinochet regime "clean" on the questions of labour rights.

If that seems far-fetched, then it is worth noting who has been negotiating with the dictatorship on behalf of the AFL-CIO.

He is President of the American Institute of Free Labour Development, the AFL-CIO's Latin American arm.

His name: Peter Grace. His occupation?

He is a big-time capitalist and a director of multinational corporations, especially those with interests in mining in Peru and Chile.

Ian Smith last week got his expected majority vote in the Rhodesian white's referendum on the internal settlement draft constitution.

Out of 67,847 votes cast only 9,814 voted against. The guerrilla successes have forced the vast majority of whites behind Smith's attempts to protect white interests through an internal settlement.

The terms of the draft constitution approved by the whites in no way lay the basis for 'black majority rule'.

Not only do the whites, at present 1/27th of the population, get 10 out of the 30 senate seats (10 go to blacks and 10 to the Chiefs) but they also get 28 out of the 100 seats in the House of Assembly and a guarantee of five cabinet places.

## Reserved for whites

In addition top administrative posts have effectively been reserved for whites for a number of years to come.

This has been done through the device of spelling out the qualifications needed to fill posts such as the Public Service Commission and the Commissioner of Police, and what procedures are necessary for the appointment of army and airforce chiefs.

The draft constitution states that a person cannot be appointed Commissioner of Police unless he has held the rank of Assistant Commissioner or any more senior rank for periods which amount to at least five years.

Thus there is no black in the police force who could qualify for the post of Commissioner immediately after 'independence', and even if someone was appointed to senior rank it would take at least five years for him to reach this post!

The foreign office has issued a statement saying that the referendum was "no measure of the acceptability of the regime's constitutional proposals to the people of Rhodesia as a whole."

The Tories are gathering signatures on a list of MPs

congratulating Smith on the success of his campaign amongst the white population.

And Smith's collaborator Ndabaningwe Sithole claimed at the end of his ten-day visit to Britain that a future Tory government would recognise the internal settlement.

But the Labour leaders are engaged in more behind the scenes manoeuvring.

Some weeks ago Callaghan in announcing that he was not calling for the holding of an all-party conference said that the British government could see its role as being based around 'secret diplomacy'.

Rhodesian Foreign Minister Pieter Van der Byl responded to Callaghan's decision by saying that in

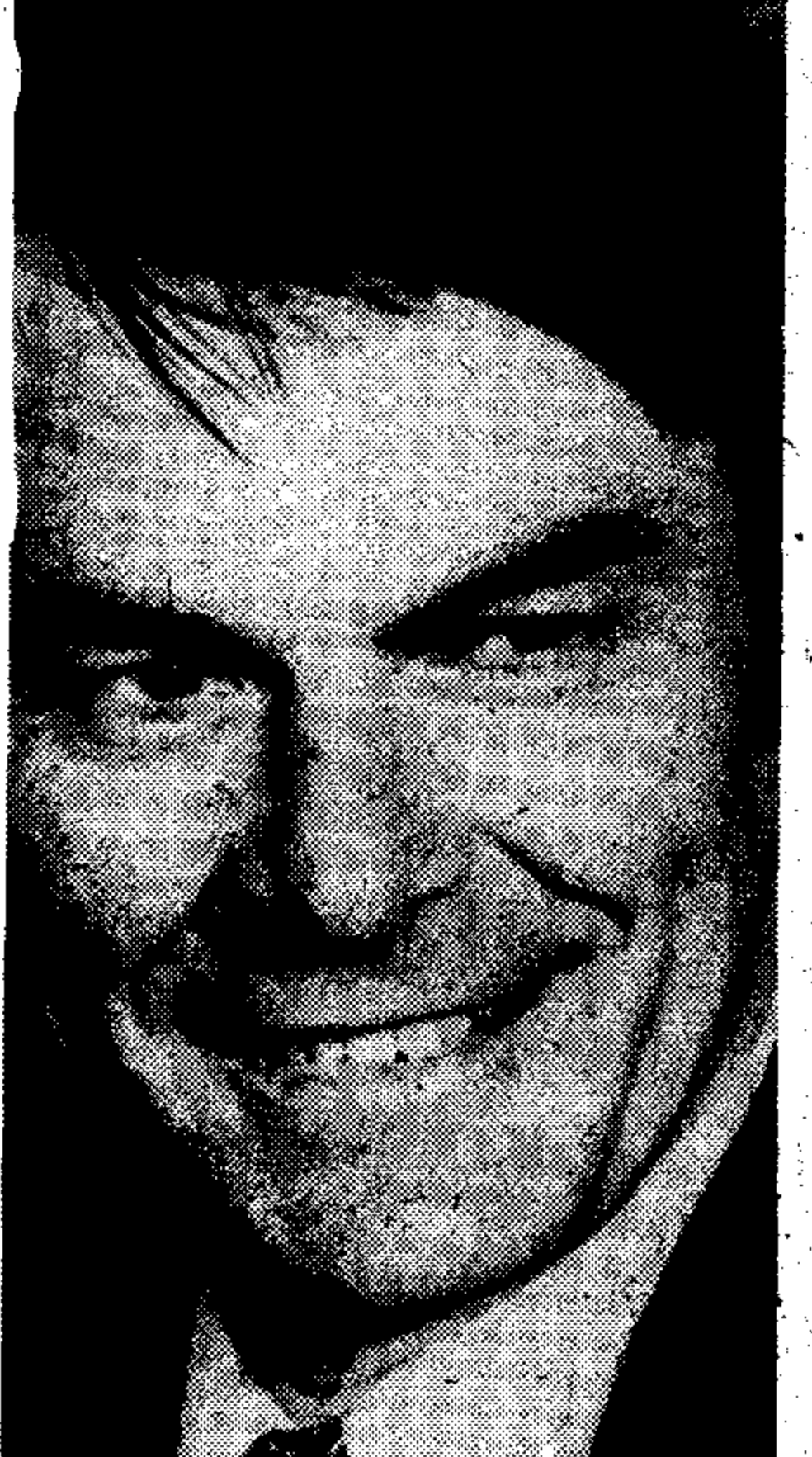


PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL

Owen

future the transitional government would deal with the USA rather than Britain.

At the moment Foreign Secretary David Owen is in the USA talking to Cyrus Vance—mainly about Namibia and Zimbabwe. What reactionary deals are they cooking up in this latest round of 'secret diplomacy'?

## Zionists' bomb blasts

IN THE aftermath of the failed Egyptian-Israeli "peace" talks, Israel has sunk back to its old methods of guaranteeing "peace" in the Middle East. These methods have a name: "terrorism".

Besides launching sea, air and ground attacks against refugee camps in the Lebanon, the Zionists have also reintroduced another old favourite; blowing up the homes of, and exiling, Arab political opponents.

During the last week the Israeli terrorists have blown up four houses of convicted Arab "terrorists", and have exiled one student to Jordan. He was accused of inciting Israeli Arab students to "disaffection".

Another six Arab students have been sentenced to internal exile and virtual house arrest.

Their "crime" was to move a resolution of support for the Palestine National Council, the Palestinian "government in exile".



# INTERNATIONAL ERITREAN FIGHTERS STAND FIRM AGAINST STALINIST BARRAGE

Second of three articles on the Eritrean war of liberation by David Whitfield

It is sixty miles from Asmara to Keren, a journey of two hours by road.

For the armies of the Derg that journey lasted ten days of bitter fighting and heavy losses.

Their final march into the evacuated city of Keren itself brought them only cold comfort.

The Derg had reached its objective but, by taking back Keren, the Ethiopian dictators had not crushed the Eritrean liberation struggle.

## Break siege

The Derg's first offensive of 1978 had been blocked in August. Mengistu, with his Soviet and Cuban advisors was then forced to launch a second offensive to break the siege of Asmara and to wrest control of Eritrea from the forces of the Eritrean Liberation Front and, above all, of the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front.

On November 18, this new offensive was launched on a scale even more massive than its predecessor.

Keren was the primary target of the assault, with armies advancing on three fronts.

Some 120,000 troops had been mobilised by the Derg for this stage of the campaign. Their attack was spearheaded by 250 Soviet tanks, largely piloted by Russians.

## Soviet officers

Beyond the Soviet generals who led the campaign, the EPLF estimated that 250 high-ranking Soviet officers were also present.

The Eritrean Popular Liberation Army was dwarfed by the size of this threat, its arms were no match for the sophisticated equipment provided to the Ethiopians by their Stalinist allies.



EPLF motif

Yet in the ten days of battle that followed, the Derg's army was driven back and harried again and again. In these encounters the EPLF estimated to have captured or (mostly) destroyed 90 tanks, at least 30 armoured cars and 180 military lorries.

The battle of Elaberet showed the scale of defeats which the Eritreans were able to inflict on the aggressor armies.

The Ethiopian forces were advancing on three fronts—one, on the south-west from Agordat which they had captured from the ELF, and two from Asmara to the south-east.

It was one of these second two columns which the EPLF ambushed in the narrow valley at Elaberet. The result was a complete victory for the EPLF in what was probably the

largest battle of the war so far.

Dozens of the Derg's tanks were destroyed, and several captured along with armoured cars and considerable quantities of both light and heavy artillery. The column was routed, but the immediate fate of Keren had already been sealed.

## Tactical retreats

By this time the EPLF had assessed that it was necessary to make tactical retreats in the face of an overwhelming superiority of enemy forces. The evacuation of Keren was in fact already under way.

For six days lorries rolled north, taking with them all the military, medical and other necessary supplies from the city. The last of the 40,000 civilians were evacuated on the night of

November 27.

When the Ethiopian armies entered Keren the next day, they captured a ghost city.

The EPLF had made an orderly retreat, as it had done at the same time from the towns along the Asmara-Massawa road, and in the past from all the other towns which have fallen to the Derg's advance.

## Major blow

The loss of Keren was a major blow to the liberation forces. Its capture in July 1977 had been the crowning point of the EPLF's major offensive. For the Derg, the recapture of this key strategic point was an essential step in their campaign to eliminate the struggles of the Eritrean people.

Yet the EPLF was not smashed in a forlorn attempt to defend Keren against siege by land and air. Its forces withdrew in order, to re-form in the towns to the north and in their central base in Sahel.

The short-term military situation is obviously far from favourable to the EPLF, yet the prospects are not entirely black.

The towns of Nakfa and Afabet remain the hands of the EPLF, while in October they succeeded once again in liberating Digsas which had fallen in the summer offensive.

Their strategy now lies in a return to the guerrilla warfare which preceded the escalation of their struggles in the winter of 1976/77. But the EPLF returns to this method of struggle under new conditions.

## Fighting Soviet Union

As the battle for Keren raged in November, Isayas Afewerki, EPLF assistant general secretary, declared: "The face of the war has changed. We are not fighting the Derg anymore. Now it is the Soviet Union".

The intervention of the Stalinist bureaucracies of the Soviet Union and Cuba has transformed the struggle in Eritrea.

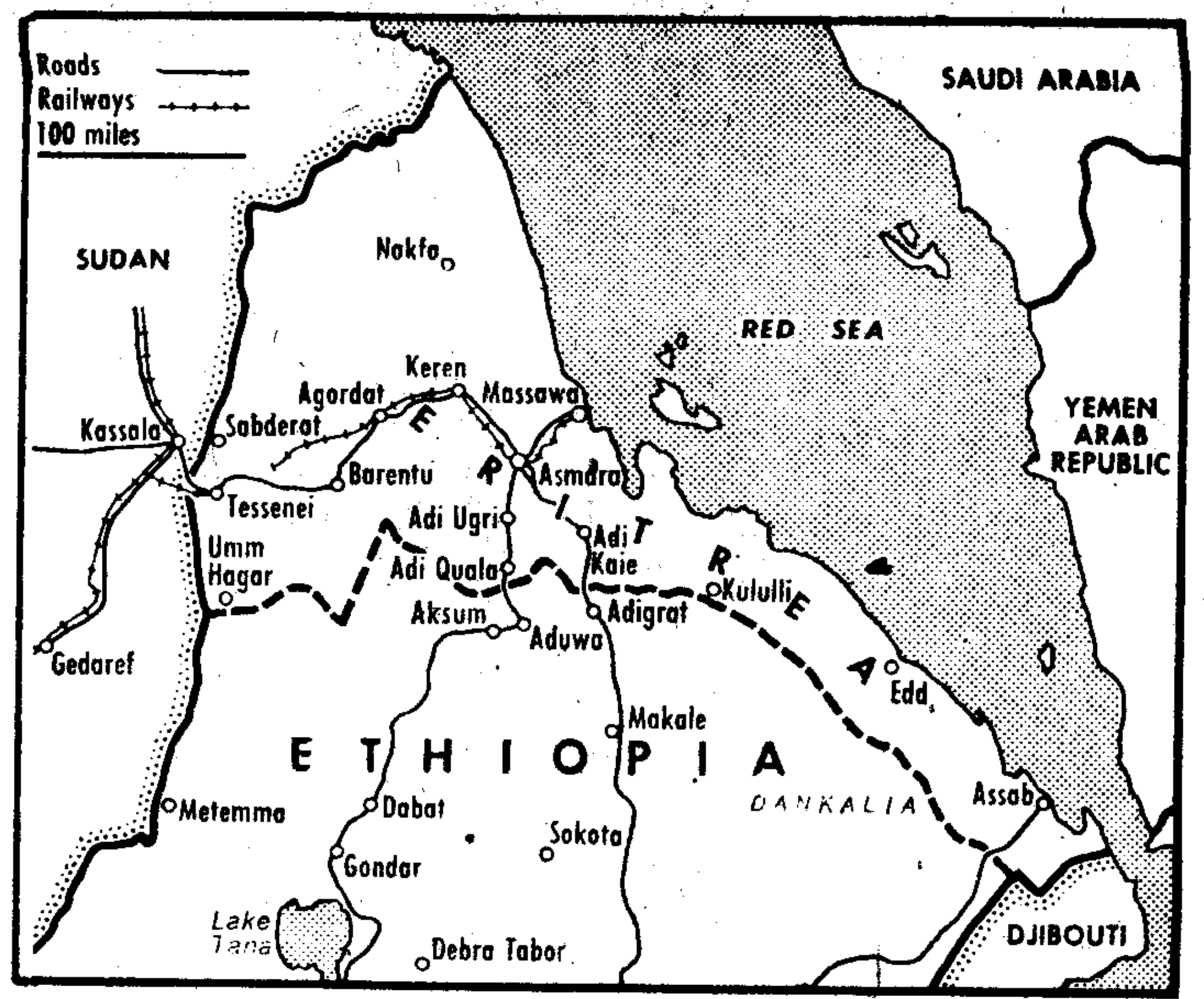
It is with their assistance alone that the Derg has been able to drive the EPLF back into a base-area one-third of the size it controlled six months ago.

But the vicious treachery of the Stalinists has brought its own contradictions. The EPLF is equipped almost entirely with the weapons it has captured from the Ethiopian armies.

## Better armed

Their successes in the last offensive mean that they are now far better armed than ever before.

Today the EPLF controls a force of some 90 tanks and armoured cars, all captured from the Derg.



In other words, the Eritrean Popular Liberation Army is in this respect one of the strongest armies in Africa by far—stronger even than the Ethiopian army had been before the Kremlin began its massive flood of supplies.

But this strength is of course inadequate to confront the mammoth invasion forces in open battle.

The Ethiopian military dictatorship has complete superiority in the air, and the EPLF lacks the defensive weapons to restrict this power.

The MIG jets are basically free to bomb the guerrilla bases and the refugee camps, to strafe the

political crisis a degree nearer to flashpoint.

The fear of explosion in Addis Ababa must gnaw at the thoughts of the Soviet generals as they pace the ramparts of Keren or Asmara in frustration. Even in the palaces of the Kremlin, icy shivers of doubt and dread must seize the Soviet leaders when they consider how much has been invested in their Ethiopian ally.

## Civil war

But the war in Eritrea is not simply a military war. Like every revolutionary struggle, it is also a civil war that is fought out in every sphere of society.



EPLF supporters demonstrate

liberated towns and villages, and to blaze the crops.

Yet the experience of US imperialism in Vietnam showed the limited value of aerial bombardment in resisting guerrilla warfare.

The Derg's main aim will almost certainly be to contain the thrusts of the Eritrean liberation forces while they try to break the EPLF's supply-lines which run far back into the Sudan.

## Sudan

Already Mengistu has an appointment with President Numeiri of the Sudan, and the highest item on the agenda will certainly be a demand from the Derg that the Sudan moves rapidly to end all EPLF activity within its borders.

So long as the supply-lines can be kept open, the EPLF can maintain guerrilla warfare indefinitely at a high level of activity. Time is on the side of the EPLF.

The longer the war continues, the more the pressure of opposition mounts within Ethiopia itself against the Derg and its bloody dictatorship.

Every shot fired in Eritrea raises the temperature of that economic and



Mengistu



Eritrean freedom fighters



# SPREADING THE FIGHT FOR ALL-OUT STRIKES

John Seymour, dustmen's shop steward at Camden's Cressy Road depot tells *Socialist Press* about the growing strike wave amongst Camden's public sector workers.

In last week's *Socialist Press* you described how you have fought for indefinite strike action on the NUPE claim since Christmas. How has that struggle developed since then?

Last week I explained how I had fought to get my branch (Camden General) and my section (Cressy Road Dustmen) to adopt policies calling on the leadership and especially the London Division to call all-out indefinite strike action.

This last week things have developed very rapidly.

Despite the general feeling amongst our 40 stewards for all out strike action our Branch Secretary took the decision to only call out the men who man the petrol pumps at the two major depots.

So at the beginning of last week there were only about four men on strike in Camden!

This brought things to a head. Because as the diesel ran out in our dustcarts, my men were refusing to scab on the pump men's strike.

Management threatened to send the drivers home if they didn't scab.

We had mass meetings on Monday and Tuesday to prepare for strike action, and when the lorries ran dry on Wednesday the whole refuse section took the decision to come with the drivers on indefinite strike in support of the full claim.

What were the feelings of the membership then and now?

They were totally fed up of one day strikes and partial actions in different sections.

Feeling was very high that the whole of the borough should be out on strike.

We elected an 8 man strike committee with each member having specific tasks.

I've been really strengthened by the way the men have reacted.

In struggle those you least expect come forward and play leading roles.

This has been seen in the strength of the picketing and the level of our organisation.

Already as well as keeping a picket line across the depot our strike committee has made decisions on spreading the strike, what emergency cover we will allow, and joining up with other boroughs on strike.

Could you enlarge on those aspects?

Well the men felt strongly that we couldn't remain out on a limb.

So the first thing we did was to send 30 blokes down to the other two depots at Camden Town and Holborn [SP The Borough of Camden has 3 refuse depots, Cressy Road (Hampstead), Camden Town and Holborn] to urge them to join

us. At a mass meeting the following day they voted to come out.

The second way of spreading the strike was the way our own picket lines affected other NUPE members in our depot.

I think the directions Fisher issued saying you shouldn't picket any workers other than your own section are a scabs' charter.

However, our strike committee made the decision to let the highways and fitters go in to work but argue with them not to bring any vehicles out.

When management threatened to send them home if they refused to break our picket line, they too took the decision to come out.

The point is that we haven't had to battle to get workers to come out alongside us.

The feeling in the membership is very strong now against the 5%.

But to set the ball rolling a lead was necessary. Because none was forthcoming from our branch leadership it was down to our depot to give a lead.

Now at the end of the week,

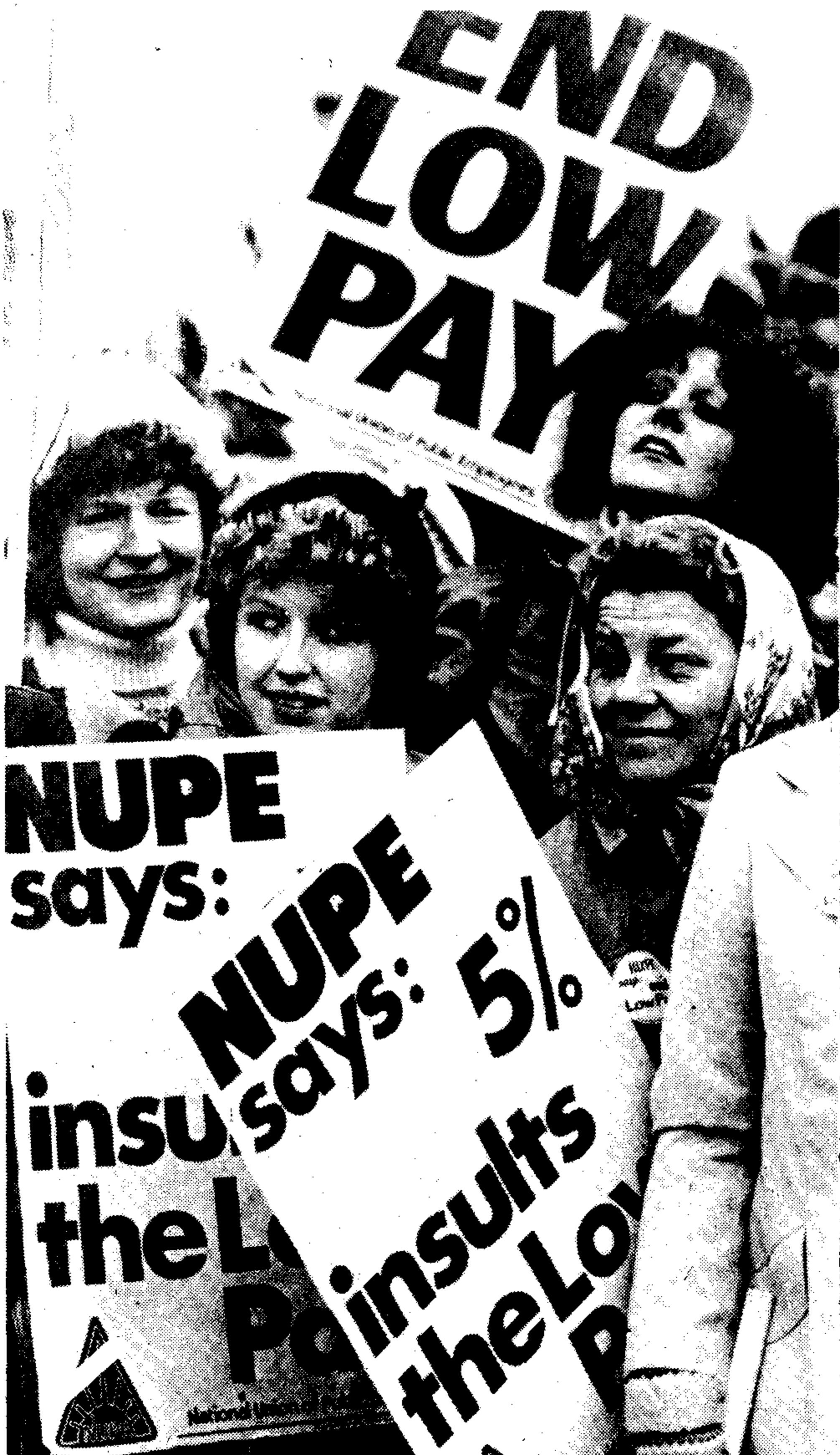


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report



Westminster Hospital staff nurse Gillian Brear speaks from floor at Central Hall meeting

## The fight for workers control

Interview with Tom O'Regan, Chairman of Kensington, Chelsea Chelsea and Westminster Branch of NUPE, currently on strike at the Westminster Hospital.

pared to come forward and fight for what they really deserve.

But they need leadership, strong leadership.

The union should go back to the grass roots and start again on basic Trade Union principles.

Officers should be elected by the people who actually do the work.

How has NUPE handled this dispute at the Westminster hospital so far?

Westminster management refused to negotiate with us for a week, and when they did come to us they tried to make us take a cut in wages to pay for domestics being employed elsewhere!

The NUPE leaders' answer to this was to go to ACAS—which has no power, because even management wouldn't listen to their instructions.

During the strike, what have you done about emergency

cover at the hospital?

We said that emergency cover would be provided under our control.

The control of oil deliveries is at the present time under the control of the stewards, which is enough to give the patients comfort and safety—they are sick people and we don't want to make them suffer.

We've got full agreement with the tanker drivers' T&GWU branch.

We monitor the oil levels with the T&G tanker drivers, and we let in just over sufficient to allow for the heating of the hospital wards.

This is still all under the control of the stewards, and it can be stopped at any time, if there is any infringement in any way by the management.

I think that only all out strike action limited to emergency cover like this will give us success in this pay claim.

ASLEF is insisting on a 10% bonus for its members and the NUR is objecting. What is the background to this?

The background to all recent rail disputes is the massive cuts in jobs since Beeching.

In 1950 there were 446,000 jobs on railways. By 1973 there were 190,000.

In 1973-5 there was a slight increase of 5,000 jobs, but now there are proposals to cut 40,000 more. And then there are staff shortages on top.

That 'saved' £64 million in 1977-8. Meanwhile there have been all kinds of technological changes making work more intensive and often more dangerous.

Yet it continues to be a really low paid industry, and in addition we've had four years of wage control.

The present dispute started last year after the jobs of station master, porter, ticket collector and guard in rural areas were all amalgamated into the job of 'pay train guards'.

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The NUR saw it as a way of improving pay for all above the lowest grade. Again ASLEF disagreed.

Then there's been the NUR proposals for a Business Performance Scheme. The NUR Research Department produced this plan of relating pay to passenger and freight tonne miles.

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*Socialist Press* interviews a Kings Cross guard who is a member of the Holloway branch of the NUR.

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It was also an alternative to the management's proposals for incentive bonus schemes which are very divisive.

The RSNT agreed to the NUR's plan and it was also endorsed at the 1978 AGM of the NUR. But ASLEF still insisted on their separate 10%.

The BPS has now been agreed to. The actual sums are £1.74 for railmen, (that's the new dog's body job of porter and ticket collector rolled into one); £2.03 for guards; £2.28 for drivers.

Backdated to April it will pay £50-£125. But you have to do enormous amounts of overtime to get even that.

What are ASLEF's arguments?

They say they bear the brunt of technological change and improved productivity, high speeds, heavy loads, new forms of traction, signalling, braking etc.

ASLEF only represents drivers, 27,700 of them. The NUR represents all grades including 2,000 drivers.

We think that Buckton is very pressed by a particularly strong group on Southern Region. The whole industry is very sectionalised.

What about this year's claim?

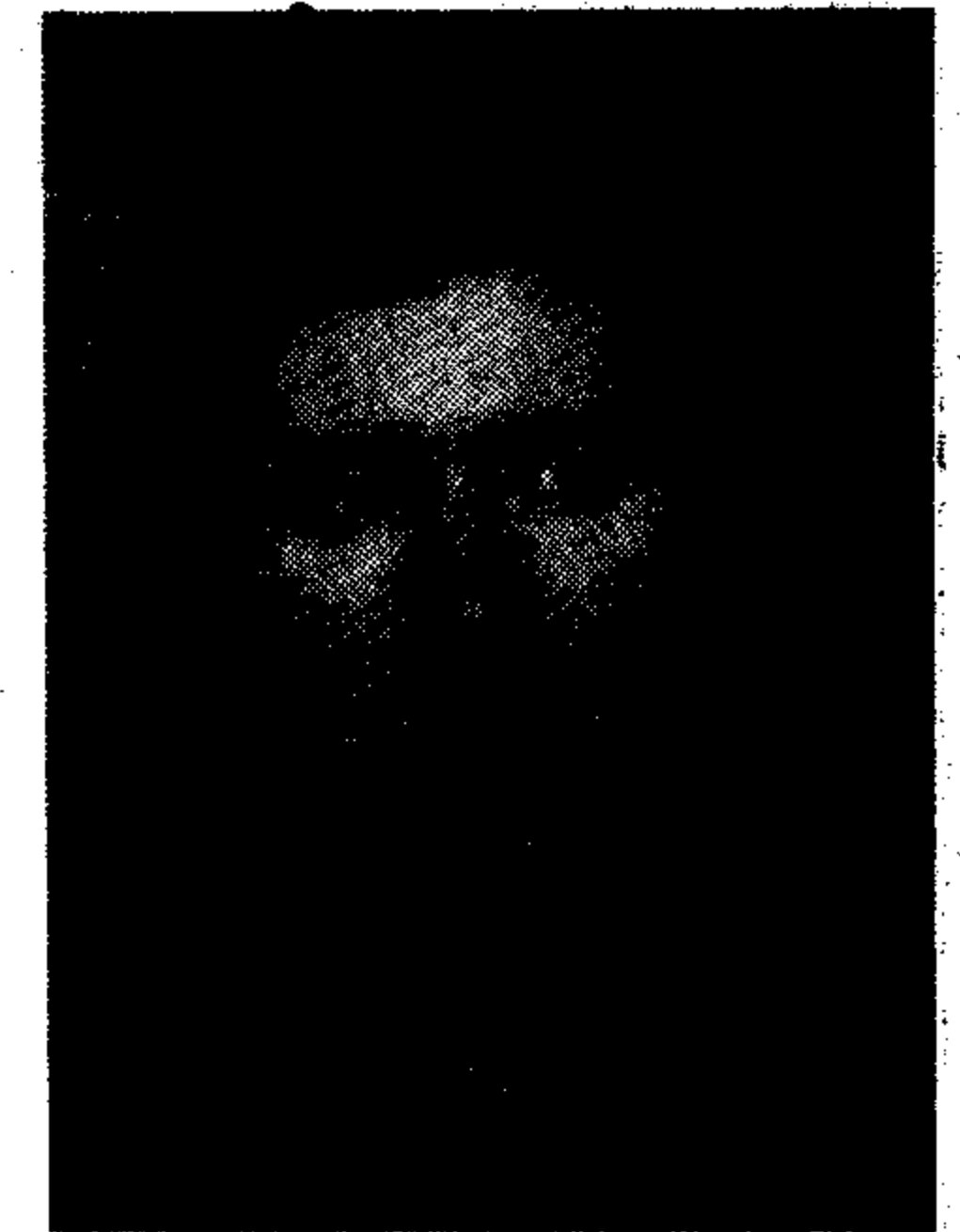
The NUR wants a substantial increase, a 35-hour week and we have a firm position on not trading jobs for wages.

In fact BR made an offer involving the axing of 20,000 jobs, with another 20,000 by 1981 so the NUR refused to continue negotiating.

Meanwhile ASLEF started striking for their 10% which they are asking for all drivers now.

Len Murray was brought in to get both unions back round the table and now its been handed over to Lord McCarthy and the RSNT again.

The management proposals



John Seymour

we've got 7 sections out including dust, sewers, highways, transport and electric lighting.

You mentioned emergency services. As you know the Workers Socialist League has always argued for strike committees controlling emergency services.

The decision was taken in negotiations with management to allow two dustcarts to empty the hospitals in the borough.

I will be fighting for a position that the strike committee decides what emergency cover should be and that any emergency cover we give depends on there being no contractors or scab labour used anywhere in the Borough.

Any wages earned should go to the strike funds.

## Officials divide railway workers

ASLEF is insisting on a 10% bonus for its members and the NUR is objecting. What is the background to this?

The background to all recent rail disputes is the massive cuts in jobs since Beeching.

In 1950 there were 446,000 jobs on railways. By 1973 there were 190,000.

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for '15 changes in manning practices' are incredible.

They include much more single manning, radio controlled trains which we have been fighting for a long time, the withdrawal of rest day working (which most people do to survive), freight guards being trained as carriage and wagon inspectors, spare time flexibility (meaning a guard could be put on the ticket barrier for the last two hours of his shift) and carriage cleaning by married women on six hour shifts with students during school holidays.

The NUR is now saying it is 'obliged' to go back to the RSNT.

What is the feeling among the membership?

An example was an open meeting at Unity House in November, which Weighell was asked to address. There was a lot of anger and Weighell, who's very keen on support for the Labour Party, threatened to leave several times.

A Scottish railman referred to the railman's wage of £38.90. Weighell said there's no such wage, we have MEL—minimum earnings level.

The bloke ran up to the platform and shoved his payslip right in front of Weighell.

Weighell just looked down over his glasses and denied that such wages exist.

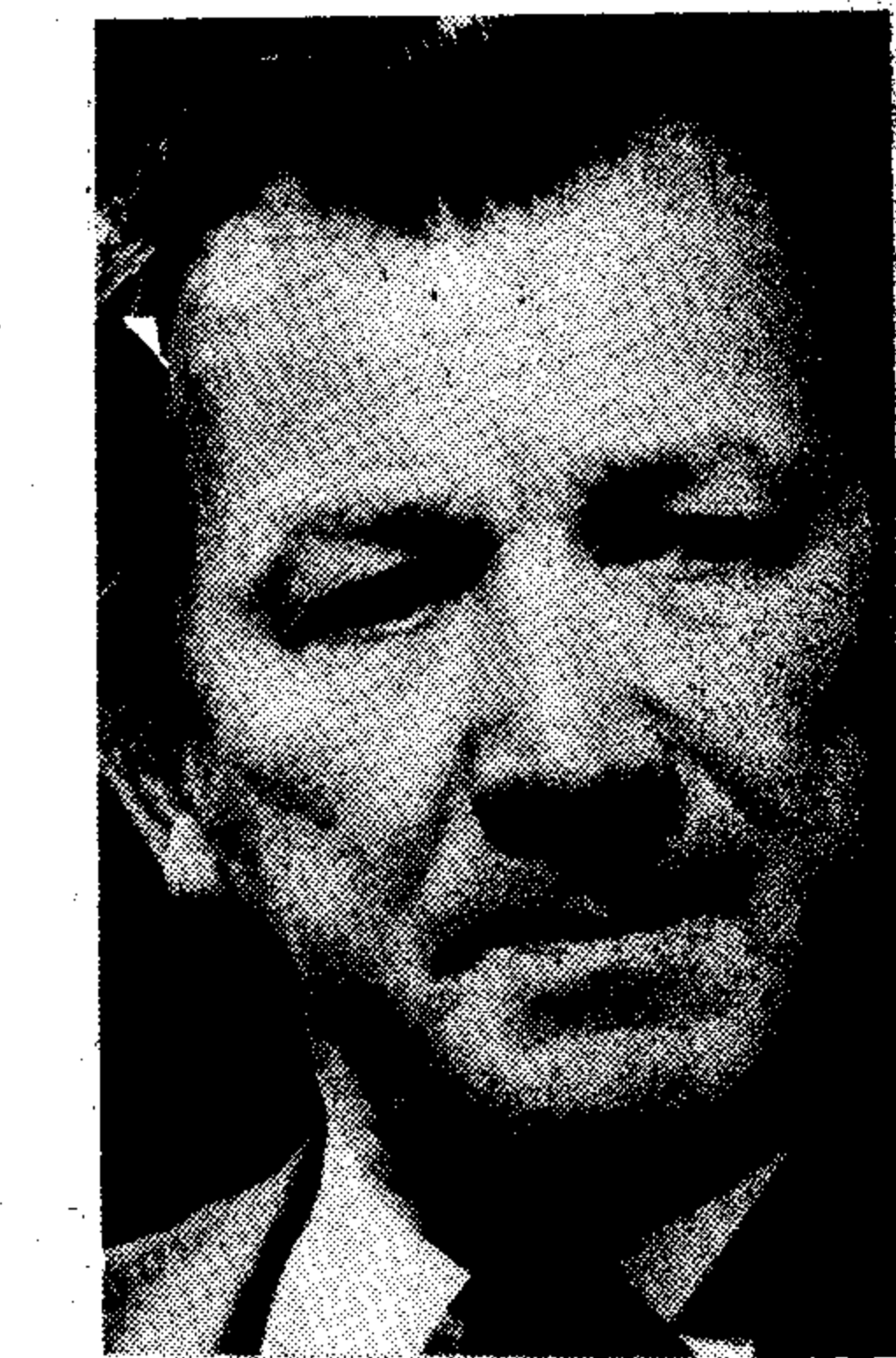


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report



Has there been any scab labour used so far in the strike.

NO! Management have assured the "Camden General" strike committee (which represents all manual workers in the Borough) that there will be no private scabs used.

This issue will become the most explosive, however. At Brent transfer station there have already been violent clashes with scab cowboy lorry drivers who are collecting rubbish at 50p a bin and dumping it on private ground out by the council-owned dump.

This refuse is then collected by McGovern's (private contractors) and taken to Hatfield for incineration.

We sent 30 men up to picket McGovern's on Friday and there were several violent incidents until the police arrived in force and threatened my members with arrest unless they allowed McGovern's lorry's to pass.

Because we were so outnumbered we took a disciplined decision to back down.

But the battle to end scabbing at this tip is going to be crucial as councils increasingly use scab contractors and ultimately the troops to clear rubbish.

It's crucial in another way because I believe it will provide the point of contact with other dustmen in struggle—Barnet and Brent use the tip as well as us.

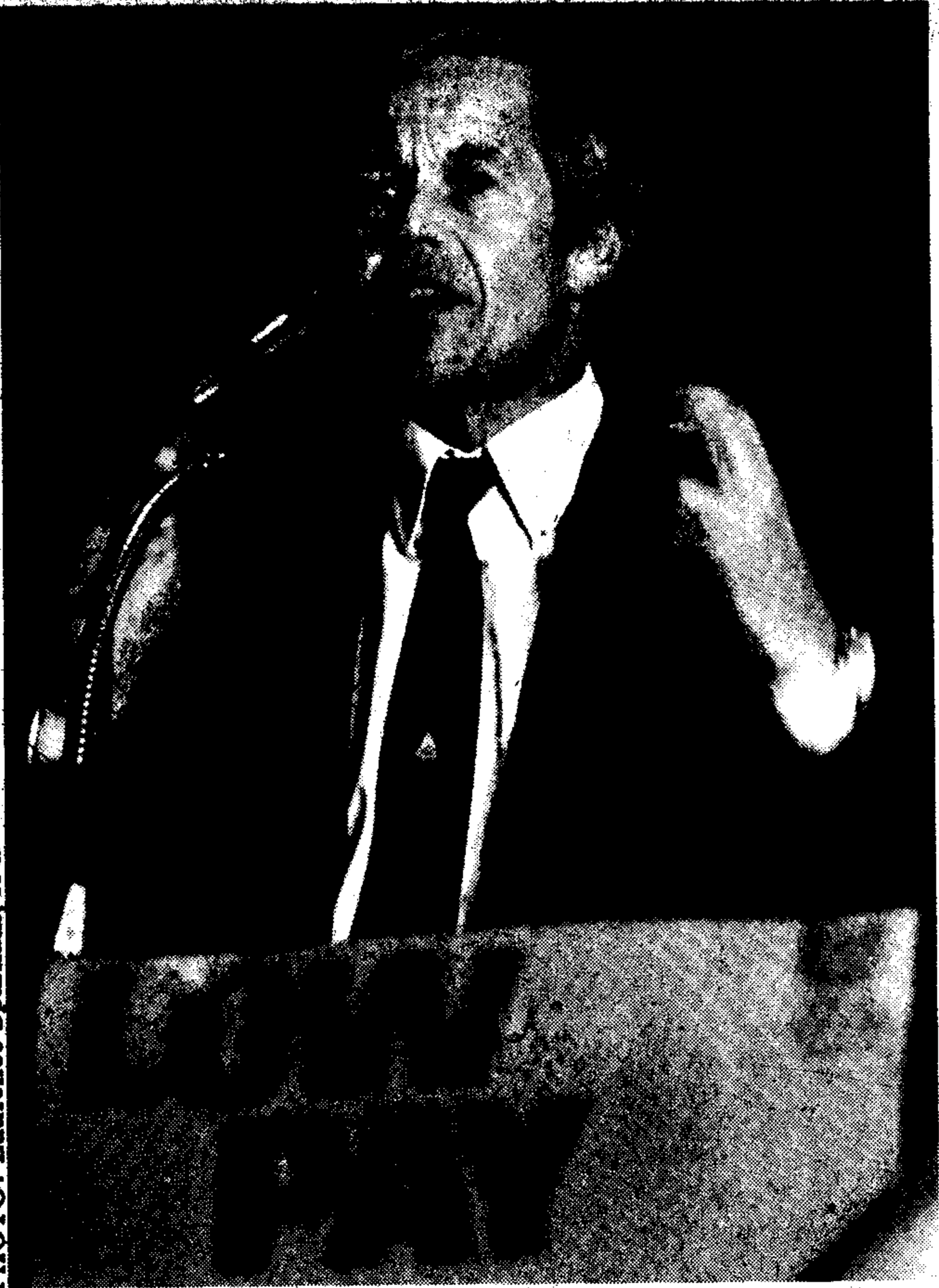
It also demonstrates in practice how treacherous Fisher's "picketing code" is.

If we only have six pickets as the police have already instructed us and if we only picket our own depots and our own members, we can't possibly stop widespread scabbing by these private contractors.

What will you be fighting for in the next few days of the strike?

Well I believe that the most immediate task is to get the whole borough out on strike. There has been a special NUPE Branch meeting called for Tuesday at the Town Hall.

PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL



Fisher

It's going to be very hard for anyone to vote against all out strike action at this meeting now that half the borough is out anyway.

To make sure however, my men will be urging all those already on strike to mount a lobby outside urging the rest of the membership to join them on strike.

The next task is to begin to link up with other dustmen already in struggle.

I believe its going to be vital that strong strike committees are set up independently of the bureaucracy.

I carried a resolution at the last branch meeting which called on Camden Trades Council to build a council of action based on all the labour movement bodies in Camden, to co-ordinate support for the strike and extend it to other workers if, for example, the troops are brought in.

Last week I and a few of the blokes lobbied the Divisional Council demanding they call all out strike action.

And I supported the Workers Socialist League's initiative in lobbying Fisher at the EC on Saturday morning.

# PRESS GANG



An article in the *Observer* (Feb 4) came to the conclusion that the Westminster Hospital strike was partly caused by the press and complained that management had turned the hospital into "a sort of Fleet Street circus".

While this is an exaggeration of the power of the press, the *Observer* reporter had clearly been repelled by the way patients in the hospital were being used as a battering ram against the hospital workers.

As its battering ram, the *Daily Mirror* "Have Mercy on My Son" used one of the medical cause celebres, marrow transplant patient, Anthony Nolan.

A front page article suggested that Anthony might be killed by the action without saying how or why.

The *Sun* headlined 'Mum's Army' and pictured a well-heeled woman posing with a duster on the floor of the hospital.

According to the story: "Angry Mothers rolled up their sleeves and went into action against hospital strikers threatening the safety of sick children."

The *Daily Mail* could not

find room on its front page for the Westminster Hospital (it was given over to attacking the gravediggers under a headline 'They won't even let us bury our dead') but made up for that omission inside.

With macabre detail over the heart disease affecting former Spitfire test pilot Charles Dershaw, reporter James Edwards used his own apparent medical expertise to say that nurses assurances that he should not worry were probably bluff.

Asked what he thought about the strikers, this poor 'victim' demonstrated his concern for the welfare of humanity:

"I'd like to put them all in a plane, set it to automatic pilot and make sure it ran out of fuel over the sea."

Apart from trampling on the patients the reporters for the *Mail* also found a word or two for the gallant heroines scrubbing the floor, but spoiled the image by giving more information than was really necessary.

The same 'angry mum' who epitomised the workers' backlash in the *Mirror*, appeared in

the *Mail* as:

Mrs. Beryl Cameron-Webb, a lady with a five bedroom flat in ritzy Chelsea, on her knees, swabbing the floor with soap and disinfectant. This was not something you would find her doing by choice.

"A medallion on a gold chain kept flopping into the pail of water and her cluster pearl earrings were snagging her hair when she had to squeeze under tables, beds and chairs to scrub them."

Adding no doubt to the victims of the strike. All in all it must be a matter of some medical surprise that the patients survived their encounter with the demon surgeons of Fleet Street.

Certainly one woman had been frightened out of her wits by the press stories.

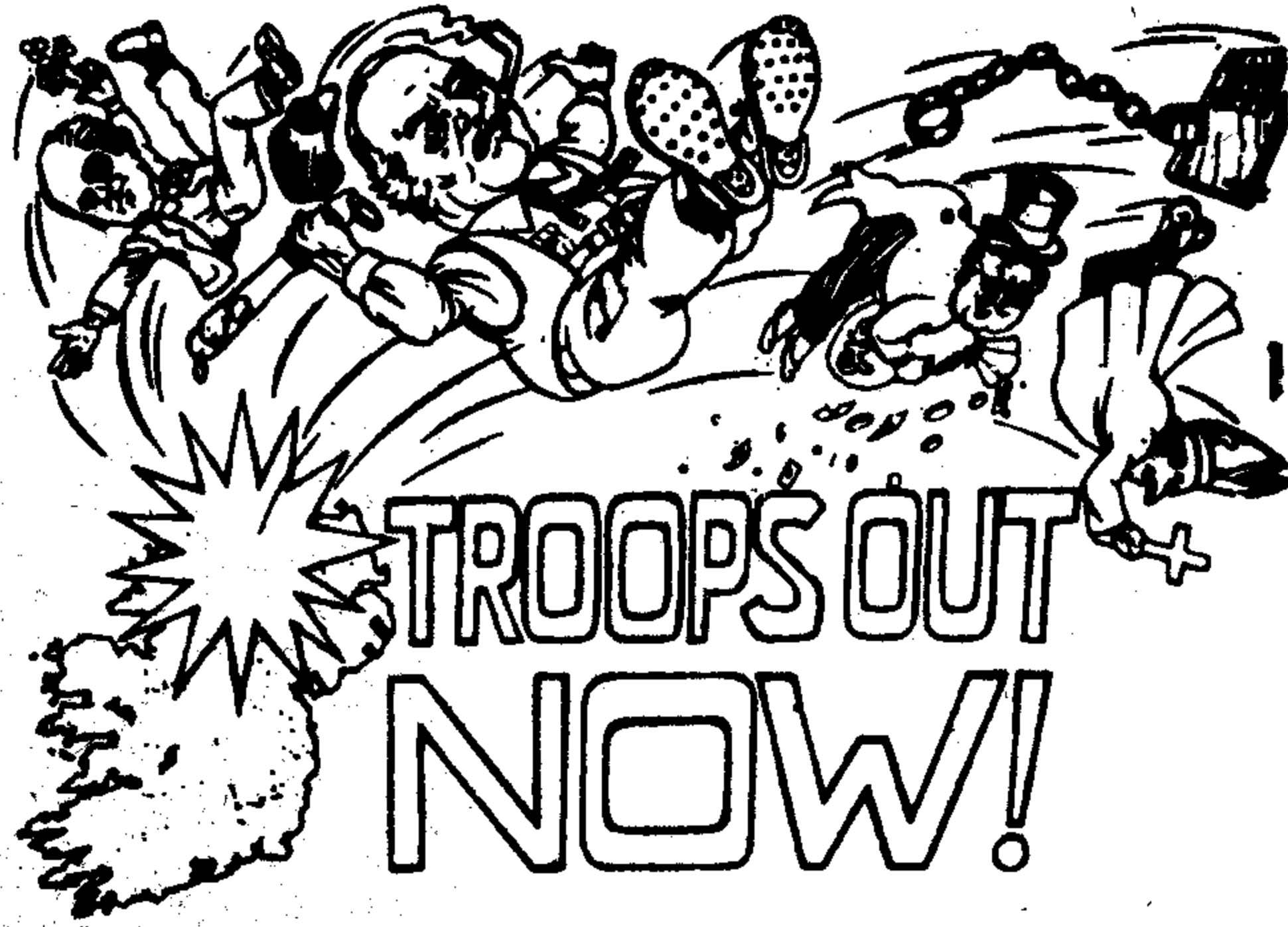
She had slept two nights at the foot of her daughter's hospital bed and told the *Mail*:

"I rushed here on Monday night because somebody told me the strikers and the pickets might start to attack the children....They won't do that will they?"

Probably not Mrs. Rodrigues...but keep watching the papers. They still have hopes.

# MASON'S LONG KESH COVER-UP

## IRELAND



Stung into action by growing awareness of the savage role of British imperialism in Ireland, Labour's "Minister for Torture" Roy Mason has attempted a grand-scale cover-up operation, aimed at refuting the arguments of the IRA.

In an unprecedented and brazen propaganda move, the "Northern Ireland Office" issued a four-page broadsheet to every MP, newspapers, radio stations and TV news rooms, which claimed to show conditions in 'H' Block of the Long Kesh concentration camp, where 350 republican prisoners are continuing their 'blanket' protest

demanding restoration of Prisoner of War status.

Because they have refused to wear prison clothing or do prison work—including the cleaning of their own cells—these prisoners have been subjected to the most barbaric ill-treatment by prison screws, who have left them clad in only a single blanket in unheated, filthy cells, with inadequate food and little or no medical care.

Prisoners have been denied any privileges—including exercise and reading matter—and subjected to beatings and torture.

Yet if Mason's broadsheet is to be believed, they have deliberately set about fouling near-luxurious cells

in which every home comfort is available.

A picture shows a prison screw hosing down a "fouled" wall in Long Kesh with a steam hose: it makes no mention of those 'blanket' men who have suffered scalds and burns when boiling water was directed at them.

It claims that 90 of the 350 are convicted 'murderers' and 100 convicted of explosives offences—but makes no reference to the fact that many of these were framed up in no-jury Diplock courts on the unsubstantiated word of a single police officer, or on statements extracted under torture.

These courts have a 94% conviction rate, 80% of which convictions are based exclusively on statements

extracted from defendants under "interrogation".

Such measures are in force because British imperialism is fighting a war of colonial repression against republican forces in Ireland.

Yet Mason and his reactionary Labour cabinet cronies have attempted to portray the republican movement as no more than criminals.

In fact the role of the real, invading criminals in Ireland was highlighted last week by news from the IRA that one member of British imperialism's undercover murder squad—the SAS—had been found shot dead by them *not* in the occupied six counties, but in the Duolin mountains.

Meanwhile two SAS thugs who shot dead 16 year old Catholic youth John Boyle last July are to be charged with murder.

It emerges from post mortem reports that these "heroes" of imperialism were brave enough to shoot this unarmed youth in the back of the head, before he even touched the hidden gun he was at first accused of "aiming" at them.

This vicious incident is of course only one aspect of the repressive work of the British army in the occupied six counties.

### Remove Mason

But it makes even more essential a campaign throughout the British workers' movement for action to force the removal of Mason and the right wing Callaghan cabinet, the restoration of the POW status to the 'H' Block prisoners, and the immediate withdrawal of British troops to make way for the self determination of the Irish people as a whole.

# Labour witch-hunters turn to the gutter press

A campaign against the expulsion of socialists from the Labour Party is to be launched in Oxford this week as the witch-hunters who control the local party machine turned to the press for help.

Delegates to the General Council who voted against the expulsion of Ted Heslin—an executive committee member—have been invited to a meeting this Wednesday to launch the campaign against the move, called by his union branch.

Heslin, a delegate to the Labour Party from the ACTSS 5/833 branch, was expelled by the local GC by 37 votes to 35 for supporting the policies of the Workers Socialist League and for selling *Socialist Press*. (See SP135). He is appealing to the National Executive.

The decision to expel Heslin—and to ban Ken Williamson (ASTMS) and Peter McIntyre

(NUJ) from admission to the Labour Party is the beginning of a wholesale campaign to rid the local party of all critics of the leadership who are prepared to fight to remove those who support anti-working class policies.

This has centred exclusively on supporters of the WSL.

It reflects the growing crisis in the ranks of the local bureaucracy who held on to positions in the Oxford and District Trades Council last week by wafer-thin majorities.

### Anti-Trotskyism

The sole political platform of the Oxford right wing in both the Labour Party and Trades Council is now anti-Trotskyism.

Under the banner of 'unity' they campaign for expulsion.

Under the title of 'democracy' they seek to stifle all effective opposition.

This now extends to pre-

paring further witch-hunts against those who defend the rights of those who are at present being witch-hunted.

### Free sheet

The witch-hunters have turned to the press. The *Oxford Journal*—a free distribution advertising paper with a history of McCarthyism—headlined last week's issue 'Mole No. 2 Kicked Out'.

After agreeing that Heslin was "one of Oxford's leading trade unionists" the paper announced to its readers:

"Ted Heslin was accused by local Party chiefs of being a successor to Alan Thornett—British Leyland's infamous left-wing 'mole'."

### Never a member

(Thornett has never been a member of the Labour Party, so it is difficult to see how Heslin

could succeed him as an 'infiltrator' but no doubt some *Journal* readers will make the connection the paper intends).

The paper quotes an anonymous 'spokesman' for the Labour Party as saying:

"Everyone has a right to their own views, but these people are not eligible for membership of the Labour Party."

It is no coincidence that on the same day the *Oxford Mail* ran a similar witch-hunt over the Trades Council elections.

It quoted Trades Council president John Power, as saying he had faced "threats of violence" and condemning all his opponents in that night's Trades Council election.

As the usual unholy alliance of Labour right wingers and the Tory press gang up once again to bar, gag or expel socialists within the Labour Party those who regard themselves as left wingers in opposition to

Callaghan's anti-working class policies must rally to the defence of Ted Heslin and any other witch-hunt victims.

If not, in a week or a month they could find themselves to be next on the list for expulsion.



Power



# PROBLEMS OF POLI



Stalin

The Workers Socialist League bases itself on the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International as the basis for the overthrow of capitalism and of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the deformed workers states of Europe, Asia and Cuba.

The problems posed in each case are different. Workers in the capitalist countries are faced with the task of *social revolution*—the expropriation of the means of production from the capitalist class through the building of independent organs of workers' power.

But in the deformed

workers' states, private ownership of the means of production has already been eliminated. State power however is monopolised by a parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy.

The task in these countries is *political revolution*—the overthrow of this reactionary bureaucracy and the establishment of workers' management of the economy.

This article will concentrate on the problem of political revolution, and point to elements of programme necessary to prepare for it.

By Tony Richardson



Throughout the history of the Trotskyist movement the concept of political revolution has come under repeated attack from both inside and outside the ranks of the movement itself.

At each point it has been necessary to establish the Marxist analysis of the Soviet Union.

Because of the profound contradictions embodied within the USSR today, and because many of the questions are complicated, requiring a historical understanding of the evolution of the Soviet state after the 1917 Revolution, the temptation is simply to rely on surface impressions and to regard them as offering an analysis.

## Struggle

Replying to the question whether the USSR is a workers or a capitalist state, Trotsky made the following points:

"In the last analysis the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, both on the national and the world arena.

Doctrinaires will doubtless not be satisfied with this hypothetical definition. They would like categorical formulae: yes-yes and no-no.

Sociological problems would certainly be simpler if social phenomena had always a finished character. There is nothing more dangerous, however, than to throw out of reality for the sake of logical completeness, elements which today violate your schema and tomorrow may wholly overturn it.

In our analysis, we have above all avoided doing violence to dynamic social formulations which have had no precedent and have no analogies.

The scientific task, as well as the political is not to give a finished definition to an unfinished process, but to follow all its stages, separate its progressive from its reactionary tendencies, expose their mutual relations, foresee possible variants of development, and find in this foresight a basis for action."

(*Revolution Betrayed*, p.256)

From 1928 onwards one of the most common forms of perversion of the Marxist analysis has been the declar-

ation that the Soviet Union under Stalin was transformed into a "state capitalist" regime, surmounted not by a parasitic bureaucracy, but by a new ruling class.

## Fought nationalism

Recognising the necessity for an *international* revolution, the Bolsheviks had from the outset fought any tendency towards nationalism. Lenin had broken decisively with the Second International when the majority of its leadership supported the capitalist class in their "own" countries at the outbreak of World War I.

The Bolsheviks pointed to the opportunities for revolution that would emerge from the War, and the dangers of any form of national divisions within the workers' movement.

And they continued to see the epoch of imperialism as one in which the question of the socialist revolution was posed on a world scale, offering the possibility of ending the isolation of the new Soviet state.

## Bureaucracy

In fighting the first signs of the development of bureaucracy within the Soviet Union—the attacks

on the monopoly of foreign trade, and the emergence of Stalin's chauvinist national arrogance in the Georgian affair—Lenin and Trotsky were intent on conducting a holding operation while looking to the parties of the newly-formed Communist International to lead revolutions in other countries.

This position is clear in all of Lenin's later writings and those of Trotsky at this time, and recorded also in the minutes of the Comintern.

## Pressures

But when no such revolutions took place, then the pressures of nationalism—rationalised in Stalin's "theory" of building "socialism in one country"—began to predominate within the growing bureaucracy.

Trotsky links the development of bureaucracy to the growth of shortages, food queues, and generalised want.

This position was effectively challenged by Trotsky in his correspondence which forms the book *In Defence of Marxism*.

At that time, as Trotsky pointed out, the advocates of this view had not yet drawn it out to its logical conclusion—a refusal to defend the Soviet Union



Hungary 1956

against imperialist attack.

But today those such as the British Socialist Workers Party, who argue a "state capitalist" position are in general correctly regarded as *outside* the Trotskyist movement, since few of them declare themselves willing to defend the USSR, China or the other deformed workers states against imperialism.

The SWP's split with Trotskyism actually has its roots in the abstentionist position of founder member Tony Cliff on the question of the war between North Korea and the capitalist South, backed by the United Nations.

## Dangers

But while a "state capitalist" analysis of the USSR has obvious dangers, so too does any analysis which simply latches on the superficial aspects of the Soviet Union and concludes that all that is needed are "reforms" to the system and not political revolution. The "state capitalists" saw only the tyrannical lack of democracy, the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939, and the crushing of political revolts in East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia as "evidence" of their view.

The apologists of the bureaucracy however see in the various "left" gestures of the Stalinist clique and its defence of nationalised property relations "evidence" that it remains a progressive force which can be pressured to the left by the masses.

Neither view is able to present an objective analysis of the contradictions of the Soviet state or offer an independent road forward for the working class.

## History

The Workers Socialist League is often criticised for directing back to history in analysing the present crisis in the world Trotskyist movement in its understanding of Stalinism.

But the Marxist method insists on the necessity of understanding all phenomena in their historical context and historical

development, and, most important of all, grasping the contradictions which drive forward that development.

Only on this basis can we decide our conscious intervention. The fight against Stalinism must be therefore taken up in this way.

## 1917 and after

The history of Trotskyism is one of struggle against the degeneration of the Soviet Union. Not only are we proud of that history, but it is the source of our understanding of the Soviet bureaucracy as a *material* force in society, and not simply a body of wrong ideas.

What happened after the October Revolution?

In *Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky analyses the backward economy of pre-revolutionary Russia. He shows how this related to the small size of the working class, and thus the small number of Bolshevik cadres who had to both run the country and also stand in the front-line in the Civil War, fighting 23 imperialist armies of intervention.

But paramount in the list of factors in the subsequent degeneration of the revolution, Trotsky places the *isolation* of the new workers state, and the failure of revolution to spread into an industrialised country such as Germany.

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# POLITICAL REVOLUTION



Trotsky and the Left Opposition



Hungarian masses, 1956

in doing so ensures a superior share-out for himself. The queues and the bureaucrats are of course still present in the Soviet Union today. Trotsky saw the solution to this dilemma only in terms of international revolution. Until 1933 he and the Left Opposition continued to argue for a clear alternative domestic policy to

by the Nazis that changed this perspective. The defeat of the German working class—the best organised workers' movement in the world at that time—flowed directly out of the criminally wrong policies of the German Communist Party. The German Stalinists had followed the lead of the Comintern in its ultra-left "Third Period", which split the working class movement by denouncing the Social Democrats as 'social fascists' worse than the Nazis, and declaring that it was better that the Nazis come to power.

### Suicidal

This suicidal policy allowed Hitler to power without even token resistance called by the mass Communist Party.

Yet within the Comintern there was not the slightest response to this catastrophic defeat—not a ripple of opposition to the totally false policies that had led to it.

It was this evidence that the Comintern had degenerated into an unthinking monolithic instrument of the Stalinist bureaucracy that led Trotsky and the Left Opposition to declare that it was not reformable, and that it was necessary to construct a new, Fourth International.

Within the USSR itself the Trotskyists took up the call for "political" revolution for the working class to regain the power that the bureaucracy had usurped.

### Bureaucratized

No longer was it possible to persuade the Soviet CP to change course. It had become totally bureaucratized. It would have to be overthrown by a revolution—but a revolution that would not need to expropriate the bourgeoisie, merely re-establish the control of the working class through Soviets.

By the time of writing *Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky estimates the bureaucracy as numbering 6 million people. It was this material force that Stalin

represented. In the hands of these six million people were the whole state apparatus, police, armed forces, and means of communication, ideology and education. In struggling against these odds the Trotskyists fought to develop a programme based on the real contradictions between the interests of the working masses and those of the bureaucracy.

They did not simply describe or attack the greater social differentiation within Soviet society, and the growing Stalinist attacks on workers' democracy; they saw in this the basis of a programme to mobilise the Soviet masses in the struggle to regain this last political power.

That programme centres first and foremost on the necessity for world revolution to end the isolation and backwardness of the Soviet economy—hence the clear demand "Long live the international revolution".

But at the same time the policy of 'socialism in one country' opens up the danger of both internal and external attacks on the nationalised property relations in the USSR.

### Exploitation

The imperialists want Russia brought back into their orbit of exploitation, while within Russia itself there are those who:

"consider, not without reason, that the new ruling layer can insure their positions of privilege only through the rejection of nationalisation, collectivisation and monopoly of foreign trade in the name of assimilation of 'Western civilisation'".

*Transitional Programme* Hence the second point of programme is defence of the Soviet Union; of the nationalised property relations.

This position is made more complex by the dual nature of the Stalinist bureaucracy. It is a parasitic privileged elite which oppresses the working class politically; but it is at the same time based on nationalised property

relations which at times it is obliged to defend in order to defend its own power and privileges.

Though such "defence" takes bureaucratic and military forms, which open the acute danger of defeat, under certain conditions it must be supported.

For instance, whilst Trotskyists opposed the Stalinist invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the crushing of the Czech working class, had NATO or the UN intervened, posing as the defender of the Czech people, we would have supported the Soviet Union—since NATO and the UN would act solely in the interests of imperialism in a bid to restore capitalism in Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union itself.

### Social inequality

In spelling out the necessity to remove the bureaucracy, a Transitional Programme points out clearly its main differentiation from the working class; and the need to wipe out social inequality:

"Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! [special rewards to workers who achieve "exemplary" output] Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! [this refers to the reintroduction of ranks in the army] Greater equality of wages for all forms of labour!"

Trotsky goes on to outline a programme against the political oppression of the working class through the struggle for soviet democracy.

Stalin's new "Constitution" of 1936 had stripped away even the nominal power that had been held by the Soviets.

### Places of work

The importance of soviets had been that they were formed from elected workers committees at the place of work. They formed a link with the 1917 revolution, and a reminder that the leading role in society had to be played by the working class.

In their place the New Constitution offered univer-

sal suffrage—whereby, as Trotsky pointed out, the worker's voice was only one of a mass.

The same period saw the Moscow Trials, in which all of the main surviving leaders of the Russian Revolution were condemned to death.

Trotskyists to this day see the struggle for the rehabilitation of these Communists and of Trotsky himself as part of the programme for political revolution, since it points to the right to struggle politically within the Soviets.

### New Soviets

While the Transitional Programme calls for the democratisation and driving of the bureaucracy from the Soviets, the lessons of the last 40 years make it clear that new Soviets, or workers councils, must be formed independently of the bureaucracy in order to carry through the political revolution.

The vivid experience of 1956 uprising in Hungary saw the spontaneous beginnings and a glimpse of the potential of precisely such a development, and is crucial in the elaboration of the programme for political revolution.

Such new Soviets will have no room for the bureaucracy, the GPU, or any of the men of privilege. And, as Trotsky makes clear, the workers in such bodies will decide by their votes which political parties should be recognised as entitled to a voice in the Soviets.

The call for such Soviets stands at the centre of our programme for the deformed workers' states. As such it differentiates our position from those who call for democracy in general, giving unnecessary concessions to bourgeois democracy.

Alongside the struggle for soviet democracy, we call for the basic demands of the restoration of free trade unions and factory committees, freedom of the press and the right to free assembly.

The bureaucracy is mortally afraid of such demands because they recognise that the moment they are enacted they open the road for the masses to organise in struggle for more far-reaching demands, and for political revolution itself.

Any slight concession along these lines—as in Czechoslovakia 1968, or, to

a lesser extent, in China today—opens up the danger that the bureaucracy itself could be swept away by a hostile mass movement.

### Political oppression

This is why the Soviet bureaucracy—even at times when it has made minimal economic concessions to the working class—has steered well clear of any relaxation of their political oppression.

And today this is the reason behind the heavy-handed Kremlin suppression of small unrepresentative groups of 'dissidents' and a rudimentary would-be 'free trade union'.

Trotsky in the Transitional Programme goes on to spell out the call for a revision of the planned economy "in the interests of producers and consumers", giving factory committees the right to control production.

The Programme makes a similar call for the collective farms.

### Open the books

As a step towards the reestablishment of workers' management of a planned economy warped by years of bureaucratic incompetence, Trotsky in *Revolution Betrayed* points to the need to:

"open the income and expense book of Soviet society".

And to expose also the manipulation of the state apparatus and judiciary by the bureaucracy, the Transitional Programme calls for the Moscow Trials to be "reviewed in the light of complete publicity".

Similarly Trotsky calls for an end to the reactionary secret diplomatic wheeling and dealing by the Kremlin bureaucracy:

"The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin to be published. Down with secret diplomacy!"

These elements of programme have come down to us from the Transitional Programme and others of Trotsky's writings on the Soviet Union.

But there are clearly many aspects that are not dealt with in Trotsky's analysis—largely those connected with the post-war experiences of struggle and uprisings against the Stalinist bureaucracy.

These aspects of the fight for political revolution will be dealt with in Part 2 of this article next week.



Rally in Budapest, 1956

that of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

But at the same time they saw the life blood of this fight as the international struggles of the working class.

They showed how the defeat of the 1926 General Strike in Britain and the 1926/7 struggles in China arose out of the policies of Stalin and the newly-emerging bureaucracy.

And they showed also how, by further isolating the USSR, they also strengthened the Stalinists.

### Political revolution

During this period Trotsky insisted on a perspective of fighting to reform the Communist parties both within Russia and internationally. It was the aftermath of the defeat of the German working class



Brezhnev with leading Stalinist bureaucrats



# HOUNSLOW HOSPITAL: Has lesson been learned?

We recently received the following letter from Pete Rowlands, Secretary of Hounslow Trades Council, criticising our article in *Socialist Press* 128.

Dear Editor,  
Your issue of December 6 carried an article on Hounslow Hospital which is inaccurate in a number of respects:

1) The 'occupation' which began on October 6, 1977 followed an 8 month 'work-in' and was begun as a response to the raid of that date. You appear confused as to the difference between an 'occupation' and a 'work-in'.

2) The 10 NALGO members had their appeals against expulsion upheld long before you went to press.

3) The initiative to begin (not continue) the occupation was taken by the defence committee, which then became the occupation committee.

4) The meeting on 3 November did produce an agreement on a joint delegation to the Minister which is being proceeded with. The X-ray department was functioning before we left due to our actions.

5) We do not run a national campaign against cuts in the NHS. We founded 'Fightback' which will continue to oppose cuts as it has in the past.

Such errors are bad enough, particularly as the occupation and the events preceding it have been well documented. However your political criticisms are equally unfounded. Our weaknesses are categorized as:

1) 'More protest politics'. A 14 month occupation is hardly 'mere protest'. We have consistently campaigned for a political response to cutbacks, locating Hounslow's closure firmly within the context of the current crisis and the attempts to solve it by cutting working class living standards and social services, and stressing the need for active opposition to cuts within the whole trade union and labour movement.

2) Spawning of illusions in i) 'Left' Labour MPs. Which ones? The fact is that while we received limited support from some MPs (which we welcomed) we have never suggested that the fight against cuts should be confined to Parliament or led by MPs.

ii) Union bureaucrats. We have never placed ultimate reliance in

union leaderships or the TUC, and have criticized them for their general lack of will to lead a fight against cuts. We believe in escorting rank and file pressure on leaderships to call action—this was successful when thousands of hospital workers in London struck on October 12, 1977 following the raid on Hounslow.

However, to extend the definition of bureaucrat to the secretaries of GLATC and SERTUC (F. Stiller and J. Dromey) is politically meaningless and quite disgraceful in view of the consistent support which these two organisations and their secretaries in particular gave to the occupation.

3) Refusal to campaign for indefinite strike action.

We have consistently attempted to promote action of all kinds against cuts, and have always stressed the need for stronger and wider trade union action.

A bigger movement against cuts is necessary before such action can be initiated on a realistic basis, and we believe that our occupation and campaign has done something towards that end.

To attribute the failure to re-open Hounslow to our 'refusal' to call for indefinite strike action is nonsense, and indicates the nature of the twilight world of ultra-left impotence inhabited by *Socialist Press*.

Our campaign of course had many weaknesses, and we would have welcomed informed criticism from any quarter. Unfortunately, your inaccurate and shallow article has done nothing to pinpoint those weaknesses or promote a greater understanding of how to fight cuts.

We will shortly be producing our assessment of the campaign which may perhaps elicit a more constructive reply from you.

Meanwhile I trust you will print this letter which will go some way towards setting the record straight.

Yours fraternally,  
Pete Rowlands  
Secretary, Hounslow  
Trades Council  
on behalf of Hounslow  
Hospital Occupation  
Committee.



Mass picket in support of the Hounslow occupation

## WE REPLY:

Brother Rowlands' letter contains a few justified criticisms of our article, combined with some rather more important political mistakes of his own.

Since the Hounslow work-in and occupation has played an important role in the development of the struggle against the cuts it is worth looking at the issues raised.

Firstly we apologise that some careless sub-editing of our original article obliterated the distinction between the occupation and the original work-in, and abbreviated the account of the defence committee's decision to launch the work-in.

As for the allegation that some of our information was outdated, we can only point out that this information came to *Socialist Press* from a central and influential member of the Hounslow Occupation Committee the day those pages went to press (four days before SP 128 was issued).

However, Brother Rowlands fifth point seems to be based on a misreading of our article which stated clearly that:

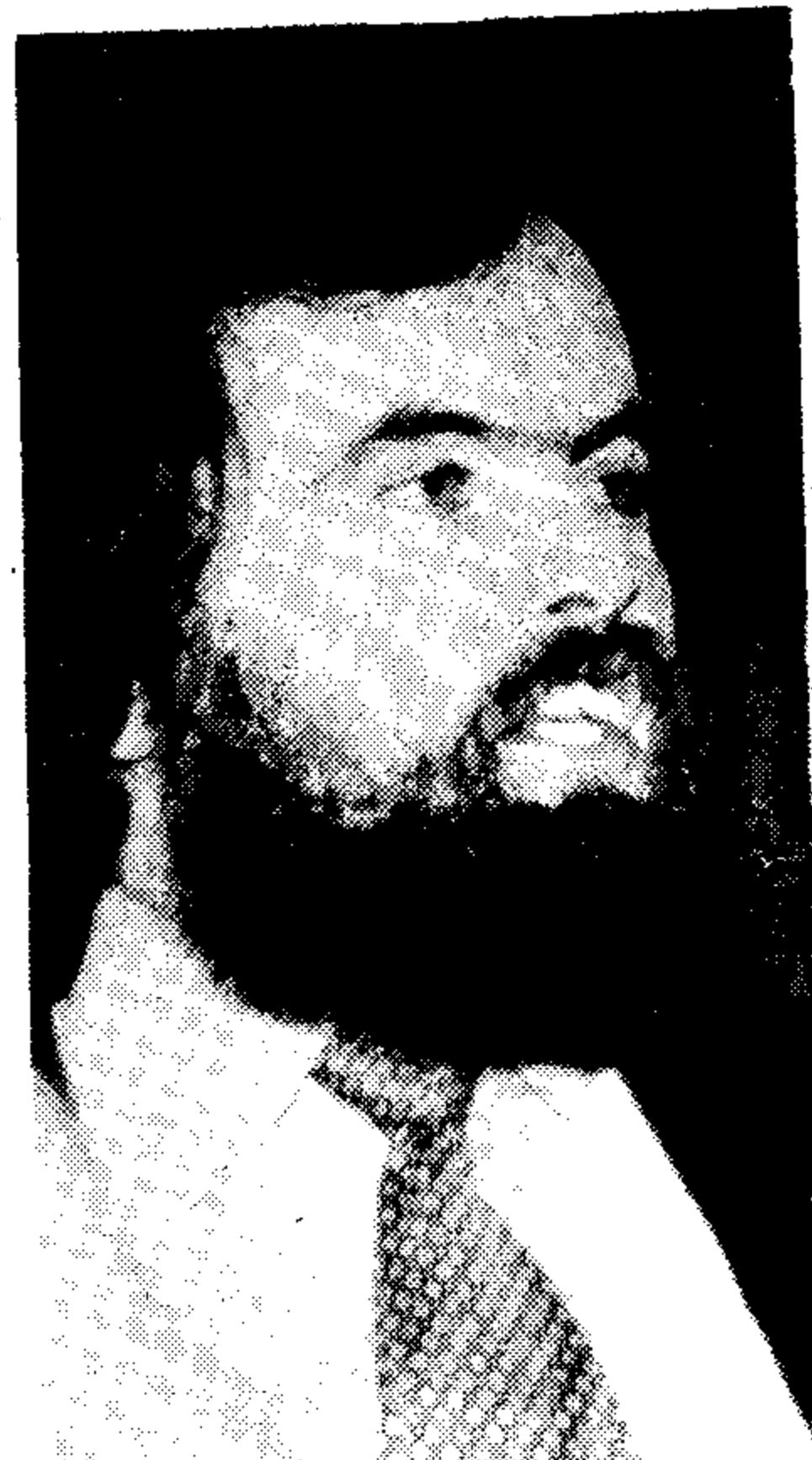
"Hounslow Hospital became a national focal point of the fight against hospital closures and cuts in health expenditure.

Assisted by Hounslow Trades Council, the Occupation Committee was a major force in creating the Fightback organisation..."

*Socialist Press* however confesses itself guilty of two minor errors of terminology, and of receiving outdated information from Occupation Committee leaders. We apologise.

But then Brother Rowlands goes on to take us to task for the political content of our article. And on this score we have no apology to make.

Brother Rowlands asserts that "a 14-month occupation is hardly a 'mere protest'!"



Bureaucrat-Dromey

He goes on to claim to have "consistently campaigned for a political response to the cutbacks", and to have stressed "the need for active opposition to cuts..."

What was this "political response" and "active opposition"? Does Brother Rowlands mean that the Committee campaigned for London-wide strike action in the health unions in support of their fight? He evades the point completely.

In fact that demand, raised by WSL members, was consistently rejected by the Occupation Committee.

Yet without such a turn outwards from the Hounslow hospital, demanding that the rest of the London labour movement (and in particular the health service unions) take concrete action against the cuts, the militant and determined occupation was bound to become little more than an

isolated—though militant—protest action.

Brother Rowlands asks us to specify which 'left' Labour MPs were feted by the Committee.

He should need no reminding.

Russell Kerr MP in particular was given rapt attention and subjected to no serious demands whatever by the Occupation Committee—while moves by WSL members to expose the hollowness of Kerr's "support" for the campaign aroused no more than irritation and embarrassment from Brother Rowlands and other Committee leaders.

## No demands

Far from suggesting that the struggle should be confined to Parliament, the Occupation Committee put forward no demands that 'left' MPs like Kerr actually conduct any fight in Parliament against the cuts and the policies of the Lib-Lab government!

And Brother Rowlands' enthusiastic defence of 'left' bureaucrat Jack Dromey makes it hard to believe that he is describing the same person whose demagoguery and steadfast refusal to expose the APEX and TGWU officials created the necessary confusion to allow the betrayal of the Grunwick strike; the same person who, despite his speeches, as Secretary of the South East Region TUC has not even consistently mobilised himself in support of the Garners strike; the same person who now as full-time official of ACTSS has proved himself a bureaucrat in every sense of the term.

## Not blamed

Of course our article did not blame the failure to win the reopening of the Hounslow on the Occupation Committee's undoubted refusal to call for

indefinite supporting strike action; to make such a charge would stand the whole issue on its head.

## Reactionary

Rather the failure of the Committee to grasp the importance of this policy flowed from their political inability to understand the stubborn determination of the Labour leadership—Benn and Hart included—to press ahead with their reactionary attacks on the working class.

It is these attacks which make it necessary to prepare the workers' movement to respond with equal determination.

The blame for the closure of the Hounslow rests squarely on the shoulders of the Labour government, those 'lefts' that assist it to remain in office, and those public sector union officials who have consistently refused to lift a finger to prevent the cuts taking place.

It was the dead weight of these bureaucrats which was decisive in isolating the Hounslow occupation.

## Unfortunate

As for Brother Rowlands' concluding round of inappropriate insults against *Socialist Press*, they can only be regarded as unfortunate and ill informed.

WSL members have played an extremely influential role in struggles against the cuts. Two examples should confirm the point.

It was our members that first took up the fight for the occupation of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital—now still open as a result of that initiative and the obvious willingness of other sections of health workers to take supporting strike action.

We have also been at the forefront of the fight to build the Committee of London Area Shop Stewards in the Health Service (CLASH), which in turn played a key role in fighting for London-wide supporting strike action after management ransacked the Hounslow.

## Assessment

We would recommend Brother Rowlands consult our booklet *How to Fight the Cuts* and back numbers of *Socialist Press* for fuller details of the impact our small movement has been able to have on the struggle against the cuts, and now the fight on low pay in the public sector.

We look forward to seeing the Hounslow Committee's written assessment of their important experience.

We believe that if the political lessons of that experience are learned then future struggles against hospital closure will start from a more solid foundation.



EGG supporters—WSL initiative led to work-in

Some people don't  
want to come to the  
**RED YOUTH RALLY**  
on Sat. 24 February

not being into  
DISCOS-FILMS-  
SOCIALISM  
AND YOUTH!



Rally—Caxton House, St John's Way, London N19—youth speakers, film and disco. Tickets 50p (provinces) £1 (London). More details (including transport) from National Secretary, SYL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL



# 'Free State' frames up more political opponents

A further example of repression in the so called Irish 'Free State' came last December with the end of the marathon Cork-Dublin mail train robbery trial.

At a cost of over £1 million, a total of 108 days were spent forcing through the conviction of three political opponents of the Lynch government.

There were in fact two different trials—both held in the Special Criminal Court where three judges try, convict or acquit and sentence the defendant without the inconvenience of a jury.

The first trial ended after 65 days when one of the three presiding judges John L. O'Conner died.

The second, lasting 43 days, ended with the conviction of three members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Osgar Breathnach, Bernard McNally and Nick Kelly were all found guilty of robbing the Cork-Dublin mail train.

Breathnach and McNally were given 12 and 9 years respectively.

## Disappeared

Nick Kelly, who disappeared before the end of the trial, has not yet been sentenced.

These three and Michael Plunkett, who was acquitted during the second trial, were charged with stopping the Cork-Dublin mail train on 31st March 1976 and stealing mail bags.

Neither the bags nor the money (estimated at between £250,000 and £400,000) have ever been recovered.

The convictions rested on statements made by the accused while they were being 'questioned' by the gardai (police).

Throughout the 'trials' all three pleaded 'not guilty' and said that the confessions were extracted under torture.

In the days leading up to the death of Judge O'Conner the defendants complained on a number of occasions that he was asleep.

Counsel complained through all the legal channels and asked for O'Conner's replacement. The complaint was rejected and branded as an attempt to disrupt the court proceedings.

## Dead

However, on June 6th O'Conner failed to appear and a messenger sent round to his home was told that the Judge was dead.

Thus the first trial ended after 65 days and the whole thing had to be started all over again.

The Irish state could have saved itself time and expense by continuing to use O'Conner—keeping him in a deep freeze overnight and propping him up in his chair during the day.

Events in the second trial were to show that it wouldn't have made any difference to the verdict.

Soon after the beginning of the second trial Michael Plunkett was released.



Workers demonstrate against Lynch's domestic policies

The sole evidence against him was that he had been identified by Mr. Conal O'Toole whose house was occupied by armed men on the night of the robbery.

Osgar Breathnach was first arrested on March 31st 1976.

At the Bridewell he was questioned by detectives and asked to account for his movements on the previous night. Released after 48 hours he was rearrested four days later.

Taken back to the Bridewell, Breathnach claims he was taken to a tunnel and beaten up by detectives.

## Confession

From there he was taken to an interview room where the beating continued.

Wishing to avoid further injury he agreed to sign a confession.

However, he signed 'Oscar' rather than 'Osgar', indicating his disagreement with the statement's contents.



Students in struggle against the Lynch regime

When he was taken to Portlaoise Prison on April 9th he was found to have bruises on his left arms and both legs and a lump on his head.

This was testified to by Prison Officer Brendan Breen who received him at the prison.

## Self inflicted

As we shall see, the Judges chose to argue that the injuries were 'self-inflicted' or the prisoners deliberately injured each other.

Supporting evidence that violence was being carried out at the time was given by three prisoners who testified to having heard shouting and screaming during the night.

William Royale said he had heard someone say "We can work in relays all night" and "it'll stop when you tell us what we want to know".

When he banged his own cell door he was told "you'll get the same if you don't shut up".

Next day he reported the incident to a Sergeant Cleary who advised him to mind his own business.

A vital part of the court's verdict rested on whether or not Breathnach's constitutional rights had been violated by his second arrest and whether or not his alleged statement, made he claimed, while under duress, could be admitted as evidence.

The bench's decisions on these questions involved the most farcical contortions of legal interpretation.

Breathnach claimed he had asked for a solicitor while in the Bridewell.

## No request

This was denied by the prosecution counsel Macdonald who went on to make the amazing statement that

"There had been no request to the gardai by Breathnach other than saying he would not say anything until his solicitor was present. That was not a request for a solicitor".

(Irish Press 10.11.78—our emphasis)

This was too much for even Justice Hamilton, who replied

"Would it not be sufficient that there was an indication? One of the gardai has given evidence that he reported to his superiors that Mr. Breathnach insisted on speaking Irish and told them that Mr. Breathnach was looking for a solicitor".

Obviously embarrassed by all this the court decided to reserve its judgement on the admissibility of Breathnach's statement.

Further evidence of gardai violence emerged when evidence relating to Nick Kelly was heard.

Two doctors Paul McVeigh (Mountjoy Prison) and Richard Burke (Port-



Lynch

laoise Prison) testified that they had examined Kelly on April 8th and 9th respectively and both found injuries consistent with a severe beating.

'astounding'.

Judge Clark asked if he really found it astounding and Sorohan replied that he found it 'surprising'.

He should not have, for he had heard similar points made in the trial of Noel and Marie Murray (see SP 124).

Defence Counsel such as MacEntee and Sorohan, who are employed by the state at the modest fee of £240 a day, are in reality simply there to provide a fancy legal cover for what can only be described as judicial frame-ups.

## Chair on hands

Giving evidence, Kelly described the beating he had received which included lying down on the floor while a detective sat on a chair which rested on his open palms; having his head repeatedly forced down a toilet bowl; repeated punches; blows on the back with a chair; and at one point having his ears banged simultaneously for ten minutes.

He repeatedly asked for a solicitor, a doctor or a priest but got no response to these appeals.

Kelly told the court he had signed a statement to avoid further beatings and that he had identified at least eleven of the detectives in court who had beaten him in Fitzgibbon Street and the Bridewell Gardai Station.

On December 1st 1978 the court eventually declared that the injuries to the defendants were not caused by the gardai but were self-inflicted.

The court ruled that all the statements, both verbal and written were admissible and that although Breathnach had been held unlawfully there was no conscious infringement of his constitutional right to liberty.

## Public interest

This statement was considered admissible 'in the public interest'.

Breathnach had been examined by a doctor in the Four Courts who pronounced him dangerously ill.

At St. Lawrence's Hospital, however, he was seen by doctors who found "no serious injuries".

It was these doctors the court chose to believe.

At the end of the Judges' statement defence counsels MacEntee and Sorohan asked for a transcript of the judgement.

This was refused—as was an application for the court tape recording of the judgement.

## Astounding

Defence counsel Sorohan in making application for the transcript, referred to the judgement as

## Protests

The verdicts and sentences were met with protests inside and outside the court.

As the 12 year sentence was handed down, Breathnach jumped to his feet and shouted "The state has spent £1. million in framing me. I am innocent".

Outside the court IRSP supporters picketed and handed out leaflets.

During the trial attempts were made to implicate the late Seamus Costello, leader of the IRSP, who was assassinated on October 5th 1977.

## Irish justice

A further issue of *Socialist Press* will carry an article on the attempts to postpone the inquest on Costello's death.

The train robbery case shows once again the nature of justice in Ireland.

Once again political opponents of the Lynch government and the Irish capitalists have been railroaded into jail after a trial without a jury and on the sole evidence of statements which they claimed were made under torture.

As the economic crisis facing Lynch grows ever more sharp it is more than ever necessary for the Irish bourgeoisie to remove those who are fighting to destroy capitalism.

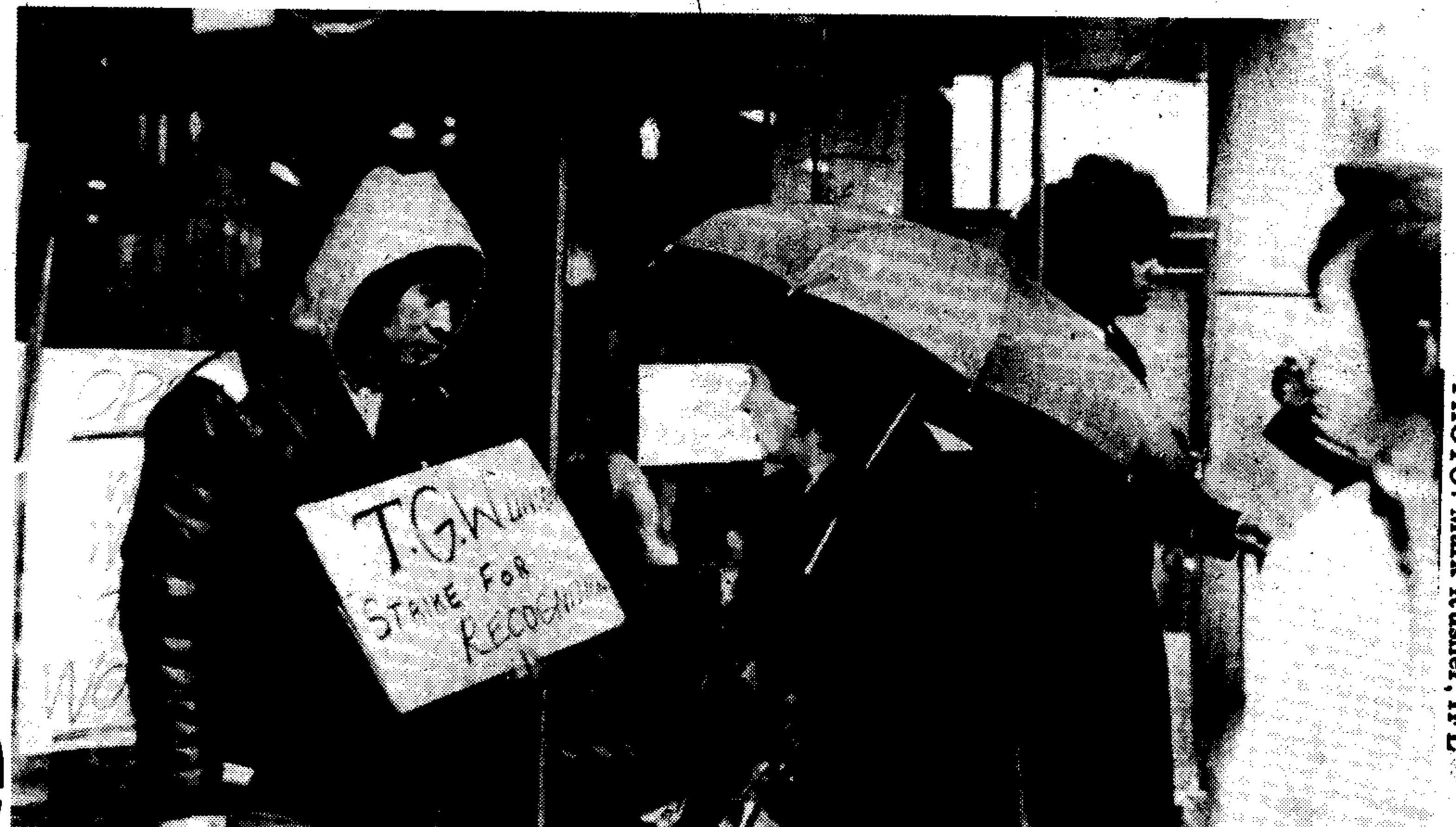
The Irish state, up to its ears in debt to foreign imperialists, spent £1 million to do its latest dirty trick.

The sort of 'justice' to be found in Ireland today will no doubt come to Britain tomorrow just as the imperialist army in the North will be used on the British working class.

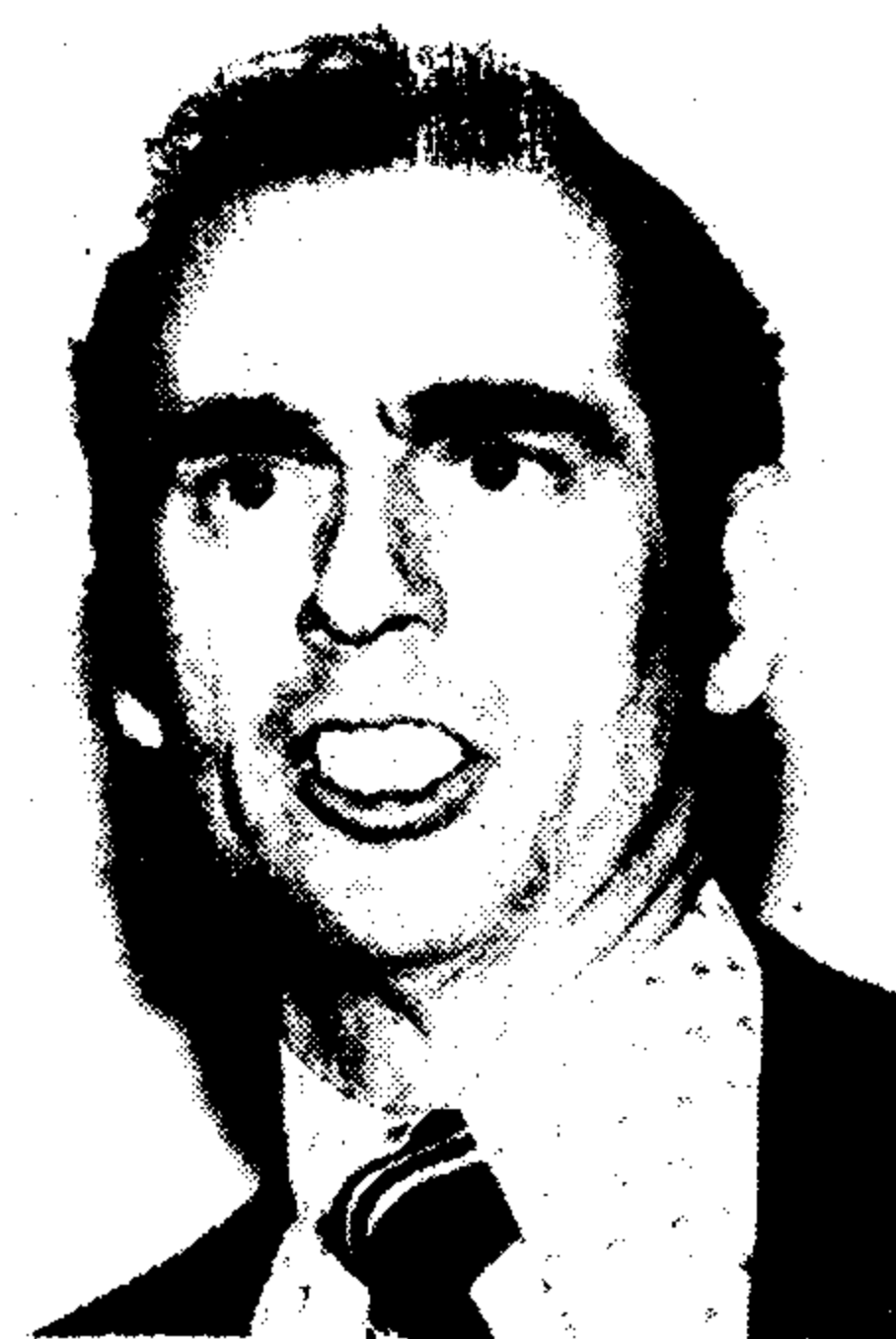
By Keith White



## Lobby exposes Garners sabotage



Garners pickets, January 1978



Shorter

The weakness of the TGWU bureaucracy in the movement of the working class against the Labour Government and its own leadership is clearly accentuated in the Garners' strike for union recognition.

A meeting of the TGWU Regional Committee for Region I was forced to hear fresh calls for action from members of the strike committee after it was lobbied by TGWU shop stewards.

This was the fourth full meeting of the Region I

committee since the strike began more than a year ago. During that time the committee—headed by Stalinist secretary Staden and Regional Organiser, Shorter,—has been totally implicated in sabotaging the struggle.

### Deal with police

As reported in *Socialist Press* this culminated in the notorious agreement with police to limit the numbers on any one picket to six. As the committee

members arrived and found themselves confronted by a lobby, their indifference and arrogance turned to embarrassment as they tried unsuccessfully to fend off accusations of sabotage.

They even denied the existence of the agreement with police.

The fact that the lobby forced the committee to accept a delegation from the strike committee shows how vulnerable the leadership is under the pressure from the membership.

This period provides very

favourable conditions for a renewed co-ordinated campaign against the bureaucracy to demand an end to the isolation of the strikers.

After the meeting Shorter hurried to the strike committee HQ to tell members that the region refused to support their call for a new day of action on March 3 and for a national TGWU delegate conference.

Because of the mass pickets on January 27 and the intervention into the Regional Committee, Shorter was not however in a position to kill off the strike.

He told the strike committee that they still had the official support of the union and that the Regional Committee had no intention of withdrawing

it. The strike committee and supporters must intensify their struggle against policies which seek to isolate the strike.

Visits to factories must be followed up and demands not confined to the necessary calls for financial support and support on the pickets.

Strike committee members must clearly explain to stewards, convenors and members the role of the TGWU leadership in the strike, and win their support to challenge and change those policies.

Workers Socialist League members supporting the strike will continue to fight to remove all obstacles to winning the Garners strike, including those bureaucrats who oppose the necessary policies.

## NATFHE MILITANT SACKED

The Stalinist-dominated executive committee of the Outer London Region of NATFHE has got a very red face.

For its secretary, also Principal of West Ham Further Education College has just had one of his lecturers sacked.

It so happens that this lecturer was chairman of the college NATFHE branch.

This is one of the few branches in the country to be actively campaigning in defiance of the union leadership's discouragement, on the claim for a merger of grades 1 and 2 of lecturers' pay scales.

Eric Williams, the Principal, is chairman of the national action group responsible for pushing through the claim.

Only a week before the college branch lobbied Newham

Education Committee and received a warm reception.

But several of the councillors on that committee are also members of the college Board of Governors, which, on January 24, voted to uphold the dismissal.

John Regan, the sacked lecturer, had only become chairman of the branch in the autumn, following an explosion of anger among lecturer I's in the college at the way the negotiations were being handled.

He said "I was bitterly disappointed at the completely negative reply of the Burnham FE Committee and went back from the lobby to my branch determined to show that the lecturer I's were a force to be reckoned with."

The decision to go for the claim was made at the annual

conference, against the advice of the union leadership.

The ostensible reason for sacking Regan was that he had refused to fill in a new kind of report for students.

Branch policy is that the reports constitute a change in the conditions of service and must be properly negotiated.

When summoned to the Principal's office Regan entered and demanded a negotiation in the Conference Room with the branch official present.

This was refused and later Regan was suspended and banned from entering the College premises.

The Stalinist majority on the Outer London Region is only maintained by a slim majority. This may well be the issue to topple it.

## FINES APPEAL

The police onslaught on Garners pickets is now taking a mounting toll in fines and costs.

A few weeks ago a strike committee member was fined £35 and £100 costs despite the clear evidence of three witnesses.

And a WSL member found guilty of obstruction has been fined a staggering £120. Police have even arrested a 15-year old youth.

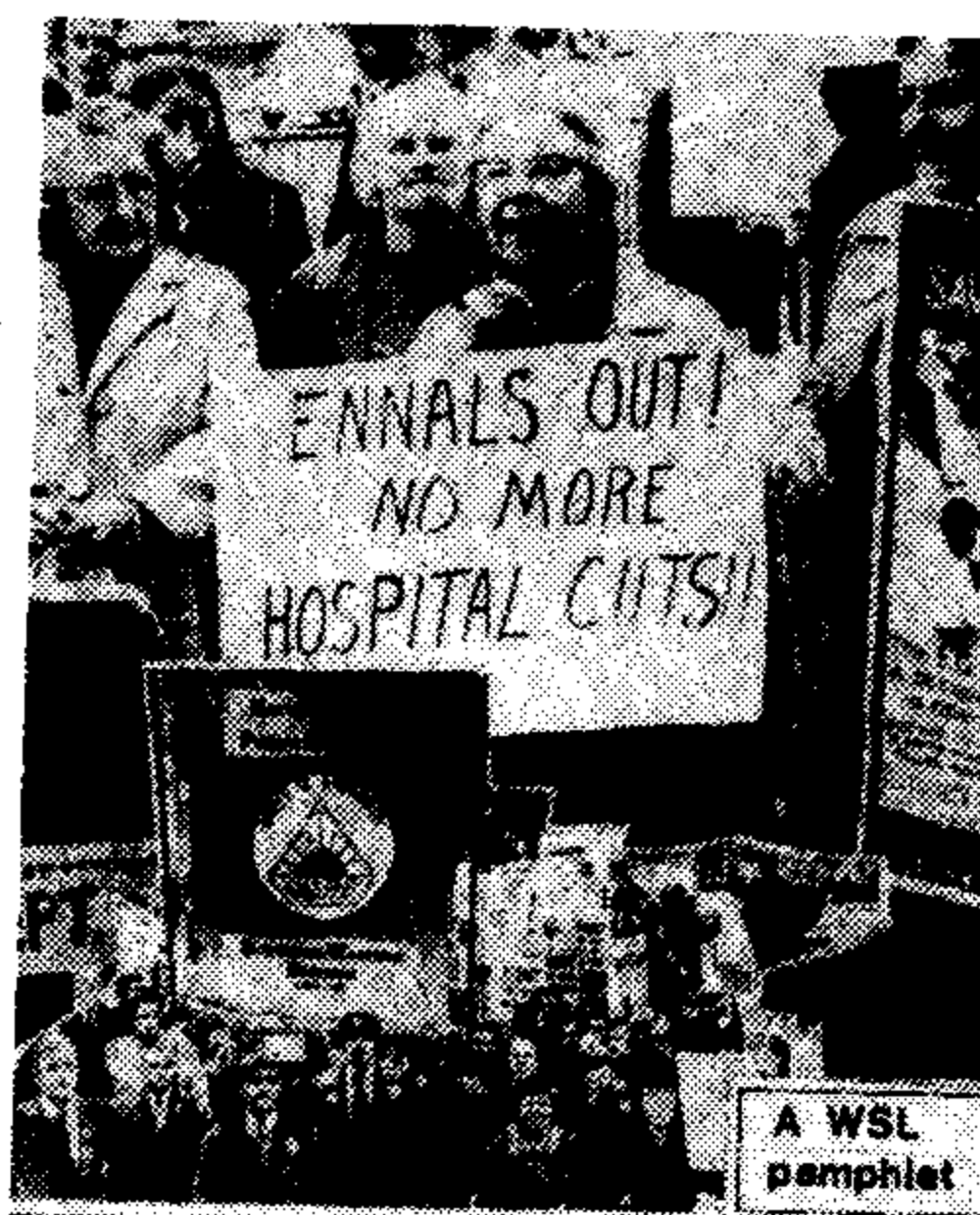
WSL members alone, as a result of being the most regular supporters on the picket lines, now face fines totalling hundreds of pounds.

We are of course fighting through the London labour movement for adequate funds to be made available to support trade unionists fined for picketing at Garners.

But the problem is now urgent. *Socialist Press* therefore appeals to supporters and readers for donations to assist our comrades in paying these savage fines.

Donations should be marked Garners Fines Appeal, and sent to *Socialist Press*, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

### THE KEY TO THE CUTS FIGHT!



The booklet which spells out the policies necessary for all-out struggle against the cuts, drawing on practical experience at the EGA and the Oxford Nursery Occupation.

30p plus 10p p&p from the WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill London NW5 1HR.

How to fight the cuts

## WSL We offer a lead!

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

The Workers Socialist League is the only movement in Britain that fights patiently and relentlessly to build such a party, on the basis of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.

We alone are the movement

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

Such a policy has made us no friends in the trade union and Labour bureaucracy, but has consistently offered the most powerful lead to workers in struggle.

Indeed the strength of our movement lies precisely in our rejection of any attempt to find "short cuts" around the necessary fight to construct a Marxist leadership in the working class.

In these battles we set out to prove to workers both in theory

and in practice the necessity for a new leadership and for a programme of transitional demands which, starting from today's problems and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers in struggle to grasp the need for socialist revolution.

For this reason, though we are smaller than some self-styled 'revolutionary' groups, the WSL has featured in the forefront of pay struggles in British Leyland, in the fight against the sale of jobs by TUC leaders, in the struggle against the cuts, in unionisation struggles, and in the fight against bureaucratic dictatorship within the unions.

This method of approach — rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, and any form of concession to the counter-revolutionary reformist or Stalinist bureaucracy — is of course essential for the working class not only in Britain but

internationally

In taking up international issues the WSL points out not only the obligation of British workers to support the Irish liberation struggle and revolutionary struggles such as those in Iran and Southern Africa, but also the necessity for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of socialist revolution.

The WSL is not the biggest movement on the left in Britain nor is it the easiest to be a member of. But in its approach to both theory and practice it is the only really serious revolutionary movement.

WHY NOT JOIN US? Fill in the form below for more details, or approach your local branch, who will gladly supply more information about our programme, policies, and perspectives.

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# REOPEN LEYLAND CARS PAY CLAIM

**British Leyland convenors will meet again next Monday to decide whether or not to press ahead with a combine-wide strike.**

This is in response to the decision of management to disqualify the November and December "parity" payments—due under the wage deal accepted by ballot in December—and their decision to defer payment of the new nationally agreed minimum rates due to come into force on February 1.

The minimum rates

would provide an £8 a week increase in night-shift allowances and a substantial increase in overtime pay.

### Small print

In order to disqualify these payments, management are pointing to the small print of the deal which contains a welter of "ifs" and "buts", and a series of loose statements which can be interpreted to suit management.

Despite these clauses, the deal was recommended to the Leyland labour force by

the very people who are now (quite rightly) objecting to it—notably the national union officials and Derek Robinson, Longbridge convenor and a leading Communist Party member.

Management now say that payment has been affected by last year's Drews Lane strike—which took place *before* the ballot—and by the road haulage dispute—which was outside of BL and took place in *January!*

This simply rams home the point made by some plants, notably Cowley, that the pay package was fraudulent from the start.

In fact Bill McLain, BL chief negotiator, produced the leaflet circulated by the Cowley Assembly Plant Joint Shop Stewards last November to "prove" that the trade unions were aware of all the pitfalls and should not be surprised that payment had been stopped!

### Full support

There will no doubt be full support for the strike decision when it goes to mass meetings during this week.

The problem is the demands of the strike as

formulated by the LCJNC. This committee is calling only for full implementation of the original package.

The end result of the package is the implementation of corporation level bargaining by November 1 this year, which is the culmination of management's strategy designed to put BL workers in a wages straightjacket.

This demand should be rejected.

The fact is that BL has used double talk, subterfuge and the confusion consciously sown by the media to get a deal accepted when they had *no* intention of paying the money.

Both the ballot and the package should now be declared null and void and the wage claims submitted by the individual plants reopened.

Workers should reject the

advice of those who have misled them in the past.

### Deadline

Foremost among these traitors is Robinson, who last year gave management until December 3 to revise the package—but then, when they refused to alter it, recommended *acceptance!*

A lead is now required to reopen the whole wages issue and establish settlements which will defend the standard of living of BL workers.

### New leadership

And this is also connected to the struggle for a principled leadership that will fight in defence of jobs and conditions throughout the combine, presenting a clear programme on which to resist management and



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Robinson

government plans for speed-up and mass sackings.

This task is being undertaken by the Workers Socialist League.



Cowley mass meeting—warned of Leyland fraud

## Near scrape for TUC puppets

**Right wing officers of Oxford and District Trades Council with the full weight of the TUC behind them clung on to their positions by the skin of their teeth at the annual general meeting last week.**

John Power, witch-hunting president of the Council for the last two and a half years, was re-elected by just four votes, defeating Gerry Casey UPW, 59 votes to 55.

Pat Ward, NUPE, former assistant secretary, was elected secretary defeating Peter McIntyre by 64 votes to 53, and another right wing nominee defeated McIntyre for the position of assistant secretary 59-56.

Casey, the last President of the former Trades Council wound up by the TUC, was elected top of the poll as one of the vice presidents, an election in which Alan Thornett (TGWU 5/293) picked up 45 votes.

The election was notable for the sudden influx of new delegates into branches solidly behind the officers, in particular NUPE, which marched into the room in a solid phalanx of more than 20 delegates—many of them total strangers.

If the votes of those who have attended the Trades Council at least once between AGMs had been counted on their own, the officers would have lost by a street.

The right wing/Stalinist alliance were so intent on making a clean sweep of the officers positions that they ousted Terry Snape (ASTMS) as treasurer, replacing him with Stalinist Gallagher, by three votes.

Snape has certainly not broken from the bureaucracy (he voted for many of the right wing nominees) but he has con-



Casey

sistently defended the democratic rights of all delegates.

As such he posed a threat to the ability of the right wing to plan their manoeuvres.

The officers are now left with a major problem.

The AGM was the biggest meeting since reconstitution in 1976 and the narrowness of the vote, together with the refusal of many of Power's supporters to show any interest in attending meetings of trades council



Power

mean that Power is guaranteed to be in a minority at every ordinary meeting.

### 'Disruptive'

This could push him towards use of the optional Rule 15 clause which threatens to remove 'disruptive' delegates, if he is to succeed in his mission of blocking policies in the interests of the working class.

The TUC had taken the precaution of ruling out of order in advance amendments to rule from the NUJ branch which sought to restore fortnightly meetings and to allow some challenge to the rulings of the chair.

The Oxford Trades Council must now be virtually the only union body in the country where there is no right to challenge the chair—and it has this special dictatorial status with the full backing of the TUC.

### 'Violence'

In the event none of the rule changes were passed, since there was little chance of a two-thirds majority for anything—left or right.

The AGM took place after Power and Ward had circulated outrageous 'annual reports'—in which Power accused his opponents of threatening him with violence and Ward said that Dancy's (the secretary elected at the previous AGM) crack-up (in reality a result of increasing political paranoia) was due "at least in part (to) the harassment that the other officers have experienced from those opposed to our elections."

Power also went into the *Oxford Mail* on the day of the elections with his absurd and unspecified allegations of threats of violence.

## Picketing rights under fire

**Amid the Tory press hysteria against picketing and Thatcher's attempts to rouse the rabble of the Jimmy Young Show into a frenzy of anti-union violence, last week brought further evidence of a concerted move to curtail basic trade union rights.**

In the courts, yet another employer succeeded in obtaining a "temporary injunction" restraining pickets outside his premises, following on the anti union precedent set in the United Biscuits judgement.

But, more sinister still, the York Trailer Company at Northallerton is to sue nine pickets for losses incurred during three days' picketing outside the factory gates in the course of the lorry drivers' strike.

The employer made it clear that the action was not against the TGWU but against the nine individuals concerned.

Should the firm prove successful in this action it would have huge implications for

pickets in future struggles and amount to a direct challenge to the trade union movement.

One capitalist spokesman keen to mount such a challenge is the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester James Anderton.

Best remembered for the massive police protection he mobilised for a National Front demonstration in Tameside, Anderton last week called for a change in the law on picketing so that:

\*Only people directly involved in the strike could picket.

\*All pickets should be authorised and identified.

\*A maximum number of pickets is laid down—with police having powers to limit numbers further.

### Garners limit

This final provision is of course in line with the policy of TGWU Region 1 officials who have of their own accord restricted Garners picket lines to six.

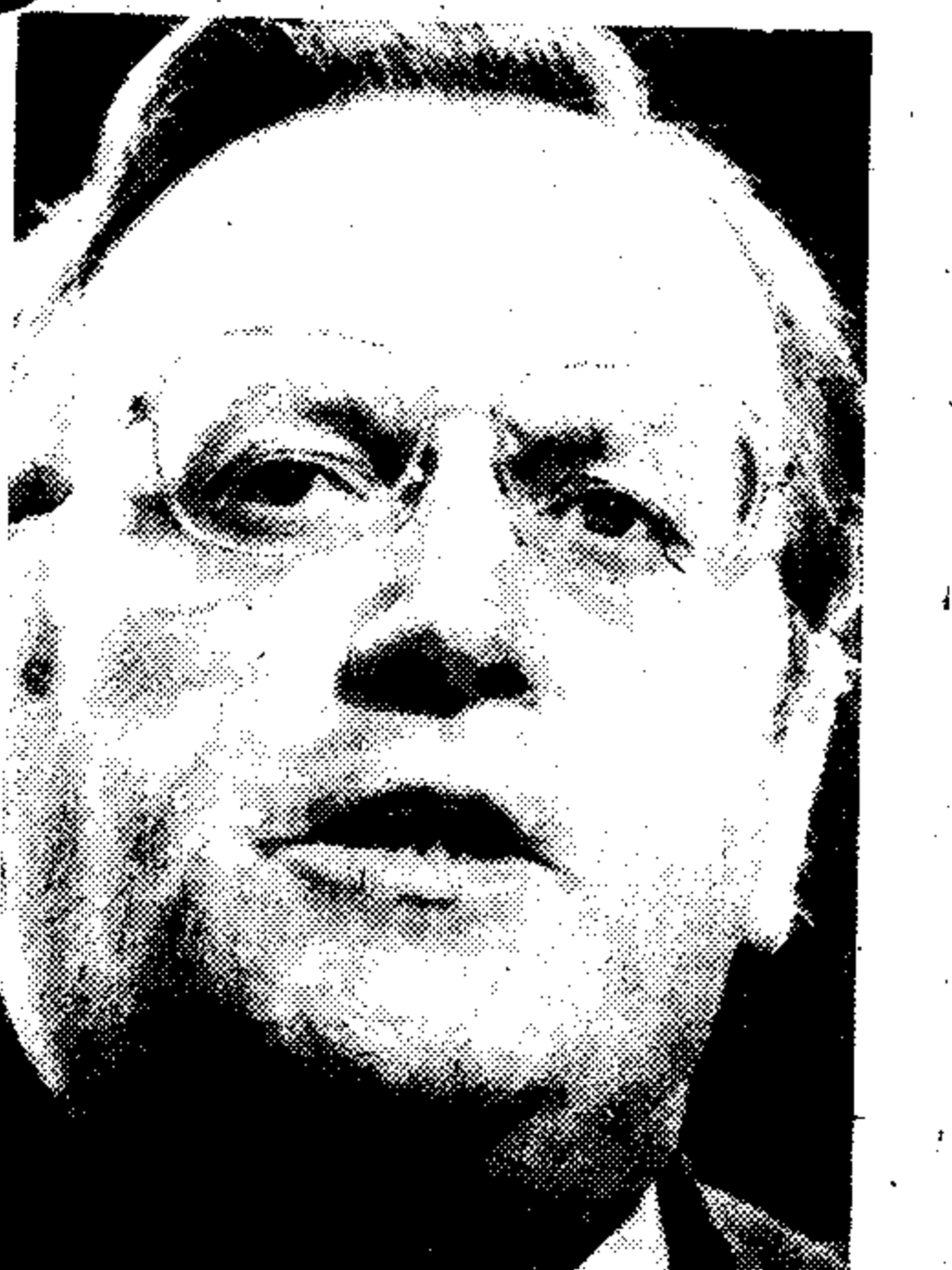


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Evans

Now Labour ministers are joining the Tory campaign against the unions.

Ministers Booth, Varley and Rees last week met the TUC to discuss the introduction of secret ballots prior to strikes—in line with Tory policy—the possibility of no-strike clauses in the public services, and restrictions on picketing.

A basis for such restraints seems likely to be Moss Evans' TGWU picketing code.

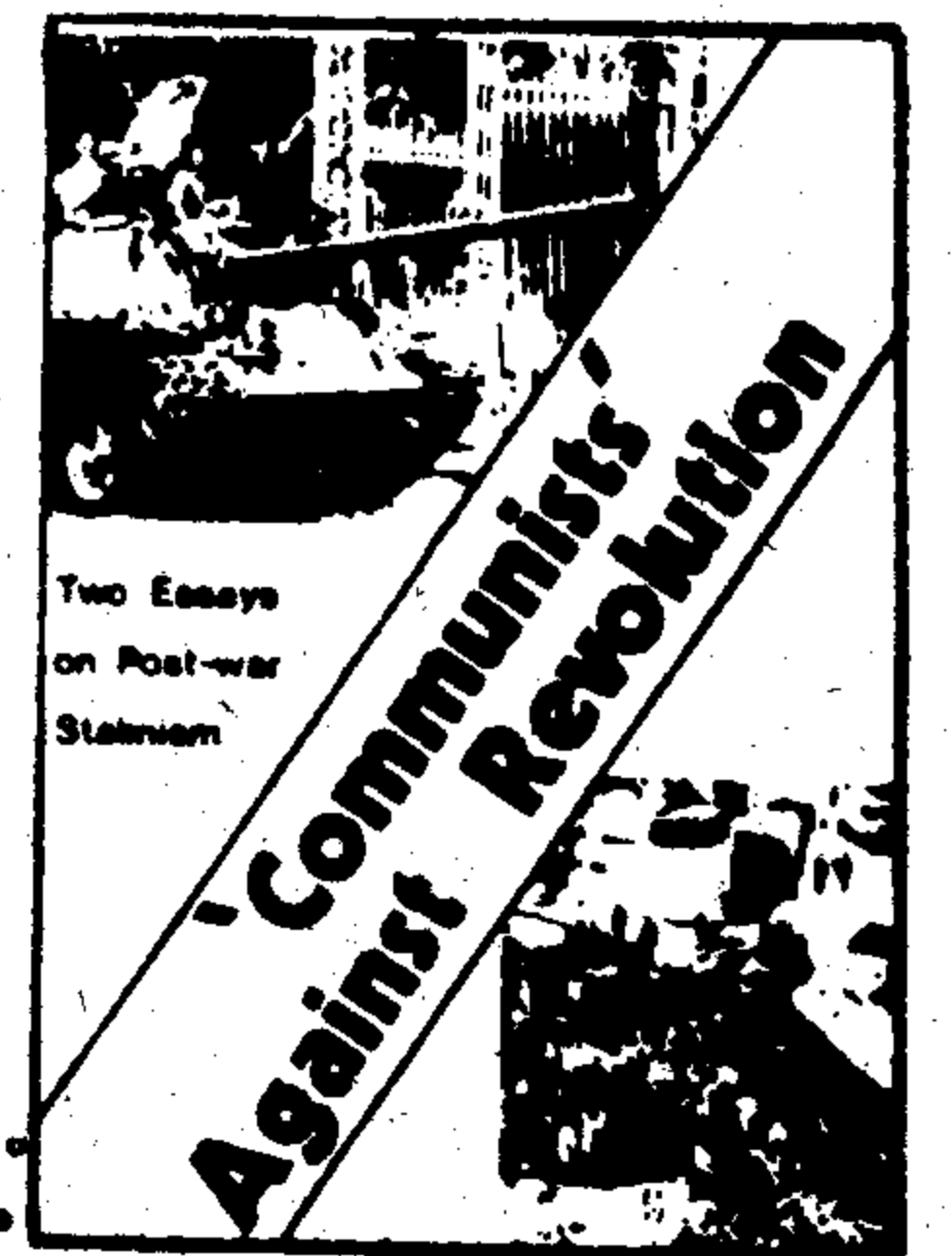
Meanwhile the Tories stand in the wings, ready either to back sufficiently reactionary Labour policies, or introduce their own attacks on the unions.

The construction of a principled socialist leadership in the labour movement has never been such an urgent task.



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

NUJ Vice President Jake Ecclestone arrested for picketing *Nottingham Evening Post*: a condition of bail is that he stay away from the *Post* premises



**'Communists' Against Revolution** containing the little-known 'Theory of Structural Assimilation' by Tim Wohlforth, is the book on post-war Stalinism that Mandel and Healy would not publish or discuss.

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# SOCIALIST PRESS



## The real face of Labour's immigration laws

### As Khomeini returns

# WHO CAN GOVERN IRAN?

"Two governments cannot be tolerated". So said Iran's prime minister Bakhtiar, referring to the returned Ayatollah's constantly postponed plans to declare his "Islamic Revolutionary Council".

But the situation in Iran shows more and more that at present there is not even one government—at least not one with any effective authority over the masses.

Bakhtiar's government itself is little more than a cipher. Most of his ministers have in fact been unable to enter their ministries for days because the doors are barred by demonstrators.

What power remains to the bourgeois state resides in the army which is itself showing numerous signs of weakness.

Its bloody but unsuccessful efforts to break up demonstrations before the Ayatollah Khomeini's return last week provoked new outbursts of mutinies by officers as well as rank and file soldiers.

Soldiers sent to fire on the crowds joined them—taking their arms with them—and these demonstrations saw the masses using arms (home-made and

captured) for the first time on a large scale.

As Khomeini returned the army virtually withdrew from the streets for three days.

Despite a thundering declaration that martial law would be restored when the permitted three days were up, the army has still not dared send a soldier back to the streets 48 hours after that deadline.

Perhaps the most ominous developments of all for the army are the threats to its supplies.

Prevented from getting petrol by the continuing control of the oil installations by the workers, they have been keeping their vehicles going on supplies flown in directly from the United States.

#### No bullets

Then last week the workers in the government arsenals came out on apparently indefinite strike.

In the demonstrations they came onto the streets shouting the slogan: "We refuse to make the bullets which kill our brothers".

As the bourgeoisie's and army's authority crumbles, power now increasingly resides with the often unorganised



Anti-Shah soldiers fraternising with demonstrators

masses in the streets, or with the religious authorities or in many factories with hastily organised and as yet uncoordinated committees of strikers.

The demand for the formation of Soviet-type workers', peasants' and soldiers' councils to take up the reins of power in an organised way now becomes the key to defending the gains already won, to preventing them degenerating into a chaos which could only benefit the army and the imperialists, and to taking forward the struggle at the political level in order to head off the betrayals being prepared by the religious leaders.

Meanwhile, the Ayatollah Khomeini hangs fire—and prays. He has not drawn any strength from the hardening determination of the masses.

On the contrary, Khomeini is now paralysed with fear by the scale and the potential of the forces which have been unleashed in the course of his campaign against the Shah's dictatorship and its precarious inheritors.

No major statements of policy have been issued from the Ayatollah's new base in Tehran, not one point of programme has been advanced to meet the needs of the mass opposition.

Even the important statement promised for Sunday was cancelled at the last moment without explanation.

But if Khomeini remains silent to the masses who still focus their opposition around his leadership, there is no doubt that he has found plenty to say to Bakhtiar through their inter-

The sordid reality of the system of racist immigration controls operated by the right wing Labour government was exposed last week as it was proved that immigration officers had been singling out immigrant women for virginity tests.

But if the Indian woman who was "persuaded" to sign a consent form on January 24 had not insisted on keeping it and pressing a complaint, the whole affair would still remain unknown.

The form, headed "HM Immigration Office, Terminal 3, London (Heathrow) Airport", states:

"This is to certify that I agree to a gynaecological examination which may be a vaginal if necessary. This statement has been read to me in my mother tongue and is fully understood by me."

#### Not to whites

The tests, needless to say, applied *not* to white immigrants from Canada or Australia or fugitive racists from South Africa or Zimbabwe, but to women from the Indian sub-continent entering Britain as fiancées.

An immigration officer admitted that whether or not such a woman was a virgin would be taken into account in deciding whether or not she would be admitted to Britain.

That the Heathrow immigration authorities carry out such obscene practices fits in completely with their occupation and their record of support for Enoch Powell as long ago as 1968.

But this combination of extreme racial and sexual discrimination flows logically from the immigration laws as a whole, which provide a legal framework for racism.

Home Secretary Rees has announced that the virginity tests will now be ended. But similar humiliation and maltreatment will continue to operate against immigrants until the right wing Labour leaders are removed and the Immigration Acts repealed.



Rees

# The Westminster at centre of fight

With sixteen London hospitals due to strike on Monday morning in support of the £60 public sector pay claim, the stubborn struggle against victimisation at the Westminster Hospital in London became the centre of a strikebreaking offensive last weekend.

#### Suspended

Despite the fact that six NUPE members remained suspended after refusing to clean the private wing of the hospital as part of the union's "selective" action, a succession of union bureaucrats and Labour government bigwigs aided by the hacks of Fleet Street piled on the pressure for an end to the strike in their defence.

#### Shaken

NUPE NEC members were visibly shaken and General Secretary Fisher protected by police from angry lobbyists as they met on Saturday and instructed the Westminster workers to refer their case to ACAS.

Top level meetings involving Len Murray and Health Secretary Ennals finally concluded at 4 am on Monday 5 February with Ennals instructing hospital management to send the dispute to ACAS.

Under huge pressure from officials, Branch Secretary Jamie Morris finally also agreed on his own behalf to submit the case to ACAS, and to call a branch meeting at which a return to work would be voted on.

#### Picket lines

But meanwhile the other 16 hospitals that had voted over the weekend to strike in solidarity with the Westminster and for the £60 claim were already manning picket lines.

The press sought to sow confusion by claiming that the strikes at these 16 hospitals had also been called off along with that at the Westminster but as we go to press there is no indication that these strikes are weakening.

There could be no clearer demonstration of the willingness of workers to fight and the determination of their leaders to hold them back.

## Court rules against Proll

Astrid Proll—the woman alleged by the West German state to be a former member of the Baader-Meinhof terrorist gang—has lost another round in her struggle against extradition from Britain.

Trade unionists and Labour Party members should urgently take up the fight for resolutions demanding that no extradition order be granted for Proll, who has already suffered two years imprisonment without trial in Germany and would face almost certain death in prison if returned.

#### Correction

OUR REPORT on Ireland carries a reference to an IRA killing of a suspected SAS agent in the Dublin mountains. We now hear that the IRA have denied any responsibility for the killing of the Englishman, named as Albert Lockett.

# FUND

Well it may have taken us a couple of days of February to achieve it but contributions to the January fund finally overtook our target of £600 to reach £601.17. After months of falling just short this is an important development which we must make every effort to maintain and which no doubt reflects the growing interest being expressed in the work of the WSL in the current upsurge of wages struggles.

The February fund has opened very well with £141.70 arriving in the first five days of the month. Let's keep up the momentum and ensure that the fund is completed on time in this short month.

Donations should be sent to: Socialist Press Monthly Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.



PHOTO: Laurie Spatham, IFL