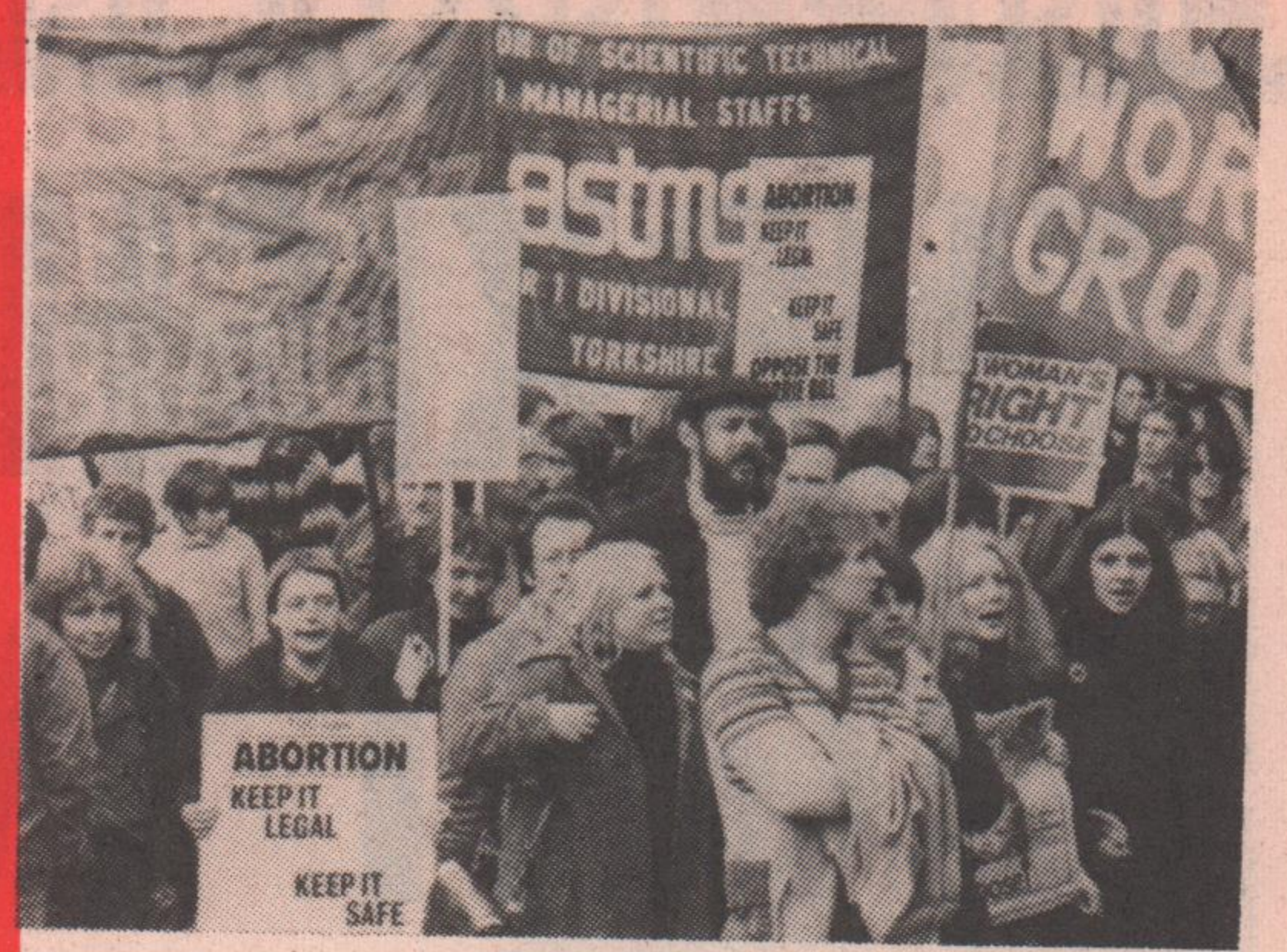


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GIANT MARCH AGAINST CORRIE
Back page

Prague show trials



Vaclav Havel



Jiri Nemek

Sentences totalling 19½ years have been passed on the first six of the ten Czech dissidents facing show trials in Prague.

This is a gauge of the fear with which the Stalinist bureaucrats who rule the deformed workers' states view any opposition.

All six defendants were charged as a result of their work in the "Committee to Defend the Unjustly Prosecuted" (VONS). This body takes up cases of ordinary Czechs, using the Czech constitution and the United Nations covenants adopted by the Czech government in 1976.

The defendants are also members of Charter 77—the majority of whose 242 signatories are workers.

The Czechoslovak bureaucracy clearly sees in such bodies the danger of a political opposition that, while originating amongst the intelligentsia, reaches the powerful Czech working class.

Any such mass opposition could fuel a political movement that challenges the dictatorial powers and material privileges of the bureaucracy—their cars, sumptuous living standards, their private flats and country houses.

Jail sentence

And this danger must seem the greater because among the six defendants is Peter Uhl, a professed Trotskyist. Uhl is a supporter of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

He has already served one four-year jail sentence for organising the RSP as a Trotskyist party in 1971.

Though he now appears to have gone backwards politically and no longer believes it necessary to build a revolutionary party, the fact that Uhl is an open supporter of Trotsky represents a profound political threat to the bureaucracy. He received the longest sentence of all—five years.

World famous playwright Vaclav Havel received 4½ years; and three others received 3 year sentences.

Though the trials will be a source of international

CZECH STALINISTS FEAR TROTSKYISM



Czech crowds vent their hostility on Stalinist soldier in 1968

embarrassment to the Czech Stalinists, they are a deliberate move to warn off any would-be political opponents.

The Czech bureaucrats, like their fellows throughout Eastern

Europe, know that their position is far from stable in the next period. In Poland, a semi-official report has pointed out that there is:

"An acute crisis which has

embraced basic fields of social, political and economic life . . . The socialism which people see is compared with the socialism they would like to see and the difference between the reality and the model is painful."

Living standards

The report also anticipates a fall in working class living standards over the next 2-3 years. The same is undoubtedly true of Czechoslovakia.

The trials are thus a move to

forestall an explosion of political anger against the bureaucracy whose parasitic and dictatorial power holds back the potential development of the productive forces and acts on a world scale to prop up imperialism.

The Prague trials follow the method of the Stalinist bureaucracy that emerged in the isolated Soviet Union after the death of Lenin.

To preserve its unstable political power against the political opposition led by Leon Trotsky the bureaucracy had by the late 1930s executed the majority of the survivors of Lenin's Bolshevik Central Committee.

A focal point of this political terror was the notorious Moscow Trials.

And in 1940 Leon Trotsky himself, in exile in Mexico, was murdered by a Stalinist agent because he represented a fight not for liberal reforms but for the continuity of Leninism and in particular for the exercise of proletarian power through the reconstruction of soviets—workers' councils—from which the bureaucracy would be excluded.



Trotsky

Trotsky insisted that, though warped almost out of recognition under Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship, the Soviet Union remained a workers' state in which the historic gain of the 1917 Revolution—the nationalisation of the economy—remained intact.

What was needed was not the social overthrow of a capitalist class, but a political revolution through which the working class must drive out the bureaucracy and assert its management over the economy.

Key to struggle

It is this approach which remains the key to the struggle against Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to this day.

The post-war period and the extension of bureaucratic control over East Europe has seen Stalinist rulers use various tactics to maintain control of the masses. Initially, suppression led to a wave of trials which in Czechoslovakia brought the execution in 1952 of CP General Secretary Rudolf Slansky and other leading figures.

But the 1953 uprising in Germany and the death of Stalin saw an attempt by the Kremlin leaders to put forward a more 'liberal' line in order to placate the masses.

The real iron fist behind this velvet glove was revealed in the brutal invasion of Hungary by Russian tanks in 1956.

The Stalinists recognised that, in forming workers' councils, in smashing the Hungarian secret police and setting up a workers', soldiers' and students' militia, the Hungarian masses posed a direct threat to bureaucratic power and privilege—a threat that had to be crushed if it was not to grow throughout Eastern Europe and the USSR itself.

Prague Spring

The "Prague Spring" of 1968, on the other hand, was much more the product of 'liberal' bureaucrat Dubcek, who attempted to appease both the masses and the Kremlin.

The movement did not advance to the level of the Hungarian workers' councils and militia—but the warning signs pointed in that direction. Once again Stalinist tanks rolled in to show the real face of bureau-

Cont'd back page, col. 4

Martial law in Norfolk

Great Yarmouth in Norfolk was turned into a virtual police state at the weekend for the first national conference of fascists of the National Front.

Police from Manchester, Thames Valley and other areas poured into the town to defend the conference held on the Wellington Pier.

A half mile area of the town was sealed off. Residents were forced to present passes to get into their own homes, and those who were not at home when they were issued had to apply to the police station before being allowed in.

A quarter of a million pounds was spent by police on this exercise as barricades were built along the beach and police boats patrolled the sea.

The conference was permitted by the Tory council last April. In May Labour gained control and sought to have the Front banned.

Denning judgement

Lord Denning in another of his classic anti-working class Appeal Court rulings said that the rights of contract overrode the powers of the council.

The police were using this as a training exercise. They had little to fear from the local labour bureaucracy who told

'trouble makers' to stay away and who called a pathetic demonstration of 200 or so well away from the 'closed' area.

Plans to mount a peaceful picket on the pier were called off after police objected.

The WSL does not call for legal or state bans to prevent the fascists meeting and marching but for united working class action to deny them facilities and where necessary confront them physically in order to deny them a platform for their racist and anti-working class views.

The Great Yarmouth fiasco is a good example of where attempts to deal with fascists through the law end up.



-INTERNATIONAL-

TURKISH WORKERS MUST FIGHT RIGHT WING THREAT

The leader of Turkey's right wing Justice Party, Suleyman Demirel, has been called upon to form a new government following the resignation of Prime Minister Ecevit.

Ecevit's bourgeois liberal Republican People's Party suffered a massive defeat at the October 14 elections, in which there was a 20% swing to the right wing parties and the RPP share of the vote fell from 47% to 29%.

The fascist party, the NAP, increased its share of the vote to a menacing 10%.

The Justice Party won all five parliamentary seats and 33 out of 50 seats in the Senate, giving Demirel control of that body.

But he still does not have a clear parliamentary majority. An early election seems likely to consolidate the latest electoral successes.

In the meantime a minority Justice Party government seems

likely to be backed by the religious National Salvation Party and the fascists as well as by some independents, in what will effectively be a re-run of the previous National Front coalition.

Within the RPP camp Ecevit has faced mounting criticism from opposition factions.

While conceding that he is responsible for the electoral setbacks, Ecevit remains unrepentant for his anti-working class policies, and the RPP has endorsed the extension of martial law restrictions on 19 Turkish cities for another two months.

The fascists have in the last week stepped up their campaign of violent provocations to force the imposition and extension of these restrictions, under which the full weight of repression falls upon the labour movement and left wing papers are made illegal while fascist bands function freely.

In the face of continual terrorist attacks and aggressive policies from the fascists, the

passivity of the leaderships of the working class parties and the trade union confederations who all gave electoral support to Ecevit, have offered no lead whatever to the oppressed petty bourgeois and peasant masses. There was no independent political alternative for whom they could vote.

In this sense the political bankruptcy and class collaboration of workers' leaders can be seen to drive confused and economically ruined sections of the petty bourgeoisie into voting for the extreme right wing.

Socialist Press has consistently warned of the dangers posed by the growth of fascism and the shift towards military rule in Turkey.

Today the threat of a military takeover, backed up by a massive fascist onslaught on the organised labour movement, is much greater than ever before.

In discussing the way forward for the new right wing government Demirel, the NSP

and fascist leaders are not discussing simply the juggling of parliamentary majorities, but the question of ensuring the stability necessary for a frontal offensive against the Turkish working class.

As Demirel has stated: "The problem is not to get the parliamentary arithmetic right, but to have the forces to allow us to rule."

But, while the bourgeoisie debates tactics, it is still not too late for the working class to mobilise and defeat the enormous dangers it faces.

A new wage agreement is shortly due for millions of workers: an offensive struggle in defence of living standards could form the focus around which workers could gain confidence in their independent class strength, and begin to organise united defence squads to repel mounting fascist attacks.

The demand must be raised on the Turkish Communist Party, the other workers' parties and the trade union leaders that



State repression in Turkey

they:

*Break from Ecevit and the bourgeoisie!
*Organise workers militias against fascist violence!

*Defeat fascist-military repression!
*Fight for a workers and peasants government in Turkey!

'Communists' back new junta

The "reformist" colonels who two weeks ago overthrew the Romero dictatorship in El Salvador have, so far, proved worthy minions of the State Department.

They have not hesitated to kill workers in clearing occupations of factories in and around

CP election collapse

In last week's Danish elections the workers' parties received a majority of the votes but because of the way the seats are allocated, ended up with a minority of seats.

The Social Democrats are forming a minority government. This will not resolve the crisis of Danish capitalism and certainly will not resolve the problems of the working class—since the main plank of leader Anker Joergensen's policy was a social contract with the unions similar to Callaghan's.

The election took place after the breakup of the Social Democrats' coalition with the Liberals. The result is only a slight increase in each of these parties' seats—four extra to the Social Democrats and one for the Liberals.

There can be no doubt that the Joergensen government will enter its crisis long before the four year social contract with the unions is completed.

The major event of the election was the loss by the Danish Communist Party of all seven of its seats.

This comes because of the development of a major crisis within the CP.

The leadership have taken an extreme rightward course and on town councils like Copenhagen have voted with the Social Democrats in such measures as increasing nursery places by 10% with no extra staff or buildings.

There have been a number of splits and expulsions of leading figures who have, often only half-heartedly, opposed some of the CP's actions.

Clearly the Danish electorate did not see the CP as any alternative to the self-confessed reformist workers' parties.

the capital, San Salvador, nor in shooting down those who offered resistance to their junta.

Forty people have died so far and deaths are reported every day in clashes between the army and popular demonstrations.

Finally, of course, the colonels have sought a "democratic" face by announcing "radical reforms", establishing a civilian cabinet and stocking it with eminent bourgeois 'democrats'.

CP Ministers

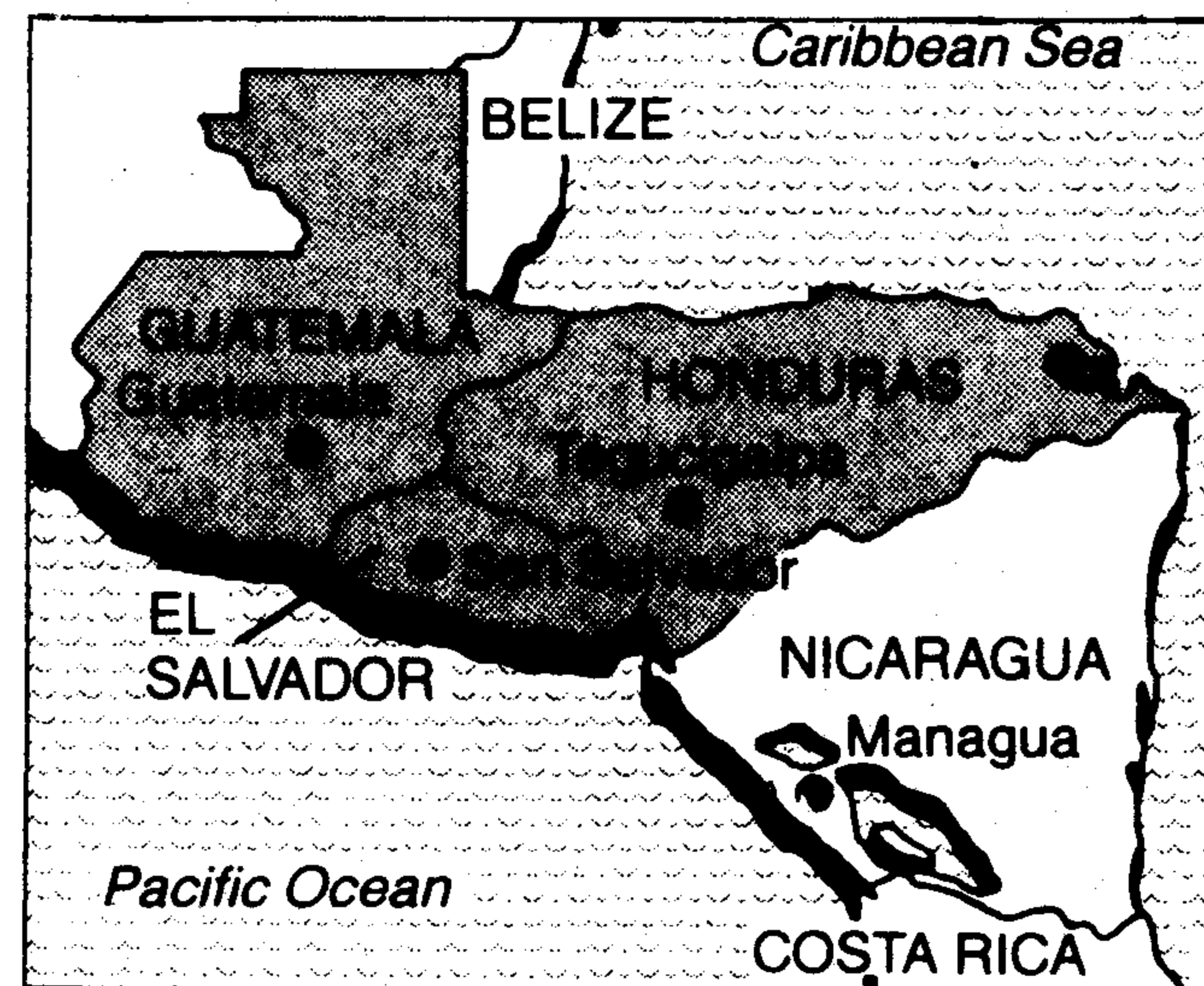
The new government of Roman Mayorga is composed mainly of Christian and Social Democrats drawn from the PDC and MNR—but it also contains two ministers from the Communist Party.

The open enthusiasm of the Stalinists to enter the bourgeois government, assisting a regime that is totally reliant upon the military and which is daily executing militant workers, is the legacy of the Communist Party's explicit ten-year alliance with the 'democratic' forces of capital in El Salvador.

Washington

Not a word of consternation has been voiced about the role of these "Communists" by the mandarins of Washington.

But the CP has incurred the wrath of El Salvador workers. The new CP Labour Minister Gabriel Gallegos, has begun his term of office in uncomfortable



style by being held hostage in his own Ministry by some 100 members of the BPR (Bloque Popular Revolucionario) who are demanding the release of all remaining political prisoners.

The government claims there are no political prisoners left. If this is true it means that hundreds of militants have been summarily executed in the last ten days.

The issue of political prisoners is the only one upon which the popular organisations are united.

SAHARA WAR: POLISARIO VICTORIES

As the Polisario Front continues to win military victories over the Moroccan army, the imperialist powers have moved to play a more direct part in the war of the Western Sahara.

Two weeks ago, a large force of the Polisario took the town of Mahbes, and routed a column of Moroccan reinforcements sent to the garrison.

Last outpost

Mahbes was the only position surviving in Moroccan hands in the north-east of the Western Sahara, by the border with Algeria.

For two years, the garrison town had been an isolated stronghold, from which the Moroccan army was completely unable to control the surrounding territory.

The occupying army had been mostly engaged in fending off attacks from the Polisario Front.

More recently, Mahbes has gained a new importance. Since the Polisario Front extended its military operations into the south of Morocco earlier this

year, King Hassan has seen the obvious need to strengthen his base at Mahbes in order to halt the northern advances of the Polisario and disrupt its supply lines into Algeria.

Major blow

The fall of the town has been a major blow to Hassan's strategy, and a major victory in the war for the liberation of the Western Sahara from colonial oppression.

The Polisario claims to have killed 767 Moroccan troops and to have driven the occupying forces back to Zag inside Morocco.

This news must have given President Carter the final spur to announce his increased support for Hassan's dictatorial monarchy.

Carter's latest proposal is that the US imperialists should provide Hassan with more sophisticated military equipment, including ground support aircraft and Cobra helicopter gunships—or, in the words of State Department officials, 'not enough to allow Morocco to impose a military solution'.

King Hassan, like his model, the Shah of Iran, has been a faithful friend to US interests in the Middle East. But the US imperialists have not rushed in with massive offers of help to support him despite the dangers of a war which the Moroccan army is steadily losing.

Lost cause

Even today Secretary of State Vance is opposed to Carter's proposals and argues only for increased supplies of the present range of weapons on offer from the US.

Vance has no desire to see the US government committed to yet another lost cause, at the cost of great financial and political losses—particularly when this will undermine the strength of Hassan's dictatorship and antagonise the Algerian regime, a major supplier of gas to the US.

But giving Hassan too little, too late is no way to resolve this crisis, and can at best serve only to prolong the death-agony of the Moroccan occupation of the Western Sahara.

Zimbabwe climbdown

The latest dispute between the Patriotic Front and the Tory government does not involve a question of principle.

It is essentially about which agency of imperialism should supervise the elections which will pave the way to imperialist recognition of a Zimbabwean regime.

The difference between them is that Tory Foreign Secretary Carrington wants the elections to take place with a British military dictator having full power and the repressive apparatus consisting of the existing racist police and army.

The Patriotic Front is far from implacably opposed to this racist, imperialist plan.

It simply wants to dilute it by letting the British-installed

governor also "rely on" the black liberation armies of ZANU and ZAPU (the components of the Patriotic Front) and troops sent by that acceptable face of imperialism, the United Nations.

Fighting PLO

These would be the same troops which are currently fighting the Palestinian national liberation movement in the Middle East and which in many parts of the world have been put at the service of imperialist reaction in the name of peace.

Carrington is reportedly opposed to mixing the light blue berets of the UN with the true Tory and racist blue of his chosen forces of repression.

But there remains room for compromise on UN "observers"



Carrington

as a way of keeping the Patriotic Front at the Conference and formally committed to the imperialist "settlement".

This is probably still what Carrington most wants.

But he may now, after the way the Patriotic Front caved in on the constitution, see his way to by-passing the Patriotic Front altogether.

Disorientated

If so, it will be because he believes that the compromises and betrayals into which he has so successfully steered the Patriotic Front leadership are now sufficient to have disorientated and demoralised the armed freedom fighters.

He will be proved wrong only if a new principled leadership can be built to fight uncompromisingly for national liberation of Zimbabwe as part of a socialist programme under the leadership of the working class.

INTERNATIONAL



Carter and Brezhnev in new balancing act

Recent comings and goings on the military front offer an indication of the way in which both Stalinist and imperialist leaders are attempting to preserve the existing balance of forces.

Each feels threatened by the revolutionary upheavals of the working class, which on the one hand shows the possibility of the complete overthrow of capitalist exploitation in the dependent economies of Central and Latin America, Africa and Asia, and on the other jeopardise the power and privilege of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy in the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

Under the innocuous slogan of "peaceful coexistence", the "Communists" of the Warsaw Pact, Cuba and S.E. Asia remain firmly committed to the preservation of capitalist stability over the majority of the earth's surface.

This is their way of protecting their own unstable position, balanced as they are between the external force of imperialism and the power of the working class in their own countries.

Offer to withdraw

It was, therefore, no contradiction whatever for the Kremlin bureaucracy to extend its recent offer to withdraw troops and tanks from Eastern Germany in exchange for an agreement by the NATO alliance not to deploy updated Pershing missiles and nearly six hundred deadly ground-launched "cruise missiles" in Europe.

For while the Stalinist bureaucracy are obliged to defend the nationalised property relations that form the material base of their privileges, they seek to carry out such defence not by revolutionary means—the mobilisation of the international working class against the capitalist class in each country—but through bureaucratic, diplomatic/military

methods.

And at a time of economic dislocation within the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries in which they plainly fear growing working class militancy (hence the wave of show trials), it makes sense to the bureaucracy to attempt to carry out such defence as cheaply as possible.

Cutback

Were NATO to accept Brezhnev's proposal, the Warsaw Pact would not only be spared the added expense of countering the new missiles, but could also cut back on the deployment of conventional ground forces.

The existing military balance could be preserved at less material cost, placing the bureaucracy under less pressure at home.

Intensive lobbying by an



Brezhnev and Carter

increasingly "hawkish" Carter administration and by the Thatcher government, however, seems likely to ensure that the Brezhnev scheme will be rebuffed.

Yet the Kremlin leaders know that such a course also brings political problems to the imperialists who, with their own economic difficulties at home, are far from unanimously

enthusiastic about publicly embarking on a further lap in the "arms race".

Leading West German social democrats, including Willy Brandt and party manager Egon Bahr are arguing for Brezhnev's plan to be accepted and other NATO governments have shown themselves reluctant to have the new US missiles based on their soil.

Why, then, is Carter so intent upon pressing home this enormously costly arms build-up?

The answer clearly lies in the increasingly desperate plight of post-Vietnam US imperialism, faced with a world-wide upsurge of revolutionary struggles in the semi-colonial countries.

Carter's regime has been forced impotently to witness profound setbacks in Angola, in Iran and in Nicaragua. In mineral-rich Zaire, pro-imperialist dictator Mobutu had to be bailed out by French and Belgian intervention.

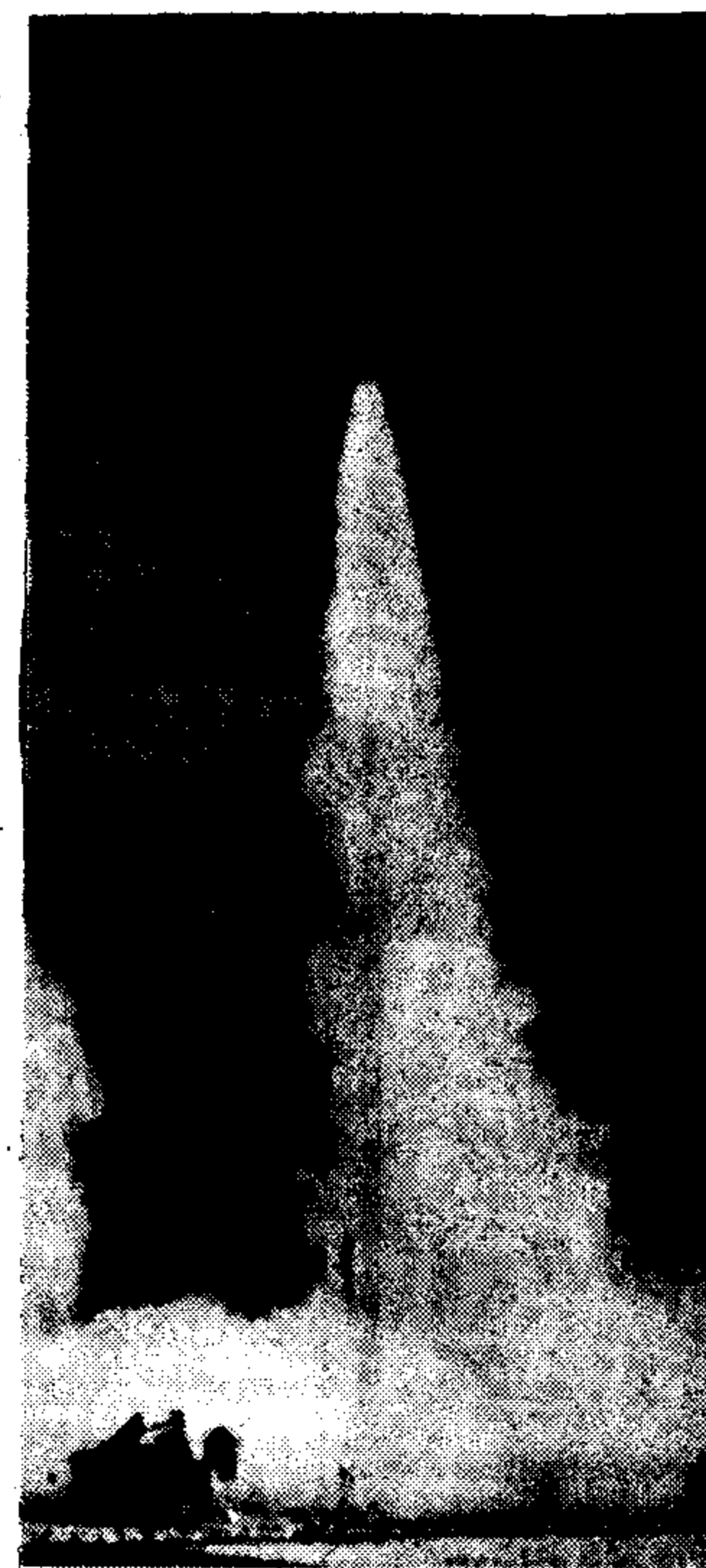
Despite noisy sabre-rattling the US is politically unable simply to dispatch the marines to impose a military solution in almost any part of the world.

So with the whole of Central America now a potential powder-keg of revolutionary struggles Carter has been looking for means of reasserting US military authority, and flexing his muscles without actually being forced to follow through with an actual major confrontation.

Humiliated

Prudently rejecting advice from defence advisor Brzezinski to send US troops to intervene in crisis-racked El Salvador, Carter has nevertheless been publicly humiliated following his ludicrously inept handling of the "revelation" of 3,000 Russian troops in Cuba during the Havana non-aligned summit.

The noisy and well-publicised landing of a few hundred US marines, tanks (and appar-



Pershing missile

ently a battalion of TV cameramen) on the long-standing US Guantanamo base on the tip of Cuba was a pathetic and inadequate face-saving attempt.

And even this gesture was out-trumped by Fidel Castro's triumphant return to the United Nations, where he drew rapturous applause from a packed assembly chamber for a 2½ hour speech.

Drum up support

This is why the NATO missiles plan has become so important to Carter, and why US military advisors have been jettisoning around European capitals attempting to drum up support.

The blunt rejection of Brezhnev's proposals on East Germany is designed to reassert imperialism's authority—and also to make a positive impression on the average American red-neck, whose anti-communist vote Carter is keen to attract in 1980.

And, after all, even if he were to get reelected, Carter need hardly worry about the colossal cost of the new missile batteries: taken on top of the recessionary policies imposed by his administration, and historic levels of inflation that are already eating deep into workers' living standards, the added cost to US workers of financing this latest lethal threat to their own safety will scarcely be noticed.



NATO tanks on manoeuvres in Germany

Basque referendum: a broken crutch for Franco's heirs

Last week's referendum on the 'Statute of Autonomy' for the Basque country (Euskadi) has provided the hard pressed regime in Madrid with a broken crutch.

Though of those voting there was a 95% majority for the statute—agreed between the ruling Democratic Centre Union (UCD) the bourgeois nationalists of the Basque National Party (PNV) and the Socialist and Communist party 'opposition'—the most significant figure was the high number of abstentions.

Only 61% of the population voted, implying virtually as much support for protest abstentions as in the referendum of December 1977.

And this time the traditional parties with mass support in Euskadi were all actively campaigning for a 'yes' vote, while in December 1977 they were all still illegal.

The abstentions, therefore, are clear testimony to the growing influence of the left wing of Basque nationalism represented at the military level by ETA (militar) and at the political level by the coalition Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity).

Although, of course, not all the abstentions can be counted as conscious political ones, the figures suggest that Herri Batasuna has maintained the bulk of the support that it won in the parliamentary and municipal elections earlier this year. While they tried to put a

good face on it, the leaders of the regime and of the PNV had to acknowledge that the referendum, though it gives the go-ahead to implementing the new statute, has by no means laid to rest the threat which the demand for real national self determination poses to the reactionary plans of the Spanish and Basque capitalist classes. PNV leader, Garraiochea, recognised immediately after the results were issued that ETA (militar)'s war would continue.

Anger

What he did not say, but must undoubtedly fear, is that the anger of the Basque working class will from now on be turned increasingly, as the statute is implemented, against the PNV and the reformist and Stalinist leaderships in the Basque country itself rather than against the Francoists in Madrid.

Despite its remarkable success at the military level, ETA's guerrilla strategy politically represents the most radical wing of petty bourgeois nationalism, though it receives very significant working class support.

It has no answers to the problems faced by the working class and is, therefore, no sub-



Suarez

stitute for the building of revolutionary proletarian (i.e. Trotskyist) party which represents the independent interests of the working class and whose programme must include but not stop short at the most uncompromising struggle for the right to national self determination in Euskadi.

The Madrid regime and the PNV are now hoping that the statute will head off this explosive demand by providing many of the trappings of national independence with none of the reality.

Euskadi will have a locally elected parliament of 60 seats (20 for each of the three

officially recognised Basque provinces—Guipuzcoa, Vizcaya and Alava) and a local government whose Prime Minister will nonetheless be nominated by the King in Madrid!

The Basque language will become an official language and there will be a Basque TV channel. The government will have responsibility for education, transport, health and tourism with certain limited powers of taxation and other responsibilities for the economy.

But apparently the most significant provision of the Statute is that which allows the Basque government to have its own police force.

It is the repressive omnipresent Francoist police which, not without reason, the bourgeois nationalists believe to be a permanent bulwark of support for the radical policies of ETA (militar).

They hope that a change in the apparent responsibility of the repressive forces will help to guarantee the capitalist order in the Basque country.

But it is certain that the consciousness of the Basque working class runs much deeper than the nationalists hope.

Workers will see clearly enough that what is planned is not a change of regime, or even a change of personnel, but merely a change of uniform.

It is planned that the officers of the new police force will still be appointed from Madrid and that the Madrid forces are to continue to have main responsibility for the fight against ETA (militar).

So this fraud will be exposed long before the first time a 'Basque national policeman' shoots down a Basque worker.

The provisions of the Basque statute are paralleled in that for Catalonia, which also received a large 'yes' majority.

The relatively low poll in Catalonia reflected not an active campaign of boycott as in Euskadi but rather a mass indifference towards a statute that is widely seen as conferring

no more than cosmetic autonomy on the region.

'Reforming' Francoist Premier, Adolfo Suarez, was hoping to use an overwhelming 'yes' majority on the referendum to reassure the growing sections of the bourgeoisie who are increasingly calling for a new military regime of the Francoist generals in the army.

On paper that is what he got. But no-one last week, not even himself, could present the results as decisive.

Unemployment

The working class in Euskadi and Catalonia, as well as throughout Spain, continue to make the same demands as before, as unemployment continues to grow and real wages fall.

And the referenda have done precisely nothing to put the Spanish bourgeoisie in a better position to meet any of these demands.

It is in Euskadi that the working class struggle against Francoism and Spanish capitalism has reached its highest point.

There is every sign that after the referendum, as before it, the Basque working class will continue to be in the vanguard of a growing struggle throughout Spain.

TORIES GET DOWN TO WORK

SACK THEM

Last week's rise in the unemployment figures produced the first empirical evidence of the impact on jobs of the Tories' recessionary policies and spending cuts.

Most economic forecasts anticipate that the dole queues will grow rapidly over the next 18 months as high interest rates and a soaring pound sterling force the pace of factory closures and rationalisation.

But if millionaire Environment Secretary Michael Heseltine has his way, the jobless total will rise even more rapidly from mass sackings in the public sector.

The government is determined to cut the number of people employed by local authorities, he declared.

"Public administration in this country is overweight and, like every other overweight organisation can, with a little effort, afford to lose a few pounds."

As for the forthcoming pay claim by local authority employees, Heseltine has announced that there is "no way" the Government would countenance a pay award equal to the current inflation rate of 17½%.

SQUEEZE THEM

As Parliament reopened, Tory ministers were united in evading any attempt to forecast the future development of inflation, now on the 17% mark, and certain to go further upwards in the next few months.

But they were also united in opposing pay claims not financed by productivity increases.

On Thursday Thatcher attempted to ram home the now traditional Tory-Labour blackmail declaring:

"The greatest threat to jobs in this country is extravagant pay claims which go beyond what is warranted by increased productivity."

And on Friday Chancellor Geoffrey Howe, admittedly

worried at the substantial increases conceded to workers at the Times, Independent Television and two million engineering workers, pressed the same point.

He quoted the recent defeat of the pay strike by Chrysler-Talbot workers and the union collaboration with Michael Edwards' job-slashing plans for British Leyland as examples of "reality asserting itself."

In a real sense Howells is right. The "reality" that is coming home to workers in struggle against the Tories is that, without a leadership prepared to challenge the concept that the employer must be kept profitable at all costs, they face a wave of runaway inflation which will squeeze their living standards still further.



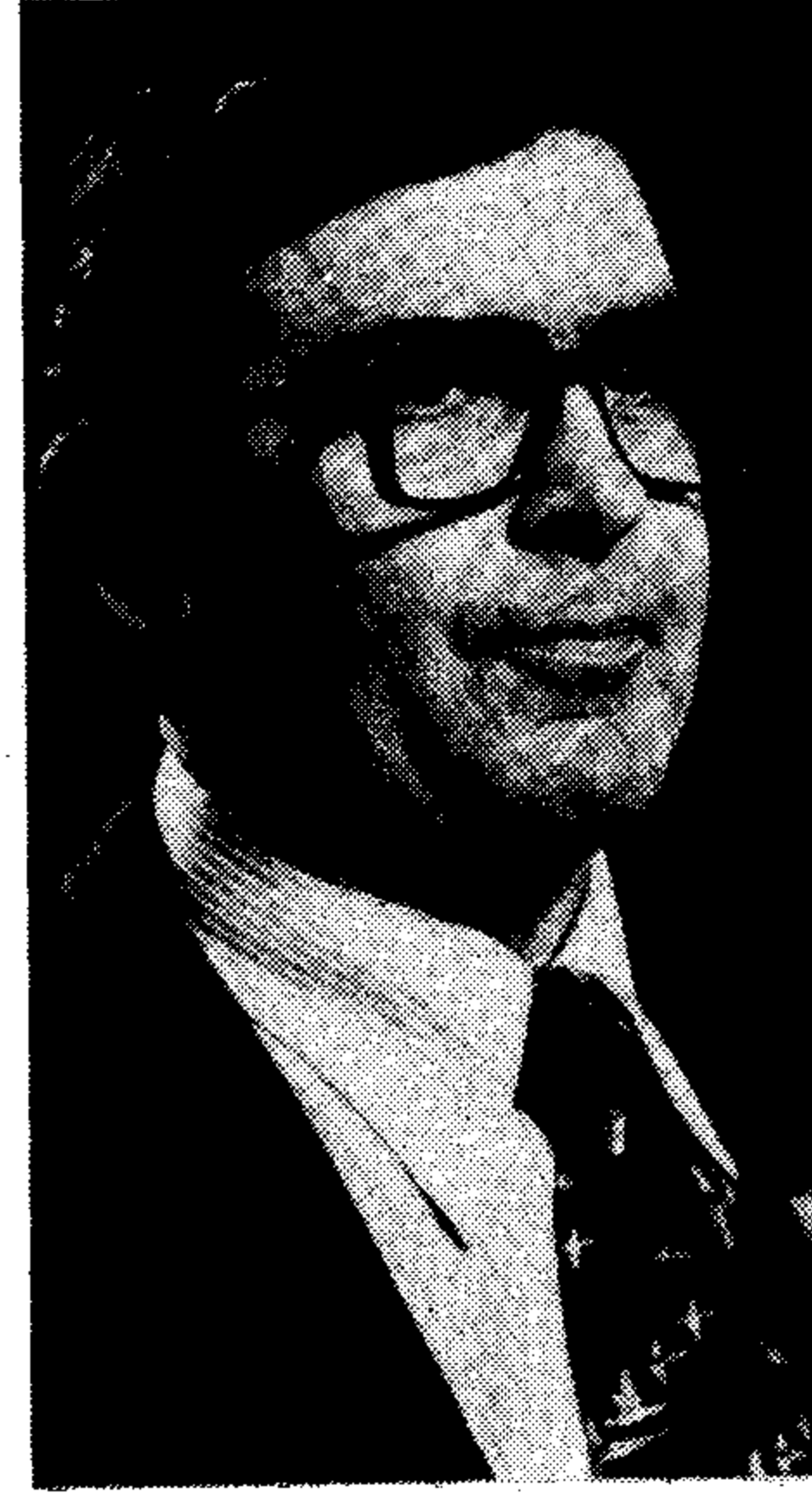
Heseltine



Prior



Thatcher



Jenkin

CRACK THEM

With Tory courts still piling up precedent-setting anti-union judgements limiting the right to picket and impose blacking action, Employment Secretary Prior is lining up new anti-union laws for the end of November.

Part of the propaganda smokescreen designed to force through this new legislation will centre on last week's Tory report on the union recruitment techniques employed by the print union SLADE.

But at the centre of the Tory offensive are attempts to smash the power of the closed shop, to prevent solidarity picketing, and to crack the class strength of the working class by taking votes out of the arena of mass meetings and substituting individual postal ballots.

The recent court injunctions against picketing by strikers from Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port plant and the £750 fine for "extortion" levied against a Scottish TGWU official for demanding a cash payment in exchange for dispensation for lorries to cross drivers' picket lines last winter both show that even before the new laws are introduced the Tories and the CBI are determined to increase the use of the courts against the unions.

The fine for "extortion" in particular sets the scene for a barrage of court actions against the standard union practice of demanding that those who cross picket lines forfeit a day's wages.

FREEZE THEM

More than 2½ million people will lose government cash help with their electricity heating bills this winter, as the result of a Tory economic measure.

Three million had been benefitting from the discount scheme, which was introduced by the last Labour government as a cosmetic measure to offset the plunge in working class living standards brought about by Healey's IMF-dictated policies—at a total cost of £38 million.

But Social Services Secretary Patrick Jenkin has scrapped the scheme, and substituted a pathetic 95p per week handout to pensioners over 75 and to families on supplementary benefit who have a child under 5: the total in these two categories is only 345,000 people.

The saving is thus a cool £22 million per year—while thousands of impoverished families face a staggering 18% increase in electricity bills and an overall 17% rate of inflation this winter. Jenkin smugly pronounced that "in general, people's incomes are keeping pace with rising fuel bills."

And, if not, why should he care?

OUR POLICIES

*Factories, hospitals, schools, nurseries threatened with closure must be occupied to provide the focus for the struggle to defend all jobs and services.

Fight for supporting strike action!

*Open the books of those employers that threaten redundancies or refuse wage increases claiming they can't pay. Elected union committees must show the links between private employers, and their relationship with the banks, suppliers and contractors as the basis for the fight back.

*No redundancies! Fight for work sharing without loss of pay, under the control of elected trade union committees.

*Open the books of the public services and nationalised industries to elected labour movement committees! Unmask and fight for the nationalisation

of these private suppliers bankers and contractors profiteering while vital services are slashed! Expose the inadequacy of state health and education provision! Fight for the restoration of all cuts and the protection of public service spending against inflation through a sliding scale of spending based on figures compiled by the labour movement.

*End unemployment! For a crash programme of useful public works under workers' management to provide work for the unemployed. For a shorter working week and a massive programme of training for adult workers and youth.

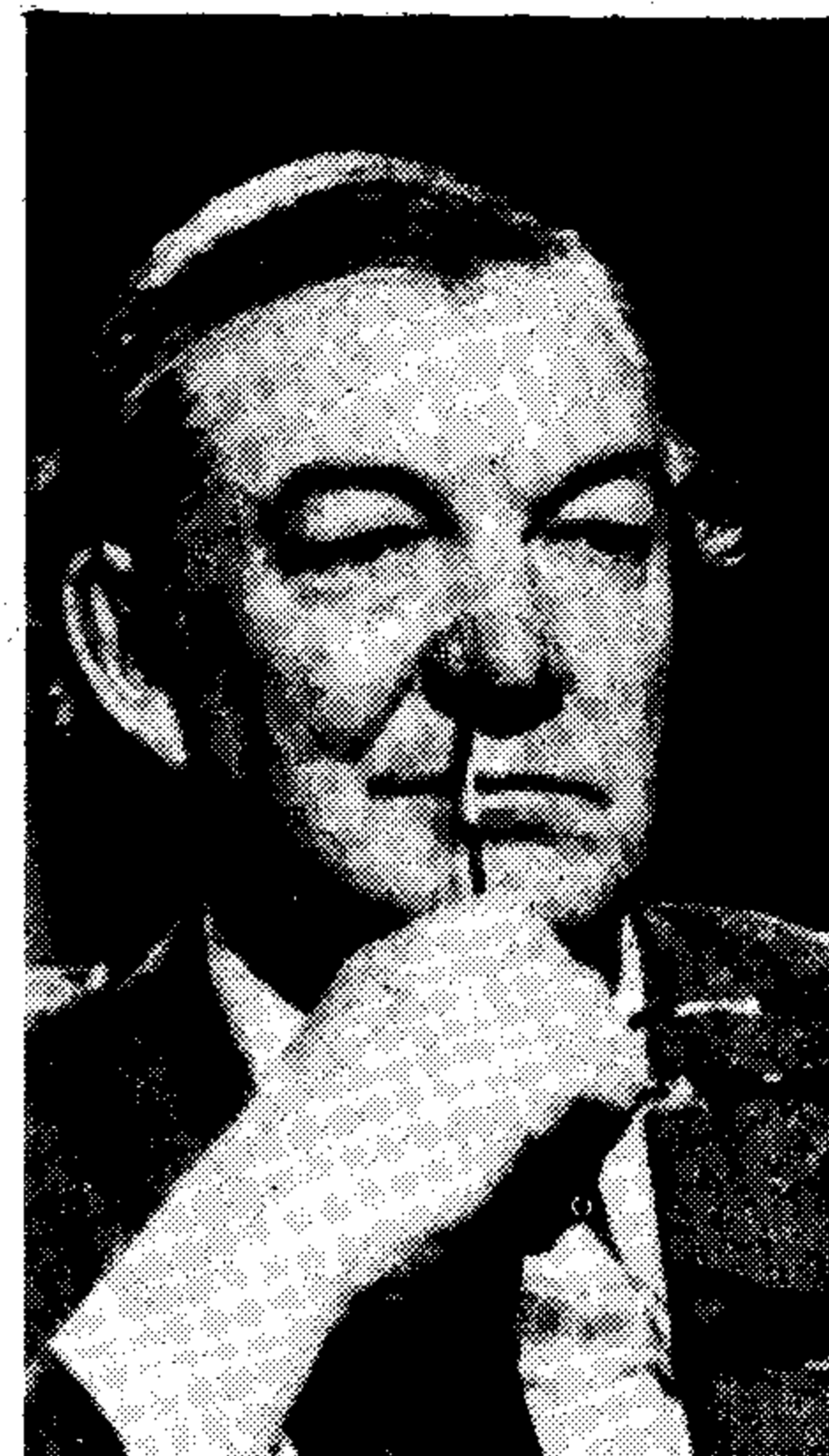
*Defend living standards! Protect wages against inflation through cost-of-living clauses in all agreements to provide increases to keep pace with rising prices as assessed by elected committees of trade

unionists and housewives. For equal protection to unemployment and sickness benefit, social security, grants and pensions!

*Bring down the Tories! Prepare mass action to force Thatcher's government out of office. Build councils of action in each area to link struggles on cuts, closures, and pay battles. Kick out the Labour traitors! Demand that those who claim to oppose the Tory offensive lead a fight for socialist policies or stand exposed.

*For a socialist planned economy! None of these policies can be achieved while the crisis-ridden capitalist system of production for private profit continues to rule the lives of the working class. Fight for the nationalisation of major industry and the banks, without compensation, under workers' management.

STARVE THEM



Carlisle

Thousands of working class children at present receiving free school meals because of the poverty of their parents will receive no meal at all as a result of the £200 million cut in school meals subsidies announced last week.

As expected, Education Secretary Carlisle put forward a Bill which lifts the legal obligation on Local Education Authorities to provide school meals at a set price and provide them free to certain children.

School closures will also be made more straightforward.

But alongside savage spending cuts the Tories are actually to spend up to £70 million more in order to reintroduce selec-

tion into the comprehensive system.

Hand-picked "bright" children in state schools will be siphoned off and state funds will be provided to send them to private schools—effectively providing a direct subsidy to these bastions of class privilege.

Meanwhile working class school youth in crumbling buildings, crowded classes and using ageing books and equipment, will be bombarded with lying Tory propaganda assuring them that high-priced baked beans on toast and similar snack meals are as nutritious as the old-style school dinner.

Not content with condemning school youth to a lifetime on the dole, the Tories are determined to make school days some of the hungriest days of their lives.

New failure for Humphrey Who



A new chapter in the disastrous career of the Tory Minister for Torture, Humphrey Atkins, opened last week.

Atkins—a nobody from the Tory back woods—had been rudely catapulted into the limelight by the surprise demolition of his predecessor, the unlamented Airey Neave.

Stepping into the shoes of Labour's Torture Chief Roy Mason, Atkins immediately found himself at the centre of a growing worldwide outcry against the barbarity of British repression in the six counties of Ireland.

Top American bourgeois politicians in particular began to pressurise their British imperialist colleagues to adopt more subtle techniques for containing the liberation struggle. This pressure brought a ban on US

arms sales to the sectarian RUC.

The New York governor Hugh Carey proposed "all party" talks on a bourgeois democratic solution to the war—only to be rebuffed by Atkins.

He realised that for the British imperialists to engage in any talks at all would appear to the Loyalists as a sure sign of a forthcoming "sellout" to the republican movement, which was itself clearly gaining in strength, fighting capacity and mass support both in the North and in the 26 counties.

Mountbatten

The summer brought the dramatic execution of Lord Mountbatten and the ambush of 18 soldiers at Warrenpoint—the biggest single military defeat for the British army since Korea.

In Britain itself defeatist elements of the capitalist class began to voice concern at the

poor prospects and high cost of militarily winning the war—and spearheaded a "troops out" move at the Liberal Party conference.

Labour leaders

The Labour Party conference, too, indicated a growing current fighting within the labour movement for the immediate withdrawal of troops—though still resolutely opposed by pro-imperialist Party and TUC leaders.

With mounting pressure from all sides, Atkins felt obliged to appear to do something.

So last week in an absurd public relations exercise he announced to Parliament that he was proposing to convene a conference of "the main parties in the North" to discuss transfer of powers from London to Belfast.

He knew before he spoke that the scheme was a non-starter.

The divided Unionist camp united in rejecting his proposals—as did even the careerist touts of Gerry Fitt's SDLP.

This left Atkins talking to himself.

And of course the key "party" involved (but never even invited to participate)—the Provisional IRA—has declared its response in practice, as the war goes on to drive the British army from the six counties.

The British working class must take a firm stand in this war for the defeat of British imperialism, the withdrawal of British troops and the self-determination of the Irish people as the basis for an Irish workers' republic.

Bonanza for bankers—but watch out for your job!

Exchange controls lifted

Last week's abolition of all exchange controls relating to the pound sterling was the unexpectedly dramatic last step along a road on which the last Labour government first set out.

It is the road to the ruthless and unrestricted pursuit of capitalist rationality.

The lifting of controls will open the way for capitalists to place their funds in the most profitable place around the world without any restriction imposed by the British state.

The move is a logical part of the whole Tory economic strategy to rescue British capital from its desperate crisis of profitability.



Howe

The Thatcher government, however, is approaching that problem in a different way from both the Heath and Wilson-Callaghan governments.

Thatcher and Howe are on all sides dismantling the controls which have been often set up to protect particular sections of capital.

They have consciously decided that the long term interests of capital are served by sacrificing the weaker sections of the British capitalist

class and by making sure that every avenue to possible profit is open.

It is a strategy which threatens large sections of the working class with loss of jobs both in industry and the public sector.

And at the same time it accepts the elimination of the weaker sections of capital.

Protection

Controls on foreign exchange and capital movements, like controls on imports, are a form of protectionism afforded to a section of capitalists.

Socialists cannot either support or oppose the abolition of such controls as such. We do not involve ourselves in disputes about how best to help the capitalist class.

Socialists must raise a programme which defends the independent interests of the working class.

That means redoubled insistence on the importance of demands such as work sharing on full pay (the sliding scale of hours); occupations and blacking to oppose and prevent closures; nationalisation without compensation of capitalists declaring redundancies and so on.

Central demands

These are central demands of the working class struggle in today's situation of capitalist crisis.

They will become even more important as a result of Howe's lifting of exchange controls in that this will if anything accelerate the ruthless "rationalisation" being carried out by the capitalist class.

So while we recognise that Howe's move is an integral part of the overall viciously anti-working class strategy of the Tory government, we put forward policies which, if fought for consistently throughout the workers' movement, can defend the interests of workers as part of an international struggle for the establishment of socialism.

This is the opposite of the way in which "socialists" of the Labour Party and Communist Party have greeted Howe's measures.

Nationalism

They have almost universally greeted them with a wave of nationalism which has nothing in common with socialism.

The controls shouldn't have been lifted, they say, because British capitalists should be forced to invest their money in Britain, developing British industry.

To Dennis Healey, the Labour 'lefts' and the Stalinists of the CP, it is better for capitalists to speculate on the British stock exchange or the British property market than to engage in



European currency dealers on the phone

the same activities in New York or South Africa.

The positions go hand in hand with the Labour "left" and Stalinist support for import controls as part of a nationalist so-called "Alternative Economic Strategy".

It is a strategy based on an alliance with the national sections of capital and encourages the international division of the working class.

The working class cannot be defended against the adverse effects of Howe's economic strategy by defending the discarded measures of the capitalist state.

But that is what the "lefts" want to do rather than fight for socialist policies.

Of course, a socialist economic programme in Britain or any other state will include state control of foreign trade and finance.

But this has as little in common with capitalist import and exchange controls as truly socialist nationalisation has in common with the state ownership of British Leyland.

14m poor

14 million people—26% of Britain's population—are living in poverty, according to a major new survey published last week.

Up to 49% of all one-parent families live on the borderline of poverty, while seven million people are incapacitated to the extent of needing social welfare provision.

The survey by Professor Peter Townsend is based largely on 1969 figures, and stresses that under successive Labour and Tory governments the situation has got steadily worse, not better.

A profound further lurch towards mass poverty is certain until the Thatcher government is defeated and removed from office.

PRESS GANG



The story so far. Princess Margaret, intrepid sister to the Queen of England is in the shit.

Filthy rich, spoilt and notorious she is seeking to get back in her sister's good books by touring her former colony of America, opening supermarkets to raise money for a London music hall.

All is going well until in a moment of careless honesty at a society dinner she tells her hostess that she thinks all Irish are pigs. Her Irish hostess storms out in a fury and our poor Princess is followed everywhere by nasty ruffians making grunting noises.

Her holiday lies in ruins. All seems lost.

Now read on: Deep throat has a plan to save the day. He picks up the phone, dials a number and begins to speak. All over Fleet Street editors stand to attention as they take their orders.

The next day: The *Telegraph*: 'IRA plot to kill Princess'.

The *Mirror*: 'Margaret Defies IRA Death Squad'.

The *Mail*: 'How the Assassin was foiled'.

The *Sun*: 'Margaret's 'Day of the Jackal', etc... etc...

The stories were identical.

An "IRA man"—(naturally involved in the Mountbatten killing)—had been going to kill the Princess as she opened a car showroom.

Police apparently had his name and photograph, but for some mysterious reason were revealing neither!

The Princess was switched to a bullet-proof Cadillac. A helicopter roared overhead.

Armed guards surrounded her. Hospitals stood by with her blood group at the ready.

The devilish assassin had given himself away by hiring a film crew and then asking them to provide him with a sketch map of the showroom!

Column after column of detail followed. The IRA, Scotland Yard and the RUC all professed themselves ignorant of the roles they were supposed to have played in this drama: but no paper except the *Guardian* took any notice of their denials.

The next day this ripping yarn began to fall apart at the seams. Agency wires buzzed with denials, climbdowns and accusations of exaggeration.

The FBI said they were investigating "allegations of a threat".

There was little reflection of this climbdown in the papers themselves.

The *Telegraph*, while conceding that if the mystery assassin was a leading Provisional he must be an amateur, concentrated on the continuing security.

Everyone said how brave the Princess was. (Let's not leave the Queen out of this. The *Daily Mail* reported a death threat from 'the French section of the Provisional IRA' (!) made by a man who said that the IRA didn't actually agree with him!)

So our story has a happy ending.

Our Princess comes home a heroine—unyielding in her determination to open car showrooms whatever the odds.

Once again the press had saved the day.

Press freedom is never having to say you are sorry.

Extreme right expelled

Two of Labour's most brazen crypto-Tories have been expelled by the Kensington constituency Labour Party.

Stephen Haseler and Roger Fox of the extreme right wing Social Democratic Alliance were prominent in the campaign against the ousting of Reg Prentice as Labour candidate for Newham NE.

It has subsequently been revealed that funds to back Prentice's extensive legal appeals and wrangles were made available by the viciously anti-union National Association for Freedom (now entitled the

"Freedom Association").

But of course well over 100 Labour MPs also associated themselves with the defence of Prentice, who is now the Tory minister in charge of attacking benefits for the disabled.

The Social Democratic Alliance, however, overstepped the mark by publicly calling upon Labour voters not to support the Labour candidate for Liverpool and Bootle in the European elections.

And in the run-up to the General Election the SDA publicised a list of 59 supposed "Trotskyist" Labour Party candidates—including right wing stal-

wart Michael Foot!

It was on the basis of these two activities that Haseler and Fox were expelled.

But they did not work alone. There remain dozens of equally reactionary crypto-Tories in constituency Labour Parties up and down the country.

Many of them are right wing MPs, who will be assisting Tory MP John Corrie to ram through his vicious anti-abortion Bill in the New Year.

It is high time Labour's rank and file set to the task of clearing out all such inveterate enemies of the working class.



You are now free to buy gold—at £75,000 a bar!

USFI Xth WORLD CONGRESS

Final part

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI) is undoubtedly the largest and most widely known of the currents that have emerged from the post-war crisis of the Trotskyist movement.

With thousands of members and sections or sympathising sections in dozens of countries, it is viewed by many militants as "the" Trotskyist Fourth International.

The Workers Socialist League does not share this view. We see the USFI as a movement that has departed on numerous key questions from the positions and method put forward in the Transitional Programme on which the Fourth International was founded in 1938.

We know, of course, that the two other main groupings that lay claim to the title of "Fourth International" are both now substantially smaller than the USFI.

Both of them—the Healyite "International Committee" (run by the British WRP) and the "Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International" (run by the French OCI)—certainly hold political positions as bad or far worse than the USFI on many questions and are themselves (like the USFI) wracked by internal crisis.

Disorientation

But the bankruptcy of their rivals is in our view no argument for recognising in the USFI the exclusive continuity of the Trotskyist movement.

SINCE 1963: A 16-YEAR RECORD OF FAILURE



The USFI's adaptation today to the petty-bourgeois FSLN in Nicaragua flows from its adaptations to post-war Sta

The impending split, and unmistakable present day confusion and disorientation of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, come as neither a surprise nor as an accident.

They are the outcome of a process, in which the USFI leaders' consistent efforts to evade problems in the past for the sake of "unity" have now created even bigger and more insoluble problems in the present which threaten to blow the United Secretariat asunder.

Today's wrong positions and embarrassed silence are the result of yesterday's unanswered questions and a refusal to draw lessons from yesterday's experiences.

The current open and grovelling capitulation by the American Socialist Workers Party to Castro's Cuban Stalinist bureaucracy began not this year or last year—but traces its roots back to the 1963 documents on which the United Secretariat was formed in the wake of the Cuban revolution.

Wrong positions

And the method of analysis and approach underlying the 1963 documents was the outcome of wrong theoretical positions that emerged from the split in the post-war Fourth International ten years before. These issues, however, refuse to be considered in isolation from the broader context of the post-war Trotskyist movement.

And the total confusion of this question within the USFI was indicated by the fact that while the SWP and its co-thinkers unhesitatingly backed the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea as a 'step forward for the Indochinese revolution', the other USFI wing, around Mandel opposed the invasion—raising the horrific prospect of rival Trotskyists' potentially fighting each other hand to hand in S.E. Asia.

Of course the USFI leaders seeking to excuse their confusion will argue that the situation in S.E. Asia is complex and contradictory. But it is precisely to analyse complex and contradictory situations that the scientific method of Marxism is indispensable—and the impressionism and formal schematism of the USFI proves itself totally unable to offer workers a clear way forward.

Defy analysis

Indochina, like Nicaragua, the Cuban revolution or the post war social overturns in Stalinist-ruled Eastern Europe defy analysis by the bourgeois method of "common sense" and formal logic.

The 'facts' of such processes cannot be understood if they are detached from the overall movement of forces that has brought them about.

The USFI leaders however, scorn the dialectical method of Marxism.

The clearest statement of all on this came from Ernest Mandel at an IMG day school on the history of the Fourth International.

Attempting to whip up backward merriment against the theory of structural assimilation, which insists that the progressive post-war steps of the expropriation of capitalist property in Yugoslavia and other buffer countries was carried out in a counter-revolutionary fashion by a counter-revolutionary Stalinist force. Mandel declared that:

"This is a classic case of the expropriation of the expropriators" —is in this case achieved in a military-bureaucratic fashion".

But of course Mandel himself as an old pupil of Pablo and a defender of the continuity of positions from 1953 through 1963 cannot grasp this necessity for a dialectical analysis of these social overturns and the more recent examples of S.E. Asia. Without such an understanding the USFI can offer no perspective on which Trotskyist parties could be based to fight there for political revolution.

It is necessary for Trotskyists to do more than put a correct label on the "accomplished fact" of the deformed workers states of Vietnam and Kampuchea (though it is of course necessary to get the label right).

It is essential to comprehend the ways in which Stalinism has acted consistently in the post war period to stem and halt revolutionary struggles.

Rather than exchanging subjective polemics—each based on rival empirical theories—the task facing the various factions and fragments of the USFI is to work in a Marxist manner, historically through these major questions of the post war role of Stalinism.

The theoretical standpoint they have adopted—the impressionist and revisionist positions of the Third and subsequent World Congresses cannot provide Trotskyists with any coherent or principled analysis of Stalinism.

And attempts now to work superficially backwards through history from present problems in a search for belated past justification for present day theories is most destructive; particularly when this is combined with splitting up social processes into individual fragments which can only be grasped as part of a whole.

The chief hurdle to the post war development of the Trotskyist movement has been the very fact that the questions of the post war overturns of capitalism under Stalinist leadership have not been thoroughly and adequately debated as they took place.

Instead they have been treated after the event, to conform to a preconceived, dogmatic and impressionist schema—beginning particularly with Yugoslavia.

The analysis of the processes that led to the expropriation of capitalism in the E. Europe Buffer as a whole holds the key to Yugoslavia.

The analysis of the particular differences in Yugoslavia holds the key to understanding China. And it is the Chinese revolution under rigid Stalinist leadership that offers us the means of understanding the contradictory progress of the revolution in Vietnam.

Attempts to analyse the events of Indochina upside down—starting from today's "facts" and seeking to fit them into a schema drawn from them alone—must lead, whether it is done by the USFI or their fellow "orthodox" formalists and empiricists of the WRP and the Workers Party, to a de facto rationalisation of the role of the Stalinist Vietnamese leaders, or artificial attempts to distinguish them from Stalinism.

In this way, of course, the nagging contradiction of reality appears to be smoothed away.

A much tidier question can be posed, in which we would decide whether (i) an undeformed workers state was created; or (ii) a reactionary leadership momentarily broke from Stalinism at the point of the overturn of capitalism.

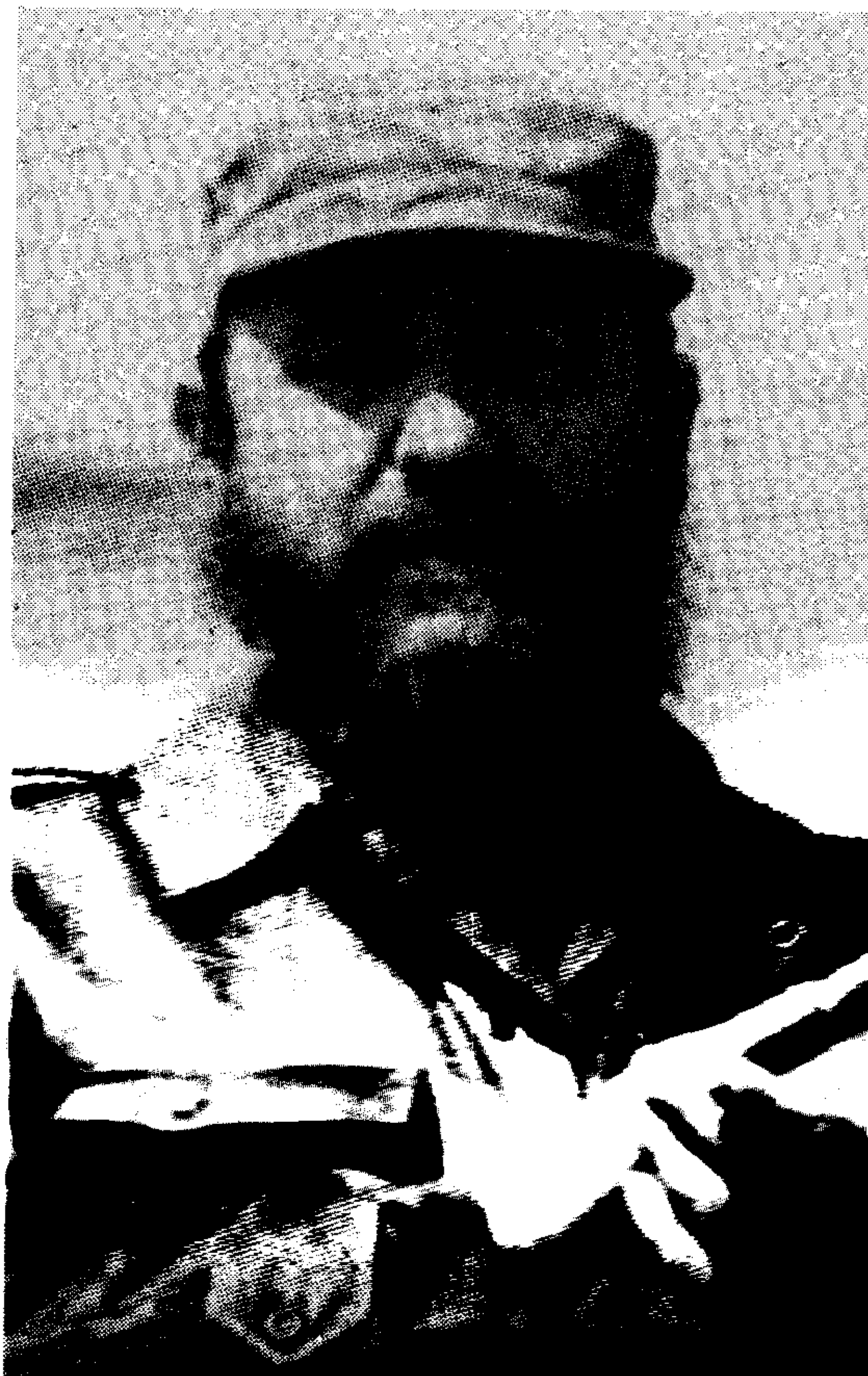
But reality is contradiction, and in seeking to eliminate contradiction from our analysis of S.E. Asia and present simply a one sided view, we must inevitably wind up failing to grasp reality, and liquidating the Marxist programme which sees in contradiction the basis for advancing the working class towards its emancipation.

But it is not only S.E. Asia which exposes the bankruptcy of the USFI's approach. They are now also divided in opinion on the nature of the Cuban leadership—which was one of the pillars on which the 1963 reunification actually rested.

"Natural Marxist"

While readily agreeing for ten years not to discuss the lessons of the 1953 split the two sides found themselves perfectly in agreement that the Cuban revolution was led by a non-Stalinist, revolutionary, "natural Marxist" leadership under Castro; that it had produced an undeformed workers' state, and that it contained the potentiality of a new international development of revolution.

Castro — preserving 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism, with uncritical support from USFI.



Castro — preserving 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism, with uncritical support from USFI.

whose post-war period has been characterised by profound political disorientation and a continuing series of incomplete and opportunist splits and fusions.

The forthcoming XIth World Congress of the USFI is however an important event. It offers Marxists the opportunity of assessing in more detail the stage of development of the political crisis which has characterised the USFI's existence since its formation in 1963.

At its Tenth World Congress in 1974 the main factions were the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, politically supporting the formally "orthodox", opportunist positions of the US Socialist Workers Party, and the International Majority Tendency, clinging on to the ultra-leftist and guerrillaist schemas of the USFI's European Secretariat.

But the untenable positions

taken by both the LTF and the IMT during the Portuguese events of 1974-6 and the Angolan war led to a sharp realignment of forces which now shapes the coming XIth World Congress.

The bulk of the USFI's Latin American member sections and sympathising sections broke with the line of the SWP and the LTF and, led by Nahuel Moreno's Argentinian PST, formed the 'Bolshevik Tendency'.

The growing challenge from these forces, combined with the complete collapse in the credibility of the IMT's guerrillaist perspectives of 1969 and 1974, pressured both the European and SWP leaders into a hasty dissolution of factions and the formation of a new, "united" leadership prior to the XIth Congress.

It was this new majority leadership that drafted the five main documents tabled for the Congress. But their manifest failure to reconcile past political disagreements is demonstrated by the pattern of conspicuous diplomatic omissions and evasions in the documents.

The Bolshevik Tendency has in the meantime declared itself a Faction dedicated to the removal of what it calls a 'Castroist current' and an "unprincipled bloc" at the head of the USFI and the restoration of "orthodox" Trotskyism.

Correct errors

A much lesser threat is seen in the statements produced by a new, 'Leninist Trotskyist Tendency' which has also emerged, with forces in a number of

sections, pledged to "correct the errors" of the existing USFI leadership.

The article below, part five of a series examining the position of the USFI in the run-up to its XIth Congress, is a critique of the five main texts presented to the Congress by the new majority leadership.

- These deal with:
 - *The World Political Situation.
 - *European Perspectives.
 - *Perspectives for Latin America.
 - *The fight against women's oppression.
 - *Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.



Mandel — his adaptationist politics still in majority.

question mark over this Tendency's ability to break from empiricism and opportunism.

The most obvious recent case was the decision of the Spanish Morenists simply to pull up stumps and leave the Socialist Party and fuse with the LCR immediately prior to the conference that forced the resignation of Socialist Party leader Felipe Gonzalez.

They thus ended a whole period of rather opportunist entry work at the very point that opportunities were opening up.

When challenged on this, a leading Morenist simply announced that the defeat of Gonzalez wasn't really all that important anyway!

The emergence of the Bolshevik Faction as an organised opposition capable of outvoting either the IMT or the LTF was clearly the trigger that prompted the hasty marriage between these two factions to form a new majority leadership on the basis of the IMT's ridiculous Self Criticism on Latin America.*

Since then the five key texts for the XIth World Congress—couched in the most studiously abstract, "orthodox" terminology and avoiding taking a position on every one of the major world developments since 1974—have been drawn up.

Method

As Marxists we must draw lessons from the USFI's desperate but unsuccessful efforts to flee from its own past.

History is not dead "facts" with no relationship to the present.

The events of the past not only materially shape the present, but it is also with the ideas of the past that we are forced to confront each new situation.

Only through the method of dialectical materialism can we accurately analyse the processes of change that are taking place around us and attempt through the test of practice to bring our ideas—and therefore our programme into accord with the real contradictions that the real

world presents. In other words, both materially and ideologically we must—whether we like it or not—carry our history "strapped to our backs".

While the USFI struggles to ignore history, history refuses to ignore the USFI. Again and again the wrong, revisionist, opportunist methods and positions of the past disorientate it and leave it divided or wrongheaded in testing situations.

We do not hold the position that only the WSL can reach and act upon correct conclusions.

There is a profound political ferment now at work within the USFI as a whole within which all kinds of questions are arising whether the leaders like it or not; there are splits and cracks that have emerged even within the monolithic Healy and Lambert movements; and various emerging currents are searching for a road to a revolutionary International.

Above all the continued hammer blows of the class struggle are refuting the idealist, opportunist and sectarian schemas of the other main tendencies.

All these factors convince us that this is the period in which we must fight harder than ever and with better than ever chance of success for the Trotskyist movement to turn back to the principles and the method of the Transitional Programme and to reaffirm these in a practical way in the development of that Programme as the basis for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

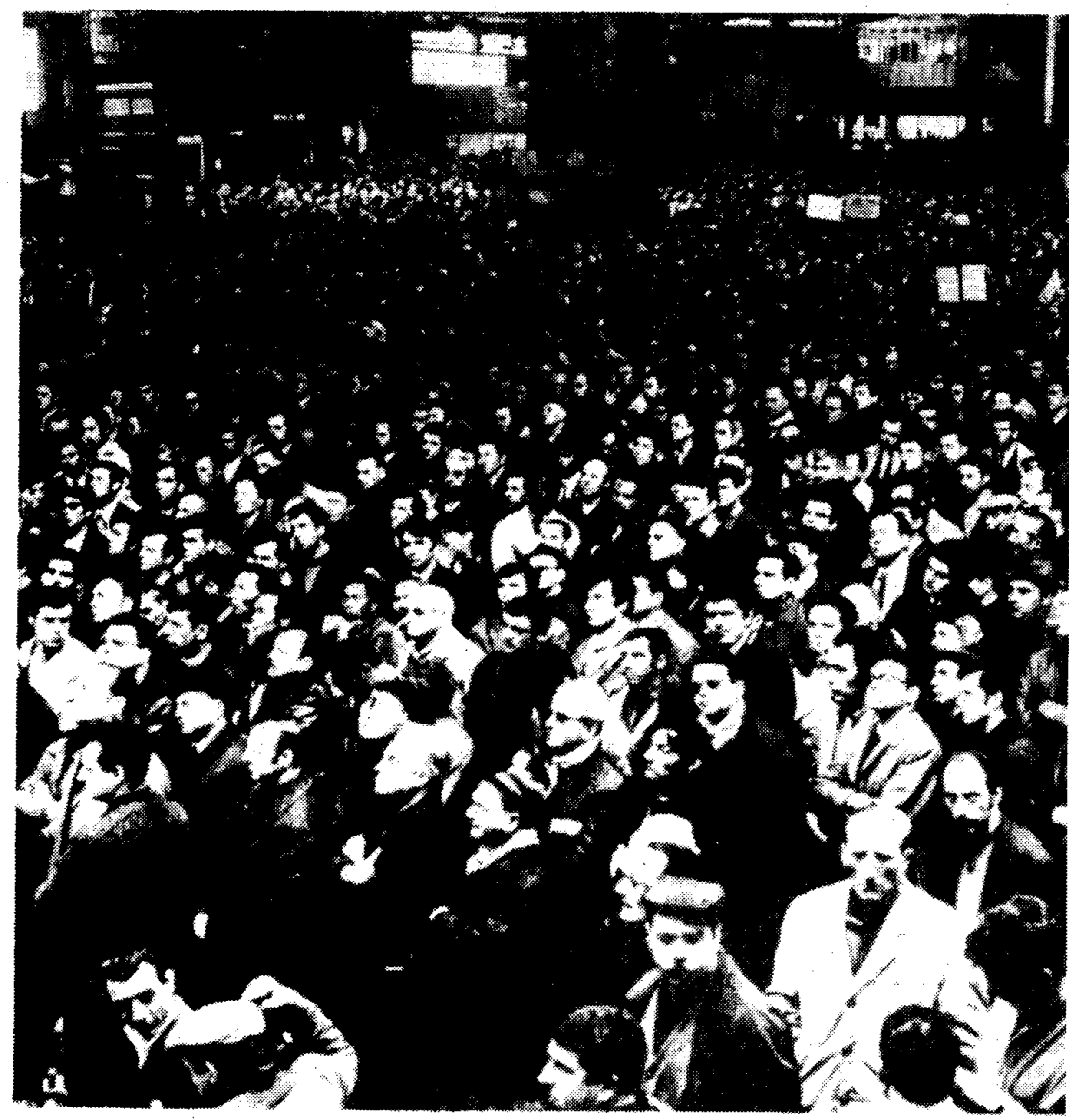
This is why, in addition to countering the false positions and evasions of the USFI, and fighting to clarify the issues involved in the post-war crisis of the Fourth International, the Workers Socialist League is struggling for the building of a democratic centralist international tendency on the basis of a clear and explicit programme.

The draft of this platform document, entitled 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle', was adopted two weeks ago by a national meeting of the Workers Socialist League.

It will shortly be published in the first issue of a new international discussion bulletin, the task of which is to provide a central focus for the political and organisational discussions that are essential to prepare for the genuine reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

The answer to today's manifest crisis in all of the international bodies proclaiming themselves the Fourth International is not any hasty 'minimum agreement' or new diplomatic link-up between existing fragments, but a thoroughgoing political assessment of the roots of the crisis, and a concrete statement of the programme and practical orientation needed to resolve it.

We invite serious militants now adhering to the USFI and other 'Fourth Internationals' to play a positive role in this vital political reassessment, which offers the only sound basis on which to go forward.



The mass struggles of May-June 1968 in France caught USFI unprepared

ism since 1949.

Yet the USFI's analysis of the Cuban revolution rests on a similar attempt to work backwards from the "fact" of the overturn of capitalism, and a determination to see the events in Cuba in isolation from the combined world crisis of imperialism and Stalinism.

The USFI's wrong view, enshrined in the reunification documents, led as naturally to the guerrillaist "turn" of 1969, as it did to the SWP's "orthodox" opposition.

For the Mandel/Pabloites in 1963 the tailending of Castro was simply the latest expression of their willingness to tail end "progressive currents" within Stalinism in Eastern and Western Europe which had existed from 1953 onwards.

So as the Cuban revolution engendered petty bourgeois nationalist guerrilla groups throughout Latin America in the 1960s, it was perfectly understandable that the petty bourgeois impressionists of the European Secretariat should wax ecstatic about the prospects for guerrilla warfare and on the basis of an entirely impressionist schema advocate this as a strategy for an entire continent in 1969.

Profound lurch

At the same time the SWP had responded empirically to the Cuban revolution, in 1963 but had retained from the IC and their long traditions as a Party a wariness of totally liquidating the Trotskyist Party itself.

The subsequent death of Hansen this year and the immediate profound lurch by the SWP to the most brazen Castroism is testimony to the way in which such crass opportunism was moderated by the older, more experienced cadre—who are now losing their grip on the younger SWP leaders.

The SWP had also developed an increasing orientation towards the pacifist elements drawn around the anti-war movement in the USA. So it began to pull back from this position.

Others—such as Moreno and Blanco, who had bitter experiences arising from the follies

of guerrillaism—began to join with the SWP in this stand.

But while they ducked the manifestly false guerrillaist conclusions which the Mandelites drew from the Cuban Revolution, and began to polemicise with increasing fury against guerrillaist strategy, the SWP and LTF would never go back to rework the false analysis of the Cuban revolution itself and the Castroite leadership in particular that had given the necessary room for such false conclusions to arise.

Lightminded

We must remember in this context that the SWP leadership swung their entire movement from orthodoxy to Pabloism on this issue: to question that analysis would amount—and does to this day amount—to questioning the entire leadership of the SWP.

For the Mandelites however, with their openly lightminded approach to historical experience and orthodoxy the matter is more straightforward.

This is why it is from the Mandel wing of the USFI that recent challenges to the USFI analysis of the Cuban leadership as "revolutionary" and even to the idea that Cuba remains an undeformed workers' state have been most numerous.

The problem of course is that the Mandelites attempt to supplant one empirical set of conclusions with another with little or no attempt to challenge the method and historical analysis through which the mistakes were originally made.

Desertion

How, then, has the USFI stood up since 1963 as a movement equipped to give a lead to the working class on the "big political questions" of the day?

Well, by 1964 its policy of substituting organisational tactics for political struggle and belittling the fight within the International for theoretical and programmatic clarity had created ideal conditions for the treacherous desertion of the vast majority of its Ceylonese section to the class enemy at a crucial point in the struggle—

as they entered the bourgeois coalition government with Mrs. Bandaranaike.

And in May-June 1968 in France the bankruptcy of the European perspective of deep entry into CPs and Socialist Parties could be empirically seen to be a major handicap in intervening in the massive struggles that emerged.

The French party had to be effectively rebuilt—rebuilt on the basis of an influx of students and youth, whose political impatience and inexperience then served to compound the petty bourgeois impressionism and inexperience of the European secretariat, and paved the way for the 1969 "turn".

Rather than recognising the need to combat the spontaneity of the youth and channel their drive and energy into the struggle for the Marxist programme, the USFI leaders adapted their politics to the youth, and trailed behind them as yet another "progressive" current.

The 1969 turn indeed took place under the banner of the turn to the "new youth vanguard".

The Ninth World Congress itself opened the door to a chapter of USFI fiascos in Latin America.

No perspective

These began with petty bourgeois guerrillaist adventures coupled with opportunist flip flops in Bolivia; included the open desertion of the PRT/ERP—the USFI's recognised Argentinian "section"—from Trotskyism in 1971; and culminated in the complete bankruptcy of the USFI on the Chilean struggles prior to the 1973 coup.

Not only did the guerrillaists of the USFI have no perspective to offer the Chilean working class—other than purely organisational talk of workers militia, completely divorced from political programme—but the majority leadership refused even to characterise Allende's Popular Unity government as a Popular Front.

It even opposed any political demand for the ousting of the bourgeois ministers and generals

from its ranks!

No serious objective analysis of the Chilean experience has ever been presented by the USFI—with good reason!

"Orthodoxy"

The 10th World Congress of 1974 shifted the emphasis of the guerrilla strategy from the countryside to the towns—the urban centres.

And the "youth vanguard" adapted to in 1969 was broadened to the vague and illusory notion of the "new mass vanguard" which basically means the gamut of left-reformist, centrist, Maoist and semi-Stalinist groupings and currents thrown up by the crisis of leadership in the European and other working classes.

It was orientation towards these currents that ensured that the IMT wound up trailing limply after the left talking officers of the Armed Forces Movement and the Stalinists in Portugal.

The SWP's empirical efforts at "orthodoxy" on the other hand led them into the reformist camp of Soares' Socialist Party.

It was these blunders, together with the SWP's criminal position on Angola which triggered the launching of the Bolshevik Faction, based around Moreno's PST and the Latin American section of the USFI.

Moreno has a long record of opposing Pablo and many of the consequences of Pablo's analysis.

But he himself—astoundingly for a Latin American Trotskyist—declares that he has no analysis of the Cuban Revolution, and has offered no really positive alternative as a challenge to the false positions adopted in one form or other by the USFI leadership.

Crass errors

Moreno openly and easily proclaims that he has made "hundreds of mistakes" in the past. But we can point to a number of absolutely crass errors by at least one Bolshevik Faction grouping in the present that cast a serious

The Poisoned Well

An analysis by the WSL of the Self-Criticism published by the USFI on the basis of which the new majority leadership was formed. Available in English, Danish, Spanish, and French from:
WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR
Price 35p including postage.

Towards an International Tendency

On Sunday October 13, the Workers Socialist League adopted the following resolution mapping out positive steps towards the formation of a principled international Trotskyist tendency, pledged to the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

1) Events since the Workers Socialist League 1979 Summer School have confirmed that the utmost priority must be attached to work designed to consolidate a new, principled, international Trotskyist tendency. Such a tendency is essential to develop and expand the nucleus of a reconstructed Fourth International capable of leading the world's working class and its potential allies to the revolutionary seizure of power and the world dictatorship of the proletariat.

2) It is clearly vital that such a tendency be based on principled programmatic agreement, both on major international issues, and on general perspectives and methods of work within the proletariat in the countries of member sections.

3) The WSL restates its commitment to the struggle for the organisational principles of democratic centralism both at a national and an international level. Only such a method of organisation allows all sections to participate in the internal life and struggles of other sections, with each section accepting mutual international discipline and control. But such

an organisational form is unthinkable without firm programmatic agreement.

4) In order that the most rapid strides forward can be taken towards establishing such programmatic agreement, the WSL formally calls upon the comrades of the US SLDC, the Greek CIL, the Danish TAF, and those comrades in Turkey in agreement with the politics of the WSL, to jointly with us convene an international pre-conference in the winter 1979/80, the proposed agenda for which should include:

a) Discussion and adoption of our document 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle'.

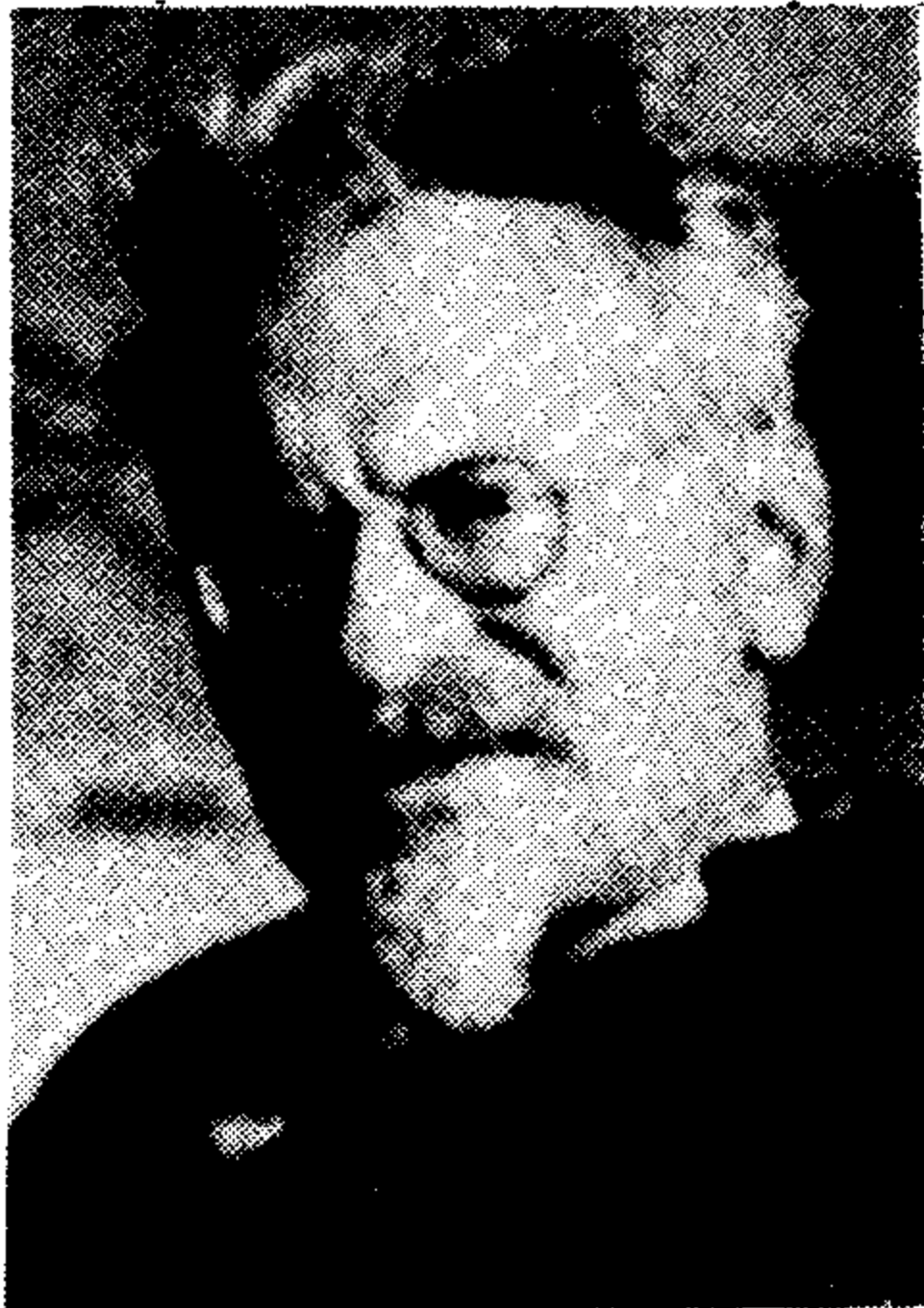
b) Agreement on a common declaration of intent mapping out the framework and time-scale within which further discussions will take place on national and international perspectives, and on conditions of membership of the tendency. The tendency itself will only be formed after a principled agreement has been reached both on conditions of membership and on the national perspectives of member organisations.

c) Formation of an international liaison committee to act as the organising centre for political discussions prior to the founding conference of the tendency, and to publish an international discussion bulletin and draw up the document stating conditions of membership of the tendency.

d) The issuing of an appeal to those forces internationally now engaged in the revolutionary struggle for socialism to participate in this process of constructing a principled Tendency in opposition to all forms of opportunism and sectarianism.

5) The organisational details of this pre-conference, within the general format and the political line adopted by today's national aggregate, shall be in the hands of the WSL National Committee, in conjunction with the leaderships in the USA, Greece, Denmark and Turkey.

October 12, 1979



Trotsky

Poverty, cuts kill babies

On average, in Britain this year, one in every fifteen births is going to result in a dead or handicapped baby.

Around 11,000 babies will be stillborn or will die in the first few weeks after birth and around 30,000 will face life suffering from some form of congenital disability.

The Spastic Society, in a report sent to Patrick Jenkin last week, maintain that over 4,000 of the deaths will be due to the lack of adequate ante-natal care facilities, particularly intensive-care units.

Incubators

They point out that the DHSS's own recommendations require the provision of 480 incubators although only 129 are available.

They also claim that over a third of the handicaps could be prevented given adequate community-health programmes.

Another report, sponsored by the Government, also published last week attacks the Spastic Society's call for improved maternity provisions.

They state that poverty is the main cause for this country's high infant mortality and handicap rate (one of the worst in Europe).

The National Perinatal Epidemiology Unit, based at Churchill Hospital in Oxford, believe there is little point in investing vast amounts of money in ante-natal care, because by then it is already too late.

There is some truth in both arguments.

Maternity care facilities are not equally distributed and tend to be most lacking in the areas where they are most needed.

More than half of the deaths and handicaps are due to Hypoxia and low birth weight—which tend to predominate in the poorer areas of the country.

Results from Manchester Intensive Care Unit support the Spastic Society's call for improved provisions. Between 15-20% of babies born there are of low body weight and they have an 87% survival rate amongst these.

However, intensive care units can only treat the effects of Hypoxia, they cannot treat the cause; and this is where the NPEU report is valid.

Over the past ten years the number of midwives has been halved—mostly due to the policy of centring maternity care and delivery in the hospital as opposed to the home.

There are sound arguments in favour of this policy provided that there are adequate back-up community resources and facilities. But this has not been the case.

The policy of hospital deliveries has been accompanied by the reduction of the most important community asset—the visiting mid-wife.

In the poorer areas, on average, a third of expectant mothers don't attend pre-natal clinic soon enough or often enough, although, often they can hardly be blamed, with over-crowded waiting rooms, impersonal treatment, and long journeys.

Hospitals and clinics are closed, so are nurseries and schools, wages are restricted and jobs axed.

The people most crushed, vulnerable and desperate are denounced by the wealthy as 'scroungers'.

This is the light in which we must view the bureaucratic betrayals of last winter's low pay battles and the hypocritical bleatings of a Labour opposition that quickly seems to have forgotten the name of Hounslow Hospital!



PHOTO: John Smith, IFL

Letters

Send us a letter, putting your views on the articles in Socialist Press, on the struggles in your union or district, or on any topic you feel is important. Write to: Socialist Press, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

More on Marxism and Culture (SP 170)

Dear Comrade,

Terry Eagleton's article on "Marxism and Culture" was a welcome contribution to a subject which is usually confined to universities and intellectuals' discussion circles.

But precisely because of this it is necessary that we are aware of certain contradictions and misconceptions in his article.

Some of these seem to come from comrade Eagleton's previous broad adherence to the virtually incomprehensible use of language and the idealist philosophising of the French Stalinist, Louis Althusser.

So, for example, the definition of "culture" as "a set of social practices usually symbolising certain significant meanings and values, which are marked mainly by their primarily non-functional nature" is reminiscent of Althusserian thought and language—and surely pretty meaningless to most of your readers.

This is particularly so when "culture" is used throughout most of the article as a synonym for "art"—which usage Eagleton himself declares "ideological".

And it is unexplained why terms like "greatness" and "genius" as used by Trotsky are idealist.

After all, in the same sentence comrade Eagleton speaks of Trotsky as "one of the greatest Marxist cultural theorists".

If theorists can be great, why can't artists?

Further, the idea of "non-functionality" as used in the

definition quoted above is confusing, especially when it is shown how culture *does* function as "ideology" or a means of political agitation.

Presumably he means (like Lukacs, whom Eagleton too easily dismisses with total contempt) that culture is those social productions not necessary for the immediate maintenance of life.

Which means that the Parthenon was a cultural object for the Greeks, even if not so much an "artistic" one as it has become for us.

The most important point to make here is that art under capitalism has become totally divorced from the real lives of most people.

And comrade Eagleton is over-generous to the contribution of the Futurists and Constructivists to the beginnings of cultural revolution in the USSR in the 1920s.

Certainly some of them participated sincerely and valuably in the agit-prop programmes of the state and the party.

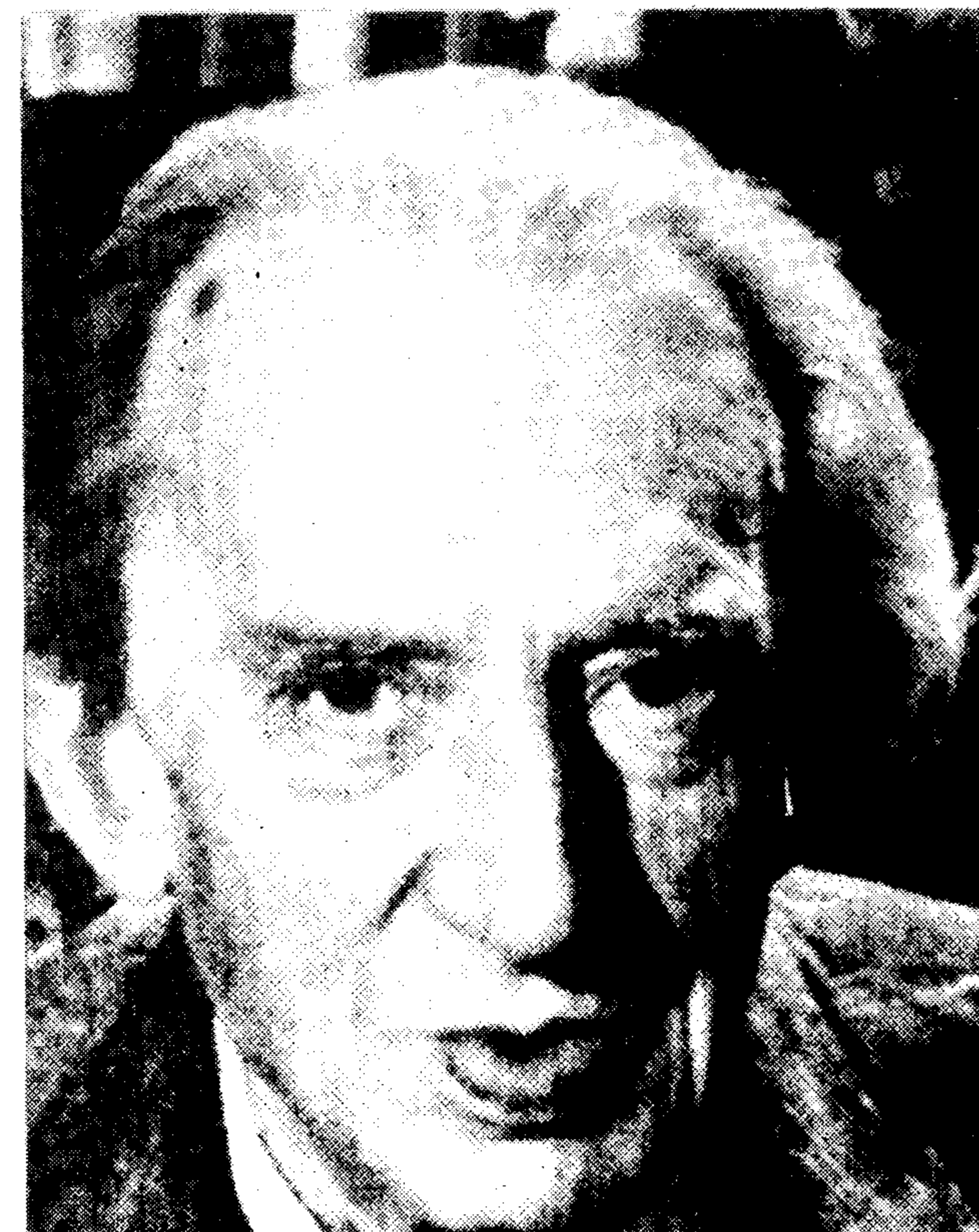
For the most part, though, they were sectarian ultra-leftists.

They were unresponsive to the real cultural needs of the masses and of the workers' state, and too involved in their personal artistic development (which was firmly rooted in pre-revolutionary Russian/Western society and culture) and their abstract and idealist concept of "proletarian culture".

In this regard, and in discuss-

ing the role of art in social revolution we should refer to Trotsky.

He made a valid distinction between that (usually 'inferior') art which is primarily politically significant, and that which has a longer-term value for the development of a truly new, genuinely mass-based communist culture.



Lukacs

To revolutionists the former is incomparably more important.

In the later stages of the world proletarian revolution, the latter will play its part in the development of a truly human society.

Yours fraternally,
L. Davidson

Author's reply

Comrade Davidson's letter is a useful contribution to a debate which has been too much ignored by Marxists. But his points are for the most part misinterpretations of my article.

There is nothing particularly 'Althusserian' about the definition of culture I advanced.

As far as I know, Althusser has never proposed such a definition, and indeed has never written much on culture at all.

Perhaps comrade Davidson means that it is 'Althusserian' to use 'difficult' language—in which case it is also 'Marxist'.

The sentence he quotes is fairly clumsy, as it tries to compress a complex issue into a single formulation; but I can't see that it is 'meaningless'. Nor do I think the language of the article in general any more difficult than, say, most articles on the history of the Fourth International.

For 'pretty meaningless', perhaps, read 'unfamiliar'.

The article rejected terms like 'greatness' and 'genius' when applied to art because they spring straight from bourgeois ideologies of the artist as an inspired, eccentric being whose 'creativity' is somehow mysterious.

The idea of the 'creative genius' is basically modelled on theology: the artist as the divine creator conjuring up his handiwork from nothing.

Art is not creation but production: the re-working of certain given materials into a

certain product.

This definition is indeed 'Althusserian'. It also seems to me to be true. To call Lenin a 'great genius' is harmless enough; to call Leonardo a great genius suggests a whole bourgeois ideology of art.

Comrade Davidson questions my use of the word 'function' and then conveniently answers his own question. I did not dismiss Lukacs with 'total contempt': he is a major cultural theorist. I simply said that he was a Stalinist, which is accurate.

Comrade Davidson is right to warn us about the ultra-leftism of some of the Futurists and Constructivists.

I had done the same myself, in a longer article of which this article was a necessary compression. This is certainly a part of the debate which needs continuing.

Terry Eagleton

COMING SOON

A series of articles by TERRY EAGLETON critically examining the work of Western Marxists. The series will include, among others, Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, Benjamin and Sartre.

Russia's secret atom holocaust

Last week saw the publication of 'Nuclear Disaster in the Urals' by Zhores Medvedev, one of the joint translators of Khrushchev's secret speech, and a leading biochemist now working in London.

Over recent years Medvedev has been at the centre of a controversy over reports of a major nuclear explosion in the Soviet Union at the end of 1957. Medvedev first brought the story to light in a New Scientist article, published on 4 November 1976.

The explosion was a result of the underground storage of nuclear waste materials from several industrial sites in the Urals, where the Soviet nuclear industry is concentrated.

Volcano

Eventually the buried mass of material overheated and blew up 'like a violent volcano'.

The radioactive cloud was carried for hundreds of miles, causing enormous damage. Tens of thousands were affected and hundreds died.

Despite its tragic consequences the incident had some positive effects. One of these was the end of atmospheric testing of Soviet nuclear weaponry. Another was the final removal of Lysenko from positions of power in Soviet science—when it became clear

that Lysenko's brand of 'genetics' was powerless to understand, still less treat, radiobiological damage.

Medvedev was astonished at the reaction to his article, which was widely denounced as 'science-fiction'.

Windscale

One of the loudest of his critics was Sir John Hill, chairman of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, at that time busily preparing for the Windscale enquiry. This was the same Sir John Hill who recently insisted that the Three Mile Island accident gave "no cause for concern" about British reactor safety.

However, more evidence was soon forthcoming, including an eye-witness account by Professor Lev Tumerman, former head of the biophysics laboratory at the Institute of Molecular Biology, Moscow, who had visited the sealed off area after the blast.

In fact there had been very little effort to cover up the explosion story at the time, and a number of papers had been translated for the UKAEA.

Ignorant

It is clearly a matter of some concern that the chairman of the UKAEA should either be ignorant of the event or else had deliberately sought to misinform the public about it.

ERNIE STUBBINS reviews "Nuclear Disaster in the Urals" by Zhores Medvedev

In addition, Medvedev found over 100 published Soviet studies on the effects of Strontium 90 and Caesium 137 in natural plant and animal populations.

Most of these studies made no reference to the source of the contamination they dealt with, and were silent on the question of location (with a single exception which mentions the location—Cheliabinsk—claimed by Medvedev).

From this mass of material it is clear that Soviet scientists are conducting large scale studies of the contaminated area, but it is also clear that enormous research opportunities were lost in delays, doubtless related to attempts to cover up the event.

The published material also provides information on the kinds of nuclear contamination encountered, and confirms that what happened was the explosion of a waste dump.

A reactor explosion or a bomb would have produced a quite different mixture of radioactive contaminants.

Medvedev has produced a great deal of other interesting material on the development of science under Stalin and Khrushchev and later.

Not much of it will stick in the reader's mind quite as vividly as the story of the Cheliabinsk explosion.

Many of the incorrect practices in the Soviet nuclear industry can be interpreted as the result of political pressure to produce nuclear weaponry in the period immediately following World War II.

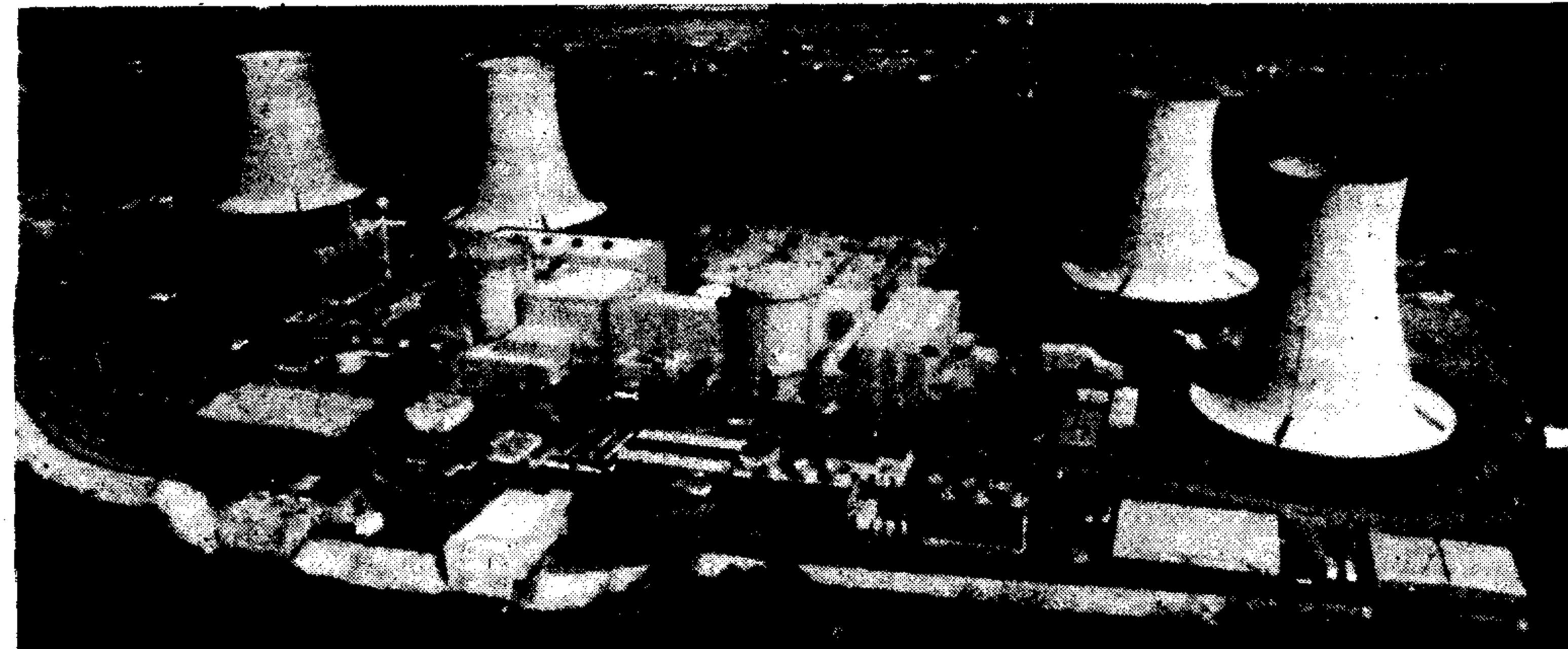
Narrowly averted

At the Hanford Nuclear Centre in the US a similar event to the Cheliabinsk explosion was only narrowly averted in the 1960s.

Charter 77 has recently produced documentation of two serious accidents at the gas-cooled heavy water reactor called A1, at Bohunice, near Bratislava in Czechoslovakia.

Czechoslovakia has a larger nuclear programme than any of the Eastern European states, and the Soviet designed A1 is crucial to the bureaucracy's expansion plans.

It is the first operational nuclear power station in Czechoslovakia, topping out a series of three experimental prototype reactors.



Control room in Soviet atomic power station at Kursk



The Three Mile Island plant at Harrisburg

The reactor began operation in December 1973, but even during construction alarming stories were in circulation about inadequate technical preparations and lack of safety procedures.

The first accident occurred in January 1976, during the loading of new fuel elements.

A gas escape valve jammed and the resulting pressure build up blew the highly radioactive element out of the reactor, releasing a cloud of radioactive coolant gas.

Exit locked

The site had to be evacuated during which two workers were asphyxiated when they found an emergency exit locked "to prevent thefts".

The second accident also took place during fuel element insertion, in February 1977.

A fuel element had not been correctly prepared and eventually overheated, which damaged the cooling system and forced the operators to shut the generator down.

Radioactive steam escaped from the cooling circuits into the atmosphere, and there was further contamination during the cleaning up process.

Since the second accident A1 has not been in use. Despite early attempts at denial, the Czech authorities have recently confirmed that the accidents did occur, but have not confirmed the details published by the Chartists.

Charter 77

Charter 77 calls for full public discussion and possibly a plebiscite on the nuclear question. They also call for a



Radioactive waste buried in Idaho, USA

system of safety monitoring and greatly improved work conditions for operators in the nuclear generators.

While these demands are of course reasonable, they fail to deal with the problem of the bureaucracy's growing dependence on nuclear power, which is exactly parallel to the capit-

alists' need in the West for cheap nuclear power.

Internal needs

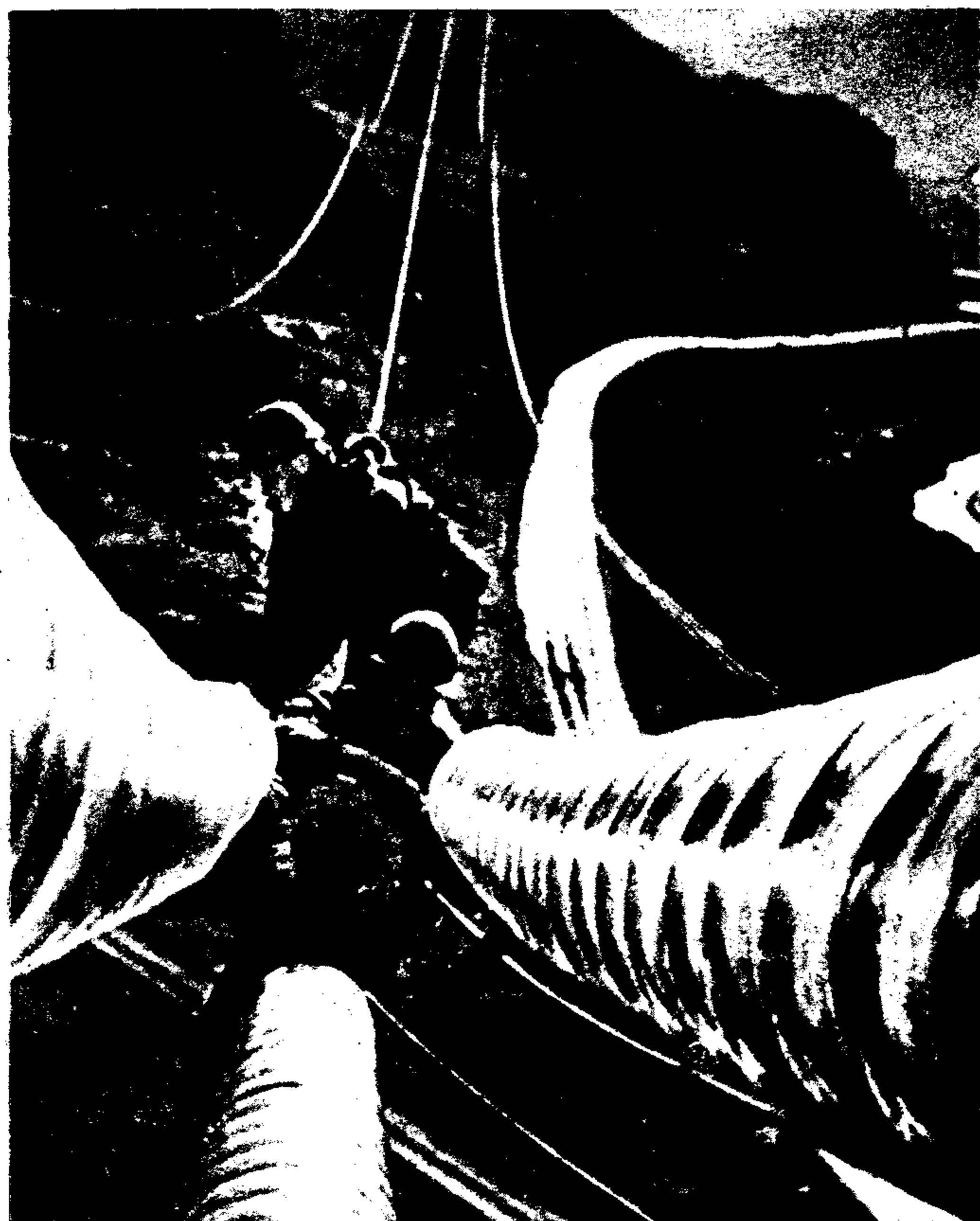
Anti-nuclear protestors of both capitalist and Stalinist states must learn that their states are driven by internal needs which override considerations of safety and quality of life.

So far, the world has not experienced any nuclear accident of the really large scale sort which are possible.

Harrisburg, Bohunice, Cheliabinsk, etc., are tiny compared to the type of disasters that might happen, and are increasingly likely to happen.

Workers management

Real safety and environmental protection will not be achieved without the final overthrow of the state—whether capitalist or Stalinist, which subjects its citizens' lives to the priorities of profit or privilege, and the imposition of workers' management over the planning and operation of energy production.



Soviet power workers



Overturned truck carrying Uranium across US

Officials wind up hospital work-in

News of the planned closure of St. Mary's Hospital, Hampton, Middlesex attracted 50 people including staff, doctors, trade unionists and local people to a meeting in early October.

Attempts by NUPE's local official Vic Palmer to control the meeting failed, and it was decided to occupy the hospital to attempt to prevent the Kingston, Richmond and Esher Area Health Authority from moving out patients before the closure date of October 16.

"In hand"

The occupation was led by the Richmond and Twickenham Trade Union Council, and was joined on the following day by officials of COHSE who claimed to "have the matter in hand".

The full meaning of this term is now clear with news that patients at the hospital

have been reduced to a handful.

At a meeting of the AHA representatives of COHSE, TGWU and NUPE were told of a month's reprieve of closure in order to give trade unionists "time to consider alternative ways of saving the £80,000 involved".

Press release

The local Community Health Council has issued a press release opposing the closure of St. Mary's, and one of the hospital's shop stewards, Pam Weeks, was reinstated following protests about her suspension from her job for being a "trouble-maker".

A motion from COHSE workers at St. Mary's that called for support from community groups, trades councils and trade unions was blocked at a COHSE branch meeting by regional officials—despite COHSE's officially proclaimed policy of organising occupations to prevent hospital closures.

A public meeting has

been planned for Monday 5 November in Hampton to assess the situation before the AHA meeting the next day.

However, the efforts of St. Mary's Hospital workers to fight cuts has been seriously undermined by the predictable sabotage of the trade union bureaucracy, and provides a tragic negative demonstration of the need for a principled revolutionary leadership.

STILL AVAILABLE WSL MANIFESTO
An outline of the political programme of the Workers Socialist League.
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WOMAN WORKER No. 3
Articles on women in Ireland, fighting the cuts, Kampuchea, and the Communist Party's women's paper, "Link".
Price 16p including postage from WSL, 31 Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

CORBRY: CALL A NATIONAL STRIKE!

Once again this coming Thursday will see the whole town of Corby grind to a halt and thousands of workers take to the streets in protest against the British Steel Corporation's plan to shut the steel works.

There is no doubt that Corby workers, like their brothers and sisters at Shotton, and in other threatened sections of industry are ready and willing to take determined action to safeguard jobs.

Nor is there any doubt that BSC management, facing a Tory ultimatum to reverse alleged £300 million annual losses by next spring, are determined to press ahead with the closure.

Union leaders

But what is increasingly in doubt as the planned closure date approaches is the willingness of the union leaders involved to wage the slightest fight to prevent the wholesale sackings, the speed up and closures that are the essential component of BSC's plans to restore profitability at the expense of steel workers.

Speeches by ISTC leader Bill Sirs at the Labour Party and elsewhere have been full of sound and fury but signified nothing in terms of a tangible fight.

And TGWU National Organiser Ron Todd—who thumped the rostrum in Brighton declaring that the TGWU "will not accept one redundancy, or one closure", and announced that the union would "demand to look at BSC's books: we will challenge their whole notion of profitability"—has done nothing to build mass action to save the Corby plant.

This passive acceptance is in keeping with the consistent record of union leaders in every major closure so far—be it British Shipbuilders, British Leyland, Singer sewing machines or a host of other plants throughout the country.

But BSC unions have the power to resist: they have the strength through strike action to shut down production of this industry that is so crucial to the balance of payments of British capitalism and to production throughout the engineering industry.

They have the numbers and the power to picket and mobilise blacking action on the docks to prevent scab steel stocks being brought in to break their action.

Such a strike would bring the job-slashing Tory government to its knees: it would easily create conditions for the defence of jobs in Corby, Shotton and other steel plants, and the imposition of work sharing on full pay throughout the industry.

And at the same time elected trade union committees should be fighting for access, to

the full accounts of BSC to find which private employers and bankers receive the benefit from its colossal £300 million "losses".

Such an examination will point to the precarious future faced by every steel worker if this Tory government and its plans for the industry are not confronted.

Small percentage

Let nobody be fooled. If all-out national strike action is not taken now to defend jobs in Corby and Shotton, then these sackings massive as they are—will only be a small percentage of the jobs that will be axed throughout the industry.

Those union leaders that obstruct such a policy have already consigned thousands of their members to the growing dole queues: they must be fought and removed before they turn Shotton and Corby into ghost towns.

For this task, a principled, socialist leadership must be built in the steel industry.



Bill Sirs

JOIN OUR FIGHT AGAINST TORIES!

Returned to office after five years of Labour betrayals, the Tory government has immediately begun wielding a sharpened axe on jobs, conditions and social services. Trade Union rights face imminent legal attack. Prices are already beginning to rocket upwards.

Plum sectors of state industry will be handed to the Tories' profiteering big business backers; and the pay rises to police and armed forces mark only the prelude to increased state violence against pickets and anti-fascists, and an intensified army crackdown in the occupied North of Ireland.

The Callaghan-Healey leadership has made it clear that it will oppose any perspective other than settling down and meekly accepting five years of Tory devastation.

And, though they have once more dusted off their near-forgotten "socialist" speeches, Labour's "left-wing" MPs have continued to duck away from any fight to remove Callaghan.

TUC leaders, too, have set out to establish a basis for collaboration with Thatcher and the Tory cabinet, paralleling their anti-working class alliance with Wilson and then Callaghan.

But the working class has experienced and overcome such betrayals before—to topple Heath's union-bashing government in 1974, and smash through Callaghan's reactionary Phase 4 of wage controls in a series of monumental pay battles last winter.

These experiences are not dead. They point to the way that jobs, social services and hard-won union rights can be defended against renewed Tory attacks.

But a principled, revolutionary leadership is needed if the Labour traitors, the TUC collaborators and their hangers-on in the Communist Party are to be exposed and pushed aside, and the mass struggles mobilised that can defeat and remove the Tory government.

Such a leadership must fight day in and day out for a programme of transitional demands which, starting from today's conditions and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers to grasp the necessity for socialist revolution.

And in taking up democratic demands—such as an end to racial and sexual discrimination, it must show the crucial role that must be played by the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class capable of leading the struggle for the emancipation of mankind.

And it must fight on an international basis—mobilising solidarity for anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles—whether in Ireland, in Southern Africa or elsewhere throughout the world, and drawing strength and political lessons from revolutionary upheavals such as that which ousted the hated Shah in Iran.

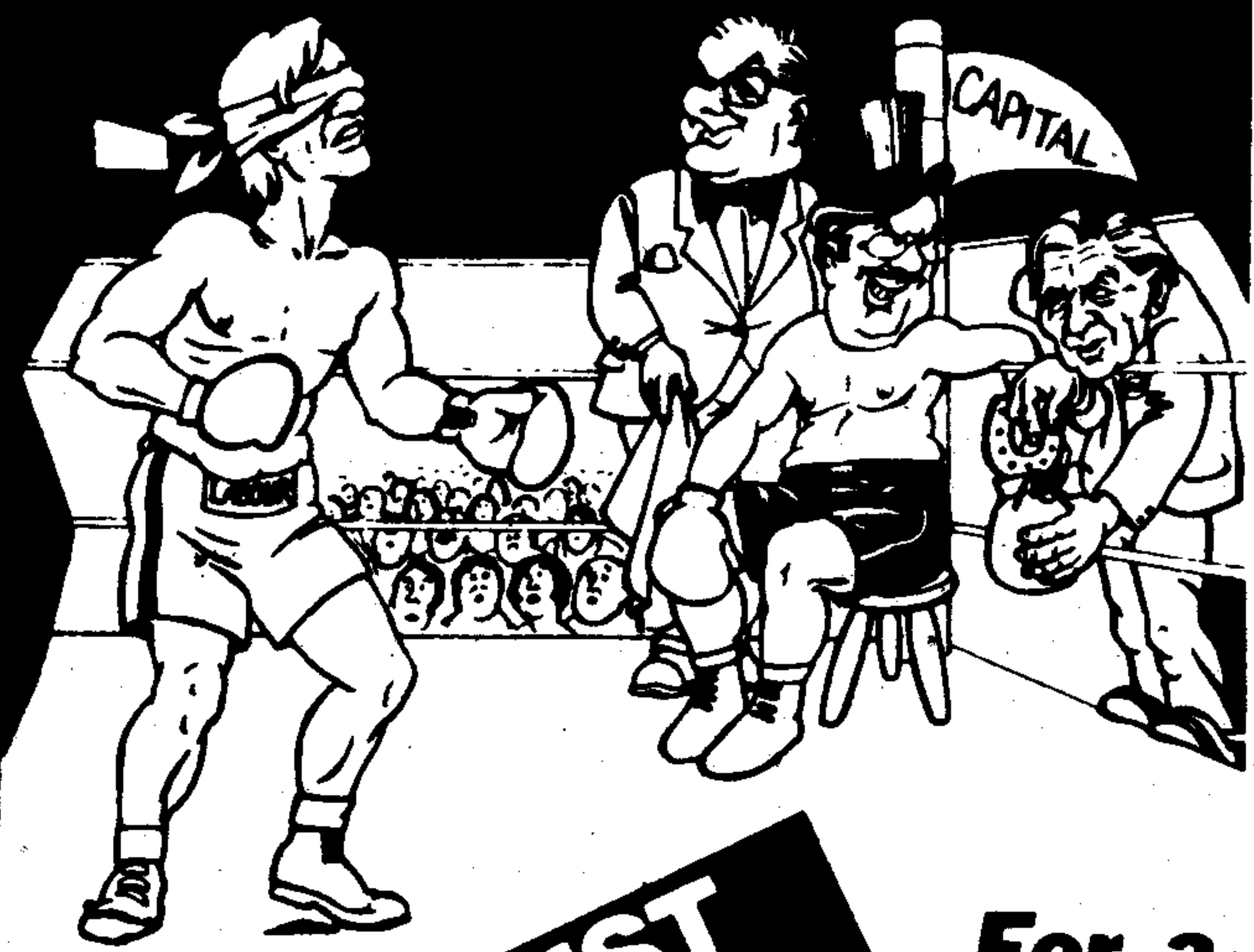
This means fighting for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

This method of approach, rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, or concessions to the labour bureaucracy, is the method fought for by the Workers Socialist League.

The next period will see major class struggles in Britain. A principled, Marxist leadership is essential. Our movement though strong in programme remains small in numbers.

JOIN US and take forward the struggle for socialism!

DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!



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Talbot bosses put the boot in

How is the management operating?

The foremen had been briefed that they had to change their role, be more forceful and stamp authority on the situation.

The company told them they didn't like the fact that the only liaison between management and the shop floor was the shop stewards.

They wanted to cut out the stewards and establish monthly meetings between foremen and the shop floor.

Was there anything in the pay deal which helped them?

The return to work agreement had stated that we would accept flexibility on mobility of labour. They used this to bypass the stewards and give instructions to individual workers.

The track was not running and they were telling people to do all sorts of things.

One young worker was told to clean office windows. He went over there and because the staff were taking the piss out of him he refused to do the work.

Are the stewards accepting this sort of thing?

Yes. But the company wanted to suspend him and this was going a bit too far even for the stewards who were going along with management on flexibility. A Joint Shop Stewards Meeting was held and the militant stewards argued that the company was using the return to work agreement to bypass the procedure laid down in the Plant Agreement.

We said that if the company suspended him we wanted a mass meeting on the company's refusal to deal with us.

What was the response of the convenors to this?

They weren't there. The Deputy Convenors left the meeting and told management what we thought. They backed down on the suspension.

They also called the foremen together and told them they had to inform stewards as to what was happening. But you've still got foremen attempting to wield the big stick.

Part of the return to work deal was discussion around a bonus scheme. What is happening to this?

In the document it says that an independent working party would be set up.

The convenors have insisted that the negotiations should go through the Plant Negotiating Committee. They've been talking to management for three weeks.

Last Thursday they called the first official stewards meeting to give a report back.

What are the proposals?

During the dispute and at the end of it a total of about

Socialist Press interviews a shop steward who is a supporter of the Ryton Action Group on the situation in Talbot after the defeat of the pay strikes.

240 left the plant. But then the ending of the night shift cut out about 90 to 100 jobs.

Management have taken on about 90 in the last three weeks. This leaves us about 40 short of the previous levels.

They say if we reached 110% effort without any extra workers being taken on then we might get an £8.35 bonus—but even this is not guaranteed.

What have the Convenors argued for?

They said that they hadn't had time to put our case—they spent three weeks just listening to management. They just read out the proposals. We did not even have a copy so no decision was taken.

Since then management have held a meeting of shop stewards to urge us to accept the proposals.

They pushed the 'viability' argument and talked about the threat from imported cars. That's quite a joke seeing as Talbot is responsible for importing large numbers of cars from their European plants. They ended up their talk by inviting all the "gentlemen" to join them at the bar.

How would you sum up the situation?

Management are going all out to impose speed-ups and the foremen are on the offensive.

Everyday senior management stand on the gates to stop people going home early. On Wednesday they suspended the Chairman of the JSSC for a day for leaving early. This apparently didn't even merit a JSSC meeting.

What can be done about it?

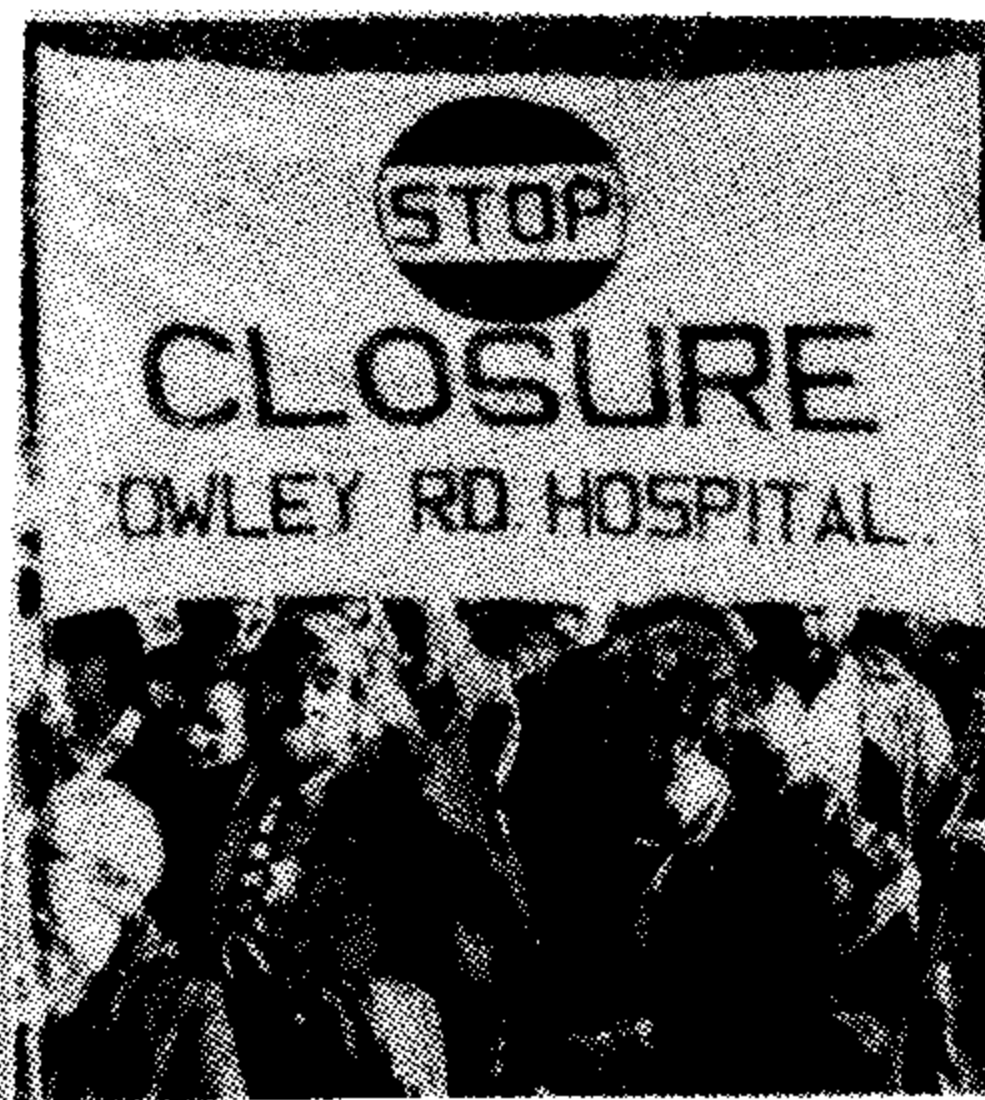
The guys on the shop floor are not as demoralised as the management might think they are. They won't take the things management want out of them.

The situation is much the same at Stoke and the Ryton Action Committee (which was set up during the "shoddy work" strike at Ryton) is confident that a joint struggle can be established across both plants.

The return to work agreement should be thrown out and the way opened up for a new offensive on wages.

Cowley Road thumbs down

For the last eighteen months Oxford's main geriatric hospital at Cowley Road, under threat of closure and dispersal of its beds and facilities, has provided an object lesson in both Area Health Authority tactics and in the treachery of a local Union leadership committed to cosy collaboration with this same Authority.



The only meeting expressing opposition was organised by the Community Health Council, attracting 400 people. Yet the workers in the hospital who could have given concrete force to this opposition were themselves given no direction by their union leaders.

As a direct result of this treachery, while the Appeal against closure was still being processed, the AHA was able, unopposed, to remove all acute patients from the hospital and close the out-patients' department.

By this time, the closure plans had gone through the appeals procedure up to the Minister of Health, who appointed a one-man 'independent' inquiry by a Professor Wilcocks.

The outcome was a body blow. This 'independent' Professor could not consider the needs of geriatric patients outside the financial limits of the Tory cuts policy.

Meanwhile a GP on the hospital support committee has obtained a pledge from 25 local GPs that they will give medical cover themselves in defiance of the AHA should the staff decide to keep the hospital open.

And support from other NHS union branches has already begun to come in. Meetings of staff being held this week must build on this strength and look towards keeping their hospital open under their control. There is now no other alternative than the complete dispersal of Oxford's geriatric service.

BL ballot scandal

AS WE go to press the BL ballot on the acceptance or rejection of 25,000 redundancies and the closure of 13 plants is near completion. Within 24 hours the result will be known.

The management-organised ballot lives as a scandal in the trade union movement. 165,000 workers are being urged to vote 25,000 out of their jobs and the leadership of the Confederation are strongly urging a yes vote.

In one recent interview Edwardes also warned about the consequences of occupation of the threatened plants.

But to their discredit no-one in those plants has mentioned occupations.

So why then does Edwardes mention it? Because it is the only policy which can seriously affect his plan.

He fears occupations and he sees a yes vote in the ballot as a way of ensuring there will be no such action.

But a 'yes' vote cannot be in any way binding on workers in the plants to be closed.

Only they can take a decision on whether or not to fight.

It is essential that the struggle to defend the 25,000 jobs goes ahead whatever the outcome of the ballot.

The TGWU, whose Executive have said that they will support any group of members who opposes the Edwardes plan, must be pressed to stick to that decision and make it clear that the result of the ballot will have no bearing on their policy as a union.

WARWICKS CAMPAIGN

The Tory Council in Warwickshire are enthusiastically following the instructions of their friends in the government to attack the basic social services in their area.

Among the cuts they plan to implement are the loss of over 200 teaching posts, a £2 million cut in school meals, milk and transport, school amalgamations are being discussed and it is likely that fees will be introduced for nursery education.

Staff are to go unreplaced in all the important services and school furniture and equipment is being cut back drastically.

The cuts are to be voted on formally at the full council meeting on November 20. Outside the meeting will be a mass lobby organised by the trade unions in the area.

The Warwickshire NALGO branch has initiated a united campaign of all public sector

unions and the Coventry Association of Trades Councils has passed a resolution from Nuneaton Trades Council calling for the setting up of anti-cuts committees throughout the county.

On October 22 a public meeting organised by Nuneaton Trades Council heard speakers from the NUT, NALGO, SPCS, POEU and TGWU urge support for the Nuneaton Against the Cuts Campaign (NACC).

The immediate focus of the Nuneaton campaign is the fight against the closure of the Attleborough Grange Old People's Home. This closure is so unpopular that many Tories are opposed to it and it is possible that the Council will keep it open.

If Attleborough Grange is not reprieved at the forthcoming meeting of the WCC Policy and Advisory Committee there must be a campaign for occupation and supporting strikes to stop the closure.

NUPE-NO PLAN FOR ACTION

With a blatant attempt to stifle discussion on a strategy against the cuts, the London division of NUPE held a rally on 22 October at Portchester Hall.

The rally was called to prepare for the demonstrations on 7 and 28 November and included Jack Dromey, from SERTUC and Ron Keating, NUPE assistant general secretary, on the platform.

Less than 100 NUPE stewards turned up to the rally—not bad considering that notification was sent out only a week beforehand.

Jack Dromey, the star attraction, gave an exact replica of his despondent message to the SERTUC conference on the previous Saturday.

Keating was equally pessimistic, and the whole selection of bureaucrats on the platform seemed to be in a different world from the actual fight which is already taking place against the cuts, with local strikes and mobilisations occurring more and more frequently against hospital closures and the rundown of public services.

Out of the handful of speakers who were allowed the floor, almost every one demanded to know why NUPE had refused to call a strike for the November 7 demonstration.

John Seymour, from Camden, warned that the leadership were treading the same path as during the low pay dispute by refusing to give a clear lead and simply allowing branches to take action 'if they felt like it'.

And Ray Varnes, a lay Divisional Council member, asked why there had been no mention of the much publicised campaign against pay beds since the annual conference.

A campaign must be launched throughout London NUPE branches for a genuine delegate conference on the cuts, where the membership can put forward resolutions and plan an actual strategy to fight the Tories.

Paddington protest

A demonstration is being planned by hospitals in the Paddington area to coincide with a visit by the NW Thames Regional Health Authority on 30 October.

The demonstration is being staged against the vicious series of health service cuts planned in the area, and in support of the solid resistance offered, especially around St. Mary's, Harrow Road and St. Stephen's Hospital.

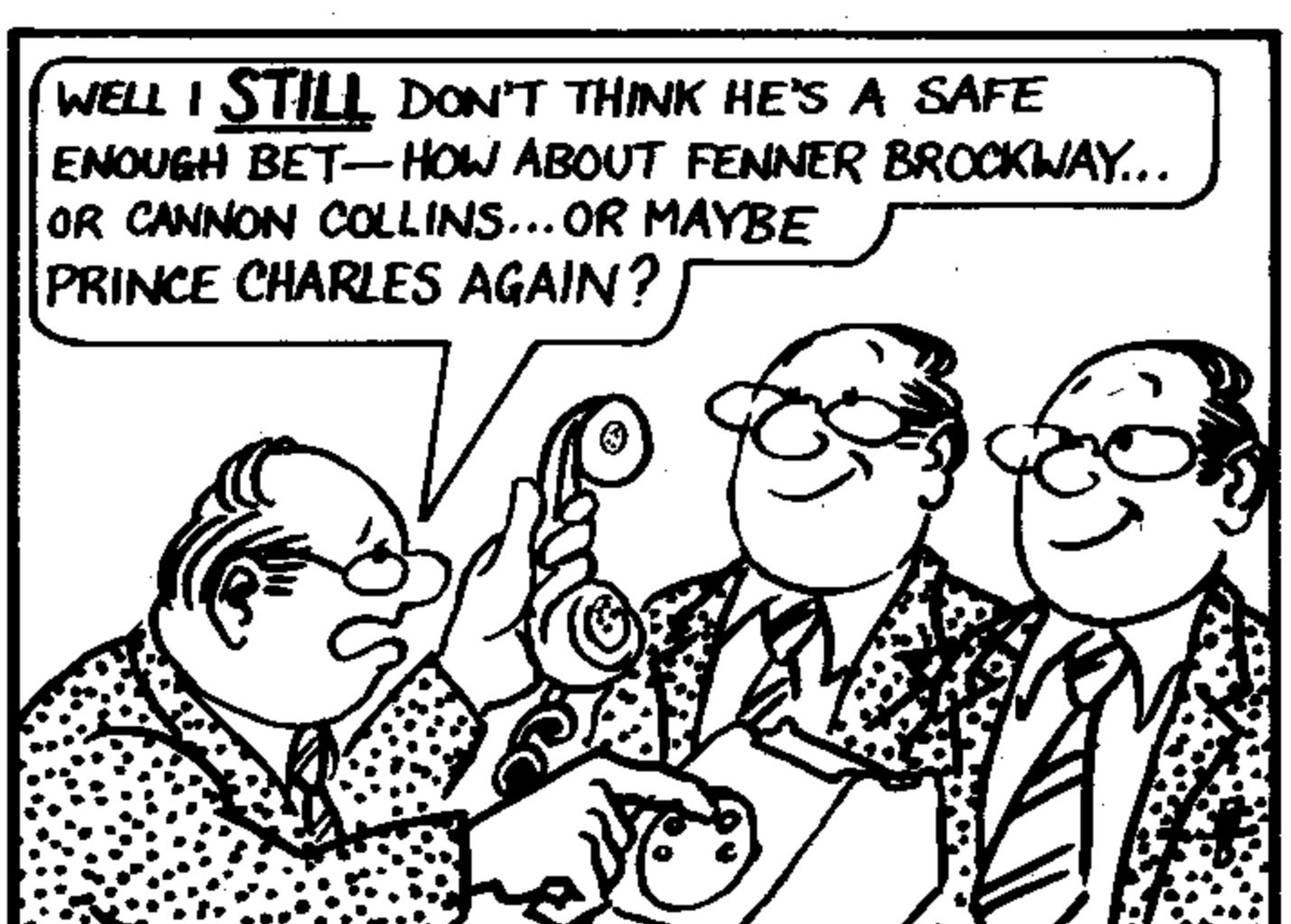
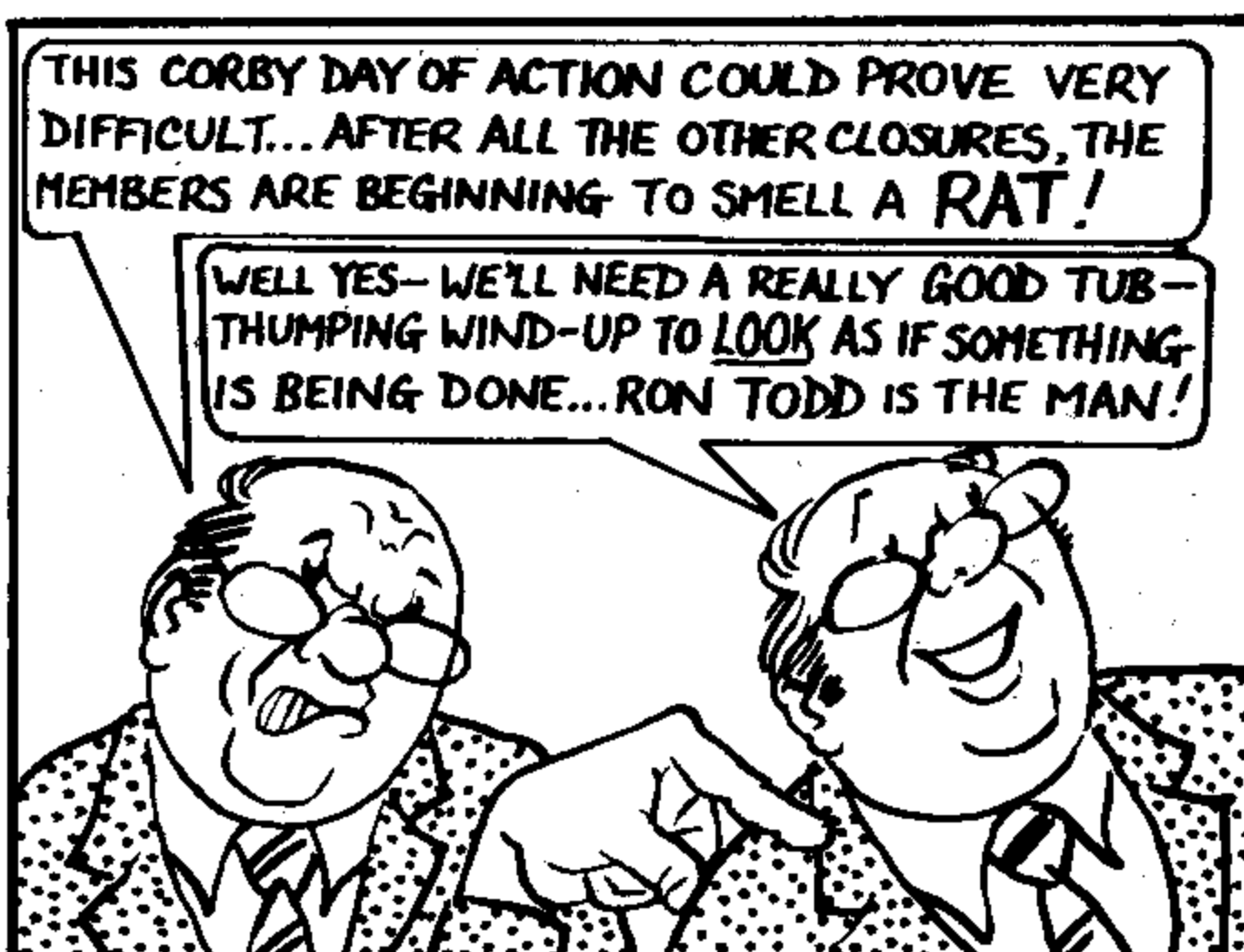
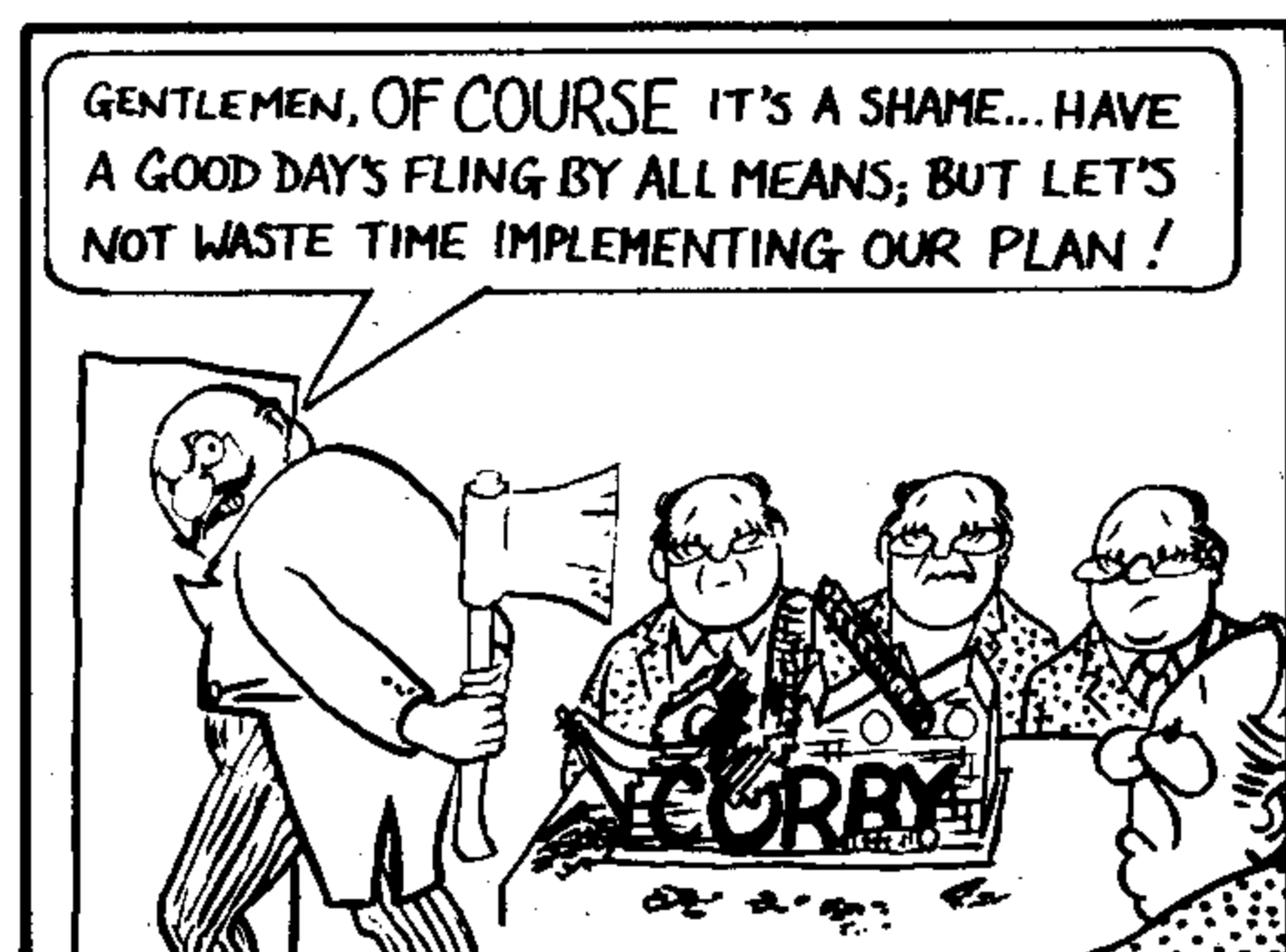
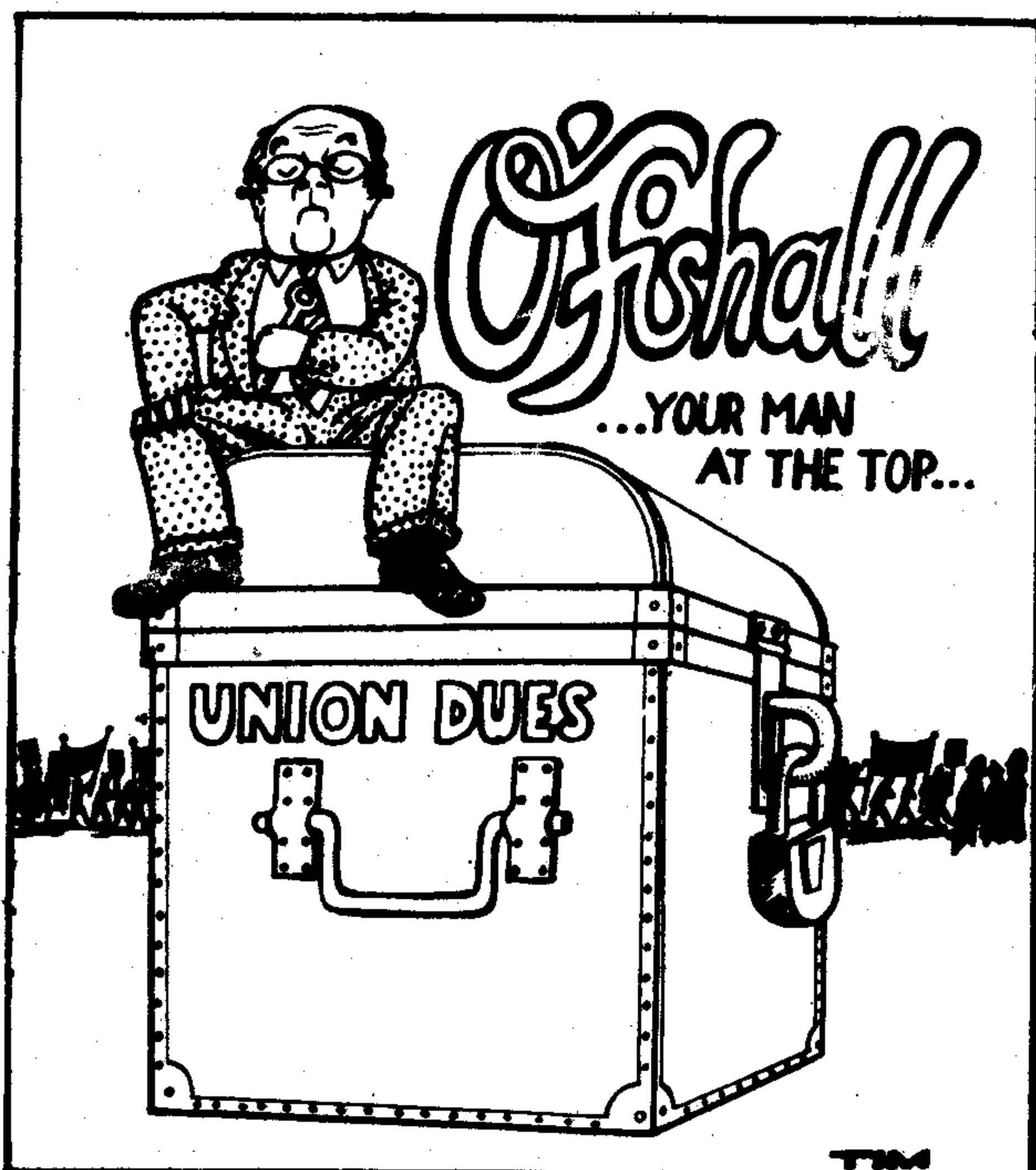
Ealing AHA holds back

West London's Ealing, Hounslow and Hammersmith AHA decided at a meeting on 24 October to postpone cuts of £3.7 million from the Health Budget.

In practice, this means that services this year are to be 'pruned' by some £350,000, while the commitment to drastically reduce the budget by 1981 will be honoured.

The immediate importance of the decision is that 3 hospitals in the West London area are for the while saved from the axe; as are several specialist units which were also immediately threatened.

The question will, of course, be decided ultimately by the strength of national resistance to health cuts which in itself will be decided not by non-elected rump AHAs but by the unions in a local area giving a firm lead to the struggle.



SOCIALIST PRESS



ALL OUT NOV 7, 28



Part of October 28 demonstration

Despite the potentially huge response against the cuts amongst the working class it is clear that the union leadership are doing their best to prevent any open confrontation with the Tory government.

Although the SE Region TUC and the London division of NUPE are sponsoring the demonstration and lobby of Parliament called by Lambeth Council on November 7, they are refusing to call for strike action on that day.

Instead they are merely calling for 'support' from trade unionists and, unless there is intense pressure from union branches, they are likely to put out the same half-hearted call for the bigger, national mobilisation on November 28.

The demonstrations on 7 and 28 November are likely to be large, but without an official call for strike action they will do little more than irritate the axemen of the Thatcher govern-

ment. The bureaucrats of SERTUC, headed by Jack Dromey, are talking of a "Day of Action" in the New Year which will "possibly be held during working hours".

But how many hospitals and public amenities will be closed by the time this "Day of Action" is organised?

How many sacrificial lambs are Dromey and the TUC prepared to offer Thatcher before directing the enormous militancy of the working class into an open confrontation with the Tories?

Strikes are taking place now against the cuts, and despite the weakness of the leadership, many branches will be taking strike action on 7 November.

A campaign must be launched immediately through union branches for a national strike to be called on November 28, and this should be seen as a step towards all-out strike action against the policies of the Tory government.

Kurds beat back Khomeini

Even while they declaim their support for the struggles of the Palestinian people, the religious bigots of the Iranian regime are still working to massacre the struggles of the Kurdish people against national oppression.

But Khomeini's strategy of military occupation and repression has failed to crush the Kurds into submission.

Returning from the hills, militants of the Kurdish nationalist movement have once again seized control of the streets of Mahabad.

As army units were powerless to move out from the barracks in which they were besieged, Khomeini's forces imposed a blockade on all supplies to the town and negotiators scurried to and fro.

After dire warnings from military chiefs, the religious tyrants have been forced to recognise their inability to defeat the Kurdish forces and the necessity of diplomatic methods.

After eight months of strenuous and violent activity, Khomeini has still proved unable to impose a stable dictatorship in Iran against the opposition from the nationalist movements of the Kurds and the Arabs in Khuzestan, and in face of the still undefeated though massively confused strength of the powerful Iranian proletariat.

CORRIE BILL RELIES ON TUC TREACHERY

If the Tories' anti-abortion Bill becomes law, it will be because the TUC refuses to mobilise the colossal feeling on the issue in all-out action against the Thatcher government.

This was shown when tens of thousands marched through London last weekend demanding an end to the Corrie Bill which will attack abortion rights for women.

Police estimates of a demonstration of 17,000 were laughable. The TUC estimate of 40,000 also seemed about half the real figure.

Trade unions

It took more than 2½ hours for the thousands of banners to pass any one point.

The largest contingent of banners were from the trade unions. The next largest from the women's groups. In a tightly and bureaucratically controlled march, all political banners were pushed to the back.

But at the end of the day what has happened to the fight against the Corrie Bill?

If impressive marches would stop Tory reactionary measures

the Corrie Bill would fall.

But they won't.

The capitalist press virtually ignored the march while giving prominence to a march of a few hundred religious bigots demanding an end to all abortions.

Speeches in Trafalgar Square, heard by only a fraction of the demonstrators since they started when about half of the massive march was still on the streets were remarkable for one stark fact.

The TUC had invited a Tory MP to speak from their platform!

Anthony Nelson, Tory MP for Chichester delivered an attack on the Corrie Bill little different from the majority of his co-speakers.

But despite small scale shouting when he appeared on the platform, he was allowed to continue his speech unharrassed by the group of feminists who had heckled earlier speakers because the Women's Liberation banner was not on the platform.

So a man whose party has launched a massive class attack on working class women, who is entirely in support of the millions of pounds worth of cuts which will drive women back into the home (and will curb abortion facilities over and above the Corrie Bill) is allowed to masquerade as a champion of women's rights!

This symbolised the cross class position of the TUC campaign.

Not one speaker had a word to say about the large number of Labour MPs who will back Corrie; and no demand for a three line Labour whip was made.

Jo Richardson, darling of the left, said that 'unfortunately' the Labour conference demand for extended abortion rights had not been carried out by the Labour government.

She wound up her speech by calling on the demonstrators to write to their MPs!

The need to link the issue of abortion rights to the other 'attacks on the working class is not met by putting a TUC

stamp on a campaign which fails to identify the class nature of the attack and the necessity for a class response.

The TUC has no answer to the petty bourgeois feminists who ask what the TUC has ever done to extend women's rights on abortion. It has done nothing.

But neither do the petty bourgeois feminists have any answer to the Tory attacks on working class women.

The National Abortion Campaign, while it has taken a step towards the trade unions, still sees them as a 'useful ally' and a means of mobilising, not as the means of placing class demands at the centre of the campaign.

NAC is calling for strike action on 5 February against the Bill. The TUC must be forced to give official backing.

But the campaign against the Corrie Bill is one aspect of the

fight that must be taken up against all the Tory attacks on the working class. Union branches must demand that 5 February be made the long-promised TUC "Day of Action" against the cuts, and the occasion for massive strike action throughout the public sector and the whole labour movement.

If the Bill becomes law then abortion clinics set up by working class organisations and defended by guarantees of strike action in the event of prosecution must be fought for.

The thousands of trade union banners show that such a perspective can be won within the workers' movement.

Anything else will lead thousands of women into the blind alley of feminist politics, Tory cuts and backstreet abortion.



Anti-abortion: Thatcher



Against action: Murray

Prague show trials

Hungarian experience. Partic of a reconstructed Trotskyist Fourth International are essential to lead the struggle for political revolution throughout Eastern Europe.

Here Peter Uhl's real weakness emerges. His bravery is clear. But in failing to fight for a Trotskyist party, and seeking instead simply to link up with forces fighting for democratic demands in Czechoslovakia, he is headed precisely in the wrong direction.

It is the history of the communist movement, not the covenants of the United Nations that point the way forward for the Czech masses.

Indeed many will now denounce the Czech trials. We must be clear that we in no way agree with those capitalist "democrats" who repress workers in their own countries and wish to reintroduce capitalism to Czechoslovakia.

Nor do we align ourselves with the reformist hypocrites of the Labour Party NEC, who

while condoning the Diplock Courts, torture and army murder in Northern Ireland, denounce the Prague trials.

Nor can anything but contempt be reserved for those "Eurocommunist" CPs in France, Spain, Italy and Britain that seek to appease anti-communist "public opinion" by denouncing the trials.

In fighting for the dropping of the sentences, and the rehabilitation of all anti-bureaucratic fighters, the Workers Socialist League takes up the struggle for the independent revolutionary interests of the world's working class.

We call not for UN-style "democracy" but for political revolution in the deformed and degenerated workers' states to reassert the power of the working class through workers and soldiers councils.

And to lead this struggle we fight for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

FUND

As we go to press there are two days to go to the end of the month and we still need £211.91—a tall order but it is essential that we get every penny in if we are not to run into debt. We may not yet be at the stage where you will know that we failed to make the target because the paper hasn't appeared, but we cannot afford to fall short of our £750 target month after month.

A good start to the November fund is therefore essential if we are to avoid the sort of last minute rush that we are faced with today.

Meanwhile, see next week's issue to find out if we got our money this time.

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