

SOCIALIST PRESS

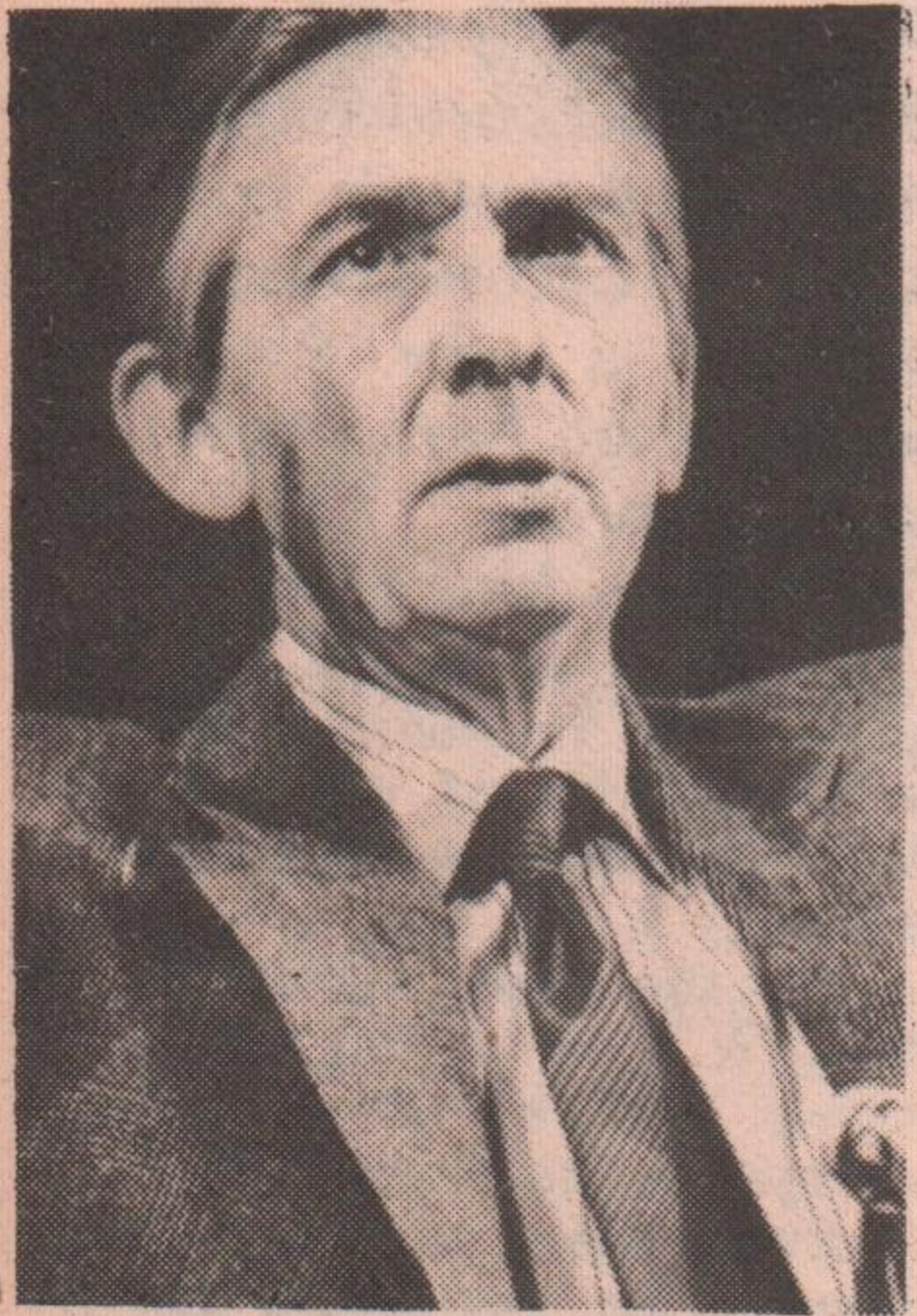


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What makes Murray run?



Murray

PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

Questioned on BBC television last week, TUC General Secretary Len Murray was vigorous in disavowing any intention to mobilise action to bring down the Thatcher government.

"I would never be party to attempts to smash up a democratically elected government", he puffed—to the delight of employers everywhere.

What is it that scares Murray? Is it perhaps the thought that the workers' movement might be defeated?

No! On the contrary,

Murray's overwhelming fear is that a General Strike *could* topple the Thatcher government, and thus put the trade union and Labour leaders firmly on the spot, as workers demanded policies to defend their class interests. And, as Murray admitted:

"If we did that, we would not know what to do with the power we had got!"

Murray's entire energies during 1980 have as a result been directed towards *preventing* a spread of the steel strike to other sections of workers engaged in pay talks or threatened with mass sackings.

The TUC leadership's absolute

dread of being thrown into the front line by the action of their members is vividly reminiscent of the capitulation in 1919 of the "Trade Alliance" of miners, rail and transport union leaders to a point blank challenge from Liberal Prime Minister Lloyd George.

The encounter is describe in Aneurin Bevan's book *In Place of Fear*: Lloyd George stressed to the union leaders that:

"If you carry out your threat and strike, then you will defeat us.

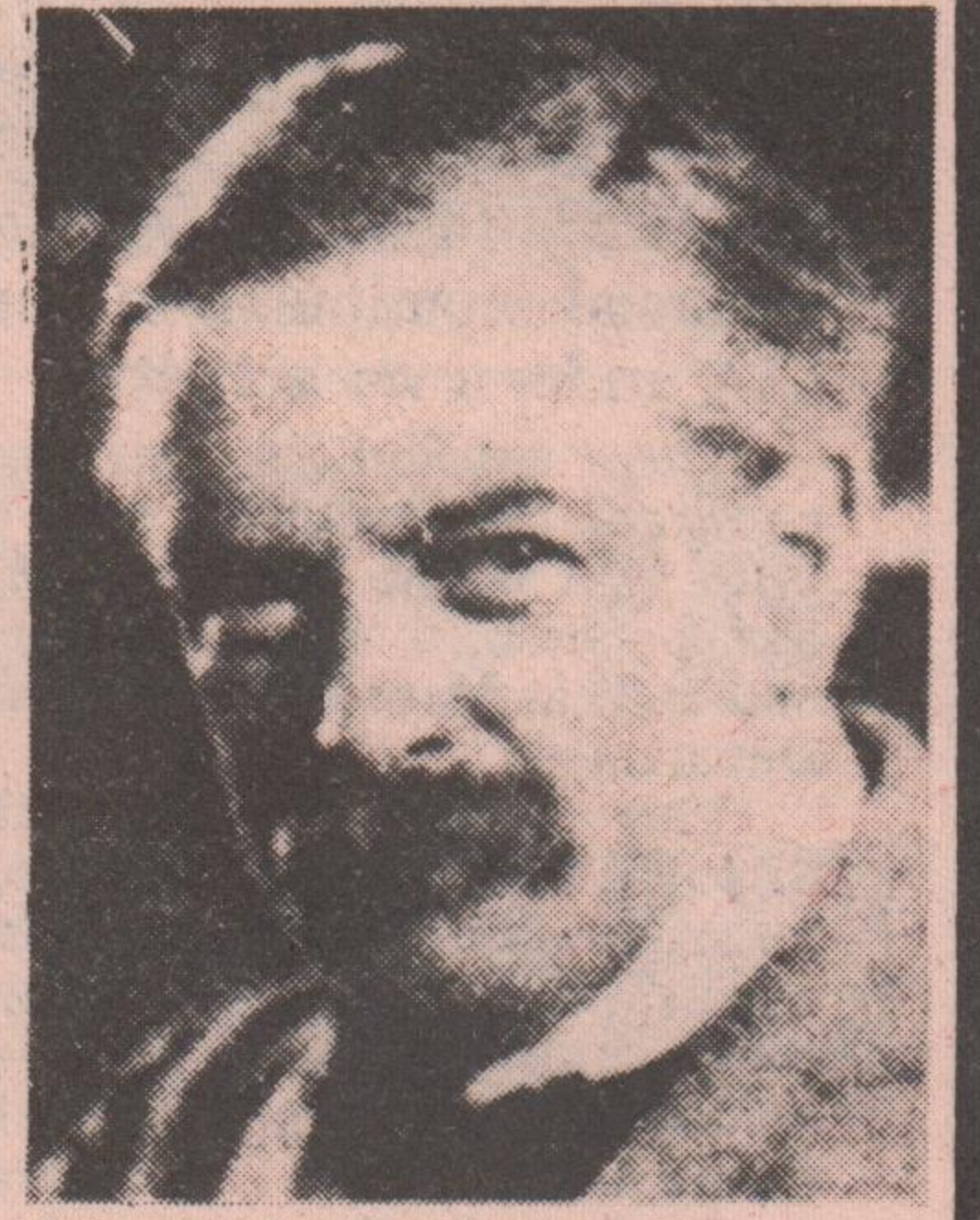
But if you do so, (...) have you weighed the consequences? (...)

For if a force arises in the

state which is stronger than the state itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the state or withdraw and accept the authority of the state. Gentlemen," asked the Prime Minister quietly, "have you considered, and if you have, are you ready?"

"From that moment on," said [miners' leader] Robert Smillie, "we were beaten and we knew we were. After this the General Strike of 1926 was really an anti-climax."

The task facing workers in 1980 is to construct a new leadership in the labour movement that will not shrink from such a challenge!



Lloyd George

EDWARDES MOVES TO SMASH THE UNIONS



The chips are down for 100,000 British Leyland car workers. Last week management announced that they intend to impose their insulting 5%-with-strings pay deal over the heads of the trade unions.

It will be imposed by *sacking* anyone that refuses to comply with its provisions.

This action, taken despite rejection of the offer by the shopfloor in a postal ballot, marks a new move by BL to break the strength of the unions as a prelude to an even more savage onslaught on working conditions.

The 92-page booklet of strings to the pay deal effectively strip away every major agreement established by unions in BL during 30 years of struggle.

Management have now announced that as of April 8 this package will be unilaterally imposed—along with the



Hawley

CALL A NATIONAL STRIKE!

punish 5% increase for manual workers and 10% for skilled men.

Workers who clock in as usual on April 8 will be deemed to have accepted this ultimatum. And there is a blunt management threat to sack any militants who fight for action to defy this vicious blackmail.

According to managing director Ray Horrocks:

"We are making it clear that any action that employees may take to prevent implementation will be dealt with firmly and those who cause disruption will be subjected to disciplinary action."

The management threat—aimed at each individual worker, is unmistakable: knuckle under or face the sack.

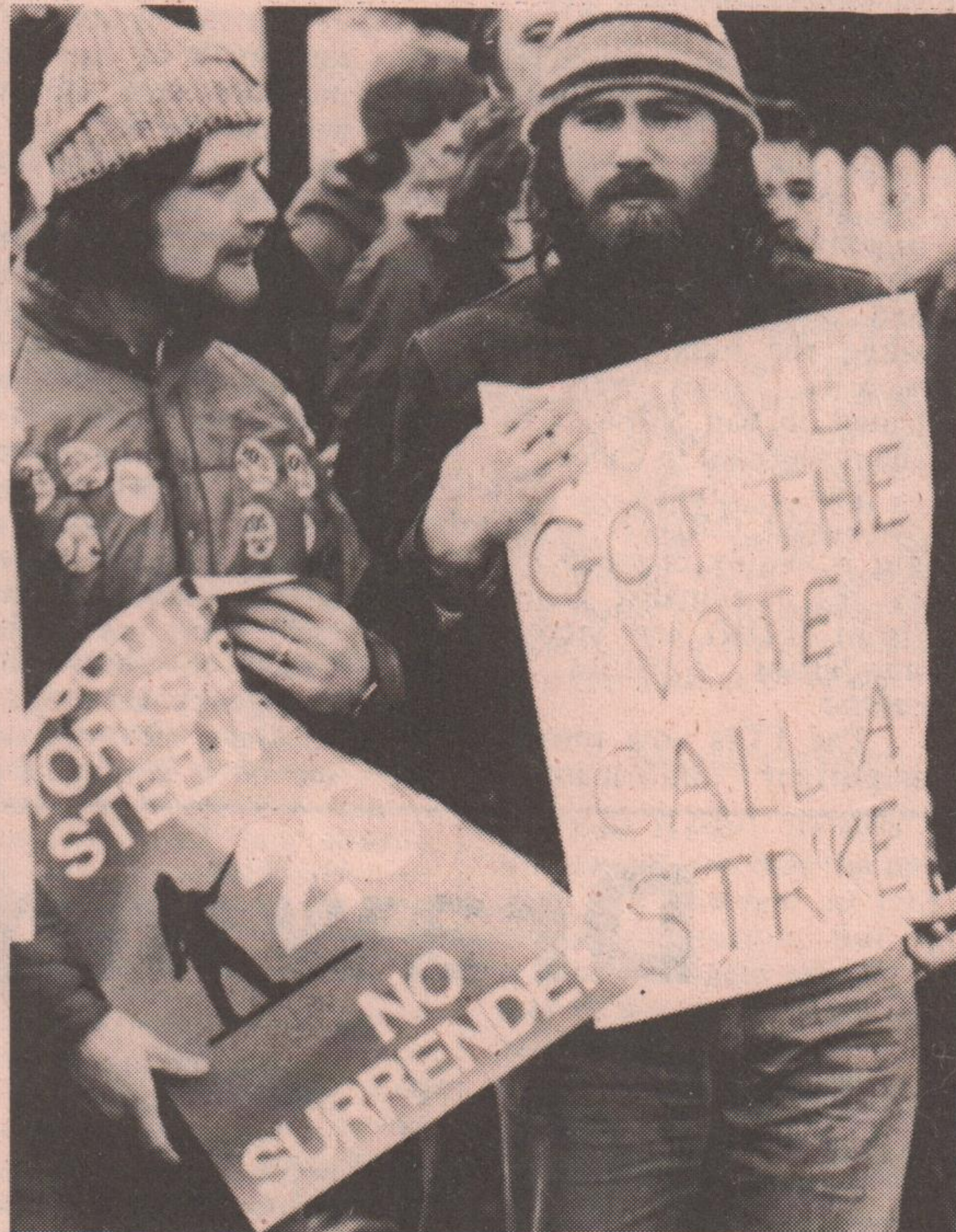
If they succeed in this move, there will be a wave of victimisations of militant stewards throughout the combine, as management move to intimidate

the slightest opposition to management dictates, and thus drastically drive up the rate of exploitation on the shop floor and press through further sackings.

This is not the first time in recent years that BL has stood in the vanguard of the bosses' offensive against shop floor wages, jobs and working conditions.

Collaboration

And at each step—in leading the way on the victimisation of militant stewards; on imposition of class collaborationist "worker participation"; on the use of the "viability" argument to press home wholesale cutbacks, sackings and closures; and in the use of postal ballots to outflank the trade union movement—BL management have been able to count on the active collabora-



BL and BSC workers lobby for strike action

tion of union officials and the spineless convenors on the Combine Committee.

Unhappy

This latest onslaught is no exception: chief union negotiator Grenville Hawley responded to Edwardes' ultimatum not with the necessary moves for immediate all-out strike action on the wage claim and against the strings, but by declaring that:

"Of course we are not happy about what BL management have done [...]. At next week's meeting, which will include union officers at national level, we will decide on our next move."

Yet the negotiation of the BL pay review—due to have been settled last November 1—has been characterised above all by the repeated *refusal* of union officials to call strike action.

And while convenors have shrunk from actually accepting the 92-page document, they voted 4-1 only a few weeks ago to shelve a proposal for all-out strike action.

Danger

Now the danger is that at meetings this week the same union leaders will simply declare that they do not accept the Edwardes ultimatum, and talk of fighting the new management package "as and when it is

imposed". This would leave the struggle to individual sections in individual plants—creating ideal conditions for wholesale victimisations and a full-blooded management offensive.

Going it alone

Already the victimisation of Derek Robinson and the successive betrayals of BL convenors and officials mean that workers in individual plants are understandably reluctant to contemplate "going it alone" in the fight against Edwardes.

But it is clear that BL workers are far from unique in facing such a crisis. Steelworkers are now in their 13th week of struggle against a similar management offensive. And at the weekend Post Office management announced their intention to ape Edwardes and impose a new productivity package on postal workers.

As we go to press, we hear that convenors in Jaguars are to hold mass meetings, recommending all-out strike action from Friday against Edwardes' ultimatum. This offers a much-needed lead to all BL plants.

Similar mass meetings must be held throughout the combine.

Defeat Edwardes

Edwardes' moves are designed to break the back of the unions: if successful they will pave the way for even greater unemployment and plunging living standards.

The fight must be taken up at plant and national level for all-out strike action alongside the steelworkers to defeat Edwardes' Tory-backed offensive and spearhead the fight for a General Strike to bring down the Thatcher government.



INTERNATIONAL

SLAUGHTER OF MILITANTS IN EL SALVADOR

Reports in the last week from El Salvador confirm that for the US imperialists the country is no longer simply one of the several post-Nicaragua trouble-spots in Central America to be handled through routine financial manipulation and CIA undercover activity.

Class conflict in this tiny country has reached such a pitch that in the last ten days it has become a major political and military front for the State Department.

This has brought the dispatch of counter-insurgency teams, new armour and construction equipment, and even preparations for an invasion involving not only the Guatemalan and Honduran armies but also former members of Somoza's National Guard (who have been re-trained by the Israelis in special camps on the Honduran border with Salvador).

All the indications are that, in order to stem the tide of revolution in Central America, Washington will employ in El Salvador a widespread rural search-and-destroy campaign very similar to 'Operation Phoenix' in Vietnam.

Clearly the move to 'Vietnamise' Central America, albeit as yet on a limited scale, has been taken far more readily as a result of the shift of global class forces following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

But it also reflects very closely the escalation of class conflict in El Salvador itself.

In the last six months over a thousand workers and peasants have been killed by the military and assassination squads, though full civil war has yet to break out.

The first response of Carter and Vance was to organise a coup by young officers last October to oust the inefficient dictator Romero and institute a number of piecemeal reforms which, it was thought, would provide sufficient political space and time to rearrange the defence of capital against the increasingly militant and politically organised workers and peasants.

The Christian and Social Democrats as well as the Communist Party's electoral front UDN (National Democratic Union) eagerly joined the Junta with the backing of the small but significant industrial sector of capital.

Centred in San Salvador, the political and economic interests of this group are different from the big landowners—at least insofar as they are able to perceive the economic benefits from an agrarian reform which was first pushed by the US in 1976.

That attempt, however, was stalled by the landowners, represented by the sector of the army led by Romero who came to power in 1977.

Since the formation of the Central American Common Market under Kennedy's Alliance for Progress in the early 60s El Salvador has become the industrial centre of the region (while Nicaragua was the leading supplier of raw materials).

But the working class still remains small compared to the peasantry, and the land question is of critical importance.

The ruling oligarchy's response to the failure of the coffee market in the 1930s was the infamous slaughter of over 25,000 peasants in 1932, ever since then independent peasant unions have been outlawed.

With the growing capitalisation of agriculture the peasantry has been progressively driven off



Thousands of supporters of the BPR march through San Salvador

the land and forced into the rural proletariat on the cotton and coffee plantations owned by the '14 families'.

In 1961 30,000 peasants (11% of the total) were landless; in 1975 166,000 (or 40%) had no plot to work.

In 1967 the oligarchy set up the 20,000 strong paramilitary organisation ORDEN to counter the new radical peasant unions and police the countryside—while the bulk of the official security forces were concentrated in San Salvador to keep the proletariat in check.

The Junta officially disbanded ORDEN in October but it simply changed its name to the Nationalist Democratic Front (FDN) and increased its murderous activities in the campo.

The FDN now provides the important informants that

accompany the US-led reform teams touring the estates to point out union leaders who are taken off and shot.

On the estate of Colima, 40 km north of San Salvador, 24 peasants were shot two weeks ago on the very day that they were receiving the fruits of land redistribution.

In the department of Chalatenango the army ringed one village with a bush fire to prevent escape before they moved in to kill 40 people and abduct many others.

The US aim is to incorporate the FDN into its rural repressive apparatus and it is building three major military bases—complete with airfields and fleets of helicopters—on which to centre its counter-insurgency campaign.

Major Roberto d'Abuison, second in command of the FDN

and much given to playing Chilean butcher Pinochet's declaration of 11 September 1973 on his TV broadcasts, has stated that to quell the peasantry "it may be necessary to kill 50 or 100,000." The imperialists are clearly preparing for such an eventuality.

At the same time, however, they are challenging the landed oligarchy by expropriating 36 fincas (estates)—comprising 25% of arable land in the country.

The agents of the rural bourgeoisie have answered by bombing the ministry of agriculture and murdering Social Democrats as well as peasants.

But the US State Department has a slightly long-term vision: 'There is nobody more conservative than a small farmer. We're going to be breeding capitalists like rabbits.' Such expectations will be still-

born.

The existence of FDN-ORDEN and the strength of the peasant unions which the left organisations now control almost completely means that unlike in Nicaragua where the peasantry was not a major force in the revolution, the civil war in the Salvadorean countryside will be exceptionally brutal, no doubt extended, and very probably decisive.

It will not, though, be a guerrilla war—for the country is only the size of Wales and extremely mountainous—there is simply nowhere to go.

Added to this the proletariat is substantially stronger and more concentrated than in Nicaragua.

This has meant that the vanguard of the political struggle against the Junta, now shorn of all party political support except for the rump of the Christian Democrats, has been in San Salvador.

This has been stepped up with the general strike of 17-18 March which was 100% solid in the city and received 80% backing in the rest of the country.

This first national political strike was clearly a trial-run for the consolidated action of the working class that will be necessary in the future.

The cost was particularly high—150 workers died on the 17th alone in army raids on occupied factories and working class regions of the town.

The CP still retains a broad influence in the unions despite its early participation in the Junta but the more radical Front for Unified Popular Action (FAPU) and Popular Revolutionary Bloc (BPR) have built up a significant base.

Last month these three parties together with the Popular Leagues of 28th February (LP-28) formed a tactical alliance through the *Coordinadora Revolucionaria* which planned the general strike and coordinates armed actions.

With the exception of the LP-28 (and its voluntarist guerrilla group the ERP) the parties agree that logically the forces of the left are too weak to meet the provocations of the military which, unlike most of Somoza's National Guard, is a highly disciplined and professional body.

In either case the workers and peasants of El Salvador are now engaged in a bloody and absolutely critical front-line struggle against imperialism.

Turkish bosses' dilemma

The seven year office of the present Turkish head of state, Mr Koruturk, ends on April 6, necessitating election of a new President which could have important consequences for the Turkish working class.

Under the existing constitution, the President is elected by a majority of the National Assembly in a series of secret ballots.

In the last elections, in 1973, it took fifteen rounds of voting before Mr Koruturk emerged as the victor.

Even then, this was only because the two main parties, the Justice Party (JP) and the Republican Peoples Party (RPP) eventually managed to come to a mutual understanding.

This time round the scene looks set once again for a similar impasse. Neither the JP nor the RPP commands a clear majority of the 634 votes.

The JP can only rely on 311 at most and the RPP on 306. With a majority of 318 needed in the final round of balloting, the right wing, Islamic National Salvation Party, with 29 votes, could play an important role.

Things are complicated though by the fact that the NSP's programme calls for the President to be elected by universal suffrage and for constitutional reforms which would limit the President's power.

But the key question in these elections will be the role of the military. At present the army appears to be holding back from the situation, though some sources predict that an electoral crisis would certainly provoke an intervention by the military.

One favourite for the Presidency is General Kenan Evren, the Army Chief of Staff and the man who last December warned of possible army intervention if the civil powers failed to maintain 'stability'.

Five of the six Presidents so far have been from military origins.

Normally election has meant that they have given up their military positions and have returned to civilian life.

The possibility this time of the President remaining a member of the military cannot be ruled out.

Drawing class lines in Peru

The *Financial Times* reported that the two days of rain which ended the long drought last week in Northern Peru were greeted as a miracle.

But this was nothing to the miracle for which the Peruvian ruling class is praying as it attempts to preserve its power through a return to civilian government after the failure of twelve years of military rule.

The elections for President and parliament due on May 18 are very unlikely to produce anything but an increase in the expectations of Peru's working class and peasantry and in the incapacity of the ruling class to satisfy any of these aspirations.

Virtually all the organisations claiming to be Trotskyist in Peru are supporting the Presidential candidacy headed by Hugo Blanco, leader of the Workers Revolutionary Party, the Peruvian section of the

United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USFI).

His vice-presidential candidates come significantly from groups supporting the two main components of the Parity Commission for the Reconstruction (Reorganisation) of the Fourth International.

Speaking at a rally in London organised by the IMG, Hugo Blanco on March 21 showed why he had such a vast following among the Peruvian masses.

In an eloquent but undemagogic and witty speech Blanco vividly described the appalling conditions of the peasantry, unemployed and workers of Peru and mercilessly criticised their military and capitalist oppressors.

His speech did not take up many of the elements of the political programme of the

alliance which he leads.

But he did discuss one of the questions which was raised in the leaflet the WSL distributed at the meeting, namely the purpose of Trotskyists standing in the elections and the relationship between elections and the mobilisation of the masses.

Our criticism of the tendency towards electoralism is based on the press of the parties involved in it as well as statements of their supporters in Europe.

But we say unreservedly that it was not a criticism which could possibly be levelled against Hugo Blanco's speech at the rally.

We agree with what he said on this point: that it is through the mobilisation of the working class, not through elections, that liberation from imperialism and capitalism can be won; that the arming of the workers forces the bourgeoisie to respect election results; that through elections propaganda for the

programme is made and the party is built.

But Hugo Blanco made no mention of the other criticisms raised by the WSL's leaflet—the political support given by the USFI to the Stalinist government in Cuba and the counter-revolutionary bourgeois coalition government in Nicaragua.

A similar political adaptation could be seen at the rally itself, when a representative of the 'Patriotic Front' (it was not stated whether ZAPU or ZANU) was greeted rapturously when he asked the audience to 'bear with us... be patient and give us time' in relation to the clear pro-capitalist direction of the Mugabe-Nkombo Rhodesia Front regime. In introducing the rally Tariq Ali referred to the 'concessions' made by Mugabe

'which we all hope will be temporary concessions'.

When several sections of the audience expressed some scepticism about how 'temporary' Mugabe's concessions were supposed to be, Ali burst into a round of criticism of the 'sectarians' 'who have to recognise realities'.

'There are no simple answers' he helpfully explained.

We have to confess we had not previously understood that the way to fight imperialism and racism was to demobilise a mass movement and make enormous concessions to capitalism.

No doubt the subtle dialectics of the USFI will eventually explain to us how it is to be done. Meanwhile we continue to press the fight for class struggle methods as the road to revolution and to fight on that basis—the Trotskyist International Workers Order Committee—for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.



INTERNATIONAL

US OIL WORKERS FACE AFL-CIO SCABBING

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Labor News can be obtained
(25p inc post) from the WSL
BM Box 5277, London
WC1V 6XX.



Striking oil workers

After more than two months on strike the 60,000 members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers continue to face the union busting attempt of the major oil companies along with the scabbing by AFL-CIO construction and maritime unions.

The strike however is growing and winning support from important sections of the labour movement.

In Los Angeles over 5,000 workers from many unions including the ILWU, shut down the harbour in an act of solidarity and marched through the harbour district.

Closed down

At the Good Hope refineries plant in Louisiana, a mass picket line blocked traffic for two hours on March 2 and was successful in closing down the refinery for the day.

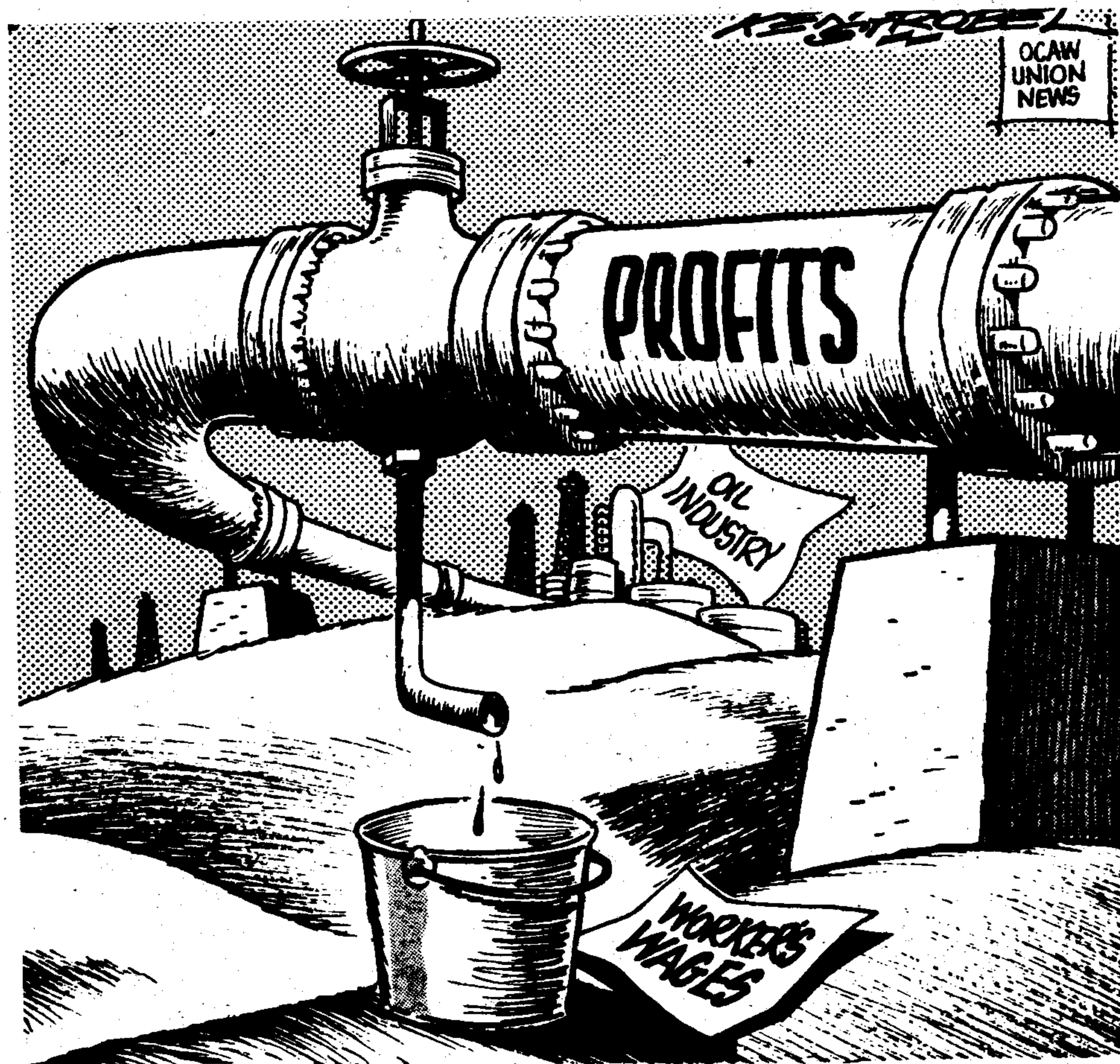
The major impediment to a victory in this struggle continues to be the scabbing by AFL-CIO unions.

In Seattle, the Trinidad Corporation which has tankers under contract to Shell is paying both licensed and unlicensed personnel overtime all the time at the dock so that they won't leave the ship and be faced with an OCAW picket line.

This is also the case in Martinez, California. The Chestnut Hill and the Austin have provided launch service to avoid pickets so members of the National Maritime Union, the Master, Mates and Pilots, the Marine Engineers Union and the Radio Operators can continue work.

Picket Boats

The Inland Boatman's Union, which is recognising picket boats in the harbour area if they manoeuvre between the



A DROP IN THE BUCKET

tow boats and tankers, has been threatened by the Shell Company, which is contracting out to bring in non-union tow boats to assist in docking.

Texaco is running launch services between the marina in Anacortes, Washington and the Shell and Texaco piers, enabling the ship crews to "avoid" crossing picket lines.

In the 1948 Union Oil Strike although the National Maritime Union was willing to walk off in support, Lundberg of the Sailors Union of the Pacific broke the strike through scabbing by his membership. The same scabbing is going on today.

In the Bay Area hundreds of union carpenters, boiler-makers and other AFL-CIO Building and Metal trades are crossing the picket lines in organized contingents directed by their union officials, yet these workers could quickly bring a victory to the strike if they walked off the job and were joined by the maritime workers who move the oil and the shipyard workers who repair the scab tankers.

Refuse to act

Despite the national importance of this struggle, the AFL-CIO leadership has refused to use its power to order a halt to the scabbing.

In San Francisco on 20 February, supporters and members of OCAW lobbied the 35,000 member 46 county District Council of Carpenters to stop the scabbing.

At the recent midwinter meeting of the AFL-CIO executive council, the new president, Lane Kirkland took the time to invite Defence Secretary Brown for a pro-war diatribe on the necessity of the draft! Yet there "was no time" to discuss how

to build support for the oil workers.

In fact, the council with only two opposition votes (Wimpisinger of the IAM and Hardy of the SEIU) voted to support the draft, yet refused to call for support to the oil workers and an end to the scabbing by the many AFL-CIO unions and Internationals.

No boycott call

The AFL-CIO and Goss also refuse to call for an international boycott of oil to the US.

While Kirkland supports blockading Iranian and Russian goods he refuses to lift a finger to fight for the International Transport Federation to block the shipment of all oil to the United States.

While the strike has been weakened by this organised scabbing by AFL-CIO unions and their leadership, the oil workers themselves stand solid in their determination to see the struggle through.

Oil workers know that with a nearly 20% inflation rate they must win major gains if they are to survive intact.

Since this is only a wage and health care cost re-opener, other issues, such as safety along with wages and pensions, are again up for negotiations in January 1981, and this strike would be for nothing if major gains are not made now.

There have already been many settlements among the small refineries that provide for a health care cost contribution of \$125 a month and 55 cents per hour plus a 5% increase, yet this is still far behind the real rate of inflation.

It is imperative that a real cost of living escalator clause determined by the trade unions

be the major issue along with full medical and dental coverage.

Goss and the membership elected negotiating committee have dropped the demand for a full escalator clause and the settlement with the small refineries falls far behind what oil workers need now.

It is time that OCAW and the rest of the trade union movement took up the political issues that confront every OCAW member along with the rest of the labour movement.

Near the top of the list are the pirates and gangsters who run the oil companies.

The AFL-CIO has already called for the nationalisation of the oil companies and this should be supported and publicized by OCAW.

The nationalisation of the oil companies under workers control would do much to stop the massive profiteering, gouging and the national union busting offensive by big business, the Democrats and Republicans. Yet Goss refuses to make a peep about the question of nationalisation.

The solidarity that is now building up throughout the country for the oil workers must be supported and built, yet it is not enough.

This solidarity should be directed towards the formation of a workers party that is independent of the Democrats and Republicans, and that will represent the oil workers along with the millions of other American workers.

OCAW can give a political lead to the four million other workers whose contracts expire in 1980 and point the way to the solidarity of the labour movement and its political independence. Victory to the 60,000 OCAW workers.

ITALY'S 39th GOVERNMENT CRISIS

The resignation last week of Francesco Cossiga's minority Christian Democrat government in Italy, at least served to draw attention to a little-known fact—that it was in office.

Resignation was the most decisive, positive act which this miserable, passive administration has taken since it came into office in August 1979.

Since the positions of the main parliamentary parties in Italy are such that a majority government is impossible, Cossiga represented the only logical solution—an invisible government.

The trouble was even Cossiga occasionally had to materialise—even if in a diminutive way—in front of the Assembly to ask for a vote.

Last week he put his nose around the door and even before the vote was taken was scurrying away to present his resignation to President Pertini and so open up Italy's 39th post-war government crisis.

The reason for the resignation is to be found in the crisis-torn Socialist Party. Up to now Cossiga has survived against Communist Party "opposition" as a result of the parliamentary abstention by the Socialists who hold the balance of power.

No guarantee

Their leader, Bettino Craxi announced not that the party as such had changed to join the CP in opposition, but rather that he, as leader, was no longer able to guarantee which way his parliamentary followers would vote!

This announcement reflects an internecine battle between right and left in the party.

The right is prepared to join a coalition with the Christian

Democrats.

The left, on the other hand, want to go into clear opposition unless the CP is admitted to the government—a step which the Christian Democrats rule out.

So Cossiga's resignation leaves the squaring of the Italian political circle as difficult as ever.

The last crisis (following the 1979 general elections) took 160 days to resolve.

Europe

This time there is pressure to do it in a hurry, since it highlights the crisis of leadership in the bourgeoisie not only in Italy but also at the level of Europe since Italy is supposed to be chairing the EEC ruling Council of Ministers.

But the only solution the Italian ruling class can devise to the crisis so far is to try to get Cossiga to form another invisible government.

And the Communist Party has already volunteered, with its customary deference to the wishes of the bourgeoisie, not to rock the boat as long as a few verbal concessions are made to it in the new government's programme.

In that case why was it necessary for Cossiga to resign? The answer is that in Italy the government crisis is a method whereby the politicians are given a formal reminder that the only alternative to keeping the Christian Democrats in power is another general election.

And for most of Italy's parliamentary politicians these days elections are viewed as a fate worse than death.

If the parliamentarians cannot agree on a government, they are more or less unanimous about the negative consequences of any participation of the masses in politics.

Elections are regarded as punishments for not agreeing to some parliamentary compromise.

So the permanent crisis of bourgeois rule in Italy drags on. At a time when the Italian ruling class requires a lion to resolve its problem they are obliged to accept the leadership of a mouse—and an invisible one at that.

In the meantime the government of Italy daily passes more into the hands of a few top civil servants and the heads of the Police who implement the range of reactionary "anti-terrorist" repression laws with which parliament (with the strong support of the "opposition" Communist Party) has equipped them.



Cossiga

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ATKINS CONFERENCE COLLAPSES

The constitutional conference on Northern Ireland set up by Atkins in January has collapsed in a predictable series of accusations and counter-accusations.

The conference was called as a test of the willingness of the SDLP to agree to the demands of Paisley's Democratic Unionists.

The conference was doomed in advance when SDLP leader Gerry Fitt resigned after failing to persuade the party to abandon power sharing as a minimum condition for acceptance.

This was the reality behind the division between Hume's initial call for a boycott against Fitt's call for participation.

Atkins hoped for a verbal agreement which would have been used to impose a new 'initiative' to allow the government to move away from direct



Paisley

British rule back to direct Orange rule of the province.

It took place against a background of increasing polarisation

within Northern Ireland itself.

The demonstration of between 15,000 and 20,000



Orange Order supporters last weekend in Belfast was a mark of the resurgence of sectarian politics in Northern Ireland.

The conference could have succeeded for the British government only at the expense of either Paisley or Hume committing political suicide.

After it was 'adjoined' (for ever) Gerry Fitt attacked Hume for failing to go into the talks 'in the spirit of goodwill and trying to find a compromise'.

He praised Paisley for being 'genuine' in trying to reach agreement.

But the SDLP is politically irrelevant. The frustration of the Orange order is frustration against the failure of the British army to strangle the anti-imperialist struggle.

There is nothing for Irish workers, Catholic or Protestant, in any peace talks with imperialism.

Yet the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle—that is the leadership of the IRA—still offers no perspective beyond a continued guerrilla war with the army.

While we support the struggle to defeat British imper-

ialism we call for the building of a Trotskyist party in Ireland which can seek to build a movement based on the working class as the means to break the British stranglehold.

*Troops out now.

*Political status for Irish political prisoners.

*For an Irish workers' republic.

Capitalism's lethal panacea For workers control in the nuclear industry!

By Tony Twine

The agents of international capital are proceeding in great haste to develop what they imagine will be an 'all-time' panacea for their disintegrating economic system.

The impetus behind the accelerated programme of Fast Breeder nuclear reactors in France, Britain, West Germany, etc., lies not only in the hope of gaining greater political and economic independence from imported oil, but in securing a share of the world market for nuclear plants, both military and commercial.

The rewards appear considerable: at present over forty countries have definite nuclear energy programmes, with plans for another 450 stations by 1995, costing an estimated \$90 billion.

A world figure of some 2000 reactors has been forecast by the end of this century (Atomic Energy Commission, US). Indeed US companies (Exxon, Westinghouse) have already built or sold over 200 PWR's worldwide, with France (Framatome) and W. Germany (NRC) also involved in extensive reactor exports.

However, it is, principally, in the so-called Third World regions, areas without indigenous coal or oil, where this 'boom[!]' is scheduled to take place—notwithstanding debts totalling \$55 billion already to the multi-nationals, of course.

For the international working class, though, the expansion of the FBR programme with its associated fuel reprocessing facilities has much more profound implications than

being merely an antidote to the declining profitability of capitalism.

Despite its huge potential benefits the technology remains besieged with safety problems, not least the unsolved ultimate disposal of nuclear wastes.

As it is, the FBR cycle continuously generates highly radio-active plutonium with resulting high activity wastes—some of which remain 'critical' for "geological" times (i.e. 24,400 years for plutonium).

At most points in this cycle (mining, processing, transportation etc) workers can be exposed to radiation hazards; in reprocessing and storage plants countless thousands of gallons of radioactive waste have leaked into the environment (Hanford, Washington).

And to date waste products are either deposited in 'geologically safe' underground vaults or in containers dumped on the sea floor (46,000 tonnes into the Atlantic since 1967).

Caesium pollution in traditional fishing areas in the Irish Sea has risen ten times between 1973-75, prompting the 1978 report (National Radiological Board) to forecast doubled radiation levels by the year 2000 (natural radiation is said to represent a cancer risk of 100,000 to 1).

After the crisis at Three Mile Island (Harrisburg) eight workers were found to be contaminated and 13,000 people living near the plant are still forced to undergo regular checks.

At the Windscale plant radiation leaks have in the past contaminated up to 500 square kilometres, entering the local

food chain necessitating the Health Authority ordering destruction of farm crops.

If 'fission' is fundamentally dangerous, in exposing workers within hundreds of miles of power stations then the proliferation of FBRs raises the spectre of atomic catastrophe a whole magnitude higher.

The nuclear club (USA, USSR, Britain, France and China) became six-strong the instant India detonated its bomb in 1974. The strategic relationship with Pakistan though was not redressed towards parity until 1978 when France sold Zia's dictatorship the complete nuclear cycle.

Apart from the known fifteen nuclear weapon states, other critical paths include the infamous German connection with Brazil, Argentina and South Africa, who, with Zionist Israel are acknowledged to possess atomic arsenals; other military regimes in South Korea, Taiwan, Libya, Iraq and Peru are all striving energetically to develop their own bombs.

Central to this scenario is the continuing availability of uranium supplies; the USSR, USA and Australia control by far the major deposits while British links with racist South Africa enable mining multi-nationals (RTZ) to capitalise on these resources in Namibia.

Opposition to nuclear technology, at present focussed through the propaganda of various ecological groups, liberal bourgeoisie, anarchists, etc., is a new phenomenon.

The popular nuclear marches of the early 1960s in England mobilised 150,000 workers, intellectuals (plus



PHOTO: Mark Rasher, IFL

Demonstrators on the 1978 anti-nuclear march through London

Labour 'lefts' like Michael Foot) against the "deterrent".

Nevertheless, workers' legitimate fears over their future health and safety have sparked off huge demonstrations in Europe and the USA.

In July 1977 at the site of the world's first FBR at Malville in France, over 55,000 workers and students were brutally attacked by state police; one worker was killed and over 100 injured.

Again in October 1977 at Kalkar in West Germany, 60,000 demonstrators were opposed by 13,000 armed paratroops and police, with 150 arrests.

Bilbao

In July 1977 in Bilbao, Spain, over 200,000 came out on the streets for 'autonomy' against Spain's first FBR, and there were similar actions in March 1978 at Almeda, Holland (40,000), in April 1978 in London (18,000), in April 1979 in Melbourne, Australia (over 12,000) and May 1979 in Washington, USA where approximately 100,000 marched near the Capitol, in the aftermath of the USA's worst nuclear disaster

at Three Mile Island.

It is obvious that isolated occupations and protests (as in any industry) cannot of themselves wrest control of this energy source away from the state.

A patient but principled political struggle must be fought inside the working class on the following programme:

*No further work on nuclear reactors pending a safe and efficient method of disposal of existing and potential wastes.

*No further work on FBRs and reprocessing plants until safety standards are acceptable to workers' committees, drawn from all industries to assess safety aspects of nuclear power generators.

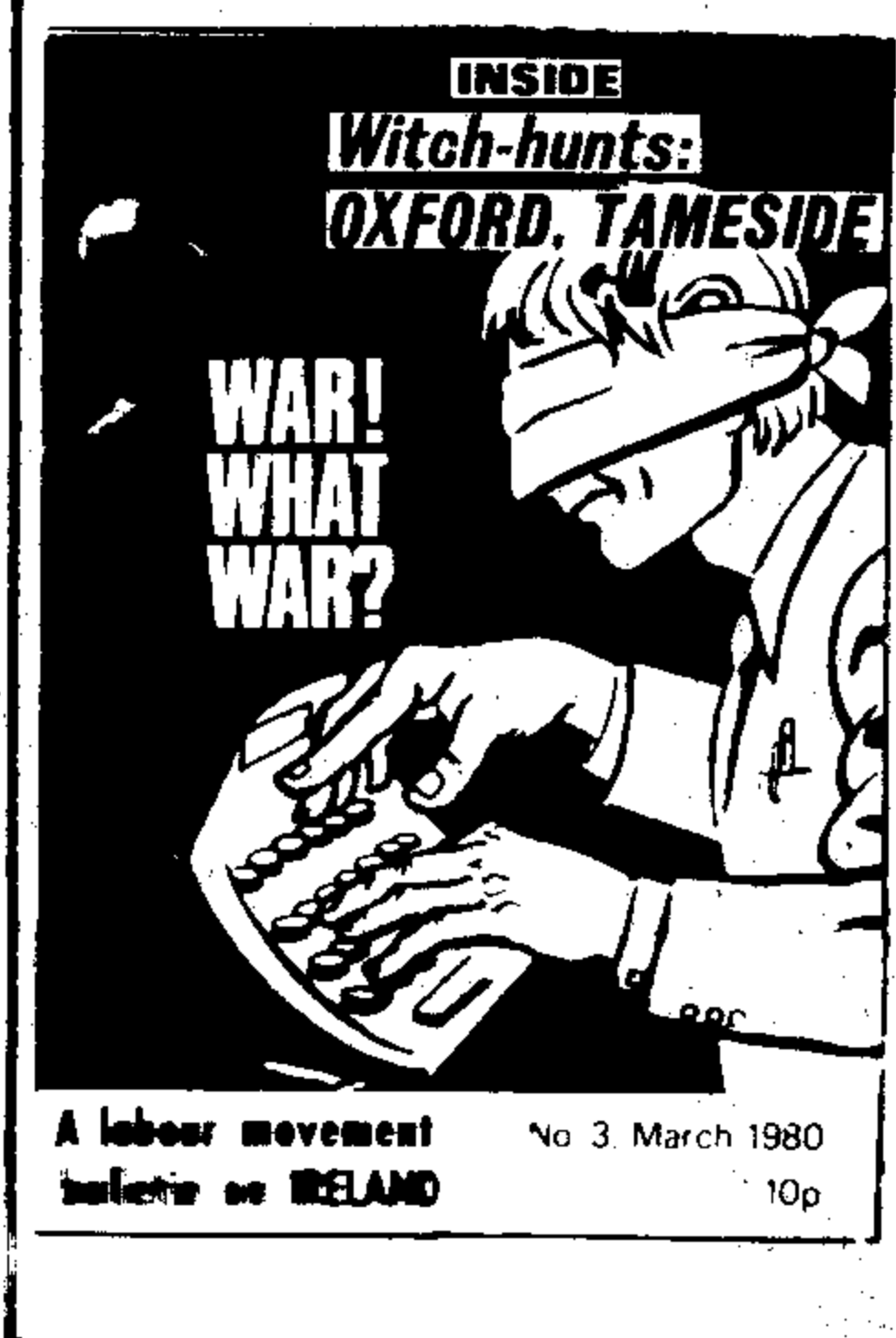
*No redundancies in the nuclear industries—for work sharing on full pay for workers unable to be transferred to research work.

*For an increase in state spending on all aspects of nuclear power research and 'soft' alternatives, i.e. solar, wave, fusion, under workers' control.

*For full publication of all nuclear industry records and immediate compensation for victims of past 'experiments'.

NOW AVAILABLE

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



Benn wins by default in 'debate of decade'

By John Docherty

The 'Debate of the Decade' on 'the future of the left' was held in the Methodist Central Hall on St. Patrick's Day.

It was largely an old boys and girls reunion from the days of the 1960s demos. But its form and content had much to show of the changes in the political balance since that time, and of the political problems for socialists now.



Audrey Wise

There were many manifestations in the meeting of how not to go about achieving the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of socialism.

Hecklers

Perhaps the clearest case of this were the ultra-left hecklers from the RCT and others who simply concentrated on denouncing the reformists and denouncing every other participant for not following their example in ignoring the discussion and simply making propaganda on such issues as Irish political prisoners.

A more sophisticated version of the same position was certainly present on the platform of the meeting, and in many of the contributions.

The argument of Hilary Wainwright (together with Sheila Rowbottom, co-author of *Beyond the Fragments*), was that perhaps the trouble was we were trying to challenge for state power at all.

Isolated struggles

Even if we did not call ourselves reformists we could instead concentrate on activity in small isolated struggles while being nice to one another.

Paul Foot and his supporting cast from the SWP, argued what was in effect the same thing.

The Labour Party was so

rotten we could by-pass it. The union leaders were so treacherous that we could rely only on the rank and file, who—providing they were militant enough, and joined the SWP in large enough numbers—would be able to conquer state power.

This line was exactly what the reformists wanted. Stuart Holland tried some-

what ineffectually to argue that there is not really any difference between reformist and revolutionary politics.

Tony Benn, however, did not need even to say that.

Cheerfully admitting that he was a reformist, Benn felt able to sneer at revolutionaries who, he said, had achieved even less for socialist revolution than he

had in a series of Labour cabinets!

Not only was he able to get out of his responsibility for the betrayal of Labour governments but he was even able to say that in his experience workers had confidence in these governments and especially in the lefts like himself.

Since Benn's role as a leader

was never challenged except by infantile heckling or ill-conceived sectarianism, he was able to make the most clever and well-conceived contribution of the evening.

No doubt he will have won some converts to his plea to join the Labour Party 'as individuals' on his terms.

Tariq Ali showed a dim awareness of the need for a fight to break the working class from its leadership.

However his main proposal seemed to be to set up a joint organisation with the SWP and then get affiliated to the Labour Party.

It was not difficult for Audrey Wise to ridicule this perspective and argue that she, and other reformists were fighting the right wing. She nimbly separated herself from any responsibility for their betrayals—or her own.

Clearly this was a debate won hand down by the 'left' reformists on the platform.

Their failure to provide leadership for the struggles that really do exist was not raised.

Their responsibility for the policies of Callaghan and now Thatcher was not even mentioned.

The 'socialist feminists', the 'extra-Parliamentarians' and the Pabloites had each in their own way let them off the hook.

The alternative in reality was never between fighting in the Labour Party and challenging for leadership on the one hand and building a revolutionary leadership on the other.

It is precisely through the daily challenge for leadership in the mass organisations that a genuine alternative can be built.



PHOTO: Laurence Spacham, IFL

Benn speaking in the Central Hall debate

PRESS GANG



Racialism, nationalism, jingoism are the corner stones of the fervent 'patriots' of Fleet Street.

The *Daily Express* was one of the leaders of Tory opposition to the EEC. This opposition was based on racial affinity with the white commonwealth; hostility to the 'foreigners' of Europe and a dinosaur-like belief in the 'greatness' of Britain.

The 'patriotism' of the British ruling class, which is portrayed in its least sophisticated form in the *Daily Express* has much in common with the Great Russian chauvinism of the Czar, the German nationalism of the Kaiser and the French nationalism of De Gaulle.

Deaths

It is the nationalism which sends millions of workers to their deaths when the capitalists fall out.

For seven years the *Express* has been largely silent on the question of the EEC.

But as exports fall and the cost of EEC policy increases the rampant jingoism is once more turned on.

On Thursday March 20 the *Express* (in a front page opinion column headed Get Lost! The message for France) declared:

"The last time Britain went into Europe with any degree of success was on June 6, 1944."

"We are a tolerant and long

suffering nation. Too tolerant. Too long suffering. Too inclined to believe that we are so weak we have to cough up hard cash to French parasites."

(The *Express* does not blame the EEC on a world conspiracy of Jews, but otherwise this opinion column could have been taken word for word from the pages of *National Front News*).

Gutter

French ministers expressed strong hostility to the *Express* editorial.

Next day the champions of British nationalism sank deeper into the gutter.

"Of course we do make allowances for the French. We know their attitude is born not of arrogance, but of an inferiority complex.

"We know they have never forgiven the British for liberating them in 1944. We know they have never forgotten that, in their darkest hour, Churchill offered them common citizenship with us..."

"Well, the French had toughen up their over-sensitive and delicate natures because the British people are getting angry—and we have only just begun".

Ruling class

The "British people" is the British ruling class. Having duped workers into voting for EEC entry (against the advice of the *Express*), the capitalists and

their government have begun to rattle the chains on their own penury.

British workers—in their legitimate hostility to a capitalist unity of Europe—have nothing whatsoever in common with the racist diatribe of the *Express*.

Dover-Catch 22

Dover Tories have come up with a particularly vicious "Catch-22" for homeless workers on the council's 4000-strong housing list.

They have proposed a means test that would eliminate any family with a combined income exceeding £5,250—thus almost wiping out the list of applicants for council housing!

The Catch-22 is that while any family with a joint income of over £100 a week is debarred from obtaining a council house, they would in no way be able to buy a house on the private market.

Average prices for 3-bedroom houses in Dover are around £28,000—necessitating a £3,000 deposit and a £10,000 per year salary to pay a mortgage!

Meanwhile—presumably arguing that there is now "no demand", the Dover Tories have

Big business merger activity rose to a peak in the last quarter of 1979. The total value of companies acquired between October and the end of the year was £752 million—giving an annual total of £1656 million.

This marks a sharp upturn in process of concentrating capital on the part of the ruling class.

The previous peak had been in 1972, when companies valued at £2532m changed hands in the last gasps of Heath's 'lame duck' policy for rationalising British capitalism.

Under Labour this fell to a low of £291m in 1975 as fears about the ability of the Wilson administration to control the working class haunted the boardrooms of big business.

From 1976 on, however, under the class-collaborationist Social Contract there was a steady upturn.

Mad rush

Now, with Thatcher driving to smash trade union rights and to break up the welfare state, the rush to prepare for world recession and intensified class warfare, has become a charge.

Already, in the first two months of 1980 deals and mergers have been announced worth £800m.

The 31 largest acquisitions announced in 1979 costing over £10m each amounted to two-thirds of total expenditure.

This, of course flies in the face of the limp Tory claim that the basis of their attacks on the welfare state was to encourage investment in productive industry.

Concentrate capital

In reality the British bourgeoisie has continued to hold back on investment in plant

preferring to utilise its capital to eliminate or swallow up competitors and concentrate in fewer hands the existing body of industrial capital.

This drive to merger and monopolies provides the background to the wholesale attacks on jobs.

Less employed

A consequence of centralization is that as the mass of capital in a single hand grows, fewer and fewer workers are employed by it.

Unprofitable sections of capital are closed down through a process of asset stripping in order to protect the profitability of other sections of capital and reduce the pressure of competition on a diminishing mass of new wealth.

This independent role of capital as a social power, standing opposed to the actual development of the productive forces as a whole and to the social interests of the working class lies now at the very centre of the crisis of capitalism.

Wealth

It can only be resolved by the socialising of the means of production under the control and management of the working class itself as the only source of wealth in society.

The alternative is misery, degradation and the collapse into fascist barbarism. For capitalism the death knell has sounded too long.



Heseltine

Mergers herald new jobs threat

HOW THE CZECH STALINIST MASS MOVEMENT OF W

How much were the Czech working class involved in the overturn of capitalist property relations that took place under Stalinist control in the post-war period?

Certainly Czechoslovakia was the country in Eastern Europe in which there was the greatest amount of mass mobilisation at the time.

This was facilitated by the comparatively large size and long history of the two Communist Parties—the Czech CP and the Slovak CP—which were the mass parties of the working class.

Yet Bloomfield describes the overturn as a "Passive Revolution" because, he says, the working class was a "willing accomplice", and not the driving force in the expropriation of capital and the transformation of the old state machine.

He comes to this assessment partly because of his own Stalinist political standpoint. He examines the attitudes of the working class in relation to the lead given by the Stalinist party leaders in their bureaucratic moves towards the overturn of capitalism: he does not analyse the political development of the Czechoslovakian working class in relation to the possibilities for revolutionary mobilisation and a genuine socialist revolution, which were present from 1945 onwards.

Indeed while academics feel able to look at various real and imaginary models of socialist transformation—the October revolution; the East European overturns; the Chinese revolution; the Cuban revolution; the supposed "parliamentary road"—and choose their favourite, revolutionaries are forced to look at the objective possibilities in each situation.

In Czechoslovakia there was enormous potential scope for revolutionary intervention. The masses were involved from the outset in the military defeat of the German state power, and militancy increased towards the end of the war.

On May 5, 1945, 80,000 people helped build barricades in Prague University and carry through a major uprising. And this mass mobilisation lasted right through to the 200,000-strong demonstration in February 1948 at the point where the Czech CP took complete control.

Such mass involvement was not to take place in other East European countries, even though the Kremlin bureaucracy exercised its control in the main through the national CPs.



Czechoslovak workers councils sprang up in the struggle to defeat Nazi occupiers

It was not therefore the action of the masses in Czechoslovakia that was decisive in the overturn of capitalist property relations: it was an expression on the one hand of the anti-capitalist feeling of the masses, and of the willingness of the Czech CP to utilise this for its own purposes.

But of course there could be no question of the Soviet bureaucracy assisting a full-blooded socialist revolution involving the formation of

soviets as independent organs of working class power: after all, the Stalinist bureaucracy had themselves liquidated the power of the soviets in order to consolidate their own power and privilege as a ruling caste in the USSR itself.

For the Kremlin leaders to allow the full independent mobilisation of the Czech working class on the borders of the USSR would open up pressures towards political

workers.

The Czech CP itself however could be relied upon to oppose any such developments. It was a complete tool of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The Gottwald leadership had been installed by the Comintern in 1929—and had obediently followed every instruction from Moscow.

Yet even this leadership

clearly came under considerable pressure. There was in post-war Czechoslovakia—as throughout the East European countries—a large influx of membership into the CP.

While much of this recruitment would have been careerist elements, the growth in these parties also coincided with a massive growth of CPs in Western Europe: it reflected the radicalisation of layers of workers, who turned towards the CPs looking for a means of fighting for Communism.

Yet they found only bureaucratized appendages of Kremlin foreign policy—parties that were to be ruthlessly purged of genuine militants and possible dissident layers of the bureaucracy in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The process of the overturn in Czechoslovakia can be approximately divided into two phases: from 1945-47, and from Autumn 1947 to February 1948.

Yet there were elements of the second period in the first, which marked the moves by the Moscow bureaucracy to halt revolutionary struggles in Czechoslovakia.

Bloomfield points out

that the policy of Internal Central Committee of the Czech CP December 1944 was th

"The Czechoslovak people must liberate themselves and not await passively the arrival of the Red Army. Obviously co-ordination with the advancing Red Army was essential. Yet internal leadership laid great stress in the need to arouse mass actions in opposition to the Nazi occupiers which would culminate in an armed uprising" (p.33).

But Moscow's direct were rather different. Gottwald and the external Czech CP leadership resistance activity as simply "complementary to requirements of the advancing Red Army" (p.33).

In March 1945 a conference took place at the Czech embassy in Moscow in which the four parties that were to form the National Front coalition government were brought together to discuss a programme.

The government was to be a "Popular Front" workers' parties along with capitalist parties.

When it took office Moscow's hand was again: all of the key governmental positions allotted to the CP were taken



Stalin at Yalta in 1945

COMMUNISTS USED MILITIAS TO CRUSH WORKERS

external CP members.

In the uprising, workers' councils had taken over the factories and unions had developed militant demands for nationalisations. Workers' militias had been formed.

Yet the CP spent the whole of this period not developing these independent struggles, but transforming the workers' councils into mere advisory bodies "to put suggestions". They dissolved the workers' militias.

As the trade unions persisted with their calls for nationalisation, they found themselves opposed all the way by the CP.

Bloomfield's book extensively documents this position, which lasted until Spring 1947.

The CPs only consistent direction for the masses was towards a fierce nationalism. They supervised the deportation of 230,000 Germans, including Communists (shades of Kampuchea?). And they ceased publication of the CP's own dual language paper.

Industry was to be run on profit lines, and the CP favoured compensation for nationalised industry.

In other words, the Stalinists blocked revolution in the East as completely as they did in Western Europe.

Bloomfield's depiction of the events of Czechoslovakia exposes the fraud of the Soviet bureaucracy claiming credit for carrying through socialist transformation in Eastern Europe.



Stalinist tanks crush Czech workers in 1968

If the Soviet Union had not obstructed the struggle, the Czech working class itself could have taken the power in 1945.

A revolutionary party fighting for a break from the bourgeois parties of the Popular Front could have offered workers a lead in the fight for a healthy workers state based on the power of workers councils and soviets.

What changed the attitude of the Czech CP was not the movement of the working class: by 1947 the mass pressure had been largely contained. It was the movement of the imperialists, and the onset of the Cold War.

The bourgeois parties and social democrats had been very quiet in post-war Czechoslovakia—resting happily in the coalition government.

But as the bourgeoisie moved into an anti-Soviet offensive on a world scale, this found its political reflection in the East European buffer states:

"With the announcements of the Truman Doctrine on 12 March, followed by the Marshall Plan on 5 June, the Big Three coalition collapsed. The Truman Doctrine heralded an ideological crusade against the USSR and Communism" (p.179).

The economic moves of the Marshall Plan were an attempt to pull the bourgeois coalitions of Eastern Europe back firmly within the capitalist orbit.

Right wing ministers in Czechoslovakia—as in other 'buffer' states, at first responded favourably to this initiative: but under severe pressure from Moscow they were persuaded to pull back.

Stalin however had seen the writing on the wall. The Kremlin began to work to break the Eastern European economies completely from the West, and in September 1947, at a conference of ten European CPs in Poland, the Cominform was established to coordinate the strategy for the takeover and consolidation of Stalinist power in the 'buffer' states.

Meanwhile other factors were emerging in Czechoslovakia itself.

As the CP, following the new instructions from the Kremlin, took up the call for nationalisation and a series of 'left' policies, the right wing took a majority within the Social Democratic Party and began moves designed to split the Czech working class.

In February 1948 the right wing parties resigned from the government—using the excuse that the CP control over the police meant they were removing political opponents and replacing them with party members.

This was almost certainly the case, since the CP's overall perspective was towards the consolidation of state power through the elimination of the right wing from the National Front government.

In doing this they were even prepared to utilise the strength of the working class, and began to organise, through the Central Trades Union Council, an 8,000-strong conference of works councils and union branches for February 22. Meetings and demonstrations were called—including one of 80,000 through Prague.

Yet within that the Stalinists were careful to keep control. The conference on February 22 was composed of selected delegates only: "The URO (Trade Union Council) organisational department instructed workers as to who their delegates would be" (p.221).

Not surprisingly, the conference passed the CP's proposals. A one-hour token strike was called for February 24. 2½ million workers came out in support.

On February 25, President Benes accepted the CP's demands for governmental changes, and Gottwald announced victory to a crowd of 200,000. As Bloomfield

This is the second, concluding, review article by TONY RICHARDSON on the book *Passive Revolution* by Jon Bloomfield (Alison and Busby, £3.95).

The article also examines some of the wider issues the book raises in relation to the post-war overturns of capitalism under Stalinist leadership in the Eastern European 'Buffer' countries.

points out:

"This united demonstration of working class support for KSC (CP) policy settled the crisis: the carefully controlled intervention by the working class proved decisive in sealing the fate of the right and ensuring political victory for the KSC."

From then on, as Tim Wohlforth points out in *'Communists' Against Revolution*, the critical question was in whose hands the state was rather than the mopping-up operation on the remains of private capitalist holdings."

Of course the CP did go through the motions of popular mobilisation in consolidating its takeover. It formed Action Committees all over the country, a

Central Action Committee, and workers' militias, to ward off any danger of right wing resistance.

But, as Bloomfield points out:

"The militia's presence in Prague and other major towns undoubtedly cowed the opposition, but their military value was primarily symbolic: the KSC's control of the police and army were the decisive factors in hampering the possibility of armed right-wing resistance." (p.227).

The militias were soon disbanded, as a monolithic Stalinist state was consolidated through a takeover rather than a revolutionary smashing of the old capitalist state machinery. Stalin's foreign policy had taken a further step forward—utilising the strength of the Czech working class.

In this policy of peace-

ful coexistence with imperialism, however, the Stalinist bureaucracy are forced continuously to readjust their stance as the balance of class forces shifts in various parts of the world.

The capitalist crisis forces the imperialist powers to look towards prospects of attacking the nationalised property relations of the USSR and the deformed workers' states: the struggles of the workers and peasants internationally continuously threaten the hold of imperialist oppression; and within the Stalinist-ruled states there remains the threat of mass struggles for political revolution.

The social transformations in Eastern Europe were no triumph for Stalin's strategy: but a belated recognition that 'peaceful coexistence' is not a long term possibility.

A study of the post-war period is important in demonstrating vividly the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism even in the carrying through of the historically progressive step of overturning capitalist property relations.

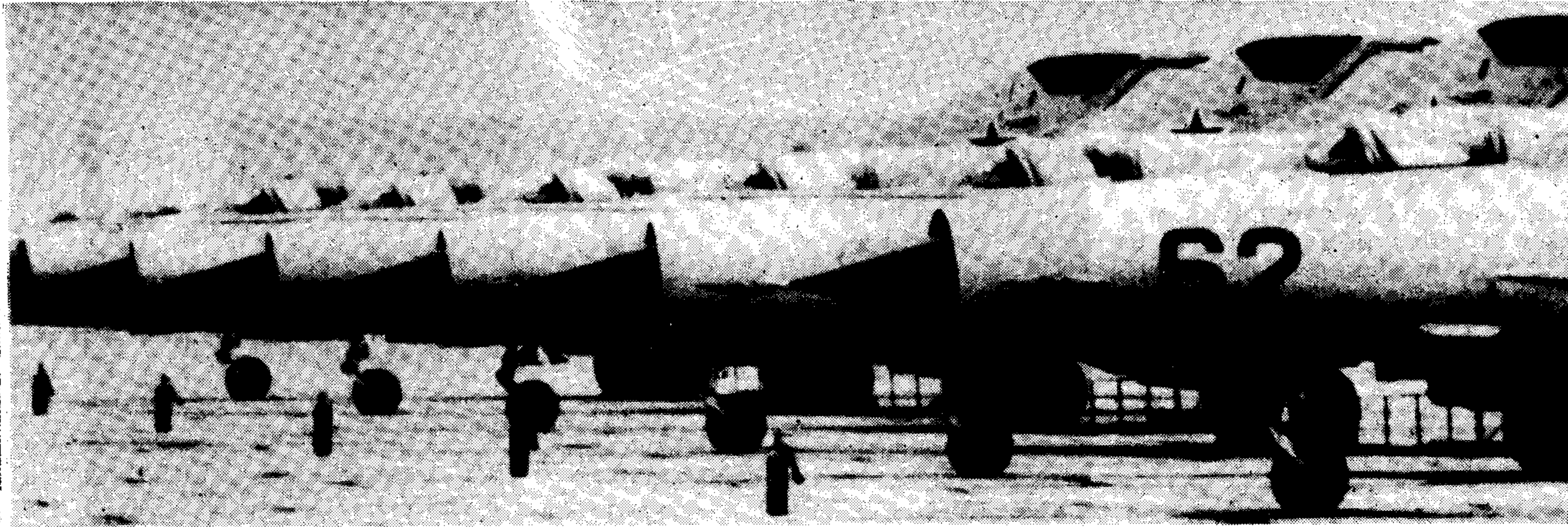
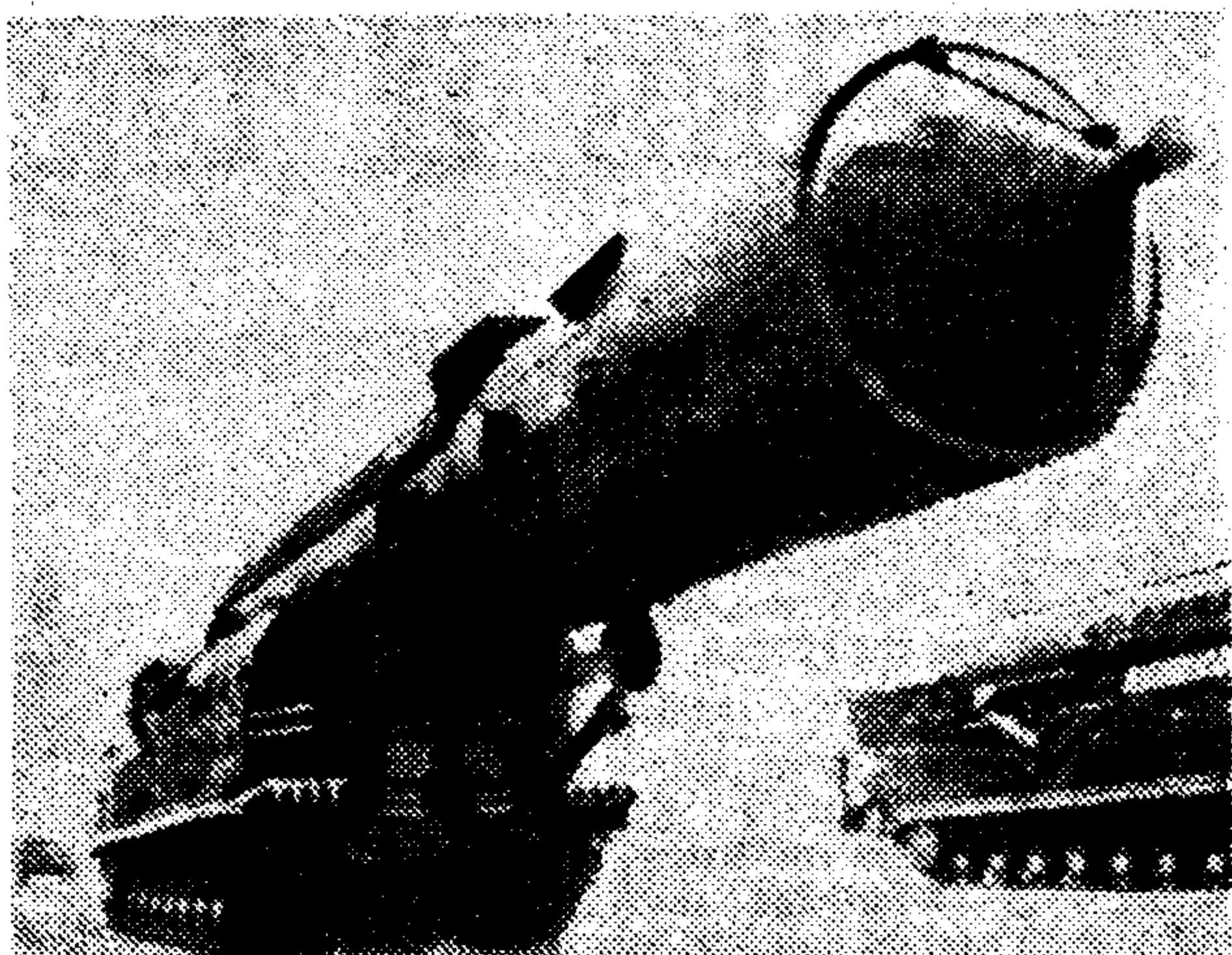
It is for this reason that Bloomfield's book is valuable for Marxists.

But the only revolutionary alternative to the class collaboration and bureaucratism depicted in the book is embodied in the programme and perspective of the Trotskyist movement in the fight for social revolution in the capitalist countries and the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies.

Bloomfield's Eurocommunist conclusion is as bankrupt and counter-revolutionary as the Czech CP whose treacherous manoeuvres he so effectively exposes.



Stalin



Soviet fighters and missiles at the ready near Moscow

ARMAGEDDON NOW?

TREVOR SELLARS reviews *The Third World War*, by General Sir John Hackett (Sphere Books)

I am not old enough to remember the Cuban missile crisis or the Berlin Wall episode in any detail.

But I do recall my parents and family anxiously watching the television reports of these events.

Their fear of war—of nuclear war—was transmitted to me then. Twenty years later the same unease and helplessness under the threat of anonymous destruction is in the air once more.

1980 however is not 1963. History is not repeating itself exactly.

In the early sixties the United States was the bustling symbol and prop of the great post-war boom in the capitalist west.

Its economic success went hand in hand with its diplomatic and military superiority over the entire globe. Today US imperialism is immeasurably weaker.

Every newspaper headline of the past two decades has screamed out its decay and defeat: Vietnam, economic recession, energy crisis, dollar crisis, Watergate, Angola, Iran and now Afghanistan.

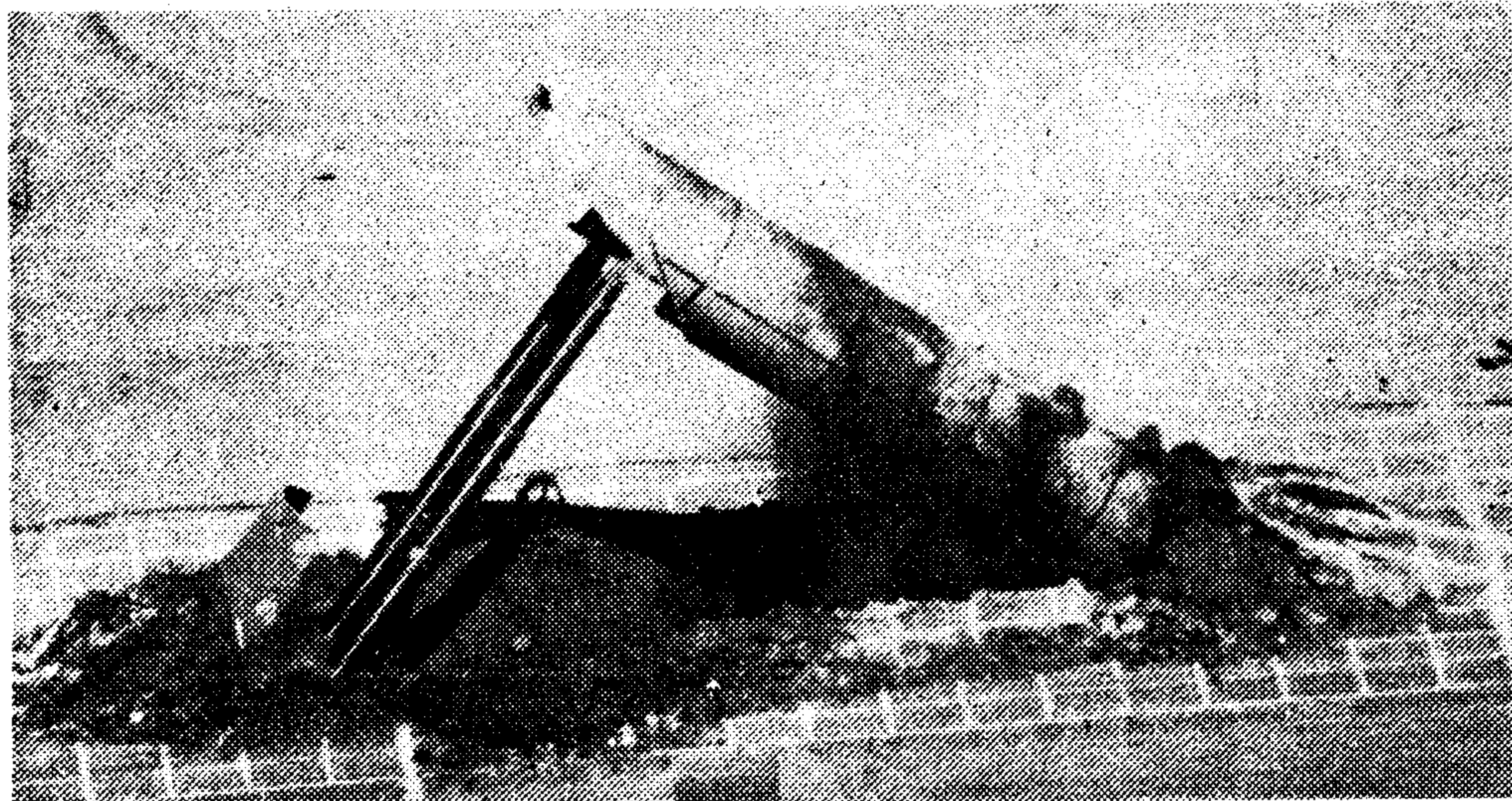
Setbacks

Pardoxically each setback for the United States and the capitalist world must make war with the Soviet Union to recover lost markets and regain dominance of the world more, and not less, likely. And that is the subject of this book.

Its chief author, General Sir John Hackett, was commander in chief of the British Army of the Rhine and commander of NATO forces in the Northern army group in West Germany.

However, he is not simply a soldier but perhaps one of the first of the new breed of Kissinger-like military leaders with a strong grasp of strategic aims, political considerations—and methods.

So General Hackett is no



American MX missile surfaces from underground bunker

novice entering the political arena. Some years ago in a famous letter to the *Times* he pointed out the weakness of NATO and demanded a rapid rearmament programme.

For this breach of the 'rule' preventing the armed forces taking part in political debate he was firmly rapped across the knuckles with a feather duster by the then Wilson government.

Now, freed from the 'constraints' of the service, General Hackett writes this book representing the feeling, and using the anonymous contributions of, the British and NATO military staffs.

It has a significance as a political weapon, written in a popular futurist form to appeal to and influence middle class opinion.

Immediate history

Thus it was written in 1978 as if it is 1987 and an immediate history of the Third World War fought in 1985.

The Warsaw Pact has been defeated—just by virtue of superior technology and a last minute rearmament programme

begun in 1979.

And this is the message Sir John wants to get over—that preparations must start now if the Western Alliance is to win the next World War.

By 1984 Hackett's world is broadly divided into three power centres: the capitalist West; the Soviet Union and its satellites; and the China-Japan alliance.

Pro-Moscow

Egypt is under a pro-Moscow regime, and threatens to amalgamate with Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States by encouraging the overthrow of their corrupt feudal regimes, thus controlling the oil supplies of the West.

In Hackett's view the vital ally of the US in the area and the policeman of western interests is the Shah's Iran! (So much for crystal ball gazing. But if you reverse the names on the scenario, the 1980 Middle East situation is still roughly described. Strategic Gulf oil reserves are slipping from the western sphere of influence under the threat of volatile Iran and Soviet-occupied Afghanistan.)

In Egypt, Sadat courts the US to replace the Shah as their Middle East strongman).

So the Middle East is the first flashpoint when, after a period of tension in December 1984, a US intelligence ship and an Iranian transport in the Gulf are attacked by Soviet forces.

Detente

The brink is reached but a Soviet/US summit temporarily patches up a detente-style solution.

Both powers consider this merely a breathing space for military preparation. The final detonator is exploded in late July 1985 as pro-Soviet groups in post-Tito Yugoslavia call for Russian help against the break-up of the Yugoslav federation and a capitalist restoration.

Soviet tanks roll across the Yugoslav border from Hungary

and are met by an amphibious brigade of US Marines. US and Soviet troops clash openly.

On 4 August 1985 at dawn the Warsaw Pact offensive is launched against the whole frontier of the Federal Republic of Germany. After three weeks of intensive fighting, expending men and munitions at a rate, and on a scale not seen before in conventional warfare, the NATO lines hold.

The advance of the Warsaw Pact armies is checked. This event is enough to loosen the grip of the unstable Stalinist bureaucracies on their peoples.

Nationalist forces reappear. The old Polish flag is hoisted. Troops refuse orders from Moscow, and stop fighting.

In order to restore the balance, the Soviet leadership plays the nuclear option and attacks Birmingham, England, with a hydrogen bomb. A million casualties are caused.

Retaliation

NATO retaliates almost instantly with the destruction of Minsk by submarine-launched missiles. The Soviet ploy fails and after a violent change of leadership the Soviet Union breaks up into its component republics and loses its hold of Eastern Europe.

An armistice is declared and the 'Free World' is saved.

In describing the possible course of the war on land and in the sea and air and in covering all major theatres, the book draws a picture of the present balance of forces and advocates those changes necessary to defeat the Warsaw Pact in each area of conflict.

The analysis includes detailed comparisons of the levels of training, strategy and tactics as well as the weaponry involved.

Undoubtedly this has been based on the war games played out by military staffs and defence planners on their computers in recent years.

General Hackett's authority is shown by the closeness of the rearmament timetable he has

laid out to real events.

For instance as accurately predicted in the book, this year measures have been taken to secure the services and maintain the training of British soldiers leaving the army as a rapid response reserve.

There can be no doubt that since the book was first published in 1978 rearmament has got under way and detente is under great strain.

Cruise missiles are being deployed in West Europe and Britain, the SALT talks have broken down, the draft in the United States may be reintroduced and conscription has been discussed in Parliament.

In his January 'State of the Union' speech, President Carter openly threatened the use of military force in defence of US strategic interests.

Thatcher

In Britain under the Thatcher government military spending has become a top priority.

Hundreds of millions of pounds are earmarked for new programmes to develop anti-submarine torpedoes, nuclear warheads and a replacement for the Polaris missile.

Later this year, in the biggest troop movement from Britain since D-Day, the entire Territorial Army is to be mobilised and shipped to Germany as a practice wartime reinforcement operation.

However, the smooth run up to war with the Soviet Union as advocated by 'The Third World War' will not occur.

General Hackett assumes that the rearmament programme can proceed without opposition.

In fact such a programme can only be financed in Britain by massive cuts in the welfare services and nationalised industries, and is already running into bitter opposition from the working class—as seen in the steel strike.

More specifically it is unthinkable that hostilities can begin after a period of tension without the development in the West of a huge popular anti-war movement.

Undoubtedly, as in the Vietnam conflict, such a movement would spill over into the armed forces (especially in those NATO states which rely on conscription) and open the possibility of war against the Soviet Union being turned into a revolutionary war against the capitalist class.



Pershing missile

So in answer to that paralysis in the face of the war threat sensed by many individuals, revolutionaries must state that the most powerful force on the earth today is not the imperialist military machine but the working class of the world.

Every nut, bolt and nuclear warhead is produced by the labour of the working class and production of every bolt, nut and warhead can be stopped by the concerted action of the working class.

Every conscript soldier is a potential revolutionary soldier.

Vietnam showed that even in the late twentieth century the most modern and powerful armed forces cannot defeat an armed and determined working class.

And the Bolshevik experience of 1917 demonstrated that this enormous latent force in the working class can be fully unleashed only if given a Marxist revolutionary party.

Hell on earth

War is hell on earth. Its source and the source of all organised human conflict is the class struggle.

Finally only the seizure of power by the armed working class and the abolition of the capitalist class as a class can resolve the struggle and end war.

The most sobering thought in this book is the realisation that General Hackett knows this last point.

His projected war and victory against the Soviet Union is not the 'war to end all wars'.

He concludes: "America and China-Japan will face each other—across the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific basin will become more important to each of them, than the Atlantic is."

Here, then, are the seeds of the fourth imperialist world war.

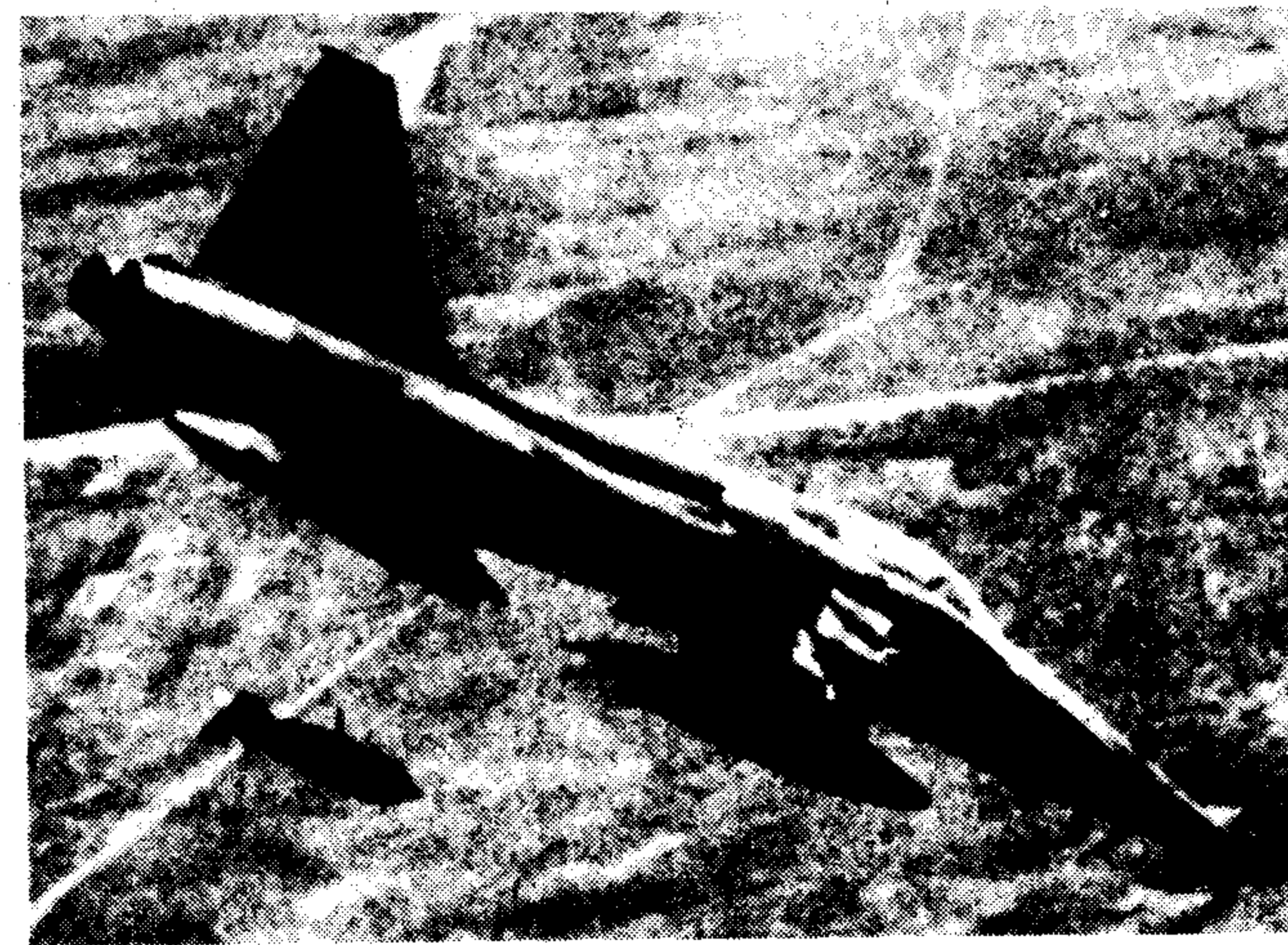
WOMAN WORKER

woman worker

Tories attack housing and jobs ...

Bi-monthly women's paper of the Workers Socialist League. Available price 18p (including postage) from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

KICK THEM OUT WITH A GENERAL STRIKE!



SACKINGS AND CUTS A CLASS ISSUE



Thatcher

By Colin Morrow

The Tory onslaught on jobs and services has produced a variety of responses.

These have ranged from the crocodile tears of Jim Callaghan, leader of the last service slashing Labour administration, through the token, ritual opposition of Labour councillors safely outnumbered on Tory controlled County Councils to actual physical opposition in the form of strikes and occupations by groups of workers directly affected by the cuts and closures.

Each individual struggle has thrown up different problems and different solutions and the vital point to grasp at this point in time is that most of these so-called solutions have been individual solutions.

Pleas to be treated as special cases have abounded, as have short cuts around the actual struggle to stop the Tory attacks.

Thus, services chopped by one tier of local government are likely to appear in revised form as competitors for finance at a different level.

Chop a nursery from the Social Services budget and it could pop-up again as a community creche asking for an urban aid grant. And often the initial response is to replace existing state services which fall under the axe by voluntary provision.

The problem here is that while such tactics may—in a minority of cases—have the effect of defending a particular local service, they do not in any way alter the fact that cuts are taking place all around us as an act of government policy.

This becomes obvious when looked at in strictly financial terms.



Labour leaders march against Tory cuts: took no action against cuts by Callaghan and Healey

Winning a grant of £10,000 for a youth centre or a nursery does not in any way halt the £5,000m cuts going on elsewhere, in the schools, the hospitals, housing and the health service. And it does nothing to defend our rights to those services.

A nursery place is of little use to a working mother whose job as a school "dinner lady" goes as an alternative part of the cuts package. And the job is no use without the day care provision to enable her to take it.

Trading one cut for another may well solve one, individual,

personal problem but it does not even begin to tackle the root of the problem: the drive of the Tories and big business to offload the cost of their economic crisis onto the working class.

Collective problem

That is why it has to be treated as a collective problem facing the whole labour movement, a class question.

Of course, that is what the Tories fear most, a united response. They have, therefore, been at pains to prepare their ground carefully.

Their efforts to sectionalise and atomize working class thinking by painting various unions as "blackmailers", "hooligans" and "greedy bullies" through the press, have gone hand in hand with the preparation of specific incentives to induce workers to approach cuts closures and loss of jobs as individual, personal problems.

Schemes like redeployment feed on just such thinking.

Thus, with redundancies, the payments offered are dangled like a carrot in front of each individual trade unionist to get him or her to sell their job, and concentrate on looking after

themselves. The employers don't of course, during their soft sell, point out the real facts: what price the lump sum when inflation literally rips the cash out of your hands as you try to pocket it?

"Scroungers"

What price the cash when the real prospect is mass unemployment and Tory attacks on the right of the unemployed—branded as "scroungers"—to claim benefit from the state?

The only aim with volun-

tary redundancies, natural wastage and early retirement schemes is to cut the workforce cheaply and without confrontation—boosting unemployment by the back door.

The unnatural wastage of people on the dole is carefully not mentioned because it is precisely that surplus army of labour which will itself be used as the weapon in the next stage to hold down wages.

These sort of softly, softly tactics by management have, of course, had the able support of most union leaders.

Officials like Bill Sirs of the ISTC have cheerfully boasted of their achievements in cutting the workforce while Duffy and Co. made no secret of their determination to back the Edwardes plan—all this in the name of 'viability'.

Accepting argument

What they don't tell members is that by accepting this argument they have also implicitly accepted that what is good for the bosses must be good for their members.

So steelmen lose their jobs while the Tories extract massive forced donations—£500 million is the latest figure quoted by Joseph—from the BSC board to finance their state attacks on jobs and services.

With similar demands on the Gas Board to pay for Tory policies (£180 million) the nationalised industries are clearly becoming a milkcow for the bankers and speculators who back Thatcher.

Unlike the trade union leaders the Tories know full well that the crisis of capitalism is a class question!

For trade unionists, therefore, faced with the stepping up of attacks on all their basic rights, the question posed most sharply now is that of class action.

Workers can only defend themselves by acting as a class, recognising the identity of their problems. As individuals they have no future except as part of that class.

Above all workers must come to recognise that the interests of the working class and capitalism are directly counterposed to each other.

This means working to break the isolation of individual disputes, linking together each struggle no matter how small as the basis for common action.

Mobilise support

It means mobilising support for every section as they come into struggle and building towards the formation of Councils of Action to co-ordinate this support.

But above all it means fighting to show the political implications of each individual struggle and the necessity for a principled socialist leadership.

Today the need for a revolutionary party fighting on a programme of transitional demands which can provide a bridge between today's problems and the socialist programme of revolution stands out starkly before all those who come into struggle in defence of jobs, living standards and basic rights.

LETTER: Hazel Motes no fraud

Dear Comrade Editor, There is an inaccuracy in Henry Phillip's review of the film "Wise Blood" (Socialist Press 190).

The film, begins with the hero, Hazel Motes, being demobbed and returning to his native area of America.

He visits his home, now derelict, and begins to be haunted by memories of his childhood. The most terrifying image is of his grandfather, a preacher.

In one flashback the child is so frightened by a sermon that he wets himself.

Motes does not return with the intention of starting a new church and this is where cde. Phillip's review is wrong. He only wants to live and do things he's never done before.

That is why he goes to a

town and visits a prostitute who's address he finds written on a toilet wall.

But he cannot escape the grip of religion. The suit he chooses to buy, even the look in his eyes, convince all who meet him that he is a preacher—so a preacher he becomes.

The new church he starts is the "Church without Christ", where there is no Jesus to redeem your sins.

Each man and woman must confront the truth of their own life, no matter how sinful and disgusting that truth is. As comrade Phillip quotes—"the blind don't see and the lame don't walk, and what's dead stays that way."

What confronts Hazel Motes and eventually drives him to his death is not the truth, but the deceit, manipulation and profit-

earing that surrounds the fundamentalist sects in that part of America.

The film points to chilling parallels in real life, such as the mystifying growth of sects like the Moonies in America, and the recent suicide of a Jewish boy in Britain who was unable to cope with his conversion to the evangelical church.

The overriding impression left by the film is the power of religion and of the corruption that surrounds it.

Hazel Motes is not a fraud, as cde. Phillip's remarks, but a victim of these forces.

But on one point he is correct, Wise Blood is worth seeing at least once.

Fraternally, R.E., London

The Battle for Trotskyism

Second edition of the opposition documents presented inside the WRP by the present leadership of the Workers Socialist League With a new introduction Price £2.50 plus 20p postage and package from Workers Socialist League B.M. Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX



Teachers vote to strike

Teachers in the Leicester City NUT Branch have voted for immediate school walk-outs if any redundancy notices are issued or any teachers on temporary contracts are told they are not being re-employed.

Angry at the current lack of a fight to defend members' jobs, the teachers insisted that action should come *before* the jobs are lost, rather than dealt with by 'no-cover' when the teacher has already gone—as under the present policy.

Divisional NUT Secretary Betty Coates claimed there was nothing members could do to defend those who had accepted temporary contracts; but the branch decisively rejected this view and adopted a policy of indefinite walkouts and strike

action if any teacher is threatened with unemployment.

The task now is to spread this to not only other NUT branches but also to all the public sector unions facing redundancy in Leicestershire.

Central to this will be the building of a fighting anti-cuts committee which can draw in and link up all those in struggle around a programme of joint action to fight the cuts, build local mass action and prepare the way for a general strike to bring down the Tories.

NALGO must impose workers' control

On Tuesday 18 March representatives of local government NALGO branches gathered from all over the country to discuss the industrial action plans being drawn up in response to the employers breaking off of the pay comparability negotiations.

Originally intended to be paid by the end of December last year, the comparability study was part of last year's wretched 9.4% pay settlement for most local government white collar workers.

While inflation has taken off at a rapid rate since then, most NALGO members have been expecting a settlement similar to those won by other public sector unions under the Clegg committee.

Since January concern has been mounting about the outcome, while the national negotiators have kept a resolute silence about the lack of results. Eventually forced to recognise that they could not possibly go back to the members and recommend to them the insignificant offer that the employers had made, the NEC found it had no alternative but to start the action.

The membership is acutely aware of the importance of the comparability claim, which will set the basis for annual pay claims for many years to come. All future percentage claims will be based on whatever pay structure emerges from the present struggle.

Clegg: pay cuts?

The Clegg report on teachers' pay, due to report at the end of this month, is certain to offer no satisfaction to the teachers demands for a restoration of the large cuts in real pay since 1975.

Leaks from the evidence to the commission suggest that in the case of many grades of teachers in further and higher education the report will be a disaster.

Clegg's reservations have apparently "discovered" that most college lecturers are actually *overpaid* by their standards, though it is not yet clear whether they are going to recommend an actual *cut* in pay or just a withdrawal of the 7.5% interim increase granted from 1 January!

The leaders of NATFHE, the further and higher education teachers' union, have jumped around in embarrassment at the "discoveries"—since nine months ago they accepted Clegg despite serious opposition from some NATFHE regions, as a pretext for abandoning any serious pay struggle round the union's 38% claim.

The treatment of the NATFHE claim is also a lesson to the whole trade union movement on the trap represented by "pay comparability" exercises, tribunals, commissions of inquiry and the like.



NALGO General Secretary Drain (centre) with NEC members

The response from the membership has been extremely strong, with most branches demanding more action from the leadership to win a quick and decisive victory.

Rock solid

At the 18 March meeting, branch after branch mounted the speaker's rostrum to report on massive membership meetings and rock solid determination to beat the bosses.

Most of the branches demanded that the NEC issues definite instructions to carry out a much wider campaign of industrial action, rather than the indecisive 'authorisation' that they had issued.

A definitive instruction was applied only to blacking of rates demands. The members were demanding blacking of rent statements, all payments and accounts to everyone and the imposition of a levy on the membership to finance selected strikes in areas of strength such as the municipal air traffic staff.

The national leadership was basking in its new found popularity after months of criticism at district meetings for their lack of action, and few of the branches were willing to spoil the near-euphoric atmosphere with warnings of caution.

Not defended

Only Ian Wall, convenor of the NALGO Action Group reminded delegates of last year's Universities dispute and the failure of the organisation to defend a number of members who had been disciplined.

In reporting the emerging action at one branch, a delegate reported that the shop stewards were examining all items of post and deciding which could be issued without breaching the blackings. 'Never mind comparability, what about workers control?' he asked.

It was a casual comment but a serious point. Stewards committees will have to take exactly this kind of control if the effect of their action is to be directed against the employers and not against those in most need.

However his remark sparked off the only unpopular speech of the day, when an NEC member attacked the concept of workers control and was almost shouted down.

This was the chance for a

powerful intervention into the meeting but in fact the previous speaker returned to the rostrum to apologise for having made 'a silly joke' about workers control.

Militants in NALGO are presented with massive opportunities by the present dispute.

There is a mood of determination among the membership which has not been seen since the London Weighting campaign of the early 1970s, and the failure of the NEC to issue clear instructions leaves it open for us to take local initiatives with almost an open promise of support from the leadership.

Pushed into fight

At the same time it must be explained to the membership that the national leaders have been pushed into this fight against their will and we must ensure that they have no chance to pull back from it.

We must take care that ultra-radical demands cannot be exploited by the leadership to isolate militants. The superficially attractive demand to

bring forward this year's pay claim now seems to have gained virtually no support among the membership and at this point would only result in leading militants losing their opportunities to influence the mass of the membership.

Link up with NUPE

At this stage the priority is to deepen the support for the action and to build links with NUPE wherever possible.

Careful tactics will be needed given NALGO's parlous financial state. Members sent home will be given full strike pay—but those who walk out in support will not.

Stewards will have to be careful in ensuring that their action involves entire sections and not isolated individuals.

This action is extremely important to the development of NALGO as a trade union, and the basic lessons of organisation and solidarity that can be driven into the membership now will bear rich fruit for many years to come.

JOIN THE WSL!

With Workers by the thousand taking to the streets to oppose Tory policies there is plainly no lack of militancy in the organised working class.

Yet the existing trade union bureaucrats and Labour leaders—whether right or left—have no perspective to offer those workers prepared to fight in defence of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights.

These can only be defended through policies which start from the independent interests of the working class, which, as an *international* class, has nothing to gain and everything to lose from attempts to restore the profitability of their "own" employing class.

In a period where the contradictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale *closure* and *destruction* of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed which, in today's struggles fights

to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

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

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

We invite all readers of Socialist Press to seek more details of the WSL and its work, and to join us in the struggle for socialism.

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Royal Northern: keep up the fight



Workers in the occupied Knowsley plant

Mass opposition to the closure of the Royal Northern Hospital casualty department in North London has forced the government to postpone the closure date and set up an "independent inquiry".

The casualty department of this busy hospital was due to close on March 1, as part of the programme of cuts planned by the Camden and Islington AHA. A campaign against the

closure was mounted in the hospital, with pledges of support from ambulance drivers and other local trades union branches.

Strength

The strength of the campaign forced the AHA to put forward a compromise proposal, in which the casualty would be kept open during weekdays only, but workers in the hospital responded by pledging to move into occupa-

tion and maintain a full 24-hour service if any closure attempt was made.

At a meeting of hospital staff with health minister Vaughan on March 4, it was announced that the closure would be postponed pending the findings of an inquiry into the health needs of the area.

Although this concession must be seen as a victory, it contains enormous dangers to the campaign in the very near future.

First, Vaughan's ploy has succeeded in preventing the occupation from going ahead.

At a mass meeting on Wednesday March 5, hospital staff voted to delay moving into occupation until the findings of the inquiry were known.

Secondly the inquiry is completely bogus, and by no means "independent". It consists of one high-ranking DHSS official, Thorpe Tracy, who has been mandated to look into new ways of making health cuts in the area.

The AHA are expecting him to report back early in April, and there is not a single guarantee that the Royal Northern casualty will be reprieved.

At a public meeting on February 28, called by the defence campaign, WSL members and other local trade unionists urged that the hospital should go ahead and occupy the casualty no matter what the outcome of the meeting with Vaughan.

This is still the correct policy. An occupation is the best safeguard against the manoeuvrings of Vaughan and the DHSS and would transform the campaign into a focus for the fight against health cuts throughout London.

Blow to Massey occupation

The solidarity shown by the Massey Ferguson plants at Manchester and Coventry towards the Knowsley, Liverpool occupation was seriously reversed last week by the decision of the Barton Dock Road plant in Manchester to accept any work transferred from the closed Knowsley plant.

This astounding reversal after the one day strike last week was the dirty work of the TGWU full time official and convenor who successfully lied their way through a stewards committee meeting and subsequent mass meeting.

They claimed that the Knowsley dispute had not been made official though it had been made official only a few days after the meeting to occupy the plant had taken place.

Exploited

Threats from the company to lay off the workforce if they refused to accept work from Knowsley were also exploited by the union bureaucracy to panic Manchester members into a rushed decision which completely reversed the magnificent demonstration of solidarity the previous week—when the workforce came out on strike for a day in response to a strong picket from the occupied Knowsley plant.

But all is not as well as it could be at the Knowsley plant, where there are rumours and stories of possible deals with the company—as at Massey's Kilmarnock plant earlier this year.

A compromise arrangement, including certain sacrifices on working conditions and manning levels plus loss of

jobs through "natural wastage" or voluntary redundancies was not ruled out by AUEW convenor Jimmy Yates when he spoke to representatives of Socialist Press.

This is a slippery slope which must be rejected and the demand for work-sharing on full pay must be fought for with no compromise.

Yates did, however, show some indications that all is not lost when he accepted the need to demand full scale official backing from the AUEW executive when it meets on Tuesday 25 March.

Yates also agreed that the company's claims that the plant was unviable were nonsense.

After some discussion Yates further acknowledged the need to call on the management to

hand over the whole of the books of the company—including also details of dealings with banks and component suppliers—to allow an independent assessment by an elected trade union committee.

This, with the aid of expert financial and technical aid, would then confirm either the fraudulence of the company's claimed "losses" or the need to nationalise the bankrupt Massey Ferguson company as part of a socialist planned economy.

On the basis of the information obtained from the company accounts the elected trade union committee would then be in a position to formulate its own workers plan for production and use this plan to run the nationalised plant under workers management.



All-night vigil outside BL's Cowley Body Plant as steel pickets struggle to stem the flow of components allowed through by the directive from Todd and Evans.

ALL OUT ON MAY 14!

While TUC General Secretary Len Murray continues to campaign to prevent the TUC's May 14 "Day of Action" becoming a full-scale one-day General Strike against the Tory government, pressure from their members is forcing some union leaders in the other direction.

SOGAT leader Bill Keyes—attempts to force through a miserable pay settlement—was among the first to put out a call

for one-day strike action on May 14: but he was swiftly followed by the right wing leadership of the NUR.

General Secretary Sid Weighell correctly declared that "it is not sufficient to wave banners in Trafalgar Square".

Instead the NUR Executive has demanded that the TUC General Council:

"calls upon all trade unions to instruct their members not to report for duty on 14 May, in order to demonstrate the depth of feeling in the movement against government policy."

The engine drivers' union

ASLEF has followed their lead, as has the NUPE leadership. And the East Midlands Regional TUC has added its voice to the call for a one-day General Strike.

Socialist Press supports the fight for strike action on May 14 as part of the fight for an all-out General Strike to bring down the Tory government and create conditions for the political struggle for socialist policies against the existing Labour and trade union leaders.

Scots strikers stand firm

Scottish steelworkers face the same problems as steelworkers in England and Wales—isolation by the trade union bureaucracy and strike breaking by the TGWU.

For weeks pickets from the massive Ravenscraig works at Motherwell have been picketing the ports and the steel stockholders in an effort to make the strike bite.

Several weeks ago they began picketing the main steel users. The Albion and Bathgate BL truck plants, Catapults and others.

At first they were armed, as were steel pickets in other parts of the country, with instruc-

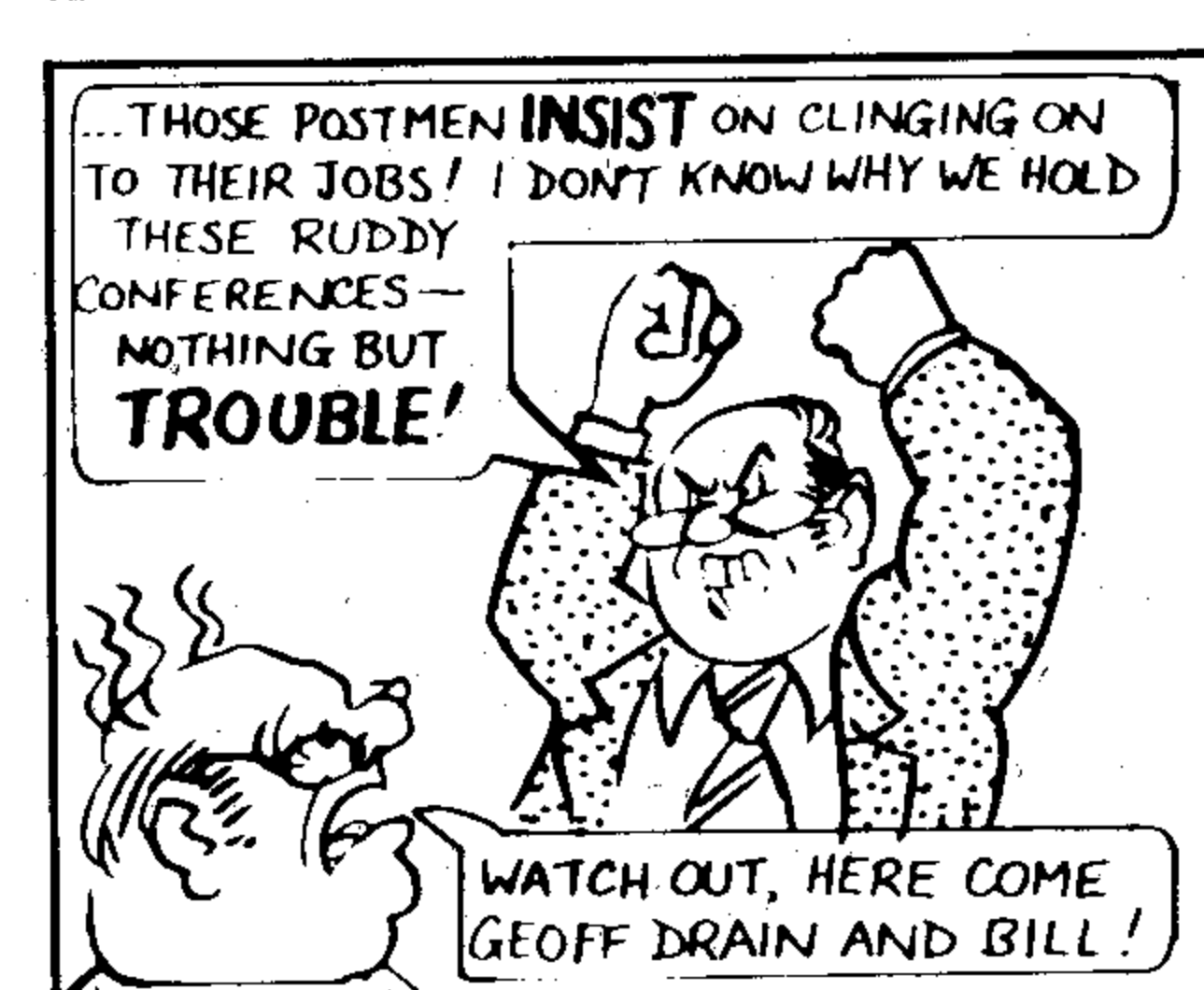
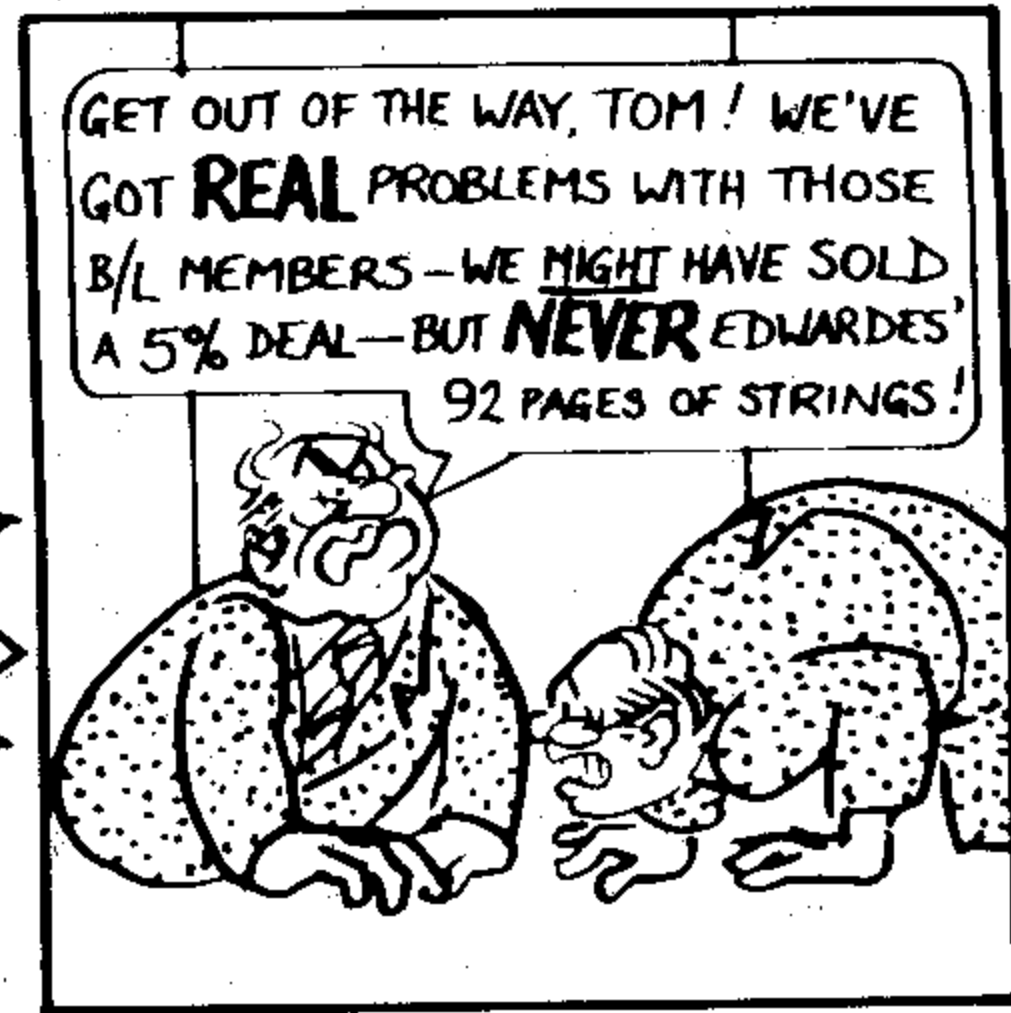
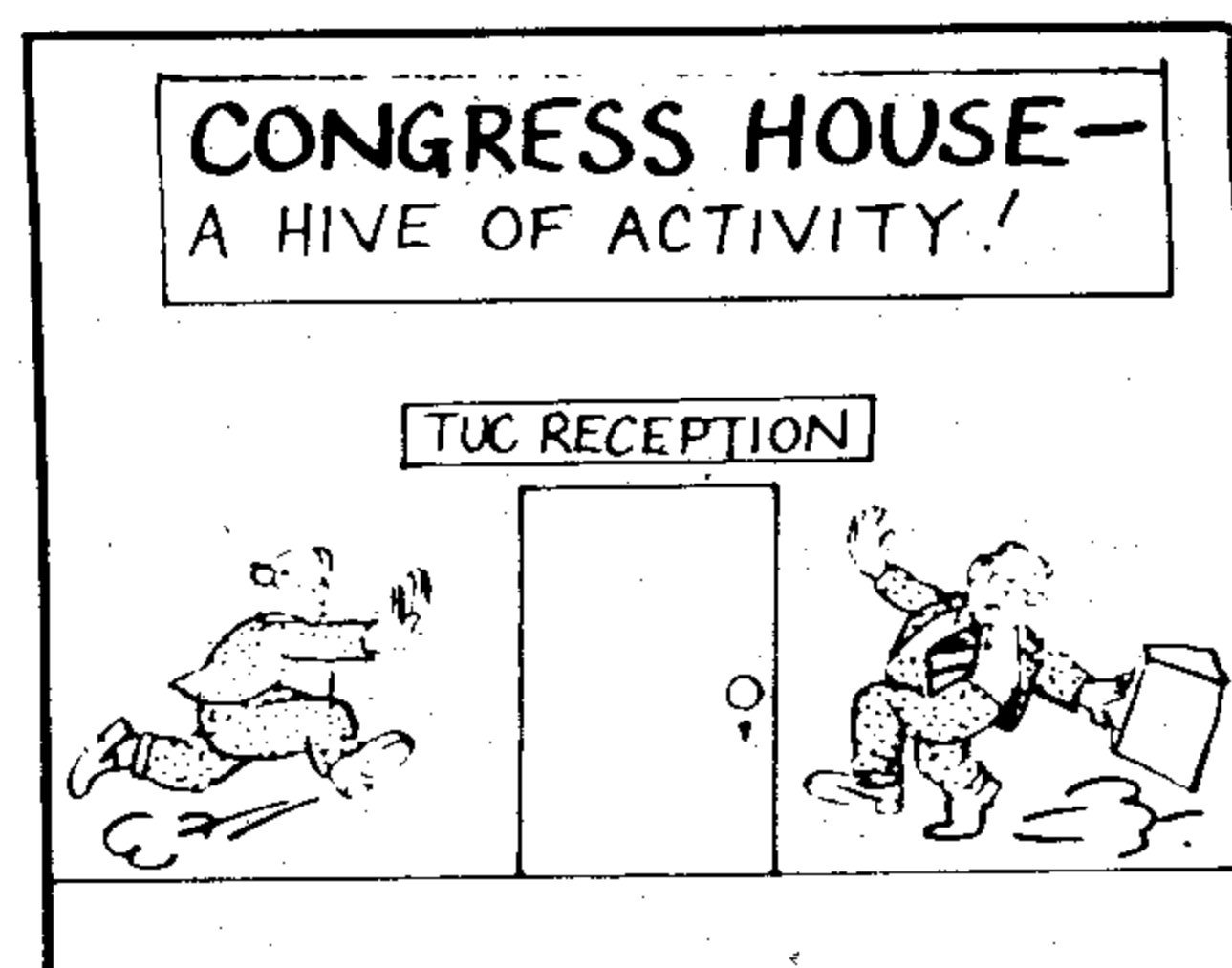
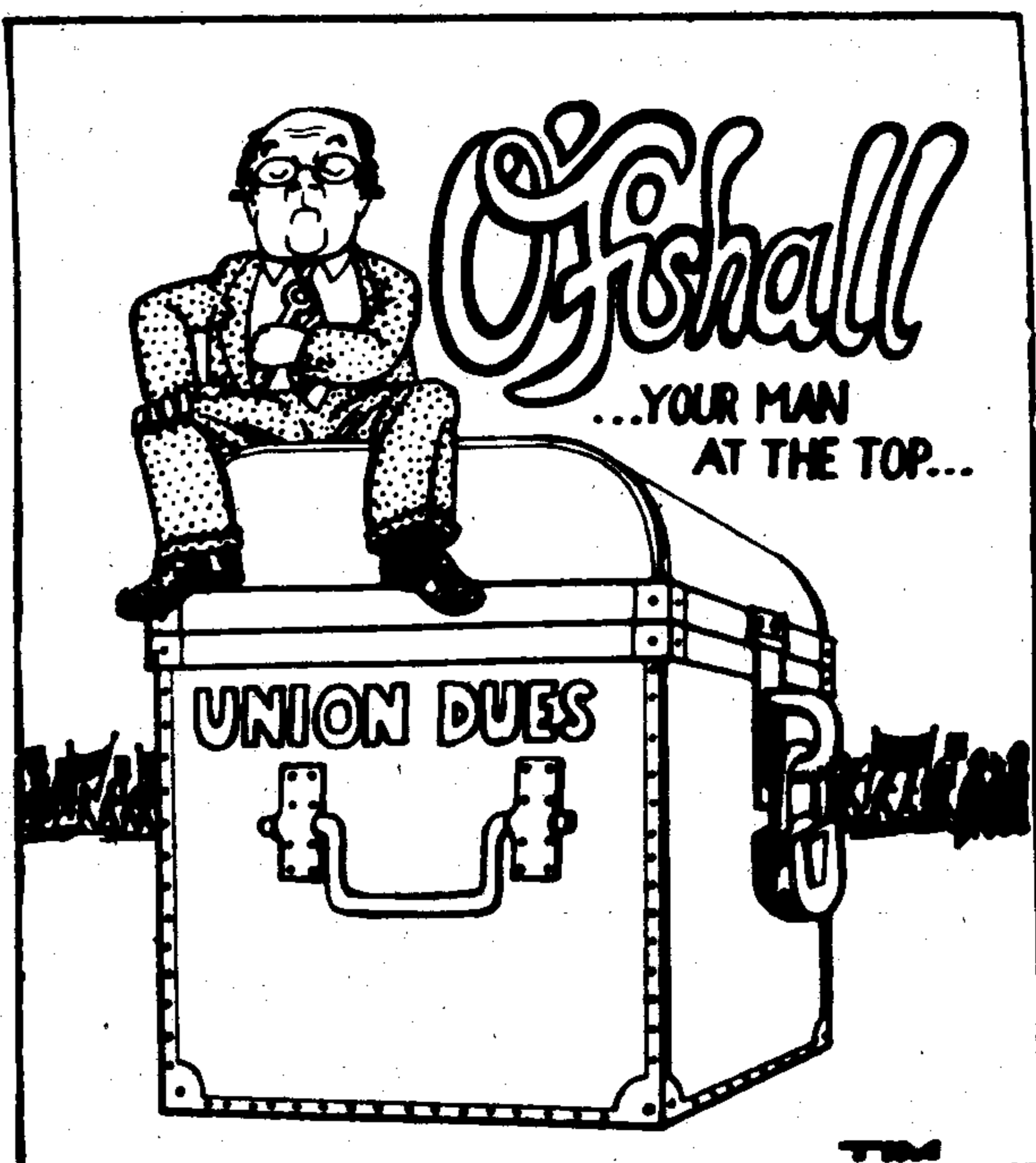
tions from Moss Evans ordering TGWU lorry drivers not to cross the picket.

But, as with the pickets on the BL Cowley Body Plant, this was quickly changed to a fresh letter, which simply gave pickets the authority to stop lorries carrying raw steel.

Since then lorries have been rolling through the picket lines continuously.

This is in sharp contrast to the morale of the Scottish steelworkers who remain solid despite the betrayals of the leadership.

Several thousand steelworkers are manning the picket lines throughout Scotland and there has been no hint of any 'back to work' move from the rank and file.



SOCIALIST PRESS



Zimbabwe strike wave

The working class in Zimbabwe has lost little time in making its presence felt following the sweeping victory of Robert Mugabe in the recent elections.

A wave of strikes has erupted reflecting the expectation of the masses in the wake of that result. Reports of the extent of these strikes vary, with suggestions that as many as 40 different plants have been affected.

Mr Kum Biarai Kangai, the new Minister of Labour and Social Welfare has been working overtime to get the strikes called off.

He is quoted as saying "I must point out that there is a laid down procedure for the airing of workers' grievances, which must be observed. While the government has given an undertaking to review the situation as soon as possible, nevertheless any precipitate action at this stage can only serve to damage the goodwill which has been built up between the government, the employees and their employers, and will inevitably have a crippling effect on industry. This in turn will have the effect of postponing any improvement in workers' conditions of service which might otherwise have taken place."

Mass sackings

Some strikers have returned to work, while something in the region of 3,000 have been sacked.

Beside the number of different plants affected, the action is not isolated to one town.

Companies in Salisbury, Bulawayo and Umtali as well as the Delni mine at Umvuma have been hit.

The stored-up anger of the Zimbabwean working class which suffers from low wages, bad conditions and high unemployment is finding expression in these strikes.

The task of revolutionaries is to develop the necessary programme and organisation which can answer the desire of the masses to put an end to their oppression.

This means the development of a system of demands based on the method of the transitional programme, the building of soviets and the construction of a Trotskyist party.

Imperialism

Such a perspective, the development of the independence of the working class, will be bitterly opposed by the likes of Mugabe and the ZANU(PF) leadership, who are moving to rebuild a stable base for imperialism in Zimbabwe.

The conflict which has already developed between the working class and the new government is the taste of things to come.

In Britain, the movement for solidarity must be directed decisively towards aiding such struggles of the masses as they emerge. Ways must be found to draw the link between the struggle of workers here and that of their class brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe.

STEEL: NO INQUIRY! STOP THE LORRIES!

As we go to press, leaders of the ISTC and NUB have rejected an appeal from BSC management for an immediate return to work in exchange for a 10% interim pay supplement.

But they have accepted the establishment of a "committee of inquiry" into their pay claim. The outcome of this inquiry is unlikely to vary more than one or two percent from management's pathetic 14%-with-strings offer and will come nowhere near the 20% claim.

No challenge

The fact is that no arbitration board or committee of inquiry is going to challenge the basis on which BSC management case rests: that an

employer must restore "viability"—profits—at the expense of the working class.

Steel union leaders who have allowed management to axe jobs by the tens of thousand in recent years, themselves accept the case for "viability".

But while they have found it comparatively easy to demoralise workers into accepting what in many cases have been hefty sums in voluntary redundancy payments, union leaders were forced to call the strike because they found it next to impossible to persuade their members to accept BSC's further plans for speed-up and closures with a miserable 2% pay offer on the table.

Now, after 13 weeks on strike have raised workers' expectations to new levels, Bill Sirs and the union bureaucrats have been forced to throw out a 10% cash-down offer.

Scabbing

But the weeks of conscious sabotage and scabbing by TUC leaders—who have worked might and main to isolate and weaken the steel strike—have taken their toll on the strike.

Though morale among militants remains high, it is clear that many steelworkers will look with dismay on the minimal impact their 12 weeks



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Port Talbot pickets

Other unions, too, and the TUC should be picketed in the fight for supporting action to win the steel strike.

And a principled leadership must be built in the steel unions to defend the interests of the working class.

*20%—no strings!
*No sackings, no closures; defend all jobs.

*Spread the strike; bring out BL; for a General Strike to bring down the Tories.

out have had on production in the engineering industry.

It is no good for Sirs and Hector Smith merely to reject the BSC pay offer: it is necessary publicly to take up the fight for other unions to mobilise solidarity action.

Yet the ISTC and NUB leaders have consciously refused to do this. They prefer to see the strike defeated than to embarrass their fellow TUC bureaucrats.

In particular, though thousands of TGWU steelworkers are

on strike, directives from Moss Evans and Ron Todd continue to allow convoys of lorries through steelworkers' picket lines to keep production lines rolling in major factories.

There must be full scale steelworkers' lobbies of TGWU District, Regional and National Offices to demand that the instruction goes out at once to stop all lorries crossing these pickets, and for immediate disciplinary action to be taken against any driver who flouts such an order.



Sirs

Defeat Labour's witch-

hunters

The Underhill Report has been published at an embarrassing time for the Labour lefts and right wing alike.

The most significant part of the press conference given by Labour's former National Agent was the news that he does not favour the expulsion of Militant supporters from the Labour Party.

Underhill's wish to see 'the



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Heffer

argument begin" has to be put into the context of a statement from Eric Heffer (who actively opposes the witch-hunt) that a letter has already been sent from the organisation committee to all groups within the party asking them to account for where they stand on the constitution, the aims and objectives of the Labour Party.

The objective of the right wing is not to press for the expulsion of the Militant but to release political tensions inside the party at a time when the collaboration of the Callaghan leadership with the Tories has been coming increasingly under fire from militant sections of the working class.

The struggle of the Callaghan-Healey leadership to preserve their stranglehold on the Party runs hand in hand with their opposition to working class action designed to bring down the Tory government.

No challenge

While they are not opposed to taking electoral advantage out of growing opposition to Thatcher they in no way wish to see a challenge to Parliamentary rule.

It is important therefore that the Labour Party remains able to attract certain leftward moving sections of workers seeking a means of defeating

Thatcher and suck them into the dead-end politics of reformism.

To proceed now to the lengths of expelling the Militant would hamper the right wing and the 'lefts' in achieving this task.

It would therefore stretch the loyalty of the Tribune left, and spell out unmistakably to all and sundry the leadership's undying opposition to even verbal socialist policies.

Meanwhile the Parliamentary 'lefts' fear that any move to purge Militant would force Tribunes—through self-preservation—to draw a clear political dividing line between Tribune and Militant—at a time when many a Tribune, with Militant support, is playing the 'left' card to the full.

This is why the purpose of the organisation committee letter is not to expel the Militant, but to draw a left line beyond which they are not allowed to go.

It will be made clear that Militant supporters will remain welcome—so long as they do not provide a sharp focus of struggle against the Callaghan-Healey leadership or a serious alterna-

tive to the Tribunes.

In attacking Militant the press are attacking Trotskyism in any guise.

The press owners know that the emergence of a genuine revolutionary current inside the Labour Party would endanger the party as a reliable alternative means for the ruling class to hold on to power.

As the *Times* pointed out: "If such activities are allowed to proceed unchecked then the Militant Tendency may indeed infiltrate the party to the extent that it is seeking to do. In which case the Labour Party would cease to be an acceptable instrument of Government."

Yet the Militant which perverts Trotskyism, and has not even attempted to mobilise Labour Party members in the struggle for its own defence (confining its "struggle" to manoeuvres with Tribunes) is no revolutionary current.

It is a classic centrist grouping which is agnostic on the question of whether a revolution carried out by the working class outside of Parliament is an unavoidable prerequisite for socialism.

It would be absurd for us to

suggest that the purpose of the witch-hunt is in reality to hound out Socialist Press supporters—unfortunately there are too few to merit such attention.

But there is no doubt that many Labour left wingers would be happy to define the "legitimate left" of the Labour Party as "Militant—but no further", and to draw a line between Militant supporters and those actively fighting for socialist principles against both the right wing and the Tribune fakers.

Militant supporters are strong enough in the Party to defend themselves against the witch-hunt.

Mobilising members

If they were at all serious about fighting the right wing they would go further, and mobilise Labour Party members in lobbies and demonstrations demanding an end to all witch-hunts, and the abolition of all bans and proscriptions against socialists.

But it seems certain that Militant will continue to conduct their defence by a bankrupt combination of exploiting the publicity value of the press witch-hunt, and back-room deals with their Tribune colleagues on the Party's leading bodies.

With 'enemies' as tame as this, Callaghan scarcely needs friends!

FUND

A big boost for our fund this week! A donation of £280 together with other contributions to our Special Fund has taken us over the first £1,000 and put us well on the way to reaching the half-way stage of our £3,000 fund by Easter.

The fund total stands at £1,269.05.

So let's go all-out to get the £230 we need by Easter, and at the same time, don't forget the £750 monthly fund.

All donations should be sent to:

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