

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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# POLAND DON'T TRUST THE BUREAUCRACY!



Poland's ruling Stalinist bureaucracy has demonstrated its weakness in the face of what had become a mounting General Strike movement by conceding virtually all of the strikers' key demands.

But even while Polish workers cheer and their leaders talk of 'victory' in their fight it is at precisely this point that the limitations of the strike leadership and its demands stand most starkly exposed.

They still have not grasped that the regime's agreement to allow workers to form trade unions independent of the state-run official unions is in the long term incompatible with the survival of the Stalinist bureaucracy itself.

As a parasitic ruling caste, feeding off the nationalised economy in Poland, the regime depends upon the suppression of the independent struggles and demands of the working class.

The formation of independent trade unions, a genuine relaxation of rigid media censorship and the release of political prisoners, while weakening the repressive apparatus of the bureaucracy, all potentially offer workers the means of expressing themselves—and thus the avenues and organisations to challenge the power of the Stalinists.

## Transient moment

This is why such gains, insofar as they are actually conceded in practice by the Gierek regime, must represent only a transient moment in the balance of class forces.

If the working class does not go forward from this point to consolidate and extend the power of its new independent

# Maintain the strike committees

organisations, to elaborate demands that further confront the political power of the bureaucracy and spell out the need for its revolutionary overthrow, the bureaucracy will use the breathing space in order to regroup its forces and take back the concessions it has granted.

## Reforming

The political weakness of the strike leaders and the workers defence organisation KOR is that they have only ever held a perspective of reforming rather than overthrowing the bureaucracy.

Already, by offering offices and other facilities to the strike leaders the bureaucracy is feeling for ways and means to draw the new independent strike committees into the vast bureaucratic apparatus.

By making other concessions conditional on the drawing up of plans over the next several months, the Gierek bureaucracy is also plainly hoping for an ebb in the revolutionary ferment in the Polish working class which might offer openings for the re-imposition of governmental

authority.

But nobody should underestimate the scale of the blow struck at the Gierek regime by the strike wave or the importance of the issues apparently conceded.

\*On trade unions, the formula endorsed at Gdansk makes it clear that, for a period at least, there seem likely to be two antagonistic trade union organisations in key industrial areas of Poland. The agreement states:

"No one's right to remain in the present union will be questioned [!], and in the future we see a possibility of entering into cooperation between the two unions."

Though there is a statement that the new unions will recognise the leading role of the Communist Party, the new unions will have the right to strike.

There is no doubt that this represents a major challenge to the control of the bureaucracy.

\*On political prisoners, the regime has climbed down completely and agreed to release all those prisoners listed by the strike committee.

This must be the first time

that a Stalinist bureaucracy has been forced by strike action to release political prisoners—and amounts to a fundamental blow against the institutional terrorism of the Stalinist secret police and state apparatus.

In another humiliating concession at Gdansk and Szczecin, the government has agreed to erect a memorial plaque to workers gunned down in the 1970 anti-government riots.

\*On censorship, the verbal concessions are far more vague: but the form of words appears less significant than the added confidence of the workers. Strike leader Lech Walesa has boldly declared that "we will write what we like".

## Concession

Here too, such a concession would in practice lay the basis to undermine the very existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

\*On economic questions, the government has stood firm against the strikers' initial wage demands, agreeing only to a small increase beginning next year. There is a promise to

export less food and to import more meat—though a demand for meat rationing was deferred. There are to be improvements in the health service and in pensions.

Such economic concessions are not in themselves large: but coming at a time when the bureaucratically-managed Polish economy is a staggering \$20 billion in debt and dependent upon continual loans for survival, they can only head the regime further into crisis.

But the latest concessions by no means imply that the Polish bureaucracy has been decisively beaten—or that it can be 'reformed' out of existence.

## Tactical retreat

The divisions on even the purged Central Committee over the latest concessions and the evident anger of the Kremlin leaders at the line taken in Warsaw underline the fact that the Gierek leadership has been forced by the sheer strength of the working class into a tactical retreat.

As miners, steel workers and

car workers throughout Poland walked out on strike or voted for action alongside the strikers in the Baltic ports, the Gierek leadership were forced to accept that the cosmetic governmental reshuffles and limited concessions that they had offered would not placate a militant workers' movement.

A General Strike if it had developed would have confronted Gierek with a total loss of control—and the prospect of a Soviet military intervention which would have been violently resisted, with far-reaching and incalculable consequences.

The Polish leaders saw no option but to retreat for the time being. But the time is limited by the scale of Poland's economic crisis.

And similar tactical retreats have taken place before in Poland. In 1956 Gierek's predecessor Gomulka promised workers' councils and an easing of censorship—only to renege on both pledges.

In 1970 Gierek himself promised Gdansk workers steps to democratise the regime—none of which were implemented.

## Leadership

In 1980 it is only the continued offensive struggle of the Polish masses, the maintenance and extension of the strike committees into ongoing soviet-type workers' councils and the development of a leadership with a perspective of the overthrow of the unstable Stalinist bureaucracy that can guarantee that the latest concessions represent more than a paper agreement.

\*No trust in the bureaucracy!

\*Maintain and extend the ongoing strikes and the strike committees as a step towards soviet-type workers' councils.

\*To defend workers' gains and independent organisations, build workers' militias!

\*Build soviets in the armed forces to control the officers.

\*Withdraw Soviet troops! Oppose Soviet intervention!

\*End all bureaucratic privileges! Close the special shops and dollar shops. Stop the tourists taking food and goods denied to Polish workers!

\*For political revolution in Poland!



# Warships smash French trawler strike

"We were anchored in the entrance to Fos channel when, at about 2.40 a.m., the ships of the navy arrived with all their lights out.

"We soon started up to get away, but they had us trapped.

A vessel had deliberately stopped so as to block us in.

"Without any warning the mobile police who were on board threw grenades at close distance. Their intention was not to smoke us out but to injure us.

"Two members of our crew were hit: one had his nose fractured by a grenade and his teeth broken".

Fos trawler owner These picket-busting techniques, used by the French government and given such sympathetic coverage in the British press are no doubt being gleefully watched by the British ruling class.

Tugmen and dockworkers in Fos immediately stopped work in protest at this smashing of the fishermen's blockade.

At Antifer, the supertanker port near Le Havre, eleven warships were sent to attack the trawlermen. 150 riot police were also deployed around the terminal which is France's largest oil terminal handling 37 million tons of oil last year. Over 15 boats were badly damaged of which two were irreparable.

As the fishermen of Fecamp remarked, "when are we going to see the army used against strikers?"

The weapons of state repression in France are certainly being used more often and openly than before. The picketers at Boulogne claim that the CRS riot police used not only tear gas against them but also some stronger type of gas as well.

The response of the government has not been a conciliatory one. Joel le Theule, minister of transport with responsibility for fisheries expressed the government view:

"It is not a question of capitulating or of losing face in the first great social and political test after the holidays..."

The cabinet meeting echoed this although agreeing to some measures. These consisted mainly of frameworks for discussion to improve marketing and the preparation of stricter rules on non-professional fishing.

Le Theule coupled the publishing of these proposals with an arrogant statement about the need for fishing to play its part in defending the national interest!

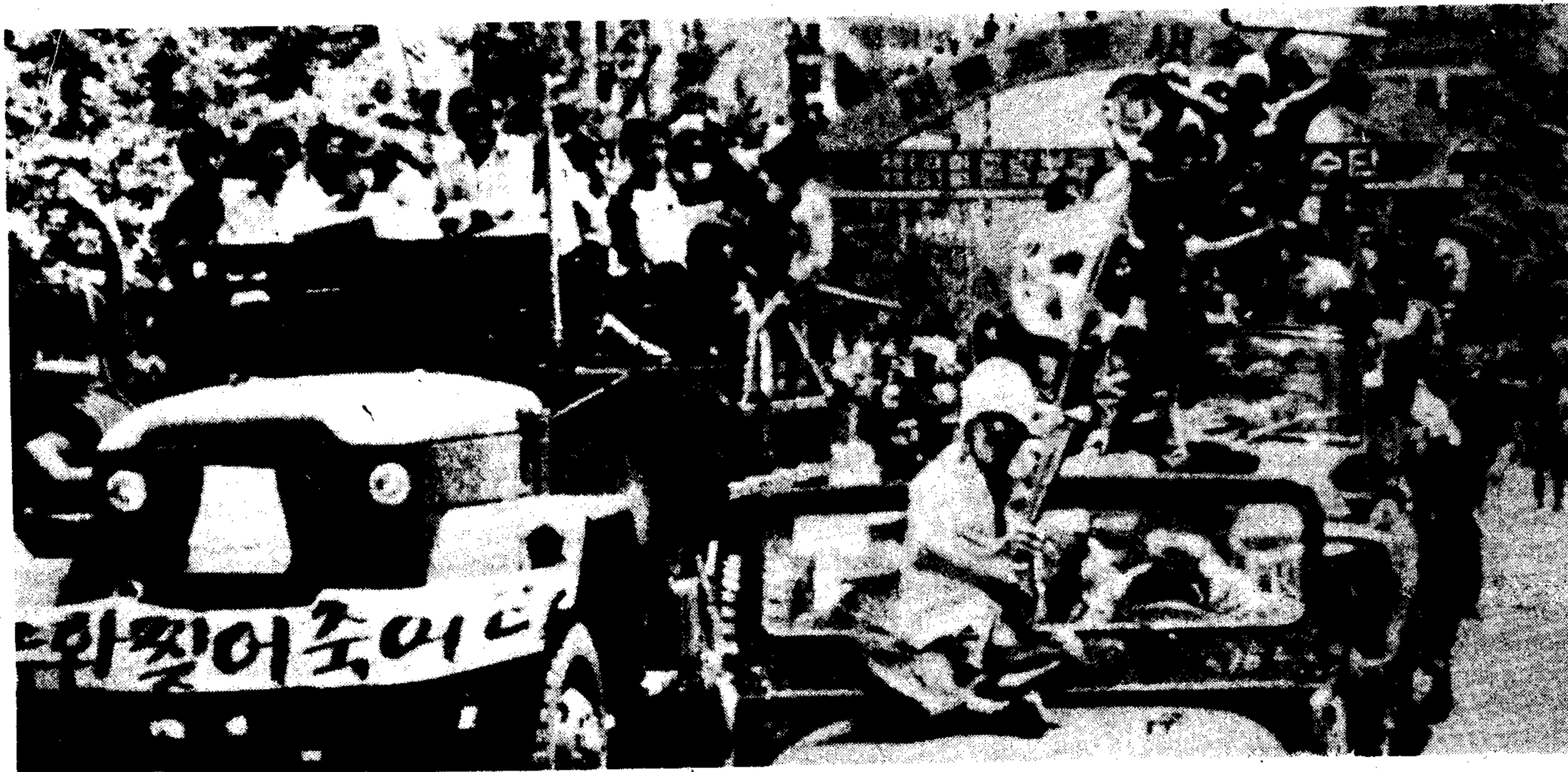
Even Georges Seguy, general secretary of the CP-dominated CGT trade union had to point out that these measures "are not sufficient to satisfy the fishermen" and would be "very badly received by them."

What he failed to point out was that the CGT leadership had done everything possible to weaken the fishermen's action. They seem to have now succeeded in isolating the workers at Boulogne and got the other blockades lifted.

The CFDT leadership was less critical and called for negotiations to continue.

As we go to press the strikers were due to meet in national assembly to discuss their attitude to these measures and decide on any future action. It is hard to see the action continuing given the sabotage of the union leaderships.

# Strongarm men crack down in S. Korea



Students and workers ride in captured vehicles through Kwangju three months ago

Since the crushing of the worker and student uprisings in Kwangju and Seoul three months ago, the imperialist-backed military dictatorship under the control of General Chou Too Hwan has unleashed a reign of unmitigated terror on the courageous South Korean masses.

Chou aims, he asserts, to "Koreanise democracy", to "melt all the impurities out of South Korean society" and this has meant wide-scale acts of murder, intimidation, mass arrests/bannings and torture.

In a country which, ever since it was militarily occupied by American imperialism after the Second World War, hasn't known even a semblance of democracy, the military has assumed total control.

## Censorship

In addition to ordering the sacking of 8,500 civil servants, over 1,200 worker militants, 400 journalists and 70 university professors among others, Chou has ordered the banning of 750 journals, strict censorship even of reports of foreign correspondents and the rounding up of over 31,000 "dissidents" into military "purification" camps.

Under conditions of the world wide crisis of capitalism, the tendency of imperialism towards ever more barbaric forms of political reaction is particularly marked. Imperialism is seeking to create, primarily through repression, the conditions necessary for the establishment of the political stability essential for profitable accumulation.

Chile, Bolivia, El Salvador, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Philippines, South Korea... wherever one looks in the world today the story is the same—bloody imperialist attacks on the most basic rights, living standards and often lives of the working masses.

In South Korea, a veritable heartland of imperialist exploitation, Chou embodies the kind of qualities imperialism is looking for to further its interests and the imperialists have therefore implicitly supported his recent moves to promote himself to President of the country.

## Only candidate

Having pressurised the puppet President Choi Kyu Hah, who took over under the aegis of the military after the assassination of dictator Park Chung Hee, to resign, Chou has now nominated himself as the only presidential candidate to be elected by Seoul's electoral college.

General John Wickham, commander of the 40,000 US imperialist troops in South Korea, will find no difficulty in co-operating with this tyrant, whom he has affectionately described as "vain", "ruthless" and "one of those people who believes he was born to the purple".

For imperialist collaboration is determined not by the "human rights" verbiage of President Carter but by the necessity to establish agents who will guarantee the most favourable conditions for the pursuit of profits.

This, Dr Harold Brown, the US Secretary of Defence, made clear last year when he said that "some questions have been raised about how our security relationship with Korea relates to Korean domestic politics and human rights. Let me simply say that our security role in Korea is based on the fundamental strategic interests of the United States".

## Combativity

Of course, the imperialists are just not able to simply establish the political stability they require—they have the strength and combativity of the militant South Korean proletariat to contend with.

Notwithstanding the fact that South Korea (a country little bigger than Wales) is subject to the massive US army of occupation and the economic domination of Japanese imperialism (in whose shadow it lies), the South Korean masses have repeatedly demonstrated in the strikes and uprisings which have occurred over the past year that they are ready and willing to fight for the overthrow of imperialism and its agents.

In the current period, when the political and organisational gains forged by the workers in struggle are immediately threatened with eradication by the iron heel of imperialist reaction, the crisis of revolutionary leadership is the biggest obstacle facing the working class.

While the Stalinists in the North continue their nervous flirtation with imperialism, it is Trotskyists alone who—starting from the necessary defence of the masses in their day to day struggles against capitalist attack—can develop the programmatic leadership for the political revolution in the North and the socialist revolution in the South which will create the basis for the transition to a classless society throughout Korea.

The Workers Socialist League, as part of the process of building the programme of permanent revolution on a world scale, will be addressing itself to this vital task.

# Bolivian junta in crisis

## The Garcia dictatorship in Bolivia remains in crisis.

It has failed to consolidate itself in the face of continued internal opposition (especially from the miners who have still not returned to work), international vilification, and growing dissidence amongst the officer corps, anxious to avoid the complete disintegration of the repressive apparatus.

Eyewitnesses have confirmed that regular units inflicted a brutal massacre in the mining region around Caracoles on 4 August.

Caracoles, along with Viloco, was one of the last camps to fall to the army.

When troops of the Tarapaca and Max Toledo regiments attacked with tanks, heavy artillery and air cover, the miners defended themselves with rocks, sticks and dynamite and many of them were killed.

When the town fell the soldiers sacked the area, torturing and murdering the surviving combatants.

Reportedly under the influence of narcotics, the troops beat children to death, marched over youths made to lie on glass, raped both women and children, made miners eat gunpowder and blew them to bits.

They then killed all the livestock, seized everything of value and brought in lorries to drive away over 900 people, the whereabouts of whom is still unknown.

While this revolting barbarism is continuously encouraged by the 'defenders of Western Christendom', ex-dictator Banzer has been travelling to Buenos Aires and Brasilia in a desperate effort to arrange an "alternative project".

Videla resisted his overtures but Brazil proved more pliant, recognising that there had been "unnecessary brutality".

No doubt the State Department is putting all its influence behind this "moderate alternative" which reportedly has the support not only of many leading officers but also of some

cabinet ministers depressed at the refusal of US banks to raise new loans, the prospect of being kicked out of the Andean Pact and total economic collapse.

The US has spent a great deal of energy on 'revealing' the fact that the present regime is not only financed by the cocaine dealers of Santa Cruz but is also actively engaged in shipping cocaine paste, which is now the country's largest export earner.

It is indeed a fact that Garcia, Arce, Colonels Hugo Echeverria and Aries Coca and others are major cocaine smugglers and received a direct grant of \$100 million from the leading traffickers to stage their coup.

Total earnings from this trade are now \$1,000 million and the effect of the coup is evident not only in the rest of Latin America where, according to one Colombian narcotics expert "it is beginning to rain cocaine", but also in the US.

However, the concentration on cocaine is quite plainly an

effort to avoid condemning dictatorship in itself for that is what Banzer too offers.

The intention is to blacken the personnel of the present regime, which threatens to unleash massive popular mobilisation when it falls, rather than its methods which will have to continue if Bolivia is to be made safe for capital.

It remains to be seen whether the moral giants of Washington will finger Banzer as a major cocaine trafficker too.

In the 1970s he ran a major operation with Paraguayan dictator Stroessner, and his only difference with the present butchers lies in the fact that he was linked to another sector of dealers.

Meanwhile the 'legal' government of Siles continues to oppose the regime, not by standing, fighting and dying like the working class but by sending a delegate to the UN to challenge the Garcia appointee.

In this the bourgeois political leaders have the support of Peru, Mexico and other 'moderate' regimes.

# Mass turn-out against Pinochet

Chilean dictator Pinochet recently announced proposals to extend his rule until 1997—a full 24 years after the overthrow of the Unidad Popular government.

These proposals will be voted on in the 'referendum' on the seventh anniversary of the counter-revolution; it is very possible that with the already well-developed fraud, bureaucratic fixing and consistently applied terror (which is currently worse than anything since 1974) he will gain majority support.

But he will not last the course.

Opposition to the dictatorship has been growing consistently as the masses begin to recover strength and confidence after the defeat of 1973.

On 28 August some 20,000 people openly demonstrated

against the regime in the first spontaneous march since the coup.

Moreover the demonstrators were prepared to confront the riot police sent to cow them back home, and hurled stones as well as insults, which resulted in an undisclosed number of arrests.

The motivation for the demonstration was a meeting addressed by Christian Democrat leader Eduardo Frei who condemned the constitutional proposals—despite the fact that he supported the 1973 coup.

Although Pinochet had banned TV and radio coverage of the event it attracted tens of thousands of people simply because it represented opposition of some sort.

It was after police excluded all but 8,000 people that the confrontations began, with the police forced to form barriers as the anti-Pinochet slogans echoed in the streets of Santiago with a force not heard for seven years.



INTERNATIONAL

# El Salvador left draws wrong lessons from Nicaragua

The struggle of the workers and peasants of El Salvador against the bloody dictatorship of monopoly capital is by no means new—30,000 lives were lost in the 1932 insurrection alone.

But in the last year imperialism, wounded by major setbacks in Afghanistan, Iran and Nicaragua, has escalated its offensive to such a pitch that, if the Salvadorean capitalist state is not destroyed through a decisive military confrontation, the workers' movement stands to suffer a defeat on a scale comparable to those in Spain in 1939 and Chile in 1973.

El Salvador is only a small state of some 4.5 million people.

Its productive capacity is of marginal importance to the massive transnational corporations.

### Critical

Its tiny, hidebound and vicious ruling oligarchy is of relatively little value to the barons of the international banks.

But Salvador now holds the key to Central America; and Central America has become a region of absolutely critical importance in the struggle between international capital and labour.

However, a proletarian revolutionary victory in this struggle is dependent not only upon crushing the forces of capitalism but also upon removing the radical petty bourgeois leadership of the mass movement. Without this the Salvadorean masses will not simply be subjected to betrayals after the defeat of the regime but they also stand in grave danger of losing even the war to oust the oligarchy.

The history of the Salvadorean left, its political development, social composition and the conditions of its struggle against imperialism are in many respects distinct from those of the Nicaraguan FSLN.

Moreover, despite its close links with the Sandinistas, it is still possible that under pressure from the masses the left in Salvador will be forced to recognise some of the 'negative' as well as the 'positive' lessons of the Nicaraguan revolution.

However, the great weight of evidence points in the opposite direction, showing the leadership to be fully committed to the politics of petty bourgeois nationalism, actively pursuing the class collaborationist strategy of the popular front.

# Nicaragua



Early days of the Salvador junta: Andano, Gutierrez, Ungo, Majano and Mayorga.

While vehemently anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorial, it consistently refuses to call for the political independence of the working class and fight for the destruction of the capitalist system as a whole rather than simply rid it of its 'degenerate' elements and realign the relationship between sections of capital (as well as between capital and labour) through reform.

Every permutation of radical rhetoric—much of it far in advance of that produced by the FSLN—is to be found, but on these central questions (questions that in the last instance distinguish the politics of social revolution from those of political reform) there is silence.

The key text in this regard is the programme of the Coordinadora Revolucionaria de Masas (CRM) of 28 February 1980.

The section entitled "The Revolutionary Democratic Government. Its Composition and its Platform of Political, Structural and Social Changes" states:

"This government will be

based on a broad social and political foundation formed in the first place by the working class, the peasants and the advanced middle classes. Intimately united with them will be the social classes prepared to carry forward this platform, managers of small- and medium-sized industries, artisans and agricultural businessmen, (small and medium coffee growers and other branches of agriculture and cattle raising).

It will also include honest professionals, the progressive clergy, democratic parties such as the MNR (Revolutionary Nationalist Movement), the advanced sectors of Christian Democracy, worthy and honest army officers, who are willing to serve the interests of the people and all other sectors, groups, persons or segments which are in favour of broad democracy for the popular masses, independent development and popular freedom".

The programme goes on to call for the nationalisation of foreign trade, electricity, oil and banks, but:

"all without affecting the small and medium companies, which will be given stimulus and support in every way..." (Tasks and Objectives, subsection e).

It calls for the destruction of the repressive bodies ORDEN, the Guardia Nacional, and the Policia de Hacienda but not the army.

A new army will be created: "constructed during the course of the revolutionary process, into which will be incorporated those healthy and worthy members of the present army."

(ibid., subsection g). A later paragraph confirms that this includes officers).

### Independence

Foreign policy will be directed on the basis of independence: "peaceful coexistence, equal rights and mutual respect between states."

Education, health, tax, credit, urban and agrarian reforms are all outlined alongside the introduction of a sliding scale of wages, a literacy campaign and general 'cultural transformation', all of which are treated as ends in themselves rather than as transitional demands.

The success of this programmatic outline as a platform for a popular front was proved with remarkable rapidity.

The CRM itself already represents, as we shall see, an alliance of forces which, although long calling for 'unity of the left', had been in sharp political conflict for over a decade.

### Differences

Its largest components, the Bloque Popular Revolucionario (BPR) and the Frente de Accion Popular Unificada (FAPU), and the smaller Ligas Populares-28 de Febrero (LP-28) had substantial differences over tactics.

But they had been united in opposition to the strategy of the Communist Party, the electoral front of which—the UDN—was the fourth signatory of the platform.

PART TWO of a background series by DON FLINT.

They attacked the CP as 'reformist' and revisionist long before the UDN actually joined the government set up by the military junta in October 1979.

Nevertheless, these groups share a formal adherence to 'marxism' and 'socialism', and possess a sufficiently large membership within the working class and peasantry to be considered workers' mass parties, albeit with petty bourgeois politics and leaderships.

### Coherent move

Their alliance on the basis of the programme of 28 February was in many respects a coherent move and consistent with the example of the FSLN in Nicaragua—in terms of the strategy of 'prolonged peoples' war' and the 'policy of broad alliances' with capitalist organisations.

Consequently, having united the 'established left', the CRM successfully appealed for the support of the Frente Democratico Salvadoreno (FDS).

The FDS, formed a week after the announcement of the programme, consists of the small social democratic MNR, the tiny Social Christian party, leading Christian Democratic politicians who had resigned from the government over the previous months in protest at its repressive policies, independent professional associations, and trade unions which had hitherto resisted affiliating to the left parties.

On 18 April the CRM and the FDS combined to form the Frente Democratico Revolucionario (FDR), the secretary general of which is Enrique Alvarez, previously minister of agriculture for the junta.

Since April the FDR has been engaged in the task of emulating the 'successes' of the FSLN last year in drumming up aid for its cause amongst 'social democratic' regimes.

The leading political figures of the October-January junta have toured the chancelleries of the world in search of backing for their newfound democratic locomotive.

These are the Robelos and Chamorro of El Salvador; Hector Dada (ex-Foreign Minister); Ruben Zamora (ex-Minister of Presidency)—who only in February of this year was attacked for being 'in close

alliance with the US State Department' by Salvador Cayetano Carpio of the BPR-FPL but is now a leading architect of the FDR; Roman Mayorga (ex-junta member) and Guillermo Ungo (leader of the MNR and ex-junta member) to whom the FAPU referred in January as "petty bourgeois reformists fully entwined in the cobweb of the oligarchy". (Pueblo, Boletin Internacional, Jan. 1980 pp. 29-30).

In sum, the FDR fosters the political enterprise of bourgeois figures and parties which, while they may be distinguished from the central oligarchic bloc, actively participated in a regime that killed hundreds of workers and peasants in the service of imperialism and with the full knowledge that the junta was totally mortgaged to the US State Department.

In this they differ from their Nicaraguan confreres who were faced with the monolithic Somocista bloc with which they could, despite frenzied efforts, achieve no institutional settlement.

Moreover, in Nicaragua there was no scope for a separate arrangement with the military since the Guardia Nacional owed its existence and very survival to the Somoza dynasty which guaranteed it a share of the family's booty, and actually used it against other sectors of capital.

To be sure, some of the Salvadorean dissident bourgeois politicians may have been personally outraged by the methods employed by their military allies.

But their principal reason for quitting the ship of state was the fact that this repression actively encouraged resistance and the growth of revolutionary consciousness amongst the masses.

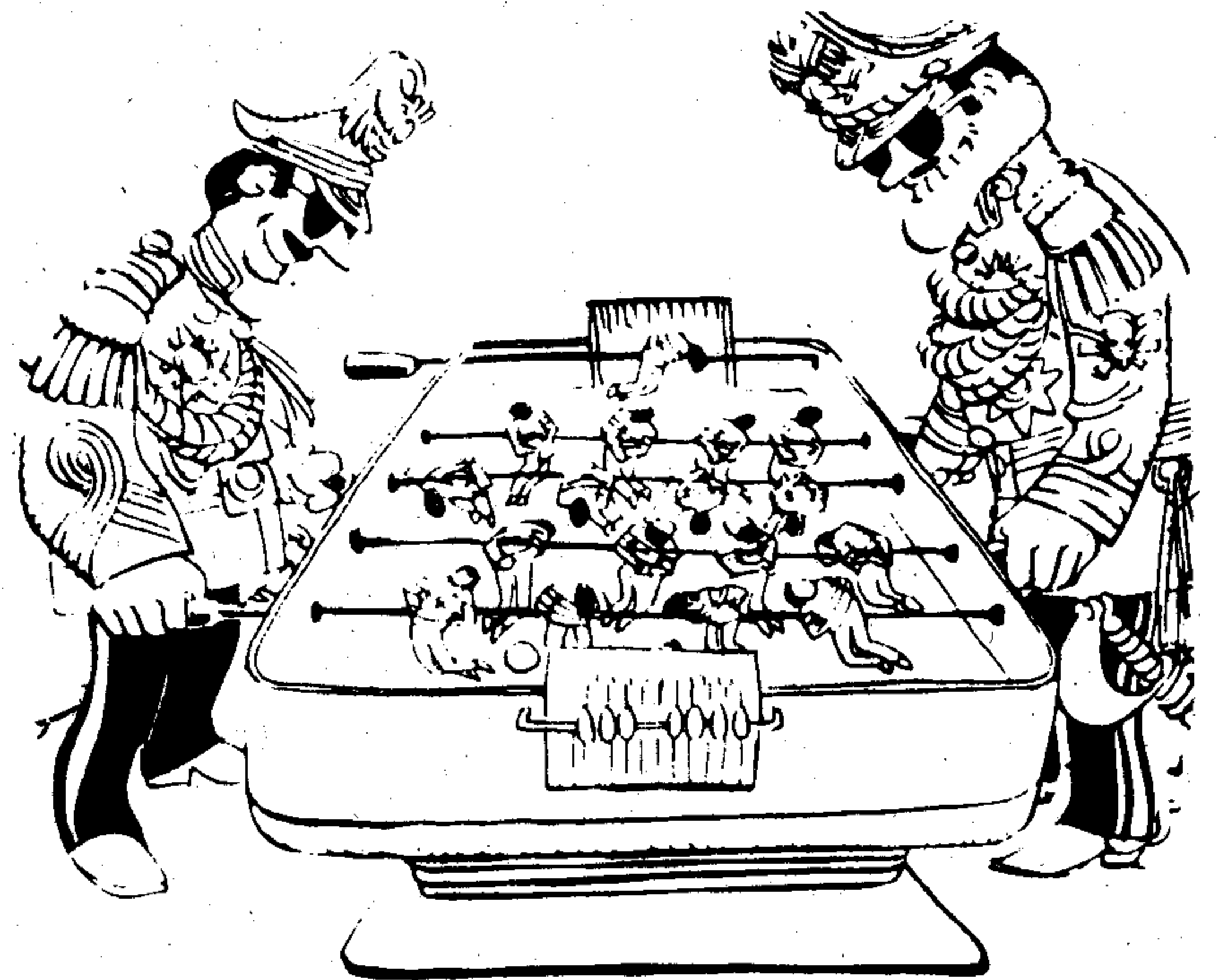
By transferring their allegiances they have certainly polished up their 'democratic' credentials; but they have also moved to safeguard the norms of property ('small- and medium-sized').

In this they have been more perspicacious than the high marshals of imperialism—a contradiction that relates to the different interests of the specific and the general.

The danger to the workers' movement, however, remains just as great.



Nicaraguan FSLN leaders Robelo, Chamorro and Ramirez with Panamanian President Royo



# TORIES SLASH SICK PAY

One proposal made by the Thatcher government which has received remarkably little attention, has been the Green Paper on sickness benefits (known as Employers Strategy Sick Pay—or ESSP).

If you're lucky enough to have a job you will no doubt see from your pay slip that part of your weekly and monthly deductions go to the National Insurance Scheme.

You probably think that this money is all going towards your retirement pension, your sickness benefit when you are ill, widows pensions, death grants etc. *Well think again!*

If the Green Paper's proposals become law, then you will still be paying out as much from your wages—but the benefits you're entitled to will be seriously slashed. Thatcher is taking the first steps to break up the National Insurance Scheme as an integral part of the drive to sack civil servants in the DHSS.

The main proposals are as follows. First of all that employers should be responsible for paying sick benefit to workers who are off work for up to eight weeks. There will continue to be no sick pay for the first three days of illness as now.

The bosses will only be obliged to pay a minimum rate and all entitlement to state benefit will be abolished for the first eight weeks.

Working men and women will have no reductions in their contributions to the state scheme, but employers will have their share of contributions cut!

The DHSS deals with about 10 million claims for sickness benefit each year and 80% of these are for periods of less than a month. So at one fell swoop private enterprise will take over a massive portion of state

welfare. This means the loss of three out of every four jobs in the sickness benefit sections of the DHSS (at least 5,000 jobs).

What is more, the Tories are proposing to abolish the earnings-related supplement which sick workers are entitled to at the moment. Employers will be expected to pay a flat rate minimum which will be taxed and subject to National Insurance deductions! This will hit all workers—and especially those with dependants.

Your own doctor's opinion will no longer be enough either. A firm's medical officer will be able to over-ride any NHS medical certificates.

Closely related to the ESSP Scheme are the attacks on maternity benefits and industrial injuries payments, both of which look certain to be cut

So far the annual conferences of the two main civil service unions, the CPSA and the SCPS, have come out strongly against the Green Paper proposals. This reflects the growing rank-and-file fear about the number of jobs to be cut.

But the union leaderships have been silent on the whole matter whilst Thatcher is allowed to set the necessary wheels in motion for the changes to go through.

The CPSA in particular must be forced to take a lead within the TUC in campaigning against the Green Paper. Any such campaign cannot be divorced from the wider questions of the attacks on social security.

\*No reduction in state benefits!

\*For an increase in all basic rates which must then be linked to inflation as assessed by trade union committees!

\*Open the books of the National Insurance scheme to reveal how much is collected in and how much is paid out!



## TUC SEEKS FIG-LEAF FOR TAMESIDE GAG

### Polish workers need a Leninist party!

Last Tuesday a meeting was called by 'Solidarity' and individual members of the Labour Party to discuss solidarity action with the Polish working class.

Robin Blick, a former Trotskyist, opened the meeting.

After making a series of correct observations about the events inside Poland he launched an attack on Trotskyist parties in Britain. This set the pace for the rest of the evening.

Speakers from the platform—comprising both Polish and British strands of reformism, an anarchist and a libertarian 'Marxist' all joined in on an attack on Leninism.

They declared that the main development in Poland was the rejection by the Polish workers of 'Leninism', and that the events in Poland proved that workers by their own autonomous actions were capable of carrying through a successful political revolution.

For this motley crew of ex-Trotskyists and Anarchists this is indeed an easy solution. Just let the workers get on with it: who needs a revolutionary party?

#### Not yet won

Of course what was missed out was that the Polish workers despite their courageous struggles, have not yet won.

How many more concessions to the Stalinist bureaucracy will they have to interpose before they have to interpose militarily?

Trotskyists can see the quali-

tative difference in the class struggle in Poland in 1980 to 1956, 1970 or 1976.

In the last ten years the Polish workers have learned not to trust the broken promises of the bureaucracy.

But it seemed to me on hearing this crowd of intellectual Libertarians that what the Polish working class needs in 1980 more than anything else is a principled disciplined revolutionary leadership to carry them through to victory.

#### Silence

One correct point Robin Blick made in his introduction was the silence from the official leadership of the British labour movement on the historic events taking place in Poland.

All trade unionists and members of the Labour Party should be fighting to bring up the question of Poland and demand to know where their leaders stand.

As a member of the WSL correctly pointed out, the connivance of the leaders of the British trade union movement with the Stalinist bureaucracies of Eastern Europe reflects their own disquiet at any attack on privilege.

We welcome readers' letters on any topic, preferably not more than 400 words in length.

As the TUC Congress grinds into action, the NUJ delegation has a mandate to challenge the section of the General Council Report which spells out the bureaucratic arguments for disaffiliating Tameside Trades Council.

Since few trade unionists normally see this Report it may be of interest for *Socialist Press* readers to look at the threadbare case erected by the TUC as its pretext for knifing Tameside's attempts to promote discussion on the war in Ireland—and the general threat that hangs over any Trades Council that adopts fighting policies.

The Report, section 88, points out that:

"In February 1980 the TUC had received information and complaints from local trade union bodies about a conference on Northern Ireland which Tameside Trades Council proposed to hold. The particular theme and format of the Tameside conference gave rise to great concern.



A leaflet advertising the conference carried the headline slogan 'Support the Irish people; Bring the War to Britain'."

#### Content clear

To those who know little of the war in Ireland, the slogan "Bring the War to Britain" is of course open to various interpretations: it is not a slogan which *Socialist Press* advocates.

But its content is clear: it states that the war in Ireland is a matter of concern for the British working class. Rather than simply lamenting the war, socialists should be fighting for active support for the Irish people in the British labour movement.

It is against this that the TUC bureaucrats object most strongly. Their own so-called "Better Life for All" Campaign is no more than a pathetic appeal to the British government to improve conditions in the occupied six counties of Northern Ireland—thus accepting the continued partition of Ireland which is the source of the ongoing national struggle.

But the Report grasps for a fig-leaf to conceal this, and comes up with the flimsy complaint that:

"the Trades Council was not playing an active part in the work of its county association and, contrary to specific advice given to it by the TUC, it had continued to refuse to nominate trade unionists to serve on the District Manpower Committee ..."

Such heinous crimes obviously called for dire punishment!

#### Threat

But the TUC makes it clear that in their view:

"trades councils have a responsibility to the TUC to work for and support the implementation of Congress policy. It is also a requirement that trades

councils must not associate with organisations, and their representatives, whose policies or activities are contrary to those of Congress".

This, of course, is a threat not only to Tameside but to any Trades Council that—unlike the TUC—wishes to fight the Tory offensive: only last month Len Murray vetoed a NW TUC plan for a regional Day of Action on unemployment.

#### Ultimatum

The General Council then laid down the following ultimatum to Tameside:

"a) it must dissociate itself publicly from publicity material including the slogan "Bring the War to Britain", which had been issued by the Trades Council in connection with the conference on Ireland.

b) it must give an undertaking not to hold any conference on Ireland without first securing the agreement of the TUC about the format, agenda and speakers for such a conference.

c) it must undertake to play an active role in the county association of trades councils and nominate to and cooper-

ate with the District Manpower Committee and other relevant bodies;

d) it must act at all times within the terms of Congress policy and carry out the proper function of a trades council as set out in the model rules.

#### Scapegoat

In other words Tameside has been used as a scapegoat by the TUC in order both to muzzle broader discussion on Ireland and to hog-tie the Trades Councils to the wretched capitulationist policies adopted by the TUC—designed to cripple any real fight against the Tories.

By their votes on this issue therefore, trade union leaders will indicate both their stance on the Irish war and their attitude to local initiatives and struggles against the Thatcher government.

Meanwhile the fight within the trade unions and Labour Party must be stepped up around the demands:

Troops out of Ireland now! Self determination for the Irish people!

Restore political status to republican POWs!



Bureaucratic platform of "Better Life for All"



# Labour: no answer to Tory cuts

By John Lister

A central feature of the Tory attack on the working class is the huge wave of cuts in public services—in particular the health service, education and social services.

Bitterness at such cuts and willingness to fight them has emerged in a large number of local struggles and a few national protest demonstrations—but has been largely contained within the confines of protest gestures by trade union leaders determined to avoid a full-scale confrontation with the Tory government.

The toothlessness of such an approach is well reflected in the motions on the cuts in the Labour Party conference agenda.

Not one resolution declares support for the struggles that have actually taken place against the cuts—in particular the occupations of nurseries and hospitals.



COHSE leader Spanswick

Nor do the major public sector unions NUPE, COHSE, the GMWU or the TGWU, have any tangible policy to offer Labour activists: instead all resolutions on the cuts reduce themselves to the "solution"

of waiting until the "next Labour government" comes to office—in four years' time!

In this light of course some resolutions appear to offer some very left wing demands—for an end to private medicine and private education, ending prescription, dental and opticians' charges, a reversal of the cuts, nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry, and many others.

### Relegated

But—as ever in social democratic politics—these lofty objectives are relegated to the indefinite future, while in the real world of 1980 workers are offered . . . not even a minimal protest campaign.

The fact is that the only way mass support will be mobilised to achieve a restoration of the public services that have been axed by Labour and Tory governments in the pursuit of profits, is through the develop-

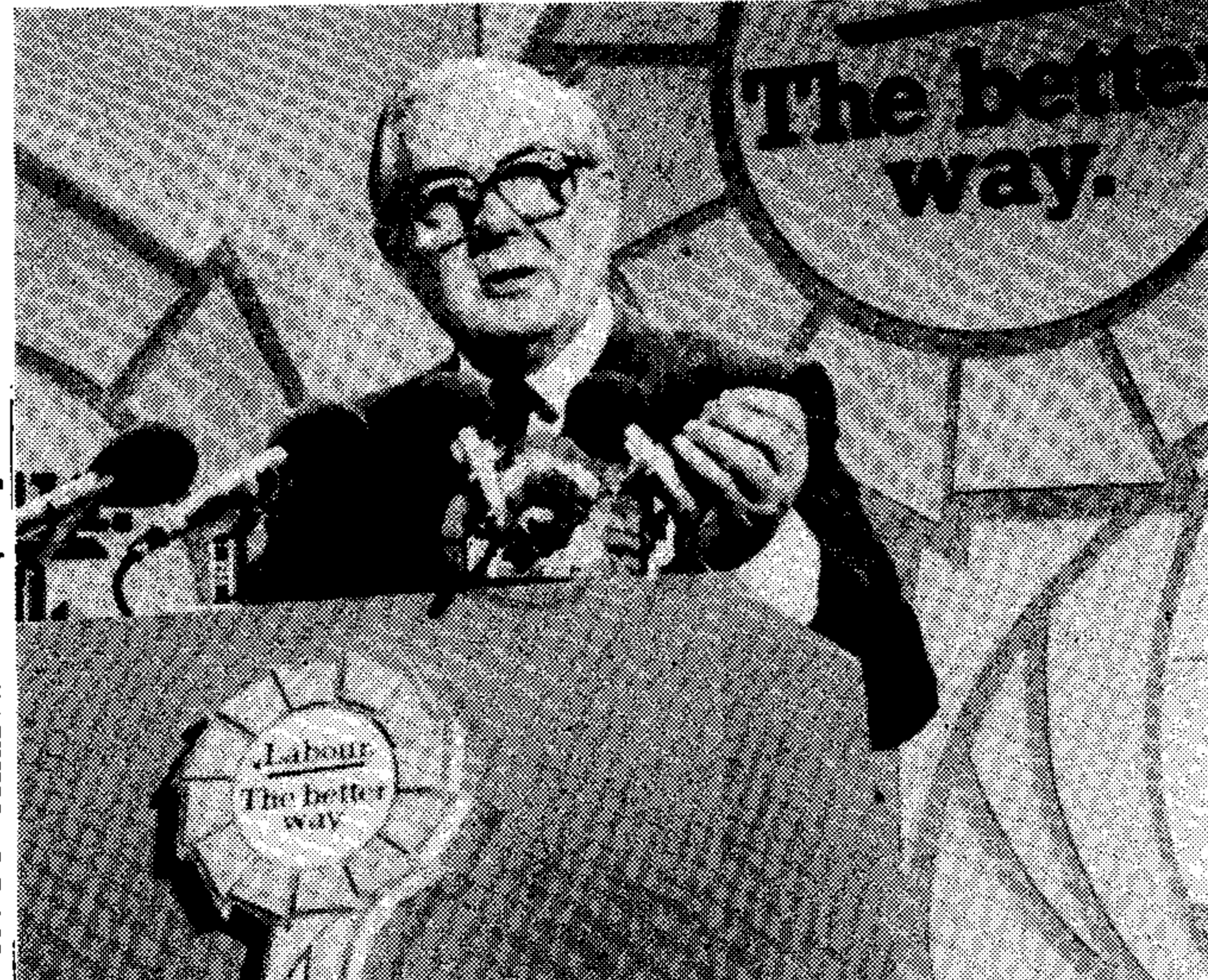


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Callaghan

ment of struggles now against every aspect of the Tory attack.

Threatened facilities must be occupied; local cuts campaigns must fight for supporting strike action on a local and national level; and the full resources of public sector unions must be made available to support and extend struggles against the cuts into an all-out fight to remove the Tory government.

### Opposed

Under such conditions workers would be best placed to focus their demands for socialist policies on the Labour leaders, and to remove those who betray the struggle.

Union leaders have repeatedly shown they stand in practice opposed to such a fight.

Labour leaders, too, have

accepted the "right" of the Tories to govern—and slash public services—for five years.

### Serious fight

The Callaghan leadership has declared that Thatcher can only be removed by the ballot box—and has opposed industrial action against the Tories.

A serious fight against the cuts is therefore also bound up with a fight in the whole labour movement to build a new leadership that is prepared to fight now for action to defend the working class.

Only in this way can the socialist aspirations of many rank and file Labour activists be transformed from a far-distant fantasy into the basis for practical action.

## Scots 'lefts' plan rate increases

"Rate rises are just another form of cuts" warned Edinburgh CLP delegate Joe Baxter at a conference in Stirling last Saturday.

But the warning was not heeded by the majority of the conference, convened by the Scottish area of the Labour Coordinating Committee under the title: "The scope for social policies in local government".

The agenda covered four subjects:

\*Democratic accountability of Labour groups.

\*The role of the Labour Party in COSLA (the organisation of Scottish local authorities).

\*Industrial democracy in local government

\*How Labour councils should oppose the government's cuts.

### Impatient

The 85 Labour activists who attended—including 28 councillors, were obviously impatient to get to the final item on the agenda, and time ran out before the discussion on fighting the cuts could come to any conclusion.

## PRESS GANG



From the Prime Minister's Press Office: To all Fleet Street Editors.

Re unwanted attacks on this government's policies.

It has come as something of a disappointment to the Prime Minister to find that our policies are not being defended with the vigour to which we feel we are entitled.

Last week unemployment passed the two million figure. I would remind you that two million is a statistic like any other—not necessarily of any significance in itself.

The way in which the newspapers went out of their way to draw unnecessary attention to this figure was indicative of the fact that you seem to have forgotten this is your government.

We understand that we can expect little else from the *Mirror*. 'Betrayal of a Nation' is about what we would expect from Callaghan's speechwriters.

We felt however that it was unnecessary for the *Evening Standard* to headline the number of unemployed in numbers several inches high.

This shows lack of imagination in headline writing—2,001, 208 could as well be a film title as the number of people out of work.

(We have written separately to the paper's owner, Sir Victor Matthews, since Mrs. Thatcher had understood that he was

taking personal responsibility for the headlines. Don't forget where that Knighthood came from, Vic!).

The *Daily Telegraph* showed uncommon lack of tact. The combination of the two headlines (Jobless rise to over 2 million—Policy is right says Thatcher) contained an implication that our policy is high unemployment—and it surely has been clearly understood that this is not to be said.

XXXXXXX

An adjacent story about the engineers' 20% wage claim was well placed since it highlighted our message that efforts to keep up with the cost of living throw people out of work.

But next to that was a picture of Mrs Thatcher with a wasp on her nose! She was clearly flinching!

I sometimes wonder if the *Daily Telegraph* does not have a Trotskyist mole somewhere on its staff. If so he or she should be rooted out at once.

Headlines aside, press defence of the government is now flagging—often little more than exhortations not to do a 'U turn'. There is a dire need for innovation.

XXXXXXX

On a more cheerful note, the Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your

coverage of Poland.

It is most important that we show the public that these Commie policies don't work.

XXXXXXX

But I was wondering if we could find a new word to replace 'strikers' in Poland. It has such bad connotations!

Anyway, keep up the good work. Think of those poor Poles without a free press like ours!

PS. Now the *Times* is back could you check that none of these journalists has been contaminated by being on strike. Judging from what I saw of them on telly they haven't—but you can never be too careful!



Victor Matthews

## NF demo did Labour Council know?

It seems more than likely that Nuneaton's Labour Council was involved in the secret plans to allow National Front fascists a free run in the town on 17 August.

As we reported in the last issue of *Socialist Press* it is quite clear that the police knew well in advance that the NF march was going to take place in the town.

But individual members of the Council's Policy and Resources Committee are reported to have said that they knew of the planned march the previous Wednesday, the lunch-time or the evening before the march.

### Ban

The Mayor has been quoted in the press as saying that the Council wanted to apply for an immediate ban but that the police said they could handle it.

More significantly, a rumour is circulating in Nuneaton that a request was made to the police to keep the anti-fascist coaches out of Nuneaton!

The Nuneaton Committee Against Racism and Fascism has taken up these points in a letter to the Policy and Resources Committee.

They ask: when did members of the Council first know of the planned march and when was it confirmed? What decisions did they take to prevent the march? Did they agree to it going ahead? Did any member of the Council ask for the anti-fascists to be kept out of Nuneaton?

What steps did they take to inform the people of Nuneaton that several coachloads of fascists were descending on their town? What were the costs of protecting the fascist march, and what part of these costs will be met by the people of Nuneaton?

At the time of writing no reply has been received, although it has been said that one was posted four days ago.

### Public meeting

The Nuneaton Committee Against Racism and Fascism is to hold a public meeting when its investigations regarding the complicity of the Labour Council have been carried out.

Those arrested in Nuneaton on August 17 come up in court on October 2.

A defence committee has been formed and fund-raising social events are being planned to contribute towards expenses.

A demonstration is being organised and a tentative date for this has been fixed as Sunday September 28.

Further details can be obtained from and contributions to the defence fund can be sent to Nuneaton Committee Against Racism and Fascism, 111 Bulkington Lane, Bedworth Nuneaton, North Warwickshire.

One anti-fascist who had to return to Germany was dealt with by the courts the day after the march and was fined £50.

Anti-fascists should start sending money in now and start preparations for a big turnout on the march.

**Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement**  
"CAV and the Car Industry—make the bosses pay for the crisis"  
Monday 8 September at 8pm  
Co-op Hall, Acton High St.  
Speaker: Alan Thornett, BL  
Cowley steward, in personal capacity.

# POLISH WORKERS' LONG STRUGGLE AGAINST STALINISM

In late 1939, while Nazi troops invaded Poland from the West, the Red Army in accordance with the Hitler-Stalin Pact and under the pretence of protecting the Soviet Union's borders and defeating the war of 'Polish landlords', invaded from the East.

There is no question of there being any progressive content to the invasion. Six years later, under a different pact and following the agreement with imperialism over the allocation of spheres of influence in Europe, the Red Army was the overseer of the installation of a government dominated by the Polish Stalinist Party.

That Party had, in fact, been hastily resurrected a short time previously. In 1938 Stalin's purges had totally destroyed the Communist Party: virtually the entire leadership was arrested and shot. In April 1938 the Comintern officially decreed its dissolution as it "had been infiltrated by agents provocateurs, Trotskyites and other enemies of the working class".

When Stalin found it desirable to reform it as the Polish Workers Party (now the Polish United Workers Party) followed its forced amalgamation with the Socialist Party in 1948) it grew in a bureaucratic fashion as to satisfy even him.

The Polish resistance to Nazi occupation was not led by the Communists, who played a small though increasingly important role. But Poland, with a 400-mile border with the USSR was to be a vital part of the East European buffer.

## Bureaucratic

The transformation of Poland into a deformed workers' state was carried through in a totally bureaucratic manner under the watchful eye of the Red Army. Where revolutionary actions had been taken by the working class they were reversed, and the forms only of these actions later taken again in a controlled and bureaucratic manner.

In Poland, as in the other Eastern European states allotted to the USSR at Teheran and Yalta, the structural transformational process which led to the creation of the deformed workers' states was definitively set in motion from about 1947.

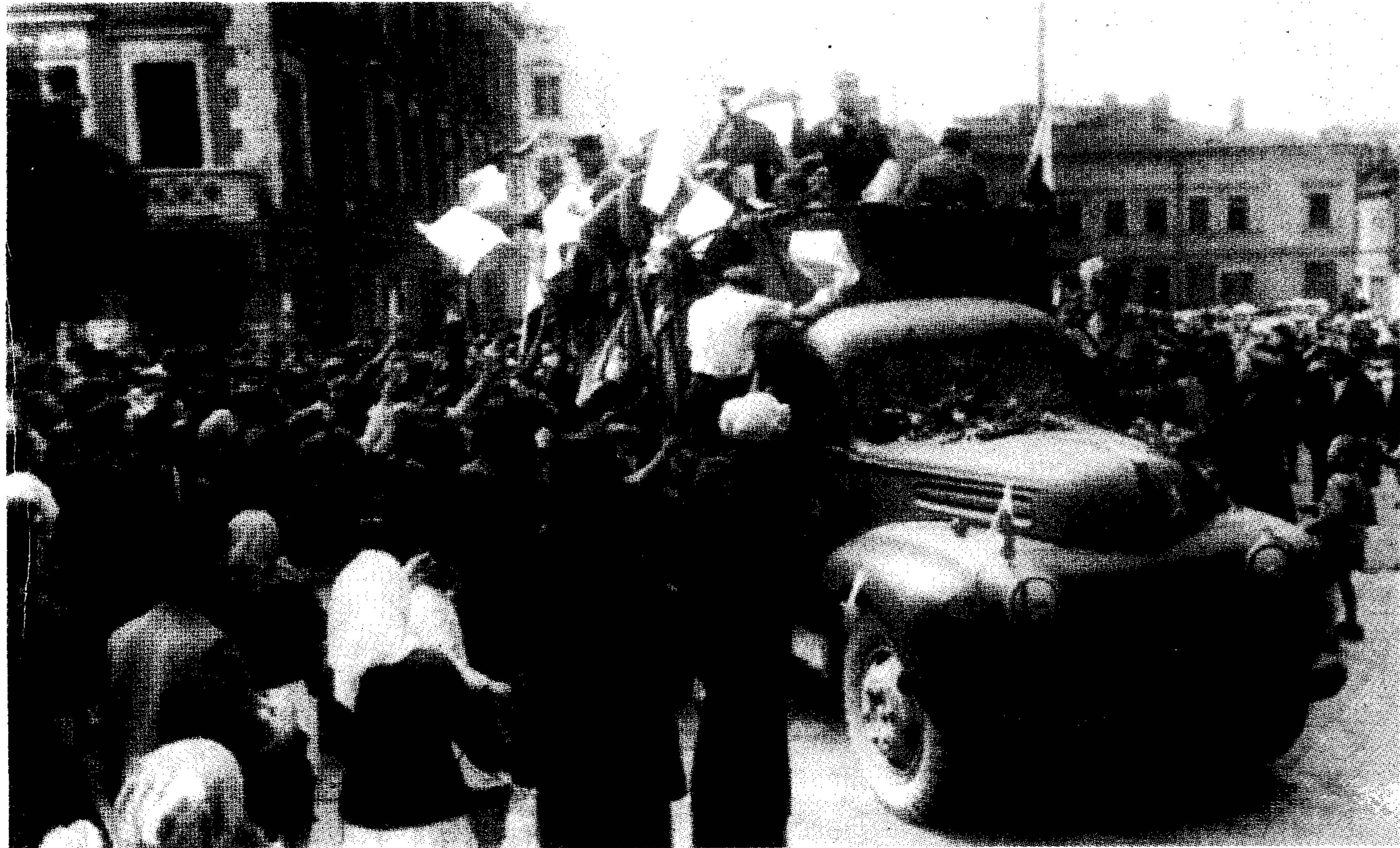
"In the period following 1947 the Stalinists, acting largely independently of the working class, in a reactionary way carried through the historically progressive task of removing from power the bourgeoisie which had remained in power only because of their own treacherous policies in the previous period.

It is in this and *this alone* that lies the progressive content of the Stalinist transformations of the period. And this progressive task they carried through in such a *reactionary* manner as to totally alienate the working class itself so that within seven years of the completion of the main aspects of this process the working class was in *armed revolt* against the Stalinist regime".

(Wohlforth, *The Theory of Structural Assimilation*, p.31).

## Industrial growth

A central feature of the 'planned socialist economy' in post-war Poland as in the other



Red Army troops liberate Poland 1944: 600,000 Soviet soldiers were killed.

deformed workers' states, was an enormous industrial growth. An increase of 158% was claimed for the years 1949-53.

Paying the cost of this growth was the working class. As it itself quickly grew in accordance with industrial development, the proletariat not only saw targets for growth in popular consumption increasingly abandoned in favour of heavy industry, but its real income fell by as much as 10%. By the mid 1950s workers were in revolt against economic and political repression.

The subterranean growth of proletarian anger, the semi-chaos that bureaucratic mismanagement produced in the national economy, something of an agricultural crisis, and the increased scope for political and economic reform following Stalin's death in 1953, were reflected in the ruling bureaucracy.

## Concessions

In 1948 Gomulka had been deposed, not only because he seemed to the Soviet leadership to be a 'Titoist nationalist deviationist' but, particularly, because he had argued for a policy of concessions (especially to the peasantry) as a counterweight to rapid industrialisation and a fairly limited agrarian collectivisation.

In 1953 the workers' revolt in East Germany argued his point; Polish developments continued to do so. A 'reformist' wing developed in the ruling caste, and 1954-56 saw tentative steps towards 'liberalisation', 'democratisation' and 'de-Stalinisation'—urged on by a reluctant peasantry and a disaffected intelligentsia, and made imperative by a seething working class.

The new Party leader Ochab, elected as a compromise candidate following the timely death of Bierut in early 1956, raised the wages of the lowest-paid workers and claimed that was all that could be afforded. A tour of Silesia, though, revealed the reality of the growth of the working class opposition and he

announced a 15% increase for miners. There had already been strikes in Gdansk.

The 'liberals' and the 'Stalinists'—that is, the reformist and conservative wings of Stalinism—were both warned alarmingly of what could happen, by a workers' rebellion in the town of Poznan. There, 15,000 workers had for some time been threatening action in the Zispo locomotive, carriage and armaments factory.

## Conflict

Irregular supply of raw materials affected earnings; oppressive taxation and above all, increased production schedules which lowered their miserable wages still further, brought the workers into direct

conflict with the management.

The local PUWP organisation—to which a third of the workers belonged—and the bureaucratic trade union organisation showed which side they were on. A delegation was despatched to the Ministry and the metallurgical union headquarters in Warsaw.

In the capital the government agreed to refund excessive tax deductions and to pay full bonuses, but rejected the delegation's central demand—for an immediate 20% wage increase. An (unfounded) rumour that their delegates had been arrested deepened the Zispo workers' reaction to the rejection of their pay demand.

On 28 June the workforce marched to the city centre, gathering on their way thou-

sands of other workers. To the original slogans demanding higher wages were added others: "Down with the USSR" . . . "Down with false communism" . . . "Down with Soviet occupation".

Different groups of demonstrators invaded police headquarters and seized weapons, attacked the radio building and broke into the prison. "Armed provocateurs" (as the government afterwards explained) made for the security police building.

Hundreds of 'provocateurs' were cut down by bullets. Armed battles continued throughout the day; but army tanks, units of the internal security forces and the civil militia gained control of the streets and crushed the last



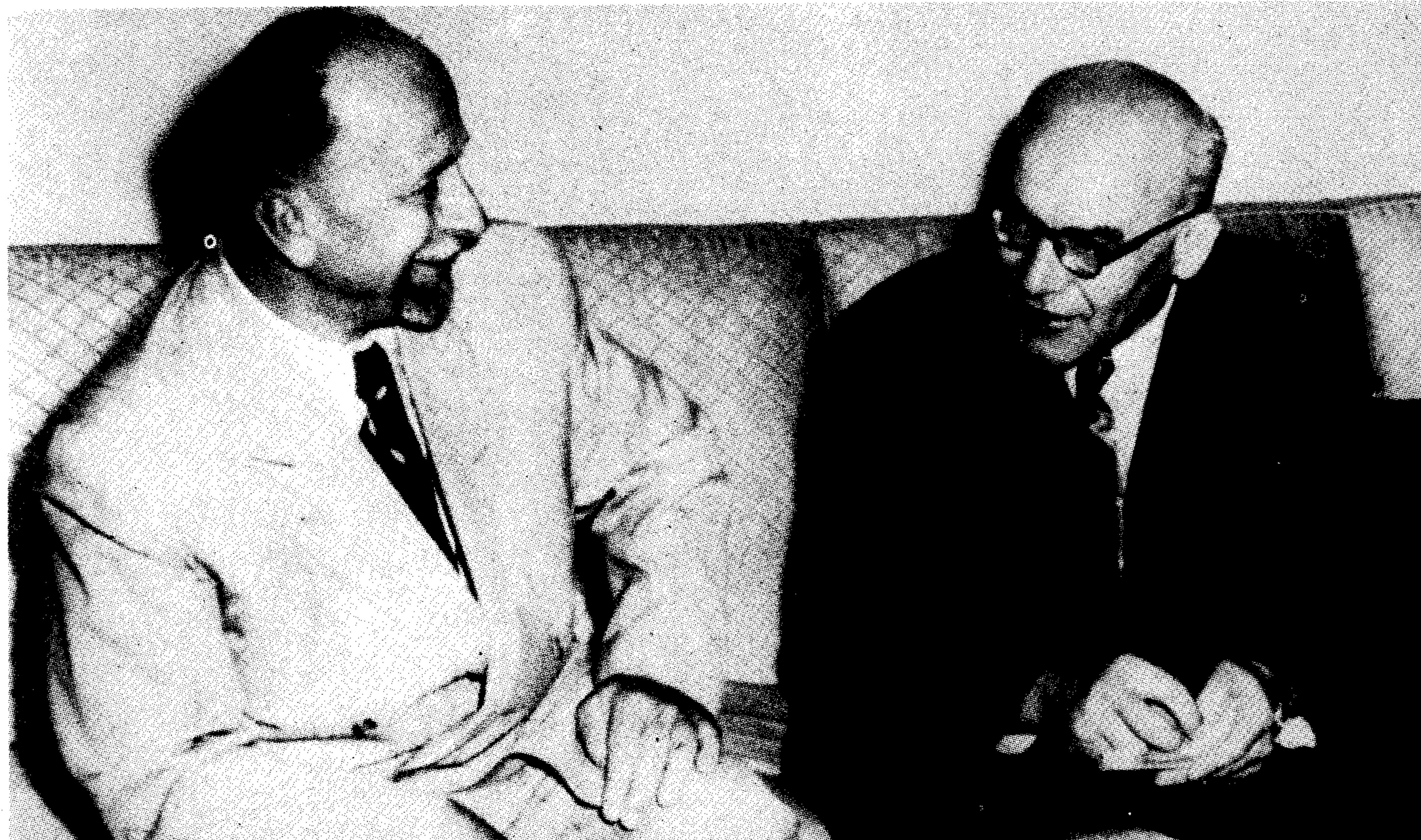
Tanks in Poznan, 1956.

flickerings of resistance the next day. The working class were given an indication of the price of more bread: 54 were dead, 300 wounded and about 300 arrested.

The "progressive" Stalinist wing understood the significance of Poznan. Strikes were already occurring in Gdynia, Gdansk and Silesia, and military brutality might not be able to contain many Poznans at once.

If the workers were not given bread and the illusion of some control over their existence then the bureaucrats might end up losing the caviare and power which suited their own tastes.

So the inquiry into the Poznan uprising modified the analysis which had appeared throughout the Stalinist bloc



Polish 'reforming' leader Gomulka (right) with E. German leader Ulbricht in 1957.

# IG ALINISM



(excepting Yugoslavia) which spoke of it as incited by 'imperialist and reactionary Polish underground agents' (*Pravda*), a "carefully prepared provocative diversionary action . . . organised by enemies of our fatherland" (*Trybuna Ludu*, the Polish Party daily).

It was now conceded that "the strike action of the Poznan workers . . . was to a considerable extent caused by bureaucratic distortions of the proletarian state". The reformists, by the time of the Central Committee Seventh Plenum in mid-July 1956, were convinced of the need for economic and political concessions to the masses: increasing food and consumer goods production, encouraging the peasants, and promoting 'workers' participation' in management.

In opposition to this wing of the bureaucracy there emerged the minority 'Natolin group'—drawn mostly from the police, the military and the management of heavy industry, all defending their sectional interests. They had the comfort of having, if not an increasing level of support from rank and file Party militants, intellectuals and trade union bureaucrats, then at least the support of the Soviet bureaucracy, which feared the consequences of an acceleration of the 'reforms' permitted in the Stalinist bloc by Krushev.

## Popularity

Gomulka, when expelled from leadership and the PUWP in 1948, had somehow evaded the fate of Rajk in Hungary, Blansky in Czechoslovakia, and many others. In 1956 all he had to do was wait for the reformists to claim him and make use of his popularity—as a nationalist who had earlier 'defied' the USSR, as a friend of the rich peasants, as a symbol (a symbol only, workers soon learned) of opposition to Stalinism.

Gomulka was to be re-elected Secretary General at a Central Committee meeting on 19 October 1956, and the hard-liners removed from the

Politburo. The Natolinians in turn prepared a coup. They drew up a list of 700 reformists to be arrested before the Central Committee meeting. Moscow was informed; sections of the army under sympathetic generals marched towards Warsaw.

The Gomulkaists rallied their own armed forces. But the source of their success was the basis they established for themselves in the masses, through the Warsaw Party Committee, the lesser Party and union bureaucrats, in the intellectual centres and, most importantly, in the big Warsaw factories.

## Insurrection

They threatened an insurrection. It was a dangerous, though necessary, move: the level of discontent in the working class threatened to remove not only the hard-line Stalinists from power, but the whole of the parasitic bureaucracy. For the moment, though, the Stalinist party and union organisations were in control of the factories they mobilised.

Arms were distributed to the factories, but were under lock and key. The keys were in the pockets of the party and union bureaucrats as they exerted themselves to keep the workers off the streets and under control. This was the situation in the factories on 19 October; workers were not told of the Russian and Polish tanks moving towards Warsaw.

While mass meetings were mobilising workers in the factories in case the 'reformists' needed them, the Central Committee was meeting with almost the entire Soviet Politburo and military leadership who had arrived that morning to strengthen the hard-line position.

## Broadcast

Gomulka, threatening to broadcast the news of troop movements to the masses, and promising insurrection,

persuaded Krushev to back down. The troops turned back and Krushev and Co flew home—still somewhat unconvinced that the rehabilitated 'traitor' would and could secure the Polish working class as a peaceful cog in the Eastern European machine they operated from Moscow.

That cog was beginning to act independently of the bureaucracy which had sought to harness its movement to its own ends. On 22 October there were riots in Wroclaw and, the next day, demonstrations in Gdansk. In the Zoran motor works in Warsaw there were strikes.

On 23 October, as revolution painted the streets of Budapest in Hungary red, Gomulka was finally given complete Soviet backing. He was then able to turn his attention to controlling the movement which was developing in his own factories.

The Polish workers, though duped by the promises of the 'anti-Stalinist' Gomulka, who was for the time being genuinely popular, had been fighting a real battle and were determined to claim their own.

## 'Support'

Their support for the Hungarian revolution, manifested in demonstrations and popular subscriptions, threatened to extend that revolution and set fire to the whole deformed Stalinist structure of Eastern Europe. The victorious Gomulkaists themselves found it desirable to announce their support for their fellow-reformer in Hungary, Nagy; until Nagy's reformism began to go a little further than Gomulka's in terms of independence from the Warsaw Pact and the USSR.

After the second invasion of Budapest by the Soviet Army on 4 November, when it became clear that the Hungarian revolution would be crushed, Gomulka publicly dissociated himself from Nagy.

The central feature of the workers' struggle in the 'Polish



Delegates to the 20th Congress of the CPSU hear Krushev denounce Stalin in 1956.

October' was the formation of workers' councils in the factories, largely independent of the official party and union organisations.

Primarily they were an expression of working class consciousness of the necessity for organs responsive to their independent class interests—and, as such, they looked forward to similar developments in future struggles.

But to the extent that the local bureaucrats were able to control the development of these councils, and use them as implements to bring the reformists to power, the enormous gain they represented was vulnerable.

## Workers' councils

Gomulka was forced to recognise the existence of the workers' councils, prior to destroying them. His phrasing about 'workers' self-management' and the councils as a 'form of participation by workers in the administration of the enterprises' was accompanied by an all-out campaign to limit their functions to small administrative details, to infiltrate them and, generally, to transform them into their opposite: bureaucratic organs whose only relevance to the working class was that they were part of the grotesque machinery of the deformed workers' states and, as such, instruments of the ruling bureaucracy to maintain the oppression and alienation of the proletariat.

In April 1958, long after their real death, the councils formed by workers in struggle were formally subordinated to party/union control.

The success of Gomulka in controlling the development of the workers' struggles is primarily due to the continued presence and organisation of apparently radical reformists in the factories and workplaces throughout the period. Although the demands of the workers continually threatened to transcend the limits of reformism, their illusions in the 'lefts' allowed for the dissipation of their movement towards a revolutionary affirmation of an independent class position.

## Illusions

That is to say, in the absence of an organised revolutionary leadership, the reformists were able to place themselves at the head of the workers at a shop floor and national level.

There can also be no doubt that Gomulka personally was popular amongst most sections of the population. His rhetoric, his actual reforms, made more substantial the illusions about his anti-Stalinism that were subtly woven during the period of his exile from government. And he was able to grant the workers some gains—including wage rises—as part of his 'liberal' initiative.

The peasantry did even better out of the 'Polish October', as collectivisation was abandoned. The intelligentsia were given more of their precious 'freedoms'. Increased scope for small private enterprise was announced.

Ominously foreshadowing the present balance of payments crisis, the Polish bureaucracy won from the USSR a greater autonomy in foreign relations and opened negotiations with the USA for 'economic aid'—that is, imperialist insinuation into the economy of the deformed workers' state.

From the Soviet Union itself, Gomulka obtained an inadequate compensation for its rape of the Polish economy during the previous ten years.

## Church

(For example, Poland had been selling the Soviet Union coal at one-tenth of the world price. The Poles, always ready with a joke about their sufferings as the Western media like telling us, spoke thus of Polish-Soviet trade in the time of Stalin: "The agreement was, we send them our corn and they take our wheat".) This was, inevitably, rather more popular than Gomulka's announcement that Soviet troops would remain in Poland—despite the dismissal of Russian generals from the Polish army.

The inauguration of a closer bond between the state and the Catholic Church also resulted from October, and was to have a glorious future—another delight for the bourgeois press. An early expression of Gomulka's rise to power was the release of Cardinal Wyszynski from house arrest and, soon afterwards, the signing of a new Concordat with the Church.

This was a popular move, and the large role of the Church in the consciousness of the Polish masses cannot be denied. It can, however, be better understood than by simply suggesting that the Poles (like the Irish) are inherently religious.

The ideological role played by the Church in the long history of Poland as an oppressed nation was easily able to continue in the subservience of Poland to the Soviet bureaucracy, and in the continued oppression and alienation of the Polish masses.

When 'Marxism' renounces Marxist humanism and declares that the most profound social revolution in history consists simply in the nationalisation of property and the dictatorship of a bureaucratic clique, the Cardinal has an obvious and easy role to play in the 'defence' of workers' and peasants' interests. The nature of the Church as an organisation apparently outside the hated Stalinist structures of the state is an invaluable asset to God and his clergy.

And, very often, an aid to the bureaucracy. In 1956 the Church willingly and spontaneously gave its aid to Gomulka's drive to thwart mass struggle. Wyszynski, on 4 November, while the Hungarians were fighting tanks and huge demonstrations of support for them arose in Poland, urged his congregation: "Poles know how to die magnificently. But, beloved, Poles need to know how to work magnificently. A man dies but once and is quickly covered in glory. But he gives long years in trouble, hardship, pain and suffering. This is a greater heroism".

In the elections of January 1957 (which were more of a plebiscite, based on appeals to national independence and the as yet continuing popularity of Gomulka) the Church, in company with the imperialist Radio Free Europe, urged Poles to vote in line with Gomulka's appeals. It was an alliance that was to continue, in its essence, beneath the mutual recriminations of the struggle for influence over the masses.

The Polish workers had much of Wyszynski's 'trouble, hardship, pain and suffering' inflicted on them in the years after 1956, as Gomulka's reformism revealed itself fully as the perpetuation of Stalinist oppression. In 1970 they opted out of 'greater heroism'; they revolted against oppression, throwing aside as they did so the man who had clawed himself up, whip and bridle ready, to ride on their backs to power in 1956.

Concluded  
next week

# Why capitalist measures can't end unemployment

Final part of a series by Bob Sutcliffe

When the month of August added over 100,000 to the unemployment register to put it over two million for the first time since 1934, Thatcher and Prior arrogantly put the blame for this on the workers themselves.

This was just an instance of the way in which the capitalist class both in Britain and elsewhere, makes use of the existence of the mass unemployment it has created to strengthen its propaganda for other aspects of its anti-working class objectives.

### Propaganda

So, for example, the bourgeoisie is conducting a massive propaganda campaign alleging that it is the greed of the working class itself which creates unemployment.

Workers, by demanding too much pay or, refusing to take cuts in pay, are, so the argument goes, "pricing themselves out of a job".

Like other notions which are propagated by capitalist ideology, this one has some power because it is subscribed to also by a large proportion of the established leadership of the working class.

And that occurs because also this notion like other notions of bourgeois ideology, contains a tiny partial element of truth.

It is true that the life of one capitalist factory, threatened with imminent bankruptcy and closure, might in some cases be extended for a time if the workers were forced to take a wage cut so that at existing prices the factory could continue to make a profit.

In a number of cases in the last few months unorganised workers have been "persuaded" by this plausible looking argument.

But the element of truth in the argument is so partial and one sided that in reality it is utterly false.

Measures which might temporarily help the workers of a single capitalist in alliance with their exploiter, cannot if universally applied assist the working class as a whole against their exploiters.

Quite the contrary. General wage cuts under capitalism will not only fail to eliminate unemployment, they would contribute to the creation of unemployment and the intensification of slump.

This is precisely a concrete illustration of the contradiction which Marx emphasised between the production and realisation of surplus value.

### One-sided

There are equally important illustrations of this central contradiction in the panaceas of the left of the Labour Party and the Communist Party.

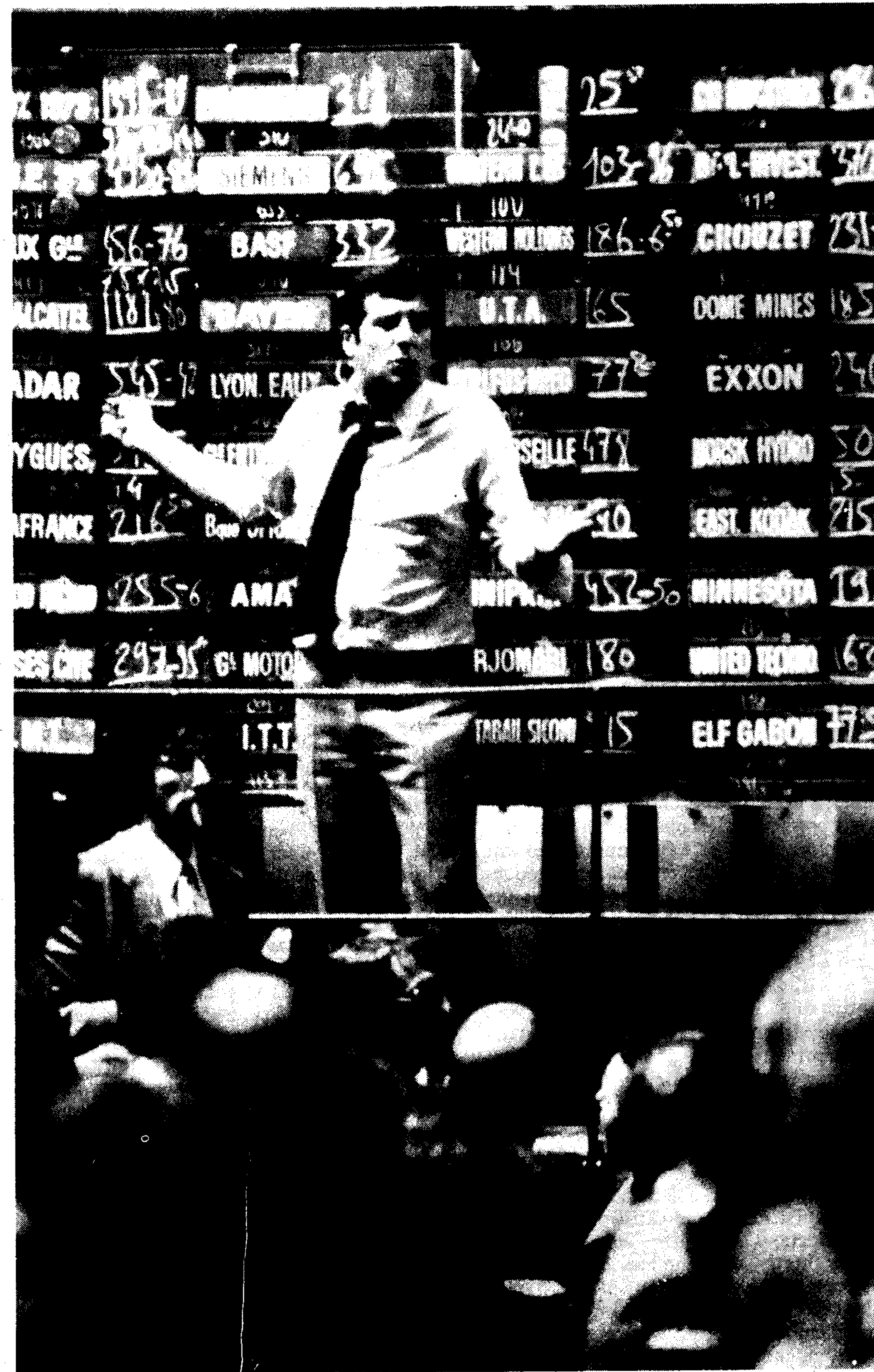
Just as the Tories' argument, that workers price themselves out of jobs, depends for its power on a limited and one-sided understanding of capitalism, so equally do the favourite arguments of the left reformers that unemployment can be eliminated by government spending and import controls.

The first of these arguments is another example of the failure to recognise the contradictions between the conditions for producing and realising surplus value.

If the problem would go away as many of the Labour lefts imply simply by an increase in government spending then why are the leaders of the



Tea-break in a Japanese car plant: exporting unemployment is no answer



No answers in the Paris stock exchange: the crisis is worldwide

capitalist class at the present time so desperate for government spending to be reduced?

While an increase in public spending on useful public works to create jobs is an essential part of the socialist programme

to fight capitalist unemployment, it is totally insufficient by itself since it would worsen other aspects of the capitalist crisis if it were implemented.

And therefore the interests of the working class would

require that further demands culminating in the expropriation without compensation of capitalist firms would have to be added to the demands for higher state expenditure.

The demand for import

controls is in fact an almost exact larger scale parallel to the Tories' arguments about wage cuts.

Like wage cuts, import controls involve a section of the international working class allying itself with an appropriate segment of its own exploiters against other workers and exploiters.

Like wage cuts, import controls, if they were generalised would have a detrimental rather than a favourable influence on the interests of the working class.

These examples of the consequences of the contradiction between the production and realisation of surplus value illustrate that within capitalist relations there is no straightforward non-contradictory way of combatting unemployment or any of the other ills created by capitalist society and its crisis.

Analysis of the contradiction shows that the interests of the working class cannot be protected by dividing it up into sections, each one of them forming an alliance with "their own" section of the exploiting capitalist class.

### Organise

Those interests can only be protected through a struggle in which the working class acts independently of its own exploiters and therefore in unity, both between firms and industries nationally, and between countries internationally—and not in competition with each other.

And more than anything a struggle must be waged in the workers' movement against the division, which the capitalists need to foment, between employed and unemployed workers. This means in part a struggle to organise the unemployed within the framework of the trade unions.

But more generally the organised strength of the employed working class must be mobilised against unemployment.

### Programme

But such a united and independent struggle in support of the material and political interests of the working class internationally cannot be allowed to be successful by a capitalist system in crisis.

The struggle for such elementary needs therefore as the right to a job for all workers must be fought for by means of a programme of demands which begins with obvious visible means of protecting and creating jobs—work sharing on

full pay rather than redundancies; government spending programmes on useful public works to create new jobs—but at the same time points the way towards the abolition of the system which already refuses to implement such obvious measures.

Mass unemployment today is being created in the interests of the capitalist system.

It will not be eliminated by that system though it may contribute to the development of a political response from the exploited classes which is capable of expropriating and eliminating private property and so eventually the pursuit of profit rather than social need as a basis for production and employment.

Even the capitalists own statistics show beyond question that in the present crisis the capitalist system is virtually unable to offer any kind of employment to a whole generation of workers.

Under such conditions the words of the Transitional Programme of the Fourth International have renewed relevance.

In that programme, Trotsky argued that the question of unemployment was "one of guarding the proletariat from decay, demoralisation and ruin. The question is one of life or death of the only creative and progressive class, and by that token of the future of mankind."

### "Let it perish"

If capitalism is incapable of satisfying the demands inevitably arising from the calamities generated by itself, then let it perish".

Socialist economy and workers self-management will not mean the substitution of mass unemployment by jobs for all; it will mean a revolutionary change in the nature of labour.

Under capitalism labour is alienated; workers are forced to fight for jobs simply in order to survive.

In a socialist planned economy labour can become the unalienated expression of the conscious decisions of human beings.

Under capitalism the fight against mass unemployment takes the form of a fight for the right to perform alienated labour, but it can only be definitively successful insofar as it is transformed during the course of a struggle into the fight to destroy and replace the system which makes that alienated labour necessary.

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# PRIOR'S ATTACK ON THE RIGHT TO STRIKE

Final part of a series by Jack Burnett

"Public opinion as far as I can judge concedes the right of a worker in a free society to withdraw his labour, it just draws the line at strikes".

With these words the satirist Michael Frayn opened an article on the "Perfect Strike" which he penned for the *Observer* many years ago.

His purpose was no doubt to entertain but it appears that the present government have taken him so seriously as to construct their legislation on industrial action around the schizophrenia that Frayn attributes to public opinion.

Under this law, the key question that will determine whether or not most strikes or industrial actions such as a 'go-slow' or a 'work to rule' are legal will be whether or not they lead to a breach or interference with the performance of a commercial contract!

As the bargaining power of any strike rests precisely on its real or threatened capacity to interfere with the performance of a commercial contract the purpose of the 'Catch 22' Act is simply to outlaw all strikes that do not fall into one of the following categories:

- 1) A strike or industrial action by workers against their own employer at the workplace in dispute or at another workplace owned by the same employer.
- 2) A strike or industrial action by workers while not employed at the workplace in dispute but employed by a major supplier or a major customer of the workplace in dispute.

## Conditions

However this second category, so called secondary industrial action will only be legal if it meets the following conditions:

a) There is a regular contract in existence between the workplace in dispute and the supplier or customer where the sympathy industrial action is taking place.

b) A judge believes (after an employer has unsuccessfully sought an injunction in the courts to stop the sympathy strike action) that the sympathy strikers at the customers or suppliers at the workplace in dispute are likely by their action to help the workers at the place of original dispute win their conflict with their employer.

c) That a judge is satisfied (!) that the motivation of the sympathy strikers at the supplier or customer has the primary purpose of disrupting supplies between their workplace and the workplace in dispute.

It might be thought by the average person who doesn't reflect too deeply on these matters that these last two conditions are self-evidently superfluous.

## 'Common sense'

Surely workers don't opt for courses of industrial action that are unlikely to achieve their objectives? And pursuing this common sense logic, that has so blighted the political development of the English working class, a little further, he thinks to himself, the primary purpose of disrupting supplies must be ... to disrupt supplies.

Lord Denning, however, was able to show during the recent steel strike that when the steel union brought out its members in the private sector of



Prior spells out his strategy at the Tory Party conference.

the steel industry to stand alongside their fellow members already out and in dispute with the British Steel Corporation, Bill Sirs, as union leader was acting illegally.

Such an action was unlikely to help win the strike because it was "too remote" to have any impact or "further" the dispute with the BSC.

In fact, calling out the private sector, whatever appearance must suggest to the superficial observer was not an industrial action but a political one.

For the intention of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC) better understood by Lord Denning than by the ISTC leaders and members, was not to bring pressure to bear on the employer with whom they are in dispute but to bring pressure to bear on the government who of course were not a party to the dispute at all—a nice juridical distinction that at present is being maintained by dint of injunctions against the *Sunday Times* and legal threats against journalists to betray the confidential sources that have provided substantial evidence to the contrary.

Lord Denning's superior qualities as a trade union strategist led him last year to uphold an appeal by *Express Newspapers* for an injunction against the National Union of Journalists.

## Blacking

In their dispute with the country's provincial newspapers the NUJ blacked all Press Association copy when the PA refused to stop supplying material to the provincial

papers.

Such blacking covering only a part of the copy that made up the papers affected did not have, in the opinion of Denning, "a reasonable prospect" of furthering the provincial journalists dispute. In fact its motivation was in the words of this robbed wrecker "merely ... keeping up the morale" of one side during the dispute, and as all militant shop stewards in Chancery will know, keeping up morale has no effect on the likely outcome of a strike or dispute.

## Quite wrong

Here are two clear cut cases where the trade unionists believed they were pursuing various actions "in furtherance of a trade dispute." They thought bringing out wider sections in one case would make it more likely they would win.

In another they thought they were disrupting journalistic copy for the primary purpose of getting their employer to settle.

But they were quite wrong. The learned Lords were able to show they were doing something completely different. In both these cases it should be said Denning was overruled by the Court of Appeal. In overturning Denning's judgement in the case of the newspaper dispute Lord Justice Scarman said:

"It would be a strange and embarrassing task for a judge to be called upon to review the tactics of a party to a trade dispute and to determine whether in the view of the court the tactic employed was likely to further or advance that

party's side of the dispute. It would need very clear statutory language to persuade me that Parliament intended to allow the courts to act as some sort of back-seat driver in trade disputes".

That was of course before Prior's Employment Bill became law. And it is quite clear that Prior has incorporated Denning's rather than Scarman's philosophy into his legal framework and intends precisely to allow judges to be back-seat drivers in reviewing, approving or condemning the tactics that trade unionists pursue in fighting the employers.

The judges in the attacks on trade unions have time and again over more than a century centred their attacks on the question of breach of contract.

However, whatever one thinks of the English judiciary one cannot but admire the energy, perseverance, single mindedness and ingenuity with which they have undermined, outflanked and otherwise flouted various Acts of Parliament designed to give trade unions a degree of immunity from liability claims of employers.

## "Conspiracy"

In 1872 the judiciary convicted trade unionists, who tried to organise gas workers in the West End of London, of "criminal conspiracy". The threatened strike by gas workers (then a crime) meant breaking their contracts and their combination for the purpose of breaking their contracts constituted an "unjustifiable annoyance or interference with the

masters in the conduct of their business".

When Disraeli's parliament in 1875 passed a Trades Disputes Act which gave trade unionists protection against criminal conspiracy as long as they acted in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute the judges had to think again.

## Astonishment

They took a little while to do so but in 1901 they developed the notion of civil conspiracy and felt that the Taff Vale railway company could claim damages suffered in a dispute with the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants.

They could do so said the Law Lords to the astonishment it must be said of most lawyers of the day, because while ASRS was a registered, it was an unincorporated trade union.

This new crime of civil conspiracy and this 'unincorporated' exception to the immunity granted to trade unions in 1875 produced this observation from a legal expert:

"The House of Lords first invented a new civil offence and then created a new kind of defendant against whom it could be alleged."

The Taff Vale judgement completely undermined what protection had been given to trade unions in 1875. It should be said that the immunity given in furtherance or contemplation of a trade union does not, as many uninformed people believe, put trade unions above the law.

What the Act did was to say that industrial action could not



Denning

be regarded as a criminal conspiracy. Any criminal act perpetrated by a trade unionist, whether in the course of furthering a trade dispute or not is still punishable. The only difference is that the trade unionist would have to be charged for the crime, a specific thing for which concrete evidence would have to be furnished while conspiracy to commit a crime requires no concrete evidence, permits hearsay evidence, doesn't even require the crime to have taken place or proof that the alleged conspirators would carry it out.

In short it is much vaguer, much more likely to secure a conviction, much harsher in the sentences it can impose and consequently much liked by judges and the State as weapons against its enemies of which history shows trade unionists to prominently figure.

## Overtuned

The limited Parliamentary protection granted trade unions in 1875 was overturned by the Law Lords in 1901 and restored by Parliament in 1906. But the immunity granted trade unions in 1906 has effectively been a technicality because since 1906 actions in tort (claims for damage for civil wrongs) have never been brought against a trade union but instead against officials and members of a union who have never been given such immunity.

In 1964 a certain chairman called Rookes led his union DATA, whereupon his fellow workers, to protect their closed shop refused to work with him.

The official threatened the management that industrial action would follow if he didn't get rid of Rookes. He did and in his case it was held by Lord Devlin that while the workers and the official were breaking no law in contemplating or carrying out industrial action once they "threatened" to do so they were guilty of a new crime of civil intimidation!

So industrial action is all right but to threaten it is not. The minority Labour government of 1974-6 was defeated by a combined opposition when it tried to draft legislation granting immunity for breach of contracts in contemplation or furtherance of a trade dispute.

The opposition added the two words "of employment". The consequence of this is to grant immunity for one act but take it away for the consequences of that act! For how can a contract of employment be broken without interfering with the performance of a commercial contract that the employment was engaged upon?

## Notion

Perhaps when James Prior brings out his next "Codes of Practice" for acceptable industrial action his notion of the perfect strike will be something very like what Michael Frayn advocated in that *Observer* article many years ago:

"A small decorous strike of company directors during one lunch hour in favour of lower wages for trade union officials. It should take place under a Liberal government just as soon as America, the Common Market, Japan and our other principal economic competitors happen to sink into the sea."



# INDUSTRIAL NEWS

## St Benedicts faces crunch

The continued struggle to save St. Benedicts Hospital in Tooting has become a focal point for the fight against the cuts in London.

The fact that the hospital scheduled for closure months ago, is still functioning with over 100 patients, is the outcome of the solid 8-month occupation and work-in staged by the workforce—mainly NUPE, RCN and COHSE members.

Now the fight to save the hospital faces a new challenge—a threat by the Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth AHA to implement the closure on September 30.

The AHA hopes that by axing the unique geriatric services provided at the hospital they can save £1.5 million in their drive to eliminate "over-spending" caused by Tory cuts.

### Attacks

The planned closure runs alongside a barrage of attacks on services to the elderly unleashed by Wandsworth's notorious Tory council including:

\*The sacking of 28 out of 61 social work aides.

\*A £180,000 cut in the home help and meals-on-wheels budget.

\*An end to telephones for the elderly

\*An end to holidays for the active elderly

\*The closure of a luncheon club for old people

\*An increase in meals on wheels prices from 6½p in 1978 to 30p now.

Meanwhile the AHA, in a pincer move designed to whittle away social provision for the area's 43,700 old people, plan to "replace" the 273 places now provided by St. Benedicts and Bolingbroke hospitals with a possible total of 55 beds in St. James, Balham and the South London Hospital for Women.

## Scots jobs fiasco

In the early days of the Wilson government, Tony Benn as left-talking Industry Secretary piloted through a Bill which set up the much-vaunted National Enterprise Board.

The objective of the NEB was to channel state finance into ailing and emerging sections of private industry to boost profits and thus "save" or "create" jobs.

The plan fell flat on its nose with the advance of the world economic crisis—but the illusion

lives on in the make-believe world and "alternative strategies" of the reformist left.

In Scotland, the role of the NEB was to be augmented by a new Scottish Development Agency with plush offices in New York and San Francisco.

The task of the SDA's gang of well-paid bureaucrats was to hand sums of cash to potential US investors as a lure for them to set up shop in Scotland.

Nearly five years later the SDA has failed to attract a single American job to the crumbling Scottish industrial landscape.

### Collapsed

And an all-party committee of MPs has divided on whether or not the US offices should be closed down—thus axing the few administrative jobs (albeit in the USA) that the SDA did create.

The SDA has invested £22 million in 41 companies—nine large ones of which have subsequently collapsed.

The SDA was called upon by the Wilson government to secure a staggering 15% rate of return on capital employed by this financial year—but instead has wound up with losses that mean a disastrous rate of return of minus 14.3%.

But then, like the NEB, the SDA's terms of reference condemned it to a future of baling out a sinking economy with a sieve.

Were there any scope for profitable investment in Scotland or in Britain as a whole, then capitalists would be investing, without the urgings of such reformist bodies.

Instead the crisis of profitability brings simply a rising tide of closures and redundancies that can be resolved only by the defeat of the Tories and the fight for a planned, socialist economy.



Inside the St Benedicts work-in

Drawing attention to this onslaught on the elderly—and the particular added burden that it brings to women forced to care for older relatives for whom no facilities are available—the St. Benedicts campaign has taken up a struggle to defend all jobs and services.

A campaign booklet declares firmly that:

"The only way to stop the cuts is a united front against the Tories both nationally and locally."

And it gives tangible expression to this, by demanding that a victory at St. Benedicts be the basis of a fight to turn "the dismal tide of defeat in the fight against the cuts."

"This can only be achieved... if the movement uses its strength and pledges industrial action to stop any attempt to close it. All protest must be backed up by a real threat of action. This action should not be confined to the health service or just the public sector but should include all sections of local workers".

to do in any previous cuts struggle.

Indeed the occupation at London's Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital brought several examples of unofficial one day stoppages by local non-NHS workers—but remained restricted in scope to local protest action by the union officials determined to avoid an all-out struggle.

If the Tory cuts are to be defeated, then so too must the reactionary union bureaucracy who fear the strength of their members more than they fear the cuts.

In the meantime, the St. Benedicts occupation is seeking support on the picket line to resist the closure on October 1. More details of this picket and copies of the booklet (10p plus postage) are available from the committee at 72 Glasford Rd., London SW17.

### Regrettable

It is not entirely surprising, but regrettable however, that the campaign does not go further and specifically place demands on union officials in the public and private sectors to mobilise such industrial action—which they have signally failed

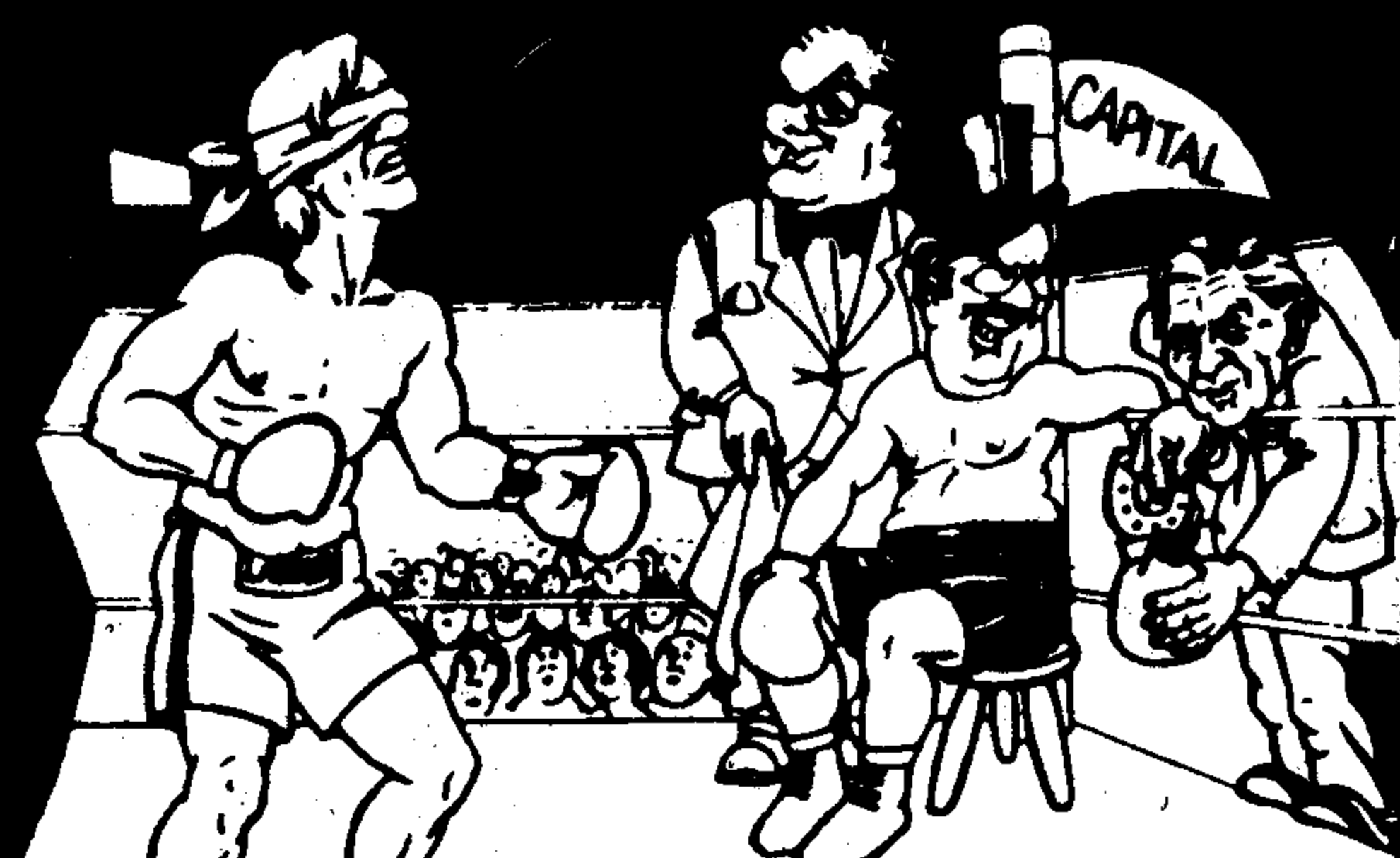
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## Scots teachers sold out

Scottish teachers have returned to a new session angry and frustrated with the management imposition upon them of a 14% wage settlement.

Despite the protestations of the leadership of the EIS, it is obvious that the Executive must have known all along that the terms of the Scottish Teachers Salaries Committee enables the management to unilaterally call in the services of an arbitration board to legally impose a settlement upon the teachers, many of whom are now asking themselves—what trust can be placed in a leadership which misleads the membership in this fashion?

### Embittered

The embittered mood of many teachers is being expressed in some areas by a refusal to carry out non-statutory administrative duties and resolutions have been passed calling upon the Executive to make the ban official and national in scope.

There are also moves afoot for a Special Salaries Conference and a Special General Meeting of the Institute to change the union constitution so as to establish a directly elected Executive.

All of these moves show that teachers may have received a set-back but certainly do not share the pessimistic mood of John Pollock, the National Secretary, who characterised the settlement as "a major defeat".

If a more radicalised and better organised union at rank and file level means a defeat in the eyes of the leadership that is perfectly understandable.

The current mood of disillusion with the present leadership must find expression however in the elections for Council and Local Association Committees of Management when they occur in early 1981.



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 local leaders—whether right or left—have no perspective to offer those workers prepared to fight in defence of jobs, living standards, social services and democratic rights.

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

In a period where the contradictions of the anarchic capitalist system force the wholesale closure and destruction of the productive forces of society, only a socialist planned

economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

To achieve such a perspective a leadership is needed which, in today's struggles fights to advance workers beyond trade union militancy, protest politics and illusions that capitalism can be abolished through parliament.

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

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

degenerated workers' states.

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name .....

Address .....

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

# Tories back Labour's closure

As expected the Tory Secretary of State Mark Carlisle has confirmed the closure of Wheatley Street Nursery School by Coventry's Labour Council.

Unfortunately for the Council the destruction of 70 nursery places (50 full time and 20 part time) was not completed quietly and effectively but in a way which has done them not a bit of good.

In order to push through the decision before the beginning of the new term a Council officer, a Labour and a Conservative councillor visited the DES and spoke to Under Secretary of State Rhodes Boyson.

Coventry MP William Wilson has written to the DES asking for reconsideration of the decision and asking for the same facilities to be given to the Parents Action Group as were given to the Council delegation.

And in rushing to confirm the closure practically as well as legally a private firm's removal van was used to empty the school of its equipment. The local authority unions will no doubt have something to say about this.

While the DES decision will inevitably take some of the steam out of the anti-closure campaign in no way can it be said that the Council has inflicted a decisive defeat.

The Coventry Nursery Campaign (Wheatley Street) (CNC-WS) responded to the DES confirmation by staging a 70 minute occupation of the Education offices on the first day of the new term.

A press statement issued by the campaign gave notice that the fight to re-open the school will continue with a lobby of the next Council meeting (Tuesday September 9) at which a petition of several hundred signatures will be presented.

An investigation into nursery requirements in Coventry has already turned up approximately one hundred people who need a nursery place either now or in the next couple of years.

## Secret plans

The CNC-WS is continuing this investigation and combining it with one into nursery provision plans by the Council and also an attempt to discover the secret plans for the future of the Wheatley Street site.

The widespread support for the campaign must now be extended and those wanting nurseries organised into a powerful campaign for more not less nursery places.

In the unions the lessons of the campaign's 5-day occupation of the Nursery must be learnt.

The campaign platform "what we stand for" calls on "the trade unions to declare their refusal to co-operate with the Local Authority in any attempt to interfere with any such action in the future".

The platform goes on to say "we support any industrial action taken by trade unionists in defence of nursery services".

The campaign must also be continued with the Labour Party where it has already contributed to the growing isolation of the right-wing councillors.

## Divided

A significant section of the Coventry Labour Party supported the occupation and many Labour Party members were directly involved in it. A number of the ten rebel councillors expelled from the Labour group for voting against school meals price increases have also been involved.

The Labour Party is being divided between those who actually want to fight the Tories and those who do not.

Issues such as Wheatley Street pose the question of how to fight the cuts and the Labour Party should take up the methods of direct action to confront the government and those in the Council who implement Tory policies.

Further information about the Wheatley Street campaign can be obtained from Coventry Nursery Campaign (Wheatley Street) 37 Beaconsfield Road, Coventry.

# Steel unions to aid BSC

Jettisoning the uncharacteristic fiery rhetoric of this year's steel strike, Bill Sirs and other steel union leaders have not fully reverted to their more accustomed role in the extreme right wing of the trade union and Labour movement.

Undaunted by the wave of sackings and threats of more closures, Sirs has declared the readiness of the ISTC to collaborate with Tory axe-man MacGregor in his plans to foist the industry's crisis onto the workforce.

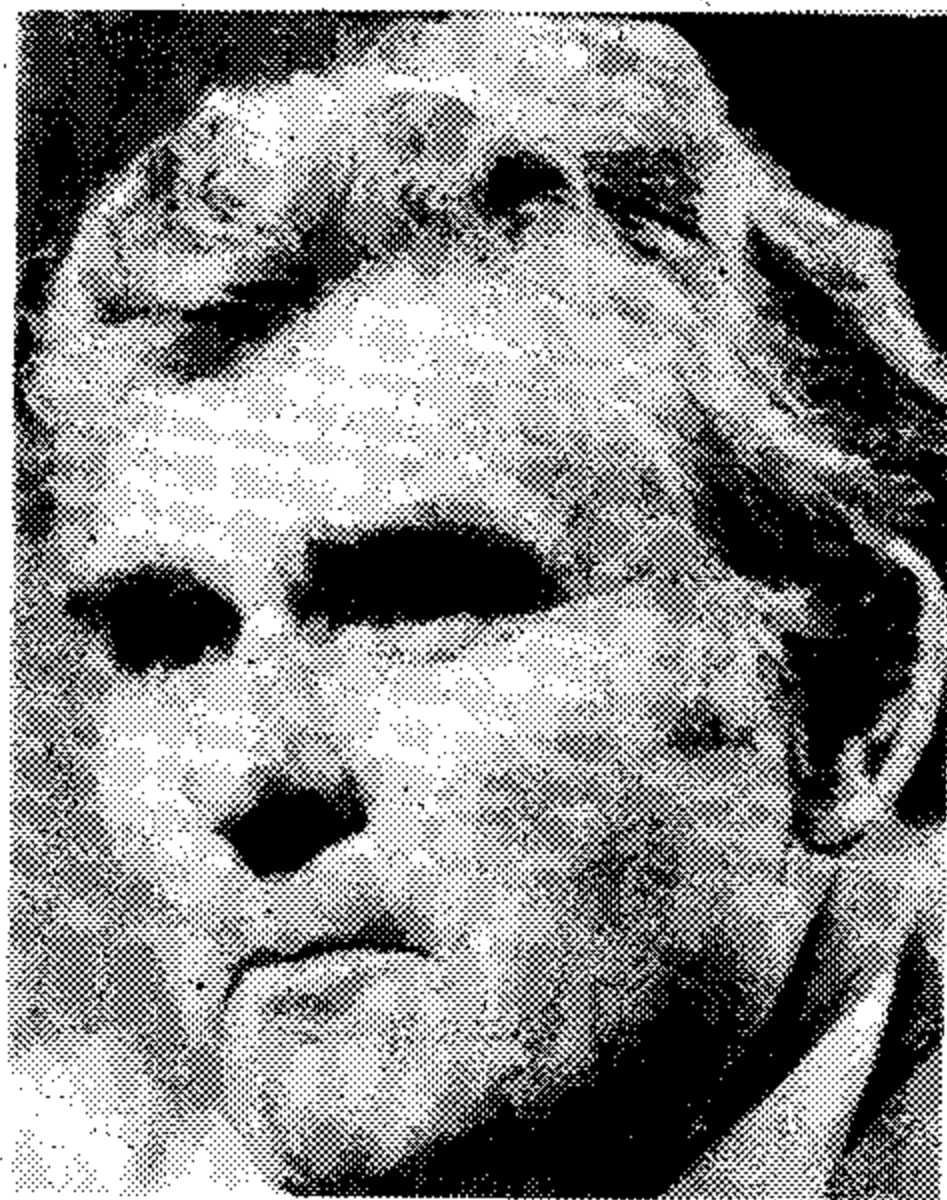
As the deadline for the closure of the Consett plant draws nearer amid the now usual rumours of last minute capitalist syndicate buyers, Sirs has spoken of a return to "the industrial relations we used to have in this industry just a few years ago", in which union bureaucrats and employers worked hand in glove.

A TUC steel committee document has already boasted that BSC—after years of collab-

orationist union leadership—has the lowest cost workforce in the developed world.

But MacGregor wants much more—and has made a priority out of matching international levels of productivity: in other words imposing still further speed-up.

Sirs' new pledge to help out BSC management in this quest is a further indication to steelworkers that a new leadership is needed if jobs and conditions are to be defended.



Bill Sirs

# NALGO ducks pay fight

Delegates to NALGO's special Local Government Group Meeting on Friday 29 August were in no mood to fight the Tory government's cash limits which forced the employers to stick with their insulting 13% offer. Instead they voted to refer the case to arbitration.

The leadership of the Local Government Committee had no intention of allowing any development of the wave of militancy that grew out of the pay comparability action earlier this year, and has made every effort to keep the membership in a state of quiescence since the beginning of July when the pay negotiations began.

Since that time there has been no reference in NALGO circulars to fighting the cash limits, only vague talk of 'defending services' with not a single concrete proposal.

The NALGO decision therefore does not change our overall assessment of the situation.

The union memberships remain prepared to fight the government and the employers—but the union leaderships are refusing to give any direction or perspective to such a fight.

The proof of this lies in a growing groundswell of rank and file action among NALGO members, particularly the lower paid.

This movement was reflected inside the Special Group Meeting by some unexpectedly militant motions being passed on other issues.

The most important of these was in response to the refusal of ACAS to award any pay increase to nursery nurses.

The Group Meeting instructed the convening of a special delegate meeting of nursery nurses to plan a campaign of action.

The central demand here is for comparability with teaching staff, and an important tactical step will be the establishment of joint action committees with the other unions represented in nurseries.

Other sections demanding action on their special conditions include Education Welfare Officers, the staff of Adult Mental Health Training Centres, Special Schools staff and librarians.

What they have in common is that they are all at the sharp end of reductions in services, and are among the lowest paid of NALGO members.

It is an important development in NALGO that these kinds of sections are learning the lessons of the social workers' action and are correctly bringing their grievances into the mainstream of the union.

# Ealing NALGO fights back

The young, the sick and the elderly are people that most of us think need a bit of extra attention.

We would like to think that they can go to day centres, staffed by trained workers that get a reasonable return for the care and attention they provide.

Ealing council thinks different.

115 day care workers, members of NALGO, employed by Ealing have been involved in negotiations with the employer since January 1979.

The negotiations are about increasing the scandalously low level of wages (around £4,000 p.a. gross for most workers) and also for improving the service that is provided.

As a result of the management fobbing off negotiators with talk of "national negotiations" the Ealing workers have been forced to take industrial action in furtherance of their claim.

The council administration claimed to be in support of the workers claim but as soon as the action started their real position became evident.

Ealing NALGO is blacking all new client admissions, refusing to work with agency staff, and refusing to send in administrative returns to the Town Hall. Staff are also sticking to strict staff/client ratios and refusing to cover for staff sickness or leave.

This action has already resulted in approximately 150 clients being excluded from day care centres in the borough.

The employers' response to this has been to witch-hunt the workers for causing hardship to the needy. Local papers have carried front page stories about clients adversely affected by

the action.

This is pure hypocrisy as it is no time at all since Ealing council implemented quite ruthless cuts on the social services including the closure of Elthorne Park Adult Training Centre for the mentally handicapped.

NALGO have already held two lobbies of the Town Hall which were well supported both by members and clients of the centres concerned.

Very little investigation is required to show that it is the trade unionists rather than the management that are actually concerned about the service being provided.

The employers seem prepared to let the dispute carry on indefinitely but the union is seeking permission from the National Emergency Committee to ballot its membership for an all-out strike should Ealing Council fail to make an offer by 15 September.

Ealing NALGO members are to be supported in this action at a time when the council is trying to intimidate their workforce with redundancies.

In particular they should demand the support of Labour councillors who so far have gone along with a quaint old custom of "the council speaking with one voice" in discussions with employees. This means that because the Labourites are in a minority custom dictates that they do not publicly criticise the way the Tories are mistreating their employees.

It is not by gentlemanly debate with the Tory axe-men that living and working conditions are going to be defended but by determined industrial action.

# Times bosses lose out

Times journalists returned to work last week having shaken the management, Lord Thomson and themselves to their foundations.

The NUJ members were not quite certain why they were on strike or how it happened or what it was like when they got there.

The settlement 27% over 18 months is no better than 18% over 12 months which the chapel rejected.

But if the journalists cannot claim to have won—indeed their strike demand was some abstract concept of moral indignation—the management has certainly lost.

## Need of allies

Dugal Nisbet-Smith, managing director of Thomson Newspapers, said the board had come "within a millimetre of closure".

The blow to management is not over revenue. Their battle with the print unions has left them in need of allies and the

journalists are a key section of the petty bourgeoisie they wanted to win over.

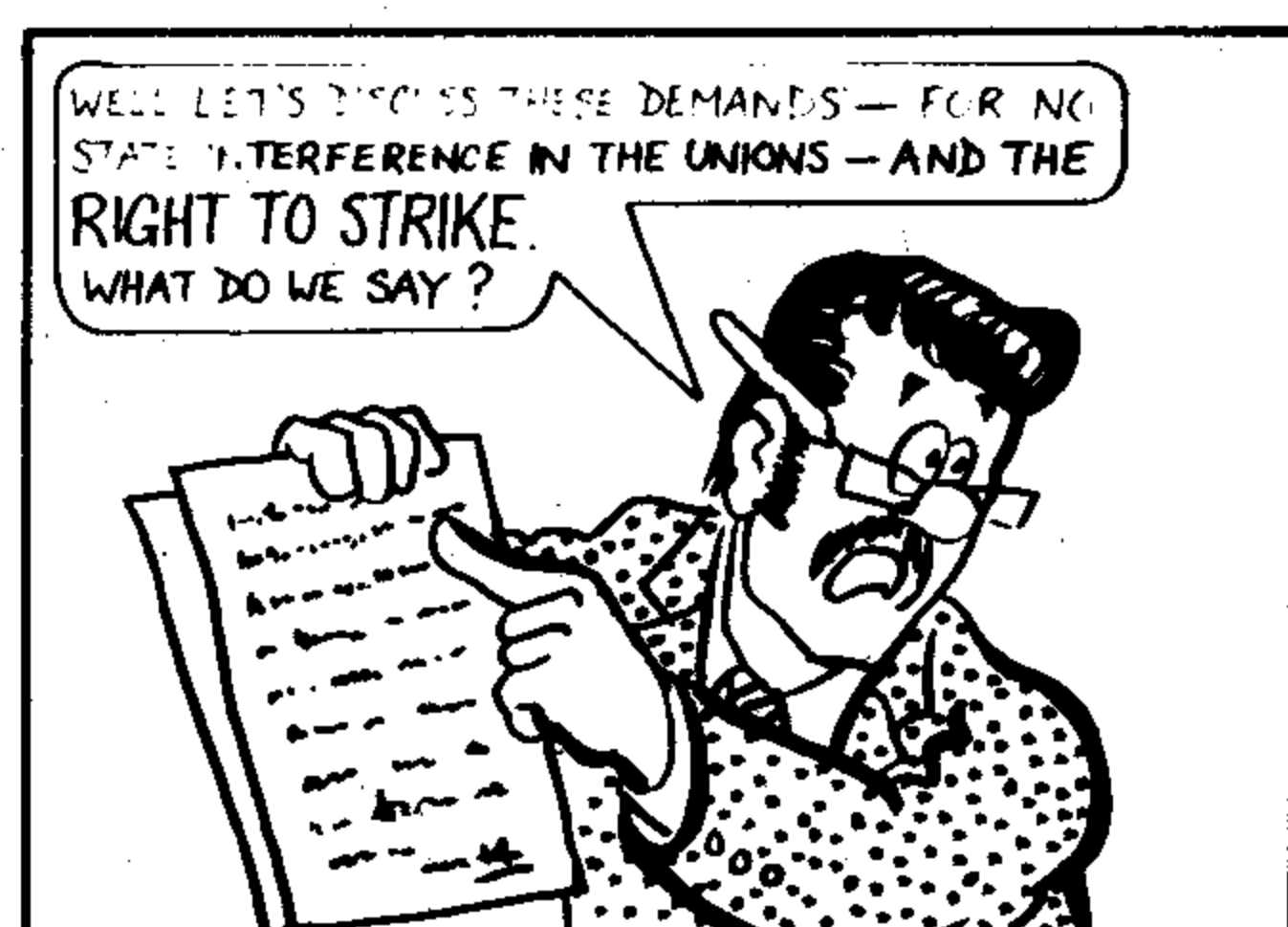
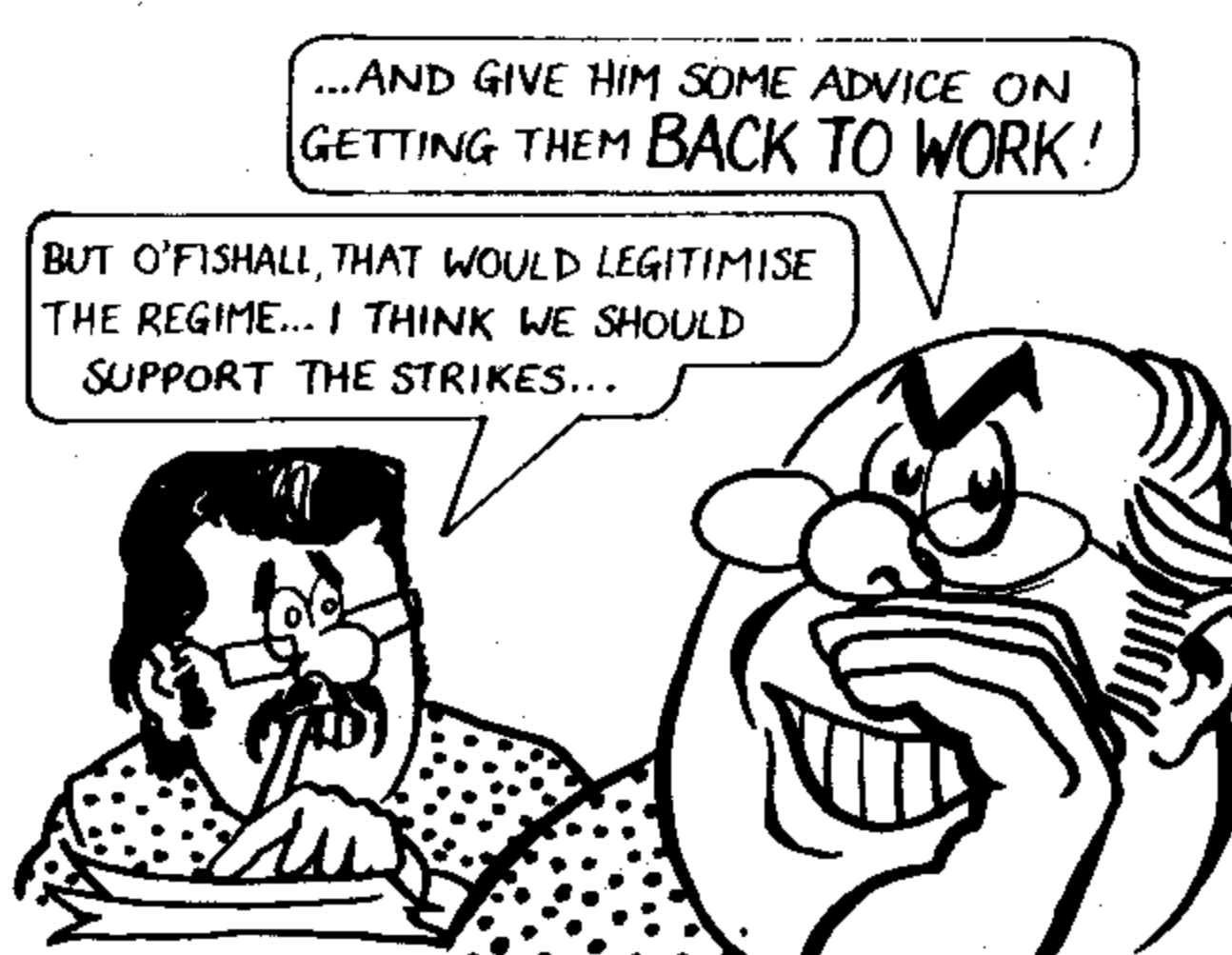
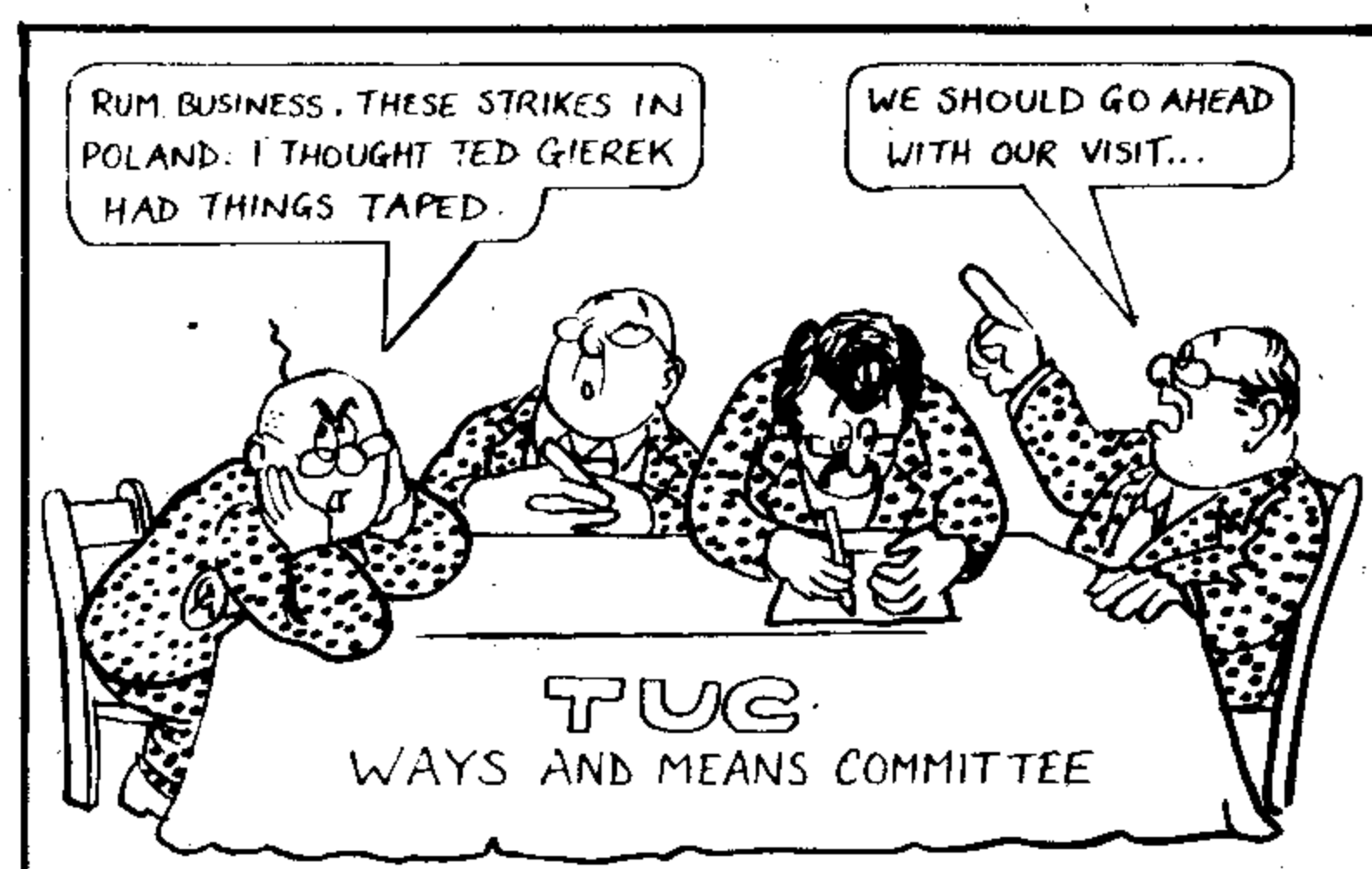
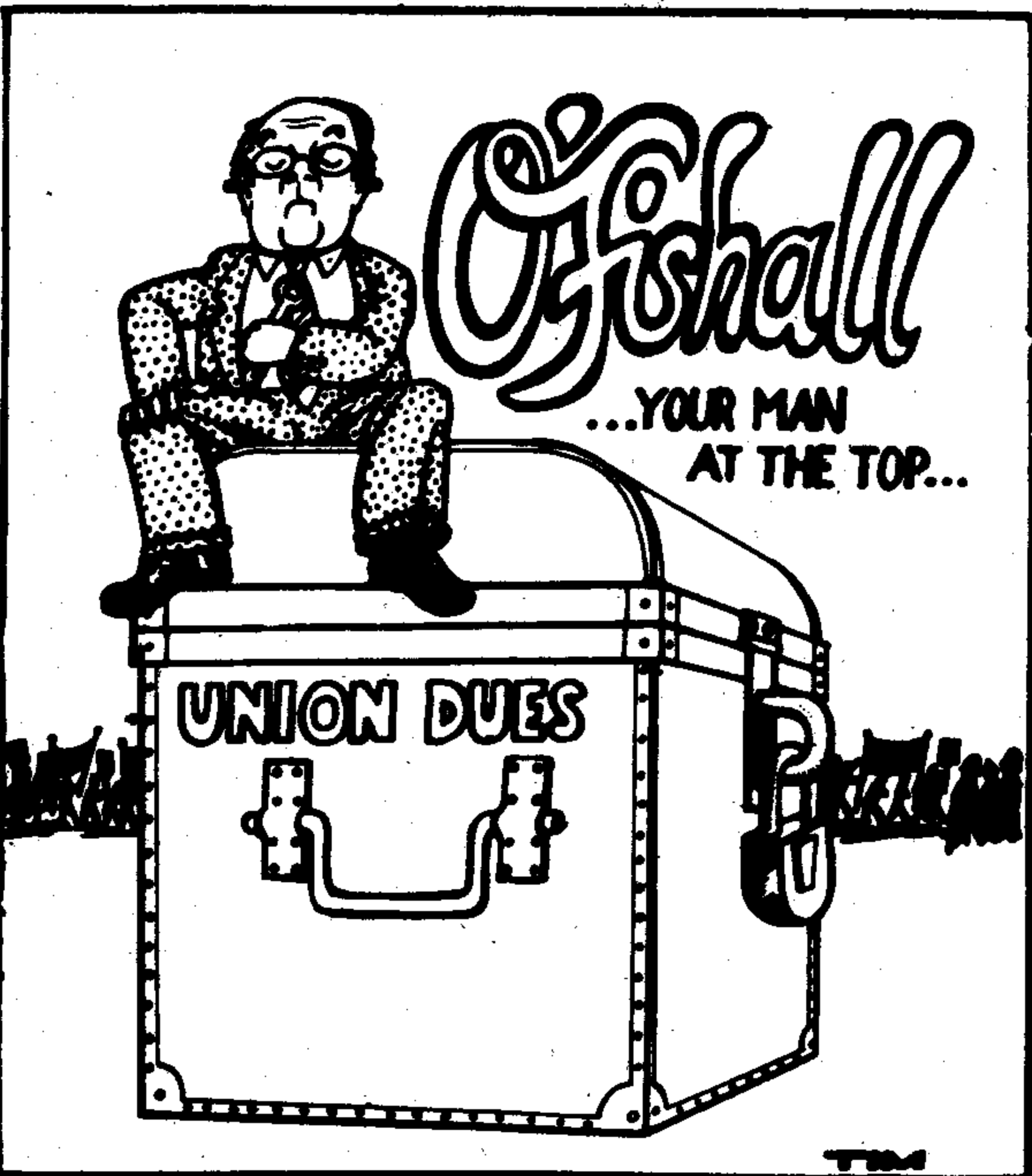
Yet not only did a minority of all 'journalists' including editorial executives declare themselves willing to work on the paper, but also the NUJ members who struck were shown—on management's own admission—that it was the NGA support which stopped a scab paper being produced.

## Hysterical

This explains the hysterical editorial from editor Rees-Mogg which greeted the return of the Times. He declared *inter alia*:

"The Thomson family, for reasons which are simply those of national interest, have put tens of millions of pounds into The Times" and "A journalist, though he may make a judgement of circumstances is either a Times man first or an NUJ man (!) first."

The economic crisis can drive the petty bourgeoisie either way. The Times management find to their dismay that their banner is deserted.



# SOCIALIST PRESS



## 'Call a General Strike!' -MP

A Labour MP has underlined the futility of the TUC visit to Thatcher and the Parliamentary "opposition" to the Tories.

"The TUC should call a general strike next week," declared Ray Powell, MP for Ogmore.

"We as politicians, despite being criticised, have done everything possible in Parliament as an opposition.

We can do very little else because Mrs Thatcher has got such a large majority.

The only alternative I can see is for the trade union movement to demand some action.

Whether Mrs Thatcher agrees to meet the TUC this week or next they should demand a general strike against her policies".

Powell's statement is a correct summary of the situation facing the working class: but it stands in flat contradiction to the toothless motions tabled for the Labour Party conference, and to the position of Party leader Callaghan—who has opposed strike action against the Tories and insisted they must be defeated "through the ballot box".

Other Labour MPs claiming to stand to the left of Callaghan must be called upon to endorse Powell's stand and to mount a campaign for a General Strike throughout the labour movement alongside a fight to oust the right wing Callaghan leadership.



Thatcher

# STOP TUC VISIT TO THATCHER!

The 1980 TUC Congress is beginning as we go to press: but even now it can be recorded as a wash-out for any workers looking for a fight against the Tories.

Thatcher's unprecedented anti-working class offensive and unparalleled post-war unemployment figures are to be met by undisguised cowardice and unequalled treachery from TUC leaders who have no intention of lifting a finger to defend their members.

The only vague hint of a fight against the anti-union Employment Act—a Bakers Union call for the expulsion of unions that accept Tory cash to run postal ballots—was dropped ten days before the Congress started.

### Vague and empty

The composite resolution against the Act is so vague and empty that even the reactionary AUEW leadership feels able to lend it unanimous support.

And while Moss Evans made hypocritical sabre-rattling statements about unions being prepared to picket as necessary in defiance of the new Act, TGWU members at Adwest on strike for 15 weeks in a bitter union recognition dispute have been told they are to receive no official backing.

The fact is that—as the AUEW leaders have explicitly stated—union officials are preparing to accept the terms of the Tory Act, just as they have accepted the public spending cuts, accepted the closures and mass redundancies, and accepted cash limits on pay in the public sector.

The keynote for the TUC attitude to the Tory government emerged during the steel strike earlier this year when the opening existed for a General Strike to bring down Thatcher.

Instead the TUC General Council intervened to crush a General Strike movement in

South Wales, and union leaders in the public and private sector fought tooth and nail to preserve the isolation of the steel strikers by sabotaging simultaneous pay strikes and even solidarity blacking action.

### Snivelling

Now we have the other side of the refusal to bring down the Tories: the snivelling appeals from Len Murray and co. to be allowed an audience with Margaret Thatcher to discuss unemployment—at which they will once again argue for their so-called "alternative economic strategy".

Instead of resolutions offering a strategy for action by the workers' movement to halt the cuts, occupy threatened plants and defend all jobs, workers are confronted with an absurdly irrelevant carnival of evasion, hot air and empty protest—coupled to efforts to advise the Tories on the best way to run capitalism!

Trade unionists must demand that the TUC visit is cancelled.

The fact is that it is the capitalist system itself and its insoluble crisis which are the objective basis of the surge in unemployment and the Tory offensive on the unions.

Yet by their commitment to seeking no more than piecemeal reforms within the capitalist system the union leaders and their Labour co-thinkers are incapable of seriously challenging it or offering any socialist alternative.

### Privileged layer

The balance of forces between the rank and file movement on the shop floor and the power of the capitalist class has for decades been the basis on which the union bureaucracy has consolidated itself as a privileged layer of mediators and negotiators.



Adwest pickets

Feeding off the strength of the workers' movement, they nonetheless owe their power and privilege to the continued existence of capitalism.

This is why the TUC bureaucrats fear above all an independent movement of the working class which could disrupt this balance of forces, confront the capitalists directly, and in defeating the Tories, begin to sweep aside the parasitic trade union and Labour bureaucracy.

The fight to stem the Tory offensive, the fight to defend the most elementary trade union rights and working conditions therefore poses before workers the necessity to build a new, revolutionary leadership in the labour movement, committed to the independent interests of the working class.

The Workers Socialist League is fighting to construct such a leadership. In contrast to the capitulation of the TUC and Labour leaders we fight for:

\*Occupation and supporting strikes to halt closures and redundancies. For work sharing on full pay!

\*Strike action and occupations to halt the public sector cuts. Defend all jobs and services!

\*Unite the struggles against the Tories! Build councils of action drawing delegates from all labour movement bodies! For a General Strike to bring down the Thatcher government.

\*Kick out Labour's right wing leaders! Mobilise mass action to force the nationalisation of banks and major industry, without compensation under workers' management. For a planned socialist economy and a programme of public works!

# ADWEST: TGWU ACCEPTS TORY ACT

So like Brixton, a strike that clashes head-on with the Tory/policy moves to deny the right to picket is deprived of assistance from the union leadership.

All the fighting talk about Prior's law from the TUC rostrum (and TGWU leader Moss Evans' own pre-Congress threat to defy it) should be looked at in the light of the bureaucracy's actual attitude in cases where the Act is being imposed.

In a move aimed at breaking the long-running strike at Reading's Adwest engineering factory, it was last week yet again refused official backing from the TGWU.

At a meeting organised under pressure from the strikers by the union's national official Larry Smith, they called on Regional Secretary Ashman to declare official support, a step which would immeasurably improve their chances of winning their struggle against victimisation.

### Lame excuses

Instead they got only a letter from Ashman reiterating the union's lame excuse about 'financial irregularities' making support impossible.

## Textile sackings

The wave of sackings and closures in the textile industry has grown still further with the axing of 1,380 jobs by Courtaulds in the last week.

Eight textile mills in the Greater Manchester area are to close—bringing the jobs lost in cotton spinning in 1980 to over 10,000.

Yet as in every previous closure the bosses' attack has been met only by weak-kneed protests and nationalistic appeals for import controls from union leaders.

For textile workers in the North West and elsewhere the crucial question is occupation and supporting strike action to prevent these closures and defend jobs while the industry still exists.

Even more glaring than their ambiguity over Heath's Industrial Relations Act, the union leaders want no part of any action which could spark a mass movement against this or other key parts of Thatcher's strategy.

The strikers planned recall mass picket later this month could therefore more appropriately be held outside the doors of Transport House than the gates of the Adwest factory.

# FUND

A rush of money totalling over £200 this week has greatly improved the situation on the August fund. But with the month now over we have fallen short of our £850 target by £282.13.

Now that the holidays are over it is important that we make an early start with the September Fund. We cannot afford to fall short of the target we have set ourselves. So the sooner we get started the better.

Send us a donation today.

Our address is:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund  
BM Box 5277,  
London WC1V 6XX

ADWEST STRIKE  
Donations to the Adwest Strike Fund are urgently needed and should be made payable to:  
J. Dhoot,  
c/o Danny Broderick,  
46, Berkley Rd.,  
Reading, Berks.



Evans