



*Action not words to defeat Tories
*Strike to stop the cuts!

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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Leyland sell-out tells the tale:



Sold-out: seamen



Left isolated: steelworkers



Sold down the river: BL workers

WHO IS BLOCKING ACTION AGAINST THATCHER?

Seldom in the British class struggle have so many workers been so militant—only to be betrayed by so few.

Nobody needs another list of the Tory attacks in the last 18 months. Everyone is sick to the teeth of cuts, closures, redundancies and price increases.

Never in recent years have workers been so universally hostile to a government.

The willingness of tens of thousands of workers to fight for the removal of the Tories is unmistakable.

But each time this strength emerges it is met by a stubborn refusal of trade union and labour leaders to fight to kick out Thatcher.

The record is plain for all to see.

***100,000** steelworkers struck last winter for 14 weeks: the TUC left them to fight alone—knifing the moves by the Welsh TUC for a General Strike. The cost? Tens of thousands of jobs lost.

***Over 1 million** workers downed tools on the TUC's May 14 Day of Action: but union leaders insisted it was a 'failure' and in any case they only wanted Thatcher to 'change course'.

The cost? More cuts, more sackings, and new anti-union laws.

***Despite a lack of any official lead,** a few hospitals and nurseries have been occupied to

prevent closures and sackings: but in each case the struggle has been kept isolated with no official call for supporting strike action.

The cost? The forcible closure of St. Benedict's Hospital, the brutal AHA raid on cancer patients at St. Columbas (page 4) and a non-stop tide of health and other cuts—with not a finger lifted by public sector unions.

***Dockers** voted for national strike action to defend jobs, and Gardners' workers have occupied their factory against redundancies. But officials have diverted such struggles into negotiations on 'voluntary' redundancies.

The cost? More jobs lost.

***Labour conference delegates** voted overwhelmingly for mass industrial action to halt cuts in local government spending. This stand was endorsed at a 700-strong conference called by Lambeth Labour Council. Yet not one public sector union has adopted a policy of strike action against the cuts and Labour spokesmen have opposed "illegal" action against the Tories.

The cost? Tens of thousands of jobs and services axed by Labour councils.

"Friends"

The total cost of such bitter lessons for the working class is catastrophic. We cannot afford to carry on this way.

Each betrayal carried

through by the leaders of the labour movement appears to be a victory for Thatcher. But with "friends" like the do-nothing TUC, and the Labour leadership waiting for an election in 1984, who needs enemies?

The clearest example of treachery so far is the sell-out of the pay fight at British Leyland. A battle on wages there would have provided the focus for a mass wave of struggle against the Tories.

Disregarded

BL carworkers voted by 2-1 at mass meetings for strike action to press their £17 pay claim and reject Edwardes' insulting 6.8% offer. Five days' strike notice was given.

But union officials *disregarded* their votes completely. They set out to undermine the action. General Secretaries met Edwardes and came out recommending BL workers to accept yet another wage cut.

This line was rammed through by full time officials on the BL Joint Negotiating Committee. Then it was pressed through a completely unrepresentative meeting of BL convenors.

When the proposal was referred back to mass meetings there was again a large vote for rejection. But as right wing convenors forced some plants into acceptance, everything hinged on the vote at the Longbridge mass meeting.

Longbridge convenor Jack



One year ago: the last Labour cuts demonstration, November 27 1979. Since then no action.

Who's next for a lame excuse?

Adams, a Communist Party member, was *opposed* to a strike. He was voted down on this by his stewards' committee—who wanted action to defend living standards.

But Adams still got up at the mass meeting and argued *against* a strike. A close vote on a show of hands was hastily declared "carried" for acceptance of Edwardes' 6.8% deal. The Communist Party had played a key role in preventing a fight against Thatcher.

And the BL workforce had been sold down the river yet again by their leaders—along with the whole working class,

waiting for a chance to act against the Tories.

Such union leaders will be two-a-penny on the November 29 demonstration in Liverpool. There will be hordes of Labour leaders, and there will be Communist Party Stalinists.

They will wave their arms and rant against the Tories for one day—and then return to their daily routine of sabotaging struggles to bring down Thatcher.

The tens of thousands of workers from all over the country who will march on 29 November deserve better than this. They are ready to fight. The Tories *can* be beaten.

All that is lacking is a leadership prepared to lead—a revolutionary leadership ready to pit the strength of the working class against this bosses' government.

That's what *Socialist Press* is all about. We are fighting to build such a leadership in the workers' movement. We have a programme for action to defend workers' interests.

We urge you to join us in that fight. When you see the soaring cost of trusting our present leaders, can you afford not to?

Longbridge background, p.4
O'Fishall, page 11.

Strike and occupy to defend jobs!



INTERNATIONAL

Kania appoints Catholic

The Catholic Church continues to utilise the Polish mass movement for its own purposes.

In negotiations between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Church hierarchy they have achieved the appointment of a Catholic Deputy Prime Minister, Jerry Ozdowski.

Creating a rod

The relationship is clear. The church tries to limit the movement of the masses so that they don't overthrow the bureaucracy—and in return the bureaucracy strengthens the position of the church.

In this, the bureaucrats are creating a rod for their own backs at a later point in time.

In the meantime the undefeated strength of the working class is clearly shown.

The strikes and occupations of health workers have been successful, reportedly forcing 25% wage rises.

The threatened strike by Solidarity trade unionists in the southern province of Czestochowa has forced the dismissal of the governor and his two other top officials. The position of the mayor of Czestochowa and other officials is being reviewed.

This is a major gain as it has shown the working class is continuing to act politically. It also shows that gains are made because of strikes or the threat of strikes and not—as the Solidarity leadership has recently declared—by talks alone.

IN BRIEF

W. Germany

In Reutlingen, Baden Wurttemberg, student teacher Barbara Bregler has been stopped from completing her course because she stood for city council elections on a list supported by the Communist Party.

When she took her case to court the Judge had to borrow the programme she stood on from her solicitor—saying that if he bought one himself it might cost him his job.

India

Leaders of all opposition parties have protested about "assaults on democracy" by Mrs Indira Gandhi because, during the parliamentary recess she promulgated the detention without trial ordinance.

Amongst those who protested were several parties of the Janata coalition, who themselves, when they were in power, initiated dictatorial measures.

South Africa

Leaders of four unions, ASTMS, COHSE, SCPS and the agricultural workers' union joined 150 others to demonstrate outside the South African embassy last Thursday, against the continued detention in solitary confinement of Oscar Mpetha.

Mpetha is national organiser of the African Food and Canning Workers Union and an organiser for SACTU. Eight other leaders of his union have recently been arrested. Mpetha is a diabetic, and it is considered that his life is in danger.

El Salvador

The Faribundo Martin liberation forces last Wednesday killed anti-guerrilla commander Col. Carlos Choto and burnt his house down, in a daring raid in which they painted the entire street with slogans.

Black masses fight on despite Mugabe

The massive social tensions underlying Mugabe's unstable capitalist regime in Zimbabwe have begun more sharply to erupt to the surface.

On November 5 *Socialist Press* pointed out that the "legacy of popular frontist guerrillaism is being experienced for what it is—not the triumphant construction of socialism by a broad front united in struggle, but frustration and disillusion among the oppressed which can even lead to militaristic acts of terror against workers and peasants."

Just four days later this prognosis was brutally confirmed.

Over 60 people—the vast majority being workers—were massacred when rival groups of militants and frustrated guerrillas turned their guns on

one another in Entumbane, the black working class ghetto outside Bulawayo.

The sole responsibility for this outrage rests with the treacherous nationalist leadership of ZANU and ZAPU who have consistently subordinated the interests of the mass base upon which they rest to their own petty-bourgeois class interests in reforming the capitalist system.

Fertile ground

In the absence of a revolutionary leadership, the pent-up anger of the guerrillas is fertile ground for the reactionary, tribalist and opportunist elements in both ZANU and ZAPU to exploit, in order to pursue their own sectional interests at the expense of the Zimbabwean masses.

Since the Bulawayo massacre

similar acts of armed terror have occurred in Salisbury as well, where five workers were killed in just one clash.

Although Mugabe has mobilized the full might of his repressive apparatus in an effort to contain the guerrilla clashes, he has been unable formally to go beyond the political disarming of the guerrillas to actually disarm them physically.

Ever since Mugabe came to power, workers have demonstrated by their actions that they are willing and prepared to struggle against the oppressive and exploitative conditions of their existence.

Last week over 6,000 workers in nickel and coal mines owned by the Anglo-American Corporation of South Africa, came out on an indefinite strike in pursuit of demands ranging from pension deductions and higher wages to the dismissal of certain racist white managers.

In the rural areas, the stage has been set for growing struggles around the question of land redistribution.

Already 'squatters' who have returned to the countryside and spontaneously taken over land abandoned by white farmers, have met with armed eviction by the state forces.

Struggle

The depth of the social, political and economic crisis wracking Zimbabwe today is driving every sector of the oppressed masses into struggle.

But without the political perspectives and programme which can turn their spontaneous struggles against the bosses, their government and their agents in ZANU and ZAPU, the Zimbabwean workers and their oppressed allies stand threatened with defeat.

West Bank shootings

Last week workers witnessed newsreel film of Israeli Zionist troops opening fire on students in the occupied West Bank.

Military repression is nothing new to Palestinian people who since 1967 have lived under the strain of Israeli occupation involving land expropriations, house destruction, torture and detention without trial, and non-recognition of Palestinian Trade Unions.

The present wave of heightened military violence is linked to the enforced closure of Birzeit University—the biggest

Palestinian university in the region.

The closure resulted from the university 'Palestinian Week' which attempts to keep alive the national consciousness of the Palestinians.

Nine Palestinian students, two of them teenage girls, were shot as troops put into practice an old policy of shooting at the legs of Arab demonstrators.

At the same time the Military Government has introduced press censorship preventing foreign journalists from interviewing or reporting incidents at first hand.

All trade unionists should fight to raise the barbarity of

Zionist repression in the British labour movement.

Teachers and lecturers in the NUT and NATFHE should condemn the mounting harassment by the military authorities of the Birzeit university which was also previously closed on Israel Independence Day (May 2 1979) and ransacked by Israeli officials.

On that occasion international pressure forced the Israeli government to re-open the campus.

Journalists within the NUJ must raise the issue of press censorship and demand a union inquiry into repression on the West Bank and the other

occupied territories.

The importance of these actions by British trade unionists can be seen in recent reports in the Israeli daily paper 'Maariv' where government officials are quoted arguing for an industrial relations officer to be sent to the Israeli embassy in Britain.

These demands come from a recognition that anti-zionist feeling is growing in the British working class.

This growth must continue in support of the Palestinians' just demand for national self-determination.

A new series

Why build a

revolutionary

party? 3. The Communist Parties



What is Communism?

It is a classless system of society that rests not on private ownership of wealth but on common ownership; not on the haphazard workings of the capitalist "free market" but on planning; not on the exploitation of the vast majority by a wealthy minority but on the development of the forces of production to provide an abundance for all.

The Workers Socialist League is fighting to achieve a communist society.

To do so it is necessary to win the support of the working class for the struggle to overthrow the present, capitalist system, which offers workers only the prospect of years of mass unemployment, growing poverty and the threat of war.

So why do we oppose the Communist Party—and the so-called 'Communist' regimes of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba?

To answer this question it is necessary first to point out that communism cannot be achieved in a single country in isolation from the rest of the world.

The development of technology, and the need for a wide range of raw materials for modern production mean that no country can hope to remain self-sufficient.

To provide the material basis for communism—a massive increase in the production of commodities needed by the working classes to eradicate poverty and inequality—an international division of labour is necessary.

When they carried through the first-ever socialist revolution in Russia in 1917, Lenin and Trotsky were the first to realise this. Russia was an economically backward country. It needed technology and industry from the West to develop the basis for a socialist economy.

International

They fought therefore to extend the revolution into Germany and throughout the world. In 1919 they set up the Communist International, in order to develop in every country the kind of revolutionary leadership needed to lead the overthrow of capitalism.

But setbacks took place. Revolutions in Germany, in Hungary and in Bulgaria were

defeated. Mass struggles elsewhere were headed off by partial reforms to the working class. The Russian revolution became isolated.

Within the Soviet Union, conservative, nationalist forces emerged that thrived on this isolation. Under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, they began to argue in defiance of Lenin and Trotsky that the task was not to extend the revolution but simply to create "socialism in one country".

Stalin was able to exploit the material difficulties within the Soviet Union to build a power base among the careerists, technocrats and administrators who emerged in the war-damaged economy as a new state bureaucracy.

And, after the death of Lenin in 1924, he moved to isolate and expel Trotsky.

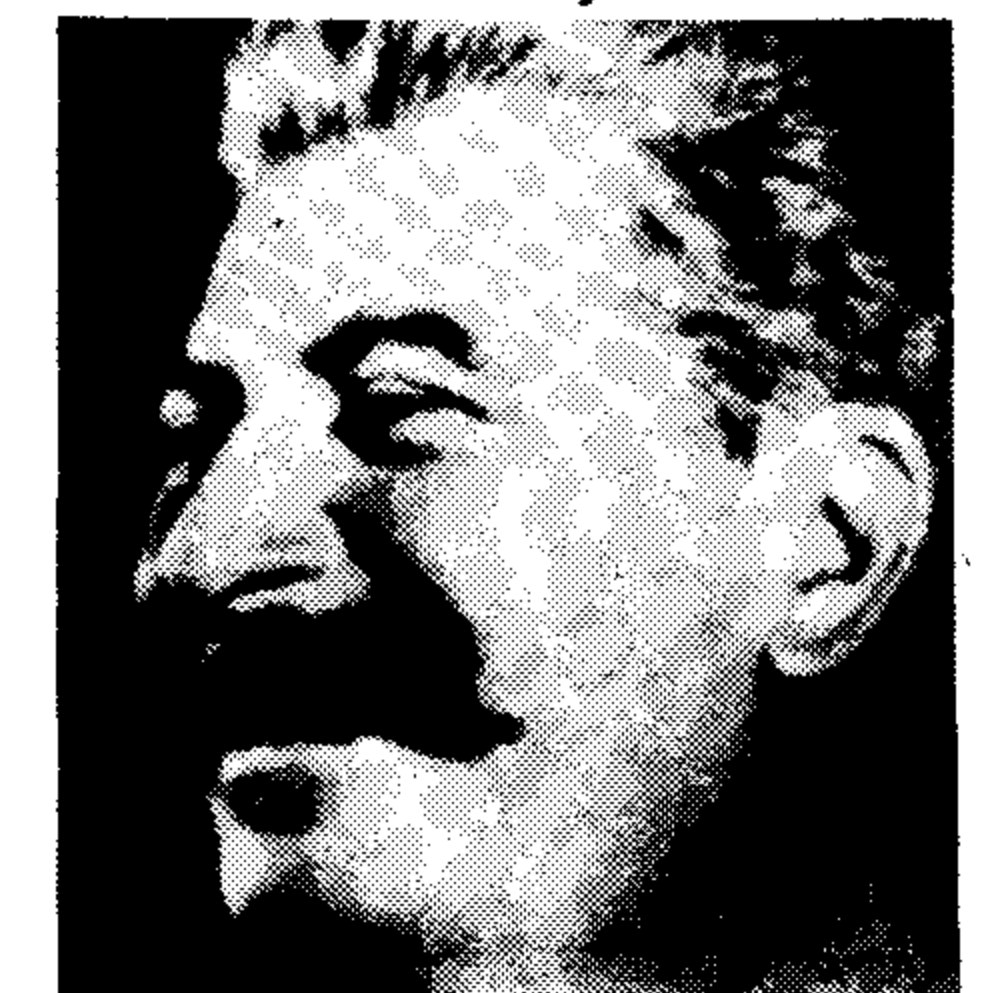
Under Stalin's leadership, the Soviet Communist Party turned for support not to the independent strength of the international working class, but to alliances with "left" sections of the labour bureaucracy in various countries—such as the British TUC leaders of the Anglo-Russian Committee—and with nationalist leaders like China's Chiang Kai Shek.

The Communist International (Comintern) and its parties became increasingly the tool used by Stalin to carry through such diplomatic manoeuvres.

The consequence was a string of disastrous errors—

including the slaughter of the Chinese Communists by Chiang Kai Shek's forces in 1926-7, and the betrayal of the British General Strike by Stalin's chosen TUC allies in 1926.

But any voices that were raised against Stalin's policies within the Soviet CP or the Comintern were immediately silenced by bureaucratic expulsions—and later by executions.



Stalin

By 1933 the Comintern had been so purged of revolutionaries and transformed into Stalin's puppet that not a single voice was raised to criticise the absurd ultra-left line of the German Communist Party, which, by branding the mass Socialist Party as "social fascists", had prevented a united front against Hitler.

Trotsky who had consistently fought Stalin's policies declared after the rise of Hitler that the Comintern and its parties had been proven to be

"dead for the purposes of revolution".

It was necessary to build new revolutionary parties, and a new, Fourth International.

Events since that time have amply confirmed Trotsky's analysis.

The Communist Parties have remained subservient to the overall objectives of the Stalinist bureaucracy which not only remains in control in the Soviet Union, but which with the weakening of imperialism after World War 2 has now extended its control into Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba. Time and again they have blocked revolutionary struggles.

The Kremlin bureaucracy seeks to preserve its own power by preserving "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. This means in practice preserving capitalism throughout two-thirds of the world.

Communist Parties in the various countries have adopted this strategy—by seeking various illusory "parliamentary roads", and even forming open 'Popular Front' alliances with so-called "progressive" sections of capitalists.

In Britain, too, the Communist Party has proved itself dedicated to blocking all-out action to defeat the Tory government. Despite its fraudulent name it is an obstacle to Communism.

That is why we fight to build a genuinely revolutionary party—the Workers Socialist League.

INTERNATIONAL



TURKEY: behind the coup of 1971

The second article by DAVID LARKIN on the military coups in Turkey prior to 1980.

The period between 1960-71 in Turkey saw a massive growth of class struggle, starting almost immediately after the first military take-over in 1960.

The delay of the new junta in recognising the right to strike was the main target of the prolonged and bloody strikes and occupations.

After the right to strike was recognised there were struggles over wages, trade union recognition and in defence of victimised militants.

These struggles were soon reflected in the political arena.

The Turkish Workers Party (TIP) was formed in 1961 by reformist trade unionists and intellectuals.

The yellow trade union confederation TURK-IS was founded as a reaction against the formation of the TIP, though in this period the TIP did not have any organic links with the trade unions and the working class.

Influence

But in the 1965 elections, in the conditions of rapid growth of the labour movement it was able to draw 276,000 votes and win 15 seats in the National Assembly.

This showed the TIP had some influence among workers, especially in the big cities such as Ankara, Izmir and Istanbul.

There was a gap between this sympathy from the workers and the TIP's ability to give it a political and organisational expression.

This highest point of the TIP's development was therefore the moment of its deepest political crisis.

Its policies right from the beginning were oriented toward electoralism and pacifism and therefore centred on collaboration with the capitalist class.

Until the late sixties it never claimed to be Marxist-Leninist. It was rather a purely Parliamentary organisation.

The TIP made concessions to both nationalism and militarism. Its social composition was as heterogeneous as its politics. By the 1969 election its support was declining and it later split.

In the mid-sixties there was a rapid polarization of the youth movement based in the universities.

The works of Marx and Lenin were translated during this period, as also were the works of Stalin and Mao. The student movement was completely isolated from the workers' movement and the rest of the masses.

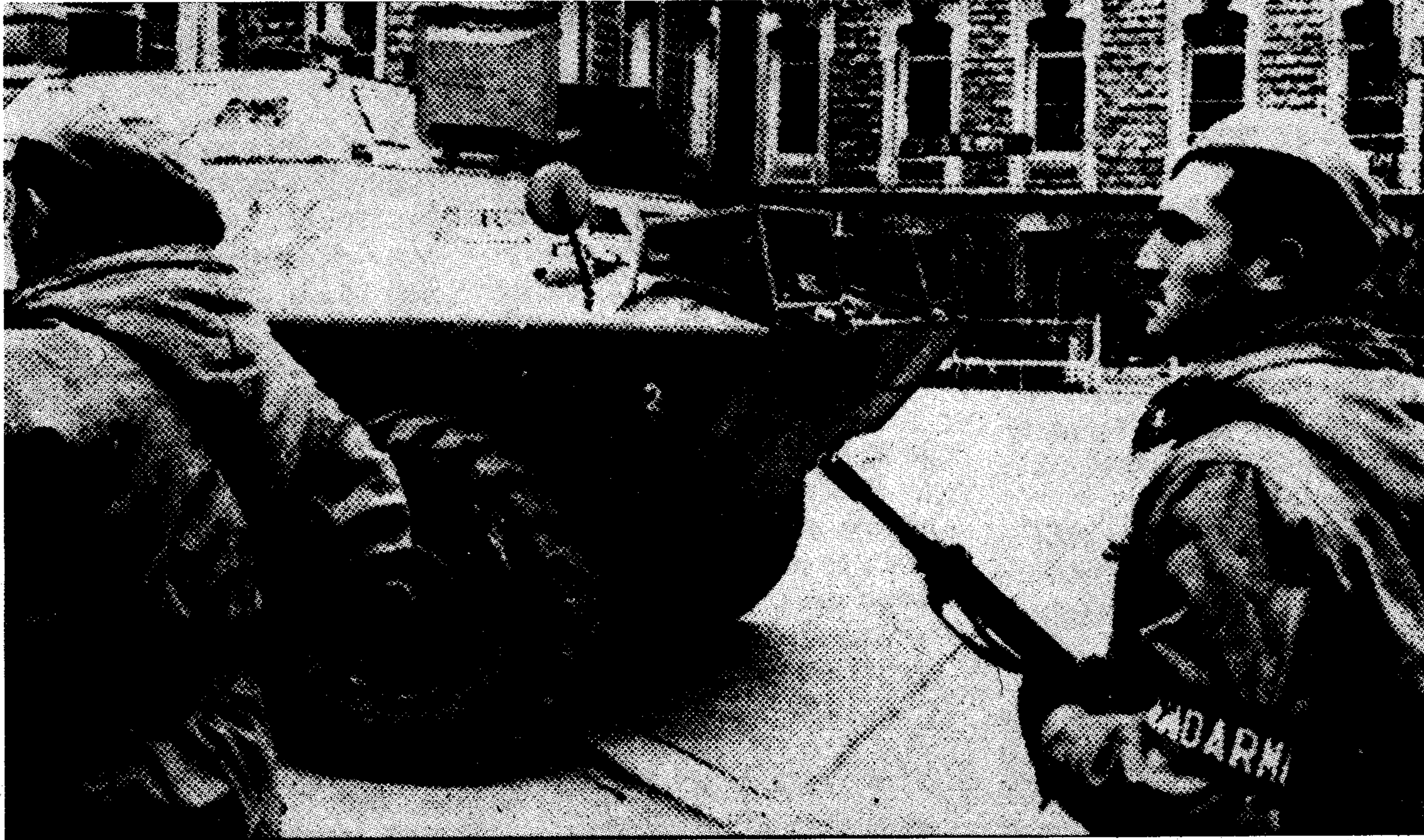
Regroupments

Discussion was generally pitched at an academic level and many splits and regroupments resulted from these debates.

Even at this level, however, the strength of Marxist theory, albeit in its Stalinist form, proved sufficient to draw students away from the TIP and petty-bourgeois "You" movement to groups which adopted variations of the Stalinist theory of a revolution to be accomplished in "stages"—first 'democratic' capitalism, then at some point, socialism.

From the end of the sixties and up to the present these groups have been the large political organisations on the left outside the Communist Party, ('Revolutionary Youth', 'People's Liberation', 'Liberation', etc).

In the politics of these movements, empirical impressions were brought together from the Russian, Chinese and Cuban



Troops on the streets in Turkey

revolutions, as seen from limited perspectives of Stalinism and petty-bourgeois Castroism rather than from the viewpoint of the independent working class.

This involved the imposition of a necessary stage of the 'National Democratic Revolution' to be achieved before the proletarian revolution, an idea drawn from Stalinism—and which Stalin in turn derived from the Mensheviks who on that very basis had argued against the October 1917 revolution in Russia.

The major form of organisation was the guerrilla cell, a conclusion drawn from Castroism.

These organisations, although largely Stalinist in their political thought, were never controlled from Moscow or Peking.

In 1967, as a result of the rapid polarisation of the workers' movement, the trade union organisation DISK was formed.

Militant sections of the working class, mainly from the larger factories in the private

sector, finding themselves restricted and held back by the reactionary leadership of TURK-IS, joined DISK.

Strikes and occupations grew in step with DISK's expansion. From an initial membership of 10,000 in 1967, membership grew to over 300,000 in 1971 and over a million by the late seventies.

Both the pressure of the working class—which meant more resources "diverted" to social services—and the workings of the capitalist economy created insoluble problems for the Turkish bourgeoisie.

In countries such as Turkey industrial development entails a growth in imports—raw materials and machinery.

This results in trade deficits. The only productive area that can make up the deficit is

agriculture. But here there are two related problems.

Firstly, agricultural production cannot grow as fast as industrial production—requiring extensive investment and development before any returns are seen.

For this reason the capitalist looks to industry for a quicker profit.

Crises

The resulting failure to develop agriculture means that increasingly agricultural exports fail to finance industrial imports and industrial development falters as financial crises follow.

In this context, it became imperative for the bourgeois government of Demirel to inflict a defeat on the workers' move-

ment and to this end DISK was abolished.

On the 15-16 July 1970 the workers of Istanbul rebelled against this move by the government.

For two days, 150,000 workers took to the streets in defiance of army tanks, and in the face of this the government retreated.

Confusion in the ranks of the ruling class about what to do next was covered by the introduction of martial law for three months in Istanbul.

But the strikes and occupations continued, and it was this response by the working class to the economic and political crisis that convinced the generals to take power.

The coup of 12 March 1971 did not dissolve Parliament. Instead it appointed a Prime

ITALIAN 'COMMUNISTS' WOO BOSSES' LEADERS

New!

Socialist Press Pamphlet containing analysis of the military coup by the Bolivian generals.



Price 32p incl. p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

The Italian Communist Party is reeling.

Having been, in the last few weeks, outmanoeuvred by the capitalists of the Christian Democratic Party in the formation of a new centre-left coalition, and humiliated by the defeat of the Fiat strike, the CP leaders are desperately searching for a new tack.

Of course, as CP General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer said in the Central Committee at the beginning of November, the overall policy of the leadership—far from socialism—is still to establish a "historic compromise" with the capitalist class.

Berlinguer issued an appeal for "unity" from the Central Committee to that traditional Stalinist category "democratic, progressive and catholic forces". But there are always tactical variations for the CP en route to this reactionary goal.

And Berlinguer, who is per-

manently in fear of total exposure in the eyes of the CP's supporters, is always ringing the changes.

"Opposition"

Under Andreotti's reactionary Christian Democratic government up to mid-1979, the CP adopted a policy of "benevolent abstention" in Parliament to keep the government in office.

Then the CP went into "opposition", and remained so until Cossiga's government was defeated over its economic policy two months ago.

Now, with Christian Democrat Forlani as prime minister, the CP has decided to adopt a stance of "conditional opposition". It will reserve its judgement until it sees the nature of Forlani's economic policies.

But even within that framework there are variations—and they mostly concern the

attitude of the CP to Forlani's main coalition partner, the Socialist Party.

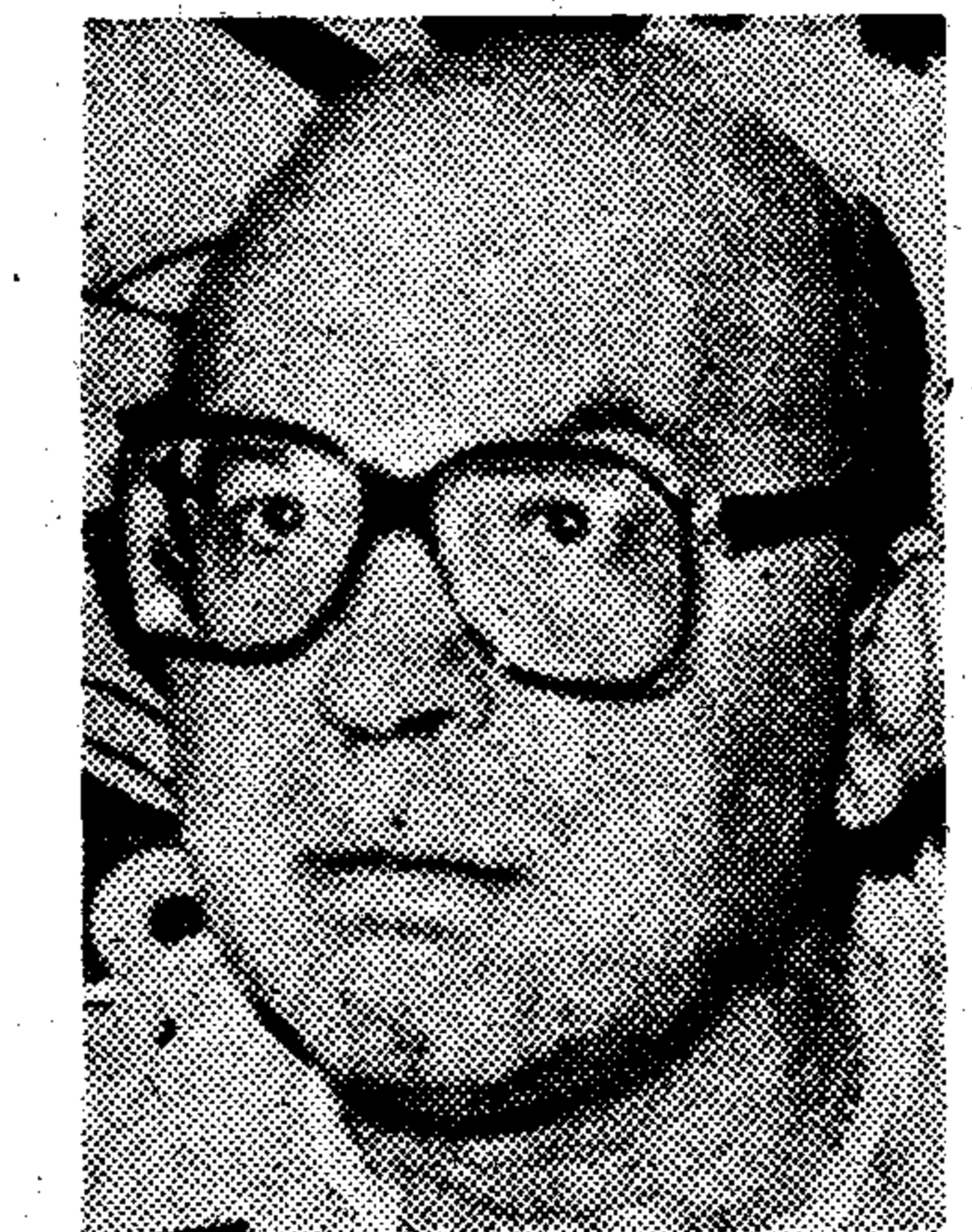
A few months ago Berlinguer even playfully floated the idea of a CP-SP government along the lines of the many such liaisons in Italian municipal governments.

Then, after SP leader Bettino Craxi shifted his party sharply to the right, Berlinguer aimed to cash in on this and attract some dissident Socialists by claiming on October 23 that the SP "is no longer a party of the workers' movement".

Now, however, the Central Committee has decided as one of its priorities that there have to be discussions and "the political objective of an amelioration of relations with the Socialist Party".

There is no knowing in which direction the Italian CP will lean next.

But we can be sure it certainly won't be in the direction of providing an independent policy



Craxi

for the working class against the offensive of the Italian bourgeoisie.

The CP's twists, turns and reversals are all directed towards finding some organisational way of fulfilling their policy of alliance with the capitalist class.

STALINISTS 'STAR' ROLE IN BL BETRAYAL

By Tony Richardson

The *Morning Star*, daily paper of the Communist Party, has played a key role in the struggles against the Thatcher government.

Its role has been not to strengthen and develop these struggles but to assist those who have sabotaged that struggle.

The most recent example of such a betrayal has been the *Star's* coverage of the sell-out of the pay fight at British Leyland.

Seeking only to preserve the Communist Party's hand-in-glove collaboration with the official trade union leaders and convenors the *Star* has supported the bureaucrats in every twist and turn.

At first—when even TGWU chief negotiator Grenville Hawley was denouncing Edwardes' 6.8% "final" offer, the *Star* supported the call for strike action and welcomed the 2-1 vote by mass meetings.

But as the bureaucracy, fearing a head-on confrontation with Edwardes that could form the centrepiece of mass struggles against the Tories, moved in to stop a strike, the *Star* was ready and eager to help them.

As they forced through a vote to call off the strike the bureaucrats claimed it had only been "postponed" to talk about bonuses.

In fact BL was offering only the same measly £1.25 for 12 weeks—a grand total of £15 per worker before tax—which had been previously rejected. Every BL worker knows that the bonus scheme is a fraud.

But the *Star*, keen to lend a hand, told a very different story:

"This is understood to be new money, in contradiction to the firm's claim that it had no extra money."

And to foster the idea that a concession had been made, the *Star* even quoted some anonymous shop steward as saying:



Mass meeting at Cowley Assembly Plant

"This meagre concession [!] was made by the company because of the threat of action."

As the senior stewards' conference voted on Wednesday November 12 to recommend calling off the strike, the *Star* refrained from any attempt to expose the undemocratic nature of that gathering. In reality the TGWU, representing 80% of BL manual workers, has only 35 out of over 200 senior stewards—while dozens of craft union "convenors" have a vote while representing less than 100 members!

UCATT, for instance, has only 37 members in BL, but has 3 "convenors" and a representative on the Joint Negotiating Committee!

Though the *Morning Star* reported resolutions from the

Cowley Assembly Plant condemning such gerrymandering, the Communist Party itself took up no fight for democratic procedures.

As mass meetings were held, those convenors who opposed the sell-out vote by the senior stewards conference secured majority votes for strike action. In Cowley Assembly Plant the majority was increased with only 7 out of 4,500 voting against a strike!

But with some convenors toeing the bureaucratic line, some plants swung against action.

The spotlight focussed on Longbridge—where plant convenor Jack Adams is a leading Communist Party member.

Adams fought tooth and nail not for a strike, but for the

senior stewards' sell-out proposal.

He won support for this policy on the works committee and on November 19 put it before the Longbridge Joint Shop Stewards Committee—only to be voted down 180-140 by workers demanding strike action.

How did the *Morning Star* cover this? They carried an interview with Cowley Assembly Plant convenor Bob Fryer, and tactfully admitted:

"The vote of the giant Longbridge plant which will be taken that day (Tuesday) is decisive."

The fact that Adams was opposed to a strike found no mention. On the morning of the vital mass meeting the *Star* reported that some votes had shifted against strike action—but added:

"But the 15,000 Longbridge workers could easily swing the vote."

Indeed this proved to be the case. Led by a Communist Party member following CP policy, they "swung the vote" against a strike!

The *Star* gave a hint of Adams' position when it admitted that:

"Senior shop stewards are to meet later today. A majority of them are reluctantly backing the offer."

Sell-out

Translated from Stalinist double-talk into plain language, a majority of unrepresentative convenors were enthusiastically backing a major sell-out.

In the event Adams fought tooth and nail against a strike vote in defiance of the 180-140 decision of the Longbridge stewards. He claimed he was simply presenting the position of the senior stewards—but stressed that if the vote was for action "we will be on our own" and that workers should "only vote for a strike if you are sure you can win".

The leaflet issued by Adams' works committee put only the sell-out position of the senior stewards.

On millions of television screens workers saw the Stalinist politics of the Communist Party in action—as Adams fought to stop a strike against the Tories and JSSC chairman Chambers ruled the sell-out vote carried as soon as the hands went up—despite the fact that it was obviously a close vote (and, according to BBC cameras, a majority going the other way!).

What did the *Star* have to say? It was the only national daily paper that did not report the Longbridge vote!

It interviewed Adams—but only on the outcome of the senior stewards' decision to call

off the strike. Having personally ensured that no action would take place, Adams felt able to cynically praise the workforce for the fact that:

"In spite of pressure from every direction [sic!] one third of the workforce had been prepared to take strike action for the original claim."

Now, declares Adams, there is:

"a great determination to change the way we do business with the company to ensure that this year is the last our members have to face this kind of settlement."

In Longbridge, as workers count the cost of this betrayal—with Tory rent increases, tax increases and inflation already eating into their meagre pay packets—there must be developed a determination to get rid of those leaders like Adams who do the company's business for them.

Less than a year after his fellow Stalinist Derek Robinson was victimised by Edwardes, Adams is in the front line of saving Edwardes' bacon and the Tory government. And the *Star* helps spread confusion.

Hardly surprising, therefore, that this week the *Star* reported that once again it is in financial crisis, and losing readers. It is going up to 20p from January—and can therefore be expected to lose still more readers.

Socialist Press welcomes this crisis of a paper which is financially supported principally by the labour bureaucrats whose betrayals it systematically covers up.

Forward to the monthly *Morning Star*.

Labour women discuss

About 200 women gathered for Saturday's conference on "Organise for Women's Rights in the Labour Party" called by Women's Fightback.

The size of the conference was an indication that women are beginning to organise within the Labour Party, reviving moribund women's sections, and fighting against the sexism of the leadership.

A large range of issues were discussed in eight separate subject-based workshops, including Childcare, Health, Violence and Sexual Politics and Housing and Social Security.

The time allowed for report-backs to the plenary session was so short that it was impossible to get any but the sketchiest idea of what was discussed in the other workshops.

In fact three groups were unable to report back at all.

The emphasis on drafting policy also made it hard to tackle the problem of how to fight for action to bring down the Tories or to take up the record of Labour's leaders both in government and in opposition.

This was highlighted by the total absence of any discussion about the republican hunger strikers and the women in Armagh Gaol—despite the fact that one workshop actually talked about prison conditions in Britain.

This was remedied by a spirited speech in solidarity with the republican prisoners from a *Socialist Challenge* supporter—which had to come from the floor, against opposition from the chair.

Although it marked a useful beginning to fight for women's rights in the Labour Party, this conference will have to be built upon if anything tangible is going to be achieved.

AHA kidnaps dying cancer patients

St Benedict's finally closes after year-long fight

'THANKS FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE'

Front page of the October issue of 'Health Services', journal of COHSE reports closure of St. Benedict's. Yet COHSE leaders made no call for strike action to prevent its closure.

On Friday 14 November two private ambulances crossed the picket line at St. Columba's Hospital, London, and removed three terminally ill cancer patients, injuring a NUPE hospital worker in the process.

This act has proved beyond doubt that the administrators of Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster AHA are not capable of running any part of the Health Service.

The team of administrators, led by Mr Terry Hunt, have sunk to unbelievable depths in their attempts to close this small hospital.

They have sacked a consultant at the hospital for publicly declaring that the patients were too ill to be moved; they have interfered with patients' personal belongings; and they have bundled seriously ill patients into mini-cabs against their will.

Finally, they organised Friday's raid in the full knowledge that the neighbouring Camden and Islington AHA have agreed in principle to take over the running of the hospital.

Activists among the staff and local trades unionists have fought the closure every inch of the way, but the handful of pickets present on Friday were unable to prevent the raid.

The ambulances, owned by 'Medi-Link', were escorted

through the picket line by the administrators and a large number of police were held in reserve.

Tom Wilkie, a chef at the hospital, was knocked down whilst attempting to talk to one of the private ambulance drivers.

Workers at St. Charles Hospital where Bro. Wilkie is based, called a mass meeting on the following Monday and voted to take sporadic industrial action in protest at the raid. They began with a token occupation of the administrator's office.

Protest action

There is now one very seriously ill patient left at St. Columba's but supporters of the campaign have decided not to continue with the picketing but to concentrate instead on lobbying Camden AHA and organising protest action against the raid.

A mass demonstration has been called for December 10 to coincide with the next meeting of Kensington AHA at Bishop's Bridge Road, London W2 at 4.30 pm.

Two lessons can be learnt from St. Columba's. First, the psychopathic AHA bureaucrats who organised the raid must be driven out of the health service, never to return, and the administrative system which allows such insanity should be replaced by elected bodies from the hospital unions, labour movement and community

organisations.

Secondly, the treacherous isolation of the St. Columba's struggle by the official union leadership must be condemned and fought by every public sector trade unionist.

Conference

Despite huge opposition to the cuts, none of the public sector leaders issued a single call for sympathetic strike action, either at St. Columba's or during the St. Benedict's occupation.

It is only the spreading of struggles such as these which will defeat the health cuts once and for all, and the union leaders must be forced to mobilise and encourage strike action.

Camden Ambulance Station NUPE branch have called on the London Division of NUPE to organise a delegate conference to plan a strategy of action in defence of threatened hospitals and against the use of private ambulances.

This call should be taken up and supported by every health service union branch in London, so that the raids which took place at St. Benedict's and St. Columba's are never allowed to happen again at any hospital.

Fighting unemployment in Coventry

With the unemployment rate in Coventry already above the national average, Talbot management last week made their own contribution to the growing figures by announcing over 900 redundancies at their Stoke Engine Plant.

While there has been no success in stemming the growing flood of sackings, the November 29 demonstration has been a useful focus for preparing a fight back.

A city-wide "Labour and Trade Union Campaign Against Unemployment" has been formed, initially to mobilise for the Liverpool demonstration, but with the aim of continuing activity afterwards.

Affiliations

A special train with 600 places has been booked and 200 of the seats have been reserved for unemployed travelling free.

The campaign, which so far has affiliations from 35 trade union and Labour Party organisations, holds regular meetings.

It has adopted an initial policy statement which includes demands for free bus passes for the unemployed; free access to Council owned leisure facilities for the unemployed; the

Coventry

Council to provide a special day centre for the unemployed to meet and to organise, a massive expansion of the Youth Opportunities Programme with trade union rates of pay; an end to systematic overtime and for a shorter working week of 35 hours with no loss of pay; a national minimum wage of £80 per week—index-linked to inflation; early retirement on full pay; opposition to voluntary redundancy; trade unions to organise the unemployed; and the call for an early general election—to replace the Tories with a Labour government pledged to the implementation of socialist policies.

Last Friday the Campaign held a public meeting which although poorly attended with only approximately 30 in the audience showed the determination of the organisers to build a serious movement against unemployment.

Gerry Jones from Talbot Stoke outlined the way in which management were picking off the Talbot plants one by one.

The present redundancies at

Stoke were simply a prelude to a complete close-down. He stressed the role that voluntary redundancies had played and warned in particular against trying to fight for voluntary rather than compulsory ones. "We have to decide this week to fight all redundancies", he said.

Campaign

Left MP Ernie Roberts, a speaker from Liverpool LPYS and a worker from the Gardners occupation were the other platform speakers.

Another initiative against unemployment being taken locally is a campaign by four staff unions—ACTSS, AUEW/TASS, APEX and ASTMS.

This was started by the officials of these unions who then decided to call a meeting of senior representatives. Despite, in some cases, only 24 hours notice, about 40 attended representing the major industries in Coventry.

The officials put forward a proposal which amounted basic-

ally to an appeal for regional aid.

It called for the unions to make approaches to the council (at present carrying out massive cuts in the city and creating more unemployment) and to any MP, Labour or Tory, along with any other "sympathetic" characters, to lobby the government to consider the plight of Coventry.

This cross-class alliance was rejected by the meeting and the following motion proposed and passed unanimously:

"It is agreed that a committee will be formed to pursue a campaign based on working class organisations, eg manual unions, CSEU, trades council, unemployed organisations. The campaign will pursue a town meeting and demonstration to launch an ongoing programme of factory gate meetings calling for united trade union action, support for particular occupations, etc., combine organisations, industrial action in support of public employees, with a perspective of making contact nationally and inter-



Redundancies at Chrysler Stoke, 1975

nationally wherever we can."

Although this provides a strong basis for starting a campaign the problem is that the organisation of the committee at present has been left with the officials who show no intention of letting it see the light of day.

What each of these campaigns reflects is the growing anger in the city over unemployment and an increasing awareness that if nothing is

done there will be hardly any jobs left in Coventry.

Both the campaigns should pool their resources for a joint fight. The various policy statements already adopted provide the basis for a real struggle against the Tory attacks.

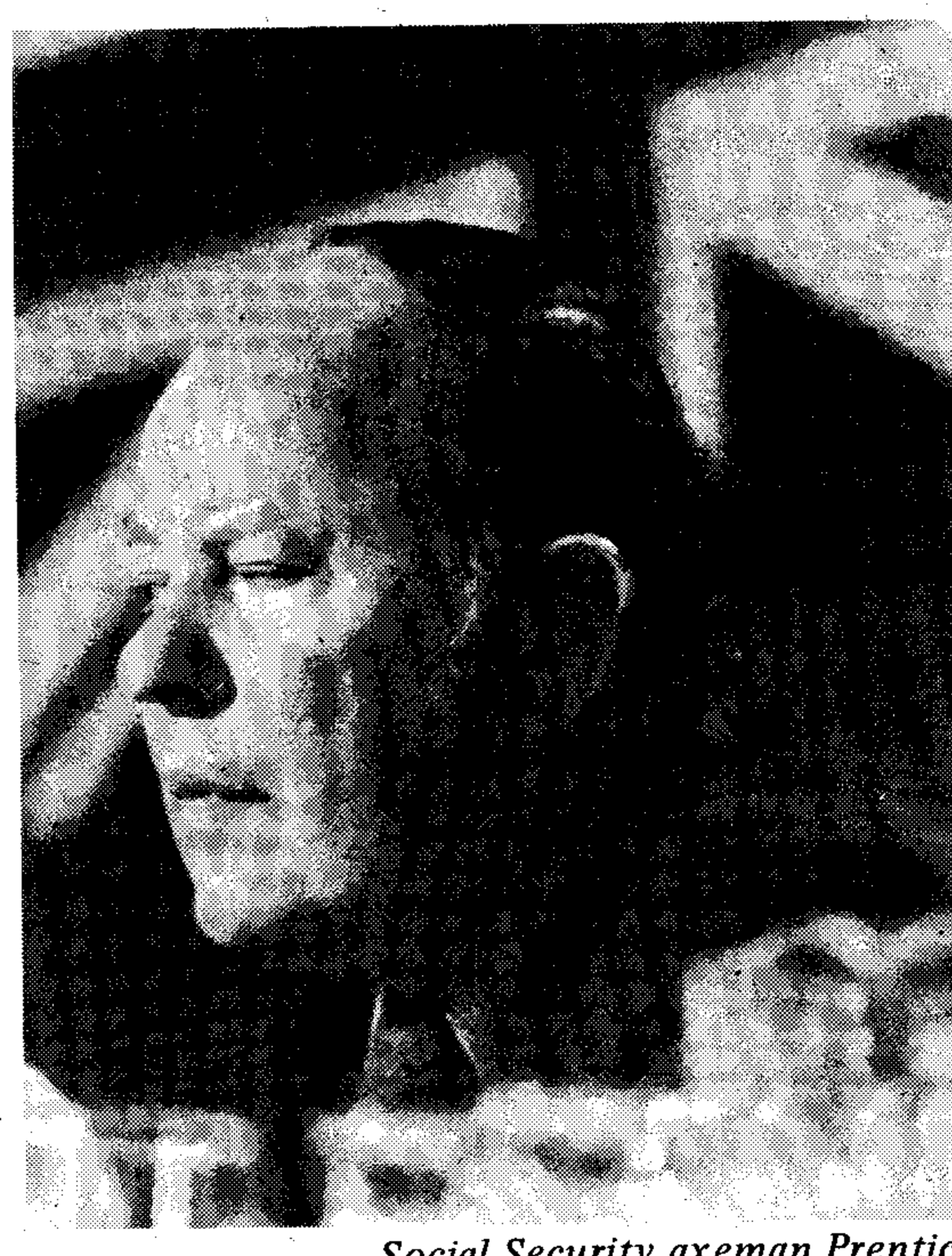
The first step must be to ensure that Coventry has a big turnout on the Liverpool demonstration.

TORIES RIP OFF THE POOR

Socialist Press looks at the new Social Security Acts



Tory Conference delegates bay for blood—yours!



Social Security axeman Prentice

This week the introduction of the Social Security No. 1 and 2 Acts coincided with the annual uprating of benefits on 24 November.

The first Social Security Bill—now the Social Security Act 1980—removed the obligation to increase pensions in line with earnings or prices whichever is greater.

There is now only a duty to increase pensions in line with prices. (Some Tory ministers want in future to disregard the prices of cigarettes and alcohol in order further to rob the pensioners).

The Social Security No. 2 Act involves major changes in the Supplementary Benefit

scheme. Much of the discretion in the system is now abolished and there are now specific regulations to cover every payment.

The Supplementary Benefits Commission has been abolished and its policy-making role has passed to government ministers.

The responsibility for guidance on interpretation of law now rests with a Chief Supplementary Benefit Officer.

Decisions on entitlement which used to be made on behalf of the Supplementary Benefits Commission will now be made by Supplementary Benefit Officers (Executive Officers in local DHSS offices) acting on behalf of the Secretary of State.

There is no right of appeal against decisions taken on behalf of the Secretary of State which relate to sponsored immigrants, maintenance payments from relatives, repayment of overpayments, the method of paying supplementary benefit and replacement of lost or stolen giro or benefit order books.

There is still a right of appeal against any other decisions made by Supplementary Benefit Officers.

However Supplementary Benefit Appeal Tribunals, which in the past had discretionary power to overrule the decisions of supplementary benefits staff, are now bound by the same detailed regulations operating in

local DHSS offices. In the past claimants were entitled to claim "exceptional needs payments" for repair and replacement of clothing. Now these payments are only made "in very exceptional circumstances".

The regulations say that these payments will not be made to cover normal wear and tear of clothing and children outgrowing clothes.

There is fall-back power to make a payment only:

"if in the opinion of a benefit officer, such a payment is the only means by which serious damage or risk to the health, safety or welfare of the assessment unit (the claimant and family) may be prevented."

The instructions should that this fall-back power should not be used indiscriminately and that the only discretion should be negative discretion.

They also state that the onus is now on the claimant to prove a need for an "exceptional needs payment" (e.g. by showing worn clothing). Previously an officer could award a payment if he or she felt it was necessary.

The amount of money saved by cutting down on these clothing grants is small—but many claimants who have lived for some time at supplementary benefit level will find it very difficult to manage as they have grown to depend on these periodic payments.

A special category of officers will be created to deal with claimants who make several requests for clothing grants and who have difficulty budgeting.

Their role will be to give advice and to make 'savings' (deductions) from the claimant's benefit (which will be a lot of help!).

This is also dangerous as many of the poor will be singled out as "problem cases".

The new legislation will also affect youth and put additional responsibility back on the family.

In the past school leavers were eligible to claim benefit at the end of the term they left school.

Now a school leaver will not be eligible to claim benefit until the end of the holiday period following his or her last term at school.

(The unemployment figures will thus be artificially reduced as school leavers will not be signing on for that period).

Occupational pensions and sick pay from work is now deducted in full from benefit, previously some of it was disregarded.

Claimants with savings of £2,000 and over are no longer entitled to supplementary benefit.

This will affect many pensioners and also workers who receive redundancy payments and lump sum payments such as life assurances.

Unfortunately, there has only been token opposition to these Acts from the unions representing social security staff, the CPSA and the SCPS.

Most opposition has come from welfare rights groups such as CPAG—who have produced a lot of material on the new legislation and informed claimants of their rights under the new system.

It is necessary to fight for strike action by the CPSA and SCPS to reverse this reactionary legislation and to demand its repeal by a future Labour government.

IRELAND: WHO ARE THE REAL CRIMINALS?

JOHN LISTER looks at the impact of the republican strike by the camp and Armagh Gaol, ...

Seven brave men are dying in the Long Kesh concentration camp in the six counties of Ireland. And women prisoners in Armagh Gaol have decided to join their hunger strike.

They are Irish republicans. They are "guilty" of struggling to liberate their country from a foreign occupying army—a struggle that has been waged for centuries.

The Tory government and the Labour leaders call them criminals.

But all kinds of people fit into the Tories' category of "criminals". The Thatcher government's new anti-union laws make it "criminal" to picket effectively, and "criminal" to defend or impose a closed shop.

It is also apparently "criminal" for Labour councillors to refuse to sell off council houses, "criminal" for them to build new houses, and "criminal" for them to refuse to carry out spending cuts. And of course anyone who occupies a factory to defend jobs is also a "criminal" under the law.

In short any serious action taken by workers against the Thatcher government is likely to wind up branded as "criminal" action—while the Tories themselves carry out spending cuts which deliberately heap misery and suffering on tens of millions of working class men, women and children, and equip themselves with nuclear weapons designed for mass murder!

But of course it is not only the Tories who have attempted to brand republican prisoners as criminals.

It was under Wilson's Labour government that the decision was taken to strip republicans of the special category status they had won in 1972.

Under chief torture minister Roy Mason the Labour leadership embarked on a sustained campaign to bludgeon the opponents of British colonial rule into submission.

Their attacks on the Irish people were part and parcel of a package of reactionary policies carried out by the Labour government at home and abroad.

Under Wilson and under Callaghan the Labourites slashed workers' living standards, scabbed on the Grunwick strike, scabbed on the firemen, scabbed on the public sector workers and paved the way for Thatcher by slashing spending on health, education and social services.

SAS thugs

Yet in the midst of these attacks they still found time and resources to step up the military repression in the six counties, to re-introduce internment (under the disguise of prolonged remand without trial for republican "suspects"), to introduce the so-called "Prevention of Terrorism" Act to terrorise Irish workers travelling in and out of Britain, and to send a gang of real criminals—the thugs of the SAS murder squads—into action to intimidate, beat and murder Irish militants.

Nobody would claim that there are no criminals at work in Ireland. There are thieves and exploiters: they draw fat profits from the labour of the working class.

There are also opponents of democracy, and wild gunmen: but these are precisely the extremist elements of the Loyalist movement, who are sponsored and militarily sup-



Rampaging British troops



ported by the British government!

Indeed it has been the opposition of these forces to democracy that brought about the historical monstrosity of a six-county Orange sectarian statelet in the North East of Ireland in the first place.

In 1911 nobody had ever heard of a six-county Ulster.

Ulster was a traditional grouping of nine counties—in which the population divided into 886,000 Protestants and 690,000 Catholics.

Five of the nine counties had a Catholic majority; and in 1913 representation at Westminster gave the advocates of Home Rule 17 MPs as against 16 Unionists.

Industries

In the remainder of Ireland there were only 250,000 Protestants compared to 3 million Catholics.

But the major industries were focussed largely in the North East of Ireland: the capitalist owners wished to retain their links with Britain and thus access to the extended markets of the British Empire.

The British capitalists in turn wanted the support of Unionist MPs in the face of the growing Labour representation in Parliament.

But as the struggle for Home Rule developed to a new intensity, the Liberals promised Home Rule—in a bid to secure the support of Irish nationalist MPs.

Once the Home Rule Bill was passed in the House of Commons in 1914 the campaign by Tories and Unionists to block Irish independence was forced to fly in the face of the niceties of Parliamentary democracy.

Bonar Law declared: "There are things stronger than parliamentary majorities."

He denounced the "tyranny of Parliament" as being worse than the tyranny of Kings.

In March 1914, the Unionist leader, rejected Home Rule. He announced he would lead armed resistance to the new law!

This was no empty rhetoric. An "Ulster Volunteer Force" was formed, with 8,000 armed men—to defy the rule of law. The UVF however drew

funds and support from the British capitalist class and "patriots" such as Rudyard Kipling. It was trained by British army officers, and set up an office at Belfast Town Hall!

These well-placed criminals and opponents of democracy did not have to rely on their own strength alone: they were able to count on the brazen support of the officers of the British army—who refused to obey orders to repress the UVF.

This combination of extra-Parliamentary struggle, armed force and army mutiny served to force the Liberal government to back down. The Home Rule Act was suspended as soon as it had been passed in September 1914.

In the wake of this retreat by the British government, frustrated republicans attempted a military onslaught on British rule in the midst of the war—the Easter Rising of 1916.

The Rising was a failure—but the wave of nationalist feeling of which it was an expression continued to develop despite repression and the execution of its leaders.

In the 1918 elections, 79 out of 105 Irish seats went to the advocates of Home Rule: 73 to Sinn Fein and six to the United Irish League.

But as the Sinn Fein MPs took steps to implement their election pledge—to boycott Westminster and set up an independent assembly in Dublin—the British imperialists who would not touch the Loyalists, without hesitation moved in to obstruct the nationalists.

Black and Tans

The notorious Black and Tans were unleashed on the Irish people to leave a trail of blood and fear across the land—while the Irish Republican Army fought back.

Faced by an escalation of the war, and the beginning of a "troops out" campaign in Britain, led by the then revolutionary Communist Party and by the Labour Party, Lloyd George changed course and offered partition as a "compromise" solution.

Home Rule would thus be granted to all of Ireland except for six of the nine counties of Ulster, in which the bulk of British capitalist holdings were

concentrated.

A treaty elaborating this arrangement was signed in December 1921—and narrowly endorsed in the Dublin Dail by 64 votes to 57.

Those republicans who fought this sell-out were quickly crushed by the combined forces of the pro-treatyites, the British army and the Loyalists.

Many of the features that today mark out the six-county sectarian statelet were quickly established. The gangsters of the UVF received the seal of approval and were made the backbone of the new Special Constabulary.

The 1921 elections saw savage intimidation of anti-Unionist candidates.

And in 1922 the Special Powers Act was brought in—allowing the police to arrest and search without warrant, denying the right to trial by jury, banning certain newspapers, and prohibiting inquests into the deaths of prisoners.

Police Terror

From the very outset, therefore, the six county statelet has rested openly on police/military terror aimed against the substantial Catholic minority.

In areas where the Loyalists were clearly in a minority gerrymandering and discriminating legislation was used to deny Catholics a voice.

The Unionist leaders went to considerable lengths to prevent Protestant workers lining up with their Catholic brothers and sisters in anti-capitalist struggles.

Large-scale non-sectarian demonstrations against unemployment in the 1930s were met by selective and brutal attacks by the RUC on Catholic ghetto areas, while Loyalist demagogues denounced the demonstrations as an IRA plot.

The Ulster Protestant League issued a statement declaring that:

"These unfortunate conditions were used as a cloak by the Communist Sinn Fein elements to attempt to start a revolution in the province. We also greatly deplore that some few of our loyal Protestant unemployed were mistreated to such an extent that they associated themselves with the enemies of their faith and principles."

And Sir John Davidson



Paisley

angrily demanded to know:

"When will the Protestant employers of Northern Ireland recognise their duty to their Protestant brothers and sisters and employ them to the exclusion of Roman Catholics? It is time they realised that whenever a Roman Catholic is brought into their employment it means one Protestant vote less."

With such conscious sectarian agitation driving a wedge between Protestant and Catholic workers, the rudimentary step towards working class unity against the employers were halted. And while the nationalist movement remained active—with periodic outbursts of military or political activity, the balance of forces remained fundamentally unchanged until the emergence of an increasingly profound economic crisis in the early 1960s.

The traditional industries of the six counties had fallen behind on a world scale. New capital investment was needed and new industries.

In 1964 the new Prime Minister Terence O'Neill began to implement a more planned economic strategy designed to attract foreign capital.

But as he did so, he was of course diluting the strength of the Protestant economic

domination and therefore also weakening their political control in the six counties.

Multi-national firms failed to follow the old established pattern of discrimination—and O'Neill even went so far as to hold talks with the government in the so-called 'Free State' in the South, and eventually embrace the ultimate Loyalist heresy—'one man, one vote'.

In opposition to these changes there emerged a new hardened current of Loyalists headed by Ian Paisley and dedicated to preserving and reinforcing sectarian divisions in the North and the privileges enjoyed by the Protestant working class.

Attacks on schools

There were vicious attacks on Catholic schools and shops, assassinations, and Loyalist marches were provocatively routed through nationalist areas. But at the same time the Catholic minority were organising to fight for their rights. The Civil Rights movement organised huge protest marches—each of which was violently attacked by RUC and 'B' Specials.

As the pacifist politics of the Civil Rights movement led simply to increased Loyalist

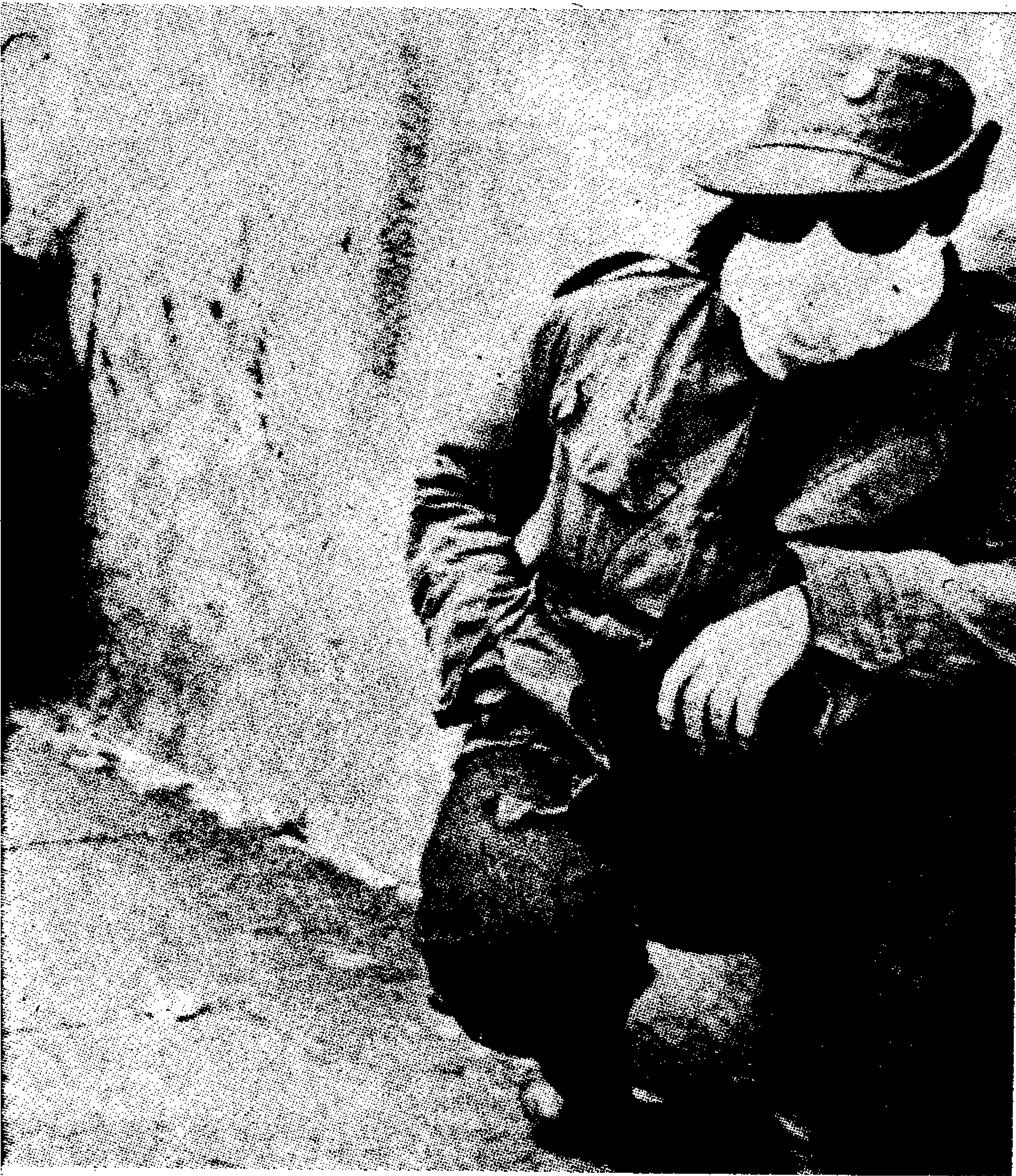
THE

at the background to the an prisoners in Long Kesh now in their fourth week.

PHOTO: Derek Speirs (IFL)



Loyalist workers march in protest at plans for Catholic housing estate



UDA gunmen on the streets

violence against the minority, so support grew for the armed nationalist resistance of the IRA.

Repress Catholics

It was only when the "Battle of the Bogside" in 1969 had proven the ability of the nationalist forces to hold their own against an onslaught of the 'B' Specials that the British Labour government dispatched troops to "restore law and order" by repressing the Catholic community.

The repression grew year by year.

In 1971, under the Tory government, came the internment of republican "suspects". It subsequently emerged that internees had been cruelly tortured.

In January 1972 came the cold blooded massacre of 13 unarmed civilians by British paratroopers—"Bloody Sunday".

In March 1972 Stormont was suspended and direct rule brought in.

Juries abolished

In July 1973 came a new spate of repressive laws embodied in Heath's Emergency Provisions Act. This abolished jury trials for republicans; placed stringent conditions on bail; admitted hearsay evidence and confessions even if these were obtained under duress; and placed the onus of proof onto the accused charged with possessing weapons.

The half-hearted efforts by Heath at establishing a non-sectarian Consultative Assembly through the Sunningdale talks collapsed within months, as the Loyalists in May 1974 staged a major strike demanding Sunningdale be scrapped.

Once again the army—so ready and eager to crush republican resistance—stood back and allowed the Loyalists to flout the authority of the "direct rulers" in London.

Intimidation

Indeed 1974 also saw the Labour government scramble through the "Prevention of Terrorism" Act—designed as an intimidation and information-gathering exercise against repub-

consistent with the recognition of the republican prisoners as political prisoners, jailed for their role in the war against British imperialism.

And if their tactics in pursuing these demands seem self-destructive, it is worth considering what other options are open to prisoners to vent their anger and express their refusal to capitulate to imperialism.

Should we expect them simply to submit to brutality, to attempts to brand them as common criminals, to the very forces they have fought to drive out of their country?

The prisoners have a right to the solidarity of the British labour movement in their struggle. It is after all our ruling class that is repressing them and the Irish people as a whole—in our name.

And of course this same ruling class is also oppressing us as workers in Britain. We should be shoulder to shoulder with the Irish militants in the battle to defeat a common enemy—the British capitalist class.

Little support

But what solidarity have the Irish prisoners received? Until the hunger strikes were announced there was next to no support from any section of the British labour movement.

A Sinn Fein national demonstration in support of the Long Kesh prisoners last year revealed a vivid contrast between the readiness of trade union and Labour leaders to denounce imperialism in distant parts of the world, and their refusal to attack the barbaric behaviour of their own ruling class in Ireland.

Chile Solidarity

Two weeks before the Irish demonstration, some 25,000 socialists and trade unionists, headed by almost the whole TGWU leadership and leading figures from the Communist and Labour Parties joined a Chile Solidarity Campaign demonstration.

Yet the demonstration to support the heroic "blanket" protest at Long Kesh was attended by a mere 600 people—with not a single Labour MP or union official in sight.

All of a sudden, however, the Hunger Strike has drawn forth a list of signatures to a petition endorsing the prisoners' five demands.

Tony Benn, Lawrence Daly (NUM), Alan Sapper (ACTT), Bob Wright (AUEW), and Ron Todd (TGWU) have added their names—along with Communist Party members Mick McGahey (NUM), Ron Halverson (AUEW Executive), Kevin Halpin

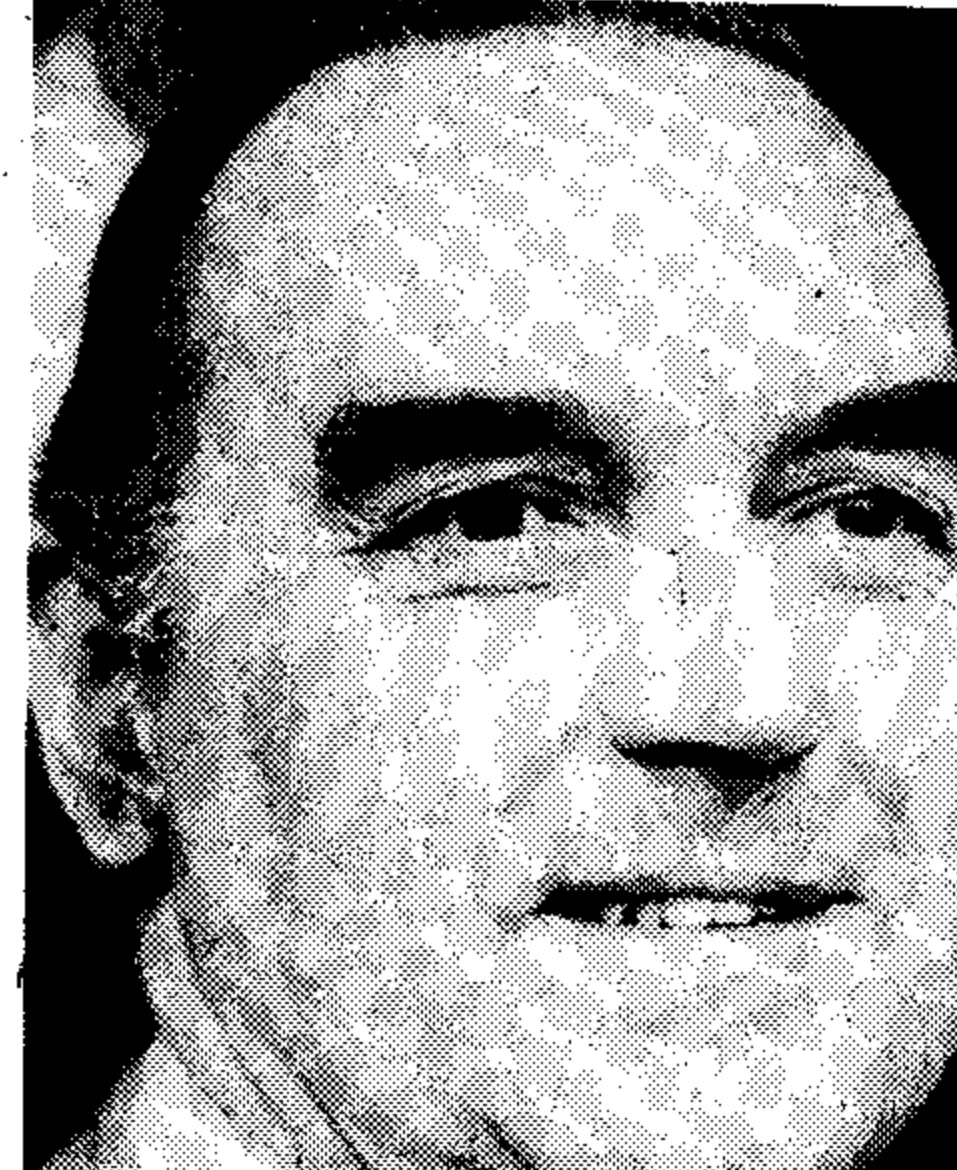
(LCDTU) and CP General Secretary Gordon McLennan.

We should welcome the growth of support for the prisoners' fight: but the prisoners have been fighting now for PoW status for four years! Where have these big names been during that time?

Maybe now they feel that the likely death of Irish prisoners on hunger strike is something they would prefer not to have on their consciences: but why have they not lifted a finger up till now to campaign for solidarity with the Irish liberation struggle?

Why did they not mobilise support for the November 15 national demonstration on Ireland—which was attended by only 2,000 people and almost entirely bare of trade union and Labour Party banners.

If Tony Benn, Lawrence Daly and Ron Todd had taken up a fight three years, two years or even one year ago to raise the issue of Ireland in the labour movement, there is a chance that a substantial 'troops out' current could have been created—and seven brave men might not be dying in Long Kesh.



Mason

Indeed the response from constituency delegates at this year's Labour Party conference indicates that there is potential rank and file support for a policy of withdrawing British troops from Ireland and self-determination for the Irish people.

Yet most union leaders and right wing MPs—seeking only piecemeal reforms from the British capitalist class—stand four-square alongside the imperialists in their repression of the Irish working class.

There is an effective gag on discussing Ireland in the labour

movement—most vividly expressed in the TUC decision to disaffiliate Thameside Trades Council for the "crime" of calling a conference on Ireland!

Those who raise the demands for troops out and oppose imperialist repression in Ireland can find themselves witch-hunted not only by right wing bureaucrats and Labourites—but even by the Communist Party, whose "peaceful road to socialism" leads its members to demand only a 'Bill of Rights' and "A Better Life for All" within the sectarian Orange statelet!

Wide support

The fight to defend and support the hunger strikers requires that British socialists build wide support in the working class—and thus fight all of those elements that effectively side with British imperialism.

The Irish republican prisoners are "guilty" only of taking up arms to defend themselves and the Catholic minority against criminals—against the sectarian violence of the Loyalists and the uniformed thugs of the British army, RUC and UDR.

Theirs is a political struggle, a war of liberation—dealt with by imperialism in political and military fashion. The republican prisoners are prisoners of war. Their demand for appropriate status is entirely legitimate.

The Irish people have the right to fight, arms in hand, to drive the foreign army of British imperialism out of their country.

And the British working class has a duty, an obligation, to support them in this task—by any and every means at our disposal

Wrong tactics

We may feel—as *Socialist Press* has repeatedly argued—that the tactics employed and the political programme embraced by the republican movement are fundamentally mistaken, and even counter-productive, in that they head away from the mobilisation of the masses against imperialism.

We are not obliged therefore to give uncritical support to every action: but we are obliged unconditionally to defend the republican movement against the repression of British imperialism.

Socialist Press and the Workers Socialist League fight for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland to allow the Irish people the basic right of self determination.

In this fight we have a particular obligation to those men and women who are placing their very lives on the line. Around the hunger strike we must build a campaign of mass solidarity.

Emergency resolutions

This means turning into the trade union and labour movement in the next few weeks, lobbying and raising emergency resolutions of support for the hunger strikers.

The Labour Party NEC, formally pledged to support the prisoners' five demands, must be called upon to mount a campaign. Todd, McGahey, Daly and Wright as well as Benn must be called upon to come out into the open and fight to mobilise trade union support.

In the next two weeks maximum delegations must be built to participate in the national demonstration in London on December 7.

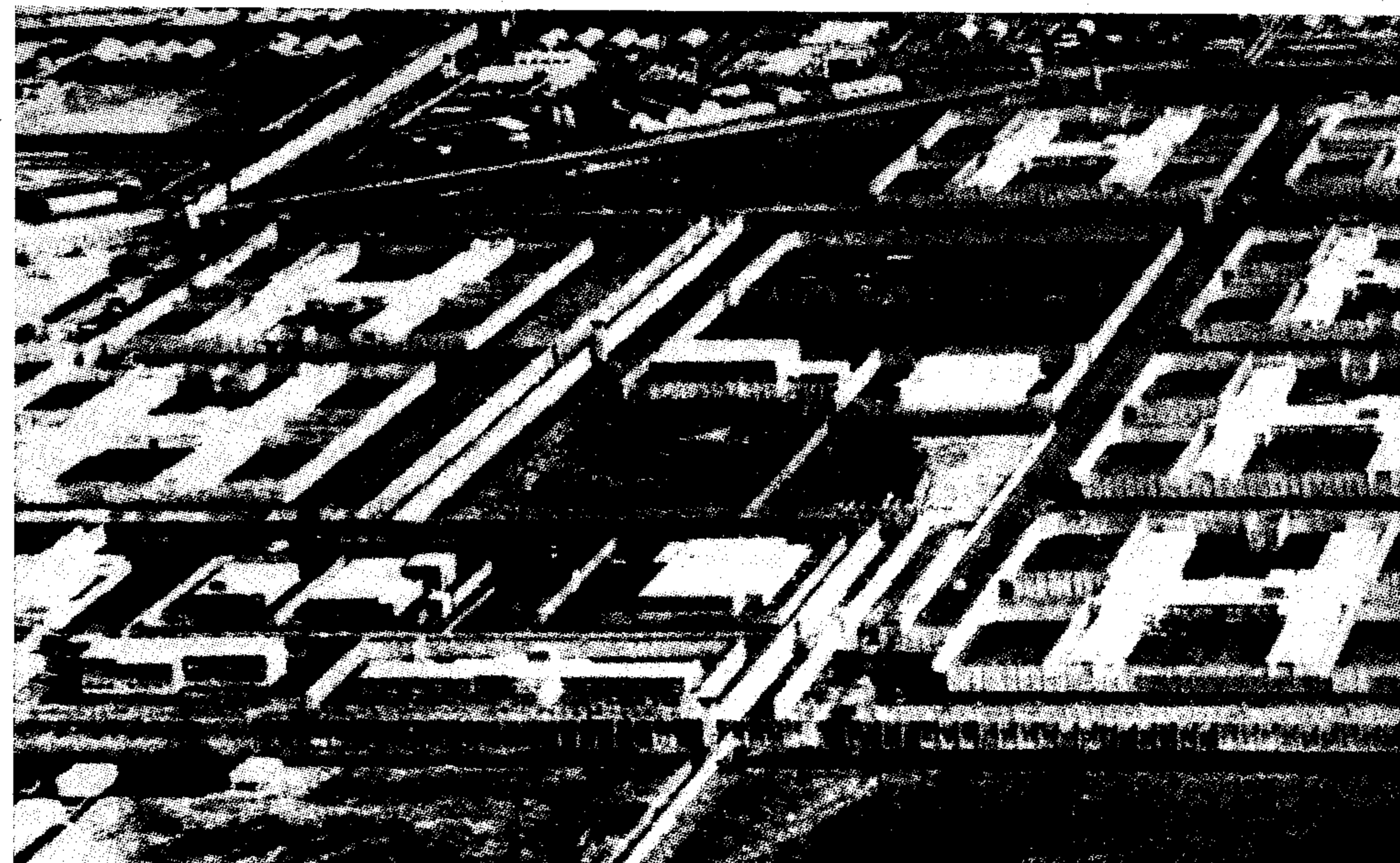
And in building for this demonstration we must look also towards the possibility of mobilising solidarity strike action to support the hunger strikers.

The situation doesn't give us a lot of time to make up for decades of silence and collaboration on Ireland in the British labour movement. The hunger strikers could be dead by Christmas.

It is up to us to develop the anti-Tory, anti-war feeling that is emerging now in sections of the workers' movement and link this to the fight for troops out of Ireland.

If we don't do this, then we too play a role in leaving the hunger strikers to die.

And if that sorry event is allowed to come about, it will be seven more martyrs to the Irish struggle—while the criminals remain alive!



The 'H' Blocks of Long Kesh



PHOTO: Eamonn O'Dwyer (IFL/Report)

Sinn Fein marchers

Answer Reagan with a Labour Party!

We reprint below an article from the current edition of 'Labor News'. The article has been shortened for reasons of space.

The historic shattering defeat for the Democratic Party and the election of a Reagan regime along with the most reactionary right-wing Senate in over thirty years has solved nothing for capitalism.

In fact, Regan won with only 25% of the vote and 48% of eligible voters not even bothering to vote. Millions of workers abstained from the election because they believed they had nothing to vote for, with massive unemployment, high inflation rates and an increasing interest rate being the shared policies of both the Democrats and Republicans.

On the day of the election it was reported by CBS that Bush, on going to the polls to vote, said "We got in the White House like a burglar."

This exemplifies the whole charade of the election. The two capitalist parties were provided with over 60 million tax dollars to harangue the voters on TV, radio and in the newspapers, while socialist candidates and others such as the Citizens Party were faced with a news media blackout.

Rigged election

The Democrats publicly admitted spending nearly a million dollars to keep Anderson, along with other third party candidates, off the ballot.

Additional amounts were spent by the religious right-wing in attacking liberal Democrats and the social programmes.

In short, the working class was faced in many ways with a rigged election.

The major capitalists however have begun a major shift in their strategy toward the working class in this country and the needs of imperialism internationally.

They have funnelled tens of millions of dollars into the coffers of the most reactionary witch-hunters, bible-toting racists and war mongers since the McCarthy period in the 1950s.

These proto-fascists such as preacher Falwell, Weyrich of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress and others seek to whip up a right-wing religious jihad against the unions, minorities and the deformed workers states.

Their immediate goals during the election was not only to elect Reagan but to "knock off" liberal senators such as McGovern, Church and Birch Bayh.

Attacks

The voter abstention and the turn against Carter made them even more successful than they thought they would be, with the removal of these and others to allow Republican control of the Senate for the first time in decades.

The election victory of

Reagan and his reactionary supporters now means a qualitative step-up in the attacks against the working class. These newly elected right-wing senators have made careers of organising for causes such as the open shop, against women's rights, cutbacks in social programmes and for a hard line against the Soviet Union, its supporters and the national liberation struggles of the underdeveloped countries.

They will now move ahead to implement their policies with a vengeance. So confident are they of the backing that they have from their masters that they even attacked Bush a day after the election for being too "liberal". This for a man who headed the CIA gangsters around the world for years.

Wreckage

The entire strategy of most of the trade union movement and its leaders in this election has been left a wreckage.

Their whole campaign to vote for Carter to stop Reagan has backfired with the loss of nearly every "friend of labour" in the senate and others such as congressman Frank Thomson of New Jersey upon whom trade union bureaucrats counted to introduce legislation or support union-sponsored legislation.

In many ways the support for Carter and the Democrats by the unions has helped bring the election victory of Reagan.

The AFL-CIO, UAW, ILWU and other unions provided no alternative to the anti-labour policies of the Democrats. The stupidity of attempting to get laid off auto workers and millions of other workers to vote for a government that helped to put them there should have been obvious to the trade union bureaucracy but their continued defence of the needs of capitalism leaves them with no other choice.

No alternative

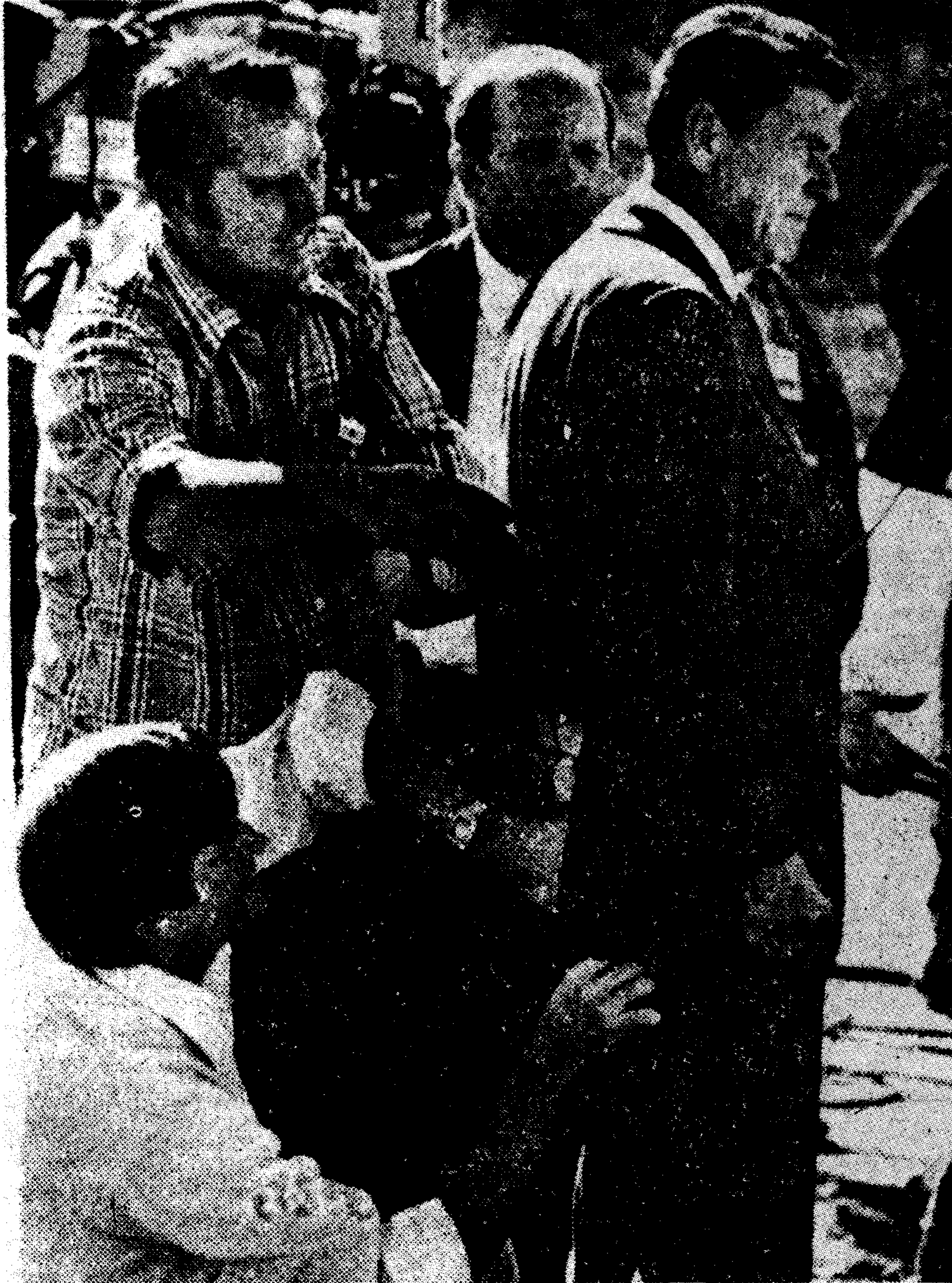
Their refusal to support a labour party movement or even for the "lefts" like Wimpinger to use the apparatus of the million member IAM to support Commoner of the Citizens Party has left them with no political alternative to present to their members.

As a result of this political backwardness, the trade unions now have one of the most right wing Senates and Congresses ever to contend with.

Frank Fitzsimmons, Teamsters President, must also be singled out for special condemnation.

Fitz was one of the few trade union officials who actually supported Reagan, hoping to insure an amicable relationship between mob elements and the Republican government.

Probably the first assault against the trade union movement will be for the destruction of the Davis Bacon law. This



Aides wind up Reagan ready for action



Union bulletins support Carter campaign

act provides for a union prevailing wage for construction workers throughout the country.

Open shop supporter Senator Orrin Hatch, who is now the head of the Senate Labour and Human Resources committee, has helped organise an entire national movement to kick out union shops and remove the Davis-Bacon Act. Now he is in a perfect position to implement his programme.

The effect of this to union construction labour would be devastating with probably the loss of 25% of the membership throughout the country.

Entire union officials in states like Utah and others are

dependent on Davis-Bacon to protect union jobs and these would be immediately threatened by the end of Davis-Bacon.

In addition, the 88 billion dollar Synergy (synthetic fuels) programme will now be made "union free". Carter in a deal with the trade union bureaucracy prior to the election appointed AFL-CIO head Kirkland to the board of this government corporation, but now with the new regime "all deals are off".

Reagan's probable new cabinet members like George Schultz, vice-president of Bechtel Construction Company and formerly with the Nixon administration, have a direct interest in completely busting

the construction unions among others, and the Synergy programme will be a major target to make non-union.

The past strategy of the trade union bureaucracy has been to call on workers to "write letters to congress" and other pressure tactics on the Democrats for "reforms".

Labour haters

The idiocy is now even more apparent with Orrin Hatch and the rest of the open labour haters in control of the Senate.

The only way that the unions will stop the destruction of Davis-Bacon and other pro-labour measures will be through mass mobilisation of the membership, building up to

general strike action nationally, if they are to save their unions.

This, of course, terrifies the Kirklands and others who have made a career of open collaboration with the capitalists and the suppression of democratic rights within the unions, along with preventing mass worker action to defend labour.

Now, in our view, it is either "do or die". The unions will be destroyed unless their tactics and political strategy changes.

The first task for the Reagan gang will be to "get the house in order". This will mean a freeze on all federal hiring with the exception of defence; and massive cuts in social programmes and education, along with the destruction of OSHA and other labour protective measures.

Interest rates

The bankers at the same time seek to put value back into the dollar by another round of major increases in the interest rates.

Only two days after the election the prime rate rose a full 1% to 15½%, thereby making the cost of a house or even a car completely out of reach for millions of American workers.

This will be especially devastating to the auto industry, which has jacked up the price on its new models by thousands of dollars in the last year.

Reagan's answer to this will be to convert plants to war production with an increase in the military budget from between 10 and 20 billion dollars.

Reagan's pro-war advisors are already urging a major programme to build bomb shelters "for protection against nuclear war" and the capitalist media are encouraging the view that there will be a nuclear war and the US must get ready for it.

The major problem that Reagan and the banks have in implementing these policies is the strength of the international working class and that major confrontations between the classes will explode in the United States in the coming four years, whether Reagan is ready for them or not.

Class battles

In the United States, major class battles are on the agenda. Postal workers are now being told that they will lose their cost of living clause next year when their contract expires and in all likelihood there will be a major national strike that Reagan will attempt to bust.

The coal miners also face increasing attacks and their demands will also mean a national strike in a bitter confrontation with the union busters.

The Wall Street Journal is already reporting that the utilities and steel companies are stockpiling coal and are preparing now for a long battle with the miners in 1981.

The political battle that millions of trade unionists, blacks, women, youth and retired workers will face in the coming four years requires the construction of a revolutionary Trotskyist party that can defend and lead the working class politically and the Socialist League aims to construct that party.

LABOR NEWS
Monthly paper of the Socialist League (Democratic Centralist), US Trotskyist group in sympathy with the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.
Single copies available (32p post free) from WSL BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

WOMEN'S JOBS UNDER ATTACK

Mary-Ann Todd looks at the Scottish TUC Women's Conference

The Scottish Women's TUC met last week in Stirling. 153 delegates representing 28 unions and 16 trades councils gathered to discuss in the main the effects of Tory policies on women's jobs.

Mr Jimmy Morrell, President

of the Scots TUC said, "reversal of women's rights is one U-turn this government is prepared to see."

The conference showed clearly that Tory policies were especially hitting those sectors and industries where most women workers had been traditionally employed.

The statistics on job loss

were appalling in areas like sales and distribution where 24,000 jobs were lost last year.

In textiles, seven out of ten women have lost their jobs—jobs are disappearing at the rate of 10,000 a month!

By 1984 half a million jobs in textiles will be lost.

In local government, some 180,000 jobs are expected to go

over the next four years.

Faced with such decimation of women's right to work, what measures did this so-called 'radical', angry conference come up with to defeat the Tories?

Did they consider they themselves should adopt a U-turn in policies—bearing in mind that previous policies adopted hadn't stopped a single factory from closing, or saved a single job?

Was there a concerted call for all-out strike action to bring down the Tories so that by 1984 half a million jobs will not be lost in the textile industry and our public services will be maintained and extended to provide the necessary facilities to enable women to play a full and equal role?

No! That wasn't the "fighting call" that came from this supposedly radical and militant conference!

Though it resolved to resist any offensive which asserts that a woman's place is in the home, the Tory government can rest assured that the resistance coming from the Scottish Women's TUC will be so much hot air laced with divisive, nationalist calls for import controls.

Women's unemployment in Scotland has topped 11% in the West of Scotland, a so-called 'Special Development Area'.

Well over 77,000 women are now registered unemployed in Scotland.

And that figure does not include some 8,000 young women school leavers, nor the thousands of married women who have lost their jobs and see no point in signing on.

The situation needs a firm, clear lead and direction both on how to defend existing jobs and on how to organise the unemployed to demand jobs.

It needs policies such as occupation linked to national strike action as soon as redundancies are announced.

The Liverpool dockers successfully defended jobs with the threat of this tactic.

Factories, hospitals, schools threatened with closure should be occupied like Meccano, Gardners, St. Benedicts and the workers should be given unqualified support from the unions.

This means not only full strike pay but also full supporting strike action—so that occupations are not left isolated to defend themselves but their struggle is linked to the fight to defend all jobs in the industry or service involved.

Workers control

Workers should also demand the opening of the company accounts to elected trade union committees to see for themselves how firms take and misuse the profits from their labour and if they see it is bankrupt, they should place it under workers' control and demand its full nationalisation

without compensation.

Women workers should demand work sharing on full pay for all workers and fight anyone who argues for positive discrimination on redundancies.

We don't want any worker to lose their job—male or female.

Nor do we want workers in other countries to lose their jobs—as the Scots Women's TUC would like to see as they call for import controls to help British employers sort out their problems.

There is undoubted hatred from Scotland's 400,000 women trade unionists to Tory policies.

This hostility is especially bitter as Scotland universally swung to the left in the last election.

Their anger should have been channelled by the Scots Women's TUC towards a fight for mass action to bring down the Tories this winter.

But, unfortunately—like their bureaucratic counterparts in the rest of Britain—for all their rhetoric, that is the last thing they want.

NEXT WEEK
Special discussion
article on
Violence against women



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Why I joined WSL

Dear Comrades,
I am writing this letter to you via Leicester because I see a vivid necessity in applying to join the Workers Socialist League.

My application is in the absence of any other left group with an equal programme either of political directive or practical involvement.

I have made an estimation of the current situation in this country and my conclusion is one of neither elation nor despondency.

At one time I had considered writing to all left groups and parties with the intention of seeking common ground and finding a realistic common approach. But it is obvious that the direction of many of these left groups is one way, and that is downward.

On the contrary, the WSL's physical, legal, political and propaganda attacks by sexist youth, fascist organisations, the police and the forces of the right generally we have called for a mass demonstration in Manchester on February 21.

Specifically the situation is this:

1) From reports coming into many male gay and lesbian publications, switchboards, gay centres and gay groups including informal reports in bars and clubs the level and severity of street attacks has risen considerably over the past six months. As a result of the political and economic conditions we appear to be moving into an 'open season' period.

2) Police prosecutions of gay men for carrying weapons have increased.

3) Though we have little evidence as yet (because of the considerable caution and secrecy involved) we have every

Yours fraternally
C.K.
Leicester

READERS WRITE

We welcome letters on any topic—preferably less than 400 words.

Demo to defend gay rights

London SE24
12 November 1980

Dear Comrades,

In response to the growing physical, legal, political and propaganda attacks by sexist youth, fascist organisations, the police and the forces of the right generally we have called for a mass demonstration in Manchester on February 21.

Specifically the situation is this:

1) From reports coming into many male gay and lesbian publications, switchboards, gay centres and gay groups including informal reports in bars and clubs the level and severity of street attacks has risen considerably over the past six months. As a result of the political and economic conditions we appear to be moving into an 'open season' period.

2) Police prosecutions of gay men for carrying weapons have increased.

3) Though we have little evidence as yet (because of the considerable caution and secrecy involved) we have every

reason to believe that the rights and security of children living in the homes of lesbians and homosexual men are being considerably undermined.

4) Police activity in the area of police/employer cooperation is also expanding, resulting in suspensions, kangaroo court 'investigations' by employers and sackings of lesbians and gay men.

5) The number of employers and public bodies who will now openly adopt policies banning homosexuals from their employment is rapidly rising.

6) Finally, police prosecutions of gay men for chatting-up men (importuning, soliciting), holding hands, kissing, hugging etc (breach of the peace, insulting behaviour), making love (gross indecency), leaving known gay establishments (obstruction), dancing (licentiousness), having lovers who are over 16 but under 21 (corruption) are all on the increase.

The principal objectives of this demonstration will be to raise the awareness within the

labour movement of the seriousness of our position and the implications that this has for the movement as a whole.

And to sound a warning to the authorities that we cannot and will not meekly accept this devastation in our lives.

Consequently, we will be calling on all socialist, labour and progressive organisations to join this demonstration on a national basis.

The precise slogans, route and form of the demonstration will not be decided until the Joint Committee convenes in Lancaster over the last week-end in November.

But what is certain is that the demonstration will be in Manchester on Saturday 21 February.

We hope that the League and your press will support.

Yours in struggle,
Richard O'Neill
Gay Noise Collective



In the wake of the Hunterston sell-out

Strathclyde unions unite to fight the Tories

The fight of the Hunterston shop stewards against the abject sell-out imposed by the leadership of the Boilermakers Society and the STUC is now being broadened into a fight for leadership in the entire Strathclyde Region trade union movement.

On Monday 17 November the Hunterston JSSC called an emergency conference of shop stewards in the region to explain the lessons of the dispute and call for the formation of a Strathclyde Action Committee.

Around 90 delegates and observers from 36 organisations -including JSSC's, Labour Parties and Trades Councils attended the conference in the Partick Burgh Halls.

Opening the meeting Ronnie Munro, convenor of the Hunterston site, outlined the history of the dispute and the important parallels between Hunterston and other disputes such as BL, Sullom Voe and Lewis where workers have been viciously attacked by management backed up by cringing union officials.

Following him, Abby Courtney, a leading shop steward on the site, told the members of the conference that their workplaces too will be under attack from the Tories.

He then made a call for the formation of a Strathclyde Action Committee of shop stewards to fight against the Tory attack which threatens us with the prospect of three million on the dole in 1981 and a cut in dole money in March.

Pointing to the lack of leadership from the trade union and Labour Party bureaucrats who were responsible for isolating and demoralising sections of workers in struggle he said that the power of the trade union movement lay with the shop

stewards and that they had to unite to give leadership and expose leaders such as Duffy.

Speakers from the floor outlined their experiences in the oil related business in the shipyards and the bureaucratic manoeuvres of their leaders and graphically illustrating Courtney's observations that despite the fact that the oil industry is very profitable, the crisis of capitalism forces the bosses to launch an attack on wages and conditions.

Eddie Daelstrom, an observer from Rolls Royce AUEW made a contribution on the union leaders, saying that they are allies of the ruling class -but militancy is not enough to defeat them.

A fight must be taken up to force them to call action leading up to a general strike to remove the Tories.

Four speakers from the platform then spoke on the battle against the cuts, the so-called "Employment" Act, the attacks of management on the unions and the important development made by the conference against unemployment in Stirlingshire.

Rowland Sheret, speaking from the chair, after speaking on the unemployment conference, went on to condemn the STUC's convention on unemployment on December 8 where they had invited the participa-

tion of the churches, the CBI and local authorities-both Labour and Tory!

Speaking against this, Sammy Barr from Govan Boilermakers and a leading member of the Communist Party said that the union members must use the cracks in the employing class to line up with the dissenting sections of the CBI!

He was backed up by his fellow Stalinist George McCormack, convenor of the Rolls Royce plant, who as well as backing the STUC's call to the employers, tried to turn the conference towards the Stalinist-run Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions claiming that it had fought for years around issues such as Hunterston.

This obvious attempt to divert and tame the developments was rejected by the conference.

The resolution reprinted below was passed by a majority vote of the conference.

A steering committee was set up to organise a recall conference on 15 December.

The way forward for this extremely important movement which has forced the Communist Party to participate in it is to:

*Picket the STUC convention on December 8, force the STUC to break from the employers and churches and

lead a fight against redundancies.

*Call a conference in Ayrshire along the lines of the Falkirk conference against unemployment. Link the struggles in Hunterston, Ardeer and Stonefields.

*Approach Glasgow SOGAT and build a joint campaign for a Strathclyde Council of Action linking shop stewards and Labour Party constituencies in the fight to remove Thatcher.

"This conference warns the whole labour and trade union movement of the dangerous implications of the deal signed by union leaders to end the two-month dispute at the Ayrshire Marine oil platform construction yard at Hunterston.

The deal involves loss of at least 300 jobs, victimisation of the shop stewards, a 'phased return' for the remainder of the workforce who have to apply for re-employment, surrenders the right to seek changes in the working agreement, and gives up the right to strike.

The executives of the Boilermakers Society and the GMWU also signed a clause saying that the employers could recruit labour irrespective of whether the members accepted the agreement. This is no different to sanctioning scabbing.

The demands of the workforce on safety were not met, and other conditions conceded by the executives without consultation with the membership

include: welders doing the jobs of caulker burners, thus doing away with the need for caulker burners; and a plater has to do his own tack welding, thus reducing the welding workforce.

In addition, charges are being brought against 48 members arrested by police in what our Committee has described as a 'military style operation' against our peaceful picket line.

This attack is in line with Tory anti-working class policy which is causing mass redundancies throughout Ayrshire and the rest of Scotland, using legislation to undermine union rights, use the police, army and courts against trade unionists, and install dictatorship. WE CALL FOR THE FOLLOWING ACTION:

1) Shop stewards committees, union branches, trades councils, to send resolutions to express alarm at the Hunterston developments and the repercussions for the rest of the movement. Branches of the Boilermakers and GMWU to demand complete reversal of the agreement and full reinstatement of all jobs, conditions and shop stewards.

2) That delegates from factories, yards, and workplaces form a delegate committee to forge a united campaign linking all sections, facing closures, redundancy, public service cuts, etc., and those resisting wage cuts such as at BL and public sector workers resisting the 6% limit.

3) Full support for the November 29 demonstration in Liverpool, for all workers who occupy factories to defend jobs, and for the organisation of the unemployed in trade unions.

4) A further conference to be held by the Hunterston JSSC in approximately one month's time to mobilise wider support and build up the forces of the campaign.

5) Demands that the STUC leads an all-out fight against the Tory government. We condemn the STUC general council's decision to invite employers' organisations to be represented at the Convention on Unemployment on December 8 in Glasgow."

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JOIN THE WSL!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

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TROTSKYIST INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE

DISCUSSION BULLETIN No. 2

Price 40p plus 15p p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

Scots teachers meet on pay

In the aftermath of last session's struggle by Scottish teachers for a decent wage increase, the leadership of the EIS has organised a Special AGM on Saturday next to try to push through major changes in the negotiating machinery.

These include closer formal links with the NUT; retention of the element of compulsory arbitration in the machinery; and the establishment of a permanent pay review body.

Although some members of the rank and file have expressed approval of the first proposed course of action, it is doubtful as to whether there are any advantages from the standpoint of teachers' interests in moves towards unification with the NUT.

Evidence of the struggles of the past decade suggests that the bureaucratic leadership of the NUT has been even more successful than Pollock and company in stifling any aspirations towards a campaign for better wages and conditions by their membership.

Moves towards unification at this point would only be from the standpoint of strengthening the hand of the more conservative elements in the EIS leadership.

Although talk of "unity" and "joint action" sounds fine,

the reality of the present situation is that closer "formal links" are no more than a bureaucratic manoeuvre.

On the other two issues there can be even less doubt. It was implementation of the device of compulsory arbitration that enabled the management to force teachers into acceptance of 14% earlier this year.

How on earth can Keir Bloomer, the union's chief negotiator, argue for its retention?

If teachers are to break through that they can only do so through the determination of their own struggle and not by casting around for some loop-hole through compulsory arbitration.

Dashed

The same applies to the proposal for a permanent pay review body. Surely any doubts on this issue must have been dashed by the Thatcher government's recent decision to reject the findings of the Civil Service Pay Review Unit.

When that body proposed a 20% wage increase in the current pay round, Thatcher stepped in to reject the figure out of hand and insist on a maximum of 10%.

What good then is a permanent pay review body, however many "copperbottomed promises" are given, if governments ignore pledges of previous administrations, and even their

own pledges, and substitute pay norms in this arbitrary manner? We are convinced that EIS members will reject this motion and trust to their own ability to secure a decent award.

Two issues which must be fully debated and adopted by the conference are those for united action with other public sector unions and for a break with any notion of linking salaries to jobs and conditions in future negotiations.

Crosbie march

An estimated 5,000 teachers and anti-cuts campaigners joined an official demonstration through Nottingham last Saturday demanding the reinstatement of victimised nursery teacher Eileen Crosbie.

Sister Crosbie was sacked by the Education authority for refusing to teach an oversized nursery class without adequate assistance. The staffing levels had been reduced by spending cuts.

The settlement date for the annual pay review at Fords is supposed to be this Monday, 24 November.

But the company has followed on its savage disciplinary moves with an insulting 7½% offer tied to a demand for greater efficiency.

Yet when asked about strike action, Ron Todd of the TGWU said "we shall not go rampaging about like a lot of old bulls."

Todd declared the union leaders are prepared to discuss

"greater efficiency" (speed-up) in exchange for the shorter working week.

So much for saving jobs. The unions have rejected the 7½% offer, clearly expecting a slight increase. Fords have said they will not pay more than their competitors. This means a rise of no more than 10% with inflation running at 16%.

The company is using a Leyland-style threat to close close its UK operations. And union officials are responding in a way that makes it clear they are ready to impose a Leyland-style betrayal on the Ford workers.

Moss Evans says he supports the firemen: how about the TGWU supporting its own members and the firemen by fighting for all-out action in defence of living standards?

P&O, the shipping company, has proposed to the crews of its three Dover-based ferries that they take a wage cut.

This amounts to £25-£30 per week off the pay of ratings in order to 'reduce costs'. This has been rejected by the unions.

And unions representing 30,000 Heathrow airport workers have rejected a call from British Airways for all its UK based staff to accept a pay freeze for six months and then a 7.5% rise.

BL: fight for new pay body

The struggle for Leyland workers goes on despite the 6.8% sell-out by their leadership.

At Longbridge, workers making seats for the Metro trimshop have been resisting the company's speed-up. They have refused to produce the increased workloads.

The company has retaliated by contracting out some of their work. It is the blacking of this work that led the company to lay off 500 Metro workers.

This lay-off produced an angry demonstration last Friday.

As we go to press on Monday the laid-off workers are picketing the plant and 7,000 Metros are tied up by the dispute.

A meeting of 200 stewards at the plant have voted to back the seat-workers with strike action if necessary.

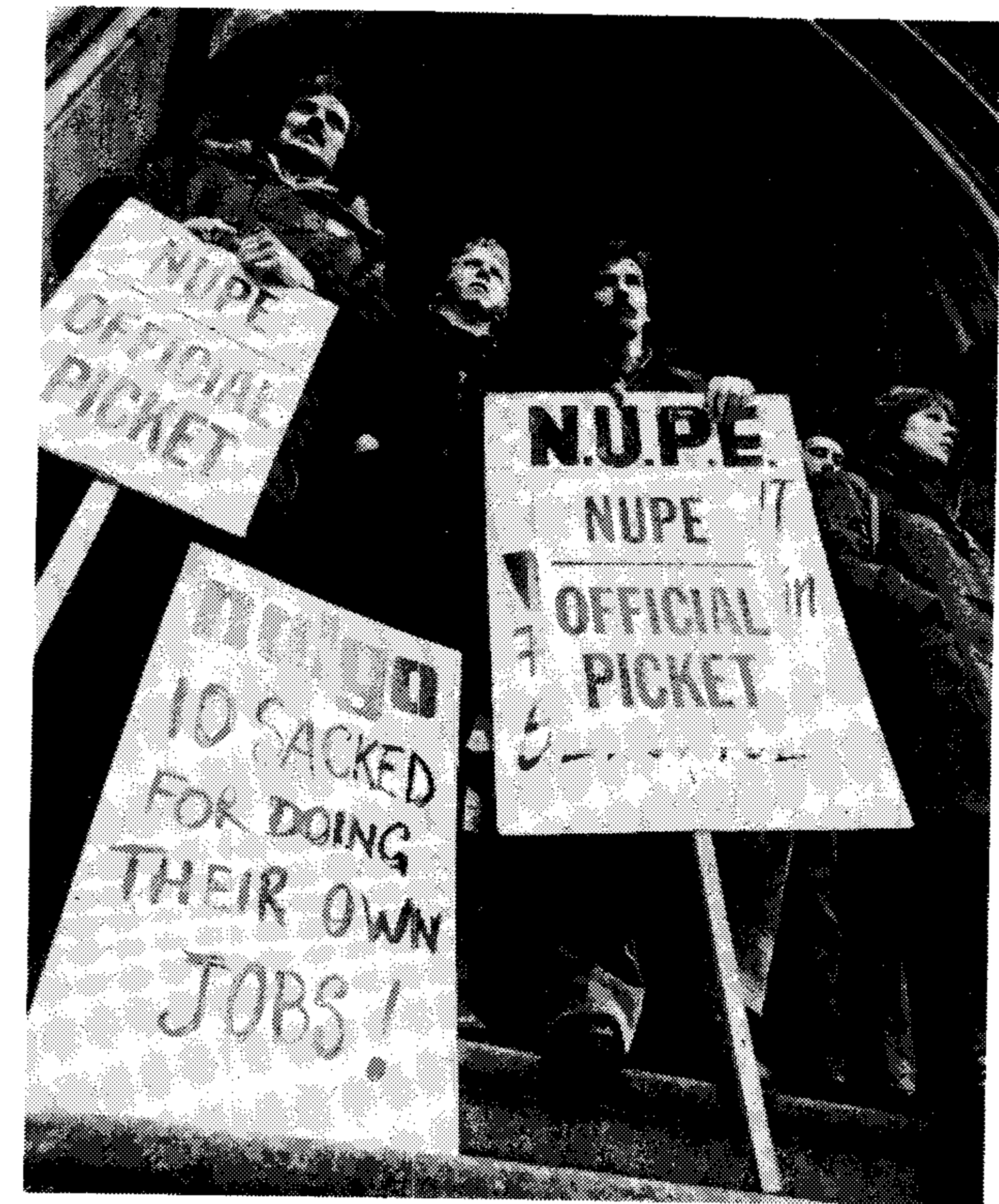
Democratise

Meanwhile in the Cowley Assembly Plant a mass meeting last Friday unanimously supported the demand for democratisation of the BL negotiating structure.

The proposals advocated by Cowley stewards would mean proportional representation and accountability of the negotiating bodies—and thus eliminate the stranglehold of craft unions and full-time officials over representatives of manual workers.

The Cowley workers voted to meet again in a month to review progress on this fight.

Meanwhile the Leyland Action Committee is to hold meetings to draw the lessons of the struggle—this week in Oxford and Birmingham and next week in Coventry.



Pickets supporting the strike by 800 Housing Department workers in Manchester. The strikers, members of NALGO, NUPE and MATSA, are fighting against the victimisation of ten colleagues.

Miners say 'no'

A South Wales miners delegate conference voted unanimously last week to recommend a vote against the Coal Board's 13% offer.

But instead of calling for a strike vote they called for "new and more realistic negotiating". And at the weekend the Yorkshire miners leaders also voted to recommend rejection of the offer and the reopening of negotiations.

Previously, the Scottish pit delegate conference also voted unanimously for a 'no' vote. Eric Clarke, Scottish miners' secretary argued that the negotiations had been carried out with undue haste.

Mick McGahey, Scottish miners' president and leading member of the Communist Party, said that the first step against the government must be total support for the firemen.

But he made no call for a strike vote in order to ensure the miners are fighting alongside the firemen to bring down the government.

Lawrence Daly, NUM General Secretary, has attacked the Scottish, Welsh and Yorkshire committee decisions as "unethical and unconstitutional" in that they seek to under-

mine a decision of the union's governing body.

The Scottish miners have in turn called correctly for the democratisation of the union. They want a change from the position where right wing representatives of a minority of

miners are able to outvote those representing a majority of miners by 14 votes to 11 on the Executive Committee—as happened with this pay offer.

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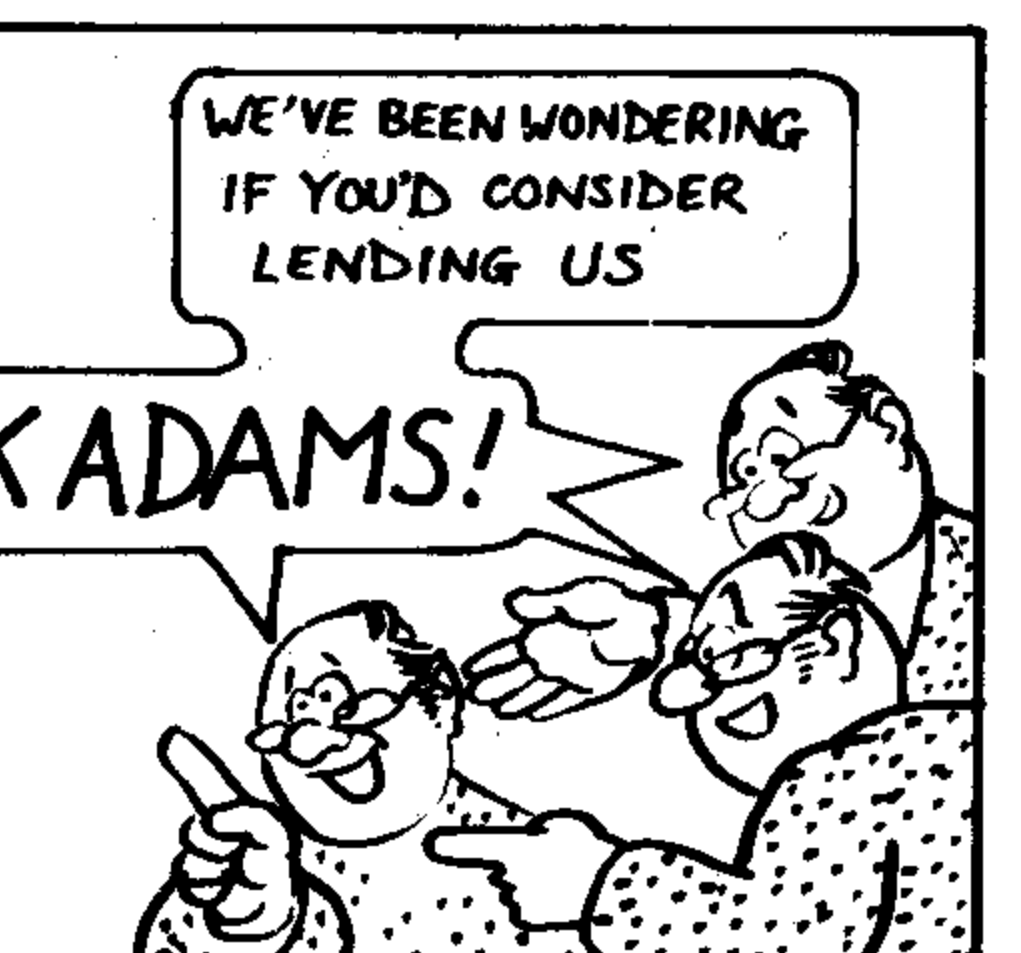
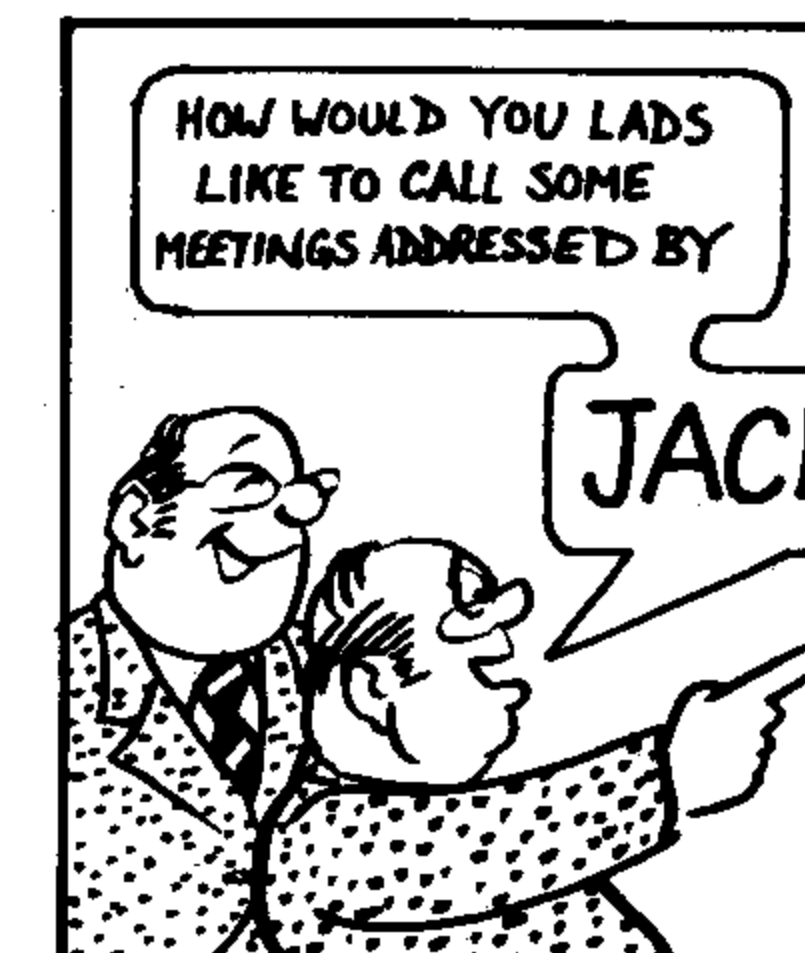
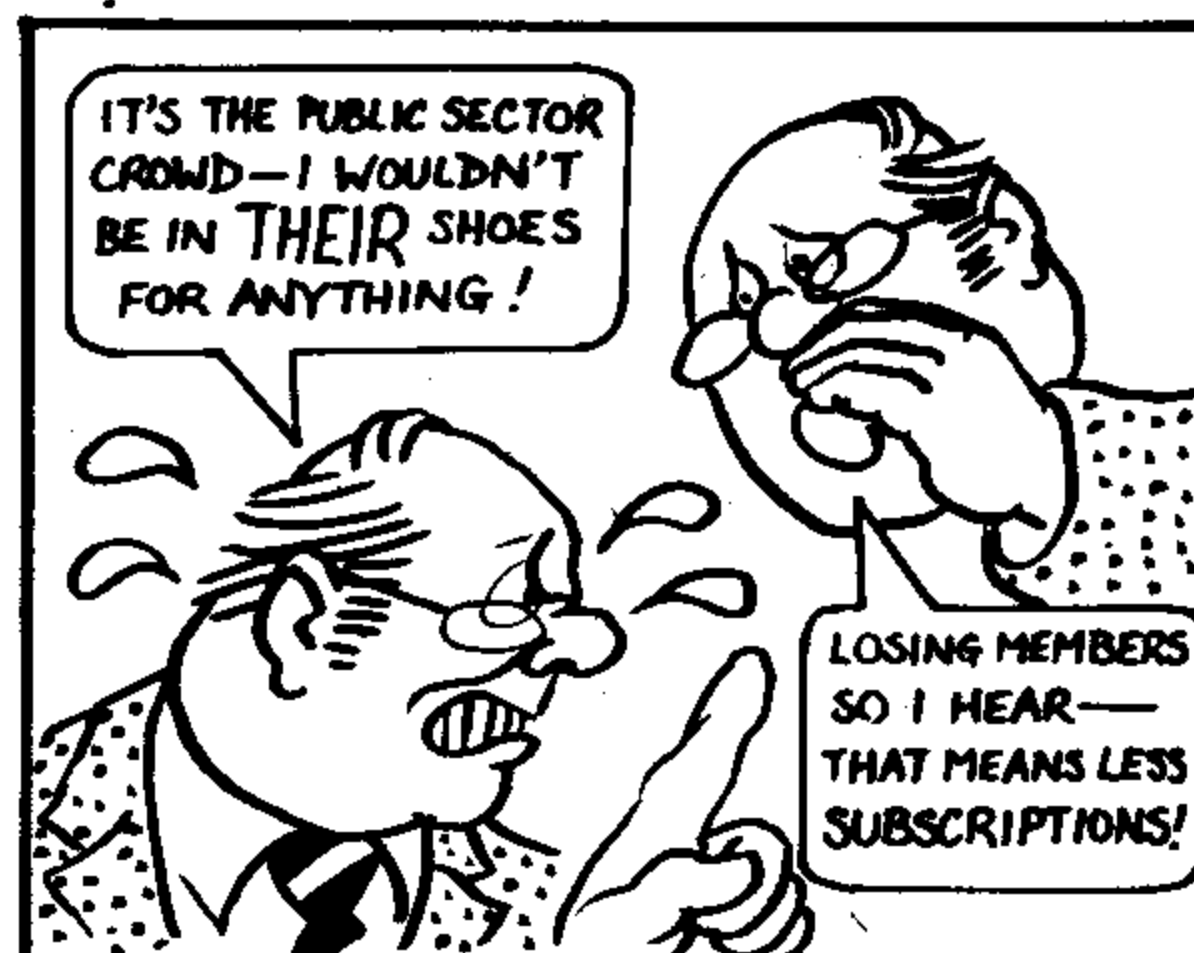
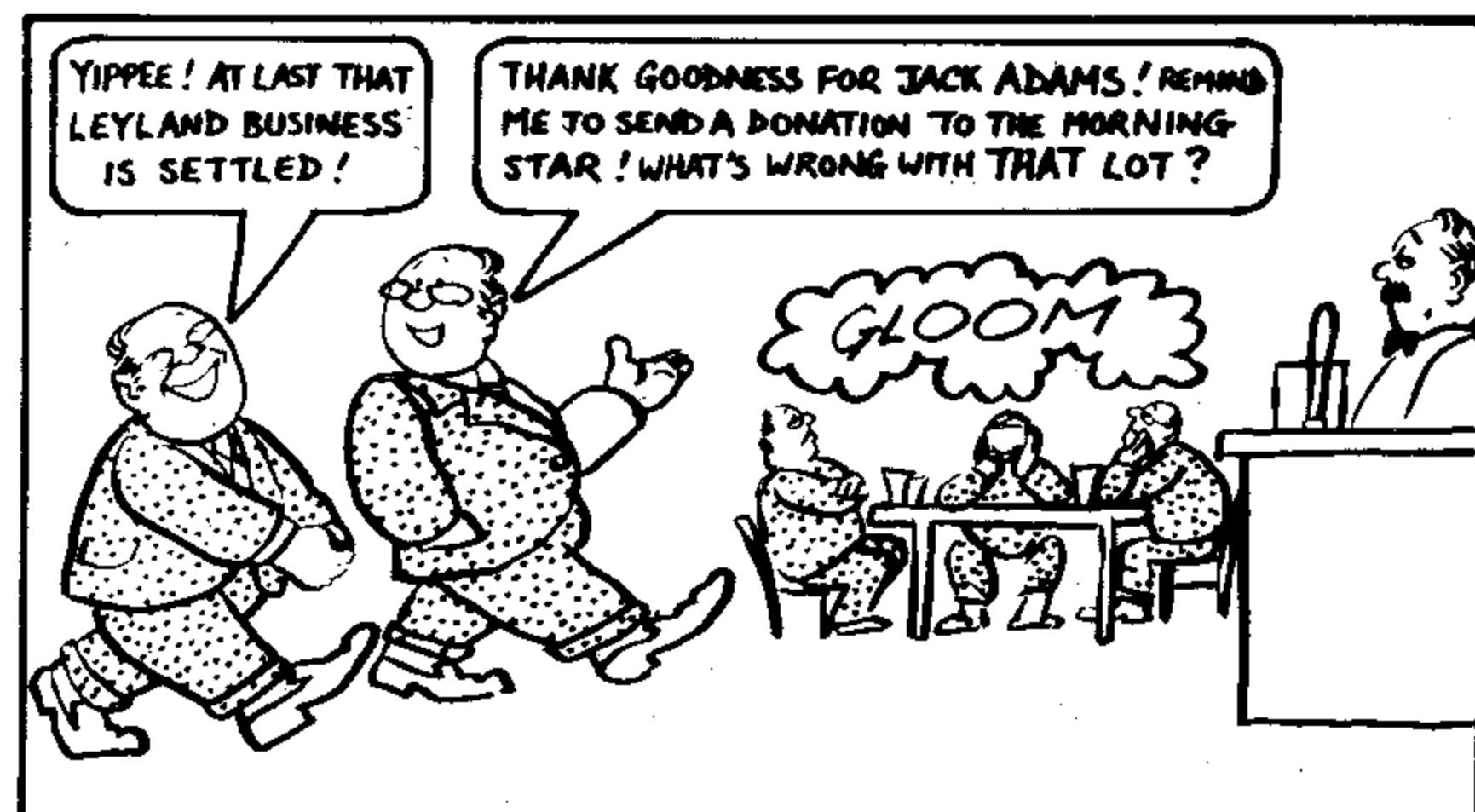
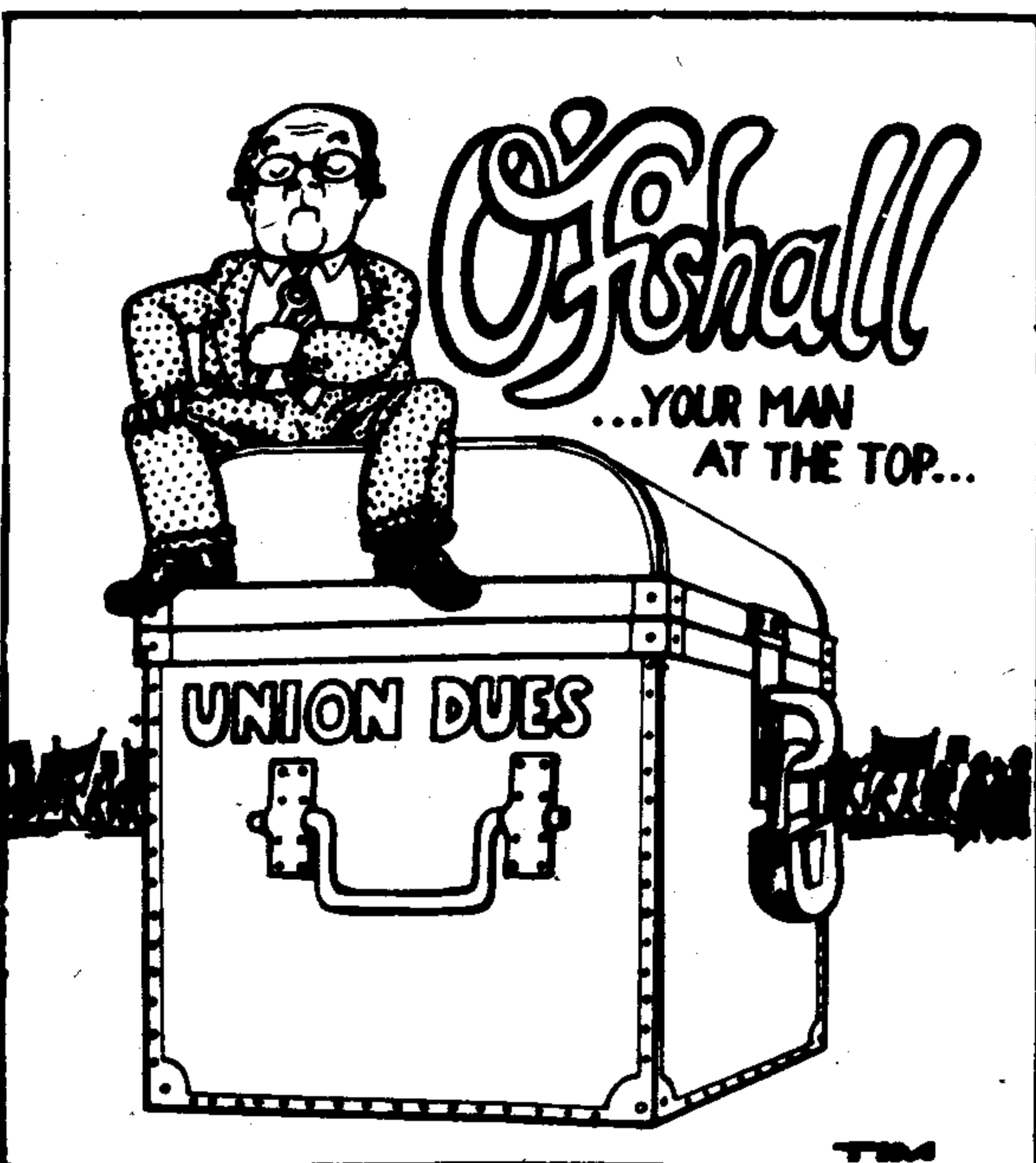
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SOCIALIST PRESS



KKK killers walk free

"Justice" Ronald Reagan style was done last week when the six Ku Klux Klan members who murdered five anti-racists in Greensboro, North Carolina, walked free. They were acquitted by an all-white jury—on the grounds

that they had acted in "self defence". Yet TV viewers all over the world saw the gunmen simply open fire on the demonstrators from the back of a car. The Ku Klux Klan were among the reactionary organisations to throw their weight behind Reagan's presidential campaign.

HUNGER STRIKERS NEED YOUR SUPPORT



Supporting demonstration for hunger strikers in Belfast

On this, the thirty-first day of the hunger strike by Irish republican detainees in pursuance of their just demands for Prisoner of War status, it is worth considering two opposing views within the British Labour Party.

The first, an article in *Labour Weekly* (November 21, back page) by Chris McLaughlin has the scandalous headline "H Block strike lacks support". In an article largely based on statements by fake-left pro-imperialist MP, Clive Soley, McLaughlin states "... The one unanimous view among those MPs in favour of a united Ireland is that the hunger strike makes a complex political problem potentially hopeless.

"Even the most staunch Labour supporters of eventual British withdrawal draw back

from categorical support for the return of special status for H Block prisoners under present circumstances ..."

Withdrawal

Immediate refutation of such convenient pessimism has been provided by the Richmond Constituency Labour Party at its general meeting of 17 November. The following resolution, (drawn up to include much of the Labour Committee on Ireland's model resolution but rejecting its compromised "policy for withdrawal" demand) was carried overwhelmingly.

"This CLP recognises the evidence that the clear popular wish of the Irish people favours a British withdrawal from Ireland and progress towards a united Ireland. Furthermore we recognise that British involvement in Ireland constitutes a major obstacle to developments towards socialism in that country. This CLP therefore:

- rejects the current bipartisan policies of the PLP leadership;
- repudiates the policies of successive British governments which have effectively guaranteed the right of veto to the Unionist minority in Ireland, thereby ensuring that the present disastrous situation remains unresolved;
- feels that effective communication between British and Irish organisations is essential and urges that measures be taken to ensure that British trade unionists and Labour Party members are provided with accurate information about the views of their Irish counterparts.

d) instructs the Labour Party leadership to adopt a policy favouring political and military withdrawal;

e) calls on the next Labour

government to immediately and unconditionally:

- grant prisoner of war status and release all political prisoners.
- Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act.
- withdraw all British military and political involvement in Ireland."

The Richmond resolution is yet further evidence that where the issues involved in the Irish war are fully debated within the labour movement, support can be won for a position of solidarity with the Irish people.

As the Irish hunger strikers make their eloquent call for support from their British brothers and sisters it is necessary for every socialist to take up the fight. *This means you!*

Emergency resolutions supporting the hunger strikers' five demands should be tabled at every union branch and Labour Party meeting. Delegations must be mobilised for the national demonstration 'Don't Let the Hunger Strikers Die' to be held in London on December 7.

Labour councillors and MPs and union officials at every level must be forced to lend their weight to the campaign for the restoration of political status to the republican prisoners of Long Kesh and Armagh Gaol—which alone can save the lives of the men and women hunger strikers.

Those that refuse to take such a stand must be exposed as open defenders of the oppression of the Irish people by the same capitalist class that, through the medium of the Thatcher government, is carrying through savage attacks on the *British* working class.

If they won't fight British imperialism in *Ireland*, be certain that such leaders will also surely betray your struggles at *home!*

"Who are the real criminals?"
Centre pages

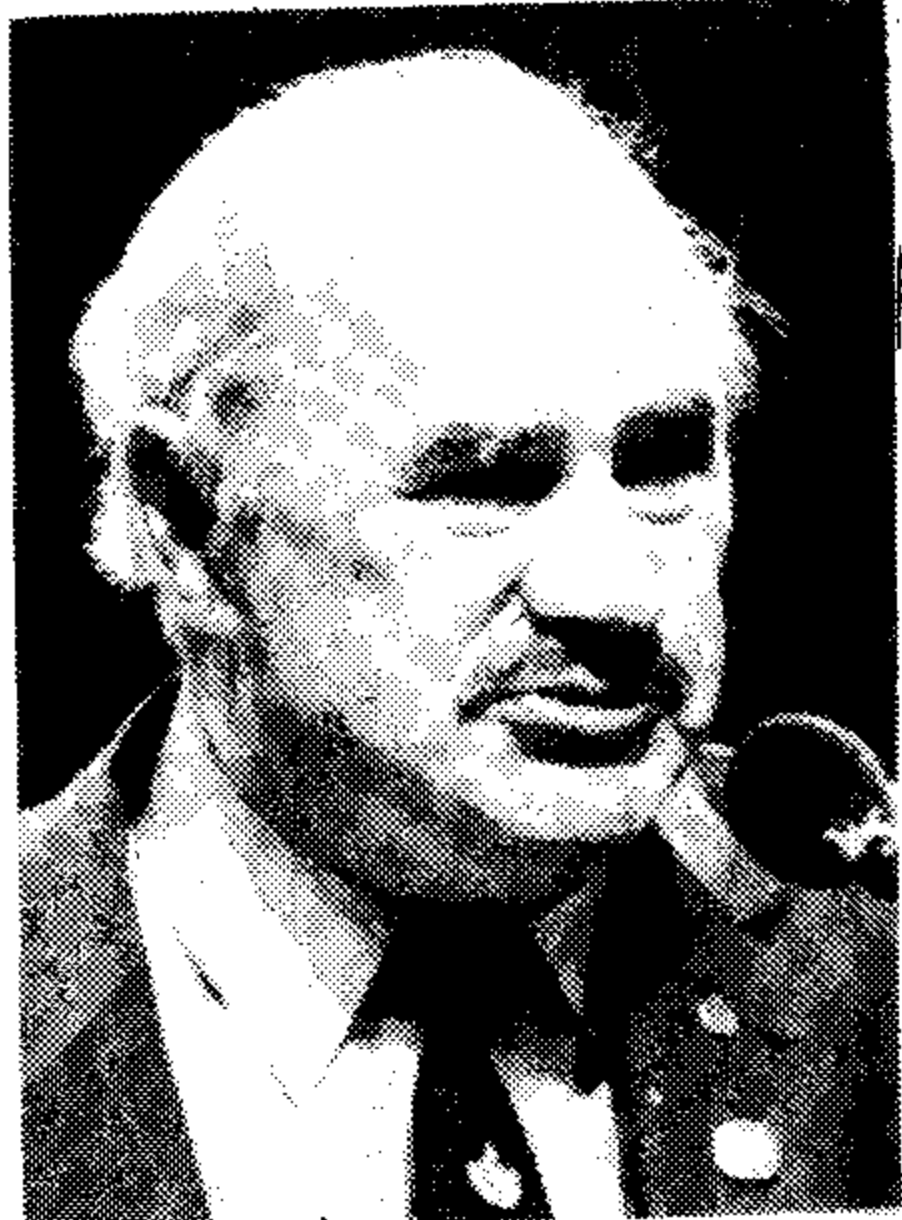
FBU HOLDS BACK ON ALL-OUT STRIKE

A national assembly of delegates from all fire brigades met at the recall conference of the FBU to debate the action necessary to combat the Tory government's 6% pay limit.

Behind them was the anger of firemen determined to preserve the agreement which ended their 9-week 1977-78 pay strike. That deal pegged their pay to the level of average earnings, and would mean an increase this year of 18.8%.

"Not enough"

The FBU executive's plan for a series of lightning one-day strikes has been discussed and in general well-received, though a number of brigades and many individual station branches felt that one-day stop-



Terry Parry

pages were not enough to force the employers to honour the agreement.

Strathclyde and Buckinghamshire were two brigades with resolutions calling for all-out strike action, immediately or at some predetermined time.

Voted down

Many other brigades wished to table amendments to the EC proposal in order to strengthen the action.

But the Executive had arranged that their plan of action should be debated before conference standing orders be reconvened.

This meant in effect that unless the EC proposal were voted down, no alternative resolutions or amendments would be put to the conference. Predictably this manoeuvre succeeded in forestalling discussion on such policies and left the question of steps to escalate the action in the hands of the FBU Executive.

But delegates recognised that at stake is a head-on clash with the Tory government.

If the 6% limit is to be enforced on the public sector, then the firemen must be beaten into submission.

Anti-union law

This is the more true now the TUC has endorsed the FBU claim. In one battle with a small union the Tories will hope to use troops as strikebreakers and thus underline the treachery of such TUC backing.



Firemen on the march

Secondly, the firemen will mass picket their own fire-stations, defying Prior's reactionary anti-union laws which limit pickets to six in number.

Even FBU General Secretary Terry Parry predicted arrests as soon as the one-day strikes commence.

Nor will firemen allow troops onto fire stations—or allow themselves to be locked out: there is every possibility that some fire stations may be occupied.

And in the wake of the last pay strike, militant firemen can be expected to picket army scab fire stations—in defiance of the anti-union laws.

There is also a real threat

that some employers, backed by the government, may lock out firemen either until the union accept the 6% limit, or until individual strikers sign a humiliating 'return to normal working' contract.

FBU members have shown themselves ready to defy all threats and take on the government.

But as their last strike showed, they need full-scale support from the labour movement if they are to win.

And any attempt by the TUC and the FBU Executive to drag out the one-day strikes into a demoralising fiasco must be resisted by the fight for all-out action.

PHOTO: Andrew Ward Report

SPECIAL FUND

With less than two weeks to go the WSL Rally and the end of our Special Fund we are still a long way short of our £1500 target. We have only received £749.25 leaving us a massive £750.75 to raise.

Chancellor Howe may have detected a rapid decline in the rate of inflation, but he could have fooled us because we don't notice it every time we come to pay our bills.

In fact, quite the reverse. And these bills have to be paid and finance has to be raised if we are to be able to carry out the many areas of work in which we are engaged, in the unions and the Labour Party, among women and youth.

That is why we are appealing to *all* our readers and supporters. Send us a day's pay to help us in the fight to build a leadership that *will* lead the working class against the Tories. If you are unemployed or can't afford a whole day's pay then send us what you can afford. Every penny counts.

Our address is:
Socialist Press Special Fund
BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

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