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LONGBRIDGE CRUNCH

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1980: WHAT WE'VE DONE

Centre pages

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MAKE THE TRADE UNIONS ACT!

We publish here an open letter from John Nixon, one of the seven initial 'H' Block hunger strikers and a member of the Irish Republican Socialist Party.

Nixon correctly addresses his appeal to the Irish TGWU which, as part of the Irish TUC, set its face against industrial action to back the 'H' Block struggle: but the content of his appeal is relevant to all trade unions in Britain and Ireland.

We urge readers to study John Nixon's appeal—and to take up the fight in their own organisations for action to back the republican hunger strike.

To the ITGWU (Irish Transport and General Workers Union).
A Chara,

I lie in this wretched abode on hunger strike to the death. I hunger for justice, I have no death wish. I do not want to die for I am still young. The action I have taken was forced upon me. The choice that faced me was to hunger strike or continue to live in this hell and suffer degradation and ill-treatment.

The decision to hunger strike was not easy. We are well aware that death or serious injury or illness may result from it, but as you are aware we have tried every way and every means for four years and more. We have suffered daily and extensively, in doing so we have made our

message clear to the world that we do not possess the qualities of a common criminal. We have made clear our message to the world the distinction, our willingness to endure all punishment and degradation meted out to us by the prison authorities.

Now we have come to the climax in our protest in the H Blocks, we resort to the only weapon that is left to us, the weapon of self-sacrifice which Connolly understood. Did he not hunger strike also? Did he not find the highest expression of his ideals in self-sacrifice? There can be no doubt that we have the full support of the people in this issue.

It is the most crucial time in

the history of the six country struggle. The British Government have made it so, not us. In their stiff upper lipped arrogance they have ignored all appeals and efforts to resolve this issue. They can still do it before it is too late, before life or lives are lost, they can prevent a bigger crisis. If they continue in their arrogance and ignorance there is no doubt the situation will be beyond their control.

We appeal to you to help in any way at all, act as a Union. You know the demands we have made are reasonable. We are well justified in making these demands.

We are victims and prisoners of an unjust system of special

laws, Emergency Powers, non-jury courts, in which the flimsiest of evidence is admitted.

Our motives are not self gain. We believe that all our actions are justified. The justice of our cause, we maintain determines our right to struggle.

Once before we faced this problem, the weapon used was hunger strike. The British Government resolved the issue then, before it was too late and only when the maximum pressure was exerted. They can do it again before it is too late.

Those who want to help must do so now. There is a time factor. Every day brings us closer to death. Due to the conditions we have existed in for

over four years, we were in a weak state at the outset of the strike.

The days are now counted in double figures. We have deteriorated rapidly since day one.

We don't reckon to hold out for a long period, we will not be force fed. Our only hope is the people and any people can exert pressure. This is why I have asked you to help. Consider the situation and how it may be if someone dies. If you do so, then you will know that you must help.

John Nixon
on hunger strike

Behind the hypocritical cant about "peace on earth" the war against British repression in Ireland will reach a new peak this Christmas.

As top Tories, church dignitaries, Labour leaders and union bureaucrats tuck into their Christmas dinners, seven hunger strikers they have effectively sentenced to death will be in the final stages of starvation in the Long Kesh concentration camp.

As we go to press, these republican prisoners have been on hunger strike for 50 days. Three women prisoners at Armagh gaol joined their hunger strike on December 1. And today another 23 republican prisoners have also begun a hunger strike.

A hunger strike is a desperate, potentially self-destructive means of struggle.

For the republican prisoners it marks the climax of a bitter four-year struggle. They want the restoration of their special category status as political prisoners, who have been jailed as a result of the continuing war for the liberation of the six counties of Ireland from British rule.

Blankets

For four years republican prisoners at Long Kesh have been refusing to wear prison clothes or do prison work—both of which they correctly regard as attempts by the British military authorities to deny them political status and brand them as common criminals.

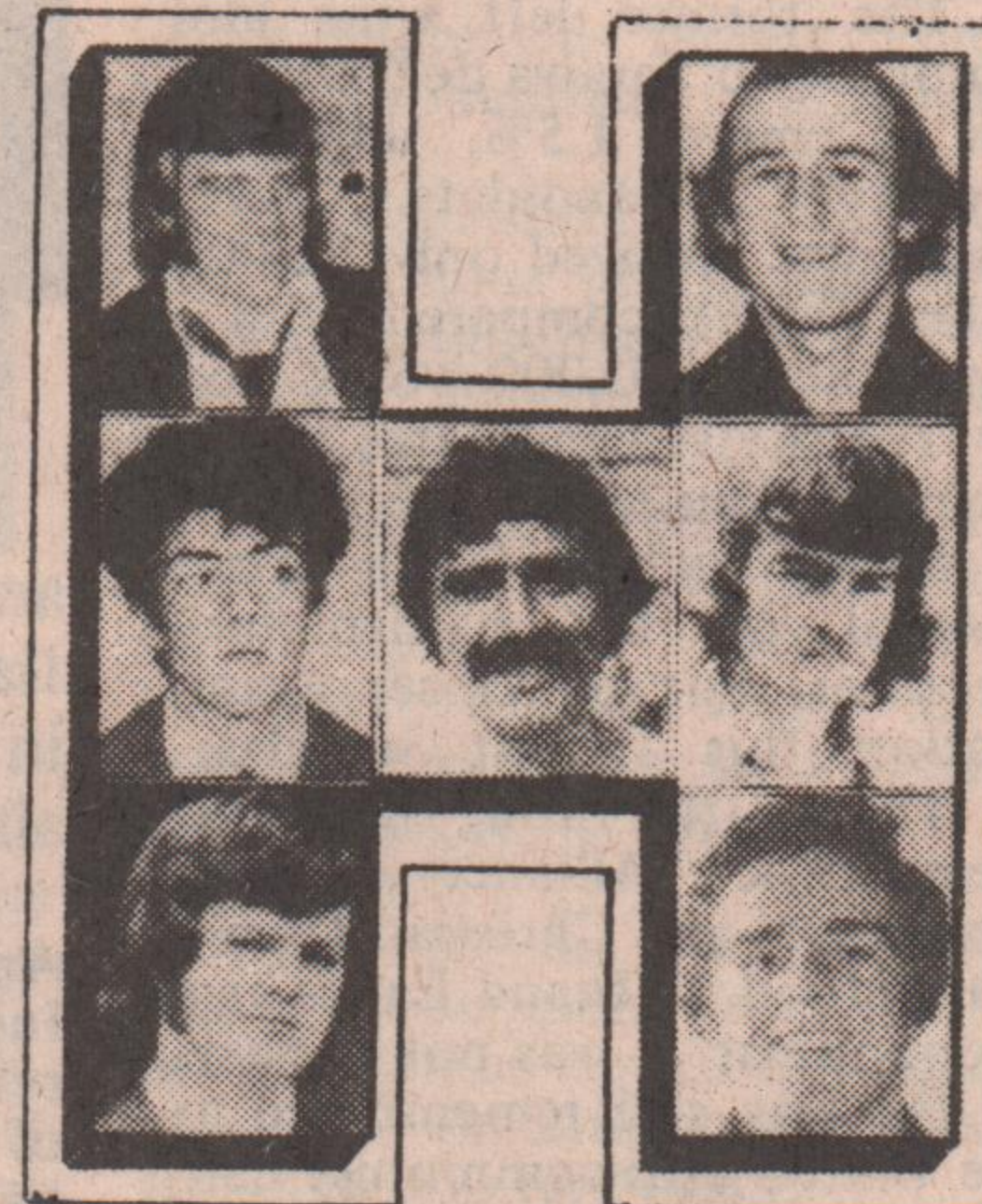
As a result of this stand, the prisoners have for four years been left in unheated cells, naked apart from a single blanket: they have been subjected to violence, abuse and intimidation. As the struggle has escalated, their cells have been fouled and their conditions are now an international scandal.

But for four years this struggle and the barbarity of imperialist rule have been blandly ignored or savagely witch-hunted by virtually the whole leadership of the British labour movement.

The pleas of the Irish prisoners for the support they are entitled to expect have fallen on deaf ears. British Labour and trade union bureaucrats, unwilling to lift a finger against their "own" ruling class and its military machine, have continued to support imperialist rule.

And British workers, fed on a diet of lies and censored news by the mass media and by their

IRISH HUNGER STRIKERS: THEIR LIVES IN YOUR HANDS!



Dublin solidarity demonstration

own leaders, remain largely ignorant of the atrocities being carried out in their name by the British army against the Irish working class.

Now the prisoners feel they have waited long enough.

Their response to their isolation has been to launch a hunger strike centred on the five elementary demands which tacitly represent prisoner-of-war status:

- *The right to wear their own clothes.
- *The right to abstain from prison work.
- *The right to free association among themselves.
- *The right to their own educational and recreational activities.
- *The restoration of full remission of sentence.

Their struggle has sparked a large wave of solidarity action throughout the whole of Ireland over the last seven weeks.

Last Wednesday the unofficial call by the National 'H' Block/Armagh Committee for industrial action in their support—though strongly opposed by the Irish TUC—brought work stoppages in Belfast, Dungannon, Derry, Armagh, Enniskillen, and Newry in the North; and in Dublin, Cork, Dundalk, Drogheda, Monaghan, Sligo and in other factories, shops, building sites and public services in other localities in the South.

Minority

But in Britain, even as the hunger strikers draw near to

death, solidarity with the Irish struggle is still a cause fought for only by the most dedicated socialists and Irish militants.

In advance of the hunger strike, a handful of Labour MPs, union bureaucrats and liberals belatedly signed the Charter 80 petition calling on the Tories to concede the prisoners' five demands on "humanitarian" grounds.

The Tories of course have remained adamant—and conceded nothing.

Since then, few of these signatories have lent even token support to the struggle to mobilise solidarity action in the British labour movement. As the issue has polarised feeling, supporters of 'human rights' in Ireland have been few and far between.

An attempt by left MP Ernie Roberts to enlist Labour MPs to support the hunger strikers on humanitarian grounds produced only five signatures out of 230 MPs!

Witch-hunted

Trade unionists who have raised the issue have found themselves witch-hunted by extreme right wingers while union bureaucrats sit back in silence.

The fight for solidarity in Britain is a hard one—but a vital one. The Irish hunger strikers are, like us, engaged in the struggle against the British capitalist class.

The prisoners have shown themselves, far from being

criminals, to be the most self-sacrificing political fighters against imperialist oppression.

We may disagree with their politics: we may wish they had chosen some other form of action to press their demands: but every class conscious worker now has the obligation to fight unconditionally, tooth and nail, in their defence.

DON'T SIT BACK AND LET THEM DIE! ACT NOW!

Demand your union branch, your Labour Party, declare its full support for the hunger strikers and their five demands.

Demonstrations

Demand the Labour NEC and the TUC break from their reactionary bi-partisan alliance with the Tories and support this struggle by the Irish people against imperialism!

Bring contingents to join the solidarity demonstrations on 20 December!

Give your support to the local campaigns to back the hunger strikers: spread the truth on Ireland to the working class—leaflet factories and other workplaces.

The class collaboration of Labour and trade union leaders now seems likely to send more brave Irish 'martyrs' to their deaths.

Only our struggle can bring to an end the barbarism of the Irish war.

*Political status now! Support the hunger strikers!

*Troops out of Ireland now!

*Self determination for the Irish people!

*Bring down the Tories!

LCI—see back page

Photo: Republican News

SUAREZ SNUBBED ON BASQUE COUNTRY TOUR

Over one hundred members of the security forces of the Spanish state have been gunned down by the Basque national liberation fighters of ETA in 1980.

Prime Minister Adolfo Suarez has reacted to this shattering affront to the dignity and power of the Spanish state not by launching a political counterblast to militant Basque nationalists but by covering in his Palace in Madrid.

Until last week Suarez had visited Euskadi (the Basque

provinces) only twice since he became Prime Minister in 1976—both times in secret and only for internal meetings of his party, the Democratic Centre Union.

Plunge

Last week in the end, under huge pressure from the nervous capitalists of Euskadi as well as the rest of Spain their 'leader' Suarez finally took the plunge.

The trip, designed to mobilise support against the force of militant Basque nationalism, was a political catastrophe.

First, Suarez was surrounded by a security net so tight that no one even saw him and he indicated that he was afraid to walk the streets of part of the country he claims to have nursed into democracy.

Second, there were strikes and demonstrations in protest against the visit throughout the Basque provinces.

These were organised not only by the left and by radical nationalists of ETA but also by the conservative nationalists of the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV).

The central government is so unpopular among the people of Euskadi that the PNV had to organise protests despite itself in order to preserve its credibility as a nationalist organisation.

The PNV president of the nearly powerless Basque "autonomous" government, Carlos Garaicoechea, refused to organise a banquet in Suarez's honour in the historic Basque capital, Guernica.

And in at least 104 municipalities the local councils themselves organised work stoppages and closing down of all council

business as a protest against Suarez's visit!

So, far from asserting his authority, Suarez was forced to return to Madrid politically empty handed, snubbed and humiliated.

Impunity

It was not what the Spanish ruling class—and in particular the Francoist generals—were looking for as a response to the daily assaults on the security forces which ETA is still able to impose with virtual impunity.

One of the consequences of the visit, therefore, will be an increase in the already grave danger that the army generals will once again decide to exercise direct state power and stage a coup d'etat.

The Spanish Civil War is not over yet.



Suarez

**Portugal:
danger
ahead**

The incumbent President Ramalho Eanes, supported by the Socialist and Communist Parties, won the Portuguese presidential election.

In a very heavy poll he received 56% of the votes to the 40% of the Democratic Alliance candidate General Soares Carneiro.

The former left wing idol Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho got a mere 1.5%, and the Trotskyist candidate Aires Rodriguez received only 12,000 votes (0.2%)—compared with a remarkable 140,000 votes won by Trotskyist candidates in the recent parliamentary elections.

Eanes' victory looks like a reversal of the parliamentary elections. But on closer examination this is not so clear.

Though the ruling right-wing Democratic Alliance (Social Democrats and Christian Democrats) tried to brand Eanes as a 'Communist' it was not so easy.

He was still remembered as the united anti-communist candidate (supported by the SP, the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats) in the last election.

Eanes himself repudiated the CP's support for him and during the campaign he came closer and closer to accepting the Democratic Alliance programme.

This was one of the things which led a section of the Socialist Party (led by Mario Soares) to withdraw support for Eanes.

During the campaign Soares temporarily resigned as SP General Secretary but—never one to stand on principle—he is now back again.

Soares' political impotence was illustrated by the failure of his gesture to affect Eanes' campaign.

And Soares' return has not ended the split in the Socialist Party.

The party sent two separate delegations to the funeral of former Prime Minister Sa Carneiro, killed in an air crash two days before the election.

Sa Carneiro and the deputy premier Christian Democratic leader Freitas do Amaral, said they would not continue in office if Eanes was re-elected.

Do Amaral has carried out this threat personally and said he will no longer serve as a Minister.

But the existing government will carry on under the new leader of the Social Democrats, Pinto Balsemao.

Balsemao, like Sa Carneiro of whom he was a close associate, was a member of Caetano's 'fake fascist parliament' but resigned just in time to have some anti-fascist credentials.

He clearly aims to continue, with Eanes' growing support, the right wing policies of his predecessor, including the dismantling of the remaining gains of the 1974 revolution.

Crisis deepens as ITALIAN SCANDALS MULTIPLY

The disgrace of present and former leading Christian Democratic politicians in Italy is becoming an almost weekly event.

Last week it was the turn of Antonio Bisaglia, Minister of Industry who was stung into resignation by the conclusions of a "court of honour" set up by the president of the Senate.

Bisaglia is a big Venice financier who has for some time been the subject of public suspicion of involvement in the ten million lire oil tax scandal which originated in Venice.

Siphoned off

This vast sum of money was siphoned off by civil servants and probably Ministers and others over the last ten years through the fiscal office responsible for taxation of the oil industry.

Despite frantic attempts by the Christian Democrats to cover up this scandal it is threatening to burst—drowning the reputations of several powerful leaders in the process.

It is even publicly alleged that the leader of the "left" of the Christian Democrats, former long time Premier Giulio Andreotti was in some way involved in the fraud.

Even if, as seems likely, the full truth of all these allegations is never known, the damage to the authority of the main ruling class political party is already being done.

Earthquake

Bisaglia's resignation comes hard on the heels of the offer of resignation from the Interior Minister after the monumental failure of the government to provide relief in the south after the earthquake.

Bisaglia himself was pushed to resign not over this or even directly due to the oil tax scandal but because of allegations that he was abusing his position as Minister of Industry to favour his vast Venetian insurance business.

His only pathetic defence was that he let decisions on

insurance be made by one of his deputy ministers.

Although Bisaglia's resignation will have the effect of strengthening the Communist Party's current more rigorous opposition to the Christian Democratic-dominated government, the accusations against him came from the far right—

from the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI).

This fact frighteningly illustrated the way in which in Italy, as in Spain, the crisis of authority of the 'respectable' 'democratic' representatives of the ruling class is leading the far right to prepare to take over.

Turkish junta in balancing act

By Jack Johnson

After three months in power, the Turkish military junta is still balanced uneasily between conflicting forces in Turkey and on a world scale.

Its pretence of an "even handed" stance has meant that its vicious attacks on the working class have run alongside measures against the fascist NAP. Fascist leader Turkes has

been brought repeatedly before the courts facing various charges, one of which—"inciting people to armed rebellion against the state"—carries a life sentence.

Other NAP members are charged with financing armed thugs.

Charges against other politicians from the Justice Party, the RPP and the National Salvation Party include a charge

of corruption and tax fraud against the brother of Justice Party leader Demirel.

This crackdown is designed to show that the army alone is able to crush "anarchy". Prime Minister Uluu has boasted that political killings have dropped from 20 per day to an average of 1-2.

The junta is holding public meetings across the country, trying on this basis to win support of desperate and bankrupt middle class layers—who have been wooed by the junta's economic and tax reforms.

Main victims of these policies have been the working class. The Turkish lira has been devalued twice, while the price of basic commodities has risen by 100%.

The factories have been placed under virtually military discipline, with the sack for any worker who arrives late three times in a month.

Not paid

The promised 20% bonus for workers has never been paid—but independent unions have been banned and strikes outlawed. There has been a savage crackdown on revolutionary organisations, with thousands of militants jailed.

On the international level, the junta also continues to balance uneasily. A break in diplomatic relations with the Zionist state of Israel has helped pave the way for talks on trade with the oil-rich Libyan and Iraqi regimes.

And the Turkish generals have sought to improve relations with the Soviet bureaucracy. A new trade deal is expected to be signed in Moscow in January.

Echoing this collaboration between the Moscow Stalinists and the junta chiefs, the illegal Turkish Communist Party is proclaiming the junta to be a "lesser evil" compared to a fascist government.

But of course the junta itself is completely linked to the NATO alliance and thus to imperialist strategy in the Middle East.

Despite the defeatism and collaboration of the Stalinists, and the real setback inflicted by the September 12 coup, the Turkish working class is still not completely defeated.

Key to its struggle is the building of a revolutionary leadership to unite the oppressed masses on transitional and democratic demands in the fight to oust the bonapartist junta and establish a workers and peasants government.



Andreotti (right): was he involved?



Turkish troops on the streets

MASSIVE EXPLOITATION OF DATSUN WORKERS

Reprinted from Tokyo University's Annals of the Institute of Social Science, no 21.

Economic background: An analysis of labour's relative share in value added.

History of Nissan's Business Performance.

Nissan's postwar business performance clearly shows the company has been expanding very rapidly in terms of both its annual production and sales.

1) Production and Sales.

Nissan's production in the financial year 1975, i.e. 2.11 million vehicles, is 150 times larger than production in 1952, of 14,000 vehicles, and 92 times the level of 1955's 23,000 vehicles.

In the 20-year period from 1955 to 1975, Nissan's production increased about 9 times as fast as Japanese manufacturing industries as a whole, which expanded only about 10 times.

This simple comparison eloquently indicates the rapid postwar growth of the Japanese automotive industry and of Nissan Motor, one of its giants.

Nissan's growth rate in the 24-year period from 1952 to 1975, measured in terms of sales in constant prices, was an incredible 8500%.

Four periods

2) Periodisation.

Upon closer examination, however, Nissan's rapid growth in production and sales was far from steady. Its growth can be divided into four distinctive periods which directly correspond to the business cycles of Japanese capitalism.

What four years marked the beginning of these four periods? The first period began in 1950 the year in which the Korean War broke out.

At that time, Japanese industry was in the depths of a serious depression due to the chaotic conditions that prevailed in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II and also to the deflationary policies (Dodge Plan) enforced by the US occupation authorities.

Even Toyota Motor Co., now the leading Japanese auto manufacturer, faced an inevitable bankruptcy.

Toyota was given a new lease of life by emergency rescue measures devised by the Nagoya Branch Office of the Bank of Japan and by the US forces which placed orders with Toyota for 3,329 military vehicles in July and August 1950, immediately following the outbreak of the war in Korea.

Nissan, which was in equally desperate straits, was also able to resume full production only after it received an order for 2,915 vehicles for use by the US military in August 1950.

Watershed

To both the automotive industry of Japan and to Japanese capitalism as a whole, the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 represented a watershed.

The war ended the period of post World War II confusion and ushered in a period of reproduction on an expanded scale.

The second period dates from 1954, when Japan was in a depression following the August 1953 truce agreement in Korea. The year 1954 was very significant, especially for Nissan, which had just experienced a major 100-day long strike in 1953.

In the course of this strike, the labour union at Nissan split and the present Nissan Workers'



Automated production line at Datsun

Union was established. What were the causes of the 1953 strike?

In an effort to start producing passenger cars, Nissan concluded in December 1952 an agreement for a technical tie-up with British Austin.

The management of Nissan hoped that knockdown assembly of Austin's model 40 would enable their company to learn the skills necessary for passenger-car production.

In their eyes, however, one serious obstacle clouded Nissan's future: the labour union was staging strikes too frequently and was unwilling to cooperate in production.

100-day strike

Management decided to crush the union. The workers tried to protect their rights by staging a 100-day strike. In the end, however, they were miserably defeated, and the union was split.

The second union is the present Nissan Workers' Union which completely cooperates with the company. Thus, it was by crushing the workers' struggle that Nissan managed to lay the foundation for its prosperity in the subsequent years.

The third period began in 1965, which coincided with a medium-term swing of a ten-year cycle. The beginning of the fourth period was marked by the oil crisis of November 1973.

In each of the years that marked the beginning of the four periods, Nissan was suffering from stagnant production and sales. In each period both production and sales grew at unusually rapid rates; from 1955 until 1964, they grew at an annual rate of about 30%. Even in the 1970s till the oil crisis, production and sales continued to expand at a rate of more than 10% per year.

3) Enormous profits.

Needless to say, the expan-

ded production and sales enabled Nissan to earn tremendous profits.

Nissan's gross profits in 1952 amounted to a mere 1.24 billion yen (or 2.22 billion in 1975 prices) and in 1955 to 2.56 billion yen (or 4.68 billion in 1975 prices).

But in 1972 the year before the oil crisis, gross profits soared to a staggering 151.1 billion yen (or 236.9 billion yen in 1975 prices), which is 55 times the figure for 1955.

In the following section, I would like to clarify the basic mechanism that helped Nissan generate these profits.

a) Labour productivity: Let us first look at the trend of labour productivity. We shall put the level of production per worker in 1955, i.e. 3.45 vehicles, equal to 100. The labour productivity index which stood at a low of 60.6 (or 2.1 vehicles) in 1951 increased rapidly to 1,190 (or 41.1 vehicles) by 1975.

This is approximately a 20-fold increase in the 24 years from 1951 to 1975 and about a 12-fold increase in the 20 years from 1955 to 1975.

As a result, Nissan now enjoys extremely high labour productivity: more than 40 vehicles per worker per year.

Productivity

With respect to the changes in labour productivity, each period can be characterised as follows. In period I, labour productivity remains at a low level of about two vehicles produced per worker per year.

It rapidly increased in period II to 17 vehicles. In period III labour productivity increased, although not as quickly as in period II, to approximately 37 vehicles. In period IV it leveled off at the high rate of 40 vehicles.

b) Wage rate: Let us next look into personnel cost per worker, the average wage. Need-

less to say, in order to examine costs over a long period we must use the real wages which are calculated to negate the effects of price fluctuations.

In 1952 Nissan paid its workers an average annual wage of 438,000 yen (or 1,598,000 yen in 1975 prices) and in 1955, 445,000 yen (or 1,446,000 in 1975 prices). The wage rate in 1975 was 2,920,000, or an increase of about 1.8 times in 23 years.

Twenty times

Given the fact that in the same period the physical productivity of labour increased about 20 times, the wage rate not only failed to increase in proportion to the productivity hike but its rate of increase was less than one tenth of the productivity increase.

To put it differently, the pie produced by each worker grew 20 times in 23 years, but the slice of pie dished out to him less than doubled.

What is more, in the same period the average real wage paid in Japanese manufacturing industries as a whole trebled. The real wage rate at Nissan increased at a rate far slower than that of the average Japanese manufacturer.

c) Value added and personnel cost per worker: On the basis of these observations about physical labour productivity and real wages I shall now analyse value added and personnel cost per worker.

Let us first look at the functions which the gross value added productivity of labour and personnel cost per worker play in determining the level of labour's relative share in value added and in causing it to fluctuate. The trends of the three variables, i.e. labour's relative share, gross value added per worker and personnel cost per worker, are summarised in Table 3.

In period I (1952-4), gross value added per worker was at a low of 1,110,000 yen (in 1975 prices, which are used herein-after), but personnel cost amounted to as much as 780,000 yen.

It should be pointed out, however, that in this period gross value added per worker was fairly stable or beginning to show signs of increase, while personnel costs were declining.

All in all, however, period I can be characterised as a time when the workers were able to enjoy a relatively large share due to the fact that Nissan Motor's operations were still moribund.

The picture changed drastically in period II (1955-64). Gross value added per worker continued to increase rapidly at more than 10% per year, reaching an average of 2,070,000 yen in the first half of the period (1955-59) or twice the level in period I and 4,280,000 yen in the second half (1960-65) or four times the level of period I.

In stark contrast, payroll cost per worker decreased from 780,000 to 770,000 yen in the first half: it increased again in the latter half, but very slowly.

Through "technological innovation"—through the process of accumulation accompanied by advancement of organic composition of capital, labour productivity rose very quickly, and labour's relative share decreased rapidly.

Picture changed

This is exactly what labour's relative share in gross value added at Nissan Motor is when business is on the rise.

In period III (1965-1973), the picture again changed drastically. Labour's relative share in the first half of the period increased. This was due to the fact that whereas gross value added per worker increased at a slower rate than in period II, reaching 4.41 million yen in the

first half, personnel cost per worker increased more than 10% per year, reaching 1.31 million yen in the first half and 2.42 million in the second.

These phenomena can be attributed to the "shortage of labour" that prevailed in the final phase of the long term cyclical upturn of business.

In fact, at the time when not only Nissan Motor but spokesmen for Japanese capitalism as a whole were eulogising the blessing of "numerical prosperity", their growth potential was nearly exhausted.

In period IV (1974 to the present), the Japanese economy has been in a depression following the oil crisis, and labour's relative share has been leveling off.

Gross value added per worker has been stagnating at a high level and with a slight downward movement. Personnel costs per worker have leveled off at a high level with a slight upward trend.

Nevertheless, the situation has drastically changed since the oil crisis of November 1973. Gone are the days of excitement and enthusiasm that once characterised the period of high economic growth when real wages increased rapidly, and labour productivity still more rapidly.

The capitalists were able to earn enormous profits and the workers could dream of improving their livelihood within a capitalist society.

It has now become self-evident to both the workers and the capitalists that job insecurity, unpaid wages and reduced profits are an integral part of a capitalist society.

Conclusion. The 20-year period of Nissan's operations from 1955 to 1975 can be viewed as a rapid process of expansion and capital accumulation for Nissan.

Underlying this rapid accumulation was the low rate of distribution to the workers (i.e. high rate of surplus value), for the accumulation of capital is essentially a process by which surplus value is transformed into capital.

Day after day the workers have been trying to earn their living by hard labour at the assembly line's endless conveyor belts.

To be sure, the 20-year period seems to have been the brightest for workers in the whole history of Japanese capitalism in the sense that it was accompanied by expanded job opportunities and a steady increase in real wages.

Yet in the production process, the workers have produced capital, which exploited their labour in the subsequent cycle of production at a rate several dozen times or even hundreds of times faster than their wages increased.

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BENN POINTS OUT STATE SNOOPING

Tony Benn has lifted another tantalising edge of the veil that shrouds the relationship between the state and the labour movement.

His revelations at the Labour Party conference of Callaghan's vetoes on election manifesto policies stirred up a furious reaction from the Labour bureaucracy.

Now comes an introduction to the Review of Security and the State 1980—compiled by State Research, in which Benn details some of the ways in which up-and-coming Labour politicians are drawn into state surveillance.

Playing on 'the national interests' and the opportunist Labourites' desire to disassociate themselves from 'undemocratic' forces, the state agents turn future leaders of the Labour Party and the trade unions into police spies.

The introduction is double edged, pointing the finger as much at Benn as it does at the state.

Benn was first approached by an army colonel through his former headmaster after leaving the navy. He was offered a salary of £1,000 a year—at that time double the pay of the BBC producer's job which he was about to start.

Amazed

Benn says he "thought for a moment" (what about?) and then said that as he was on the list of would-be Labour candidates he could not undertake such a job.

(Benn's account casts himself in the role of a starry-eyed naive candidate constantly amazed at the deviousness of the democratic state).

"Expecting that this reply would end the interview, I was very surprised to hear him say:

'Oh that is no problem. You could do both jobs.'

Later, after becoming an MP, Benn was approached again by the same colonel, who offered work 'for the Foreign Office' and named "a certain Labour MP who had served as a Minister in the 1945-51 Labour government."

Benn says "I thanked him courteously and declined again."

When Benn was invited to address what he calls "The Socialist International" (the 2nd International which helped send the male youth of Europe to their mass graves in 1914) his Civil Service private secretary expressed shock and horror, apparently under the impression that this was the same as the forerunners of the SWP—the International Socialists.

Benn appears to attack the state's role on Northern Ireland; but in fact a closer reading shows he does no such thing.

He describes the build-up of

security measures as:

"an apparatus that, improperly used, would resemble that of a police state and could stretch back into intelligence work in Britain."

(our emphasis)

Benn is not one to use words carelessly. He clearly is not prepared to say that the apparatus is a police state in Northern Ireland.

Own role

Benn also skates over his own role in the use of the army, in industrial disputes—mentioning obscurely plans to use troops to break the tanker drivers' strike in 78-79 when he was Energy Secretary—but remaining silent on his own role.

He expresses amazement that the security services did not move against currency speculators in 1976 and upholds the right of senior civil servants to hold their 'private' political beliefs so long as they don't "incorporate their own political attitudes into the work they do as military or civil servants".

Benn's article most glaringly fails to expose those in the labour movement who Benn, on his own admission, knows to be spies.

He alludes to a 'social occasion' when a former Labour Prime Minister admitted spying on a strike HQ. *What Prime Minister? Which strike?*

The introduction shows the crying need for a workers' inquiry to weed out the state spies in the labour movement. First to the witness box could be Tony Benn—with a list of names and dates.

*The Review of Security and the State 1980 by State Research is published by Julian Friedman Books Ltd at £10.



Benn

LAMBETH'S RATE RISE DILEMMA

A dilemma now faces the Labour council in the London borough of Lambeth.

Since it has failed to carry through many of the Tory cuts, and been penalised by Heseltine for its "overspending" the council faces a deficit of £11½ million by the end of this financial year.

And the council's first resort to resolve this problem has been to turn to massive borrowing based on income in the next few months.

But the district auditor has now warned that this could well be illegal. Were councillors to support such a course of action—and seek to cover this year's debts by borrowing money due to be paid to the council in the next financial year—they could render them-

selves personally liable to a surcharge to cover the outstanding amount!

Lambeth has already spent its income for this financial year. Its only hope to cover the £11½ million needed would therefore be to impose a supplementary rate on the people of Lambeth—averaging around £4 per week.

Yet Lambeth council, and in particular its leader, Ted Knight, have stood at the forefront of the campaign in the last few months to mobilise action against local government cuts.

The labour movement conference convened by Lambeth council called specifically for *opposition* to rent or rate increases, and for a policy of all-out strike action as soon as any Labour council faces reviewers or commissioners or

is surcharged for refusing to implement cuts.

It now seems clear that Knight and his fellow councillors will be among the first to face up to such a test. They must decide soon.

Will they cave in and impose a £4 a week wage cut on Lambeth workers? Or will they confront the Tory offensive?

To do so Lambeth councillors will need full backing from public sector and other unions. Already there has been a call for a strike of "at least 2 weeks" by council direct labour workers from February 2.

Time for action

This stand must be actively supported by other trade unionists both in Lambeth and throughout the country. The time for action, if local government services are to be defended is now.

The Lambeth crisis underlines the importance of the recall Lambeth conference on the cuts scheduled for January 31.

Delegates are invited from all labour movement organisations. *Socialist Press* readers should press for the fullest possible support.

Further details of the Lambeth campaign and the recall conference, and requests for speakers from the Steering Committee to attend local meetings should be addressed to: Local Government in Crisis Steering Group, c/o Room 103, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2 1RW. Tel. 01-274 7722 ext 2066.

Makers of
Modern
Marxism
By Terry Eagleton

This Socialist Press pamphlet contains articles by Terry Eagleton on Marxist theoreticians from the time of the Comintern to the present day—Lukacs, Korsch, Gramsci, Marcuse, Benjamin, Sartre and Althusser.

Price 65p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

PRESS GANG



A court case is taking place in London in the High Court which has no heroes, only villains. Nevertheless it is running true to form as a whitewash job on the press.

The Moonies—Unification Church—are suing the *Daily Mail* for libel for an article in 1978 which described them as a 'sinister' church which 'breaks up families'.

This description may not seem a cause for offence to *Socialist Press* readers who will have no love for the big business machines of 'alternative churches'.

13m dollars

Such churches seem to view poverty as essential for their rank and file and something to be avoided at all costs by their leadership.

Already the court has been told that the Rev. Sun Yan Moon is worth 13 million US dollars.

But the charges which are regularly levelled at the Moonies in the press (the *Daily Mail* has been chosen as a test case) would at first sight seem to be

better aimed elsewhere.

How about 'Church seized my daughter' sobs father—over a story which could read:

"Heart broken parents last night accused a mystical group of brainwashing and abducting their daughter."

The 18-year old girl has left home and is living under a 'vow of silence' in a prison like building called a convent.

Her head has been shaved and her clothes replaced by a rough sack-like object. She told her parents—before disappearing—that she was going to be a "bride of Christ".

"The religious sect observe strict discipline and worship a man executed for treason nearly 2000 years ago."

The group is well known as a breaker up of families. It insists that children of members must be members.

But it is controlled by a group of wealthy elderly drones in Rome who own vast areas of land throughout the world and who live in unimaginable luxury.

At their head is a shadowy Mafia Godfather known as the Pope. He claims to be the earthly representative of a deity who made everything—and

therefore infallible.

Last night the stricken mother said: "We tried to reason with her but she just stared at us with eyes that seemed drugged and said she had seen the truth revealed in a dream."

Such a story has yet to be written about the Roman Catholic Church but is common currency over the Moonies.

Yet the *Daily Mail* certainly has the judge—if not the jury—on its side.

So far the Moonies, even to continue their case, must pay into court by the new year a total of £175,000. This is the "justice" for which British courts are famed.

In fact the case is quite likely to be struck out if the Moonie leadership is unwilling to cough up.

If such things were written about Pope or Archbishop the court would probably be a criminal one and the sentence measured in decades.

So long as the Moonies (who are considered to 'discredit' religion and challenge parental authority) are the target, then the *Daily Mail* is regarded by the courts as being on the side of the angels.

1980: A YEAR OF FRUSTRATION

By Terry Smith

A year of plummeting living standards and rocketing unemployment; a year of victimisations and savage speed-up; a year of slashed social services and growing homelessness; 1980 was all of those things for the British working class.

But above all 1980 was a year of massive anger, pent-up militancy—and growing frustration as workers time and again saw their leaders grovel to Thatcher and sabotage any prospect of a fight to halt the Tory offensive.

Crushed

The year began with the steel strike, and calls for an all-Wales General Strike to go beyond the pay battle to resist all closures. The General Strike call was crushed by the TUC and the closures accepted by the steel unions. And the year ended with the announcement of yet another 20,000 redundancies in the steel industry, while Welsh union bureaucrats welcomed the news!

Twice during 1980 union leaders gave notice of all-out strike action in British Leyland—and twice BL workers were forced to witness a miserable last-minute sell-out to Michael Edwardes which sent management cock-a-hoop into renewed attacks on the shop floor.

1980 began with Derek Robinson victimised at Longbridge and union leaders sabotaging action in his defence; it looks certain to end with six more shop stewards and five other workers being victimised at Longbridge—while union leaders sit back in silence.

Tenacity

The Tories forged ahead with a tenacity and a commitment never seen from the leaders of the labour movement. Ruthlessly they cut and hacked away at health, education, social services, unemployment and sick pay, civil service jobs and public sector industries.

They halted council house building. They penalised "over-spending" Labour councils. They announced a 6% pay limit for public sector workers for at least two years. They brought in savage anti-union legislation.

And all the time the dole queues, fed on a diet of monetarist policies, grew and grew.

Dukes of York

What did the union leaders of the labour movement do? Like feeble old Dukes of York they chose three occasions to march their members to the top of the hill—and march them down again.

On March 9 it was the TUC's Sunday demonstration. Tens of thousands turned out—to hear empty speeches from union leaders.

On May 14 it was the TUC Day of Action. Two million workers ignored the pleas of union leaders to restrict action to lunch-time meetings—and stopped work.

250,000 joined local demonstrations that day in towns throughout the country: but still they were offered no perspective for action to defeat the Tories.

And on November 29 came the biggest march so far. Over 100,000 workers mobilised



BL workers march in support of Derek Robinson



Steelworkers demand support



Tory leaders delighted at their easy ride

behind the Labour Party's defeat the Tories is "through the ballot box"—in 1984! There have been signs during the year that perhaps this

stubborn opposition by the labour bureaucrats to action against the Tories might be defeated.

The October conference of the Labour Party—in sharp distinction from the miserable display at the 1980 TUC Congress—carried an emergency Lambeth resolution calling for all-out action to defeat the cuts in the public sector.

The same conference overturned the Callaghan leadership by forcing through mandatory reselection of MPs and demands for a more democratic means of electing the Party leader.

Regroup

But since that point the right wing has begun to regroup and mobilise to overturn these reforms.

Union block votes now seem set to back an "electoral

college" dominated by the right wing rump of the Parliamentary Labour Party—and union bureaucrats are already packing GMCs with right wing placemen to prevent the selection of socialist candidates. A right wing Shadow Cabinet has been elected by MPs. The fight for Labour Party democracy has a long way still to go.

Treachery

It is indeed in the final few months of 1980 that the treachery of union leaders in sabotaging action against the Tories has reached its peak.

As the autumn pay round began, engineering employers, encouraged by Terry Duffy's assurances that the union leaders were not in militant mood, forced home a miserable 8.2% pay settlement for two million workers covered by the Confed.

This left BL workers in the

forefront of the fight—faced with a further humiliating pay offer from Edwardes after two successive years in which 5% deals had been imposed.

There was huge shop floor support for strike action against Edwardes 6.8% "final" offer, which means a further cut in real pay of over 10% for BL workers.

A strike at BL—the heart of the engineering industry and also a part of the public sector—would have offered a lead to millions of other workers facing pay reviews.

Union officials fought tooth and nail to avert the strike—and were assisted in this by the Communist Party in the shape of Longbridge convenor Jack Adams, who managed to procure a mass meeting vote against strike action.

The BL sell-out was followed at once by the Tory announcement of the 6% pay limit in the public sector.

Compromise

Powerful and potentially embarrassing sections of public sector workers—the miners, the water workers and the firemen—have been offered compromise deals to avert strike action.

Elsewhere the Tories have shrewdly assessed that public sector union leaders like Fisher, Drain, Basnett and COHSE leader Spanswick have no intention of fighting a pay limit—however low it may be. And the stage has been set for a new pay sell-out in steel.

The BL betrayal has thus altered the whole shape of the class struggle in the next few months. Mass action on pay—despite the militancy of the membership—seems likely to be combatted in every case by union leaders who prefer to see Thatcher remain in office than workers mobilised in action to oust the Tories.

The fight to defend living standards; to defend jobs and public services; to defend union rights; and to carry through the kind of fight for socialist policies implicitly demanded by Labour conference delegates, demands the construction of a new, revolutionary leadership in the working class.

The lessons of 1980—and our role in these and other key struggles (see overleaf) confirm the need for socialists to join the Workers Socialist League in its fight to build such a leadership.



JOIN THE WSL!

Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

1980: WHAT WE HA

Last winter's pay battles fighting for a General Strike

The year began with the first national strike by steelworkers since the 1920s. The struggle took place as pay talks affecting BL workers, water workers and others were reaching a crucial stage.

The situation offered broad layers of workers the opportunity to strike together against the common enemy—the

Thatcher government.

From the outset *Socialist Press* pointed to the necessity to spread the steel strike, to bring out other sections of workers if the Tories were to be defeated.

We called for councils of action to be built to draw together delegates from all of the organisations of the labour movement to defend, develop and extend the strike.

And we underlined the need to include an agreement for the preservation of all jobs as a condition of settlement.

We warned of the moves by ISTC and TUC bureaucrats to hold back the development of strike committees and isolate the strike.

And we took practical steps to combat such isolation—first and foremost by fighting in every way possible for strike action by BL workers against Edwardes' insulting 5% with-

As the Welsh TUC's call for

an all-Wales General Strike from January 21 was crushed by Len Murray and national union bureaucrats, talk of a General Strike became common coin. One after another, union leaders anxiously warned that a General Strike could be the result unless the Tories con-

The Workers' League in this situation utilised these empty threats by the General Strike action to bring down the Tories. This was underlined by the threat of court action against the ISTC for calling out its members in private steel firms, and by the huge strike of 250,000 workers on the Welsh Day of Action on January 28.

But the union leaders had very different ideas. They were working overtime to prevent

any other struggle linking up with the steelworkers.

So while the Tories conceded over-the-odds settlements to water workers, gas workers and others, in BL union bureaucrats were completing the betrayal of victimised covenor Derek Robinson, and, despite the fight waged by WSL supporters, sewing up a miserable capitulation on the pay claim.

To combat the growing isolation of the steel strike, *Socialist Press* urged steel pickets to turn their attention towards stopping the flow of components to the main industrial plants.

The TGWU was nominally pledged to support the strike. We fought alongside steelworkers to put up picket lines to stop TGWU-organised lorries that were keeping production rolling throughout the engineer-

ing industry—and to demand the TGWU issue an instruction that these pickets be respected. Such moves were unsuccessful. But, under massive pressure, BL union leaders eventually issued a call for strike action on their pay review.

The Tories' actions confirmed our analysis that what they had feared above all was a united struggle against them. They immediately cobbled together an "inquiry" to make a "compromise" offer to the steel workers—which was forced through by ISTC leader Bill Sirs. The prospect of a joint fight was thus destroyed. And shortly afterwards a humiliating retreat by Moss Evans handed Michael Edwardes his biggest "victory" so far—the imposition of a 5% pay deal with 92 pages of strings.

Defending basic union rights

1980 was the year in which Thatcher's Tory government with even less trouble than Heath's in 1971—rammed through sweeping anti-union legis-

lation.

Drawing the lesson from the futile 1970-71 "Kill the Bill" protests orchestrated by the Communist Party which had so signally failed to prevent Heath enacting the Industrial Relations Act, the Workers' Socialist League insisted that only the defeat of the Thatcher government itself would prevent the so-called "Employment Bill" reaching the statute books. We argued consistently for the new anti-union laws to be fought as part of the wholesale Tory offensive on jobs, wages and social services.

The necessary generalised strike action to defeat Prior's laws would come not from workers angered by the abstract prospect of legislation, but from mass resistance to the implementation of that legislation to attack pickets or break up the closed shop.

The WSL therefore focussed on the necessity for unions to ignore and defy the new laws and all anti-union court rulings. A motion initially proposed by *Socialist Press* supporters spelling out a policy of defiance carried by the NUI.

And *Socialist Press* supporters played an important role in the fight for NUI solidarity when printers from the NCA were locked out in their pay dispute.

While the courts attempted

to bludgeon the print unions into dropping their strike call for the May 14 Day of Action, our members and supporters fought in the car industry and elsewhere for strike action.

But union rights were not only under fire from the courts: some employers, impatient to get at the throats of workers, were battling tooth and nail to crush the unions.

No sooner had the unionisation strike at the Chix bubble-gum factory in Slough been sold out by the GMWU leadership, than the strike against victimisation of TGWU convenor and shop stewards by workers at Adwest Engineering in Reading threw the spotlight on the refusal of union leaders to fight for even the most basic rights of the workforce.

WSL members worked alongside the Adwest strikers, fighting to build their mass pickets and to expose the treachery of the TGWU bureaucracy.

The strike faced harassment from police rehearsing for the enforcement of the anti-union laws—bringing mass arrests in July.

The eventually unsuccessful struggle for official TGWU backing culminated in an occupation of Transport House by strikers and supporters in September, which was ended when leading TGWU left Alex Kitson called in the police.

The Adwest struggle was an early warning sign that union leaders were determined to avoid any actions to defy the Tory anti-union laws.

So too is the fight against the victimisation of shop stewards and militants at the Ayrshire Marine construction site at Hunterston, where *Socialist Press* supporters have fought consistently alongside the strikers to extend their labour movement against the Tory offensive.

Solidarity with Irish struggle

Members and supporters of the Workers' Socialist League have fought consistently within the labour movement for opposition to British imperialism in Ireland—and as such have faced and fought a succession of witch-hunts.

1980 began with a scurrilous attempt by Communist Party members to whip up mass hos-

tility to left wing candidates in the TGWU leadership elections at British Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant. The CP chose to witch-hunt deputy convenor Alan Thornett and convenor Bob Fryer for the principled stand they had taken in defence of a Provisional Sinn Fein demonstration through the town the previous autumn.

The witch-hunt misfired as shop stewards' meetings voted unanimously on the night shift and 120-7 on the day shift to condemn it, and Thornett and Fryer strengthened their position in the shop floor ballot.

By March the witch-hunt against anyone raising the issue of Ireland had been taken up in earnest by the TUC.

TUC bureaucrats moved in to lend their weight to a massive press witch-hunt against a Tameside Trades Council conference

on Ireland. They declared that if the conference went ahead, the Trades Council would be dis-affiliated.

The Trades Council correctly rejected this blackmail, and their stand has won wide endorsement from other trades councils. WSL members and supporters have played an important role in mobilising support for this struggle in trades councils to convene similar conferences.

The issue of censorship and biased media coverage of the war in Ireland has also been taken up by WSL members and supporters, with the successful fight for a resolution at annual conference committing the NUI with other media unions to convene a national labour movement conference on the issue—now scheduled for February 1981.

WE BEEN UP TO

The past twelve months have brought a significant strengthening in the political work of the Workers Socialist League, as workers increasingly recognise the need for firm action to combat the Tories. JOHN LISTER looks at some of the most important contributions made by our movement during 1980.

Fighting for ACTION on cuts

From the time when a WSL member working at University College Hospital, London first proposed to a shocked meeting that workers at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital should occupy to prevent its closure, the WSL has consistently stood at the forefront of the fight for this policy.

The EGA was in fact defended for over three years by a work-in—backed up by repeated threats of widespread strike action to prevent the various moves made by the AHA to close it.

Sabotage

It was the sabotage of such supporting action by union officials which left other hospital occupations at Hounslow and Etwall in Derbyshire exposed to savage AHA

raids, and which eventually allowed the closure of the EGA. 1980 brought further examples of such treachery.

The ten-month occupation of St. Benedict's Hospital in Tooting, which had become a national focus for resistance to the Tory offensive on the NHS, was smashed by scab ambulances driven through angry picket lines—while NUPE and COHSE bureaucrats refused to lift a finger to fight for supporting strike action.

A few weeks later management brutally snatched terminal cancer patients from St. Columbas Hospital, Hampstead, to end a work-in there.

Against this background of betrayal our members and supporters have fought against the odds for action.

The attempts to mount a fight against the closure of the large Cowley Road geriatric hospital in Oxford were defeated by the determination of the hospital's NUPE convenor, NEC member Betty Ward to avoid an occupation at all costs.

But the long campaign to save the smaller and more isolated geriatric hospital at Longworth has led to the establishment of an occupation there, in which WSL members and supporters have worked alongside staff to defend much-needed facilities.

Elsewhere, WSL members

and supporters played an important role in supporting the occupation of Wheatley Street nursery in Coventry, where a Labour-controlled council was busily carrying through Tory cuts.

But, more important, the lessons from these struggles have been drawn out in more general terms by the WSL.

They were incorporated into

the amendments moved jointly by supporters of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement and Socialist Organiser at the anti-cuts conference convened by Lambeth Labour Council on November 1.

As the scale of the Tory

attack became clear, these policies, which have often been fiercely contested in smaller local campaigns, won the backing of a clear majority of the 700 delegates who attended from a wide range of trade union and labour movement bodies.

The steering committee set up from that conference includes WSL members and supporters: it has now convened a recall conference for January 31 and called for national backing to a two-week strike called by sections of Lambeth Council workers.

The fight for such policies of all-out resistance to the Tory offensive can expose the destructive role of the union bureaucracy and provide a vital focus for the fight for generalised action to defeat the Thatcher government.

Labour Party in crisis

The Labour Party in 1980 has been dominated by the fight for democratic reforms to the constitution as workers have sought the means to prevent a repetition of the betrayals of Wilson/Callaghan governments.

Indeed the debate has been far more thorough on the "alternative" policies advocated by the left wingers who have emerged as the foremost advocates of democracy. Socialist Press supporters within the Labour Party have fought for the maximum extension of democratic procedures while at the same time developing a fight for consistent socialist policies.

Import controls

In particular our supporters have fought for opposition to British imperialism in Ireland, and challenged the nationalistic calls by 'left' wingers for import controls.

It is around the question of the right of Labour Party members to advocate Trotskyist policies that the fight for the reinstatement of expelled Oxford CLP member Ted Heslin has continued throughout the year.

Hostility

But at the same time the Heslin case has exposed the hostility of supposed 'left' wingers like Neil Kinnock to those who argue consistently for socialist policies.

Heslin has made no secret of the fact that he supports and sells Socialist Press. He has simply demanded the right to argue for such socialist policies within the Labour Party. Such a request drives the Oxford Labour Party right into paroxysms of fury—and the CLP is still refusing to comply with an NEC decision that Heslin should be reinstated.

Kinnock has declared himself in favour of expelling not only Socialist Press supporters but possibly even kicking out 'Militant' supporters as well! Yet Kinnock is opposed to the expulsion of the right wing Callaghan clique. The fight for socialism in the Labour Party must therefore be conducted against both the open right wing and the fake left.

Bring down the Tories!

The rapid worsening of the economic crisis—with unemployment racing over the two million mark, continuing inflation and the certainty of more cuts in spending—made it clear that anti-Tory militancy would grow within the working class.

With the autumn pay round taking place in the context of 16% inflation, the Workers Socialist League National Committee drew the conclusion that the prospect of mass struggles on cuts and pay hinged on the problem of leadership.

No fight

TUC leaders had made it clear they would not fight the anti-union laws: but whether they could contain the growing willingness of workers to fight on wages was far less certain.

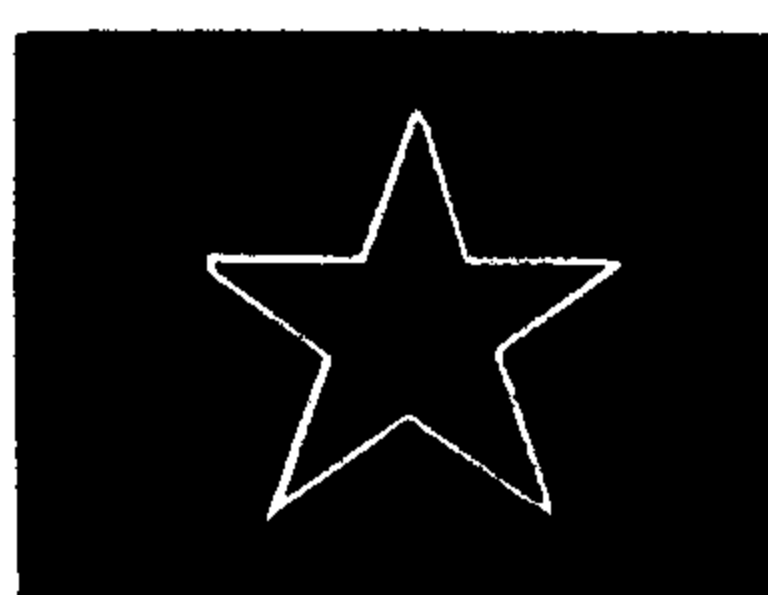
And if one major group of workers were to lead the way in struggle, conditions were ideal to bring others out by their side.

With this in view, WSL members pressed for the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement to convene a November Conference under the slogan 'Bring Down the Tories This Winter'.

A Socialist Press campaign pamphlet under the same title was also produced. The conference was supported by over 25 labour movement organisations and heard speakers from virtually every major struggle taking place against the Tory offensive.

In BL and the FBU, WSL members and supporters fought tooth and nail alongside other Trotskyists to mobilise all-out strike action and the hard-won standards and the hard-won FBU pay agreement—a focus would also have formed a focus for the fight to defeat Thatcher.

Our fight goes on—with the struggle against the 6% limit in the public sector unions, and the fight for strike action against the cuts.



The fight for the Fourth International

On December 31, 1979 the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee was formed, comprising, in addition to the Workers Socialist League, groups from Italy, Denmark, Turkey, Chile, a nucleus in France and a sympathising section in the USA (barred from affiliation by reactionary US legislation).

The TILC takes its stand on the Trotskyist Transitional Programme of 1938 and on the development beyond it which is embodied in the document 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle'.

The level of political agreement this indicated marked a major step forward in the fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International: but the TILC has been clear from the outset that it sees itself as only a transitional step towards such a reconstruction.

We have stressed repeatedly that we do not seek to proclaim ourselves as "the" Fourth International.

The TILC's 'Declaration of Intent' stresses that our task is to confront the problem of the profound divisions within the world Trotskyist movement—divisions which result from 30 years of political inactivity.

The TILC thus faces a dual task. On the one hand in the practical work of its sections and in the discussions within its own ranks it is attempting—necessarily in a limited way—to offer leadership and develop programmatic agreement that will advance the class struggle internationally.

On this basis we intend to work towards the agreement of national perspectives for each of the sections and the establishment of the TILC as a democratic centralist international tendency.

On the other hand the TILC has pressed for discussions both on a national and international level with other Trotskyist forces on the fundamental political problems to be tackled if the Fourth International is to be reconstructed.

We have sought—but failed to achieve—discussions with the newly-formed Parity Commission.

Discussions have, however, taken place with the Fourth International Tendency, whose sections include Politica Obrera in Argentina and the POR in Bolivia as well as the Workers League in Palestine. FIT representatives attended the successful TILC summer school in July.

Within the TILC on an international level a wide range of agreement has been evident throughout the year. Resolutions on Turkey, on Poland and on the Iran/Iraq war, along with a political assessment of the Parity Commission, will be among the topics debated at the next Liaison Committee meeting.

Meanwhile on a national level, discussions have been conducted by TILC sections with individual Trotskyist groupings, with a view to ascertaining whether a principled basis exists for possible fusion.

Thus in Italy the GBL is engaged in discussions with a circle of militants who have come from a number of organisations; in France discussions are taking place with sympathetic forces in Paris; and in the USA the Socialist League (DC) is engaged in discussions and joint work with the RWG.

In Britain the WSL has, during the year, developed discussions at leadership and at membership level with Workers Power—in which Workers Power has moved to harden and extend the differences of method that have emerged.

And discussions are taking place between the WSL and the International Communist League, accompanied by joint work around British Leyland, the FBU, the Labour Party and the fight against the cuts. Such discussions are yet at a tentative stage, with no firm balance sheet having yet been drawn up on areas where disagreement clearly exists.

Whatever the outcome in any of these instances there is no doubt that 1981 will be a crucial year for the further development of the TILC as a force fighting to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International.

MURAL ART AND REVOLUTION

Penny Woolcock reviews the work of the Mexican muralist Orozco on show at the Oxford Museum of Modern Art (entrance 60p).

"Our fundamental aesthetic goal must be to socialise artistic expression and wipe out bourgeois individualism.

"We repudiate so called easel painting and every kind of art favoured by ultra-intellectual circles because it is aristocratic, and we praise monumental art in all its forms, because it is public property."

"We proclaim that at this time of social change from a decrepit order to a new one, the creators of beauty must use their best efforts to produce ideological works of art for the people; art must no longer be the expression of individual satisfaction which it is today, but should aim to become a fighting educative art for all."

David Alfaro Siqueiros
Art and Revolution

The relationship between art and revolution is a thorny and also arguably unimportant problem.

At different times the revolutionary banner has been claimed by both figurative and abstract painters and at these times it was not so much the consciousness raising properties of the paintings themselves which determined which was to be the revolutionary artistic vanguard but rather the political sympathies of the artists themselves.

At the time of the Russian Revolution for instance, the academic painters were broadly patronised by and supported the Tzarist establishment, whereas the avant garde was aligned with the left.

Lenin disliked their work but had to accept their presence in the cultural work of the Bolshevik administration and allowed Lunacharsky, the new Minister for the Arts a free hand.

Artists were encouraged not only to make propaganda films and posters but also given materials with which to paint.

It would be interesting to investigate the reasons why figurative and non-figurative painters fall into both revolutionary and counter-revolutionary camps at different times in terms of social class, state patronage, etc.

But no conclusion could be reached without examining the psychological and sociological variants which, rather than talent, characterise artists in any given society.

It is worth examining the extent to which, for example, the invention of the camera represented an opportunity for the exploration of those areas not fully accessible to pictorial imagery or, on the other hand the extent to which it provided a legitimate haven for social misfits—unable to fulfill themselves any other way—to retreat to.

It is a haven increasingly used by women who, rejecting the traditional female role of helpmate and breeder, rush into a hitherto male profession which enticingly promises them a quick transformation from model to Maker, only to find that they are further marginalised and imprisoned as parasites on male culture.

In other words the political and social composition of a sector of creative workers is not a simple question, since a social realist will fulfill a revolutionary function at a particular conjunction of Mexican history, and be a puppet of Stalinist



Orozco: 'The Leaders' (1936)

and be a puppet of Stalinist reaction at another place and time.

Therefore whether the painter should be seen as a stable factor distorted by political realities is doubtful.

The USA art establishment rejected non-figurative painting as 'subversive' and communist until the 1930s—when Stalin decided that social realism was the only truly proletarian art.

Unsurprisingly, the New York critics under the expert tutelage of Clement Greenberg then flung themselves into a paean of unrestrained worship at the altar of bourgeois individualism now represented by... abstract art!

This throws into question the heady objectives quoted at the beginning of this article. They are objectives which are contradicted in any case by the practice, and adulterated by the other theories of Siqueiros and others like Rodchenko in the USSR.

These artists returned again and again to their easels, compromised themselves with reactionary patronage and went beyond their audience and Eisenstein's dictum:

"The great revolutionary painter is a synthesis of the ideas of the masses and their representation by an individual."

Capitalism perverts and stultifies popular culture. There are queues for *The Confessions of a Taxi Driver* and reruns of *The Sound of Music*, not *The Battleship Potemkin*.

Oohs and aahs are reserved for Woolworth pap paintings of coy girls and white horses on the beach, not Leger's 'Constructeurs'. Committed art is always appropriated eventually by the bourgeoisie.

The Orozco exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art is worth visiting as an impressive collection of a lifetime's work, although the 60p entrance fee is an unwelcome innovation which rather underlines my point about the elitism which 'socialist' art cannot escape under capitalism.

Like the previous shows held there in this genre, (El Lissitzky and Rodchenko), it is interesting but sad since they represent the ultimate failure of these artists' circuit and subsequent overpricing.

open for youth today and the struggle to be waged would be a welcome addition to a stroll through any city as ossified as Oxford for example.

Would the critics and respectable patrons of the galleries be as pleased to see them outside the safe confines of their walls?

Mural painting in Mexico has been particularly significant, partly because of the heritage of highly visual non-literate Indian culture which continued in a restricted way into the Christian era with religious wall panels and votive paintings.

Heritage

Nationalist artists, in the period immediately before and after the revolution attempted to bring out this heritage more strongly and repudiate the dominance of imperialist culture, a nationalism which revealed its reactionary features most clearly in the fascist positions taken at the end of their lives by both Dr Atl, precursor and inspirer of the muralists, and Vasconcelo, the Minister of Education who did most to give them state patronage.

The three great muralists thrown up in this period each had different visions of the artist's role. Orozco, the only non-Communist Party member, saw himself as a critic rather than participant or party hack.

His paintings vividly illustrate the betrayals and butchery of the revolution, the tragic character of the soldier-peasant alliance and so on.

However, his lack of commitment meant that, however correct, his critique simply led him towards cynicism and a nihilistic doctrine of the fallibility of human nature. As a 'Partisan with absolute freedom of action' he offered no way forward beyond his image of the revolution as a gravedigger digging his own grave and slumping into it asleep.

he painted only when he couldn't engage in other political activities.

Even if this were not qualified as many of his statements are, by others emphasising the professional and specific role of artists in society, any politically active painter knows that political activity can consume twenty-four hours of any day in the most quiescent times, and painting time has to be fought for.

However, the very contradictions which abound in Siqueiros' life illustrate even more potently the complex choices facing militant artists over where to place their political energies.

Monumentalising art, in effect meant that he was patronised by 'progressive' forces such as Fords and the bourgeois state even while they imprisoned him for other activities.

Neither of them would spend a penny on publishing Marxist books or teaching anyone to blow up army bases.

Riviera, on the other hand, was a lifelong party member and firmly believed that the revolution had taken place, contributing towards the stability of the cultural hegemony of the new political establishment with his glorious images. The New Order had arrived and it was now a question of the 'national interest'.

Siqueiros, the most politically active of the three, notorious for leading an early unsuccessful attack on Trotsky's life, for his trade union activities, his soldiering in both the Mexican revolution and the Spanish civil war, claimed that

His 'The March of Humanity', a 4,600 feet mural, is inside an expensive auditorium in Mexico City, patronised by middle class tourists and not used as a didactic aid for an illiterate populace.

I would not however want to underplay the fact that because artists were linked to mass movements in both Mexico and the Soviet Union, public art galleries and museums are to this day seen as the preserve of the intelligentsia.

The paintings of these three artists, Orozco, Riviera and Siqueiros are all powerful and reflect, if nothing else, currents of left/Stalinist thought on culture at the time—not least in their portrayal of women who appear invariably portrayed as either shameless prostitutes representing European decadence or as exalted suffering Madonnas with their babies, images which have more in common with fascism than communism.

Artists are a minor part of a state propaganda machine. Certainly their skills can be used to contribute directly towards it by helping to design posters, newspapers, working for television and advertising companies—and marginally by painting murals.

It is the constant bombardment of the media, the use of language, the education system which exercise ideological control.

Fine art painting is a specific activity which sometimes impinges on, but is not identical to the functions of any part of the propaganda machine.

To predict and legislate on the shape of culture 'after the revolution' is to fall into impoverished and rigid categories which do nothing other than support Tory stereotypes of socialism as a grim vision of automatons and common denominators.

We don't know what forms creative potential will take when released from the fetters of capitalism—when it is no longer the preserve of disaffected members of the bourgeoisie and a minority of workers co-opted by bourgeois culture.

Those of us who are artists and revolutionaries must engage in the struggle alongside other workers with no special brief, no Stalinist trappings.

There is no socialist labour under capitalism, there are only socialists.

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woman worker ★

OUR PROBLEM: LEADERS WHO WON'T LEAD... and blame us!

FOOT STEPS IN



FOR A REAL ALLIANCE AGAINST STEEL CLOSURES

With the threat of the BSC Chairman Ian McGregor's forthcoming plan for the steel industry in the offing, over 80 trade unionists met in Motherwell on Saturday last to consider the creation of a united front to fight redundancies.

Representatives of Scottish miners, railwaymen and steelworkers discussed the creation of a triple alliance to combat any closures.

Local Labour MPs, John Smith and Jeremy Bray, reported back on their discussions with George Younger, the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Scottish CBI and McGregor, highlighting the danger to Gartcosh, the steel finishing complex near Coatbridge with 900 employees.

This threat, it was emphasised, placed Ravenscraig the main supplier of steel in Scotland, in a more vulnerable position than had been previously supposed.

"Good chairman"

Despite this prospect, David Lambie, MP for North Ayrshire praised McGregor as likely to prove himself a good Chairman.

Smith's assessment of the situation was that the government, fearful of the political consequences of wholesale decimation of the industry in one area of the country, would earmark for closure one cold rolling mill in South Wales and another in Scotland, namely Gartcosh.

Some speakers from the floor called for an end to "low key approaches" and demanded a wider campaign against the forthcoming BSC plans.

Barr, NUR spokesman in Scotland, pledged the support of his union for the steelmen in their struggle.

In solidarity with this stance, Mick McGahey, President of the Scottish miners, emphasised that any closures in the Scottish steel industry mean the run-down of pits and affirmed that his union would stand by the steelworkers.

He further called for creating the industrial and political conditions for a General Election at the earliest opportunity and the return of a Labour Government committed to its Conference programme.

The significance of this meeting lies in that it marks an important stage in the creation of a triple alliance of steelworkers, miners and railway-

men. McGahey warned that this must not be a "cripple alliance", thereby alluding to the disastrous collapse of the Triple Alliance of 1914-22 which comprised the miners, railwaymen and transport workers.

Formed on the eve of the First World War to create maximum solidarity on the wages front, when confronted with the intransigence of government and employers in the years 1919-22, it failed to meet its early promise and collapsed ignominiously, isolating first the railway workers in 1919 and then the miners in 1921.

Capitulation

None of these defeats can be blamed upon the workers—who remained militant throughout—but full responsibility must lie with the trade union leaders, above all J.H. Thomas, the NUR leader, whose final capitulation came on "Black Friday", 15 April 1921.

Lacking a common, industrial and political programme, the Alliance was never more than a flimsy paper agreement between the leading figures of the respective unions.

The collapse of the Alliance left the way open for government and employers to pick off individual unions as in the defeat of the engineers in 1922, and, more fundamentally, it grievously weakened the trade union movement.

Membership collapsed by 3 million in the course of the following three years, placing the employers in a more advantageous position to prepare for the General Strike of 1926.

Frustrated

Trotsky's apposite comment in 1921 on the whole experience was as follows:

"The recent crisis of the Triple Alliance furnished the possibility of a revolutionary collision with the bourgeoisie, but this was frustrated by the conservatism, cowardice and treachery of the trade union leaders."

How is this kind of debacle to be avoided today?

*Immediately the trade union leadership must ensure that their membership in all three industries is fully informed through mass meetings and conferences of these decisions. Only in this way can trade unionists ensure that the pledges made by their leaders are adhered to.

*Trades councils, along with constituency Labour Parties, must organise campaigns to unite the employed and unemployed in Lanarkshire and elsewhere on an agreed platform of struggle.

*A common programme has to be hammered out adequate to meet this crisis, having as its central perspective the bringing down of the Tory government.

Rightward shift in NUS

A series of feeble resolutions—on grants and loans; on youth unemployment; on peace and disarmament; on finance and autonomy; and on Ireland—passed at last week's National Union of Students' conference summed up the bankruptcy of the Left Alliance leadership.

The NUS is now committed to negotiate with arch reactionary Rhodes Boyson in defence of the grants system—but with no coherent policy to fight Tory moves to impose student loans instead of grants.

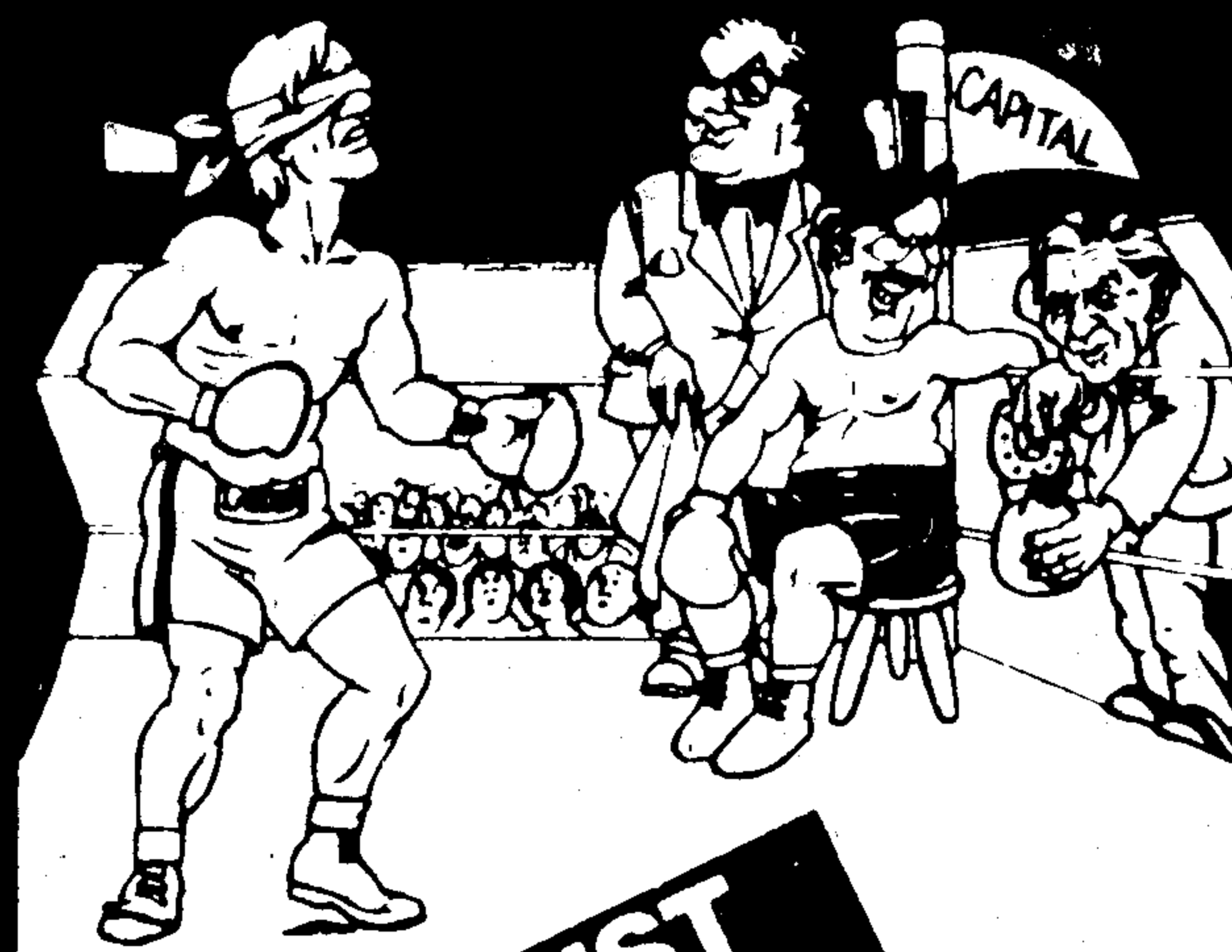
The main motion on Ireland adopted the TUC's reactionary pro-imperialist "Better Life for All" campaign which recognises long-term British rule over the six counties of Ireland.

Not unscathed

And despite an impassioned speech from Mrs Nugent, mother of Armagh hunger striker Mairead Nugent, the conference rejected even the humanitarian appeal of Charter 80 by a majority of 80,000 on a card vote.

In spite of the rightward swing at the conference the NUS Executive did not escape

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STUC fiasco

The STUC organised Scottish Convention fulfilled the expectations of those who, like *Socialist Press*, forecast it would be a fiasco.

The 850 delegates who gathered in Bute Hall at Glasgow University on Monday 8 December were overwhelmingly Labour and trade union bureaucrats, representatives of the Scottish CBI, Tories, churchmen, nationalists and assorted reactionaries.

The authentic voice of the working class was stifled, barely able to express itself in this august assembly.

Sam Gilmore, convenor of shop stewards at Govan Shipbuilders, made a fighting speech of attack upon the Tory government and the need to get rid of them, but the air was thick with platitudes about the plight of Scottish industry and the extent of unemployment.

Nothing was decided save the establishment of a body of 18 unnamed commissioners to approach the government. The comment of John Davidson, director of the CBI (Scotland) that it had been a "civilised conference" is surely a fitting epitaph on the whole sorry affair.

In marked contrast was the lobby of the Conference held in the morning and the lunchtime meeting organised by supporters of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement and Socialist Organiser which emphasised the need for pressure on the STUC to break off all talks with the Tories and industrialists and to launch a campaign to bring down the government.

Participants at the lunchtime meeting, including Ron Brown, Labour MP for Leith, expressed their disgust with the class collaborationist methods being pursued by the STUC leadership and the need for an alternative strategy in the Scottish labour movement.

The campaign launched by the Scottish Graphical Division (West Branch) of SOGAT for a Strathclyde Shop Stewards Committee must be an integral element in that strategy and must be taken up immediately in union branches, shop stewards committees and constituency Labour Parties.

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Hospital work-in wins more support

On December 2 the staff of the 50-bed Longworth geriatric Hospital, in the Oxfordshire countryside, went into occupation—deciding to work-in to stop the Area Health Authority's efforts to close their hospital.

Just two days later, the AHA was making efforts to split the COHSE staff off from the support of the union officers.

These officers, for their part, were making it clear that, while they were quite prepared to make a noise about cuts, and use this occupation to feather their own caps, they would now use their weight to tip the scales the other way—to suspending the occupation!

This, they said, was a 'gesture of faith' to the AHA, who promised not to move patients for a whole five weeks and to 'consult' COHSE before they did so!

The occupation committee, knowing they could not retreat, having come so far, and starting to realise their own strength and the responsibility this placed on them to stand firm, unanimously rejected this deal.

Meanwhile the AHA, under its chairman, Lady McCarthy (who also sits on the local Labour Party GMC!)—had just one card to play.

Not daring to risk her reputation by snatching the patients as other AHAs have done, she resorted to blackmail!

The new Witney Hospital, due to open after Christmas, would stay shut as long as Longworth Hospital remained occupied, she announced as there was 'not enough money' for both and she was not prepared to have the patients "frightened and confused".

Blatant lie

This last was a blatant lie, as the staff's first concern throughout has been to protect the patients by ensuring continued care, so that their life continues absolutely as normal.

The courage of the occupation committee who remained strong in the face of this blackmail and the attempted sell-out, was well rewarded.

Many staff inside the hospital who had been wavering were won round to supporting the occupation.

A record number of relatives visited the hospital that weekend and approved of the occupation when it was discussed with them.

Support and offers of help

came in from the surrounding villages, starting with the staff's own families.

Every union branch the staff appealed to, and some they were stretched to get to, offered help.

In contrast, the staff are still waiting for official backing from their union—COHSE—at national level.

Prepare

But with the determination they have shown thus far, they will win this backing.

The fight must then be to prepare for the time when the AHA finds that playing a waiting game, with persuasion, derision and blackmail in not opening Witney Hospital will not be enough, and begin to plan in earnest to break the occupation.

This is the time for which Longworth staff must prepare other trade unionists to stand alongside them by taking strike action to safeguard this hospital.

Meanwhile the occupation and picketing urgently need financial assistance and moral support from other health workers and trade unionists.

Send donations and messages of support to:

Barbara Russell, Weybread Cottage, Farringdon Road, Longworth, Oxfordshire.

LONGBRIDGE 9: THE CRUNCH

After a similar 'Kangaroo Court' appeal to the original disciplinary hearing, eight of the nine victimised Longbridge militants are still sacked, including all four shop stewards.

One of the workers had his sacking changed to a two week suspension.

None of the company's witnesses were named or could be cross-examined so the whole 'appeal' was just a farce.

All eyes will now focus on CAB I Tuesday morning day-shift. This is the area that the victimised workers came from.

If this section takes strike action then the Works Committee have promised a Joint Shop Stewards meeting.

It is to this meeting that

the demand for plant-wide strike action will be put.

All last week the Works Committee refused to call a full stewards' meeting before the 'appeal' despite the sacking of four shop stewards. They thus managed to avoid any preparation for a confrontation.

No confidence

One of the victimised shop stewards said at a public meeting last Sunday organised by the Selly Oak Labour Party, that he had no confidence in the 'appeal' and that only industrial action could save his and the other jobs.

The initiative in support of the nine by Selly Oak Labour Party must be applauded.

About 50 people attended a

meeting chaired by Tom Litterick.

Rover worker Pat Hickey spoke in place of Derek Robinson—who failed to turn up.

There was a great deal of criticism of the role of the Longbridge CP leadership in the wages sell-out that led to the victimisation.

When Litterick asked if there was a Labour Party member in the audience of the well-publicised meeting, in order to see whether they were going to fight the victimisation none were present.

Every BL steward

What was made plain at the meeting was that if the company are successful with the sacking of the '9' then not only will every steward in Longbridge be in danger but so will every Leyland steward.

If the stewards are not defended at Longbridge then the betrayal will be similar to that of Derek Robinson. But the responsibility will go right down into the stewards' movement.

HOSTEL SIT-IN

16 homeless people, together with hostel manager Joe Costello, have occupied the Bakehouse Hostel in Chelsea, to prevent its closure by the St. Georges Community Trust.

The Hostel has been run on semi-commercial lines (with charges upwards of £17.25 per week) to subsidise the Trust's main hostel.

Suddenly the Trust's founder and director, one Austin Williams MBE, JP,

declared the Bakehouse was losing money—and gave ten days notice that it would close and Costello would lose his job.

Williams is a Labour councillor in Newham—and as chairman of the education committee, he is currently considering school closures.

The homeless tenants are now occupying the hostel. They would welcome offers of support from the labour movement—to Joe Costello, Bakehouse Hostel, 47 Milmans St., London SW10.

Journalists occupy against sackings

The struggle of 65 NUJ members against redundancies in the British Printing Corporation's Publishing Division took a new turn last week when the chapel occupied company premises in response to a management lock-out.

Three weeks ago the company sacked all 65 members.

They had issued warnings over disruptive action taken by the chapel against the second wave of redundancies from the company this year.

Some months back the chapel had mixed success over an initial group of redundancies.

Some jobs were saved through chapel pressure in the form of disruptive action, mandatory meetings and selec-

tive strikes and pickets.

In the latest round of redundancies the chapel has so far saved two jobs out of nine.

Of the remaining seven, five became individuals to defend when the individuals named by the company, opted to take voluntary redundancy. The chapel remains firmly committed to defending the other two jobs.

One factor in the chapel's resolve is that the redundancies have been directed almost exclusively at chapel members though they represent only 60% of editorial staff. Furthermore chapel officers have been amongst those named.

Initially the chapel pursued the same strategy as for the first round of redundancies but this time the company issued warnings which culminated in mass

sackings.

The chapel responded by continuing to turn up for work.

Last Monday 8 November, chapel members arriving for work found their way barred by security men. The chapel nevertheless found a way up to the sixth floor of the building where they promptly decided to occupy.

The chapel has also begun picketing at other sites, in particular Polton House, Shepherdess Walk where production is continuing. Police from the local City Road police station have been heavy on the pickets—limiting the number to four.

The action is gaining support from NUJ members in other book and magazine houses and will obviously become a main focus for a conference the NUJ is organising for January around redundancies in the industry.

Over 100 trade unionists, youth and unemployed workers attended a conference to discuss factory closures convened in Winsford on Sunday December 14.

Platform speakers included a representative from the Gardner's occupation, a full time official from AUEW/TASS, a Labour Party speaker, and Winsford WSL secretary Dave Murphy.

Council of action

After a lively discussion the following resolution, calling for the formation of a council of action to combat the tidal wave of closures in the area, was unanimously carried:

"The unemployed figure of 2½ million and rising fast; factories closing and redundancies being announced each day; hospitals, schools and social services being closed in every area; the school meals system virtually ended; council house building at a standstill; rent increases on the agenda; mortgage payments up, and the homeless figure soaring; 15% inflation means plummet-

ing living standards while those at work face speed up and anti-union laws.

This Tory government is a class war government, selected from the most determined sections of the capitalist class.

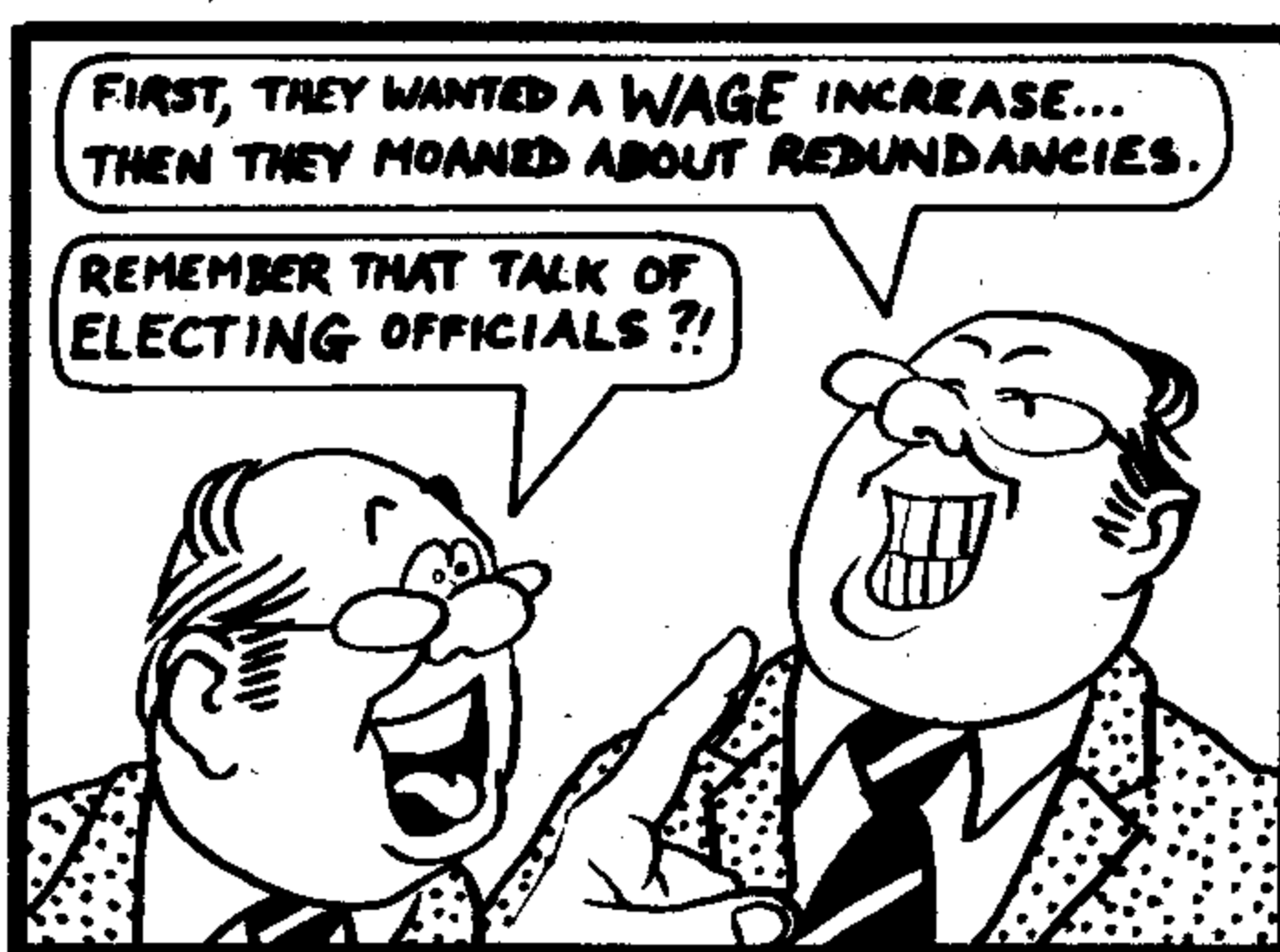
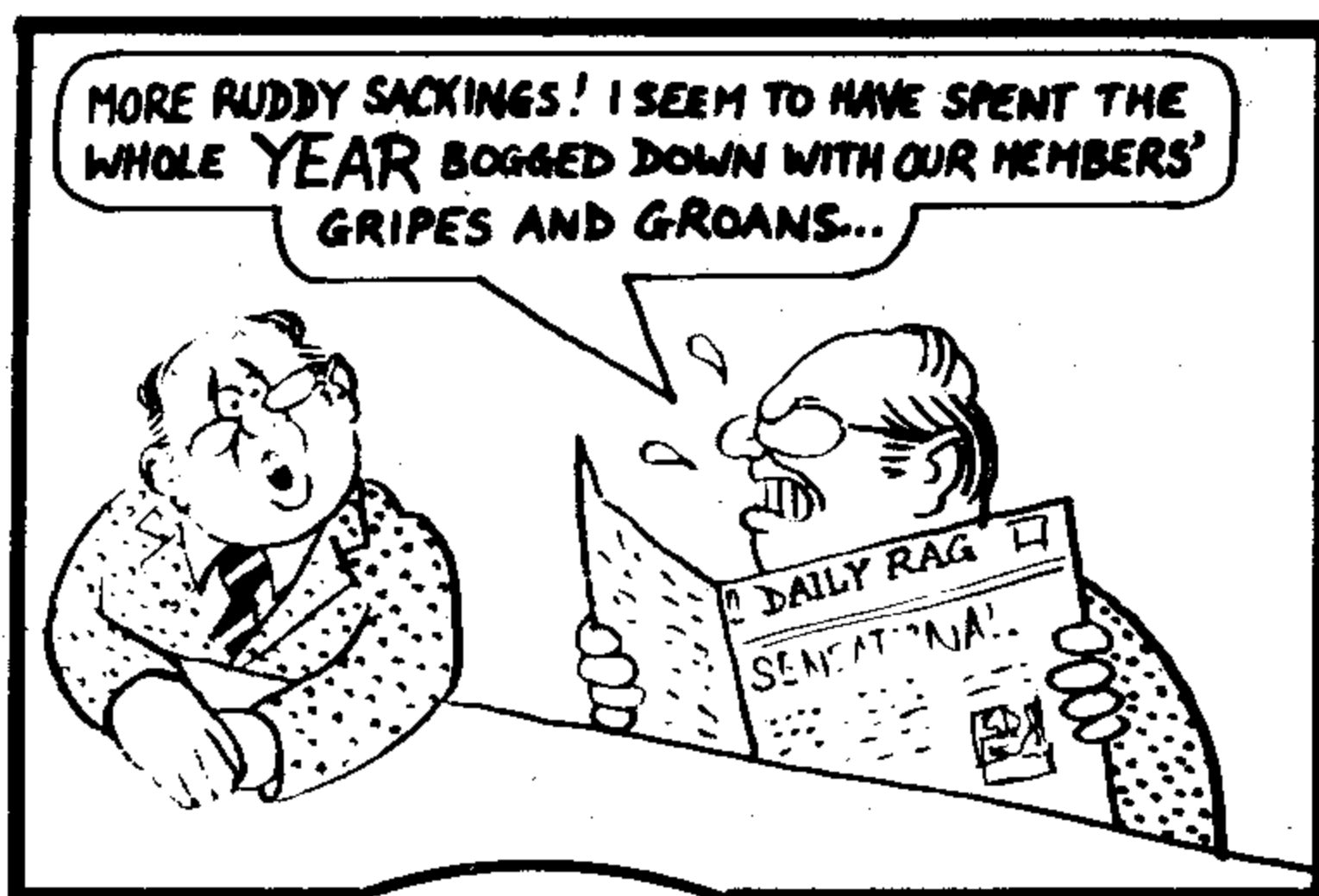
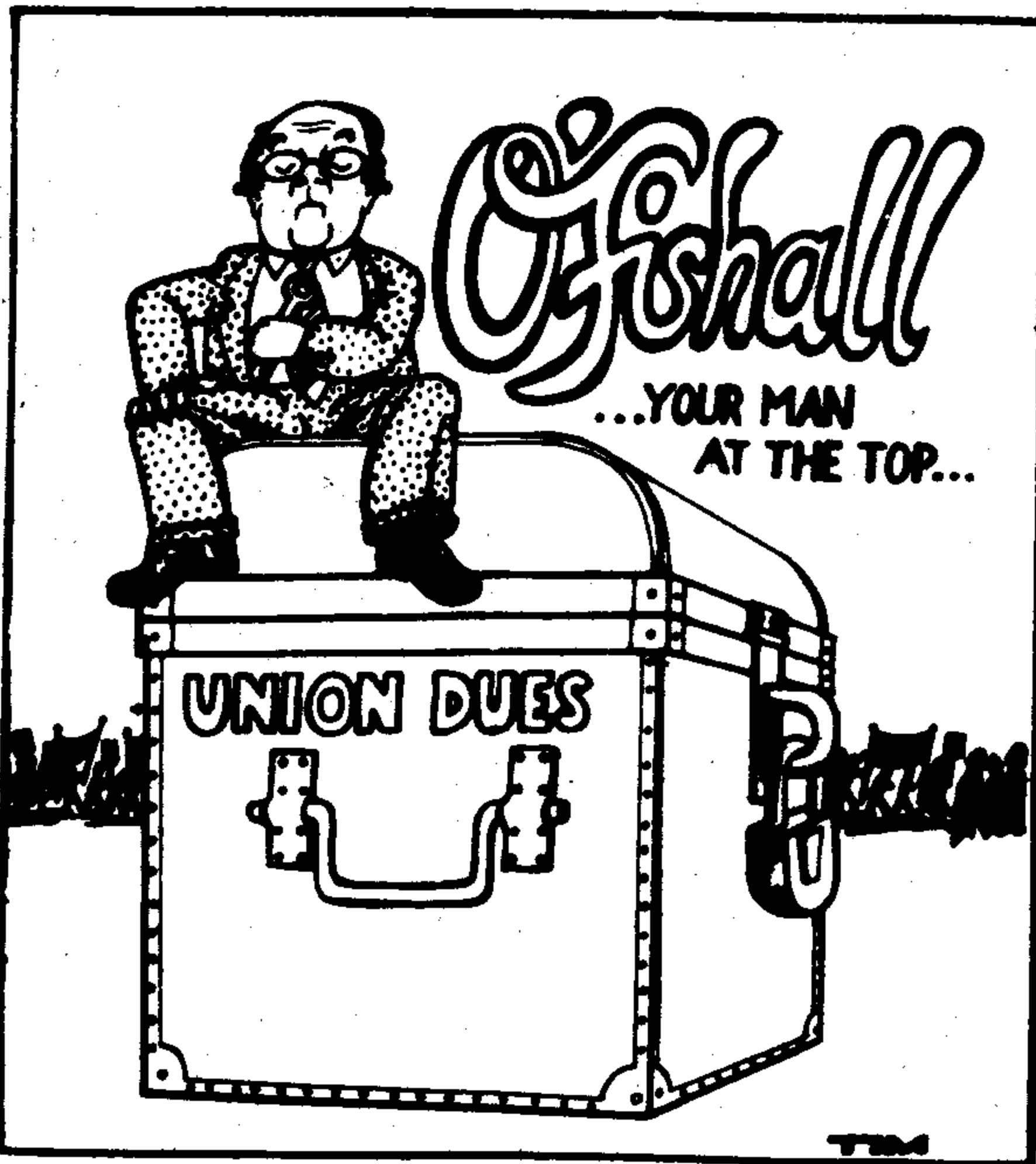
It has come to office committed to do a specific job for the bankers, employers, speculators and landlords. That job is to carry out an all-sided attack on the working class, its living standards, social services and working conditions—all in the interest of profit.

Therefore it is the declared intention of this meeting to call upon all workers, employed and unemployed, to resist all factory closures and to oppose all redundancies and cuts in public expenditure by whatever means possible and to support both morally and financially all workers in struggle.

In order to facilitate this, [Mid-Cheshire] Trades Council should immediately form an area Council of Action which will embrace all working class organisations—trade unions, labour groups, unemployed, youth sections, community action groups, and tenants associations."

NATIONAL CHILDCARE CAMPAIGN
Constitutional Conference
Saturday 24 January 1981
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'Council of action' call



SOCIALIST PRESS

Call for Labour action on Ireland

The growth and success of the Labour Committee on Ireland was apparent at a meeting of its supporters at Caxton Hall, Archway, last Saturday.

Since the inauguration of the LCI last March it has expanded to many new important areas. Despite last minute problems of venue, a small hall was packed to capacity with supporters, some of whom come from as far afield as Edinburgh and Glasgow.

The main item of the agenda concerned the submission of a document from the LCI National Council to the Labour Party NEC Special Working Party to review existing policy on Northern Ireland.

After discussion, a motion was passed overwhelmingly that tied all LCI documents to the "founding political principles of the LCI"—specifically in relation to "a policy and commitment to the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all British military and economic involvement in Ireland."

Submission

CLPs and trade unions were also encouraged to make submissions to the NEC on this vital subject.

The meeting displayed a high level of political understanding and serious unity of purpose. Particularly useful, was a contribution from an LCI organiser in the Midlands whose careful tactical work has yielded much fruit in that area.

The main motion passed was moved by Scottish supporters, as was the other one. It called for:

"a national campaign in support of the restoration of the recognition of the political status of Irish political prisoners. Such a campaign should include the following:

- production of a special edition of 'Labour and Ireland'.
- national mailing to CLPs.
- national speaking tour by the MPs and trade union officials who have written articles/spoken for the LCI.
- sponsoring and mobilising for national demonstrations in support of the prisoners.
- including a special section of the LCI submission to the Labour Party working party on Ireland which underlines the political status of Irish political prisoners.

f) production of LCI leaflets and posters.

g) bringing pressure to bear on the Labour Party NEC to support the prisoners' demands by a lobby of its January meeting and by a campaign for resolutions.

h) to organise a national rally in the New Year.

Conference resolves to elect a 'political prisoners sub-committee' to ensure the efficient and prompt implementation of the above measures."

Finally the meeting made arrangements for regional organisation and convenors. Labour Party members who have not yet been involved on Irish issues are encouraged to write to Don Flynn, the Secretary, Labour Committee on Ireland, c/o 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

MacGregor puts the boot in!

20,000 more sackings: no pay increase

Last year a miserable 2% pay offer from BSC management triggered a bitter 14-week pay strike—and an eventual 14% settlement.

This year the new steel boss Ian MacGregor feels confident enough of the spinelessness of union leaders arrogantly to announce not only 20,000 more redundancies but also a total pay freeze for steel workers at least until July.

In other words with inflation running now at 15%, steel workers are being called upon to accept a 15% cut in their living standards in order to bail BSC out of its colossal economic crisis.

£10 million a week

Of course it is obvious to anyone that even if the entire BSC workforce worked the next twelve months for nothing at all, the money saved would scarcely make a dent in the £10 million a week losses run up by the corporation in the midst of Thatcher's slump.

The argument that "sacrifice" by workers will "save the industry" is a transparent fraud.

Major factors in BSC's crisis are the soaring interest payments siphoned off by the bankers, the sky-rocketing cost of energy imposed by Tory policies, and plummeting demand for steel as factories close and whole industries grind to record low levels of output.

But steel union leaders, petrified by the independent strength and tenacity shown by their members in the 1980 strike, have no plan to fight either the new redundancies or MacGregor's pay freeze.

ISTC suggestion

According to the *Guardian* ISTC leaders had themselves actually planned to suggest a pay freeze—in return for a 12-month moratorium on redundancies!

Such leaders do not object

to their members being made scapegoats for the capitalist crisis: they simply want to avert a new round of struggles in which once again their own limitations are exposed.

MacGregor's tactics have been correctly likened by AUEW bureaucrat Gavin Laird as a parallel to those of Michael Edwardes.

Surrender

The problem faced by steelworkers is that the tactics of their union leaders are also the same as those of the union leaders in British Leyland—empty protests followed by abject surrender.

ISTC leaders console themselves with statements that for the Tories to close down BSC altogether and put 390,000 onto the dole would bring down the Thatcher government.

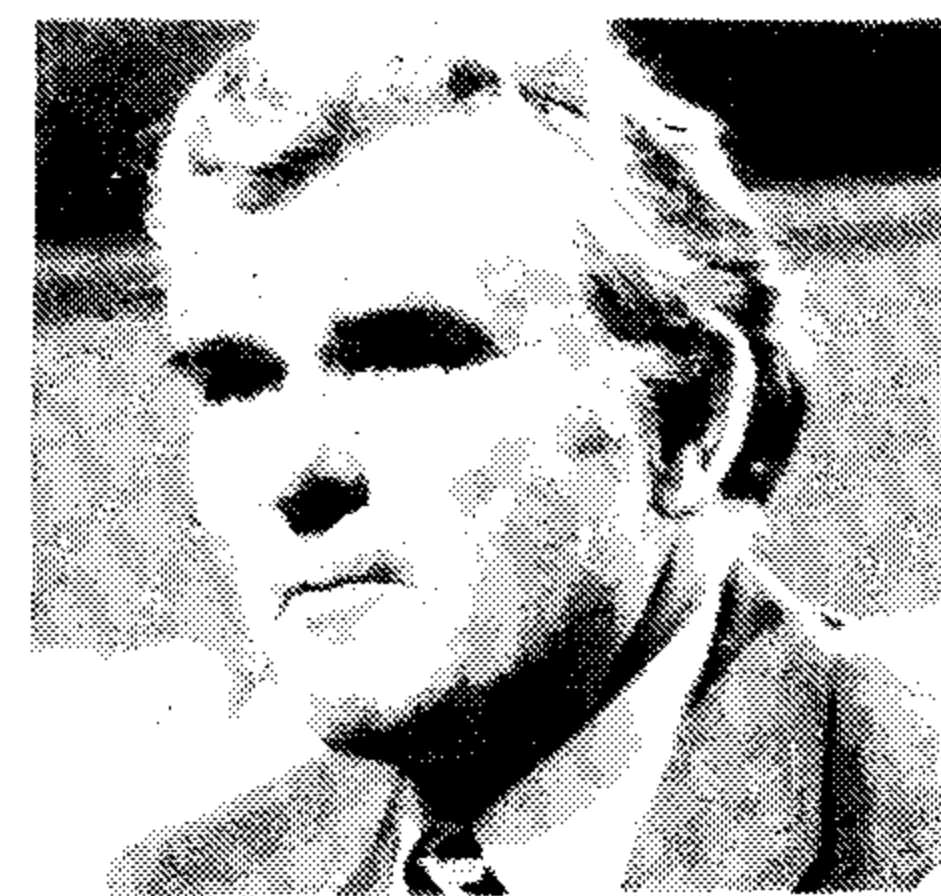
Our task is not to speculate what might topple the Tories—it is to mobilise all-out action that will bring them down.

Steelworkers, public sector workers and others must unite in this struggle—before still further setbacks take place.

*Defend all jobs! Occupations and supporting strikes to prevent plant closures and redundancies!

*No to the pay freeze! Demand wage increases to protect against inflation, with a cost of living clause to keep pace with rising prices.

*Unite public sector workers against the Tories' offensive! Build councils of action!



Sirs



Steelworkers on March 9

CHURCH BID TO REIN IN POLISH WORKERS

"Church is Communists' most valuable asset". So read the paradoxical headline in Monday's *Guardian*.

Why is it that a regime supposedly based on scientific socialism should now require the services of the world's most entrenched bastion of mediaeval bigotry and superstition?

The answer is of course that the stony-faced Stalinist bureaucrats—who have drawn their own privileges from their own fumbled and high-handed administration of the nationalised economy—have failed to win the mass support of Polish workers.

Break hold

And they have likewise failed to break the hold of the Catholic Church over the peasantry and the working class.

Until recently the Stalinist regime compensated by outright police repression for its own lack of popular support.

But now Polish workers, spurred into struggle by the food shortages and poverty line wages that arise from the bureaucratically distorted economy, have begun to assert their independent strength as a class.

As a result they have begun to challenge the very basis of the police state and of bureaucratic privilege.

This development brings no joy to the Catholic Church. For workers to discover their own material strength throws into question their need for the "spiritual" notions peddled by the Church.

Institutions

This is why Cardinal Wyszynski has now lent his unambiguous voice to that of Party leader Stanislaw Kania in urging Polish workers to "exercise restraint" and preserve "the institutions of our State" in the next period.

The Catholic Church speaks for world imperialism. US and European capitalists have offered economic and other aid to prop up the Polish Stalinists.

They fear above all a new wave of revolutionary struggles in Europe. And so do the Kremlin leaders.

Capitalists and "Communists" will therefore be saying a common prayer this Christmas: "Oh Lord, keep the workers in their place of oppression and exploitation, and us in our places of wealth, power and privilege."

And if illusions in the Lord won't do it—then there are tanks and guns on the Polish border ready to do the job.



Wyszynski

DEMONSTRATE in support of hunger strikers

Saturday 20 December

GLASGOW

Assemble 10.00 am.
Craigendmir Street
Blackhill, Glasgow.

MANCHESTER

Assemble 1.30 p.m.
All Saints, Manchester

BRADFORD

Assemble 1.00 p.m.
Infirmary Field
Westgate, Bradford
Called by North of
England Hunger Strike
Committee

CONFERENCE
"Ireland and the British"
A Labour conference
organised by Battersea CLP
Saturday 17 January 1981
11.30 am—5.00 pm.
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SW11
Workshops, plus speakers—
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MP, Geof Bell and others
Credentials from M. Tupper
177 Lavender Hill, SW11

Keep the money coming

With Socialist Press taking a break for two weeks this column will not be chivvying you for your money until 7 January. But that doesn't mean that we

NEXT ISSUE

Socialist Press is taking a break for two issues. We will next appear on Wednesday 7 January. We hope all our readers have a pleasant holiday and return refreshed to the struggle in the New Year.

do not need your financial donations. We need them more than ever. Steadily rising costs make the production of Socialist Press ever more expensive. And yet our paper is an essential part of our struggle to give leadership to the fight against the Tory government.

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