

SOCIALIST PRESS



REINSTATE CONWAY XAVIER!

Demonstrate
Tuesday January 13 1981
Assemble 1 p.m. at Great Ormond
Street Hospital, London WC1

(Article—page 11)

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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Longbridge: new sell-out



RIGGED 'INQUIRY' WON'T REINSTATE THE EIGHT!

The production lines may have been at a standstill, but it was Metro workers who were in the presses during the Christmas period.

Day after day a barrage of propaganda in every paper, radio and TV station blared into their homes, threatening, cajoling, bludgeoning them to abandon their strike action in defence of eight victimised workers.

Even Thatcher joined in—making special TV and radio speeches. Since when has a Prime Minister personally intervened to stop a strike by one section of only 1,500 workers?

The reason is obvious: Michael Edwardes' brutal methods of management are the means chosen by the Tories to press home their attack in every industry.

Steel sackings

Already British Steel Corporation chairman Ian MacGregor is at work on similar lines—pressing home wage cuts, and mass sackings through a combination of postal ballots and the manipulation of union leaders.

The BL management had to be seen to win out against the Metro strikers. But for all the pressure heaped on the workforce the key to this was once again the role of the trade union leadership.

The organisers of Sunday's vote to halt the strike in the CAB section at Longbridge were plant convenor Jack Adams, AUEW official Bill Jordan and TGWU Regional Secretary Brian Mathers.

The eight sackings took place after frustration over continual lay-offs of production line workers and over the high-handed imposition of harsh and petty disciplinary measures brought a flare-up before the Christmas holiday.

Amidst allegations of "riots" and "rampaging behaviour" Michael Edwardes—Thatcher's model and guide for all British managers—carefully selected virtually every shop steward on the Metro track as "ring leaders" of the disruption that took place.

With Christmas approaching,



Longbridge workers march to defend victimised convenor Derek Robinson: now his successor abandons fight to defend stewards

he clearly thought he had chosen his moment well.

The immediate walkout and picketing in defence of the eight took him by surprise. As the strike progressed and production of the Metro ground to a halt, the media began to hedge their bets—expressing doubts as to whether Edwardes

had perhaps overplayed his hand.

The charge of "riots" against the victimised workers began to be qualified in the press as "alleged" rioting. Some papers even grudgingly printed the trade union response to the charges.

Faced with a militant work-

force, a doubting media and uncertain public support, Edwardes turned once again to his most dependable allies in his attacks on BL shopfloor organisation—the union bureaucracy.

Anyone who may have dismissed as fanciful our recent article in Socialist Press, which claimed that the Communist

Party played a key role in protecting Thatcher from the wrath of the working class, should have been at Digbeth Civic Hall on Sunday.

There they would have seen Jack Adams, the Longbridge convenor and leading Communist Party member, calling off a strike that was essentially in

defence of the trade union organisation he is supposed to be leading!

Together with the full time officials, Adams had attempted to deflate the militancy of the strikers. He had announced to the press, days before the meeting, that they would make no recommendation on whether to continue the strike or settle for a union/management inquiry (whose outcome management is under no compulsion to accept).

Adams also knew full well what the AUEW policy was. But he did nothing to expose it. It was only in response to a question from the floor that Bill Jordan was forced to admit from the platform that it didn't matter to his union what the meeting decided.

If they voted to continue the strike his District Committee would urge AUEW members to cross the strikers' picket lines!

AUEW President Terry Duffy had made it clear from the outset that he regarded the strike as simply a TGWU dispute. Yet not only did Adams happily share the platform with strikebreaker Jordan but he recommended strikers to suspend their action for an "inquiry" in which two management representatives face two union men—one of whom is an AUEW official, committed to smashing the strike!

The sacked workers are not even reinstated during this bogus "inquiry". Money equal to their wages will be handed over to the unions concerned for distribution.

The one fleeting moment that showed a glimmer of trade union principle from the platform came when the chairman Brian Chambers (Adams' deputy) called a floor speaker back to the microphone to repeat his account of an incident while he had been picketing before Christmas.

Two managers had approached the picket line. One, called Molyneux, asked his name. He and the other pickets gave their names and clock card numbers.

"When this strike collapses, as it inevitably will," Molyneux told the pickets, "you'll be next!"

But even such a stark state-

Continued back page

Strike now to stop Edwardes!

French Communist Party leads racist attack

"On Wednesday (Christmas Eve) at 4.10 p.m. about 50 people led by the mayor, including council workers, arrived in front of the hostel with a bulldozer. About 15 of them stormed inside. They tied up the caretaker, M. Berthaud, took him to the office, threatened him to get the keys. Another group . . . cut the electric cables . . . Another group broke the water pipes, and gas pipes. Others pulled up the phone lines whilst outside the bulldozer was blocking up the exits."

So reported Michel Micheletti, representative of ADEF, (which is the French Association for the development of hostels).

Was this a fascist attack on the hostel—where 320 workers from Mali were just about to move in?

Not at all. The attack was led by Paul Mercieca, the Communist Party mayor of Vitry—a working class suburb on the outskirts of Paris.

The mayor denied belatedly, having organised the attack but his actions have been upheld by the CP paper *Humanite*.

The French CP has in fact been in the forefront of calls for more immigration controls and has raised these in such a way as to encourage the racists.

So, for example, they link areas of high immigration with increase in crime.



Mali workers repair damage done by Stalinist raid

They have completely accepted the idea put by the capitalist class that immigrants are somehow responsible for the crisis and it can be resolved by stopping immigration. They have demanded that this and other hostels be sited in more middle class areas.

Since October 1980 the CP has backed the demands put forward by Pierre Thomas, the CP mayor of Aulnay-sous-Bois.

Halt immigration

These include the immediate cessation of all immigration into his area and the Paris region, to facilitate a better "sharing out" of immigrants.

This is put forward as an "answer" to the government's policy of putting hostels in CP-controlled areas and rarely in

those run by the right wing parties (Saint-Maur, where the Malians have moved from, is controlled by the right wing).

It is to be remembered that the immigrants brought into France have often not been allowed to bring families but have been shipped in for a couple of years to live in government-controlled hostels, in a certain workplace.

These workers do not have a vote, as they do not have French nationality.

The CP, like true parliamentarians, are not interested in those who cannot vote for them.

Apparently 43% of those of voting age in Aulnay do not have a vote.

The Socialist Party has called under certain circumstances for immigrants to have a vote in

municipal elections. But the CP has opposed this call!

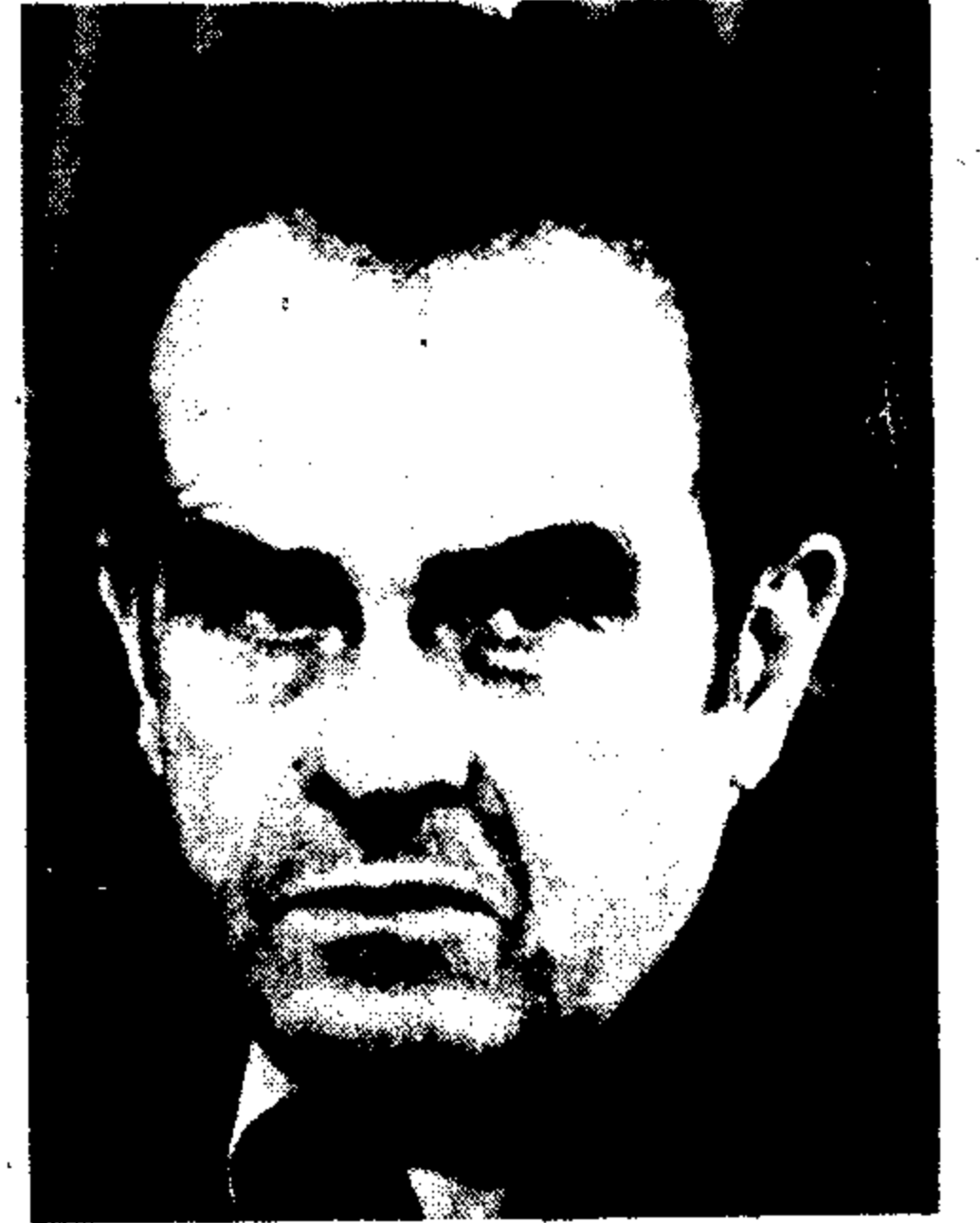
Other racist demands supported by the CP are the immediate stopping of providing accommodation for the families of immigrants; of complete consultation with representatives of residents and the municipality before siting a hostel.

Slogan

A major outcry has arisen as a result of the raid. The slogan "PCF—raciste" has appeared in the Paris Metro.

The organisation of Jews, *Renouveau juif*, has denounced:

"The collusion which exists today in France between the CP, the extreme right and the government which is multiplying controls and the arbitrary expulsions of immigrants."



French CP leader Marchais

The SP in the council of Vitry backs up this demand.

The reason for the growing sharpness over immigration and the increasing racist attacks is the deepening crisis of French capitalism—made even worse by the problem of oil supplies since the Iran/Iraq war.

Unemployment is growing fast, and the need for the capitalist class to find scapegoats becomes more acute.

They have attempted to whip up racial hatred even though the number of immigrants in France has decreased since 1977.

They have now found reliable allies in the CP.

It is important for those workers in Britain sympathetic to the Communist Party to study what the Stalinists do in capitalist countries where they do hold positions of power.

SOLIDARITY WITH POLISH WORKERS!

The strength of the mass movement in Poland has forced the bureaucracy to recognise the independent trade union Solidarity.

This concession came as a desperate move to stop the spread of soviet-type bodies and general strike action from Gdansk and the Baltic ports throughout the whole of Poland.

But any independent organs of the working class are irreconcilable with the continued existence of the Stalinist bureaucracy, whose power rests on its political control.

The Polish working class now has a voice through which it can expose, criticise and mobilise against not only the police powers of the bureaucracy but also against their high salaries, special shops and other material privileges.

The independent union organisation of the working class was destroyed in the Soviet Union as one of the first consequences of the bureaucratic degeneration of the workers' state in the rise of Stalin's faction after the death of Lenin.

Dual power

The Kremlin leaders have never allowed such rights in any of the deformed workers' states.

This latest dual power—or "duality of power" as Kania has called it—cannot continue indefinitely. Yet it is precisely this untenable state of affairs which Walesa and the leadership of Solidarity are seeking to preserve by holding back strike action.

The economic situation of Poland—which has worsened since the strikes first erupted in July, and now finds Poland \$24

WORKERS!

billion in debt to the Western capitalists—now looms over developments.

Interest payments and other debts now absorb virtually the whole of Poland's projected hard currency revenue, and force the bureaucracy to seek means of lowering the living standards of the working class.

This situation exposes the weaknesses of the Solidarity leadership. They do not seek the political overthrow of the bureaucracy. They set out simply to reform away the worst aspects of bureaucratic rule.

They query not the bureaucratically-planned production of the national economic "cake"—but simply the uneven way in which its inadequate crumbs are distributed.

The Polish economy is planned solely by bureaucrats, with no reference to the demands or wishes of the masses. It exhibits therefore all of the deformations of the USSR and the other bureaucratic workers' states. To accept this means to tie the hands of the working class. And the Solidarity leadership has failed in any way to challenge the strategy of building "socialism in one country" which preserves the isolation of the Polish economy by actively opposing revolutionary struggles in the capitalist countries.

Trotsky and the Left Opposition long ago showed the integrated nature of the world economy, and the impossibility of building socialism in one

country.

The impact of the capitalist crisis on Poland and other East European states shows that this is equally true even of a bloc of "socialist" countries encircled by imperialism.

Solidarity, however, by restricting itself to demands within the framework of the deformed workers state implicitly accepts the inevitability of an economic crisis which in fact flows from the domestic and international policies of the bureaucracy.

This is why the same leaders who fought so courageously for the right to strike, argue now against workers using this new right.

They came from a mass movement that they led, only months ago. They still have this mass pressure on them and they are still capable of leading important struggles such as demanding the release of political prisoners. But their political weaknesses will be continuously exposed.

Added to this limitation is the reactionary influence of the Catholic Church upon the leadership of Solidarity.

Church leaders at first saw the mass movement as a useful means to strengthen their position within the deformed workers' state. Now, in exchange for the appointment of a Catholic as Deputy Prime Minister, they are agitating in defence of the Kania bureaucracy.

This position is not in conflict with the ultimate trend of the Church towards the restor-

ation of capitalism. The Church is simply trying to achieve its objectives by gradually strengthening its own power in Polish society and by consolidating an alliance with the most reactionary sections of the bureaucracy itself, which possibly might promote substantial changes of the economic system.

But despite these problems the mass of the Polish working class has now realised its power, and it has the means of expression for the first time ever. Workers do not trust the bureaucracy. Any new attack on their living standards is likely to receive a rapid and militant response.

The Polish bureaucracy knows this full well. It is openly split. Some sections are already saying they are willing to call in Soviet tanks. Other, so-called moderates (though they include Moczarski who has a history of anti-semitism), look towards applying pressure on Solidarity—to persuade its leaders not to struggle, to infiltrate its leading layers, bureaucratise it, and thus from within work to destroy its independent strength.

Yet this strategy suggests peacefully taking away from the workers gains they have struggled to achieve. This is impossible; and for this reason the threat of an invasion by the Kremlin bureaucracy is very real. The Polish movement is a threat to bureaucrats all over Eastern Europe—not least in the USSR itself.

These Stalinist leaders will not allow instability to remain

Text of a statement on Poland adopted by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee at its meeting in Paris at the end of December.

for too long. They have given their Polish colleagues a brief period of time before they move in with the ultimate solution of a desperate bureaucracy—tanks and bullets.

This is a real danger and is no doubt in the minds of the Polish working class. The problem is that holding back struggles only makes the Soviet bureaucracy feel that the Polish working class is afraid of an invasion and therefore makes them more confident to carry it out.

The Polish working class must strengthen its unity in struggle and appeal to the rest of the East European and Soviet working class and the Red Army.

The real danger of an invasion must be met not simply by the Polish working class, but by a movement of workers throughout Eastern Europe to mobilise opposition to the bureaucracy in the USSR and every country of the Warsaw Pact as well as their armies.

At the same time we fight for solidarity within the capitalist countries.

Within the world Stalinist Parties the Polish events have created a tremendous new crisis. The Polish struggle vindicates the struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, and the necessity of reconstructing the Trotskyist Fourth International with parties in the deformed workers' states.

What is needed in Poland is a Trotskyist party to fight for a political revolution. Such a

party must base itself on defence of the nationalised property relations in Poland and the deformed workers' states, and the development of the independent strength of the working class to capture political control of these countries and oust the parasitic bureaucracy.

*Defend the independent trade unions.

*Set up Gdansk-type soviet bodies throughout Poland. For a centralised soviet to speak for the Polish proletariat.

*Set up soldiers' councils in the Polish armed forces to send delegates to the soviets. Form a workers' militia, linked to the soldiers' councils.

*End all bureaucratic privileges—high salaries and special shops. Officials to be paid the average wage of industrial workers and subjected to annual election and recall.

*Open the books of the economy to elected workers' representatives as a step towards genuine workers' management of a planned economy.

*For defence of the nationalised property relations. Reveal the Warsaw Pact discussions on Poland!

*Withdraw Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops from Poland; no to any invasion. Hands off Poland!

*Appeal to the Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops to set up soldiers' councils. Appeal to the workers of Eastern Europe to follow the Polish lead. Down with the bureaucracy!

All sections of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee will campaign now against the danger of a Kremlin intervention and in solidarity with the Polish working class in the struggle for political revolution.

SAVE THESE VICTIMS OF APARTHEID TERROR!

We reprint below a resolution on South Africa passed by the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee at its meeting during the last weekend of December.

The Workers Socialist League will be conducting a campaign in the British labour movement on these lines and Socialist Press will carry reports of the progress of the campaign in future issues.

In the face of the forward movement of black workers in struggle, the barbaric capitalist regime in South Africa is using the judicial murder of militants as just one of the measures aimed at repressing the courageous struggle of the working class.

The degree of class strength and militancy forged by the working class movement in struggle, coupled with the destabilising effect of the world capitalist crisis, confronts the South African ruling class most immediately as a crisis of political control.

The bourgeoisie needs to establish the political stability necessary for protecting and boosting profits. It needs therefore to adopt measures aimed at containing, controlling, and ultimately reversing the forward movement of the working class.

Indefinite detention without trial, banishment, bannings, murder of militants in and out of jail, right wing terror squads, perpetual army and police repression—these are part of the daily reality confronting black workers already weighed down by mass unemployment and a sickeningly low standard of living.

Yet despite all these massive hardships, the working class is repeatedly showing its determination and courage in struggle against the class enemy.

In its efforts to assert control over a rising movement of struggle, the South African state is trying to use the much publicised judicial murder of individual militants in an attempt to intimidate the whole working class.

First victim

In 1979 Solomon Mahlangu, an ANC militant, became the first victim of the judicial killing of political prisoners in South Africa for more than 15 years.

Four more militants have recently been sentenced to death by the courts of the capitalist state. Three of them—Mcimbithi Lubisi, Tsepo Masigo and Naphtali Manana are guerrillas of the ANC. The other, Markus Kateka is a Namibian farm worker. The charges against the three arose out of an attack on a South African police station.

Markus Kateka faces hanging for aiding SWAPO guerrillas in Namibia.

These four militants are amongst thousands whose determination to fight against their exploitation and oppression has



South African police fire on demonstrators

taken them into the ranks of the ANC and SWAPO.

It is crucial that the united strength of the working class—in South Africa, Namibia and internationally—be mobilised to save these courageous militants from the gallows, as part of the struggle to build the defence of the working class against every attack which confronts it.

This task can in no way be left to the Stalinists and reformists who lead the ANC and SWAPO. Together with the reformist and Stalinist bureaucrats in the international labour movement, their politics of class collaboration leads them to seek alliances with imperialist governments, reactionary dictators, so-

called "progressive" sections of the capitalist class—in short, *popular frontist alliances* with anything in preference to dependence on the *independent* strength and mobilisation of the working class.

Struggle

This politics of class collaboration is as incapable of building a defence of individual ANC and SWAPO militants as it is of providing the policies on which black workers could build their defence against every economic and political attack.

It is only the struggle to build and mobilise the independent strength of the working class which can create that defence.

As the constant flouting of the United Nations arms embargo on South Africa has so clearly demonstrated, pious protestations from the bourgeoisie, its governments and agents mean nothing when *profits and the protection of profits* are concerned.

Behind its anti-apartheid postures, the international bourgeoisie has a very real political and economic interest in the political control and *continued* exploitation of black workers.

Arms and related supplies will *only* be stopped from reaching the South African regime through the *independent black-*

ing action of the international labour movement.

The reality of all international links with the South African government and ruling class must be exposed by the international working class in an ongoing campaign to *open the books* and break through the web of government and business secrets.

This is the way forward in the fight to *nationalise, under workers control*, all firms and banks trading with the South African bosses and their government—to bring every aspect of every link with South Africa and Namibia under the scrutiny and control of the working class.

For it is the *international working class* which is the *only genuine ally* of the Southern African working class and militants within the ranks of SWAPO and the ANC.

Action urgent

Immediate solidarity action in defence of the four militants now facing hanging is an *urgent* responsibility of the international labour movement.

Mass demonstrations must be organised and supported by every organisation of the working class to express an overwhelming voice of protest and solidarity. Such protests must not be allowed to become

merely token protests—they must be used for developing more powerful working class weapons of solidarity.

This demands the urgent development of an *extended programme of workers blacking* in defence of the four militants. Blacking is the crucial *immediate weapon* in the ongoing programme of solidarity with the struggles of black workers.

In every demonstration, mobilisation and solidarity meeting, the voice and programme of *independent international class solidarity* must be at the fore.

These militants must not be left to hang. And the workers of Southern Africa must not be left to face the vicious capitalist state alone.

Labour Parties and trade union branches should pass resolutions of solidarity with the four black South Africans and send telegrams demanding their release to the South African Embassy, Trafalgar Square, London WC2.

US dockers black arms to El Salvador

In the most important labour action yet taken on El Salvador, West Coast Longshoremen have voted to indefinitely boycott all military cargo to El Salvador.

The ILWU, representing 15,000 dockers on the coast, voted to start the boycott on December 23 and at press time were planning a labour rally at their hall in San Francisco to announce the action.

At the same time, many unions are now demanding an end to US intervention and military support for the reactionary regime, along with denunciation of the CIA AFL-CIO tie in El Salvador.

The CIA, through the AFL-CIO American Institute of Free Labour Development, has supported the dictatorship and collaborated with the capitalists in El Salvador to crush the

independence of the unions.

AFT Local 957 in San Jose, along with the Santa Clara County Central Labour Council have both denounced the AIFLD and demanded a break from the AIFLD operation in Latin America.

They have also demanded an answer from Lane Kirkland on his role in this CIA front organisation. San Francisco Hotel and Restaurant Workers Local 2 have also joined with the Santa Clara locals in condemning the AIFLD.

The secretary of the AIFLD Peter Grace of the Grace Company, not only busts unions in Latin America with the support of Kirkland, but operates a string of non-union restaurants on the West Coast.

Far West Industries, owned by Grace, operates Cocos and many other non-union restaurants in the area, yet Kirkland has yet to make a peep about his pal on the AIFLD.

On November 29 the Socialist League, along with other organisations, participated in a march and rally called by BPR to protest the murder in El Salvador of seven leaders of the Popular Democratic Revolutionary Front.

The march began at 24th and Mission in San Francisco and was welcomed and supported by the people of the neighbourhoods of the Mission District.

Labor News calls on its readers to take action in their own unions to get the US out of El Salvador and expose the Kirkland/AIFLD/CIA connection.

Reprinted from *Labor News*, paper of the Socialist League (DC), in the USA.

TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Defend democratic rights in Turkey

PUBLIC RALLY

CONWAY HALL, RED LION SQUARE, LONDON WC1

Thursday 29 January at 7.30 p.m.

Speakers from the Labour and Trade Union Movement

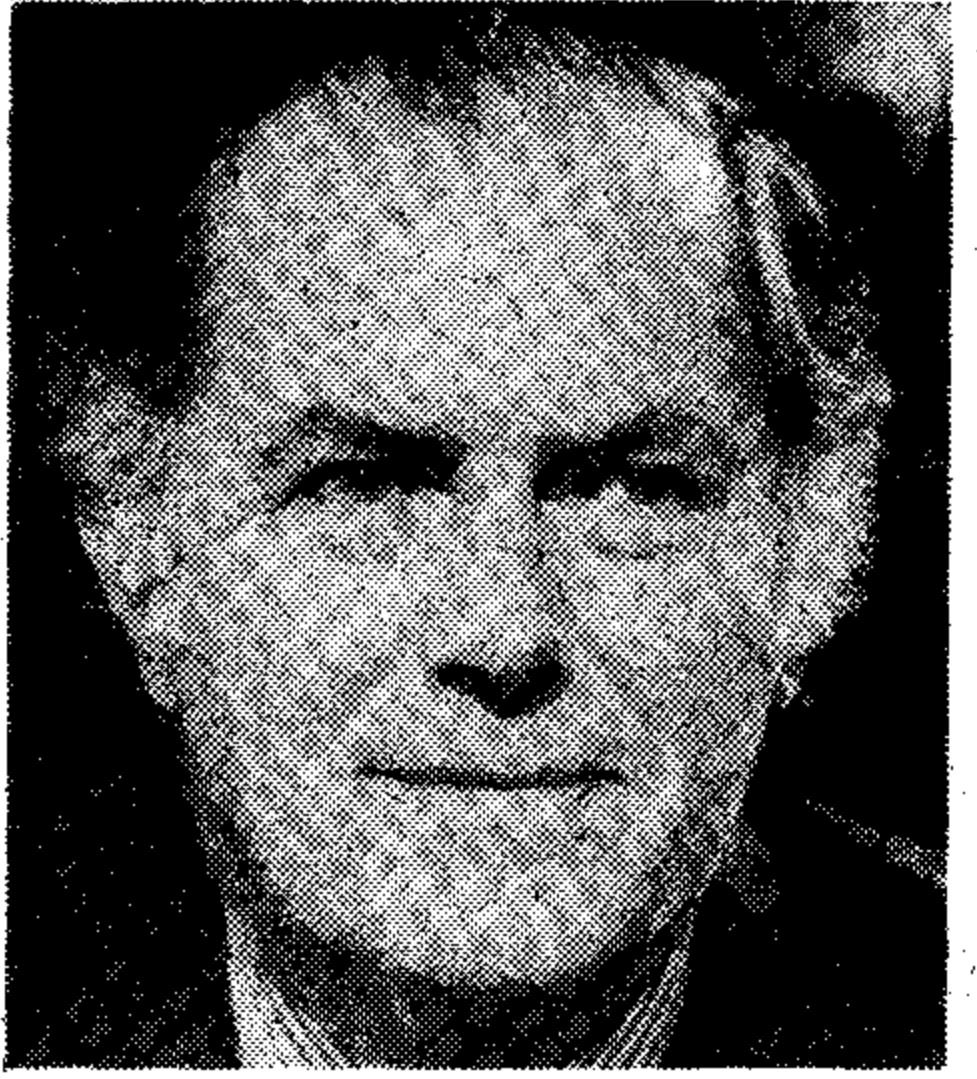
The military dictatorship which took power in Turkey last September, posing as a 'democratic' alternative to 'anarchy' has established a record of systematic repression and attacks on basic rights. Foremost among its victims have been the trade unions and other organisations of the working class.

Nevertheless illusions are still deliberately sown internationally as to the 'neutral' character of the ruling National Security Council.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign, in association with the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey, are organising a public rally to assist in countering the false view of the regime presented by the mass media and to discuss active solidarity with the oppressed masses of Turkey.

IRISH HUNGER STRIKERS FORCE CONCESSIONS

but Tories break agreement



Atkins

"In ending our hunger strike we make it clear that failure by the British government to act in a responsible manner towards ending the conditions which forced us onto a hunger-strike will not only lead to inevitable and continual strife within the H Blocks, but will show quite clearly the intransigence of the British government."

So saying, the seven heroic republican hunger strikers from the 'H' Blocks of Long Kesh ended their fifty-three day struggle which had brought one of them, Sean McKenna, to the brink of death.

Protests

Their strike—and the huge wave of supporting demonstrations, strikes and protests throughout the whole of Ireland, coupled with wide international support—had forced the Tories to expand a brief four-page statement on December 4 to a 34 page set of proposals which, two weeks later, offered the basis of a settlement.

Central to the 34-page document was the flexible interpretation of the two most contentious issues challenged by the republican prisoners in their four year struggle for the restoration of political status—the wearing of prison clothing and doing prison work.

The expanded statement stated that "prison work" could be interpreted to include "education" in which "periods of study range from two to twenty hours a week, depending on the subject" and "in addition... self-study courses—with tutorial support as necessary."

In addition it declared that it was undesirable to draw a rigid line between such "work" and free time: and that "prisoners who have the benefit of study time during the



Dublin solidarity demonstration

day can also frequently make use of their leisure time to continue their studies."

On top of this open-ended offer of education as a form of non-penal "work", the 34 page statement says that if other work is not available on any day, then additional PT, games or handicrafts time could be provided instead.

Were the prison authorities to utilise the full flexibility of this document it is plain that republican prisoners could successfully avoid doing any penal work, and instead organise substantial educational activities.

Leeway

On prison clothing, Atkins had in October offered prison-issue civilian clothing. And his December 4 statement claimed that if prisoners conformed with the rules they could wear their own clothes for almost half the time they were outside their

own cells.

The December 18 document went even further, stating that as soon as the blanket protest ends "denim prison uniform becomes a thing of the past". The document allows enough leeway for prisoners to completely evade the wearing of prison-issue clothing.

Thus the republican protest secured substantial verbal offers of concessions on the two issues most central to the attempts by Labour and Tory governments to impose "criminal" status upon them.

In addition the tenacity of the hunger strikers forced the Tories to recognise the republicans' command structure.

A top representative from Atkins' office travelled to Long Kesh, met with the hunger strikers themselves, and negotiated with their spokesman Brendan Hughes.

And before the hunger strike was called off, government representatives had been forced to bring Bobby Sands, the officer commanding the 300-strong 'H' Block blanket protest across to meet with the hunger strikers.

But with the hunger strike called off, and the potential embarrassment of a hunger striker dying over the Christmas holiday averted, the Tories appear to have reneged on the concessions implicit in the document.

Optimistic

The blanket protest has not yet been called off, despite the optimistic initial announcement by the blanket men's leader Bobby Sands that:

"We are satisfied that the implementation of these proposals meets the requirements of our five basic demands. Republican prisoners will not be wearing any form of prison uniform and will not be participating in any form of penal work."

A document is one thing: its implementation something else. The Tory leaders are seeking—plainly with some success—to manoeuvre to split and confuse the republican forces and thus hold back their resistance.

Hence talk this weekend of a possible further hunger strike if the concessions made are not implemented.

Meanwhile Loyalist leader Paisley has recognised the scope of Atkins' paper concessions, and complained that the Loyalist population has been "sold down the river".

Secret deal

There seems little doubt that a pledge to prevent the deaths

of the hunger strikers was part of the secret deal cooked up between Thatcher and Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey on December 8: it remains an open question how far this means the Tories will go in making actual concessions to the republicans.

However there is no doubt that the 53-day hunger strike—supported by an 18-day fast by the women of Armagh Gaol and by 300 more blanket men—brought more publicity to the political status struggle than 4½ years of blanket protest and general propaganda.

It has helped to mobilise a new wave of mass support throughout Ireland.

But it has also exposed the acute weakness of the anti-

imperialist movement within the British working class. Two major national demonstrations in the course of the hunger strikes drew only a handful of labour movement banners on each.

And the sprinkling of union leaders and left Labourites who signed the Charter 80 petition in support of the prisoners almost melted away as soon as the hunger strike actually began.

With or without political status in prison, Irish republicans face constant military and police harassment; and the Irish people as a whole find their country partitioned and imperialist control maintained by an occupying army of tens of thousands of foreign troops.

The fight in the British labour movement must be stepped up for a policy of immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

In this context the national conference of the Labour Committee on Ireland acquires particular importance.

Socialist Press readers are urged to attend.

CONFERENCE
"Ireland and the British"
A Labour conference
organised by Battersea CLP
Saturday 17 January 1981
11.30 am—5.00 pm.
177 Lavender Hill, London
SW11

Conference on media censorship

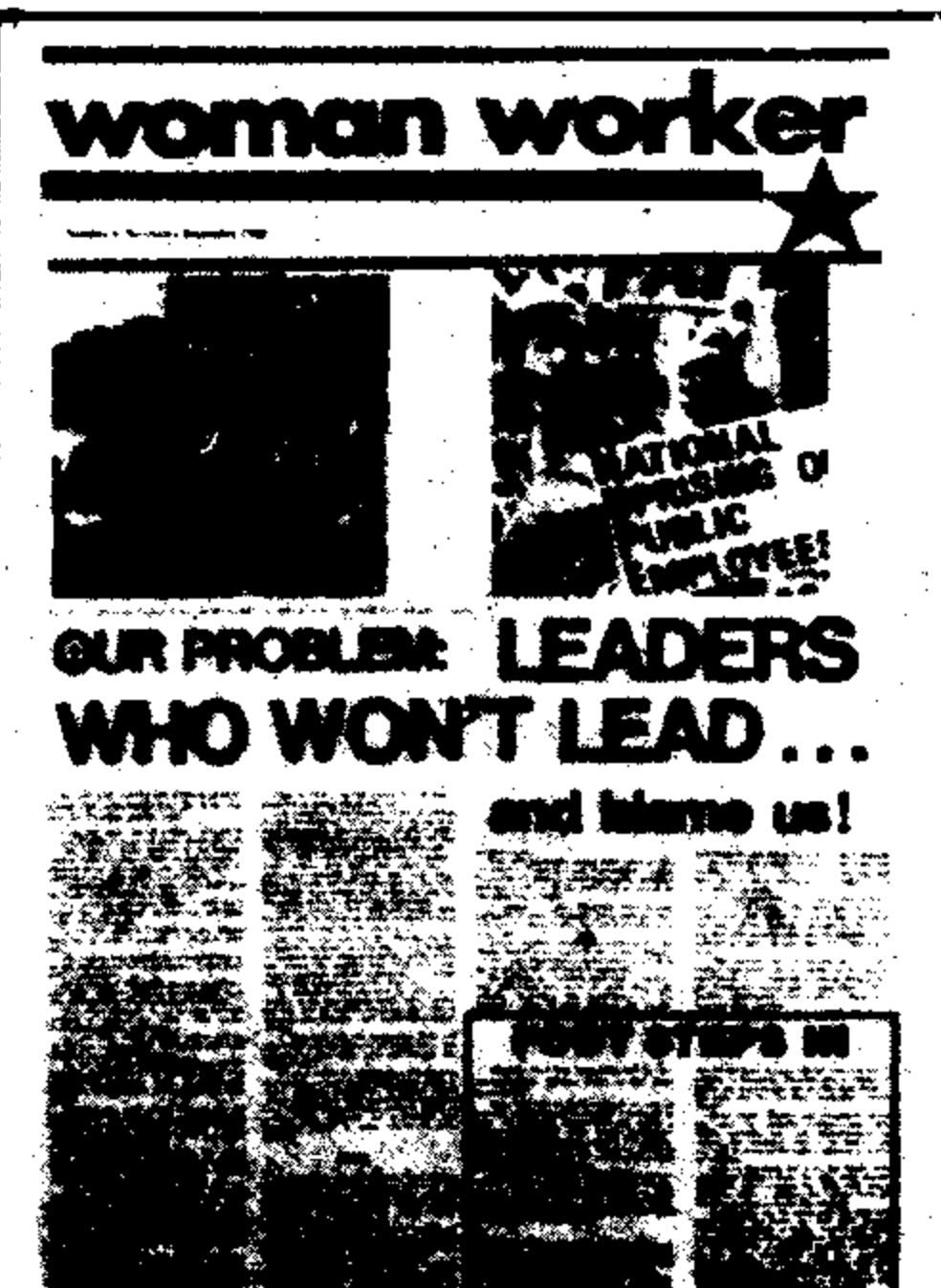
Following an initiative from the National Union of Journalists, a national labour movement conference has been convened to discuss the question of media censorship of reporting on the war in Ireland.

The proposal for the conference was carried at last year's Annual Delegate Meeting of the NUJ. Since then the NUJ leadership has approached other print and media unions to support the conference. The Association of Broadcasting Staff and the film technicians' union ACTT are among those who have responded positively.

But for the conference to prove successful it must also be raised more widely in the labour movement—trade unions, trades councils and Labour Parties.

Literature on the conference is now available and readers are urged to seek every possible means of ensuring it is publicised and supported in their own areas and union branches.

Details of the conference—to be held in Birmingham on February 28—are available from Ron Knowles, NUJ, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Road, London WC1.



Available price 24p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

BRING
DOWN
THE TORIES
THIS WINTER!

a Socialist Press pamphlet

30p

A brand new pamphlet, spelling out programme and perspective for struggle to oust the Tories.

Available, price 45p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

Labour's nest of vipers

Any trade unionist who looks back to the nationalising post-war Labour Government of 1945-51 as the 'good old days' should check out the newly released Cabinet Papers for 1950.

In them we have the real thoughts of that particular bunch of reformist traitors when they were safely behind closed doors.

There is no mention of class war against the Tories and the ruling class—but a good deal of venom is worked up against the working class.

Thus, in the course of the year we find the Labour leaders discussing not inroads against capitalism but legal action for treason against the *Daily Worker* over Korea and the use of war-time laws against strikers on the docks and in British Overseas Airways.

Furthermore, it would appear that a secret ban on Communists and sympathisers becoming British citizens through naturalisation was agreed.

In contrast, Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, argued in favour of a military alliance with Fascist Spain! Like any good "social democrat" he explained that:

"It is illogical, at the least, to exclude a power whose regime, though deplorable and even Fascist, is definitely not in the same category as that of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."

Finally, and possibly most upsetting for those who see the 'left' of Labour as the spearhead against capitalism, we have the thoughts of Aneurin Bevan, Minister of Health.

This supposed hardy advocate of the NHS is to be found arguing in favour of cuts in NHS spending, particularly through restricting the number of prescriptions.

In a memorandum to the Cabinet he states:

"Here there ought to be scope for savings if ways and means can be found. While flagrant abuse may be the exception, it is obvious that there is more prescribing than can be really necessary."

Here speaks not the fiery people's leader built up by the press, but the real, hardened labour bureaucrat.

Those on the left, like Gerry Healy (leader of the present-day Workers Revolutionary Party) who uncritically campaigned for Bevan and argued at the time that:

"the task of left-wing Labour is simply to aid in making fully explicit the account Bevan has given of Labour's past experience and the policy he espouses," would do well to check out what that policy really was.

In 1950, as in 1931, the Labour leadership was a nest of vipers, a collection of political snakes in the grass of the workers movement.

PRESS GANG



As the press began its first real witch-hunt of the new year at Longbridge, the Queen stepped in personally. She had had enough.

There was Woodrow Wyatt and the other renegades from the Labour Party laying into the Longbridge workers in their expensive columns (A sample of their penetrating analysis: "Just the distant prospect that it might be a success has again set off the silly strikers of Longbridge").

There were the news pages pounding out the latest BL claim (We'll drop atomic bomb on Britain if they don't go back") as if it was written on tablets of stone.

There were the cobra faced puppets of television news assuring BL workers that if they did not call off the strike they would throw every worker in Britain out of a job.

(Credit where credit is due. ITN interviewed one of the sacked stewards. The Sunday Business News interviewed two of them. O what generosity! How grateful we should be!)

So who would stand up for these innocent men?

The Queen got her press secretary to make a statement. "The Queen is finding the intrusion quite intolerable and is more than a little angry over the behaviour."

Earlier she had intervened

personally. "I wish you would go away" she shouted angrily at photographers.

Prince Philip, her live-in companion, went one better. He got out his gun... No let us get this straight... a member of a party which included Prince Philip got out one's gun and blasted hell out of the car driven by a reporter from the Sun giving her heart failure and a front page lead story).

Incidentally, when she complained to police nearby they said they were always getting shot in their panda car by royal shooting parties. They have had to break them up after six days).

So what brought this stirring royal defence of the Longbridge victims. Obviously it was the royal sense of fair play, which is known the world over, especially on polo pitches and in show jumping arenas.

These blue blooded personages are simply not going to stand by while some bloody little South African upstart sacks perfectly innocent workers just so he can show who is boss.

It wasn't behaviour like that that got Britain where she is today. Of course being the Royal Family they had to disguise it a little. Pretend that they worried about some half-witted offspring falling off his pony—sorry, one of his ponies. They created diversions by

having the Queen's son dress up in nineteenth century clothes and take walks around the ground with women who wear the British ruling classes' equivalent of the veil—the headscarf.

But in reality everyone knew that behind this coded version of events it was the Longbridge workers that the Queen was really defending.

Why should the press be allowed to swing the result of votes by pounding away day after day accusing the workers of being criminals?

"It has been far worse this year than any other time", said the palace spokesman. "They are hanging around the stables (Buckingham Palace rhyming slang for Longbridge), photographing anything that moves".

Asked about the reporter being shot at he replied solidly "People who were close at hand were given plenty of warning."

This was obviously the green light for BL workers. The message from the Queen has not been misunderstood. Next time the press gang up on you, don't change your vote.

Just get hold of a shot gun (you need a licence signed by a magistrate—maybe Duffy will do the job for you) and blast hell out of the buggers.

Then charge them with trespass, rape of royal personage and arson in her majesty's dockyard. If it works for the royal family surely it will work for the workers of Longbridge?



Lord Grade

Grade stays on TV gravy train

Lord Windlesham, chairman and managing director of ATV summed up the Plowden reshuffle of commercial television contracts by saying: "We remain in control of the company and that is what matters".

The once-a-decade share out had brought two sacrificial lambs in the shape of Southern TV and Westward (which had committed the crime of public boardroom rows) but had left the giants alone.

One of British capitalism's more bizarre charades was over for another ten years.

Recession or no recession the licence to print money handed to the owners of the commercial TV stations remains as good today as when it was launched.

If public cynicism is today more evident than last time the prospectuses were drawn up (that sudden yearning for regional drama which grips the directors for a few short weeks) then expectations will not be so high and results less important.

If the IBA contemplations were to mean anything at all then ATV was surely for the chop.

Lord Grade's empire has become a byword for the cynical use of TV stations, to propagate shows produced by other wings of the Grade empire, with actors hired by agents from other sections of the Grade empire.

Even Crossroads wouldn't be complete without the block of ATV shares firmly held by Noele Gordon, one of the stars whose career can confidently be expected to run and run.

Not only that but there were two powerful conglomerates bidding against ATV. The perfect bid comes from a sort of opposite of a popular front.

Cross section

A gang of hard boiled entrepreneurs larded with a few names associated with the labour movement to give the appearance of a cross section of the community.

One of ATV's opponents, Mercia, had not only the support of 28 local MPs and the

Birmingham Labour Council—but also Shirley Williams (who is to a television programme today what good design seemed to the Titanic just before it was launched).

The other opponent, Midlands, had Uncle Joe Gormley among the list of directors (Lady Airey Neave was another plum).

Sir Robert Booth, who headed the bid, made a virtue out of the fact that they 'only' had £33 million to bid with.

Misquoting

Lord (Ted) Willis, front man, kept misquoting the Beatitudes at the press conference to launch their bid, claiming that the poor (that was them) would inherit the earth.

But ATV has survived. Just under half the shares will have to be given up and negotiations are now going on as to how that will be done.

The area—which hardly gets covered in some towns in terms of news—will be split into two with separate boards, and ATV will have to find a new name.

Perhaps that last condition was the most penetrating description of the cosmetic changes.

Southern TV will be forced to hand over to TVS which in terms of shareholders means

Associated Newspapers (Daily Mail) being forced to hand over to European Ferries.

Monopoly

The franchises are unparalleled in British capitalism. They provide monopoly conditions for a decade with the promise that someone will go to the wall at the end of that time just so the public can see how tough the IBA really is.

But previous reshuffles have not even truly passed the money press from one capitalist to another.

Defeated bidders have in the past merely bought their way in to those who succeeded. In the ATV region presumably the 49% of shares will now go mostly to the opponents of ATV and the feuding enemies will become the best of buddies.

Workers have of course nothing to gain in one or other of these teams of bandits (except that every time there is a change their jobs get put at risk).

Takeover

By carrying out this charade the IBA are surely providing an effective advertisement for a different sort of 'redistribution'—a workers' take over of the means of production.

Steel: two-way sell-out

Union leaders who have already signed away tens of thousands of jobs in the steel industry seem all set to allow a further 20,000 cut in the workforce, coupled to a six month wage freeze, and topped off with a miserable 7% pay offer.

As BSC management mail out ballot forms to the 130,000 steelworkers, seeking a vote for Ian MacGregor's so-called "survival plan", union bureaucrats are in disarray.

The new sackings are supported by leaders of the National Union of Blastfurnacemen—whose membership is already down to a mere 7,000.

Pay freeze

And the NUB, along with most other steel unions, has already accepted the pay freeze—which means a major cut in the living standards of steelworkers.

Only the ISTC—the principal manual workers' union in the industry—is recommending

rejection of the MacGregor plan. Yet the union, whose members emerged from 50 years of dormancy to wage a bitter 15 week pay strike last winter, is offering no recommendation on whether or not workers should accept the pay freeze.

Instead of offering a firm lead in the fight for action to oppose the redundancies, the ISTC has opted to call its own ballot.

There is little doubt that under the weight of Tory press and media propaganda, pressure from management, and in the isolation of their individual homes, steelworkers are likely to vote for acceptance of the MacGregor plan.

But there is equally little doubt that a similar ballot of ISTC members last winter on the pay offer would have given no idea of the rock solid support that emerged for the pay strike once a national lead had been given.

Objective

The postal ballot is a tactic designed to exploit the individual weaknesses, doubts, fears and illusions of the working class. That is why BSC is using this technique to undermine steelworkers.

The fact that right wing union leaders use the same method is related to the fact that they seek essentially the same objective—to avoid any chance of a strike which would be in confrontation not only with BSC management but also the Tory government.

If the ISTC seriously wanted to fight the redundancies mass meetings would be called in the main plants throughout the country with a recommendation for all-out action to defend jobs and defend living standards.



Pickets during last year's steel strike

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.

1981: LEADERSHIP OF TO WORKERS' STR

During 1979, the Shah of Iran, the CIA-backed "King of Kings", was booted off his Peacock throne by the mass revolt of Iran's workers, peasants and oppressed minorities.

Yet during the period since those events a reactionary clerical regime headed by Khomeini has worked incessantly to undermine the gains made by the Iranian masses, to repress the organisations of the left, and establish a new "Islamic" dictatorship.

During 1979, the bloody Somoza dictatorship was toppled by the masses of Nicaragua in an assault led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

Yet even now, 15 months later the FSLN leaders are still seeking ways of working jointly with Nicaraguan capitalists in the "Government of National Reconstruction". Nicaragua remains a capitalist country.

These two situations exemplify the political problems faced by the world's working class in the anti-imperialist struggle in 1980.

The year produced no spectacular defeats for imperialism on a par with the events of Iran and Nicaragua.

There have of course been blows struck against imperialist control.

In the Saharan desert, the militant action of the guerrillas of the Polisario Front continues to inflict defeats on the imperialist-backed Moroccan armies.

In Zimbabwe, the imperialists were forced to recognise the real balance of forces emerging from the protracted guerrilla war, and drop their plans to impose the stooge Muzorewa government.

The sweeping election victory of the witch-hunted guerrilla leader Mugabe has doubly vindicated the approach of Carrington and other imperialist leaders who carried through the Lancaster House talks.

No chance

On the one hand Mugabe's election demonstrated beyond doubt that the isolated Muzorewa regime would have stood no chance of establishing its control over the Zimbabwean masses.

On the other hand it has proved that Mugabe is in fact the toothless tiger that Marxists have always claimed he was. From his first moments in office, his efforts have been directed towards repressing the working class and maintaining and strengthening capitalism and the capitalist state in Zimbabwe.

Mugabe's "Marxist" rhetoric, which coloured his speeches during the war of liberation, has been scrapped. Instead we now hear only the rhetoric of class collaboration as Mugabe attempts the impossible task of resolving the economic crisis of Zimbabwe through petty reforms and an endless search for aid from the crisis-wracked imperialist economies.

While there is no doubt that some imperialist leaders would have felt safer were their chosen allies—such as Nkomo and Muzorewa—to have been elected to office in Zimbabwe, the political weaknesses of the Mugabe leadership have offered Carrington and company an alternative strategy for the preservation of capitalist rule and exploitation.

It is interesting to contrast this settlement by the Tory government with the intransigent line of opposition to Mugabe and the PF leadership taken by the Labour leaders when they were in office.

While the Labourites, dedicated to the defence of their "own" ruling class, see the preservation of imperialist rule simply in terms of repression of all forms of opposition, the ruling class itself feels confident enough to take an overview of a particular confrontation and make a bold change of tactic to secure their objectives.

This is the parallel between the concessions forced from the imperialists in Zimbabwe and those extracted from the Tory leaders by the Irish republican hunger strikers.

While the exact form and scope of the concessions made to the "H" Block prisoners of war have yet to be clarified, it is clear that the Thatcher government has acknowledged the political status and the command structure of the republican prisoners.

Such concessions came immediately following the visit by a top-level British government delegation to Irish Prime

Minister Haughey. It must be assumed that the Tory leaders have deliberately taken steps that they knew would incur the wrath of Paisley and other Loyalist leaders, working towards a broader settlement of the war in Ireland along lines discussed with Haughey.

Again there is a sharp contrast between the routine, bureaucratic measures of boot and bullet meted out by the last Labour government against the Irish minority in the six counties and the comparative readiness of the Tories—the direct representatives of British capital to seek a less costly solution.

It was of course the Heath government and Tory Home Secretary William Whitelaw who in 1972 went so far as to conduct direct talks with IRA leaders and in this context to concede "special category status" to republican prisoners.

More flexible

It was Labourites on the other hand who chose to step up the drive to crush the republican movement militarily with the Prevention of Terrorism Act, the dispatch of SAS murder squads to Ireland, and the withdrawal of special category status.

We do not wish to suggest that the Tory government is more sympathetic to the demands of the Irish masses than the Labourites: we point simply to the fact that they are ready to pursue a more flexible tactical line in seeking to repress the Irish people.

Such limited concessions, which have been forced on the imperialists, have however taken place under conditions where the masses have in general been held back from revolutionary struggles by their leaderships.

In particular 1980 has seen a continuation of the bloody situation of stalemate between the masses and the US-backed ruling junta in El Salvador, in which



Toothless tigers: Nkomo and Mugabe

NO JOY FOR

While workers seeking to defend their rights and living standards run headlong into an acute crisis of leadership, the imperialist leaders themselves face a profound economic and political crisis.

The latest report by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) covering 26 countries, forecasts a continued growth of recession with a further 10% increase in unemployment in the next 18 months—from 23 million to 25.5 million.

The OECD's most optimistic predictions look only for some signs of a weak recovery beginning at the end of 1981, bringing a slow increase in output.

But in three major member countries—West Germany, Italy and Britain—output is expected to fall in the next 12 months.

Unemployment in France is now at a record 1.6 million; it has even topped the million mark in West Germany.

In Britain, the unemployment figure is predicted by the OECD to rise to three million by mid-1982, with a staggering 20% of workers under 24 being unemployed.

Company profits are expected to fall still further—and speed-up and rationalisation make it likely that even the beginnings of an increase in out-

put would bring few new jobs for the mass army of unemployed. Meanwhile inflation would remain at 9%.

Even North Sea Oil revenues are not expected to bail British capitalism out of this slump—with the OECD prediction that the balance of payments will be back in deficit by 1982.

And to round off the picture of decline and disaster, surveys indicate that capitalist investment in the decaying British economy will plunge by 13-15% next year. Already the continuing wave of closures of manufacturing plants across the country has brought an abrupt drop in prices for second hand machinery and scrap metal on the British market.

On an international scale, certain basic industries have been hit particularly hard by the slump. The car industry in particular has seen a dramatic fall in sales, with lay-offs, short-time or closures in nearly every major manufacturing country with the exception of Japan.

In the USA the failure of the much heralded new "K" car to sell the numbers anticipated has raised a new question mark over the survival of the bankrupt Chrysler Corporation. Production of the "K" car has been cut back in the face of huge unsold stocks and a further £400 million has been sought in government assistance.

In France the Peugeot/Talbot group is laying off

workers and cutting production—while in Britain the crisis of the car industry is virtually daily news.

But if the imperialist countries are in economic disarray, the crisis is even more acute in those neo-colonial countries whose economic backwardness is exploited as a source of cheap labour and raw materials.

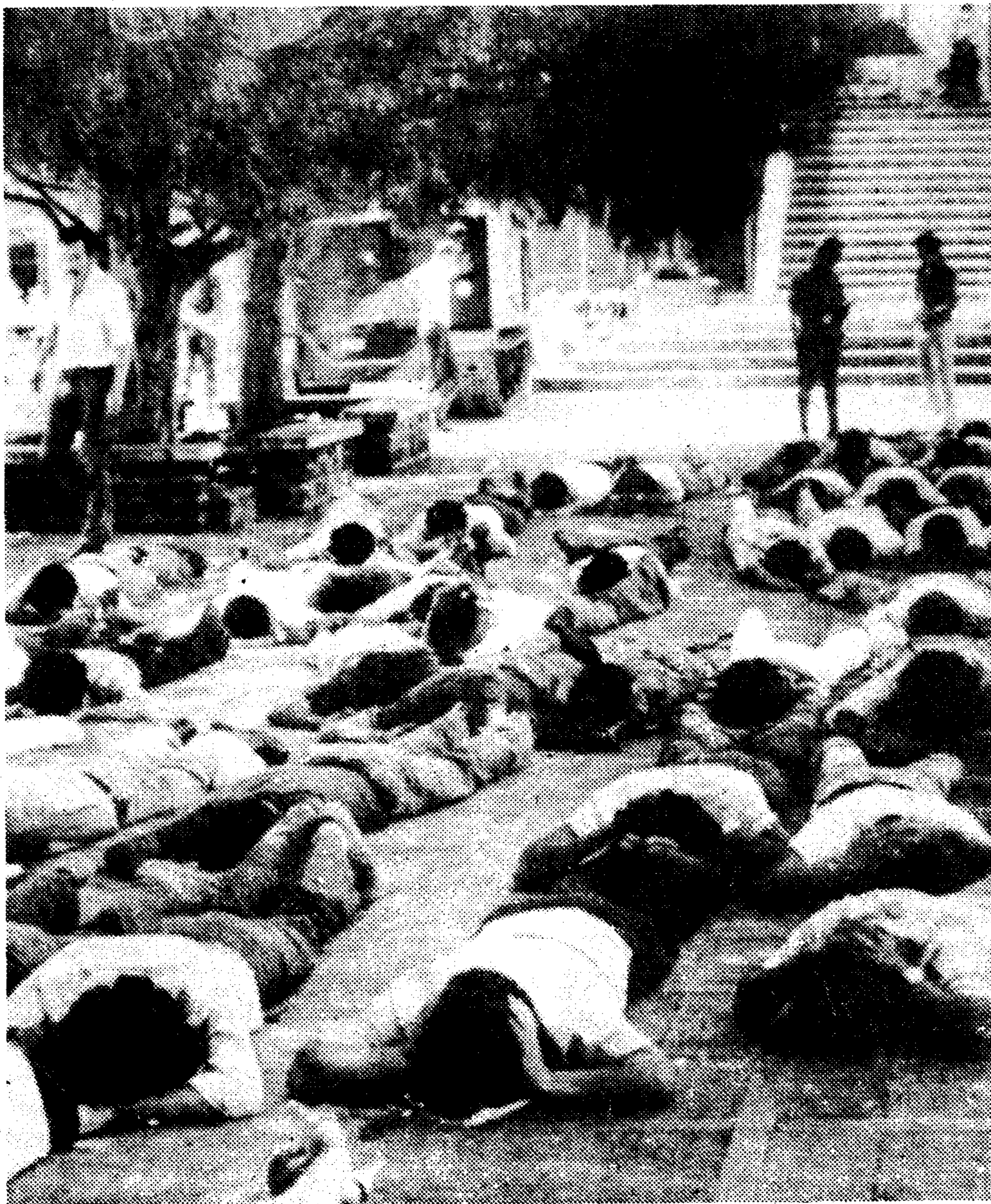
The indebtedness of the underdeveloped, countries to imperialist banks and governments is expected by the OECD to rise yet again from \$50 billion to \$60 billion in the next 18 months.

Difficult

Simply maintaining the interest payments on these debts is becoming increasingly difficult for many underdeveloped countries—while the level of exploitation of the working class and poor peasantry is already so acute that further attacks can be expected to produce substantial resistance.

It is in this context that the foreign policy of the incoming Reagan administration and the other imperialist leaders must be assessed.

Beset by political and economic problems in their own countries, they are determined at all costs to maintain and increase their exploitation of the underdeveloped economies. This means they must use



Victims of the bloody stalemate in El Salvador

CRISIS OBSTACLE BATTLES

John Lister surveys the struggles of 1980, draws a balance sheet of class forces at the end of the year and looks at some of the problems facing the working class internationally in the battles ahead in 1981.

political violence continues but no substantial party within the workers' movement is putting forward an independent line for the working class.

Setbacks

And there have been serious setbacks, too. In Bolivia a savage military junta has ridden to power in the wake of the results of the farcical "election". Bolivian union leaders and militants have been jailed, tortured and murdered and the headquarters of the COB (the Bolivian TUC) has been demolished.

And in Turkey the military coup led by General Evren has

brought to power a bonapartist dictatorship balanced uneasily between the conflicting class forces within Turkey and internationally.

The Turkish junta has jailed over 60,000 political prisoners, including the leadership of the left-wing trade union confederation DISK, and illegalised all political activity. Such firm steps to crush working class resistance and lay the basis to implement the demands made of Turkish capitalists by the IMF have been welcomed by every section of the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Yet the new Turkish regime has at the same time been forced by its economic plight

and political weakness to seek alliances with key Arab oil states, entailing a break of diplomatic relations with the Zionist state of Israel.

The final outcome of the struggle is far from settled in Turkey or even in Bolivia.

In both countries a powerful proletariat has shown itself to be still ready to fight—but denied a revolutionary leadership.

Development

But no assessment of the growing class conflict on a world scale would be complete without an analysis of these

setbacks.

Yet if the struggles directly against imperialism have faced increasing problems in the last year, the biggest development of the working class in struggle in 1980 took place in Poland.

Strikes in support of wage demands grew into the fight for independent trade unions, demands for measures that would mean the abolition of the power and privilege of the Stalinist state bureaucracy and demands for the release of political prisoners.

The threat of general strike action has forced the bureaucracy to concede time and again to the demands of the workers—threatening the very police powers on which their privileges are based within an economy in which major industry and banks remain nationalised.

It is with this in mind that the Kremlin leaders, together with Stalinist regimes in East Germany and Czechoslovakia, have maintained an intensifying political offensive against the Polish workers.

Military force

And they have increasingly backed up their verbal attacks with the implicit threat to use military force to crush the Polish struggles.

Troops have been made ready on Poland's borders.

A Warsaw Pact summit has made it plain that the Polish Stalinists have one last chance to put their own house in order before the tanks roll in.

And, under this pressure, the Polish leadership under Stanislaw Kania has attempted to take a stronger line against the demands of the workers.

In this Kania has received the active assistance of the

capitalists—both directly, through loans and trade deals to prop up the tottering Polish economy, and less directly through the appeals for calm issued by Catholic church leaders—which reached a crescendo as the Polish state-run media were turned over to the Church for the broadcast of mass and other religious messages over Christmas.

Illusion

There is no doubt that the Polish leaders and their fellow Stalinists feel at their weakest in the face of the mass movement of the working class. They are most encouraged to press home their counter-attack at those points where the working class appears more passive.

But we must not fall into the dangerous illusion that somehow the Stalinists will simply become weaker and weaker, eventually to fade away altogether in the face of growing workers' demands and struggles.

The material privileges built up over decades by the parasitic ruling caste within all of the deformed and degenerated workers' states depend upon the repression of the working class and depriving workers of any independent means of expression.

The emergence and forced recognition of independent trade unions in Poland: the direct and successful challenge to police powers that brought at the end of the year the release of jailed Solidarity members stand as a threat not only to the Polish bureaucrats, but to every Stalinist bureaucracy.

Sooner than lose their power and privileges the Kremlin

leaders would embark on the desperate step of invading Poland—no matter what the cost of such an action in economic, political and military terms.

And a large section of the Polish leadership has shown that, sooner than face the loss of their own power and privilege, they would invite Soviet tanks to invade Poland.

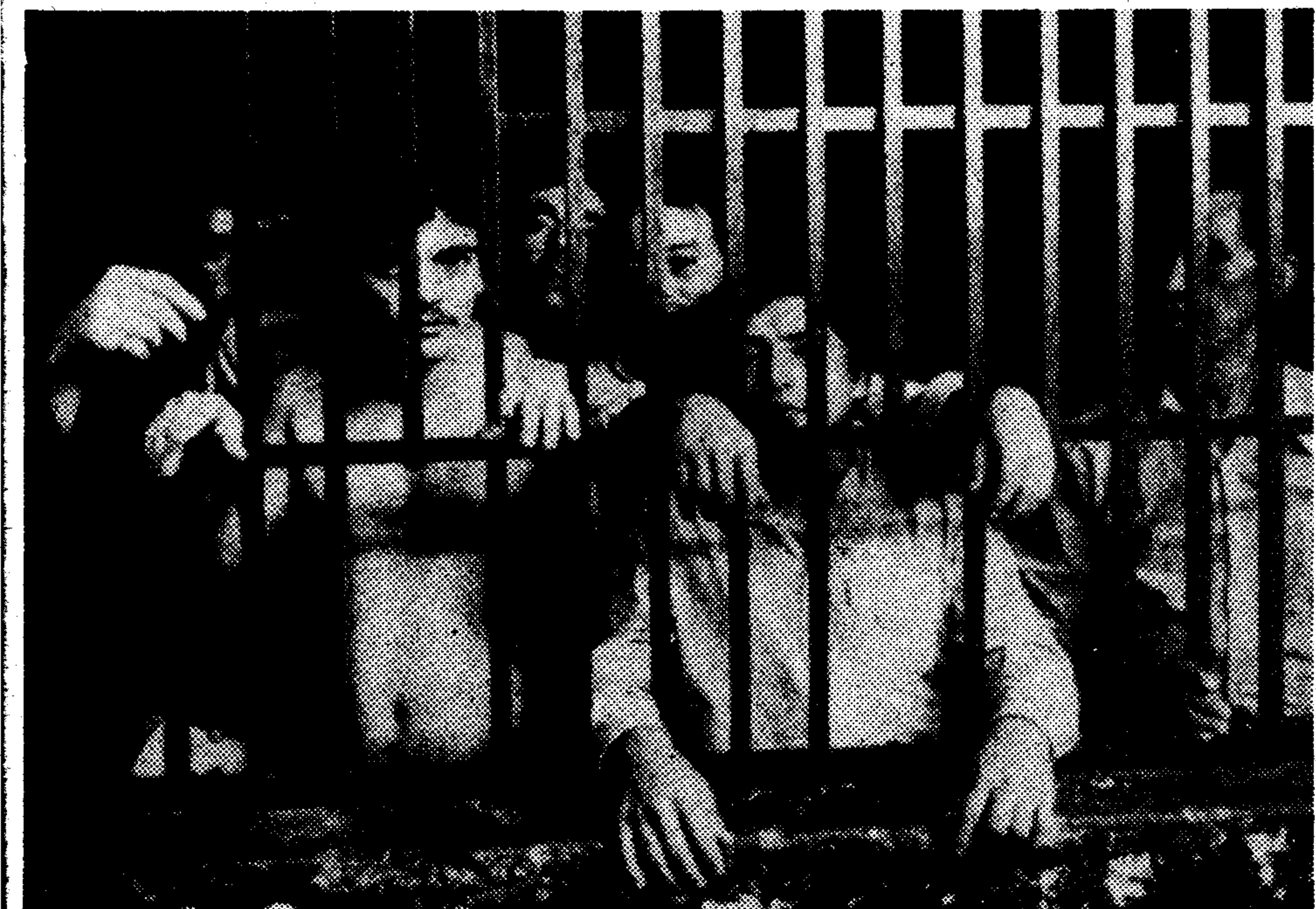
The unstable balance of power that has emerged in Poland in the latter half of 1980 cannot continue indefinitely. Either the power of the independent unions must be mobilised, in concert with the working class of other East European states, in the struggle for political revolution or they must be destroyed by political or military means.

Leadership

It is in this sense that the Polish proletariat, despite the colossal struggles and gains of the last few months, faces, like the workers in the capitalist countries, an acute crisis of leadership.

The leaders of Solidarity have been able to conduct struggles for reforms within the existing framework of bureaucratic rule in Poland: but they have not grasped that even the existence of a genuinely independent union as a vehicle for workers' political and economic demands is incompatible with Stalinist rule.

A revolutionary leadership is required which can offer an internationalist programme and perspective for the political overthrow of the bureaucracy and the defence of the nationalised property relations of the deformed and degenerated workers' states.



Bolivian prisoners—at least 2,000 political prisoners thought to be held in jail

IMPERIALIST LEADERS

the necessary political and military means to retain control of these countries and prevent any further defeats at the hands of mass struggles as took place in Iran and Nicaragua.

The last phase of Carter's foreign policy had recognised this necessity. The establishment of a large US Rapid Development Force, the escalation of military spending, and the moves to prepare for the introduction of conscription are part and parcel of a recognition by US imperialism that use of armed force may well be the only way to stem revolutionary struggles in Central or Latin America, Africa or the Middle East in the next period.

The flow of US arms and advisors' to the vicious junta of El Salvador has been maintained and may be increased by Reagan: the Turkish junta has been installed with full NATO backing.

US imperialism can now be expected to make its peace openly with the bloody Bolivian dictatorship and with other savage Latin American military regimes.

And to further intimidate the masses of the world, Reagan has appointed General Haig—known protagonist of the so-called "limited" nuclear war—as Secretary of State.

But while Reagan will seek every way possible to strengthen imperialist control on a world scale, it remains

open to doubt whether he has the ability at present to wage a major military intervention even as close to home as El Salvador.

His monetarist policies will unleash further unemployment and falling living standards on US workers at home: and a full scale war would require conscription at a time when American youth have already shown resistance to the draft.

The combination could produce substantial mass struggles by US workers.

A US intervention in El Salvador would also have unpredictable implications in terms of the stability of the whole Central American region—and trample on the toes of the Mexican and other bourgeois nationalist governments who continue to seek a way out of the El Salvador crisis and to neutralise the Nicaraguan revolution through class collaboration rather than confrontation.

We can expect the Reagan government at the very least to be strong on words in their struggle to retain control of the neo-colonial countries.

The extent to which the imperialists succeed in their strategies, however, depends to a large extent on the success which revolutionaries in the USA and throughout the world have in mobilising the working class—the class internationally exploited by capital—against imperialist oppression.



Anti-war movement a threat to Reagan's interventionist plans

PROSTITUTION: where should labour movement stand?

Following a series of 'Ripper-style' murders in Lyons in France in 1974 and 1975 about which the police seemingly did little except increase the harassment of prostitutes—which resulted in higher fines and increased imprisonments—a national strike of prostitutes took place which lasted for over two months.

A church was occupied in Lyons, being a sanctuary for 'criminals' and the 'moral centre' of the community: this occupation was quickly followed by strikes and occupations of churches all over France by prostitutes.

Support by the political parties was very limited and generally hostile but support for the movement grew and reached a climax when prostitutes in Paris occupied St Bernard Chapel in Montparnasse.

With the number of Paris prostitutes being in the region of 6,000 and therefore every church being under threat of occupation, the movement was finally broken with the police entering churches and violently evicting the occupiers.

The church occupations were hailed as an enormous victory; the murders stopped, and prostitutes had gained experience and the basis of an organisation to fight for their rights—in 1979 a government proposal for state brothels failed.

Recognition

This defeat was seen to be the result of both the organisation of prostitutes with the support of others and the beginning of public recognition of their views.

The importance of the strike in bringing to the fore of public debate a group of workers who are normally kept invisible cannot be doubted.

However, the strike only began to raise issues to those outside of the work and there still remain many unanswered questions—along with a tendency of the organised left to ignore prostitution when discussing other aspects of the women question.

The following must therefore be seen as only a very sketchy outline of what is an extremely complex issue. It does not attempt to answer all the questions.

Whatever views, as socialists, we have on prostitution (whether it should exist at all or only in state brothels, whether prostitution should be abolished under socialism, whether it is a valuable "social service", etc.) it is clear that, under capitalism at least, prostitutes form one of the most oppressed and exploited groups of workers.

No other group faces such gross hypocrisy from bourgeois morality and the legal system. This hypocrisy reaches the extent of their *existence* as prostitutes being legal while their *working* as prostitutes is declared illegal!

Union

It is therefore important that socialists consider the question of prostitution, *not* as an abstract debate but in the face of growing numbers of women out of work (for whom prostitution is always an alternative) and various organisations that prostitutes themselves have set up which effectively operate, in a limited way, as a union for prostitutes.

As socialists we have to look at these organisations and seriously consider what types of demands we would make and what type of transitional arrangements we would envisage

stand?



Existence of prostitutes considered legal: their work as prostitutes subject to police harassment

following the overthrow of capitalism.

While, of course, we would never attempt to formulate some kind of definitive blueprint for post-revolutionary society, we must accept that prostitution as it presently exists under capitalism could not continue under socialism and we therefore have to examine and work towards a view on prostitution and prostitutes.

The notions of sexuality which give rise to the 'need' for prostitution, and the oppression of women which allows them to become prostitutes (aside from economic considerations) have unquestionably to be challenged under socialism.

Illegal

Prostitution is legal in this country, as in France, but "loitering for the purpose of prostitution" and "soliciting for the purpose of prostitution" is illegal.

Furthermore, in law a brothel is defined as a place where more than one prostitute works. Effectively, this means that prostitutes, although having legal status, cannot actually legally work.

Not only do prostitutes incur heavy penalties (on their third conviction they are liable to three months imprisonment) but they are subject to constant harassment from the police.

This includes agent provocateur tactics. In the USA this is known as "entrapment" and is a form of legal defence, but in Britain it is not a defence.

Street walkers are referred to as "common prostitutes" in the courts and this results (in contrast to every other type of defendant) in the court knowing about previous offences as soon as the charge is read out.

Once known as a "common prostitute" you can be arrested for just standing or walking in a particular street.

The law used for this, (Section 1 of the Street Offences Act 1959) is strikingly similar

in wording to the notorious "sus law" (Vagrancy Act 1824).

But whereas a successful prosecution under "sus" has to involve some incriminating evidence by way of observation or otherwise, a successful prosecution under the Street Offences Act involves simply proving that the defendant is or has been a prostitute and was standing or walking in a known vice-area.

At least 300 women go to prison every year and the threat of imprisonment is increased when a prostitute comes out in the open and campaigns for legal and working rights.

PROS (Programme for Reform of the laws On Prostitution) is an organisation of prostitutes which actively campaigns to abolish all laws relating to prostitution and the imprisonment of prostitutes.

An organisation that has been active for the last few years, they produce a paper *Street Beat* and have active groups around the country.

While they acknowledge the short-term nature of their essentially reformist demands, it is not clear what they see as a long term perspective for prostitutes or how they seek to achieve it.

They point out that, at the moment, the possibilities of setting up a PROS trade union affiliated to the TUC are very limited—given the fact that they have not even yet won the right to work (legally). Therefore they act, at the moment, as a campaigning/support body.

Although in a recent issue of their paper they document a struggle in the nineteenth century to repeal the Contagious Diseases Act (by which any woman could be picked up on suspicion of being a prostitute and detained in a locked hospital ward until presumed clear of VD), in which they point to the less well known supporters including working men's organisations, they do not appear to place demands on the trade union movement today to enlist their support.

However, the tendency

towards overt hostility to the trade union and Labour movement on the part of the women's liberation movement (WLM) is not present in PROS literature, and their failure to broaden out the campaign beyond enlisting the support of MPs may be a reflection of their understandable caution given the nature of their jobs and their obvious desire to attract only genuine supporters.

Power

In contrast to PROS, two other groups—the English Collective of Prostitutes (ECP) and Prostitution Laws are Nonsense (PLAN)—both of which have close ties with the Wages for Housework Campaign—work from within the WLM.

In line with the wages for housework campaign, ECP adopts the concept that women attain power through earning money:

"This is the women's movement and the prostitutes' movement is part of it. Prostitutes are women, we are not different; like other women we don't like housework and its lack of wages, we don't like the second job and its respectable low women's wages, and we hate pennilessness, we always did . . . The prostitution laws divide pros from other women. An emancipated pro is bargaining power for other women who want more pay and in the home and children's allowances. The fact that a prostitute can earn £1,000 a week shows how undervalued other women are."

Ambiguities

ECP represents a wide range of prostitutes—from street walkers to call girls—but like many other positions and campaigns taken up in the WLM and inherent in the notion of an autonomous women's movement, the ambiguities and confusions shine forth. One of ECP's leading members argues: "I am certainly for the end of prostitution. I believe that we

A discussion article by Teresa Munby

should have a society where nothing is bought or sold and that means none of us will have to sell ourselves."

At the same time the collective argues: "Not only must every woman have the right to choose to have or not to have children, she must have the right to agree or refuse to give her time and skills, and the right to agree or refuse to sell her time and skills."

They completely fail to make any link and formulate any policy as a transition between reform of conditions today and their other concern which is eradicating prostitution.

Clearly the inclusion of prostitutes in the WLM has been a controversial issue since they, above all other women, are seen as most directly servicing the enemy.

Economic

At the same time the liberalism within the movement shudders at the thought of compromising the concept of sisterhood and so reaches out to prostitutes so as not to alienate them as women.

But what all this clearly fails to examine is the cause of prostitution and reasons for its existence under capitalism and thus fails to adopt a clear socialist perspective on class lines, of the way in which prostitution might exist or not exist under socialism.

From literature that is available, it is fairly clear that the main motivation for women to become prostitutes is economic. Often for single women with children, prostitution provides a lucrative income that once being earned becomes difficult to end:

"Once you've started, everything's set up to stop you being able to get out—the cops for a start. Cops and cash, they're the two poles in the daily life of a prostitute."

Prostitutes Our Life, ed C. Jaget.

In this book, in which six French prostitutes tell their own accounts of their lives, a common theme is the lack of choice that they felt they faced in becoming prostitutes:

"In my case it was never a choice, I'd never have thought, even when I was a hostess, that I might one day become a prostitute. I saw it as I think all so-called normal women see it—it was something impossible, something you never do, out of bounds . . . But then I think this is fairly common; you can't think ahead, 'I'm going to be a prostitute' and then organise your life accordingly. Just the opposite—you refuse to think about it."

Neither is it described as being an enjoyable occupation, this comment again reflects a common view:

" . . . the first time it really is horrible . . . Gradually it becomes a routine, so you find ways of distracting yourself from it. You find escape routes, blinkers, drugs. You grow a sort of second skin. Everyone finds their own way of coping, but you never really get used to it."

This is an important point; many socialists may feel that prostitution is like any other job—working in a tedious factory job or being self-employed—that you switch off and adapt to it.

Many of the accounts in the book point to the problems encountered in having 'ordinary' sexual relationships with men and many women, understand-

ably, maintain sexual relationships with other women instead.

Surely this illustrates the enormous differences that exist in working as a prostitute and in any other type of job. The exploitative nature of prostitution—particularly in wartime (Vietnamese women for instance being shot full of penicillin to keep down the incidence of VD in army-run brothels) goes far beyond the 'alienating' aspects of factory work.

Inherent in the view that prostitution is just another job is the notion that prostitution provides some kind of 'social service'.

Violence

This is patently refuted by the fact of the incidence of rape in well-known red-light districts; although men who are otherwise deficient or sexually inept may require the services of prostitutes, the service by no means reduces the violence and sexual harassment against women who live in the areas where prostitutes are readily available.

And while, as a short term measure, legalising prostitution would enable women to work off the streets (and so reduce the increased harassment that 'straight' women face from kerb crawlers) the continuation of prostitution cannot be seen as the maintaining of an essential service.

The PROS campaign makes very clear their view on state brothels and complicated legislation making prostitution legal as has been done in Germany and Holland.

They are opposed to the lack of control that they see would inevitably flow from such a system (and does occur in Germany for example).

Instead most favour the setting up of prostitutes co-ops under their control. Nowhere in their literature do prostitutes talk of their enjoyment of their job; they write as workers seeking a limited set of demands to improve and decriminalise their working conditions.

No small task

Given the concepts of sexuality and sexual oppression of women that exists in capitalist society which prostitution represents, decriminalising it is no small task and must be a first stage in the political fight by prostitutes under capitalism.

To that extent the PROS campaign is an important group with a clear perspective that avoids the confusions and ambiguities of ECP and PLAN.

However, in the long term we must as socialists have a perspective of abolishing prostitution along with other forms of grossly exploitative labour; with the economic incentives removed and decent provision of childcare, housing, health and leisure facilities such a job would no longer be necessary for survival.

During the transitional stage however, it is quite conceivable that prostitution would remain.

The difficulty then, as exists to some extent now, will be the need to overcome any inherent distaste we may feel and moral conditioning that we've inherited that prevents us from reaching a clear materialist understanding of why there is a need for prostitution and whether and under what conditions we, as well as prostitutes themselves, could condone its future existence under socialism.

"It has not been possible here to consider the question of gay prostitution . . . 'the rent scene' . . . which although has similarities to problems faced by female prostitutes would require a more detailed consideration of its own."

'U' certificate world

Bob Sutcliffe reviews the exhibition "In and Out of Space", at the Photographers Gallery, 8 Great Newport Street, London WC2. Opening hours Monday-Saturday 11-7, Sunday 12-6, till January 16.

Are there prudes in outer space? The officials of the United States National Aeronautical and Space Agency (NASA) were taking no chances when in 1977 they dispatched the Voyager II spacecraft in its route past the outer planets of the Solar system and into deepest space.

Affixed to Voyager's side is a golden disc on which are printed 100 or so pictures and photographs selected by the brilliant American astronomer Carl Sagan, and other members

Whitehouse takes over NASA

of the Voyager team.

If any alien being in outer space intercepts Voyager and processes the gold disk it will see (if it possesses sight) images intended to convey as succinctly as possible the nature of life on late twentieth century earth.

Despite the virtual certainty that intelligent life exists elsewhere in the universe the likelihood that Voyager II will be found is extremely low.

And if it is, it cannot be for many centuries at least.

The significance of the 100

images, therefore, is from our point of view today less to do with the impression they will make on alien beings in the future and more to do with how a group of very important human beings in the earth's most technically advanced country view their own planet.

And if you rush you can see the results of their deliberations in an exhibition of the 100 plus selected images at the Photographers Gallery until January 16.

The exhibition is both intriguing and challenging because it forces the visitor to assess someone else's picture of the whole planet and at least in a rudimentary fashion put forward his or her own.

Think hard

It is an exhibition which can hardly fail to provoke you to think hard and deeply about how you view human life.

The first images chosen by Sagan and his colleagues are ingenious presentations of our system of numbers, of the basic physiology of the human species and the structure of the DNA molecule.

Then there are details of the human reproductive system and the development of the human embryo.

So far, so instructive. An intelligent space being, if it didn't know any of this would learn a lot.

But then everything goes to pieces. The rest of the exhibition—though it consists of "true" photographs—presents a picture of the world whose blandness and reticence amounts to monumental falsification.

The key picture in this degeneration is one of a man and a pregnant woman standing side by side holding hands.

Originally this was to have

been a normal photograph.

It was not Sagan and his colleagues but the NASA authorities who intervened to insist that this image should be presented as a discreet silhouette only.

The reason for this pitiful act of censorship is some fear that outer space is peopled with Mary Whitehouses and Anita Bryants.

But if these beings who may just conceivably decode the golden disc in a few centuries or millennia are a little more liberal they will conclude that one of the characteristics of human civilisation is its extreme prudishness.

Travelogue

It will be hard for them to devise many more truths about humanity from the rest of this exhibition.

The remaining photographs—all of them technically fine and some of them beautiful—are no more than a rapid and glossy world travelogue.

There are pictures of different forms of landscape, human beings of various ages and races, working, eating, travelling or just looking at the camera.

But the censored attempt to show two human beings relating to each other was clearly enough to dissuade the selectors from anything more daring.

It is all so innocent that it could well have been the work of the controllers of children's television.

In fact even children brought up on a diet of the BBC between 4pm and 5.30 pm would have a more realistic view

of humanity than the galactic Mary Whitehouses of NASA's imagination.

They will never know for instance that on late twentieth century earth—though there are skyscrapers and other technical marvels—that one third of human beings are undernourished, or that people cry, or that some people employ others, or that some are in prison, or that people have sexual relationships or that there is violence and weapons and murder, or that people listen to music or watch television and read, or that there is racial discrimination.

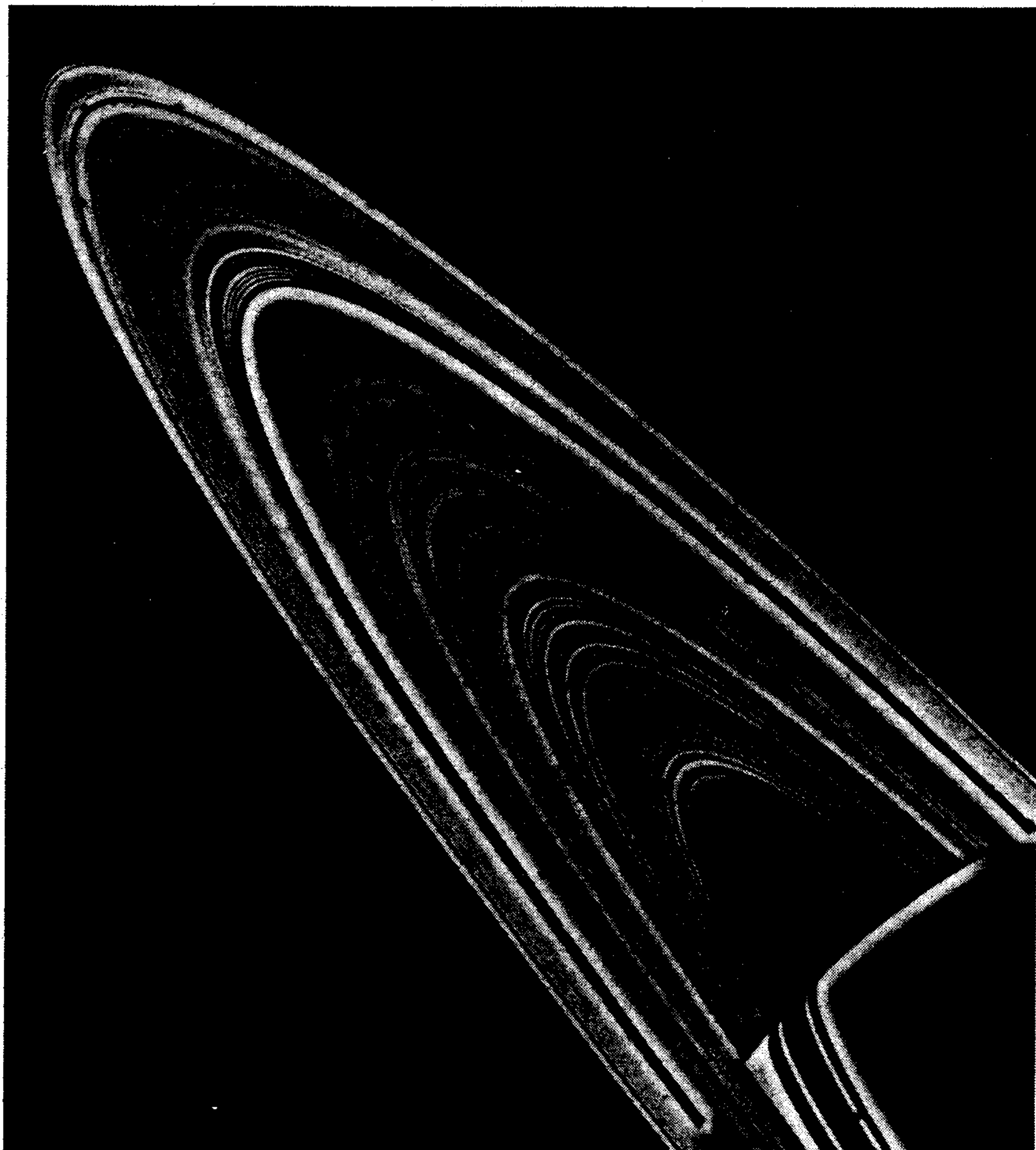
Human life, they will be forced to conclude, is peaceable, not very sociable, devoid of material problems, or power relationships, and virtually without emotion of any kind.

If the space beings want to see beyond this boring pleasureless and painless world, they will have to come and visit. They are in for a nasty shock.

On the way they will be lucky enough to get a glimpse of the awesome beauty of the surface of the planets Jupiter and Saturn.

And the second part of this exhibition contains some of the wonderful photographs of the two planets sent back by the two Voyager spacecraft which are now heading for Uranus.

The combination of these wonderful and mysterious pictures and the intellectual challenge posed by the choice of the 100 pictures make this exhibition well worth a visit—despite the fact that NASA makes the earth almost as lifeless as the surface of Saturn and Jupiter can be assumed to be.



President Reagan: is there intelligent life in the USA

Child care campaign holds

The National Child Care Campaign, formed on July 5 1980, is to hold its first Constitutional Conference on 24 January 1981 at Wolverhampton Poly.

The most controversial issue is likely to be the nature of the Committee and whether it should be open or elected. Both points of view will be put by members of the Steering Committee who will introduce the discussion groups in the morning session.

Since its formation 150 campaigns, unions, organisations and individuals have affiliated. Amongst the unions that have affiliated nationally are NUPE, NALGO, SOGAT, SCPS and the GMWU.

If your union, Labour Party branch or organisation hasn't affiliated urge them to and send a delegate to the Conference.

The Campaign has lobbied the TUC, Labour and Tory Party conferences to demand action from the unions on the attack on the inadequate provision of childcare at present and to campaign for extending provision; to demand that the Labour Party takes up concretely the question of providing a comprehensive child care service, and to show the Tories that women do work, need and want to work, and that child care facilities are absolutely necessary and central to women's equality.

conference

To operate, the campaign needs a full-time worker and is applying for funds from organisations that would not tie their hands politically. For the same reason the Campaign is seeking charitable status.

So far one application has been successful, a £6,500 grant from the Equal Opportunities Commission for a research worker.

The unions need to be approached on funding the Campaign.

NUPE has in the past given money and helped organise the conference in July but other unions with mass membership of women need to commit themselves financially and positively on one of the most fundamental questions for working women—caring for all children, not only the under fives, but extended day care for the over fives and holiday cover which is scanty, especially outside of London.

The NCCC is to publish before the conference a pamphlet entitled "Nurseries—How and Why to Fight for Them", written collectively by

individuals from Oxford, Nottingham, Leicester, Wandsworth and Coventry campaigns.

The booklet covers basics like how to set up a campaign, the legal questions of occupying and the experiences of Oxford, Wandsworth and Coventry who occupied nurseries in 1978 and 1980. The booklet will sell for 60p.

Available now are the July Conference papers, price £1, which outline the discussion in the workshops and has useful information on local groups outside London.

Future publications will include topics such as conference creches, NCCC Research Papers and the NCCC Newsletter.

The Conference starts at 10 a.m. A creche and pooled fare are being organised. You may affiliate with your conference booking or at registration.

Affiliation is £2.50 for individuals; £5 for local groups and £15 for national organisations.

Further details from NCCC, c/o Surrey Docks Child Care Project, Dockland Settlement, Redriff Road, London SE16.



Wandsworth nursery campaigners



Stirling march to support jobs campaign

The Central Region Federation of Trades Councils in Scotland have called a demonstration against unemployment to be held in Stirling on the morning of Saturday 7 February.

This demonstration is seen as part of the mobilisation of the labour movement in the Central Region in support of the Campaign Against Unemployment initiated at a Conference in Falkirk last October.

It will also be used to build support for the all-Scotland demonstration called for by the Labour Party in Glasgow on 21 February.

Support for the Campaign Against Unemployment has come from the District Committee of the TGWU, two of the Constituency Labour Parties in the Region, the three trades councils and a number of trade union and Labour Party branches.

A meeting scheduled for 7 January is aimed at pulling in the District organisations of other unions, the District Labour Parties and the other Constituency Labour Parties.

A leafletting campaign is planned to cover work places and housing estates in the Stirling, Falkirk and Clackmannan districts to advertise the demonstration.

Alongside the mobilisation

for the demonstration, attempts are being made to organise the unemployed in the Region.

A twofold campaign is being run. Firstly to try and ensure that the unemployed retain their trade union membership and wherever possible, given the present constitutions of the unions, recruit them to a trade union.

Secondly to organise unemployed associations under the auspices of the trades councils and set up unemployed centres.

The unemployed associations and unemployed centres are seen as a way of pulling together unemployed people into one body and giving them a political voice.

Support

The trades councils will be approaching the Labour controlled District Councils and the Regional Council with a view to getting their support for the setting up of unemployed centres.

It is hoped to draw upon the experience of the Claimants Union in Alloa which has already set up such a centre. In Edinburgh the Trades Council have recently set up an unemployed association and centre.

The October conference in Falkirk firmly set the aims of the campaign as being centred on removing the Tory government and spelt out a programme of action for fighting redundan-

cies and the cuts.

Five hundred copies of a report on the conference have been printed and distributed around organisations of the labour movement in the region. (Socialist Press carried a report on the conference in issue 220).

Such localised initiatives will not in themselves bring down the Tory government. However it is equally true that without such work in the localities, no mass movement will be built.

The campaign so far has also attempted to put forward a clear political programme on which to struggle and one which prepares the fight to ensure that a clear political alternative exists when a Labour government is returned to office.

RED YOUTH 27
November/December issue
Articles on hunger strikers/Tories/Gays/Labour Party/Lenin Import controls/Unemployment/Sneaks and Leaders
8 pages—10p from SYL, BM Box 5277 London WC1N 3XX

Tenants fight rent rise

The Scottish Tenants' Organisation is launching a major campaign to secure 100,000 signatures on a petition against council rent increases of £3 per week.

The STO is seeking to enlist the backing of the unions in the campaign—and STO leaders are threatening an all-Scotland rent strike if the £3 increase goes ahead.

Tenants' organisations throughout Scotland are being urged to join the Glasgow march against unemployment called by

the Labour Party for February 21.

But the limited nature of the STO campaign is indicated by the fact that its press officer emphasises that no rent strikes should begin until it is established that the petition has failed to change the government's mind on the £3 increase.

How long it will take Scottish tenants to recognise that the Thatcher government will not change course without a major confrontation remains to be seen.

Scots TUC's women's talk-shop

The Scottish TUC Women's Conference held in Stirling on 19-20 November 1980 passed a resolution requesting the Women's Advisory Committee of the STUC to "examine the possibility of arranging a trade union labour movement women's conference, in association with women's organisations, with the aim of uniting women in struggle against the present government and in defence of the hard-won rights of working women."

However, in the wake of the fiasco of the 'broad based' Convention on Unemployment the STUC are showing that no lessons have been learned.

They seem determined to continue their own Scottish 'Popular Front' policies and have decided to go ahead with a Special Women's Conference in March 1981 "representative of as many aspects of Scottish life as possible."

Instead of a labour movement conference to launch a campaign on women's rights and discuss how to organise the struggle against the Tory government we are once again presented with a talking shop.

If past experiences of such conferences organised by the STUC are anything to go by, the conference is likely to be representative of all sections of Scottish society—except the working class!

Rolls Royce pay fight

Workers at Rolls Royce factories in Scotland are showing the way forward by taking action on wages in the first two weeks of January.

Employees of East Kilbride will go on strike on 5 January to be followed by those at Hillington (Glasgow) on the Monday after.

This is their reply to the management offer of what is described as a 'self-financing productivity deal' which means that the only money on the table is in return for concessions by the workforce, leading to greater exploitation.

The price demanded by the management for any increase is a cut in the labour force

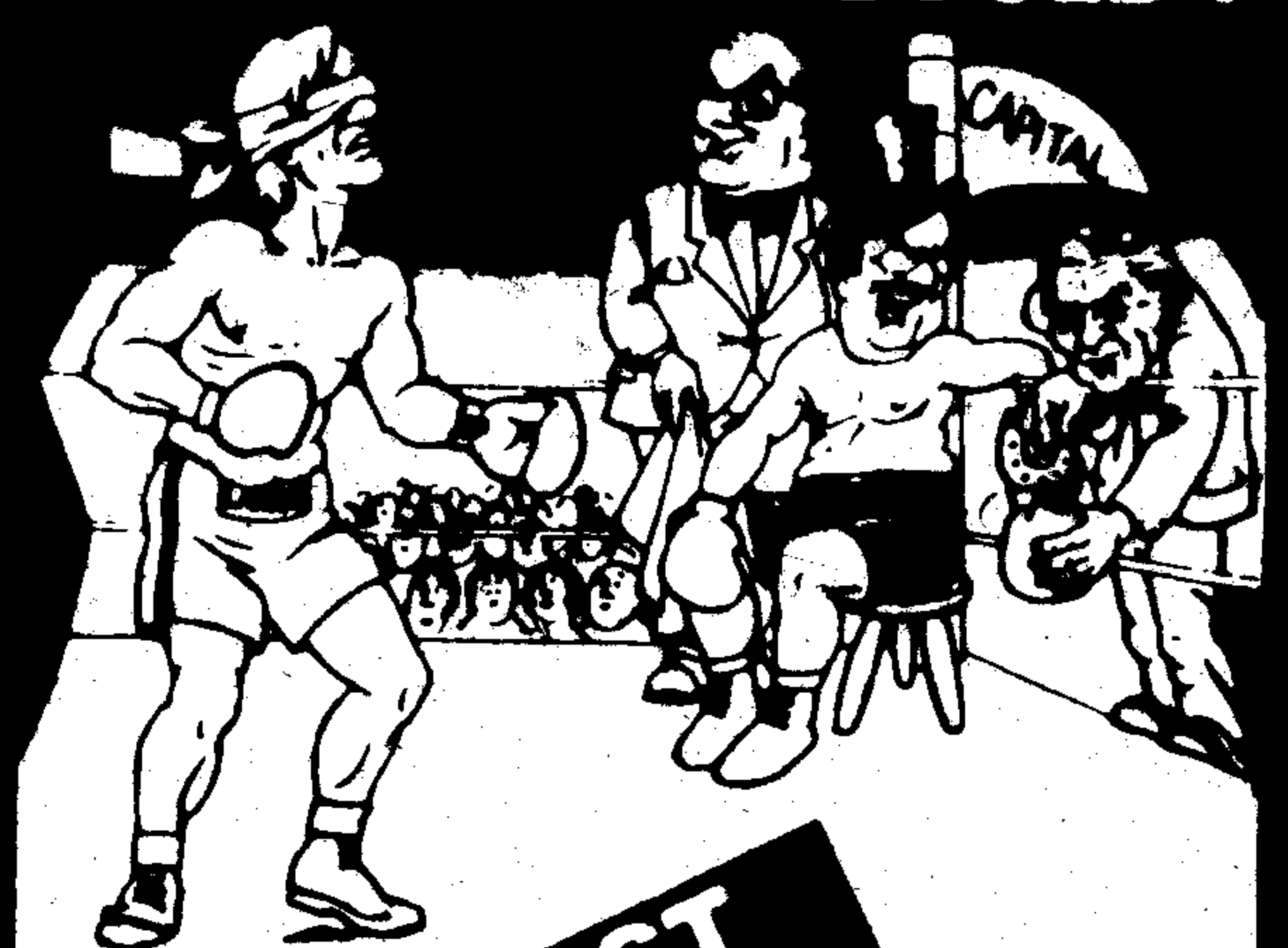
through natural wastage, a speed-up and a breaking down of demarcation lines.

This iniquitous deal has been dressed up by the management in a letter given to all employees before they went on holiday.

Many of the workers at Hillington handed back the letter unopened, thereby expressing their contempt for what is in effect a nil wages offer.

The workers concerned must now ensure that they are actively involved throughout the dispute and fully informed and consulted at each stage in any negotiations that may occur.

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

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

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

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

economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

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

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

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

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

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HOSPITAL WORK-IN GAINS SUPPORT

“We stick out till we win” –steward

Since December 2 Longworth Hospital in rural Oxfordshire has been the scene of a work-in by staff fighting to prevent its closure with the loss of 35 geriatric beds. *Socialist Press* interviewed COHSE members Barbara Russell and Myra Bungay about the fight they have waged so far.

You've been in occupation for a month now. How is it progressing?

Very well, we've got a lot more support now than we had initially from inside the hospital and outside. Support is coming in from all over Oxfordshire. The Oxford and Witney Trades Councils, NUPE, NUJ, SOGAT, and even the same Labour Party General Management Committee that Lady McCarthy (AHA Chairman) sits on as well as local Labour Party wards.

We've had visits from Sheffield steel workers and American hospital workers and from medical students. It has stimulated a terrific response as you can see.

In what ways has your union taken up the fight?

They've not been very good at all so far. They haven't been pulling out their fingers far enough!

They've done nothing yet, materially or otherwise. There has been no propaganda put out by the union, not even one COHSE poster yet!

They made it official nation-

ally three weeks after the day of the occupation but they should be going all out to get other sections off in support. It's all being left to the occupation committee when they should be doing it.

What do you want the union to take up?

We want the union to do some of the things we've been doing. We want a national campaign, not for it just to stop Longworth from closing but a real fight against the cuts and this government.

We're not going to let it go the way other hospital campaigns have gone. The government has got away with it in other hospitals.

COHSE should be doing their bit strongly. COHSE officers wanted us to accept a compromise at the beginning, to suspend the action, call it off on the grounds that the staff would get tired and that we wouldn't have the support over Christmas. That was their excuse—but we held it and that was it. Under difficult conditions.

What's the purpose of the picket?

Well at the moment, we've only got a token picket on the gate permanently, but we don't want any officials from the AHA to come and remove the patients and the NUPE ambulance drivers have guaranteed that they won't remove patients as long as there is a picket at the gate.

What has been the role of the AHA?

They've sought to wear us down, picking out individuals and harassing them. They are constantly ringing up and asking individuals questions which should be put to the occupation committee. They started on my family too. There was an emergency at home. My daughter's baby had an accident.

The Sector Manager followed me to her home on the pretence that there was an emergency situation at the hospital. He was harassing me to allow him into the hospital against the wishes of the Occupation Committee.

They also spread allegations that we allowed the patients to be photographed in commodes—all unfounded lies.

The AHA are also encouraging the RCN, who have organised a secret ballot of their members at the hospital. The

ballot actually asks if they would like to be suspended on full pay while the occupation continues.

This is aimed at dividing the workers there and to persuade trained staff to withdraw their labour from the hospital.

They also cancelled all admissions into the day hospital for a week. This meant the patients didn't get treatment which was essential, especially after the Christmas holiday.

Untrue

The patients thought it was the occupation committee that was responsible. But management temporarily closed the day hospital saying that there was a shortage of staff which was totally untrue.

What is the next step?

To get meetings in other sections to agree to supporting strike action if the AHA move to break the occupation by force.

But we also want COHSE to act first and show a lead.

We've also got to combat Lady McCarthy's attack against the workers—she being in the Labour Party and all.

How do you see it in a national context?

We are determined to keep the hospital open. To stop the cuts right here. It's the first hospital occupation after St. Benedicts.

We have the support of the two major union branches in British Leyland locally. We have to open out the struggle.

Have you been involved in action like this before?

No. I'm knackered but still determined as ever. You've got to be.

My immediate family is also involved. We're all together in the fight and shall keep on that way. Stick it out.

Messages of support and donations to the defence fund should be sent to Barbara Russell, Whitebread Cottage, Farringdon Road, Longworth, Abingdon, Oxon.



Sharing out Christmas cake in the occupation: COHSE members Vi Fear, Margaret Bradbury and Barbara Russell

BPC workers sit tight

DONATIONS of poultry, game, Scotch and reading matter assisted the determined fight of BPC journalists, who maintained their occupation of a sixth-floor office throughout the Christmas holiday.

They are fighting in defence of jobs at one BPC company, MacDonald Futura, where management want to sack 25% of the editorial staff.

The occupation needs moral and financial support. Contributions and messages should be sent to the BPC chapel, c/o NUJ Book Branch, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Road, London WC1. Cheques should be made payable to MacDonald Educational NUJ Chapel.

Xavier: make NUPE wage a real fight!

A mass demonstration has been called by NUPE for January 13 to demand the reinstatement of the union's London Divisional Council.

Xavier was sacked without notice from his job as Deputy Head Porter at Great Ormond Street Hospital at the beginning of December.

Strike action in his defence by NUPE members at the hospital was sabotaged by scabbing organised by the hospital's Head Porter—who is chairman of the local COHSE branch!

No strike call

NUPE officials gave no call to extend the strike action; instead his case has gone to an

appeal to the governors of the Great Ormond Street Hospital.

But the strong feeling on the issue—the sacking is a blatant instance of victimisation of a leading militant—has continued to develop.

A special issue of NUPE's London Divisional newspaper "Capital" has been produced to publicise the case and lend weight to the campaign for the mass picket and lobby on January 13—the day of the appeal.

There are reports that coach-loads of miners from South Yorkshire and Kent will be among those on the protest.

But though "Capital" calls for support for the demonstration and for workplace meetings, it makes no explicit call for strike action on January 13.

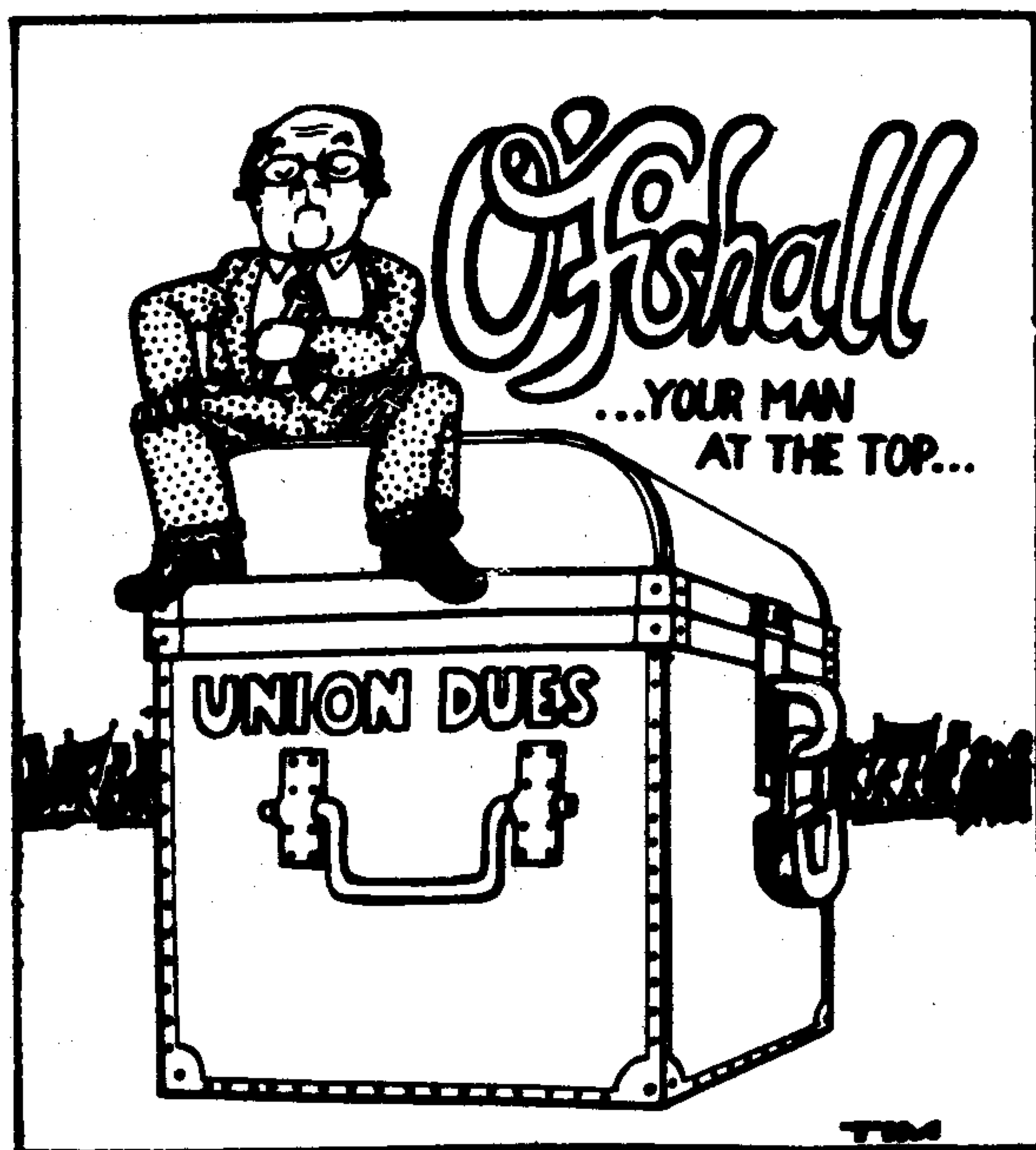
This fight is being taken up by the newly established

London Health Service Combine Committee, which meets on 6 January to discuss the fight for one-day strike action.

Already NUPE members at Moorfields Eye Hospital are committed to strike on January 13.

Fisher and other NUPE leaders are making militant noises over the Xavier sacking. But NUPE's appalling record of inaction while health service militants have been victimised throughout the London area in the past two years has plainly encouraged management to take this latest step.

Full support must be mobilised for the demonstration and one-day strikes: and if necessary NUPE must call all-out action to demand Xavier's reinstatement and force a halt to the management purge of militants.



SOCIALIST PRESS ★

Local Government in Crisis: National Labour and Trade Union Conference

Re-call Conference, 17 January at the Central Hall, Westminster, London W1

Delegates welcome from trade union branches and regions, trades councils, CLPs, Labour groups and shop stewards committees. Credentials from: Labour Local Government in Crisis Conference, Room 103, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2.

MASON DECLARES WAR ON LABOUR PARTY

"Any democracy or socialism in this Party and I'll resign!"

That was effectively the message bluntly delivered to Barnsley Labour Party GMC last weekend by Roy "Butcher" Mason.

He announced that the Labour right wingers who may be unseated in the new reselection procedures would be likely to band together—alongside Liberals and members of the extreme right wing Social Democratic Alliance—to stand against official Labour candidates.

Right wing rump

But Mason is not alone. He has big support among the right wing rump that forms the majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Only a few weeks ago he, together with seven other hardened right wingers, was reelected to the Shadow Cabinet by the PLP. Among the others who scored high in the same poll was William "Nukes" Rodgers, now the front bench spokesman for the notorious Gang of Three.

Rodgers' two fellow Gangsters are David Owen and Shirley Williams. Williams has already gone further out on a limb than even Mason.

Though still holding a seat on the Party's NEC, she has declared that she would not be willing to stand as a Labour

PARTY

candidate, so great is her disagreement with the party's policies decided at last year's conference.

And Owen withdrew from the Shadow Cabinet elections, announcing that he preferred to remain in the back benches to wage a battle against any left wing policies that might emerge.

Foot's front bench team now comprises two right wingers who have openly threatened to split the party if they do not get their own way. Others would no doubt follow Mason and Rodgers in such a split.

But it is less certain who would vote for a third party composed of such riff-raff. Mason's explosion of anger at the Barnsley GMC appears to reflect his growing isolation from a party organisation that has increasingly moved to the left as workers have demanded a real fight against the Tory attack.

Barnsley CLP for instance tabled a motion at November's Lambeth cuts conference calling for a fight for General Strike action against the Thatcher government—hardly in line with Mason's reactionary views.

And, after years of scandal-

ous inaction—during which Mason, as Callaghan's chief Minister for Torture in the six counties of Ireland carried out the most savage military repression—Yorkshire NUM leader Arthur Scargill has apparently at last begun to throw the union's weight behind moves to remove him.

Accountability

Throughout the country, trade unionists and socialists have looked to the new reselection procedures as a means of ousting right wing MPs, making MPs accountable, and taking up a fight for socialist policies.

On this basis the party has actually gained additional mass support.

No matter what its pretence of being a "labour" party, a hotch-potch gathering of deposed Labourite right wingers, crypto-Tories from the SDA and disillusioned Liberal Party drop-outs would be an explicitly anti-socialist, pro-capitalist party with no policies to offer workers or even the middle class voters they might seek to attract.

Mason's bluff must be called. The limb on which



Mason (centre) at Labour Party Conference

Williams has gone out must be sawn off. The fight for the democratisation of the Party, the removal of right wing candidates and for a programme of socialist policies must be stepped up within the Labour Party and the trade unions.

LONGBRIDGE

From front page

ment of the issues was lost on the platform bureaucrats.

To judge from the mood of early speakers a lead from the platform could have secured a strike vote.

Yet Jordan's truculent treachery and Mathers' windy rhetoric guided an aimless Adams to abandon six of his shop stewards to Edwardes' tender mercies.

Separated off

And to prevent the victimised workers directly addressing their fellow workers and making an emotional appeal to their instinctive solidarity, Adams had separated them off from the floor of the meeting, and positioned them up behind the platform.

They sat mute, but in full view—as if on trial.

Judging the moment to be right, Adams told the meeting that he and the others on the platform had been listening to the debate, and that while it progressed they had drafted a resolution.

This was obviously a lie. No resolution was written—and not much talk took place on the platform. The betrayal had been plotted well in advance.

But the resolution declared openly what Adams, Mathers and Jordan had all along been fighting for—an end of the industrial action.

A cheated, misled, manipulated workforce saw little alternative but to bitterly acquiesce, and by a 4-1 majority the plat-

form's proposal was carried.

This retreat endangers the very fabric of union organisation at Longbridge.

The task now is to prepare the basis to resume the offensive as soon as the inquiry is concluded.

We can predict with certainty that there is no way the inquiry will reinstate the eight victimised workers.

The only way to reinstate the eight is through all-out indefinite strike action not only on the Metro track but extending throughout the Longbridge plant and BL as a whole.

The Longbridge Stewards Committee must mobilise to prepare for such a fight. The TGWU must pledge full official support.

If the struggle is not pressed home, the end of the inquiry will offer BL management a green light to sack any militant anywhere—and in Longbridge a stewards' card in the hands of a militant will become the equivalent to a one-way ticket to the dole queue.

Fords tomorrow?

Nor should workers elsewhere leave Longbridge workers to fight alone: BL today is BSC, Fords or British Rail tomorrow unless the Edwardes-Thatcher offensive is brought to a halt.

*No illusions in the inquiry!

*All out at Longbridge!

*Reinstate the 8!

Why we are forced to

cut back

Runaway inflation—particularly acute in printing and production costs, in travel expenses and other overheads carried by *Socialist Press*—has taken its toll on our movement.

From our next issue until the basis can be established for a new expansion, *Socialist Press* will be reduced to a ten-page weekly paper.

The Workers Socialist League's women's paper *Woman Worker* and the monthly paper of the Socialist Youth League, *Red Youth*, will appear as four page supplements to *Socialist Press* as well as being on sale on a separate basis.

Set-back

We make no secret of the fact that this cut in the size of our weekly press is a setback for the Workers Socialist League—one which we have fought to avoid.

It is clear to all that the escalation of the Tory offensive on jobs, living standards, social services and basic rights demands of us not a reduction

but an expansion in the size and sales of our weekly press.

But we operate in material conditions in which our members and supporters find it increasingly difficult to raise their financial contributions, while our costs are soaring and new international responsibilities flowing from the development of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee have placed an added strain on our budget.

The 17% January increase in our print bill proved the final straw: such an increase could not be absorbed without either an increase in the price of the paper, a dramatic increase in

sales, or a cut in its size.

We have chosen the third option as what we hope will be a temporary measure, while every branch of the WSL investigates ways and means of maximising and increasing the sales or raising additional funds on a regular basis.

Extra copies

Every reader can help us in this task. You can take one or more extra copies as well as your own to sell to workmates, friends, neighbours or Labour Party activists. You could send us a donation—however large or small—towards our monthly

fund, and participate in fund raising activities by your local WSL branch.

And if you agree with the consistent politics and principles of *Socialist Press* you could consider joining the Workers Socialist League and helping us fight to build a Trotskyist party capable of leading mass struggles against the Tory government.

Let us make the period of the ten-page paper as short as possible! Let us find ways to reach the tens of thousands of workers seeking a way forward against Thatcher, and build the circulation of the only consistent Trotskyist weekly paper in Britain!

Send all donations to:
Socialist Press Monthly Fund
BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

If you would like to take extra copies of *Socialist Press*, contact your local branch or write direct to:

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