

SOCIALIST PRESS



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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Drive the fascists off the streets!

COVENTRY DEMONSTRATION
ALL OUT ON MAY 23!
Assemble Edgewick Park, 1 pm
March off 2 pm, to Coventry Precinct
Called by Coventry Committee Against Racism
Supported by ANL and NUS nationally

LABOUR COUNCILS FACE TEST ON CUTS

"Joy in Midlands as landslide buries ruinous Tory policies" was the joyous headline to a *Morning Star* article on last week's local election results.

There can be no doubt that there was a dramatic anti-Tory landslide, which sent them crashing from office in county councils throughout the country, including the most coveted prize of all—the Greater London Council.

Barrage

But it remains to be seen whether the new councils will bury Tory policies.

The never ending barrage of cuts in education and social services, and hostility to Tory government policies of mass unemployment combined to instal Labour majorities in all of the major urban authorities, and topple the Tories in such strongholds as Cheshire, Lancashire, Berkshire and Warwickshire.

In London, Labour candidates running on a manifesto well to the left of that put forward in the last General Election secured a majority on the GLC in the teeth of a huge "red scare" campaign orchestrated by the *New Standard*.

The most venomous attacks had been aimed at Lambeth council leader Ted Knight. This personalised witch-hunt, combined with the sabotaging, vote-splitting efforts of the Social Democratic Alliance and the unpopularity of Knight's stance in support of rate increases, served to secure his defeat.

But the strengthened position of the Labour left in London was underlined by the vote to remove Andrew MacIntosh in favour of left winger Ken Livingstone as the new Labour leader of the GLC.

Similar challenges to right wing control of the newly elected Labour

councils are taking place in other areas as we go to press. Indeed this is the major question now confronting the trade unionists and socialists whose votes put Labour back into the county halls.

So far not one Labour council has taken a firm stand in defiance of Heseltine's savage programme of spending cuts.

One after another they

Cont'd back page



Ken Livingstone

Bobby Sands' death



LABOUR'S SHAME!

Some Labour leaders are just beneath contempt. One is Don Concannon, Labour's spokesman on Northern Ireland.

*Not content with having built the Long Kesh concentration camp with its notorious 'H' Blocks to house the most militant anti-imperialist fighters;

*not content with having stripped these prisoners of their recognition as prisoners of war in the struggle for Irish liberation;

*not content with supporting the continuation of this stance by the Thatcher government while Bobby Sands starves on

hunger strike;

*not content with warnings to the Tories not to afford the republicans any publicity for the hunger strike by reporting on Sands' condition;

*not even content to issue last minute statements designed to sabotage Sands' successful election campaign, Concannon has to go one step further—and walk into the cell of the dying man to tell him to his face what he already knew: that the Labour leadership remains committed to support for Thatcher!

The interview lasted one minute. Presumably Sands did not mince his words about vermin like

Concannon.

Hours later, Sands was dead. Labour leader Foot rose to his feet in the House of Commons to echo Thatcher's sentiments and reaffirm the opposition of Labour's leadership to the prisoners' five demands.

By doing so, Foot knew quite well he was effectively sentencing three more republican prisoners to death.

Near to death

Francis Hughes, now 58 days on hunger strike, is now blind and near to death.

Ray McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara are seven weeks on hunger strike.

They, like Sands, are demanding elementary rights of prisoners of war.

*The right to wear their own clothing;

*The right to refrain from prison work;

*The right to free association;

*The right to full remission;

*The right to more prison visits and parcels.

Their struggle and their demands have the visible backing of the whole

Catholic population of the six counties. They have the backing of socialists and communists around the world.

The Portuguese Socialist Party paper has pointed out that the Irish prisoners are being denied rights granted to political prisoners even under the fascist Salazar and Caetano dictatorships.

Lech Walesa, lauded by the British Tory press for his fight for independent unions in Poland, has declared his support for the demands of the hunger strikers.

But the British Labour leaders stand firmly with the Tories, opposing any concession to the prisoners.

Their ruthless commitment to imperialist rule in Ireland has scandalised some of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Motion

14 Labour MPs have signed a motion criticising the government's "intransigence": and 32 signed another motion calling on the Tories to make concessions to the hunger strikers.

The response is pitifully late and pathetically weak. How many brave republicans must die before socialists in the British Labour Party wake up to the need to mobilise in solidarity with the struggle for political status, troops out of Ireland and self determination for the Irish people?

No more Irish martyrs! Condemn Concannon/Foot! End the bipartisan policy!

Political status for Irish POWs!

Troops Out Now!

Giscard ousted!

The election of Socialist Party leader Francois Mitterand as President of France brought a cacophony of cheering and celebratory car horns on the streets of Paris last night.

Socialists and Communists alike rejoiced at the defeat of a savagely reactionary Giscard d'Estaing by 51.7% of the vote against 48.3%, bringing to an end 23 years of right wing rule in France.

Mitterand immediately announced his intention to dissolve the National Assembly and call fresh parliamentary elections in the hopes of overturning the

present right wing majority of the Gaullist RPR and the UDF.

It seems likely that he will prepare for these elections by taking immediate steps to raise wages and family allowances, and making gestures in the direction of implementing his promise of a 35-hour week.

There is little doubt that Mitterand hopes in this way to win sufficient Parliamentary support to enable him to rule without the involvement of Communist Party ministers in the government.

Anti-Soviet

Mitterand, who conducted a viciously anti-Soviet

campaign, criticising Giscard for accommodation to Moscow, would far prefer to seek an alliance with Marchais' "progressive" forces than to line up with the Stalinist leaders in a coalition of workers' parties that would further raise the hopes of every French worker and small farmer.

35-hour week

He has come to power pledged to implement a 35-hour week, nationalise the top nine industrial groups, nationalise all those banks and finance houses still in private hands, and take over a slice of the Peugeot-Citroen car giant.

But though the election

result produced an immediate slump on the French stock exchange and a surge in gold prices, French workers should not assume that Mitterand will be in any hurry to implement his pledges.

Rather than wait for the Socialist Party to legislate socialist policies, the French working class should prepare for the necessary mass actions to press home their demands in pursuit of jobs, improved living standards and the lifting of legislation that perpetuates racial and sexual oppression.

And they must firmly oppose any attempted alliance between Mitterand and the capitalist parties.



Foot



HUGE TURN-OUT FOR SANDS

By John Lister from Belfast

No banners. No placards. No leaflets. No papers. The political message underlying the funeral procession for Bobby Sands was rammed home simply by the colossal turnout of support from the whole Catholic community of Belfast and the six counties.

Long before the service or the procession began, thousands had assembled around the church on Sands' Twinbrook estate: and thousands more arrived—on foot from other Catholic areas of Belfast, by coach from around the six counties, and by train from Dublin and the south. Many were ferried up the Falls Road free of charge in a shuttle service by the famous fleet of black taxis.

But this never-ending stream of supporters was dwarfed in numbers by the crowds that lined every yard of the 3½ mile route of the procession. Shoulder to shoulder, often three or four deep, the crowds that waited in pouring rain were a complete cross-section of the Catholic working class—small children, skinhead youth, teenage girls, men and women young and old.

Black flags hung from windows and from lamp

posts. Painted H-Block slogans adorned every yard of free wall space.

Illegal republican tricolours fluttered from houses and convenient poles.

All shops, bars and pubs were closed the length of the Falls Road.

Porters and catering staff at the Royal Victoria Hospital failed to turn up for work: elsewhere too many Catholic workers stayed off work to attend the funeral.

Traffic was at a standstill with the RUC and army tactfully out of sight, concentrating only on preventing the march travelling past Woodburn RUC station and the Protestant Suffolk estate.

Reporters suggested that hundreds of republicans had travelled from Dublin. Obviously hundreds had also come from abroad. But of the 70,000-strong turnout it was clear that the bulk had come from the six counties—more than 10% of the entire Catholic population.

"And they keep telling us Bobby Sands had no support!" triumphantly exclaimed a number of women on the route of the march on hearing my English accent.

But the show of support for Bobby Sands proved to

be more than just a grim mark of respect.

The mood was serious but confident: everyone knew it was the biggest-ever protest by the Catholic minority in the North against its oppression by British imperialism and the sectarian Orange state machine.

Everyone felt that Sands' struggle, far from closing a chapter in the struggle, had helped unite the nationalist population and open new possibilities.

International support—demonstrations in the USA, the naming of a street after Sands in Tehran, denunciations of the Thatcher government by Socialist and Communist newspapers in Europe—helped to reinforce the view that Sands' struggle had not been in vain.

With his fellow H-Block prisoner Francis Hughes now nearing death on hunger strike; with Ray McCreesh and Patsy O'Hara also seven weeks without food; and with Joe McDonnell now beginning a similar fast to the death and 100 more waiting to join the hunger strike there is no sign that the republican movement will slacken the pace of the fight.

And Sands' Belfast funeral shows that there is no sign that the Catholic people will let them fight alone.

Spanish hunger striker dies

name of Rafael will probably as well known Bobby Sands.

Last week Rafael died while on hunger strike as it happens starvation but of skull after a fall in where the hunger strike taking place, a fall his physical weak-

weeks of fasting. One of hundreds of workers in the southern Spanish of Andalusia now death in protest the material penury they are obliged to

demands of this growing movement. be more simple— Work!

Every day those basic further from being as a whole the (mated) unemploy- has now risen to

Andalusia it is much the underdevelop- the slump place in

two ways: local unemployment grows and workers who once emigrated in their tens of thousands to the more developed north are forced back.

At the same time the modernisation of agriculture forces farm labourers out of work.

£10 a week

It is estimated that 90,000 heads of families in Andalusia are completely out of work.

And 91% of peasants (over 300,000 people) do not have a steady job.

Some of them can get some work in state organised public works programmes—at a wage of about £10 a week.

Even this is better than unemployment pay to which virtually no one is entitled.

The peasant workers' trade union has concluded the only way to gain a hearing for its demands are the hunger strikes.

To date, however, there is no sign at all that the government is paying them

the slightest attention.

And this fact is leading to the rapid build-up of social resentment in the south which is constantly expected to erupt into violent mass mobilisations.

At present the government and the Francoist army appear to regard this threat from Andalusia as little more than a sub-plot to the main drama which is unfolding in Madrid, Barcelona and the Basque country in the north.

The last two weeks have seen a terrifying intensification of the threat of an all-out military coup in the wake of new terrorist attacks on officers of the armed forces.

On May 4 an army general was killed in Madrid and two para-military Civil Guards shot dead in Barcelona.

GRAPO

At first this was thought to be a continuation of the campaign of ETA-militar, the Basque nationalist organ-

isation.

The police, however, have pointed their finger at GRAPO—the 1 October Anti-fascist Resistance Group, an organisation which claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks since October 1975.

It claims to be the armed wing of the Maoist Reconstructed Communist Party.

There was then considerable speculation, especially on the left as to whether GRAPO was a group of Francoist provocateurs—or at least had been infiltrated by the far right.

And that speculation has resumed after these new attacks.

But whatever the nature of GRAPO, the timing of its latest activities is easy to link not with a specific attempt to further provoke the military high command but, as most British bourgeois papers have failed to mention, with retaliation for anti-GRAPO action by the state.

On April 30 an alleged leader of GRAPO, Jose Maria Sanchez Casas was sen-

tenced to a total of about 150 years in prison.

If GRAPO really does exist as an independent group then its latest acts were clearly aimed to be retaliation for the sentence of Sanchez.

And if they were the acts of provocateurs then they were almost certainly designed to give a pretext for the open mobilisation of fascists which took place in the following few days at which slogans were shouted calling on the army to seize power.

Devotion

The parliamentary politicians fell over each other in their rush to condemn the killings, to declare their devotion to the Francoist generals and to prevent any working class response.

Within days they were assailed by a new crisis when ETA-militar launched a daring new attack in Madrid in which a bomb placed on the roof of a car killed three

army personnel and severely injured a general closely associated with King Juan Carlos.

This time the government responded by offering the resignation of the Interior Minister, the confinement of all army personnel to barracks "for their own safety" and the calling, along with the Socialist and Communist Parties of a two minute strike "in protest against terrorist provocations".

The leaders of the two main workers' parties have, ever since the present acute political crisis began with the attempted military coup of February 23, become less and less capable of saying or doing anything independently of the "democratic" bourgeoisie.

Now they have reached the grotesque depths of calling a strike—the weapon of combat of the oppressed—in defence of Francoist generals.

Along with the UCD they chorus that the killings of army officers are a provocation designed to "destab-

ilise" Spain.

In part, of course, this is true of ETA-militar and also of GRAPO.

Revolutionary socialists are critical of a deliberate strategy of provocation towards the military.

Autonomy

But revolutionary socialists also call for a massive campaign to destroy the oppressive Francoist army, in favour of the rights to full autonomy for which the Basque freedom fighters are struggling and for the independent mobilisation of the working class against the power hunger of the Spanish military and also against the present UCD government and its reactionary policies.

The Socialist and Communist leaders have no right to condemn the attacks on the military as provocations because they do nothing to prepare the resistance of the working class or to defend its rights or those of the oppressed nationalities.

WSL Conference report



WSL policies on Stalinism upheld

Conference report by John Lister

In a lively debate on the contradictions and crisis of world Stalinism, a brief document endorsing the existing WSL positions on Afghanistan, Kampuchea and nuclear disarmament was carried by a large majority.

A vocal opposition had argued in particular that we should adopt a policy of calling for the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan; and some of the same comrades had also—with others—argued for a policy of nuclear disarmament of the Soviet Union to run alongside the call for nuclear disarmament of the imperialist countries.

From a different standpoint, another group of comrades had argued *against* our call for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, declaring that this would open the road to an imperialist-backed right wing regime.

Condemned

But speakers from the majority strongly argued in defence of existing WSL policies. In particular they upheld our analysis of the Afghanistan situation—in which we have consistently *condemned* the invasion as a reactionary move by the Kremlin leaders, but recognised that in the new situation the invasion has created, a withdrawal of troops would enable the imperialist-backed guerrilla forces to sweep to power, conduct a pogrom of leftists and pose a new threat on the very borders of the USSR itself.

The same speakers insisted that despite its degeneration in the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy since the mid-1920s, the nationalised property relations secured by the revolutionary action in the Soviet Union—and in an even more distorted form, the nationalised economies in the deformed workers' states created since the war under Soviet military protection—represent material historic gains for the working class which must be defended against imperialist attack.

Agreed

And as long as imperialism holds vast arsenals of nuclear weapons, this means that the workers' states too must have such weapons if they are to deter a military onslaught.

Other aspects of the WSL's positions on Stalinism however were agreed almost unanimously—in particular the positions adopted since our last conference on the mass struggle in Poland.

One section—outlining for the first time a position on the Cultural Revolution in China—was referred back to the WSL's Stalinism Commission for further work.

Vote for fusion with ICL

A new Trotskyist organisation some 300-strong, combining the forces of the present Workers Socialist League and the International Communist League, could be formed by the end of July.

The decision to work for a fusion conference of the two organisations was made at the Fifth Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League last weekend.

The debate on the issue, on the final day of the 3-day conference, had opened with a report of the extensive political discussions and joint work that had been conducted between the members, sympathisers and supporters of the two organisations during the last eight months.

The positive developments in the discussions—in which a number of initial disagreements had been substantially resolved—had flowed from the fact that both the WSL and the ICL have for some time committed themselves to a struggle against sectarian isolation from the mass movement, and set out to intervene in the struggles within the organised working class.

While the ICL has been most successful in winning a periphery of supporters among those fighting for socialist policies and democratic reforms within the Labour Party, the WSL has continued to orientate firmly into the trade unions and in particular into struggles against cuts and closures in the public sector.

The different political

origins and evolution of both ICL and WSL has meant that some differences of method and orientation have yet to be resolved. And on a number of political questions—in particular policy on the Common Market, and on the call to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan and Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea—there remain disagreements.

But both organisations have now taken the view that such differences can properly be debated and decided by a majority vote within a fused organisation.

And the outstanding differences of method of work and day-by-day orientation can only really be tackled in the course of joint practical activity, in which policies can be put to the test in practice.

The fusion resolution

tabled by the Workers Socialist League National Committee provided for a further two and a half months of discussion, in which a joint platform document would be drafted and an objective statement drawn up declaring on each side the areas of outstanding disagreement.

This task is facilitated by the fact that the ICL has already endorsed the British Perspectives document which was adopted by the WSL conference.

On such contentious issues as need an immediate working policy, documents stating the position of each side would be drawn up, to be put to the vote at the fusion conference.

And sub-committees will begin work on the organisational details of fusion and the drafting of a democratic

centralist constitution.

The WSL resolution already agreed in outline by the ICL provides for the joint organisation to sponsor a weekly 16-page Trotskyist newspaper, to produce a regular Trotskyist women's magazine while working to build the broad-based Women's Fightback grouping and to produce its own quarterly theoretical journal.

On an international level, the joint organisation will be affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee and play its full role in the fight for the political reconstruction of the Fourth International.

After a full debate, the WSL National Committee resolution for fusion was carried without amendment, with only one vote against.

A further resolution, addressing the unresolved

differences with the ICL on the question of work amongst women, and endorsing the interventionist method of work developed by the WSL, was also carried by a large majority.

There is obviously much more still to be accomplished before we can complete the ambitious project of consolidating a fusion of two equal-sized Trotskyist organisations.

During the course of the 3-day conference, over 100 members, supporters and sympathisers of the Workers Socialist League took part in the debates.

On the third day the entire conference stood in a minute's silence as a mark of respect for comrades Gary Thornton and Joseph Tosti, both of whom have died in tragic circumstances since the last conference.

ITALIAN ABORTION REFERENDUM

It is seldom safe to predict the survival of Italy's tottering "left-centre" coalition government for more than a few days ahead.

It would be a bold person who predicted today (May 14) that it will last beyond Sunday May 17.

Because that is the day when Italians vote in two national referenda on abortion.

At present the abortion law in Italy (introduced in 1978) permits abortion for a variety of reasons up to 90 days pregnancy but must be approved by a panel of doctors.

Needless to say, bureaucratic delays and sabotage by Catholic doctors reduces abortion rights even more severely.

The explosive issue has been brought to a head once again by the successful demand for next Sunday's two referenda.

One, launched by the small Radical Party calls for the replacement of the 1978 law by the unrestricted right to abortion on demand.

The second, sponsored by the ultra-reactionary Movement for Life (the Italian equivalent of SPUC) calls for abortion to be legal only in cases of severe danger to the physical health

of the mother.

Italian politics being what it is, the issue is not only one about the rights of women but also involves the relations of church and state.

Pope John Paul II has taken it upon himself to lead a campaign against all abortion rights. He is making almost daily speeches on the issue.

Blatant

This, of course, breaks the spirit of the agreement under which the Vatican is not supposed to interfere in the politics of the Italian state.

In this case the violation is so blatant that the non-religious parties have all felt obliged to pacify their angry supporters by protesting.

The most important protest—though couched in extremely compromising terms—has come from the leaders of the huge Italian Communist Party.

Writing in the party newspaper 'L'Unita', Communist Party secretary general, Enrico Berlinguer, said the following:

"We have already publicly recognised the complete legitimacy of the Church's pronouncement against abortion as such. But it is one thing to call on the faithful to carry out the

duties which arise from their religious faith, on the other hand it is something else altogether for the Pope to put himself at the head—with daily appeals to mass meetings—of a movement which is trying to alter the laws of our Republic."

Such mealy-mouthed opposition reflects the profound embarrassment of the CP in the face of the progressive initiative of the Radicals and the appearance of the Church in its true ultra-reactionary colours.

The CP wants to appease this reaction though its rank and file forces it to condemn it.

The result is that the CP is recommending a shabby compromise in the referendum by calling for a NO vote to both the referenda, thus leaving the restrictive and reactionary law of 1978 intact.

Embarrassed

The main party, the Catholic-capitalist Christian Democrats, are as embarrassed as the CP by the abortion referenda.

They have been forced to condemn statements like that of Berlinguer as a "return to anti-clerical intolerance" but they want to depoliticise the issue and on the whole probably wish the

Pope would shut up and not rock the boat of Italy's latent "historic compromise".

The Christian Democrats, therefore, are taking no official position on the votes but are saying it is an issue for personal conscience.

In essence this is the same as the CP's position since they accept the 1978 Act as the price to be paid for political peace and com-

promise.

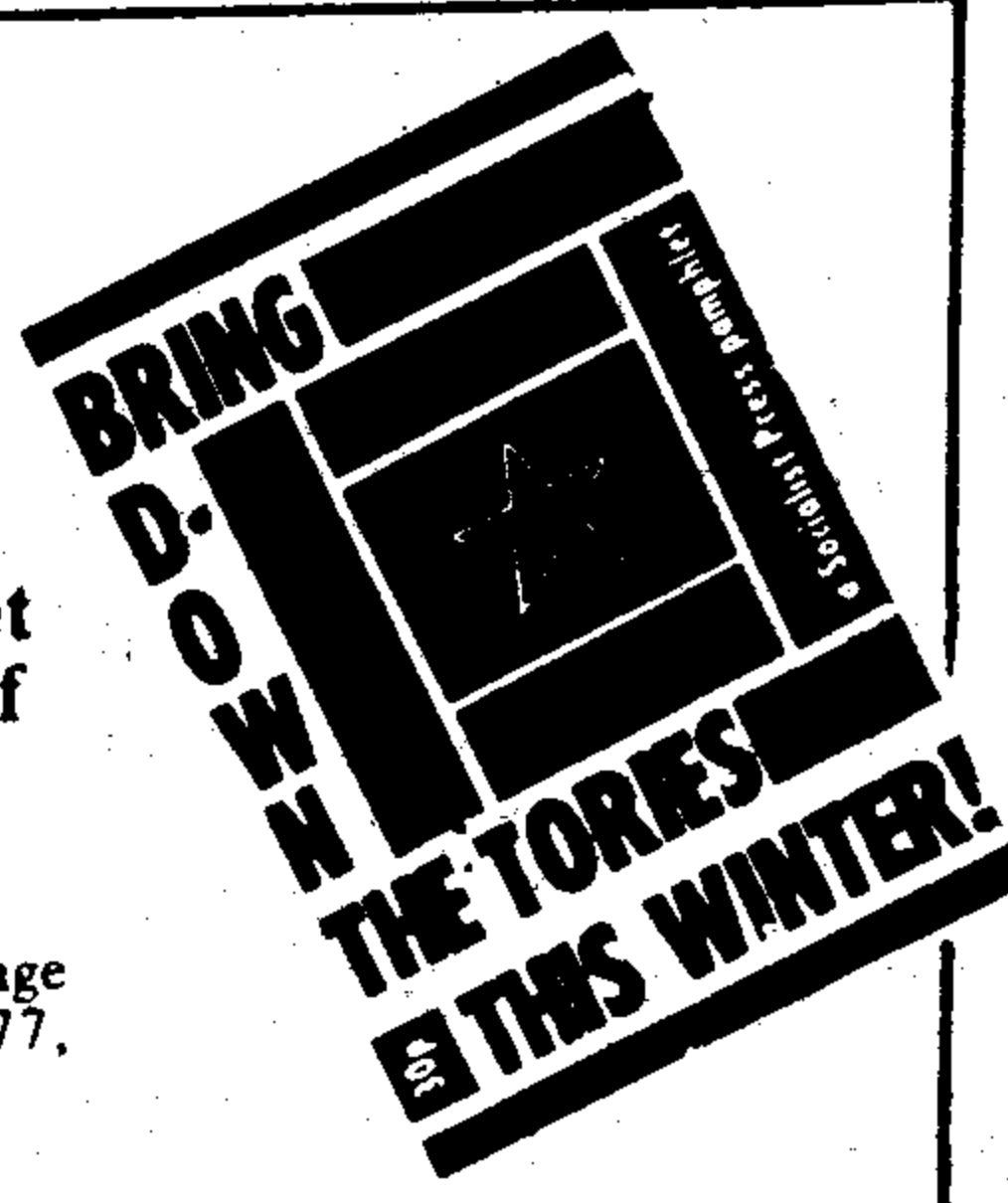
But the conditions of this compromise are now so complex and involve so much suppression of the real needs and conflicts of Italian society that even if the Christian Democrats' coalition with the lay parties (Socialists and Republicans) outlasts May 17, it cannot be long before it runs into its next crisis.



Our policies

Socialist Press pamphlet outlining programme of action against the Tory offensive.

Price 45p including postage from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.



FIGHTING THE POLICIES OF GISCARD, MARCHAIS AND MITTERAND

Are you standing in order to win attention to the current you represent, to put forward your views and to measure your influence, or do you have a precise political aim in this election?

Certainly the right—for which we pay dearly every seven years—to have an hour and ten minutes television time is going to help us make our ideas known, but I am addressing myself to electors.

I am urging them to vote for me, to express something for themselves. What? Well, to begin with my candidature is a candidature of the left, against the candidates of the right, Giscard and Chirac, who are very directly the representatives of the privileged, the rich and of all those who are not suffering from the crisis.

Also, I want to show another face of the left, different to that of Marchais and Mitterand.

You cannot vote for Mitterand without first giving him a warning; that would be to approve of his past record in governments which have conducted anti-working class policies. It would be giving him a blank cheque, since he will not deal directly with the workers. It would be giving him the go-ahead for backsliding and foreseeable betrayals in the future.

You also have to give a warning to Marchais, to say to him that he cannot play with the hopes of the workers with impunity. You can no longer tolerate Marchais' policy towards immigrant workers nor the support he gave the Russian leaders for their intervention into Afghanistan and that he will give them, perhaps tomorrow, for their intervention in Poland.

I want to offer another face of the left which has nothing to do with communism and socialism as represented by Stalin and Brezhnev on the one hand and by Schmidt in Germany and Mitterand in France on the other.

If we surpass greatly the 600,000 votes of 1974, if several million workers vote for me, this would be a real warning to everybody. It would show that the electors have had enough of being taken for fools, as halfwits to whom you can say anything you like during the election period without telling them the truth about what you are going to do during the seven year term.

At the time you announced last November, that you had gathered the 500 promises of signatures needed to go forward as a presidential candidate, you denounced "politicians" in general. Today you say that you do not intend to obstruct Mitterand and you draw a clearer distinction between politicians of the left and the right. How has this development come about?

I don't think there has

In this interview, translated by Socialist Press from *Le Monde* 20/4/81, Patrick Jarreau discusses with Arlette Laguiller, the *Lutte Ouvriere* candidate in the French Presidential Election her policies and campaign.

Socialist Press called for a vote for Laguiller in the first round and for socialist candidate Mitterand as the best placed workers' party candidate in the second round.

We do not support the

political positions put forward by Laguiller in this interview, nor those of *Lutte Ouvriere* generally.

It had been our intention to call for a vote for Alain Krivine, the candidate of the LCR—official section of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International—but Krivine failed to assemble the 500 signatures of elected mayors which are required by French electoral law to permit a candidate to go

forward.

Our call for a vote for the LCR or the LO does not of course mean that we endorse the positions of either candidate.

It means that we agree with many of their criticisms of the Socialist and Communist Parties and want to see those criticisms aired and put to the electoral test.

Our position remains that we call for a joint government of the SP and the CP,

excluding the left radicals of the MRG.

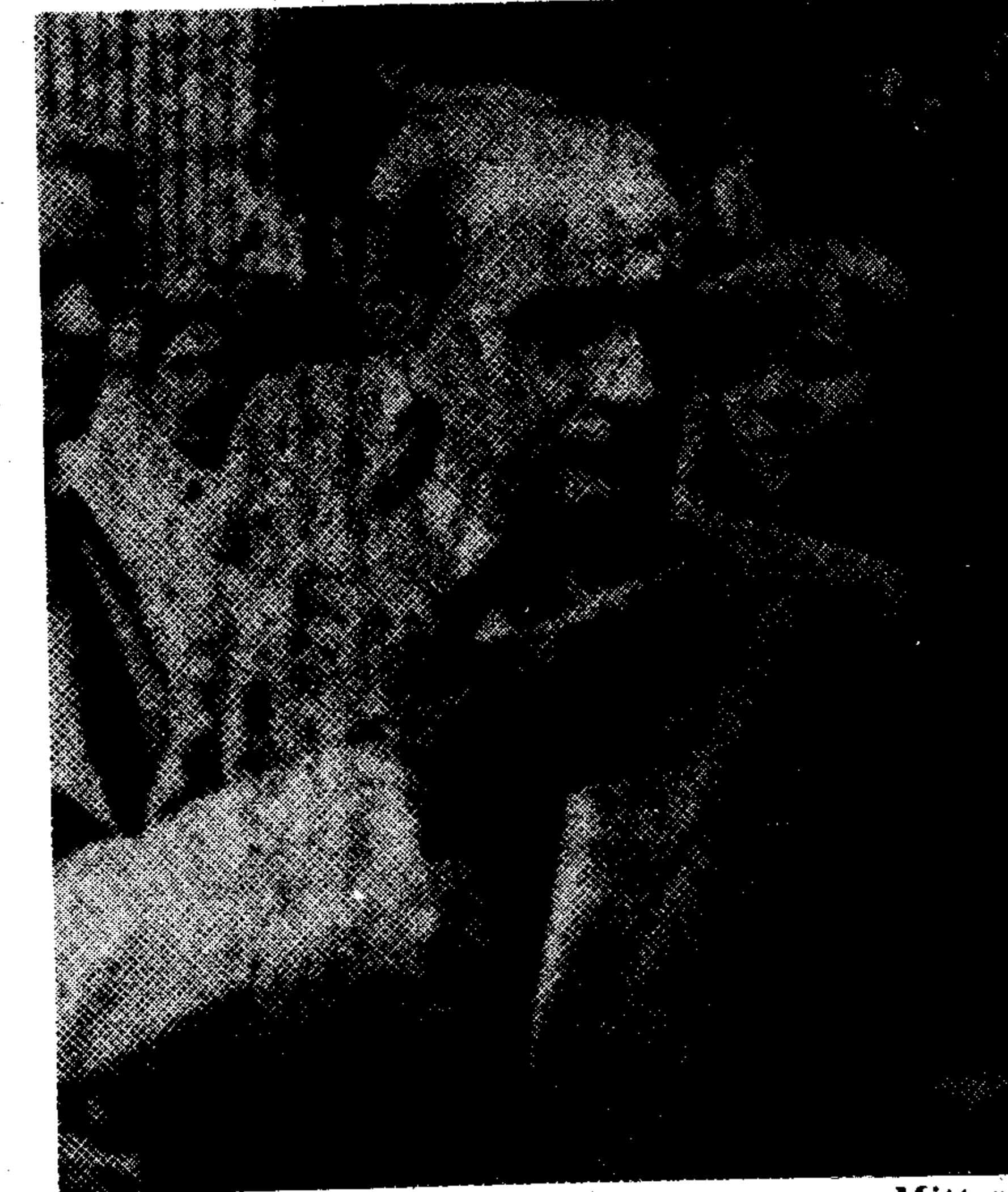
This would transform the political situation by raising enormous hopes and expectations among French workers and peasants, leading to demands on the government which simply cannot be met within the capitalist system. In this way the door can be opened to increased struggles by the French masses.



Giscard with Prime Minister Barre



Marchais



Mitterand

been a development. In effect I am a candidate against all the politicians, but I have always made a distinction between the right and the left.

I said before in 1974, that I would not stand in the way of the election of Mitterand in the second round, but it would be politically wrong to refrain from fighting him except in the second round.

Elections are not going to change society but you can express something, and you can only do that truly in the first round by voting for a candidature like mine.

For a woman worker, the only one in these elections who speaks as a working woman, to say that people have had enough of tricksters of the right and of the left.

In 1974 we called for a vote for Mitterand in the second round. Our candidature has always been of the left, but there is a kind of monopoly by the big parties over political life, and you would not like to think that you can only be left wing by approving one or

other of the candidates of the big parties.

Certainly not. There are fifteen million left wing voters. Do you think that all those people identify themselves with the Communist Party or the Socialist Party?

Sometimes they vote for one or other of these parties because there is no other alternative. We want to give them another possibility of voting for the left.

If the hope is, for the workers, that Mitterand is elected, then you are standing yourself to give this hope certain content, certain objectives. What are they?

I am not standing to give a content to Mitterand's victory.

Some people in the extreme left think that if Mitterand is elected it will be the breakthrough for the workers, etc. But we cannot know for sure, and I myself have the impression that there will be a waiting period.

It does not seem right

politically to me to base all your politics on the possibility, if Mitterand is elected, in a great enthusiasm among workers, who would take part in a struggle.

Nobody can know what there is today in the consciousness of millions of workers.

If I get lots of votes, you can say to yourself that there is something that is changing in the consciousness of workers.

The vote for Mitterand could be simply a vote against Giscard, and not at all a vote of hope and illusions. Have people got so many illusions?

They want a change—at least in the working class. Are they going to demand so much following a victory of the left? I don't know so much.

First, in 1936, it did not quite happen like that. And then, does a left victory automatically lead to struggles? No, you can see the opposite.

It will be necessary to fight for the 35 hour week; even Mitterand himself says that it will need the agree-

ment of all the European countries, and the negotiations will be carried out plant by plant, company by company.

You see what that means, it will depend on the balance of forces.

I put myself forward so that in the first round, the electorate express something, so that the workers feel stronger, so that there will be many who say, after the elections, that they will not passively accept the situation, whichever candidate is elected.

Are you simply proposing a protest vote against the "politicians" or are you giving a content to the warning that you want to address to them?

I say that all the politicians are in the service of the bourgeoisie . . . I say: let's give them all a warning. We know very well that they are all going to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie, to protect their profits . . .

All, including Marchais?

M. Marchais has no chance of being elected; it is not a problem . . . They are going to continue effectively to give handouts to the trusts.

None of them—and M. Marchais neither, for example—will touch the army's budget. They all agree with giving 20% of the income of the State budget, that is more than FF100 millions, to the army, so that it can go up in smoke.

It is not a producer of jobs. It is only used to import oil—FFr3 millions a year—so that these gentlemen can enjoy themselves carrying out big manoeuvres.

It is used to make arms which we know are already outstripped by the great powers, but it enriches Dassault and the others. It would be possible with this money to buy the surplus agriculture from the farmers and feed the third world.

What type of defence do you propose?

For 60 years the French army has been in existence to defend the country. In June 1940 we saw what good it was to finance an army—no good at all.

Since then the army has

only served in colonial wars not at all to defend territory and besides that, in the end it was beaten by unarmed peoples who were driven by the enthusiasm to fight themselves.

It is not the force of dissuasion of the Politburo they have none—which stops the Russians intervening in their country; it is the belief that it will cause popular insurrection. We the people want to defend ourselves, they have need of sophisticated weapons.

Besides another use for money spent on the army: what else do you propose? I do not have a programme—neither do others despite what they say—but I have several ideas. Why not a referendum on the military budget?

I have a programme demands for following elections. We must have a minimum right. It will be necessary to fight for it not only the working class but all popular layers those who don't exploit one. And that, whoever is elected, and even if they are Communist ministers

WSL Conference report

TURN TO ORGANISE THE UNEMPLOYED

John Lister reports on the WSL Conference discussion on perspectives for work in Britain.

The Workers Socialist League conference document *The Tory Offensive and the Prospects for Trotskyism* was carried, with a number of amendments, by an overwhelming majority.

It spells out a number of the political and material problems that stand in the way of the successful struggles of the working class to defeat the Thatcher government.

And it examines various sectors of struggle and outlines a programme of policies designed to mobilise maximum action by the working class and create conditions for the building of a new, revolutionary, leadership in the workers' movement.

Impact

Particular attention is given to the impact of unemployment on the working class:

"For the 2½ million officially on the dole, for the tens and hundreds of thousands of married women and other "invisible" unemployed, unemployment is an ever-present oppressive reality: one which fuels despair and demoralisation, isolates them from the organised strength of the unions and drives many to seek utopian or desperate individual "solutions".

Army recruitment is brisk among the masses of unemployed youth: other youth resort to crime on a less organised and officially-sanctioned basis. For others the despair leads to clinical depression—even suicide.

For those still in work, unemployment hangs over their heads as a daily threat. It hangs over every mass meeting vote; it stands as an



Massive unemployment demonstration in Glasgow

explicit or implicit penalty for challenging management on working conditions, wages or union rights.

Against those prepared to fight redundancies, "voluntary" redundancies or "natural wastage", employers increasingly—like Ansell's in Birmingham and BL—raise the threat of total closure or wholesale sackings and the replacement of strikers by workers off the dole queues.

Unemployment looms the larger as a threat because it has appeared unchallengeable. Jobs have been massacred with virtually no substantial resistance by union leaders, and no

policies put forward to lead

The document goes on to look at both the fight to defend existing jobs, and the fight to organise the unemployed through the building of Unemployed Workers' Unions:

"Firstly, and crucially, we must fight to develop Unemployed Workers' Unions as democratic self-organisations of the unemployed which can provide an active focus for all sections of the unemployed whether they be youth, housewives or those driven out of industry and the public services by redundancies.

Not only can unemployed workers' unions take on the immediate demands of the unemployed, such as for free travel on public transport and the extension of useful public works by council direct labour organisations—thereby creating new jobs—but they can play a vital role in linking the unemployed to the employed.

Picket lines

UWUs can organise their members to support picket lines, occupations, demonstrations and struggles by tenants—thereby placing their resources at the service of those sections of the labour movement in struggle.

Similarly, in certain areas, branches of unemployed workers could play a crucial role in campaigns against racism and racist violence and in the establishment of workers' defence squads to protect the labour movement and ethnic minorities against fascist attacks.

In this way UWUs can establish themselves as an important element in the class struggle at local level and win support for their own campaigns from trade unions, trades councils and Labour Parties—creating conditions for developing a political fight with the union leaders over the rights of the unemployed in the unions and for control of unemployed workers' centres by the unemployed themselves."

NHS cuts

The document goes on to draw the lessons of struggles to defeat the Tory cuts in the NHS:

"Among the threats to hospital occupations, the danger of isolation from other NHS workers and from the necessary supporting action is perhaps the most serious.

This is the tactic utilised by the trade union bureaucracy to weaken and undermine struggles against the cuts.

The NHS unions for example, made no call whatever for strike action or even mass picketing to prevent the repeated AHA raids which put an end to the work-in at St. Benedicts. And at Longworth—isolated in rural Oxfordshire—the COHSE leadership took over two months to produce so much as a poster, and has done nothing to promote a national campaign of support.

We must be clear from the outset that the TUC bureaucracy as a whole would rather see hospitals closed by the dozen than wage a fight against the Tory government.

Their every move and manoeuvre must be analysed from this understanding, and the rare militant statements made by individual bureaucrats must be seen in this light."

Other sections look at the fight against local authority cuts and rate/rent increases, the struggle against growing racist and fascist

violence, the fight to defend trade union rights against attacks by employers and the Tory government, and the fight for solidarity action in the British labour movement to support the struggle against British military rule in Ireland.

War drive

For the first time the WSL document incorporated a section on the fight against the Thatcher/Reagan war drive and for unilateral nuclear disarmament. Recognising the size of the growing CND movement, the document points out that:

"The leadership of CND however lies in the hands of the pacifist middle class. The anti-missiles movement still clings to the analysis that the problem is "two super-powers" which must be equally opposed and disarmed. Such arguments have found an echo from many of the diverse middle class forces that have moved towards the campaign—and from the state capitalist SWP.

But this should not deter us from intervening in this movement, arguing for class action to halt the war drive, and pressing the case for unilateral disarmament of the capitalist countries and defence of the USSR."

And it instructs the WSL National Committee to step up work on this issue:

"We must find concise ways to carry home our basic message—that to stop the missiles it is necessary to stop Thatcher, through mass action to bring down the Tories. We should raise the question of demanding that local councils block the development of missile sites in their areas, refuse to carry out the government preparations for "civil defence" and dictatorial rule from hardened bunkers in the event of nuclear war, and publish the secret material in their possession on the preparations already made to repress any working class survivors of a nuclear strike.

Missile sites

We should fight for other trade unionists to follow the

lead of the UCATT Regional Committee blacking work on missile sites, and seeking out means to cripple the Thatcher war drive."

Having adopted a line of perspectives for amongst women at the conference, this year's discussion on women's oppression focus on the question of positive discrimination resolution in favour of active discrimination narrowly carried—and place nurseries.

The relationship between the WSL to mobilise, organise and recruit working women in the workplace the home and on the need to relate to more petty bourgeois in the women's movement was also discussed. The adopted document points out that:

"A combination of political work at a theoretical and programmatic together with our ability to lead working class women and carry through a political fight in the labour movement offers us the means to attract the developed women from the feminist movement to the banner of Trotskyism."

Revolutionary programme

Pointing to the politicalities and problems of the next stage in the struggle against the Tories and the fight for a workers' government, the document concludes:

"Our task in the period is to develop, test and strengthen a programme in the struggles that take place reach the broadest possible layers of working class women and youth nowing a way forward against the Tory offensive; to construct the cadre must spearhead the fight for the mass revolutionary of tomorrow."

Opportunities from Labour's crisis

The crisis of social democracy, the split within the Labour Party and the new situation opened up by the continuing leftward movement of rank and file party members was a major topic addressed in the WSL conference document.

It was also the subject of a lengthy amendment tabled by the ICL for discussion, the general line of which was accepted by the conference.

Forcibly planned

The document included an outline critique of the 'Alternative Economic Strategy' peddled by many sections of Labour's left wing—pointing out that:

"The AES is not put forward as part of a strategy to end capitalism, but rather tends to create the illusion that capitalism can be for-

cibly planned, thus acting to turn workers away from the crucial need to develop their organisation and mobilise to fight for their interests."

On the Labour Party itself, the document—drafted before the split of the SDP—draws attention to the weakened position of the right wing over the last 2 years, and the way in which the leftward shift of the party has spurred further recruitment of socialist forces.

The ICL amendment adds some background material on these changes, and underlines the reasons why the capitalist class as well as the right wing have channelled their resources into opposing democratic reforms in the Labour Party.

Main dangers

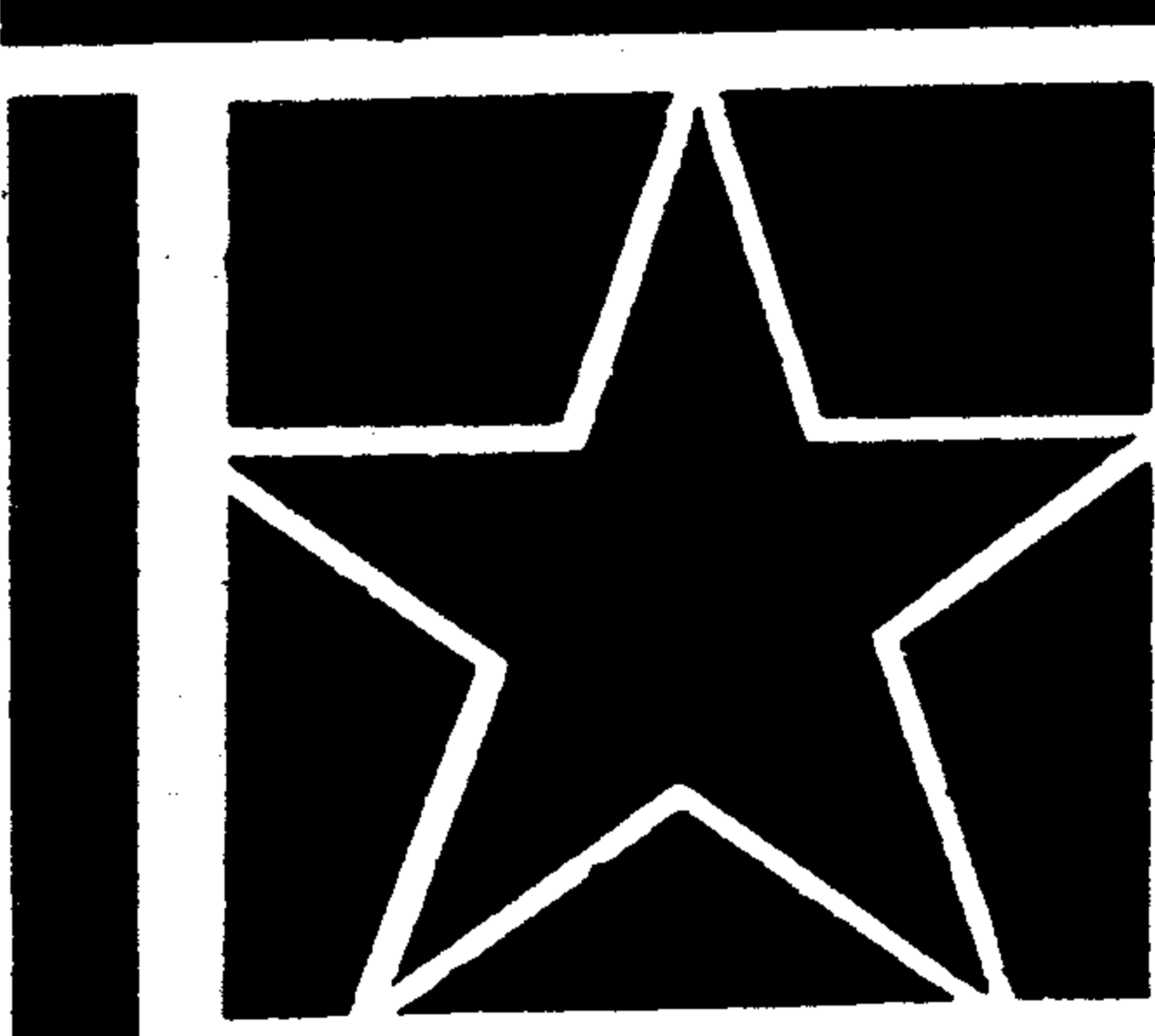
It points to the fact that the reforms that have been won have yet to be consolidated.

And the amendment

warns of the three main dangers: a) that the right wing will join with the "soft Tribune Left" to gut the democratisation decisions; b) that the soft Lefts will bury the struggle against the right wing in a wave of anti-Tory demagoguery (a tendency counter-acted to some extent by Benn's campaign against Healey); and c) "that Marxists will succumb to the pressure to adapt to and mimic the Left, abandoning their own ground."

To ward off these dangers the amendment calls for the building of a class struggle tendency in the Labour Party and labour movement; a fight for trade union democracy—using Benn's campaign as a focus—and the building of an adequate Marxist Party to offer leadership to the coming struggles.

Such tasks will be a high priority of the WSL and of the fused organisation after the July 26 fusion conference.



JOIN THE WSL!

Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

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

Coventry—all out May 23! Drive the fascists off the streets!

A demonstration in the centre of Coventry on Saturday 2 May to protest at the racist murder of Satnam Gill, and keep the fascist gangs out, provoked the fury of the local press and police force.

Besides making a number of arrests they accused the anti-racist defence committee of trying to cause a race riot.

Right wing Labour councillors and the race relations industry rushed in to try to demobilise the response of the black youth and workers but in so doing they were forced to admit that there had been thirty racist attacks in the city in April alone.

The anti-fascist movement continues to grow despite the manoeuvres of the reformists in the black community and the labour movement.

There are two strands in the development of the movement. The Coventry Committee Against Racism that has called the demon-

stration is an umbrella organisation that encompasses everyone from the Stalinists to religious groups and even Conservative Associations.

The anti-racist Defence Committee is made up largely of black youth whose anger and militancy make them reject the tired old formulae of pacifist protest.

Commitment

The first steps in making links with the labour movement have so far been achieved in the rally on Saturday 9 May.

Three rebel councillors, a Trades Council representative and the IWA were amongst the speakers from the platform who expressed their commitment to the anti-fascist struggle.

Independent of both of these are the autonomous cultural organisations, some of which organise the physical defence of their own members in the community.

While the old network of the Anti Nazi League is almost defunct and there is

no strong organisation in its place, the fascists are directing work around gangs of unemployed youth that exist all over Coventry.

With the sudden and huge growth of unemployment in Coventry there is no doubt that the BM and other fascist groups have chosen it as a major target for their activities.

The task for those who seek to intervene in the struggles of the working class with a revolutionary programme and a perspective for winning those struggles is enormous.

This is because the need to build the organisation of workers' defence inside the labour movement is really urgent in Coventry.

All of the struggles that are going on are being blocked by a leadership in

the unions and the Labour Council that would prefer their defeat rather than risk any threat to their own comfortable positions.

Common fight

Revolutionary leadership is needed to break down the isolation of isolated struggles, so that while they are being built they can at the same time take up the common fight against the right wing leadership and the Tory government.

It is crucial to build a 'Coventry Left' around these struggles.

The full strength of the Coventry labour movement must be rallied to act sharply against racist terror.

The fight must be taken up in the unions, Labour Party, colleges and schools,

on the dole queues and at every work place for workers defence groups.

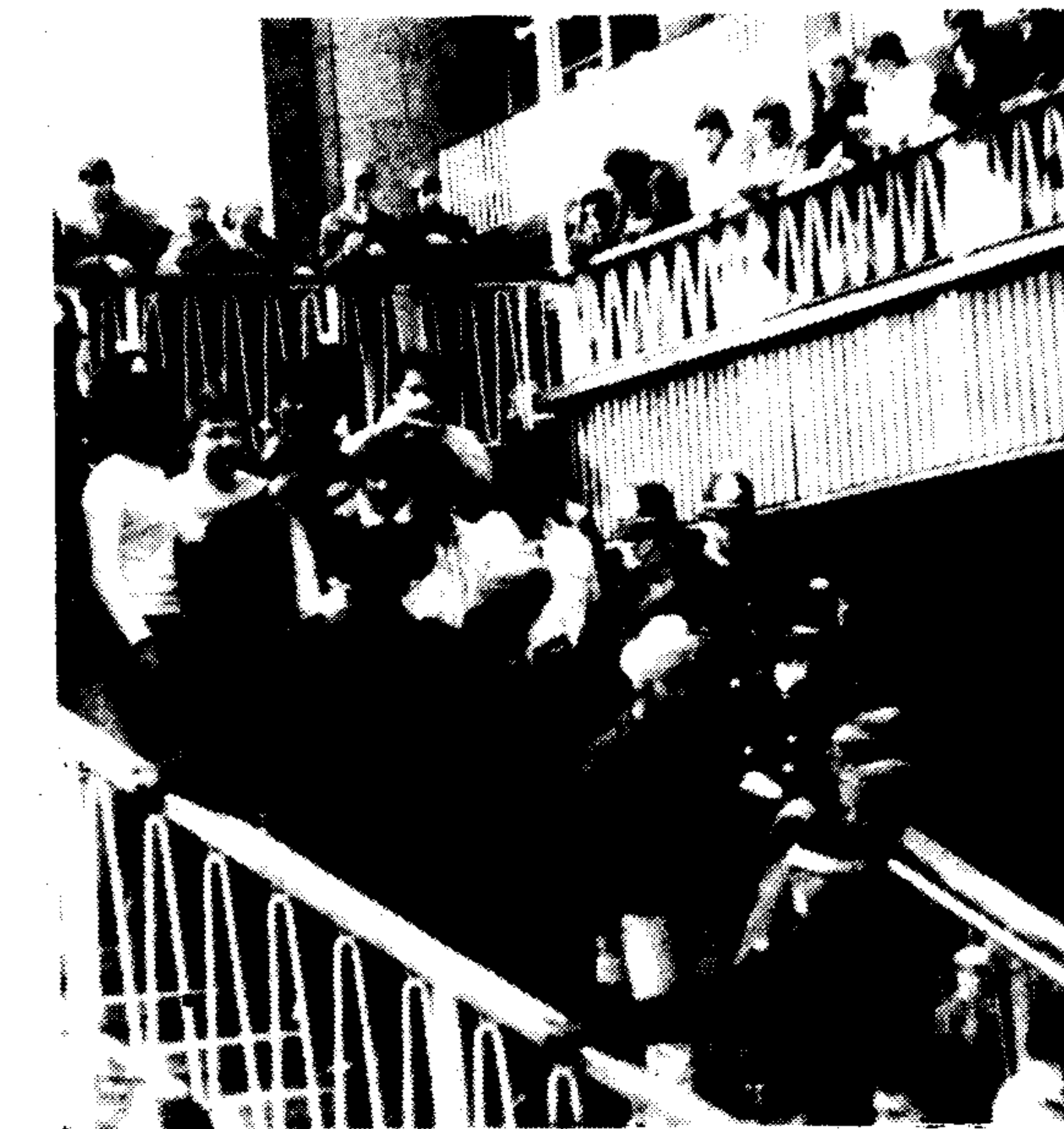
Work must be done amongst those who daily face the anti-black, anti-working class violence of the fascists, in order to link them together and organise their defence inside the labour movement.

Black youth especially must not be left to fight alone, because in isolation they are very open to attack by the fascists and the police.

United strength

Bristol and Brixton are potent symbols of black resistance, but that spirit must be directed into the labour movement.

The united strength of black youth and the labour movement is the only force



that will drive the fascists off the streets.

This demands the building of defence squads which draw their forces from all sections of the working class, and must include white

youth and the unemployed.

Defence squads that can be called upon instantly to crush any attacks whether they are on the streets, picket lines or small shop keepers.

Press Gang



Press Gang



Billie Jean King, perhaps more than anyone else, was the person who turned ladies' tennis into women's tennis.

Over a decade and a half she proved herself the toughest, fittest and most competitive, and led the way for other players to reach new heights of athleticism and riches.

She helped organise what is now known as 'player power', and fought a sometimes solitary battle to equalise the prize money offered to men and women players.

This made her popular with the other younger players who saw professional tennis becoming a passport to a life of comfort—but not to the media who guard over the fictions and prejudices of a society in decay.

There was nothing particularly proletarian about Billie Jean King. Indeed her struggle in tennis reflected the rising tide of the women's movement in the United States, a movement which articulated above all the aspirations of the petty bourgeois.

But she was disliked by the media. She tried too hard. She was not submissive enough. She made mince-meat of too many dainty maidens who better fitted the media's craving for submissive womanhood. (The British press disliked her particularly. She was foreign and made over us to a British ideal.)

All this gives some way to explaining why Mrs King had to face the psychological nightmare of having to overcome a press conference to discuss her sexual history. Marilyn Barnett, who had been her lover and who

set out to damage her in the only way left open, instinctively found a sharp weapon when she announced her pernicious law suit.

It would be nice to report that Mrs King told the media where to put their zoom lenses; that she made a short statement on the pleasures of homosexual relationships and went back to her tennis.

Of course that did not happen. Mrs King is trained to defend against physical spins, loops and cross court smashes, but not to withstand the prurient hypocrisies of frustrated news editors.

She declared the affair had been 'a mistake' and stressed the strength of her relationship with her husband and her 'normality'.

The *Star*, the *Sun* and the *Mirror* made her statement their lead story, the *Mirror* under the headline 'Billie Jean's Live-in Blonde'.

The *Times*, no less prurient, carried it on an inside page under the headline 'Billie Jean King admits to having had a lesbian affair'.

The *Daily Mail* filled a page with a report and pictures, calling her statement a "sensational admission".

All the papers played down reports that Marilyn Barnett had made two suicide attempts in the past seven months and that the reason she is now in a wheelchair is that she had thrown herself from a balcony.

The matters discussed were exclusively in the realm of personal relations. But at last the press had been able to find some concrete reason for their uneasiness at Mrs King's success.

Press Gang



The editor of Die *Aktuelle*, defending himself half-heartedly against the charge of 'gross intrusion' said his magazine had behaved ethically—it had removed all references to politics from the bugged royal conversations!

This epitomised the conflict between the royal emblems of the bourgeoisie and their guard dogs of the press.

Joke

Outrage, shock, horror at the thought of the royal phones being bugged will sound like a joke to those thousands of trade unionists and radicals whose phones are smugly extensions of the state listening system.

The British press would certainly have fewer stories about bugging the private conversations of someone else's monarch. Discussion begins at home.

The hypocrisy of Fleet Street's supposed shock was made the more obvious by its coverage of the Ripper trial.

Tailor made

This case—which has divided the victims into



prostitutes and 'innocent women' has been tailor made for the gutter.

It is no surprise therefore to find that the cheque books of Fleet Street have been waving through the letter boxes of Sutcliffe's relatives.

The subsequent row between the *Daily Mail* and Buckingham Palace has caused considerable pain inside the editorial offices.

Best defenders

The *Daily Mail* and the rest of the millionaire owned press are the best defenders of the system on which the monarchy rests. But their efforts are not always appreciated. It is rather as if the Queen, strolling in the palace grounds, came across a security guard beating up an intruder.

The monarchy is not supposed actually to come into contact with the nastier parts of the machine that keeps it in the luxury of its own defence.

"Don't believe lies and rumours. Do listen to your local clergymen, councillors and other community leaders. We will be making it our business to ensure that the news media get the facts, so listen to them too."

That was the most ironic part of a lengthy statement by Northern Ireland Minister Humphrey Atkins, and the nearest he has yet come to an open admission that he will control what appears on television and in the press.

It came in the days leading up to the death in Long Kesh of Bobby Sands, the elected MP the government could not afford to let live.

Atkins' statement was a long and fantastic account in which he alleged that the Provisional IRA were set to burn down Catholic homes and blame it on Protestant gangs. This was unhesitatingly accepted as fact by the press.

Atkins said: "In one area of Belfast the Provisional IRA are contemplating evacuating residents to other parts of the city, burning the emptied houses and by throwing the blame onto others, further fuelling sectarian conflict. Already they have actually earmarked houses for these intended evacuees and the owners have been ordered to cooperate."

No evidence at all was given for this claim, or for an alleged plan to send children out to fight the police (subsequent events showed that the youth needed no prompting).

Yet the press was obedient to the letter. Three

papers—the *Star*, the *Express* and the *Daily Mail*, gave no hint in their headlines that these claims were not established fact.

The *Star* said: "Burn Belfast Plot"; the *Express* "Burn Belfast! IRA Terror Plot Exposed"; and the *Mail* "IRA ready to burn Belfast".

Without a hint of irony the papers go on to report Atkins' speech in full—presenting much of it as unchallengeable fact and including the plea not to listen to rumour.

This was the opening salvo in a renewed attempt by Fleet Street to try to regain some ground for the government.

News manipulation was also evident on the day of the funeral itself.

The biggest Republican funeral Belfast has ever seen was given equal time on BBC radio reports with the couple of thousand who gathered in Belfast city centre to listen to Paisley's denunciation of the IRA.

But press propaganda has only a limited effect. The *Sun*, which is possibly the most virulent anti-Irish paper in the country, published a poll which showed a clear overall majority in support of immediate withdrawal of troops.

Two months ago the NUJ held a conference at which media workers were assured that no censorship existed in Ireland.

Since then the past two weeks has seen an orchestrated campaign to downplay Bobby Sands' election, death and funeral and to divert attention with totally fictitious scare stories.

This is the real face of the 'free' press.



BL Workers Fight Speed Up

LAST WEEK BL management at Longbridge increased Metro production from 25 to 31 cars per hour. And, as they are doing all over the company, they attempted to use the change in line-speeds to worsen the manning standards.

The result was that some of the workers couldn't keep up. Management responded by invoking the disciplinary procedure against two of these workers.

They received first verbal, then written warnings. This action is, in the procedure, followed by suspension and then the sack.

Both day and night shift walked out demanding the withdrawal of the warnings.

The Communist Party-led works committee then negotiated a 'compromise': the warnings would remain, but the shop stewards would be allowed off their job to talk about the issue.

This was rejected unanimously by the strikers, who said they would not return until the warnings were withdrawn.

BREAK CHAPPLE'S GRIP ON EETPU!

the rank and file. None of them are accountable to us.

Rank and file appeals committees have been abolished.

The notorious JIB, enforced by Chapple, is nothing but a 'bosses' charter'.

National conference resolutions are contemptuously ignored by our executive.

Militant branches such as Cardiff, Birmingham and now London Central have experienced bureaucratic closure, with elected members banned from holding office.

This denial of political rights can only cement Chapple's vice-like grip on union policy and programme.

This gang who hold sway within the EETPU must be challenged and beaten on the demand for a full return of power to the rank and file.

—Threatened to ballot EETPU members in a move to break ranks during the Confed engineering strike.

—Initiated elitist private health care for some of our members, adding further to the demise of the NHS.

—Encouraged scabbing at the Isle of Grain power station in a bid to smash the GMWU action there.

—Vetoed the rights of 10,000 electricians to £1.8 million benefit during the steel strike.

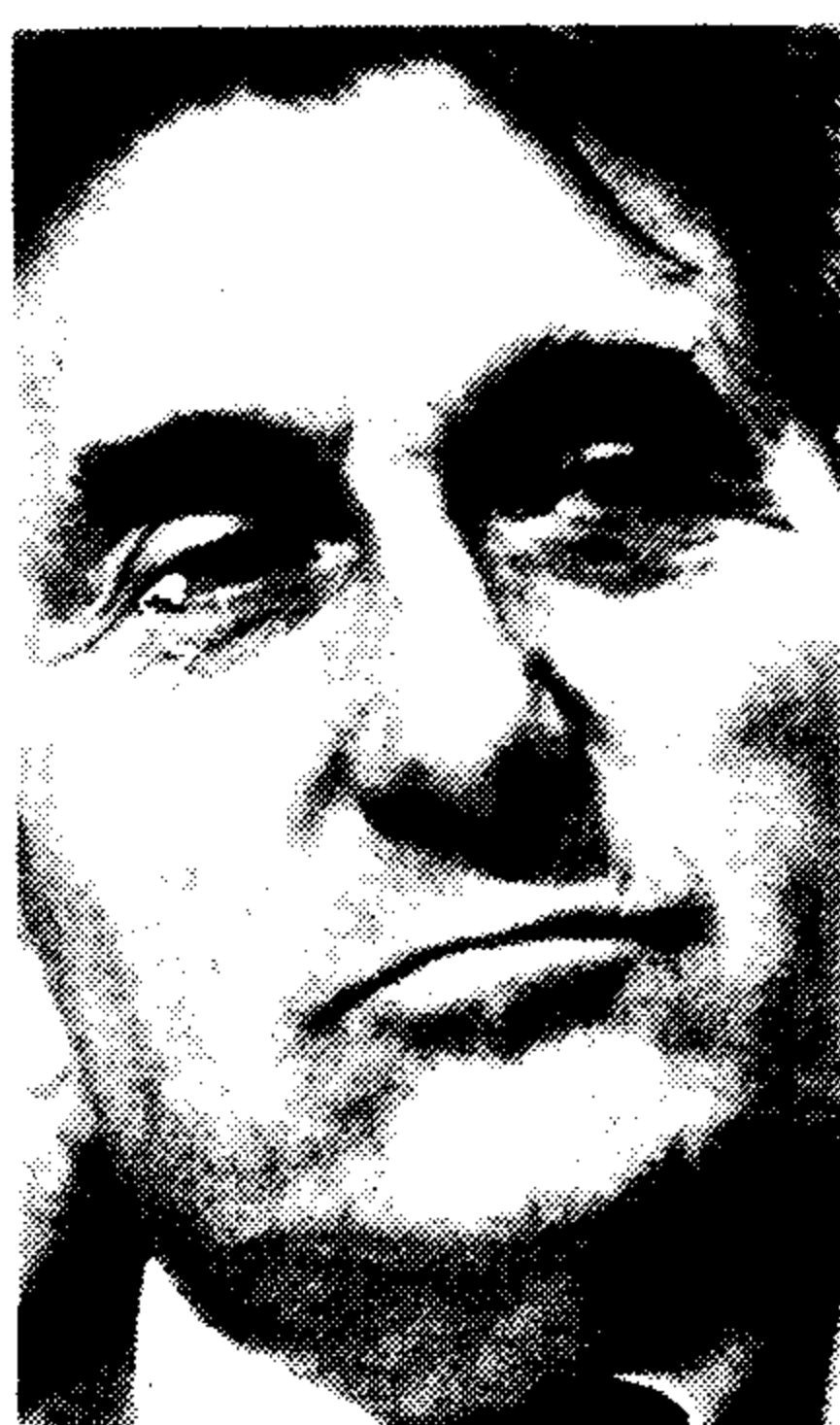
Chapple has also declared his support for five years of Thatcherism even to the extent of circularising his members not to support the TUC's Day of Action last May.

Indeed, under Callaghan's Labour government he signed the Concordat as a 'dry run' for Prior's notorious anti-union Employment Act.

And he has been an almost solitary trade union supporter for the reactionary Campaign for Social Democracy and the SDP, whose main energies are focussed on opposing socialist policies and sabotaging the possible return of a Labour government.

Internally the EETPU stands revealed as the most highly bureaucratized and undemocratic union affiliated to the TUC and the Labour Party.

Not one of its 120 full-time officers from national to branch level is elected by



Chapple

parasitic union leader Chapple fears loosening his vice-like grip on the policies of this union—policies which have resulted in the loss of jobs for thousands of EETPU members.

All this goes to show that workers face a dual assault on their hard-won gains.

Not just from Thatcher's government of the rich but also from union autocrats like Frank Chapple who have junked any pretence to representing organised labour by the sheer magnitude of their betrayals.

Isn't that why he:

—Branded striking hospital workers as "terrorists" during their low pay strikes of 1978 (directly resulting in the shutdown of the Cardiff branch).

Tory monetarism is now having a disastrous effect on the working class. Over three million men, women and young people have been thrown onto the dole as a sacrifice to the employers' profits.

Yet for those EETPU members fighting for a socialist alternative to blatant class collaborationist policies of Frank Chapple, this year's conference platform has produced the most politically gutted agenda in recent memory.

With only 136 resolutions actually accepted by the standing orders committee, this means that over 550 branches have either failed to submit resolutions or have been bureaucratically disenfranchised.

If the latter case is true then this clearly reveals an attempt by the Chapple leadership to smother any fightback seeking to defend the independent interests of our 450,000-strong rank and file.

Why do none of these resolutions demand general strike action to bring down this hated Tory government? Where are those resolutions calling for concrete defence of jobs and an end to debilitating unemployment? Why has Chapple barred democratically elected delegates to this conference?

Because like any other

ASTMS must back Benn

The 13th Annual Conference of ASTMS will start with its debate on economic policy.

The first motion is to endorse the TUC and Labour Party's "Alternative Economic Strategy", with left amendments to delete import controls and right amendments to delete nationalisation.

A large section of the agenda for the first day will be on unemployment and the rights of unemployed members which (if passed) will extend ASTMS's correct position on retaining unemployed members.

There are important rule changes which will increase the democratic control of the TUC and Labour Party conference delegations.

And between 4.00 pm and 5.30 pm on Saturday, delegates are expected to discuss, digest and vote on motions on the disabled, state benefits, the NHS and 32 paragraphs of the NEC

Annual Report.

The other important event on Saturday is a CND meeting in the lunch break which will be addressed by Tony Benn.

This meeting is important not only because the question of nuclear weapons is essential to all trade unionists, but also because at some point in the conference the NEC will move their emergency motion calling for a vote for Denis Healey as deputy leader of the Labour Party at the Labour Party conference.

Battle

This is probably going to be the biggest battle of the conference because at least three divisional councils have already submitted emergency resolutions calling for a vote for Benn, who more accurately represents ASTMS policy.

First thing on Sunday morning the NEC are hoping to pass a motion which will increase subscriptions by

25% before delegates recover from the hangovers induced by the mayor's reception the previous evening.

I'm sure someone will point out that ASTMS has not negotiated a 25% pay increase for its membership.

On Sunday afternoon there's an amendment on positive discrimination for women. This will be one of the few times women's rights have been discussed before a lot of the delegates leave on the Monday morning.

Ireland will not be a contentious issue at the conference, not because there will be agreement, but because it is not on the agenda!

It is the duty of all socialists to attempt to get Ireland raised and discussed.

This conference season is too close to the death of Bobby Sands MP and the impending deaths of the other H Block hunger strikers for us to let the bureaucracy get away with ignoring the issue any longer.

Pergamon fight on

A CONTINGENT from the 9-week old strike of NUJ members at Pergamon Press, Oxford, will lobby the TUC Printing Industries Committee this week, demanding print union support.

So far SOGAT members have crossed NUJ picket lines and NGA members both inside Pergamon and elsewhere have heeded official instructions not to impose solidarity blacking action.

The strike continues to need funds to further its struggle against Pergamon's union-busting "socialist" boss Robert Maxwell.

Donations and messages of support should be sent to the strike headquarters, 5, Union Street, Oxford.

Teachers fight sackings

Solihull teachers are once again at the forefront of action over jobs—this time compulsory redundancy.

Last February Solihull Council announced cuts of £2.4 million to the education budget. This, the authorities announced, would mean a loss of 150 teaching jobs.

The teachers' response was a massive lobby of the Council attended by some 5,000 people. This forced the authority to rescind the cuts.

Now once again the Tory authority is planning redundancies which they claim is due to the teachers' pay award of 7.5%.

32 jobs are set for the axe in the borough, 17 in secondary schools and 15 in primary.

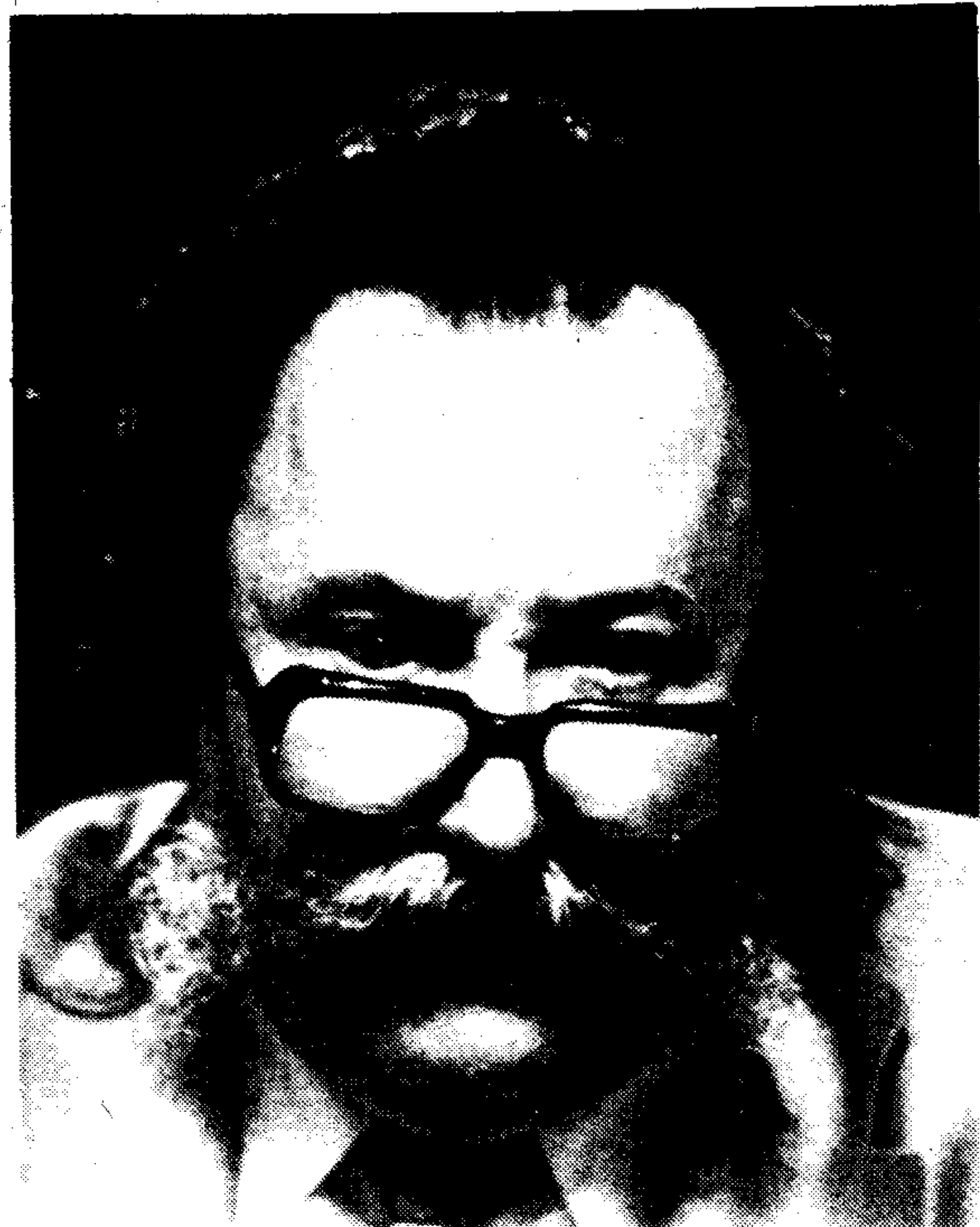
These cuts include deputy heads as well as classroom teachers.

The NUT's response was to declare unanimous support for a package of action which includes withdrawal of goodwill, lightning half day and one-day strikes and prolonged strike action.

This is the first attempt in the country to make teachers redundant. It remains to be seen whether the National Union of Teachers will put itself at the head of this action in view of their continual claims that compulsory redundancies are the issue on which the union will fight.

*A victory for Labour in Nottinghamshire in the county council elections has ensured the reinstatement of teacher Eileen Crosbie, who was sacked by the education authority when it was Tory-controlled for refusing to teach a nursery class without adequate assistance. Her stand against the cuts resulted in a campaign within the local NUT against her sackings.

The Labour Group have announced that she is to be reinstated.



Jackson

JOBS IN DANGER IN POST & TELECOMS

On Monday 18 May the Annual Conference of the Union of Communication Workers will open in Brighton.

In that same week the Committee Stages of the British Telecommunications Bill will take place.

The Bill ends the state monopoly for Posts and Telecoms, and will allow private operators to obtain licenses to run specific posts and telecoms services.

Assets or parts of the two businesses could be sold off by government directive and the pension fund will be split which all the unions with the exception of SPOE (the middle management union) are against.

Appropriately April 1 had been the day chosen for an attempt by the union officials of the UCW and POEU to campaign against the Bill.

A rally was held at Central Hall, Westminster, together with a lobby of Parliament.

It seemed to many rank and file members a bit late in the day to campaign against the inevitable—especially when the UCW Executive had in many ways pre-empted the legislation.

They have reorganised the union structure, changing its name, holding a special conference to discuss and agree on reorganising the union's structure, and setting up a Joint Reorganisation Committee that has dealt with issues requiring action to split the postal side and Telecoms.

The new Bill is no surprise to the union leaders. The campaign of non-cooperation with the split in the industry could have started immediately after the election of the Tories.

It might then have had an effect on what went on in Parliament.

UCW General Secretary Jackson, speaking to the 1 April rally, said that despite the union lobby the Tories would vote for the Bill and pay no attention.

He argued that the Tories were in power because somebody voted for them and that union members should make sure that next time they don't.

Jackson believes that what is important is the ballot box and parliamentary democracy.

Yet there is an alternative—class action to defend jobs, services and living standards. Yet, like other TUC leaders Jackson will give no such lead to the UCW leadership.

The pay award for postal workers this year is a reflection of that lack of leadership: 20% was the claim and 8% from 1 April and 1½% from 1 November is the recommendation for members to accept!

The circular outlining the agreement refers to the recent pay awards given to other public sector unions (most of them around about 7.9%) as an argument that postal workers should be pleased at what they've been offered.

But no mention is made of the firemen's 18% or the miners' 13% secured even without industrial action.

And Jackson remains silent on the way the Tories backed down over job losses when the miners began to take unofficial action!

There is a source of power outside of Parliament that can bring about changes. That is the might and independence of the working class.

The UCW membership needs a leadership in the union to show them this alternative.

If not, the future for postal and telecoms members is a dismal one—with living standards decreasing by the minute, jobs being lost and given away in so-called "voluntary" productivity deals with a gun in one's back.

The Executive hopes to avoid controversy over issues at this year's conference by producing a special report that will take up most of conference's time.

But one of the major debates is bound to be on new technology.

It is essential to secure an agreement that will not mean the loss of jobs.

Claims outstanding for reduction in the working week and extra leave should be secured by UCW members as a priority before any further discussion on new technology takes place.

SOCIALIST PRESS ★

RIPPER TRIAL AN ATTACK ON WOMEN

PEOPLE'S MARCH SHOWS THIRST FOR ACTION

Launching into action from a 5,000-strong rally at Liverpool's Pier Head, the Peoples March for Jobs has attracted wide-scale support on the first leg of its month-long journey to London.

It is the biggest initiative of its kind since the 1930s. 500 official marchers formed the initial contingent. Others will join throughout the route to provide an estimated 1,000-strong march into London at the end of the month.

There were stoppages of work to greet the march as it made its way through the North West, and a strike by 4,000 steel and engineering workers when the march reached the crisis-hit town of Sheffield.

10,000 Sheffield trade unionists joined the march which drew applause through the town centre and culminated in a rally at the City Hall addressed by Yorkshire miners' leader Arthur Scargill.

But while the trade union and labour movement have provided the backbone of the march, and strike action has proved the strength of the feeling on the issue of unemployment, the right



Sheffield workers join the march

wing and Stalinist politics of the organisers have brought platforms dominated by full time union officials and by bishops and vicars.

The Sheffield rally featured three clerics, the Bishop of Sheffield, Cardinal Monseigneur S. Sullivan and the Reverend Frank Thewlis of the Christian Socialist Movement.

Each brought his own irrelevant platitudes to a labour movement that has developed despite the obstacles placed in its way by religious superstition.

But of course praying for jobs is simply a more open expression of the protest politics practised by the Labour and TUC leaders who seek to persuade

Thatcher into changing course.

Indeed the heavy representation of union bureaucrats on a March for Jobs is itself a travesty, since these same bureaucrats have presided over the wholesale slaughter of jobs in both the private and public sector.

But of course every bureaucrat has a 'left' speech available for protest rallies on unemployment or the cuts.

Colin Barnett of NUPE has taken the posturing one stage further, by asserting that sponsored MPs will be expected to answer to the union if they fail to join the march.

But what is more to the point is a tangible lead from

both union leaders and MPs and councillors for industrial action to defend jobs and services and defeat the Tory government.

As the march progresses, it is clearly forming a focus for anti-Tory militancy and the frustrations of a working class denied any call to action against the Thatcher government.

However Labour Party demonstrations on unemployment have already mobilised 200,000 on the streets against Tory policies.

For the People's March to go one stage further it is necessary firmly and consistently to raise the necessity for mass action to drive out the Tories.

Labour councils

From page 1

have obediently imposed rent increases, rate increases, council house sales, cuts, closures and "voluntary" or compulsory redundancies—including Camdef Council on which Ken Livingstone sits.

They have become simply a stalking horse for the implementation of Thatcher's policies.

Now the electorate has spoken. Voters have shown that they reject Tory plans to slash their public services and look to Labour to bring about a change.

Confrontation

This can only be done in confrontation with the Thatcher government.

The support exists for such a confrontation but the leadership of far too many Labour councils remains in the hands of right wing time-servers who, in collaboration with union bureaucrats, seek only to maintain their own positions of power and privilege within the existing status quo.

The fight must be stepped up for the accountability of Labour councillors to local parties, for campaigns to build mass action against the cuts, and for a fight for Labour councils to spearhead generalised action to bring down the Tory government.

We publish below the text of a leaflet distributed by the English Collective of Prostitutes outside the trial of Peter Sutcliffe at the Old Bailey.

"We are picketing today to protest against the handling of the ripper case—by the court, the police and the media.

The Attorney General Sir Michael Havers (prosecuting) said of the ripper's victims that "some were prostitutes, but perhaps the saddest part of this case is that some were not. The last six attacks were on totally respectable women."

This distinction between prostitutes and "respectable" and "innocent" victims has been made all along by the police and the media—the murder of prostitute women seems irrelevant and unimportant.

This attitude towards prostitutes, much the same as the ripper's, allowed him to carry on murdering women for five years.

Is the Attorney General suggesting that if the ripper had restricted himself to prostitutes his "mission to clean up the streets" would have been more acceptable?

Such criminal comments and the media's acceptance of them are an incitement to murder women.

It is disgusting that the victims and their families are treated with no respect by the court, the police and the media.

Prostitutes have parents and children too—23 children are now motherless because of the ripper.

How must they feel to hear their mothers insulted and vilified in court and in the press? How must they feel about Sutcliffe's relatives making a lot of money for telling the story of their mothers' murderer?

The police have been inexcusably biased and incompetent:

—nothing was done for the first two years and four murders when all the victims were prostitutes.

—they only started to pay attention when the first "respectable" woman was killed in 1977.

—they were completely thrown off the track by the tape and the letter.

—they questioned Sutcliffe nine times and each time let him go.

—they ignored information from Sutcliffe's friend.

—when the last victim's handbag was found the search wasn't pursued because "it was a cold night, very windy and difficult to see anything". The weather has never stopped them arresting and harassing prostitutes, how come it stopped them that night?

At the moment you'd think the villain of the piece was a "cold" and "nagging" wife.

Yet 13 women need not have died if the police had done their job.

What other blunders did they make that the public doesn't even know about?

Why is there an internal investigation into Ronald Gregory, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire?

Other people in high places have already expressed their concern. Two MPs have already demanded that the Home Secretary orders an inquiry into the police handling of the case.

WE DEMAND:

1. A public inquiry into the police handling of the case. The public is entitled to know how the £4 million allocated to this case was spent.

2. A public apology from the Attorney General to the families of the prostitute victims.

3. An end to discriminatory and sensational media coverage. All human life is "respectable".

4. An end to bias and discrimination against prostitutes by the police and the courts.

5. Compensation for the victims and their families—especially for their children—from the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board."

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Civil servants vote to strike

The conference of the biggest civil service union the CPSA, voted today for an all-out one week strike by civil servants in a bid to press home their pay demands.

The vote, by a large majority, was carried despite the vocal opposition of the union's right wing-led Executive.

It commits the union to fighting for a total stoppage of ports and airports and of benefit offices as well as of

computer centres and revenue collection.

And the strike call follows on a 118-3 vote by the conference of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation for "any intensification" of the long-running pay struggle.

Leaders of the Society of Civil and Public Servants are tomorrow tabling a resolution to their conference for an all-out 4-5 week stoppage beginning at the end of May.

With pressure building up from the ranks for decisive

action to defeat the government's rigid stance, the right wing led CPSA executive is feeling the heat.

Annual elections have reflected a shift to the left on the union's various sectional leaderships, and the results of the national executive poll, to be announced tomorrow seems also likely to show heavy losses by the right wing.

An all-out stoppage by civil servants would certainly show the strength of feeling on the pay issue. But if prolonged, the strike could

rapidly hit millions of claimants, denying them vital state benefits.

Clearly civil servants, irritated by partial actions and by the lack of support from the labour movement, feel that such desperate remedies are the only answer to their problems.

Rather than blame the strikes, trade unionists should focus their criticism on the TUC leaders who have left the civil servants to fight alone while themselves retreating from any fight to defeat the Tories.

FUND

A collection of £139, including a donation of £10 from Winsford SYL at the WSL Annual Conference has brought our Special Fund up to £1191.00. So the money continues to come in very slowly after an initial strong response.

While there is still another two months left to raise the total of £2,500 we don't want to leave it all to the last minute.

So if you haven't contributed yet to the fund, please don't hesitate. Send in some money today and help us push on towards our target.

Our address is:

Socialist Press Special Fund
BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX