

SOCIALIST PRESS



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KICK OUT LABOUR'S TORTURE CHIEFS!

Troops out of Ireland now!

The Bennett Report on the interrogation procedures used in the occupied six counties of Ireland is a calculated cover-up.

It pointedly avoids any attempt to explain unmistakable evidence of violence meted out to republican suspects in the notorious Castlereagh interrogation centre.

It points out from the start that it never intended to investigate any of the hundreds of specific allegations of torture and violence that have filled dossiers previously compiled by trade union bodies, priests and Amnesty International.

Instead it sets out to excuse the RUC for the supposed "excesses" of "young", "inexperienced" police thugs who have beaten and maltreated hundreds of prisoners.

Medical evidence

Indeed it has left Labour Minister Roy Mason leeway to argue barefaced in Parliament that the Report: "did not say there had been ill-treatment; it only pointed to medical evidence of injuries but did not say how they had been inflicted."

Nevertheless the furor surrounding the publication of the Report and in particular the categorical statement alleging 150-160 instances of police-inflicted injuries by RUC police surgeon Dr. Robert Irwin must have shown to all but the most fanatical defenders of police violence that systematic beatings are taking place.

Signs of RUC injuries to suspects began in early 1977—as soon as the RUC took over control of "security" from the British army.

Since that time the violence has continued unabated—and included the "suicide" of trade union militant Brian McGuire in Castlereagh under most suspicious circumstances.

The whole affair serves to lift a corner of the curtain of silence that normally shrouds the brutal methods through which the Labour government is fighting to maintain British rule in Ireland.

Loyalist gunmen

Armed thugs of the British army patrol every street and public place; they are backed up by diehard Loyalist gunmen organised in the Ulster Defence Regiment; and "law and order" is preserved by the sectarian Royal Ulster Constabulary.

A gauge of this "law and order" is the half-dozen RUC men facing trial for terrorist offences while over 30 members of the UDR have been proved guilty of major crimes including murder—mainly against Catholics. The UDR's most prominent recent member is Eddie McIlwaine, one of the bestial Shankill Butchers jailed for the murders of 19 Catholics.

PHOTO: Eamonn O'Dwyer IFL/Report



March in support of H Block prisoners in Derry last October

This weight of armed repression of the Catholic minority is backed up by a network of no-jury Diplock courts—empowered to convict on the unsubstantiated evidence of a single police officer, but relying almost exclusively on forced "confessions" from supposed terrorists extracted by the RUC in Castlereagh.

Many suspects against whom there is no evidence rot for up to two years in jail "on remand"—an unofficial substitute for internment.

The intimidation of would-be anti-imperialists is rounded off by the horrors of the Long Kesh concentration camp, where republican prisoners demanding their legitimate status as Prisoners of War have been forced to endure three years naked in freezing cells in conditions of indescribable filth and suffering.

In Britain supporters of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland are intimidated through the operation of the reactionary "Prevention of Terrorism Act" under which over 3,200 people have been held by police for up to seven days; few of these have been subsequently charged with any terrorist offence, and fewer still convicted.

War going on

Only the wilfully blind could deny that there is a war going on in Ireland—a war that is again

growing in scope and intensity, as shown by the recent series of massive republican demonstrations in the six counties in support of the Long Kesh PoWs and demanding the removal of Labour's 'Minister for Torture', Roy Mason.

It is a war against the continued oppression of the Catholic minority in the sectarian six-country statelet: a war which of course threatens to flow over into the struggle for the ending of all forms of imperialist and capitalist exploitation in Ireland as a whole and the establishment of a secular workers' republic.

This is why the Labour leaders, hand-in-glove with British capitalism, have

remained implacably opposed to the Irish liberation struggle—and used the most barbaric methods to repress it.

Butcher Mason's hand is on the trigger: but the bullets are loaded by Callaghan, by Owen and cabinet cronies Benn and Foot. The blood of Castlereagh and the filth of Long Kesh are on their hands.

British workers must act now to put a stop to this treachery. A government that will administer such repression in Ireland is an abomination that can offer nothing to the British working class.

A tiny handful of Labour 'lefts', in particular Tom Litterick, have opposed the government's role in Ireland. Union branches and Labour

Parties must at once put down resolutions demanding that these MPs lead a fight to drive out Mason and the Downing St. butchers from the Labour leadership, for the immediate granting of political status to Irish prisoners of war, and the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.

NUM 'left' Arthur Scargill must be forced to fight for the ousting of Mason as the union's sponsored MP for his headquarters town of Barnsley.

And the fight must be stepped up for the building of a revolutionary, internationalist leadership in the British working class, prepared to mobilise active solidarity for the Irish liberation struggle.



PHOTO: Derek Speirs, IFL

Butcher—Mason



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

Accomplice—Benn



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Silent—Scargill

Step up Public Sector fight!

Despite the desperate efforts of public sector union leaders to force through acceptance of the miserable 9% pay offer, there is still a massive determination amongst health and local authority manual workers throughout the country to fight on for the full public sector pay claim of a £60/35 hour week.

After the decisive rejection of the offer by Ambulance drivers and NUPE health workers, a new wave of action is under way in the public sector.

Ambulance drivers in South Wales have begun an indefinite strike after being locked out by management. Manchester drivers held a 24-hour total stoppage last week, and ambulance stewards in London are holding meetings throughout this week to discuss further action.

Strikes have begun in various hospitals throughout the midlands and the north.

And there are sections of local authority workers in London and the south who have remained on strike since the end of January, despite the fact that all except NUPE health workers have been instructed to accept the 9%.

On top of this a mass NUPE stewards' meeting called by the London Divisional Council on Thursday night passed a resolution calling for all-out indefinite strike for the full claim by London health workers beginning this Wednesday (see report on page 11).

The fact that there is still the basis for a national offensive on wages in the public sector is obviously a huge blow to Alan Fisher and the other bureaucrats of NUPE, COHSE, TGWU and GMWU.

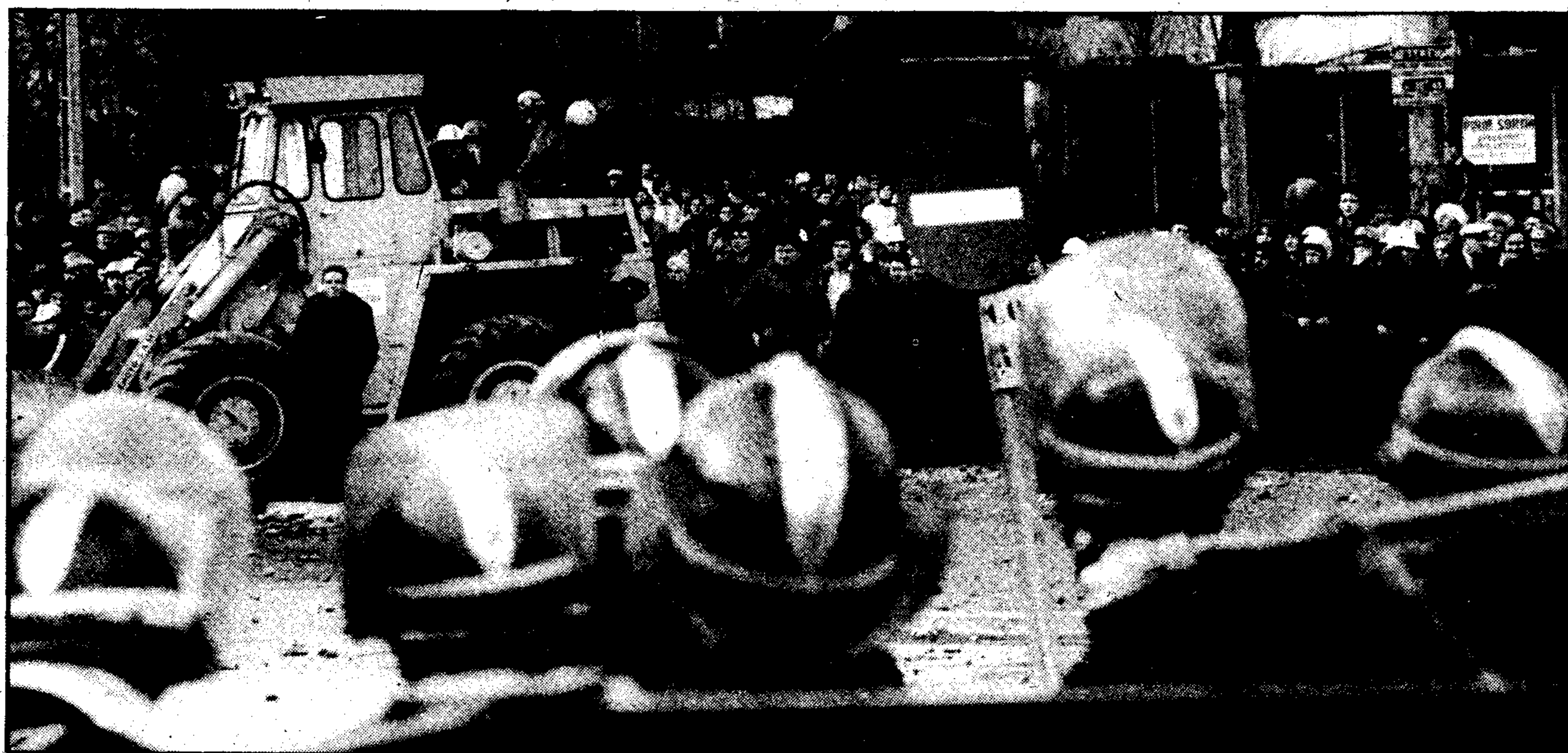
But NUPE members must grasp the opportunity now to consolidate and extend their action in every area into all-out strikes.

There should be no exemptions to such strikes in any section: rather, elected strike committees should supervise the administration of what they regard as necessary emergency services.

In fighting along these lines for the full £60/35 hour week claim a principled leadership must be built in the public sector, capable of fighting tooth and nail to end wage control and public spending cuts.



INTERNATIONAL



Confrontation in Denain on 8 March

French struggles sharpen

Without economic power, it is futile to talk of national independence . . . The path which France is being driven along is the downward path of decay.

This was no Gaullist lamenting the decline of once-great imperial France, but George Marchais—leader of the French Communist Party.

His opening contribution to the emergency debate on unemployment in the French parliament was all of a piece with this choice extract.

'National independence' was his theme as he attacked the 'anti-social and anti-national' government of Raymond Barre, and foreign capitalists were the enemies he named.

But Marchais saved his most squalid arguments for a tirade against Barre's support for the European Monetary System:

'The Europe that you want to build is a German Europe' which would lead to 'military integration' and in the end, to **'Germany getting its hands on nuclear arms.'**

Nationalism

While their leaders in parliament have been spewing out this reactionary nationalism, the Stalinists in the field have been hard pressed to hold back the tide of militancy rising among French workers.

A dramatic rise in unemployment over the last year, and the recent flood of redundancy notices, have drawn workers out onto the streets in the repeated protest demonstrations of the last few weeks.

The latest actions have developed in the northern steel-producing areas, and these have brought some of the sharpest betrayals yet from the union bureaucracy.

While the Stalinist-led CGT has sought to bring workers into a defence of their 'own' bourgeoisie against its fellow



CP leader Marchais

capitalist rivals, the Socialist-dominated CFDT has advanced more brazenly bankrupt policies.

Among the 22,000 redundancies planned in the steel industry is the closure of Usinor's plant at Denain.

Hard-core

Jacques Chereque, secretary-general of the CFDT's metal-working section, has taken up the fight to defend only a fraction of the jobs at the plant.

'We must talk to steelworkers in the language of truth and not try to make them believe that it is still possible to employ 10,000 workers at Usinor-Denain. But we are convinced that a hard-core employing about 4,500 people can be considered.'

After the riots of last week, calm is now back in Denain.

Last week a demonstration went through Denain peacefully and was addressed by Stalinist union leader Seguy.

The bureaucrats seem to have been able to head off the militancy of the French workers by arranging some phoney talks with the bosses from the steel industry and the Barre government.

Although the government and bosses have made their position very clear on the talks: "that there is no alternative to their present policies" the union bureaucrats make it out as a victory.

Not impressed

But workers are not impressed. "We have won a battle but not the war" they were saying after the bosses had backed down from their intransigent positions.

Workers are ready to carry on the fight, and they proved this last week by occupying the building where nine EEC heads of state were having their meeting to discuss the EMS and economic policies.

They left peacefully after two hours.

Meanwhile the CGT and CFTC union federations are planning their march on Paris from all over France.

It should take place on 23 March and, according to the CGT, it is going to be the biggest demonstration ever seen.

The CGT is calling for a 24 hour General Strike of all its members.

This is backed by the CFTC and the other major unions with the exception of the CFDT which says that the strike should be restricted to steelworkers.

The CFDT is saying that more actions should be taken in the meantime but is not organising any.

Although the steelworkers are now making the headlines

other sections of the working class are also in struggle, namely those in the Post Office, the banks, insurance, the health service, car industry, textiles, dockyards, broadcasting and teaching.

Even the police force are organising in unions.

In opposition to the evasions and betrayals of the bureaucracy, a clear programme must be raised to reject all redundancies in the steel industry.

The books of all the employing firms must be opened, along with the accounts of their subsidiaries and creditors to reveal the true financial condition of

these ailing capitalist ventures.

The demand for full nationalisation of the steel industry under workers management must be opposed to every plea of bankruptcy from private capital.

Worksharing on full pay must be introduced, alongside a massive programme of useful public works to end the already heavy unemployment that weighs down on the French working class.

These policies must be fought for through occupations of the steel plants, the formation of strike and factory committees and the building of councils of action in the areas

A desperate "peace"

Nowhere in the world is the desperate crisis faced by the leaders of world imperialism shown more clearly than in the frenzied efforts to patch up a treaty between the Zionist robbers of Israel and the shaky regime of President Sadat.

It is clear that the Zionists have been compelled to make some concessions to the Egyptians as the strongest military power in the area.

They will give back some of the Sinai peninsula, some oilfields, and will recognise the possibility of a truncated Palestinian state.

Even this has only been done on the basis of enormous American pressure and huge cash subsidies for both Israel and Egypt.

The Americans need to do this because they have to rebuild their shattered 'sphere of influence' in an area where their main bulwark—the Shah and his regime—has disappeared.

Pressure

The dispatch of Carter's adviser Brezinski at the head of a high-powered delegation to the reactionary Arab regimes in Saudi Arabia and Jordan will no doubt be accompanied by some of the same pressure and blackmail that has driven Begin and Sadat to their present position.

The question facing the Saudis is this. Can they seem to take their distance from Arab nationalism and the Palestinian cause by going along with their American backers;

If they do this will the

regime soon face the same fate as the Shah?

A similar dilemma has faced King Hussain of Jordan, though he has seldom in the past hesitated to continue his own secret negotiations with the Israelis.

His anxiety at the situation is directly reflected in the warmth of his opportunist embraces this weekend for his old opponent PLO leader Yassir Arafat.

If the imperialists and their allies have these problems, the question is who can fight the Zionists now?

Little support

The bourgeois nationalist regimes of Iraq and Syria show no signs of enthusiasm for a renewed offensive.

Indeed Arafat's continuing jet-set diplomacy with Arab bourgeois heads of state is producing little if

Racist regime faces scandal

In a move aimed at discrediting their former functionary as a fraud and petty thief, the South African government has out a warrant for the arrest of Eschel Rhoodie, the former Secretary of Information and a central scapegoat in the scandal over the 'misuse' of government funds.

It is clear that this is a propaganda exercise whose purpose is to both isolate and discredit Rhoodie in the eyes of voters at home and of the overseas public.

What is least wanted, of course, is for Rhoodie to be given a platform and pushed to the point of making his threatened disclosures.

There can be no doubt that these would have international implications, stripping the moral masks from a number of individuals and organisations—they would reveal a highly embarrassing sordid network of international bribery, corruption and secret dealings involving prominent political and trade union figures in the capitalist countries.

However, the piqued Rhoodie was apparently recently given reason for keeping quiet by another scapegoat, the former chief torturer in South Africa, General van den Bergh, head of BOSS.

(The General has since had his passport removed, presumably to limit further collusion

amongst the small herd of scapegoats).

All ruling sections are jockeying and manoeuvring in their efforts to persuade the voting public of the deep patriotism underlying their various activities in this regard.

And bourgeois liberals try to foster the illusion amongst the black working class of a capitalist future cleansed of misappropriation, corruption and scandal.

In so doing they seek to control the development of the real crisis facing the South African white racist ruling class—that posed by the struggle of black workers.

CENTO folds up

Last week the Financial Times announced that the only remaining member of the CENTO alliance is Britain.

So the great design of imperialism to stabilise the troubled middle-east has collapsed into an "alliance" between reactionary Labour Foreign Secretary David Owen and . . . himself!

The Central Treaty Organisation was formed in the mid 1950s as part of the imperialists' anti-communist drive to encircle the Soviet Union with a ring of heavily armed hostile states.

Originally called the Baghdad Pact, CENTO changed its name with the withdrawal of Iraq four years later.

Thereafter it consisted of Turkey, Iran, Pakistan and Britain.

One of the first acts of the new government in Iran was to withdraw from CENTO.

Last week Turkey, also a member of NATO, and Pakistan, knowing a sinking ship when they see one, also withdrew, leaving Britain the sole surviving member.

This is a definite blow to the strategy of the imperialists.

While Owen and his reactionary imperialist friends try to patch up new methods of stabilisation and anti-Communism—a campaign should be waged in the labour movement for the destruction of the other imperialist military pacts—in particular NATO.



Can you see his lips move? Carter's puppet Sadat sneaking

INTERNATIONAL



Polish Stalinists endanger nationalised property

New official figures published by the ruling Polish Stalinist bureaucracy have revealed that the problems of the Polish economy are even more dramatic than previous information had shown.

The Polish economy has suffered for three decades under the hand of bureaucratic rule which has both prevented the economy from producing in response to the needs of the working class and excluded the working class from managing the social property.

The result has been chronic failure to supply social needs and growing working class resistance to bureaucratic oppression while the state budget and international balance of payments move further into deficit.

Price increases

On two occasions in the last three years the bureaucracy has tried to rectify these economic difficulties by cutting workers' living standards through sharp price increases in basic



Polish leader Gierek goods and other consumer goods.

These actions have provoked instant and immense workers' resistance to the point of insurrection.

The bureaucracy has been forced to retreat in order to survive and has increasingly turned to imperialism for help in resolving the economic contradictions which result from the existence of bureaucratic rule itself.

In particular, it has encouraged the entry of imperialist capital in joint ventures and has borrowed money on an enormous scale to finance the unbridgeable deficit in the balance of payments.

But this only leads to further contradictions as the obligation to pay the interest and repay the loans eat into Poland's stagnant earnings of foreign exchange.

Extent of problem

It is the staggering extent of this problem which is exposed in this week's figures.

According to a report in the *Financial Times* of figures supplied by the Polish State Bank, Handlowy Warszawie, Poland's debt repayments this year will amount to well over 50% of total earnings of free foreign currency.

This is a situation worse than that of even the most indebted of the semi-colonial countries with the possible exception of Peru.

In order to meet these obligations the Polish bureaucracy is negotiating a



Riots by Polish workers in defiance of price increases in 1970

new loan on the Euro-dollar market.

One condition of this loan is that previously secret Polish economic statistics will be revealed to the imperialist banks (though not, of course, to the Polish working class).

Reports in "Western financial centres" that "western banks were now being given the power to monitor and intervene in the Polish economy in exchange for the \$500 million financing" may well, as the *Financial Times* says, be untrue.

But such reports are not accidental because this monitoring and control is exactly what the imperialists want as part of their objective of destroying socialised property forms in Poland and the other workers' states.

Matter of time

If such conditions are not being imposed yet it can only be a matter of time before they are.

The startling new information, therefore, is a clear pointer to one of the ways

in which the bureaucracy, by suppressing all elements of workers' democracy and workers' management of the economy is assisting tendencies towards the restoration of capitalism within the deformed and degenerated workers' states,

In this respect Poland, though up to now the extreme case, is not qualitatively different from the USSR and the deformed workers states.

Peru declares new state of emergency

Only a few days after the Peruvian military dictatorship ended the last state of emergency, it has imposed another one.

This time it is in an attempt to cope with a new outbreak of mineworkers' resistance to the anti-working class policies of the regime which have cut real wages in half over the last three years.

Intimidated

During the attempted general strike last December most of the copper miners were physically intimidated from striking by the full-scale military occupation of the mines and miners' residential areas.

Now it is the mineworkers who have been the first to take advantage of the temporary withdrawal of the military to launch an all-out strike.

So far the regime has used the new state of emergency to send the military back (but without so far forcing the workers back to

work) and to arrest the main mineworkers' leaders.

Among these is Victor Cuadros, one of the principal leaders of both the copper miners' union and of the Maoist-dominated left-wing electoral alliance the Peoples Democratic Union (UDP).

Cuadros is in fact one of the four UDP deputies in the Constituent Assembly.

His imprisonment is yet another proof if any were needed of the hypocrisy of the regime of General Morales Bermudez when it talks of its democratic intentions.

The strike itself, however, shows that despite its contempt for democracy the military dictatorship has virtually lost the ability to hold the Peruvian mass struggle in check.

As the class struggle continues to sharpen in Peru the crucial question is the construction of a Trotskyist leadership capable of offering an independent programme to the mass movement.

IRISH WORKERS STAGE TAX AND PAY REVOLT

As we go to press all the signs are that a virtual General Strike will take place this coming Tuesday in Dublin.

This is despite the fact that the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has opposed the strike and suggested instead "demonstrations and other protest actions".

Among labour movement bodies which resisted ICTU pressure were the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, the Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union, the National Busmen's Union, the Dublin Council of Trade Unions and Carlow Council of Trade Unions.

Level of tax

The cause of the strike is the PAYE system of taxation. Workers hit by inflation are increasingly annoyed about the level of tax they are expected to pay.

Denied any principled lead from union bureaucrats, workers' anger has focussed on the diversionary target of tax concessions being made to small

farmers.

victims of exploitation by imperialist-owned banks and monopolies and by the Irish capitalist class.

Interest charges

While the exploitation of the workers takes the open form of wage labour, the exploitation of the small farmers takes place more discreetly through high interest charges on bank loans, huge profit margins on farm supplies and machinery, and the hefty profits made by capitalist distributors and food manufacturers, who pay out rock bottom prices for farm produce.

In the struggle against capitalist exploitation in Ireland the small farmers need to be won as allies, not enemies of the working class through a programme of demands related to their special problems.

This means the fight for the opening of the books of the banks, suppliers, transport firms and food processors and distributors to committees of workers and small farmers—and the fight on the basis of the figures revealed for action to force their nationalisation, without compensation under workers' management.

It means including among workers' demands for jobs, improved living standards and

social services, the call for cheap credit to small farmers and the elimination of the network of capitalist exploitation that feeds off them.

The scale of the mass movement shows the willingness of Irish workers to fight the bourgeois Lynch regime—but also the crisis of leadership that they face in their struggle.

Last Sunday some 50,000 demonstrated in Dublin and union after union has thrown its weight behind next Tuesday's strike.

Lynch policies

Feeling on tax within the Irish working class is a reflection of the growing resistance to the economic policies of the Lynch government. The ICTU was last week meeting the government to discuss the Congress's draft plan for a new "national understanding" which would govern "job creation, job protection, industrial development, pay, social welfare, taxation and various other matters."

(*Irish Press*, March 15) This plan is the ICTU leadership's proposal to replace the newly-expired National Wage Agreement.

Having tried to stop the PAYE strike, the ICTU leaders made it clear that their discus-

sions with the government would not be about PAYE as such because they did not wish ministers to feel they were meeting the unions under duress.

Sharp conflict

The Irish Post Office strike is just one of the number of important disputes which are either taking place at the moment or are pending.

In all these disputes the rank and file have found themselves in sharp conflict with the leadership of the ICTU and its social contract plans, as well as their own union leaderships.

In the Post Office strike, the union leaders have tried to direct the membership into the dead-end of "selective" strikes. After a one-week strike, POWU leaders took most of their members back to work, leaving Dublin postmen out for a further 48 hours.

However 148 Tralee postmen refused to go back to work, and were joined by the Dublin postmen after the 48 hour action finished.

The pressure from such rank and file action resulted in a further national action which was supposed to last a week but which has continued indefinitely.

An open letter to the expelled members of the WRP

Dear Comrades,

The continuing political crisis of the WRP which exploded recently into a fresh series of expulsions following a week long special conference poses serious questions for every WRP member.

It is a continuation of the developments which led to the expulsion of 200 members at the end of 1974—including almost the whole of the WRP main industrial base in Cowley.

At that time the main ploy of Gerry Healy was to prevent the political questions being raised by Alan Thornett and others from being discussed in the party as a whole.

This policy led to our expulsions one week prior to the annual conference in December 1974.

In the Western Region (then the largest Region outside London), Gerry Healy called it

"re-registration"—the whole membership in three key areas (Oxford, Reading and Swindon) was expelled and could only regain their membership after signing a document agreeing with Alan Thornett's expulsion.

The situation facing those newly expelled or in opposition within the WRP demands that the discussion suppressed in 1974 now proceed.

Same issues

Although in the last four years the political degeneration of the WRP has deepened the issues are essentially the same.

In Britain this means the turn away from interventions in the working class and detailed qualitative work in the unions (reflected in the development of the *Newsline*).

We argued in 1974 that this arose from a turn away from the Transitional Programme and the adoption of a maximum programme which could make and required no real connection with the everyday struggles of the working class.

We remain convinced that this is the case.

Comment from outside

This deviation has now developed to the point where *Newsline* simply comments from the outside on many of the struggles it covers and is rarely able to offer perspective to struggles or feature struggles in which the WRP are themselves a significant force in terms of leadership.

Now the other, opportunist side of the party's political degeneration shows up most clearly in the positions developed on international questions—notably the national liberation struggles in the



TGWU members lobby Regional officials in support of Cowley 9

Middle East. Here every 'left' statement of every bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalist from the PLO to Libya to Iraq is praised uncritically.

Alex Mitchell writes to the *Guardian* defending the blood-stained Iraqi Ba'athist regime's record of murdering thousands of Stalinists of the Iraqi CP and others in the workers' movement. [According to the WRP's *Workers Press* of June 12 1974

the Ba'athists massacred "at least 8,000 Communists" following the installation of present Premier Hassan al Bakr in 1963].

Now the *Newsline* goes so far as to defend Khomeini against demonstrations of oppressed Iranian women, branding their basic democratic demands for rights for women as "anti-revolutionary".

Anti-imperialist

We urge WRP members to consider these points and to contrast them to the principled, anti-imperialist positions of the Workers Socialist League.

We urge you to study the record of the WSL in the workers' movement, our struggle for programme and for leadership and against the Social Democrat and Stalinist bureaucrats.

Look at our record in the trade unions today.

We have stood at the forefront of struggles for strikes and occupations against the cuts, for unionisation, and against wage control—particularly in the public sector pay fight.

In British Leyland we have led the struggle against 'worker participation' (the scheme supported by WRP Central Committee member Tom White) and the company's plans for

speed-up and corporate bargaining.

Cowley 9

And in successfully defending the 'Cowley 9' against a vicious witch-hunt by the TGWU bureaucracy—in which Alan Thornett was threatened with expulsion from the union—we again had to fight the WRP who publicly and falsely condemned us as "adventurists", manoeuvred to prevent WRP members sponsoring the Defence Campaign, and did everything possible to sabotage the struggle.

Remember that it was us who were ridiculously accused by Healy of being "soft on social democracy" when we were expelled in 1974!

History of IC

Since forming the WSL, after being expelled, we have insisted on the importance of our history in the International Committee and that our movement's strong orientation towards the organised working class flows from this history.

We point out that the IC was right in 1953 and 1963 to stress the centrality of the struggle for leadership in the mass movement through the struggle for a revolutionary party.

It was right to direct to serious work in the unions; right to direct towards working class youth; right to point continuously throughout the 'boom' period to the crisis of capitalism and refute revisionist notions of "neo-capitalism", "permanent arms economy" etc.

Although we do not agree with Healy's analysis of the crisis, it was a great strength to stress that capitalism had not changed and remained a system of acute crisis.

Serious workers

The WRP was right to reject Pabloite liquidationism and the rank and fileism of the International Socialists/SWP.

These positions attracted serious workers and developed a movement that was predominantly working class and rooted in the workers' movement—far in advance of anything the IMG or SWP could produce today.

We have insisted on the strength of this history whilst utterly rejecting the nature of

the internal regime and the mistaken and downright reactionary political positions developed on most issues today.

We have shown in detail how, piece by piece, the demands and method of the Transitional Programme were abandoned by the Healy leadership from the late 1960s onwards.

It is essential now that these questions are discussed and deepened between those who have a common history.

Such a discussion is a political obligation, irrespective of the measure of agreement which may or may not be reached.

Poison discussion

It would be a great political loss if ploys being used by the Healy leadership were successful in blocking or poisoning such discussions.

We are convinced that all of Gerry Healy's efforts will be directed towards this end.

Last week we received a request from a WRP member in London for a discussion on these expulsions.

The affair proved to be a set-up job. When two of our members arrived for the discussion they were met by Alex Mitchell and a photographer.

This set-up will, we are sure, be used to create an atmosphere of conspiracy designed to inhibit any expelled member from approaching or talking to us.

We insist: this is not a conspiracy—it is an essential, and legitimate discussion which should have taken place within the WRP in 1974.

We and you have a clear responsibility to ensure the discussion does now take place.

We did not ask to be placed outside the IC in 1974 anymore than those expelled today.

The present acute organisational crisis of the movement also flows from Healy's opportunist and liquidationist politics.

You cannot build a revolutionary party on the basis of abstentionism and the abandonment of principle.

Existence threatened

In other words Healy's politics now threaten the very existence of the WRP itself: key cadres have been expelled to suppress opposition; countless other members have been demoralised by the lack of any principled political direction for the movement or hope of changing it.

If all is not to be lost, then a thorough discussion on the Trotskyist programme and method and an examination of the historical process of degeneration of the WRP is an essential task.

We invite you to join with us in undertaking it.

WSL Executive Committee
18 March 1979



Newsline editor Mitchell

PRESS GANG



When Dr. Robert Irwin appeared on the *World This Weekend* and accused the RUC of torturing suspects, the British press greeted the programme with open hostility.

Five days later the Bennett Committee report conceded that such torture did and does take place—albeit in the half-hearted language of official indifference.

The report was without doubt the major news item of the day—yet in several British papers it would have been read only by the most diligent of readers.

Mason claimed that he had released the report early to bring 'balance'.

In fact he threw it in the middle of a row over a smear campaign against Dr. Irwin—and in the case of many papers succeeded in seeing it submerged in the froth.

Readers have now been treated in less than 10 days to the whole gamut of press tactics.

Reporters have been admitting that they were taken aside by various police officials

and press officers and fed rumours about Irwin's motives.

It was the *Telegraph* that forced this into the open by refuting the rumours (at the same time as revealing some facts about the rape of Mrs. Irwin).

This was a move to protect the RUC as a whole by trying to isolate Irwin's obviously true allegations and confine the torture allegations (as Irwin himself does) to a 'minority' of the RUC.

But even though the leaks failed to discredit Irwin they have succeeded in threatening all future critics of the Mason torture camps with a deep exposure of their private lives.

On the day following the release of the Bennett report the *Guardian* agreed that its publication:

"was almost lost in protest over a 'smear campaign' against a key witness (Dr. Irwin)".

The *Express* for example relegated the whole issue to page 4—a low priority news page—under the headline No Smear.

The Bennett report was not mentioned until paragraph eight

and the paper stressed that the report did not say police were responsible for injuries.

The *Daily Mail* reported Bennett as its main news story but again spent many paragraphs quoting Mason as saying that the police were not necessarily to blame and that "police officers had to defend themselves or lawfully restrain prisoners".

But the most nauseating treatment award must go the *Daily Mirror*—the paper closest to the reactionary Labour leadership.

Its front page story 'Rape Smear' concentrated exclusively on the rumour about Dr. Irwin and only so much as mentioned the Bennett report by name six paragraphs from the end of the page.

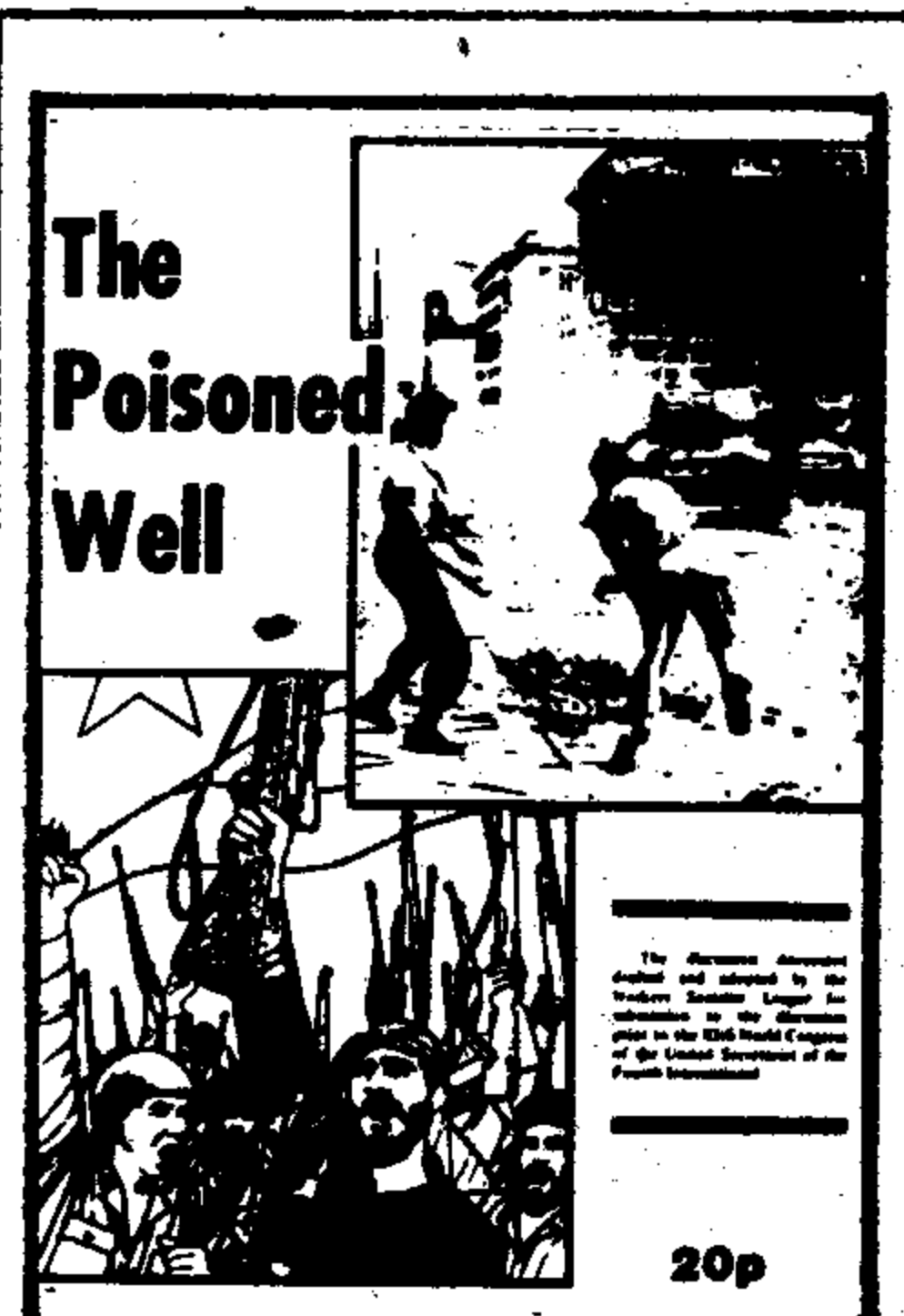
A 'report' of the Bennett finding on page 2 was headlined 'New code for Ulster police' as if the findings were of some trivial administrative nature.

Even in this second string story the allegations of injury are brief and well down the story.

There is no 'progressive' element to the British press on Ireland. They crave the cosy protection of censorship.



Iraqi strongman Hussein



NOW OUT! The WSL discussion document adopted for submission to the USFI XIth World Congress. Price 20p plus 10p p&p from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

WRP LEADERS SUPPORT

KHOMMEINI

By Tony Richardson

"b) An unconditional struggle must be carried out against the reactionary and medieval influence of the clergy, the Christian missions and similar elements.

c) A struggle is necessary against Panislamism, the Panasiatic movement, and similar currents which try to tie the liberation struggle against European and American imperialism to the strengthening of the power of the Turkish and Japanese imperialism, the nobility, the big landlords, the clergy, etc.

e) A determined fight is necessary against the attempt to put a communist cloak around revolutionary liberation movements that are not really communist in the backward countries. The Communist International has the duty to support the revolutionary movement in the colonies only for the purpose of gathering the components of the future proletarian parties—communist in fact and not just in name—in all the backward countries and training them to be conscious of their special tasks, the special tasks, that is to say, of fighting against bourgeois democratic tendencies within their own nation." (Second Congress of the Comintern. *Theses on the National and Colonial Question*).

With the method outlined above, the Communist International led by Lenin and Trotsky fought to establish the political independence of the working class even while engaging in struggles alongside movements such as the anti-Shah mass movement in Iran.

But a very different method can be seen at work today in the daily press of the Workers Revolutionary Party's daily paper *Newsline*.

Far from seeking an independent road forward and warning of the dangers of Khomeini's Islamic reaction, *Newsline* actually mounts attacks on those forces most threatened by the new Iranian regime and explicitly defends Khomeini.

What, then, is the situation now in Iran?

Control movement

Since the overthrow of the Shah and Bakhtiar the Khomeini-Bazargan regime has been engaged in desperate efforts to control a movement which has developed far beyond their wishes.

Such attempts to hold back mass struggles always occur in



Healy

revolutions, once the masses recognise their own power and begin to develop independent organisations.

Reformist elements within the workers' movement and conscious defenders of the old bourgeois order then step in and attempt to weaken and dismantle these independent class organisations, and restore "stable" capitalist forms of rule.

Khomeini of course received mass support—but principally because of his opposition to the Shah.

Recognising that it is impossible to run an industrial country from a mosque, Khomeini installed a capitalist politician as Prime Minister.

He wants Bazargan as the front man for his reactionary religious views. But to establish his authority with Bazargan, Khomeini at first deliberately ignored pleas not to carry out executions through his "revolutionary council".

Saved from justice

Of course in reality most of those executed by Khomeini's "revolutionary court" had previously been saved from the rough justice of the revolutionary masses—along with many other generals and SAVAK agents.

The execution of a token number was a gesture to establish Khomeini's credentials as a "reactionary" even while the reactionary face of the Islamic crackdown was beginning to show itself.

Similar events occurred in the February 1917 revolution in Russia in which the bourgeois democratic forces arrested many reactionaries.

"To the Ministry of the Interior they delegated the deputy Karaulov, insignificant

but rather less cowardly than the others and he issued on March 1 an order for the arrest of all police officials, public, secret and political. This ferocious revolutionary gesture was purely platonic in character, for the police were already being arrested and the jails were their only refuge from massacre."

(Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. 1, page 181.)

These same bourgeois democrats by July 1917 were mobilised to arrest revolutionaries, driving Lenin and leading Bolsheviks into hiding.

Used against Marxists

Who can doubt that in Iran Khomeini's Islamic "revolutionary courts" will be used against Marxists? Already they are being used to enforce his religious ideas, as the many reports of the barbaric murder of gays and alleged 'rapists' and the flogging of 'adulterers' show.

Khomeini's religious bigotry is a weapon of oppression, incompatible with Communism.

Bazargan's only qualms about Khomeini's reactionary "courts" is that they might encourage the workers and peasants to establish their own genuine revolutionary courts.

Hence his emphasis on establishing 'normal' bourgeois courts—now endorsed by Khomeini himself.

Revolutionary courts

As Communists we do not follow the capitalist press or middle class radicals such as Ralph Schoenman in arguing for "fair trials" according to the practice under the bourgeois state.

We argue for genuine revolutionary courts, answerable not to the mullahs but to the oppressed masses. And we call for the establishment of soviet-type bodies from the workers' councils and committees that already exist.

Now is the crucial time for such demands.

The power of the capitalists in the form of the police force and the standing army is almost non-existent. Only a handful of soldiers have obeyed Khomeini's call to return to the barracks—and they are unwilling to fight the masses.

In other words all the forces are assembled for one of the greatest steps forward for the human race.

The masses are persisting with their demands; the oppressed minorities—the Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Turkomenis and Azerbaijanis—are demanding self-determination and already effectively control their own territory; workers' committees are formed—many of them armed; and many of the millions of women who participated in the revolution are demanding democratic rights.

The one missing factor is the most crucial: the revolutionary party in Iran.

Bolstering Khomeini

But seen through the eyes of the WRP the situation is not like this at all.

Far from taking the Comintern's line of exploiting the contradiction between the masses and their Islamic and bourgeois leaders in order to "gather the components of the future proletarian party", the WRP leaders actually bolster up Khomeini and defend his reactionary path.

Rather than point out the true nature of Khomeini's "Islamic Revolutionary Courts"



Arafat with Khomeini

the WRP simply defends them against attack from the capitalist press and those like the Tribune Group who defend Bazargan.

Rather than support the legitimate struggle for self-determination by the Kurdish people (who, unlike most Iranians, are not Shi'ite Moslems) the WRP amazingly claim, despite clear evidence to the contrary, that:

"They are fully behind Iran's national leader Ayatollah Khomeini."

(*Newsline*, 14.3.79)

But while these positions pander unashamedly to the chauvinism and clerical reaction of the Khomeini-Bazargan regime, they pale in comparison to the vicious WRP attacks on the struggle by Iranian women against intensified oppression:

"The thoroughly reactionary anti-revolutionary activities of the so-called women's liberation groups in Tehran must be condemned as provocations."

Pro-American

Of course it is necessary to attack the reactionary pro-American position argued by feminist Kate Millet. But the WRP simply launch a wholesale attack on Iranian women fighting for their rights.

The "anti-revolutionary" demonstrations were triggered by a battery of attacks from Khomeini including public floggings of "adulterers", a ban on the sale of contraceptives, and the decree that women civil servants should wear the traditional veil, the Chador, at work.

The demonstration forced a climbdown on this last point. But presumably the WRP feels that the government was wrong to concede to these "anti-revolutionaries"?

Will we now see Sheila Torrance, Vanessa Redgrave and other prominent women members of the WRP sporting the Chador?

Of course not. The very idea is repulsive and absurd. So why do the WRP leaders defend the religious bigots who are attempting to impose this humiliating and degrading mode of dress on Iranian women?

Does the WRP favour Iranian women achieving equal rights with men or not? And, if not, how do they square their reactionary position with the explicit stand in defence of women's rights embodied in the Trotskyist Transitional Programme and the entire history of the Communist movement?

Uncritically supported

The reality is that to defend the struggles of militant Iranian women would bring the WRP into conflict with the line of the Khomeini-Bazargan regime.

That regime has been uncritically supported by the WRP's other chosen "revolutionary" allies in the Middle East, notably PLO leader Yassir Arafat and Libyan dictator Colonel Gaddafi—friend and supporter of Ugandan despot Idi Amin.

Sooner than break ranks with these forces, the WRP prefers to set its face against the interests of half the population in Iran—the millions of oppressed women—in their struggle for emancipation.

Newsline remains silent on the brutal murder of gays—and seems almost to defend the Islamic fanatics who attacked the women's demonstrations.

IC statement

What now of the hypocritical "Statement by the International Committee" published in *Newsline* only one month ago, which attacked Khomeini's political position as a combination of:

"progress and reaction, Sharia law and the Constituent Assembly [?], oppression of women and personal liberty."

The same statement

correctly slammed the Stalinist Tudeh Party pointing out:

"They completely capitulate to the National Front and Khomeini, endorsing the latter's reactionary Islamic Republic."

The same criticism must now apply equally to *Newsline* and the WRP leadership!

Self-determination

Its final demands included a formally correct call for:

"Self determination for the Kurds, Arabs, Baluchis, Azerbaijanis and Turkomenis. Build a secular socialist republic!"

Yet this has been cast aside in practice in subsequent pages of the *Newsline*, proving once again the complete inability of the Healy-Banda leadership to maintain a consistent or principled line on any major struggle in the working class.

Khomeini has outlived his progressive role in opposing the Shah. The mass movement must be directed towards the socialist revolution against Khomeini-Bazargan.

The WRP has shown in recent weeks that it will stand not at the head of such a struggle but in opposition to it.



New dictator Bazargan

WRP leaders junk the old Trotskyism

By John Lister

A WSL pamphlet 45p.

The only serious examination yet produced of the opportunist political line of Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party in relation to the petty bourgeois nationalist regimes of the Middle East. 45p plus 15p p&p from: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

ELECTIONS AND THE SPANISH LEFT

This third and final article on the implications of the Spanish March 1 looks at the policies which describe themselves as Trotskyist and Liga Comunista.

The greatest surprise of the Spanish general election on March 1 was the performance of the two candidacies in Euskadi (the Basque provinces) supported by the two branches of ETA, the Basque nationalist organisation.

The more moderate ETA (political-military) has for some time declared a truce in the war with the central government and no longer carries out terrorist actions.

Its political wing EIA was the main ingredient in one of the two radical nationalist candidacies in Euskadi—Euskadiko Eskerra (the left of Euskadi).

Cross class

'Left' in this case was never interpreted in class terms but as a radical national (i.e. cross-class) opposition to the proposals by the central government (and the main workers' parties) for a virtually meaningless formal "autonomy" for the Basque country.

In this respect Euskadiko Eskerra differs little, except in tone, from the right wing Basque Nationalist Party (PNV). And in fact in Navarra (the fourth "disputed" Basque province) PNV and Euskadiko Eskerra presented a joint list.

But the difference remained in the mind of the electorate. Euskadiko Eskerra was identified with ETA.

That was much more true of the other and much more successful 'left' nationalist candidacy—Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity).

Endorsed

These candidates were publicly endorsed by ETA (military) which has been responsible for the outstandingly effective campaign of terrorism against the Francoist armed forces.

The objective of this candidacy was two-fold: to under-

mine the traditional PNV within the forces of Basque nationalism; and to give the lie to the massive public campaign conducted by the political forces of Francoism, the bourgeoisie, the reformists and Stalinists and the PNV, designed to isolate ETA terrorism as the work of a tiny handful of armed militants devoid of popular support.

The (illegal) political parties behind Herri Batasuna included the Popular Socialist Revolutionary Party (HASI), the Party of Revolutionary Patriotic Workers (LAIA) and the Basque Socialist Party (ESB), along with some "independents".

These included the elderly



Successful Herri Batasuna candidate Paco Letamendia

bourgeois poet Telesforo de Monzon famous for his role in the (bourgeois) Basque government destroyed by Franco in the Civil War.

Monzon, along with 100 other Basques is currently a political prisoner of the regime, and was throughout the campaign on hunger strike.

This, combined with the fact that he was top of the list of candidates in one province, served to give Herri Batasuna an immense amount of pre-electoral publicity (except of course on the state-run broadcasting services where their existence was not acknowledged).

Monzon's presence on the lists was proof of the essentially cross-class nature of this campaign.

As the campaign went on its

cries of "Socialism and Independence" became more and more the single demand of "Independence".

In the results, Herri Batasuna got over 10% of the votes in the four Basque provinces and over 15% in the two where nationalism is most militant (Biscay and Guipuscoa).

Herri Batasuna won three seats in parliament (to Euskadiko Eskerra's one and the PNV's 8). They say they will not go to Madrid.

These strongly nationalist political forces are not themselves capable of advancing the interests of the working class and the youth of Euskadi.

In fact their cross class politics represents a danger to those interests in the long run.

They have nonetheless grown as a result of representing the most militant struggle for the legitimate right to national self-determination of the Basques.

Chauvinism

They have attracted significant sections of the Basque working class and the radicalised youth because of the grossly reactionary "big Spain" chauvinism of the main workers' parties.

These parties have joined with the Francoists and the bourgeoisie to stifle national rights to self-determination in Spain.

Only in Euskadi and Andalucia, still the most politically explosive regions in Spain, did disillusion with the main workers' parties express itself in support for another 'left' political alternative.

In Andalucia the Andalucian Socialist Party (PSA)—much to the humiliation of the PSOE—won five parliamentary seats.

But on a nation-wide level there was no turn towards those candidates who claimed to present a revolutionary or left alternative to the PSOE and the CP.

The two Maoist parties—the Labour Party (PTE) and the Revolutionary Workers Organ-



PSOE poster

ation (ORT)—ran candidates in most provinces—but came out with less than one percent of the vote and no seats.

Both these parties cling onto a bit of support in areas where they helped to mobilise the workers during the darkest periods of the Franco dictatorship.

But today they are losing this support since they have both moved decisively to the right, supporting the bourgeois constitution, the parliamentary road and the anti-terrorist laws of the state.

Destined to disappear

There is no longer any political space between them and the reformists and CP Stalinists, and they are surely destined to disappear.

To their left stood the

centrist Communist Movement (MC) now unified with the Communist Left Movement (OIC) which stood candidates with the LCR (Spanish section of the USFI) in the last elections.

This time again the LCR tried to set up a joint list with the MC/OIC—very much on the lines of the British IMG's "Socialist Unity" bid to have joint candidates with the SWP.

In the end the two stood separately, both of them receiving only a tiny handful of votes.

We would not, of course, judge an election campaign which claimed to be Trotskyist on the number of votes it got.

Rather we look to see whether it fought for a clear and principled revolutionary alternative to the reactionary leadership of reformists, Stalinists and

nationalists.

On that criterion the LCR campaign must be judged a failure.

In face of the confusion inevitable with up to 10 lists claiming to represent the interests of the working class the task of a Trotskyist party was political clarification.

This required merciless exposure of the leadership which had led to disunity in the working class, and the search for a tactic which would express that need for unity and independence of the working class.

Confusion

The LCR, however, augmented the confusion. They pointed out correctly that the last thing in the world that the main workers' parties wanted was a clear parliamentary majority.

But then the LCR made the reformists' and Stalinists' ambition easier for them, by calling, not for a united working class vote behind the workers' parties to force them into a majority, but simply for a vote for the LCR.

If it had any effect at all, this call would under the Spanish proportional representation system of voting have made such a majority of workers' parties more difficult to achieve.

This failure to produce a clear strategy in the elections was not just an isolated mistake.

It reflects growing adaptation of the LCR to the collaborationist misleaders of the working class reflected in the strong electoralism of the LCR's campaign ("Vote LCR—the workers' left to parliament—the revolutionary youth to parliament") and its concomitant adaptation to reformist policies.

Change constitution

Thus the LCR called for "changing" the reactionary constitution inaugurated a few months ago.

They called for "purging" the armed forces and police unchanged since the days of Franco of the most reactionary elements

And they took a position on



Liga Comunista contingent marching against the Moncloa Pact

IE

The LCR view

From LCR election Programme.

The bitter fruits of consensus. We were told, and are still told, that overcoming the economic crisis and consolidating democracy was a question of "national interest".

In that was included bosses and workers; landowners and agricultural labourers; the CEOE [Spain's CBI] and the Workers Commissions and the UGT, the Democratic Centre Union (and Popular Alliance) and the workers' parties.

That is the great lie which has dominated the political life of the country in recent months. It is necessary to see it doesn't continue to dominate in the future.

Because these "national interests" don't exist anywhere. What exist are *our* interests, those of the workers; and *their* interests, those of the bourgeoisie and the bosses.

We need decent wages, work for all; they need wage control and reduction of manning levels.

We need the police and army to be purged from top to bottom, that those guilty of crimes and provocations are punished, that full freedoms exist for the soldiers; they need to hide from us the truth about the activities of the reactionaries (such as "Operation Galaxy" [a coup attempt last year] and they only respond to fascists and those planning a coup with impotent calls for discipline towards the King and ridiculous sanctions.

Finally, we have to politically fight against the terrorism of ETA; we have to tell ETA that its actions all the time go more against our interests and must end once and for all.

But we cannot forget that the fundamental cause of ETA activism lies in the negation of sovereign rights of the Basque people and in a long and uninterrupted history of brutal repression in Euskadi.

For us solidarity with Euskadi means, in the first place, fully taking up the struggle for these rights and against repression and we never confuse that with giving even the slightest support to the UCD government, the police or army against ETA.

On the contrary, they, and in the first instance the government, use the negative effects that ETA actions provoke in our people, and the climate of "national unity against terrorism" (which the PSOE and CP and also the ORT and PTE have decisively contributed to creating), in order to impose more repression against Euskadi, in order to increase the effects of the police and use them to invade our streets, to limit the exercise of freedom, to justify criminal acts within and outside our national boundaries...

The conclusion is clear: every time the "national interest" is invoked in practice it is to support the interests of the bourgeoisie. That is the real meaning of the politics of consensus.

Build the alternative. When you look at the electoral programmes of the PSOE and the CP, one thing is clear: their promises of strength and effectiveness are compatible with the interests of the bosses, the army and imperialism. And the request for a "broad parliamentary majority" is no more than a way of begging ministerial portfolios from Suarez.

Because the basic thing is that they do not want to win. That is why they have not set up a unitary PSOE-CP candidacy which would have developed an immense sensation of power among the workers and would undoubtedly have gained "a broad parliamentary majority".

But that majority, a workers' majority, is what they don't want.

What they want is merely to sell their favours to the UCD at slightly higher cost. That is why they ask us for an "effective vote".



So, what is to be done? When the old roads show themselves to be blind alleys it is necessary to find a new one.

The first stones are already laid. We laid them fighting the Moncloa Pact, struggling to throw out the Constitution and now, mobilising ourselves to win the wage negotiations.

In that way the alternative is being built, the workers' left which, against any kind of pact and consensus, puts forward the unity, organisation and mobilisation of the workers.

And that workers' left has to be in Parliament. It depends on your votes. (...) For a socialist not a bourgeois government.

This is central to the problem of the elections.

Let us say it more clearly: every government in which the UCD or any other bourgeois party participates, even though Felipe Gonzalez is Prime Minister, will be a government in the service of capitalist interests, incapable of opposing them.

We do not want that government. We want a socialist government, based on an alliance of the majority workers' parties PSOE and CP.

Whether its ministers should be from both parties, or only from the PSOE, is of secondary importance.

What is important is that there should not be a single minister of a bourgeois party. A government of that kind

looking for its support to the trade unions and the mobilisations of the masses would have more than enough strength to confront the inevitable resistance of reaction and to realise the political and social objectives of the workers. That is our strong and effective government.

We know already that the PSOE and the CP don't want either to hear about or to speak about a government like this.

We know already that they say we have not yet arrived at the moment for "unity of the left", that we have to be moderate and prudent because democracy is fragile and the economic crisis very hard.

But precisely for that reason we have arrived at the moment to set up a government of workers' unity. Without that government democracy will be more and more fragile and the crisis harder for the workers.

Therefore, if the leaderships of the PSOE and the CP "don't want" it, it is necessary to force them to want it.

That is the task for the workers' left: to impel the majority workers' parties into an alliance against the bourgeoisie.

That is another reason to put the workers' left into Parliament—to vote LCR.

The LC position

From Liga Comunista election material:

Workers majority, workers' vote.

On March 1 workers are summoned to give a reply. The bourgeoisie, unable to maintain the anti-working class Cortes of June 15, 1977, has had to call elections.

The bourgeoisie is attempting a manoeuvre: to create through use of the ballot box the fiction that the majority of the population is with Suarez, Fraga and co.

But that is false. Suarez, Fraga and all the bourgeois parties are heirs of the Francoists, are the authors of unemployment and repression.

They are the executors of working class and of popular demands.

The same people want to carry on governing with the support of the ballot box.

There can only be one reply. The one the people who live in Astarfe gave to Suarez: "Out, liar, out, out".

Out with the government of the Francoists and the rest of the bourgeoisie. 40 years is enough, far too much. Out.

That is what the workers are saying with strikes of hundreds, of thousands, of millions.

The Basque people are saying that with their struggle against repression.

Because as well as the confrontation on March 1 there are those of February 25, 26, 27, 28 and March 2, 3, 4, 5... confrontations in the massive struggle against the aggression of the bosses and the Francoist government which is developing through Spain.

And that is more important than the elections. There are no ballot boxes which can deny the overwhelming expression of popular will involved in the present strikes.

But it is necessary to defeat the bourgeoisie in all fields; it is necessary to say through the ballot boxes as well that we, the workers, want no more Francoists in the government.

It is important to leave them no pretext to carry on governing. We must take advantage of the elections to back up what we are saying in the strikes: that

we want *our* government, of the immense majority of the population.

This time they mustn't be strengthened by any electoral fraud, it must be made clear that the immense majority is against them.

A workers' majority in the elections means that we demand that the Francoists and the bourgeoisie should go, because we want a workers' economic plan and freedom for our trade unions, against the social pact.

We want full freedom and to finish off the repressive Francoist laws and repressive apparatus.

We want freedom for Euskadi and the other nationalities.

We want solidarity with the people of Iran and our brother workers of the world, that we do not want NATO, the Common Market, or any of the other examples of ganging up with imperialism.

All that means a workers' majority in the elections. It implies that we want to suppress the monarchy and the constitution and that we want it to be the authentic will of the people which decides how the country is to be ruled.

A workers' government, faithful to the needs of the

majority, as well as taking the immediate and urgent measures to satisfy the workers' demands, has to guarantee the calling of a revolutionary Constituent Cortes, elected in conditions of full freedom, and not like these elections or those of June 15, 1977.

We want a Cortes in which the nationalities take part of their own accord rather than being forced to do so by Martin Villa as is happening now.

Breaking once and for all the treacherous pacts with the Francoists and the bourgeoisie, imposing the will of the working class majority. That's what the workers' majority means.

And that's why Santiago Carrillo and Felipe Gonzalez don't want a workers' majority because they are tied by these shameful pacts, compromised behind a coalition government which carries on increasing unemployment, increasing repression and denies rights to the majority.

They have done everything possible to sow division and demoralisation.

They hope that strikes are not centralised, and that the bourgeoisie is not defeated through the ballot box.

To obtain a workers'

majority we call for a vote for the workers' parties.

The LC is going to withdraw its candidates, in agreement with the independent comrades who have fought with us for the Workers' Alliance and for a workers' majority in the elections.

We fight for the victory of a united working class and we don't want to disperse votes.

In every province the vote should go to the parties which can still today draw together the great majority of the class.

In almost the whole country that is possible around the PSOE or the CP.

Does that mean a vote for the betrayals of Felipe Gonzalez and Santiago Carrillo?

No, it means confronting the Francoists and the bourgeoisie together with the socialist and communist workers, together with the majority of workers in every province.

Because in elections as in strikes there are class lines. It is a class vote, it is a vote which Felipe Gonzalez and Santiago Carrillo don't want because it is a mandate to break with the Francoists and the bourgeoisie.

If anyone still thinks that in this way we support the treacherous leaders, we will tell them perhaps yes... but like the rope supports the hanging man.

(...)



Carrillo

ing the results and
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two groups which
t: the LCR and the

was in effect one of neutrality
between ETA and the repressive
state apparatus ("We must
politically fight ETA terrorism
... we never give the slightest
support to the UCD government,
police or army against
ETA").

Behind masses

This means that, in Euskadi
in particular, but also elsewhere,
the LCR is putting itself not
ahead of but *behind* significant
sections of the working class
and oppressed masses who
continue to call in demonstrations,
for instance, for "dissolution
of the repressive forces of
public order".

These gross adaptations were
linked to a complete failure to
distinguish the class nature and
policies of the main workers' parties.

One of the main slogans of
the LCR was "a socialist not a
bourgeois government" and this
was concretised to mean a
PSOE-CP government.

Such a call, however, was
not linked to any struggle to
throw out the existing collabora-
tionist leadership of these parties.

Nor was it coupled to the
call for the *independent* mobilisation
of the working class
against that leadership.

Change of tactic

The election saw a change in
tactics by the comrades of the
Liga Comunista (LC).

Unlike the Spanish section
of the OCI, the LC saw clearly
the need to position the correct
boycott position both sections
had adopted in the elections of
June 1977.

Instead the LC engaged in
propagandist participation in
the election campaign in an
attempt to clarify the options
facing the working class, to fight
for working class unity and
independence, and to expose
the existing collaborationist
leaderships.

The LC (faced with great
difficulties of small numbers
and lack of resources) nonetheless
set up candidacies in five
provinces under the title
Workers' Alliance, stating in
advance that they would withdraw
before the voting in favour
of a critical vote to the best
placed of the majority workers'
parties in each province (except
in favour of the LCR arguing
that there was no clear majority
workers' party).

The main slogans of the
Workers' Alliance were:

- *Unify the struggles!
- *For a workers' majority in the elections!
- *Abolish the monarchy and revoke the constitution!
- *For a workers' government without bourgeois ministers!
- *Not a single vote for the bourgeoisie—Vote Workers' Parties!

Impact

This basically correct form
of campaign could have had a
serious impact if it had been
adopted by the much larger
LCR.

But that "Trotskyist" party
proved once again that its
considerable numerical size in
no way made it capable of
offering a clear alternative lead
to Spanish workers.

Next week: Spain on the eve
of the municipal elections.

1900: a warning against Popular Frontism?

A recent showing of the film *1900* in Oxford gave our reviewer Mary Ann Todd the opportunity to see and write about this important Bertolucci film.

Bertolucci's monumental film *1900* is a two part film—his most ambitious project to date.

It relates an epic tale of two babies born on the same day in 1900—one Olmo—the son of a peasant and the other—Alfredo—the son of the padrone (landowner).

1900 traces the development of their relationship together through childhood, the First World War, the rise of fascism, the Second World War and the following 'liberation'.

It is a monumental film in which, through a narrative structure where the personal and epic are woven together, we see traumatic experiences of birth, death and revolution portrayed.

When Bertolucci wants to use the film to heighten an expression of class feeling he draws from Eisenstein's example of film structure being a number of sketches executed for maximum emotional impact.

Emotional response

Like the Odessa steps massacre in *Battleship Potemkin*, some scenes in *1900* provoke an immediate emotional response.

One example is the violent death of the peasant woman in the compound who in defiance and in scorn of her fascist groper rips her blouse open to ridicule them despite the outcome.

Another is the image of the charred black melted forms of the peasants burnt to death by the fascists.

At the same time, unlike Eisenstein Bertolucci does not want to devalue the personal elements in his art, either in creation or in subject matter.

He does not show the same rejection of the individuality, the sentimentality or aestheticism of ruling class art.

We are extremely conscious of the charisma and personality of the bourgeois actors and actresses he uses—including Dominica de Sanda and Robert de Niro.

Unknown actors

It is interesting to note that those characters who show any revolutionary awareness are played by unknown actors, actresses and the peasants by actual land-workers.

There are many weaknesses in the structure of *1900*. It is very difficult to judge if this is a result of bad editing—the original film was a mammoth eight hours long and has been hacked down to 5½ hours—



Italian fascists: could only be fought by working class mobilisation not collaboration

or whether there is confusion in Bertolucci's overall direction.

Does he want to show us a story of historical realism or a symbolic theatrical commentary on events?

It could be an inherent problem in such an ambitious project. The larger it becomes the more difficult it is to control and the more flaws appear.

The film does appear to keep changing in mid-stream, one minute directly using heroic realism and then another as in the trial after the liberation using an allegorical stage-managed dance with a massive red flag.

Lyrical

On the whole, however, the film is lyrical, rich and sensuous, using images linked together to convey the intellectual themes of the film.

Paintings appear extremely important to Bertolucci. Just as in *Last Tango in Paris* he showed two paintings by Francis Bacon over the credits, so in the beginning of *1900* he sets the film with a painting by Pelizza da Volpedo of Italian workers on strike in 1905.

The whole of *1900* is shot through with direct references to paintings in the use of composition, and colour and the strong emphasis on tonality.

Idealistic

It attempts to be an overall 'painting' of workers using idealistic and romantic portraits like Millet's *The Reapers* and more realistic-

ally the work of Courbet's *The Stonebreakers*.

There is a similarity between the shot of the bandaged head of the peasant who has sliced off his ear, and the self portraits of Van Gogh with severed ear.

And the scene of the same peasant's family sitting round a dark, empty table is very evocative of Van Gogh's painting *The Potato Eaters*.

Music

But music also plays an important role in the film with one repeated theme throughout interspersed with the revolutionary singing and dance music used at key points in the film to show different stages of the peasants' history.

There is heroic singing from the women who lie down as a human barricade to the cavalry advances, and there is the slow, deliberate playing of the Internationale by a veteran accordion player—a strange remnant of the red army.

Earthy

Many other images in the film are direct, earthy and sensuous, bearing a close relationship to those found in the writings of Emile Zola.

One example is the pitchfork thrust into the genitals of Attila the fascist by the peasant women. This seems to have been directly inspired by Zola's novel *Germinal*.

There are extraordinary shots of animal life—flesh wriggling to escape from imminent death—the

stunning shots of tens of frogs threaded live on a wire around Olmo's hat writhing around his face like Medusa's hair.

There is a scene of a monumental mass of pink pigs struggling and being held down before having their throats slit. And there is the cat which is tied to a pole, wrestling to free itself before being splattered to death by the fascist's head.

These parallels with Zola are increased by the recurrence of ritualistic shots of mud, manure, milk, sweat, saliva, blood and vomit and of violently primal acts of birth, sex and death.

This also connects with another repeated theme in Bertolucci's films—his attempt to integrate in his work lessons from Marx or Freud.

Bourgeois family

We see expression of this in his indictment of the bourgeois family which Bertolucci feels represses us psychologically and emotionally in its attempt to civilise us.

Bertolucci attempts to express that only under socialism will we see the development of sexuality unfettered where sexual needs are not repressed.

Alfredo says of Olmo when they are in bed with an epileptic laundress 'Olmo's a Bolshevik; they believe in free love'.

There is continual tension between the sexual repression and backwardness of the bourgeoisie and the sexual powers of Olmo, the token 'communist'.

The symbol of cow dung and horse manure is used continually in the film to express all that in Freudian terms from which it is impossible to escape.

Bertolucci also takes up the Freudian view of personality—that childhood is always with us and unavoidably chains us despite attempts to defy and transcend it alone.

This is shown by the way the childhood relationship of Olmo and Alfredo dominates their adult relationship in contradiction to the class relationship of peasant to landowner.

The film uses the technique of the epics, by focussing on one or two carefully characterised individuals whose personal life tragedies and relationships reflect the greater events in which they are inevitably involved.

But Bertolucci inevitably chooses two males.

Women relegated

Similarly he centres solely on the repression of male sexuality. Women are yet again relegated in his films to recognisable secondary roles, their character development cut short and stereotyped.

Even the educated woman revolutionary teacher and Olmo's lover who showed signs of possible development as a committed leader operates on a completely emotional and spontaneous basis full of fervour and passion but little else.

That her development in the story is ended by death in childbirth comes as no surprise.

To Bertolucci, women are chained to the womb, the complete focus of their life being childbirth.

Dominic de Sanda beautifully portrays Alfredo's wife, a neurotic flower of exquisite hot-house sensitivity.

Ugliness

Unable to cope with the brutal ugliness of decayed society she seeks refuge in assumed blindness, sniffing cocaine, drink or riding on her white horse.

She is shown unable to have children, a poor, infertile, rich girl, rootless, lost and desperate for the simple strength and security of the peasant family hearth.

The other major woman in the film is Regina, the fascist mistress portrayed with burning embittered intensity within the mould of Lady Macbeth, ambitiously driving her man through bloody murder, recurrent nightmares of guilt, all the time horrendously existing only through him.

Hence her greatest torture at the end of the film is not to be killed after his death.

Contradiction

The major theme of the entire film is the struggle between labour and capital.

There is a contradiction between the crucial lessons Bertolucci attempts to teach us in the film and his membership of the Italian

Communist Party.

The film shows the loss of the independent action of the working class through Olmo's friendship and involvement with the bourgeoisie and the subsequent results of this—the rapid development of fascism and the defeat of socialism.

Olmo turns to his 'friend' and landowner/employer Alfredo, portrayed by Robert de Niro as a likeable, 'open' friend.

He asks him to remove Attila the fascist foreman before it is too late.

Different sort of boss

Olmo thinks his friend will be a different sort of padrone—but in placing his father's luxurious fur coat over his shoulder, Alfredo shows he has inherited all the rules of ownership.

As in *Before the Revolution*, Bertolucci shows that for the children of the bourgeoisie there is no escape from the destiny of their class, they represent capitalism.

The film also shows categorically that no matter how much the bourgeoisie may dislike fascists as upstarts, vulgar unfair or distasteful, they will never take the action to remove them but on the contrary will retain them as 'guard dogs' of their interests.

No defence

The film also shows that no matter what previous relationship the affable bourgeois has with the worker he will not lift a finger to defend him from vicious fascist attack.

The scene of Olmo being brutally thumped into the ground by blackshirts while his so-called bourgeois 'friends' look on, should be seen as a warning against the popular front policies of the Italian CP and other popular front organisations such as the ANL which seek to destroy fascism with the aid of 'progressive' liberals and members of the bourgeoisie.

What misplaced trust and cooperation with the ruling class can bring is shown again by Olmo's class collaboration.

Disarms workers

He effectively disarms the working class, literally and metaphysically ending their hopes of socialism.

By refusing to shoot the padrone and his agreement to disarm the workers handing over their guns to the allied imperialist forces, he enables capitalism to win the day.

The 'padrone' lives, Olmo 'the peasant' lives—the future of the class struggle is depicted within their lifetime as labour (Olmo) ineffectually tugging at the sleeves of capital (Alfredo).

It's a halfhearted friendly tustle which capitalism can always shrug off—a fitting symbol of the role of the Italian CP and international Stalinism.

WSL Conference: a new step forward

Report by
John Lister

The enormous changes in the political situation brought about by the Iranian revolution and by the upsurge of massive struggles against Labour's pay policy in Britain were the major focal points of the discussion at the Third Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League on March 10-11.

An important development in this year's conference was the presentation for the first time of a full-scale International Perspectives document, flowing from a year's work by the WSL's International Sub-Committee.

The document draws a balance sheet of the massive economic and political crisis confronting world imperialism.

It points to the impact of this crisis on the Stalinist bureaucracies within the deformed and degenerated workers' states.

Reactionary role

And, in tracing the reactionary role played by reformist and Stalinist leaders in every capitalist country, it stresses the necessity to resolve the historic crisis of leadership that now confronts the working class internationally.

Though drawn up prior to the massive revolutionary upheaval that followed on the removal of the Shah of Iran with the toppling of the puppet Bakhtiar regime, the document correctly stresses the acute political weakness of imperialism and its agencies in the wake of the defeats inflicted on US imperialism in Vietnam, Cambodia and Angola, and the downfall of Portuguese fascism in April 1974.

It shows the interrelationship between this political crisis and the mounting economic crisis which continues to defy every attempt by imperialist

leaders to find a "rational", planned solution.

Far from lending itself to such remedies, the document stresses, the crisis is leading firmly in the direction of intensified national antagonisms and trade war between the imperialist nations, and intensified class struggle internationally.

Head off

The document goes on to trace the ways in which, far from being strengthened by the forward movement of the working class, the Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed and degenerated workers' states have sought at each point to head off revolutionary developments in order to preserve the delicate balance of forces with imperialism on which their power and privileges depend.

A substantial section examines in some detail the role of Soviet and Cuban advisors and troops in Africa, and the way in which their growing involvement must be understood as a part of the Kremlin's overall counter-revolutionary strategy.

And another key section looks at the ways in which the capitalist class internationally, wary of direct confrontation with the oppressed masses, has turned to varying forms of Popular Front government, drawing bureaucratic leaders of mass workers' parties into direct collaboration with their plans for wage cutting and other "austerity" measures.

Fourth International

Pointing to the necessity for the political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies in the workers' states alongside the socialist revolution in the capitalist countries, the document concludes by emphasising the necessity for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International to provide the necessary revolutionary leader-



Public sector workers: part of the massive movement against Labour's pay policy

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

ship for these tasks.

Conference discussion focussed on the historic significance of the Iranian revolution in intensifying every aspect of the crisis of imperialism, and on the role of Stalinist forces in Africa.

Small forces

Important contributions came from a comrade from Denmark, examining the problems of taking up the struggle for a Trotskyist party in that country with very small forces; and from a Turkish comrade who reported on the struggle for a revolutionary perspective against the repression of Ecevit's crisis-ridden bourgeois government, and on the problems faced in the Kurdish struggle for self-determination.

Greetings to the conference were received from the Spanish Liga Comunista and the American Socialist League (Democratic Centralist).

It was agreed that a special resolution on the Iranian revolution be discussed by the incoming National Committee and adopted for publication side-by-side with the full text of the International Perspectives in the next issue of the WSL's theoretical magazine *Trotskyism Today*.

During the second day, discussion on the National Committee's British Perspectives document was able to draw together many of the important developments in the work of the Workers Socialist League during the previous year, with an analysis of the forces leading towards further, intensified class confrontations in 1979, in which the WSL must play a key role.

Leadership

Our leadership of struggles against nursery and health service cuts, against wage controls and for trade union recognition was analysed, as were the experiences flowing from our fight to give a lead to socialists struggling against the Callaghan-Healey clique within the Labour Party.

Particular attention was focussed on the almost entirely successful struggle in defence of the "Cowley 9". These militants from BL's Assembly Plant in Cowley had only a year ago stood under threat of expulsion from the union or loss of elected union office at the hands of TGWU witch-hunters.

Yet a broad-based "Cowley 9 Defence Campaign" had succeeded not only in inflicting a major setback to the TGWU bureaucracy, but also in estab-

lishing the basis for a continuing struggle for alternative, revolutionary leadership within Britain's biggest manual union.

Discussion also included the lessons of WSL involvement in the public sector pay struggles, particularly in the London area, where we had emerged as the only force prepared to fight tenaciously for all-out strike action—a policy which had won almost the full claim in Camden.

Speakers stressed the way in which subsequent massive developments in both the public sector and haulage drivers' strikes—producing a level of struggle higher than the 1926 General Strike—had confirmed the orientation of the document towards the fight for independent class organs of the working class—in particular councils of action—and the necessity even within these spontaneous struggles to struggle for the building of a conscious revolutionary leadership.

Youth movement

A number of youth members as well as trade unionists came to the microphone to remind conference of the importance of the successful launching during 1978 of the Socialist Youth League as an autonomous youth movement in political agreement with the WSL.

The importance of all branches encouraging the development of work among all sections of youth was emphasised.

This point was further underlined by the adoption at the conference of the WSL's first Student Perspectives document, and the presence at the conference of a number of students won to the WSL over the past year.

Plans were also laid to further the political work carried out by the WSL among working class women.

Women's paper

Noting the increased radicalisation of women workers, (reflected in recent recruitment to the WSL), and our movement's strong record in struggles on nursery facilities, against the cuts, and for abortion rights, conference declared it a priority for the incoming NC to establish the publication of a women's paper.

And, following a lively debate in the pre-conference period, a discussion will continue within the movement on the oppression of women in the bourgeois family unit.

A report on party organisation and finances presented by WSL full-time organisers pointed to the considerable achievements of the movement over the past year.

Twelve months' work had seen the maintenance and strengthening of the weekly *Socialist Press* despite considerable difficulties: the launching of *Red Youth* and the Socialist Youth League; the publication of a major book (*Communists Against Revolution*); a number of pamphlets, and further issues of our theoretical magazine.

But the period ahead requires and makes possible a rapid numerical growth in the WSL if political opportunities are not to be missed and if remaining organisational problems are to be solved.

Branches were urged to examine every aspect of their work from the standpoint of the need to recruit new forces to the WSL.

Appeals for a collection and for pledges to launch a renewed publication programme received a tremendous response, with

over £400 realised on each count.

Such enthusiasm was a fitting reflection of the strength and determination of the WSL's Third Annual Conference.

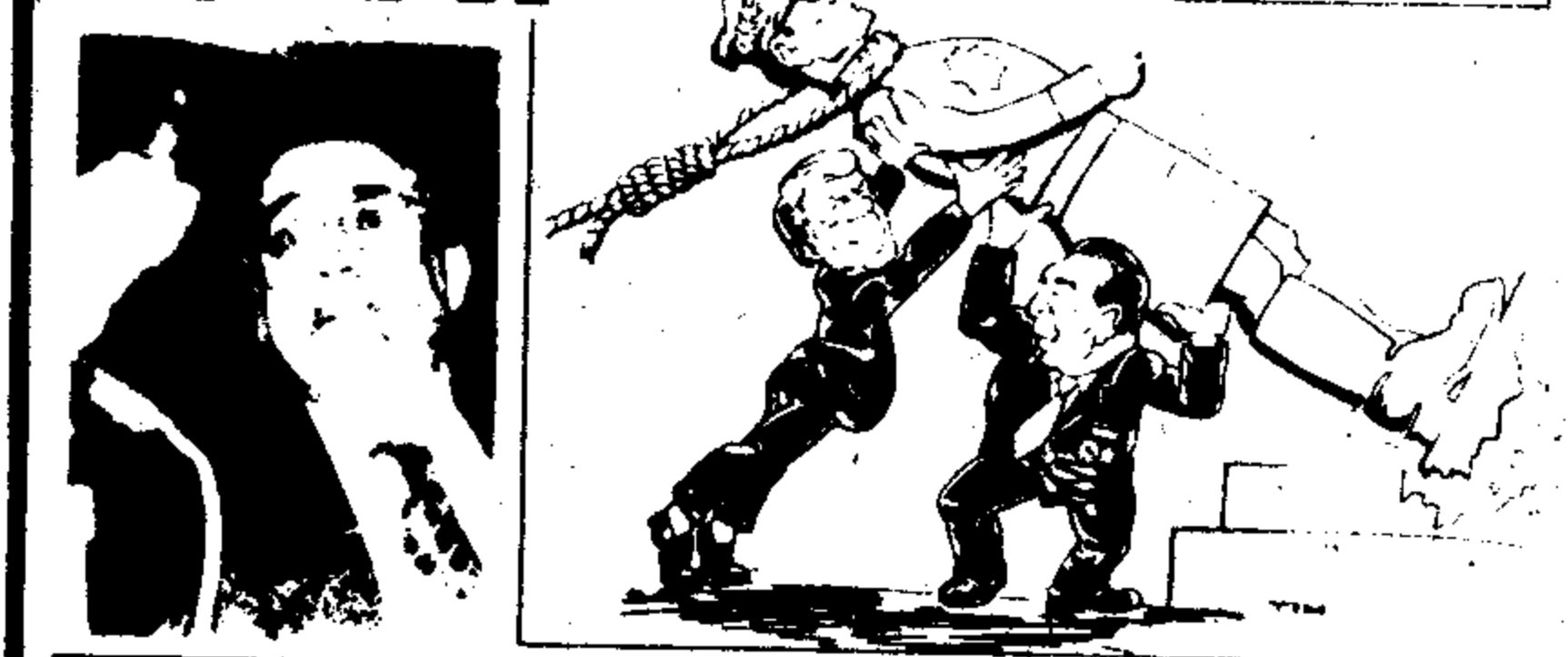
We invite readers of *Socialist Press* to consider joining with us in taking forward the fight over the next period for the building of a principled revolutionary leadership in the British working class and the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

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No. 9 March 1979
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INDUSTRIAL NEWS

Fight bosses closure threats!



Ten months ago—first Garners Day of Action

The now routine management manoeuvre of threatening to shut down plants unless union bureaucrats force through drastic speed-up and "voluntary" or compulsory redundancies continues to take a heavy toll of jobs in industry.

Last week saw a one-year "reprieve" granted by Metal Box management to its Portsmouth plastic film factory—after trade union collaborators had drawn up their own plan for 70 redundancies from the present 560 workforce, cuts in manning levels, and "certain industrial relations assurances".

Union officials boasted that this plan, by saving an estimated £450,000 on the wages bill, would ensure the



PHOTO: Laurence Spaham IFL

Duffy

"viability" of the plant. How it would assist the viability of the 70 union members to be removed from the plan, or the state of health of the 490 remaining is not explained.

But as a further side effect of the deal a similar union report is to be drawn up on Metal Box's plastic film factory in Speke on Merseyside—where Portsmouth production was originally to be transferred.

There is little doubt therefore that the 70 jobs given away in Portsmouth are only the first of a whole spate of redundancies in this sector as local union bureaucrats compete with each other to minimise the wages and conditions of their members.

Meanwhile at GEC's Trafford Park factory 700 workers were last week threatened with closure if they did not lift their ban on overtime and on subcontracting.

And at Courtauld's Spennymoor plant in County Durham management have threatened close down, sacking all 1,570 workers—in response to union rejection of 30% redundancies.

Duffy praised

A measure of union leaders' collaboration could be seen last week when the Institute of Works Managers praised AUEW leader Terry Duffy's attitude to industrial relations.

The Institute called for a change in workers' attitude to redundancy. Rather than the prospect of unemployment, it should be seen as "an opportunity for training for a more rewarding occupation."

The kind of "occupation" that is needed to fight the present wave of sackings rationalisation and closure, however, is workers' occupation of threatened factories, backed by supporting strikes.

Rather than opening text books in phoney government "retraining" schemes while on the dole, workers must fight to open the books of profit-hungry employers who seek to force workers to shoulder the entire cost of their economic crisis.

The fight must be for the defence of all jobs; work-sharing without loss of pay; and the nationalisation without compensation of those employers that seek to foist their problems onto the workforce.

Such policies demand that Duffy and other friends of management within the union bureaucracy are driven from office, and a revolutionary leadership built in the workers' movement.

FULL SUPPORT TO GARNERS DAY OF ACTION!

In the Garners strike, intense preparations have continued throughout this week for the March 24 Day of Action.

This event must mark a decisive turning point for the 14-month long struggle.

Region 1 TGWU bureaucrats Ron Todd, Les Shorter and Sid Staden, who will address this

weekend's demonstration, carry responsibility for starving this recognition strike of vital material aid and support.

Their bureaucratic aim of avoiding the all-out confrontation necessary to win has reduced the strikers to only a section of the original 84.

Despite an original £2,000 donation from the TGWU and a regular flow of money into the official strike fund, only a trickle of cash gets through to the strikers on the picket lines.

The last "major" hand-out from the union was a £38 "Christmas bonus".

At the same time the policy of agreement with the police limitation of the pickets to six per restaurant continues to open the door to harassment and intimidation by police and scab thugs.

'Unofficial'

Yet the TGWU Regional Committee minutes for January berate 'unofficial' elements (people who want to win the strike) for their refusal to bow

to the treacherous idea that: "these days of action should be kept orderly with only the agreed numbers at each establishment."

Naturally such brazen sabotage of the struggle is then covered with the classical accusation that it is the union rank and file which has let the strikers down:

"... the rank and file had not given the support expected."

How these bureaucrats could have expected support while continuously sabotaging circulars and even denying strikers use of telephones at one stage is hard to imagine.

Despite all this the strikers remain determined to win.

An appeal was made at the Stalinist-dominated LCDTU last weekend (although strikers were prevented from distributing leaflets inside the hall), and a response has been found in many parts of the country.

Disobedience at Dunlops

A poorly attended mass meeting at Dunlop's threatened Speke plant last Thursday heard the latest desperate proposals by union leaders determined to head off any call for an occupation of the factory.

Among them was a call for a programme of (non-violent) "public disobedience". This was given a ludicrous send-off when TGWU General Executive chairman Stan Pemberton led 100 Dunlop workers in a one hour sit-down in the main road in Speke.

Farcical

More such farcical proceedings are planned. The meeting also heard Pemberton—a consistent opponent of occupation—call for the opening of Dunlop's books to what he called an "independent committee".

Such a committee would presumably include a sprinkling of MPs, clergymen and dogooders alongside top union bureaucrats.

Closure looms

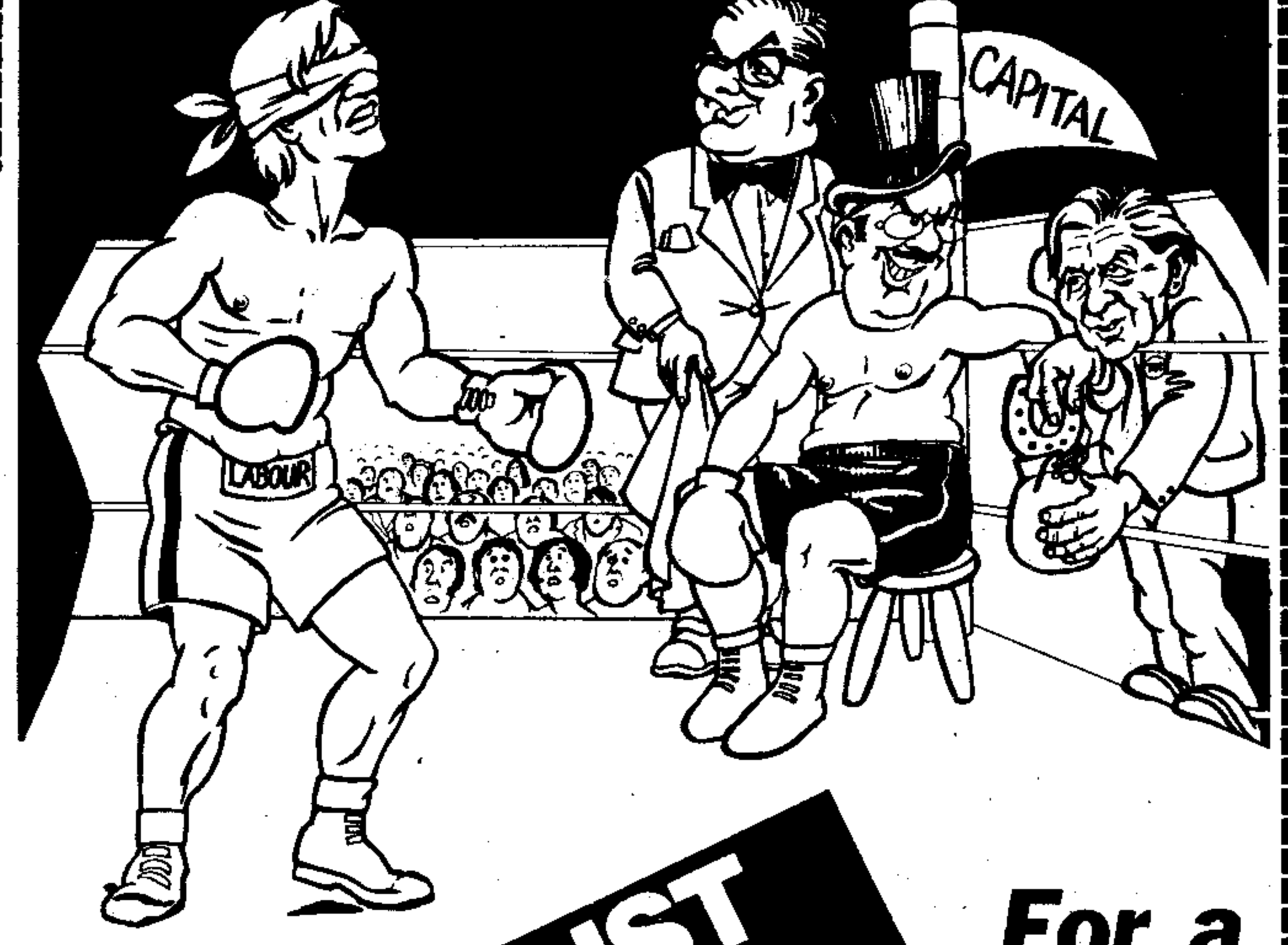
How it could obtain access to any of Dunlop's business secrets without a plant occupation and supporting strikes was not explained.

But with the closure date of April 19 looming even closer and talks with management on the sackings due to open next week, workers' patience with the "action committee's" dithering and futile protest gimmicks is wearing thin.

A policy of occupation is the only way to mount a fight.

The record of the struggle so far makes it clear that in order to adopt such a policy Dunlop workers must first challenge the bankrupt union leadership at Speke.

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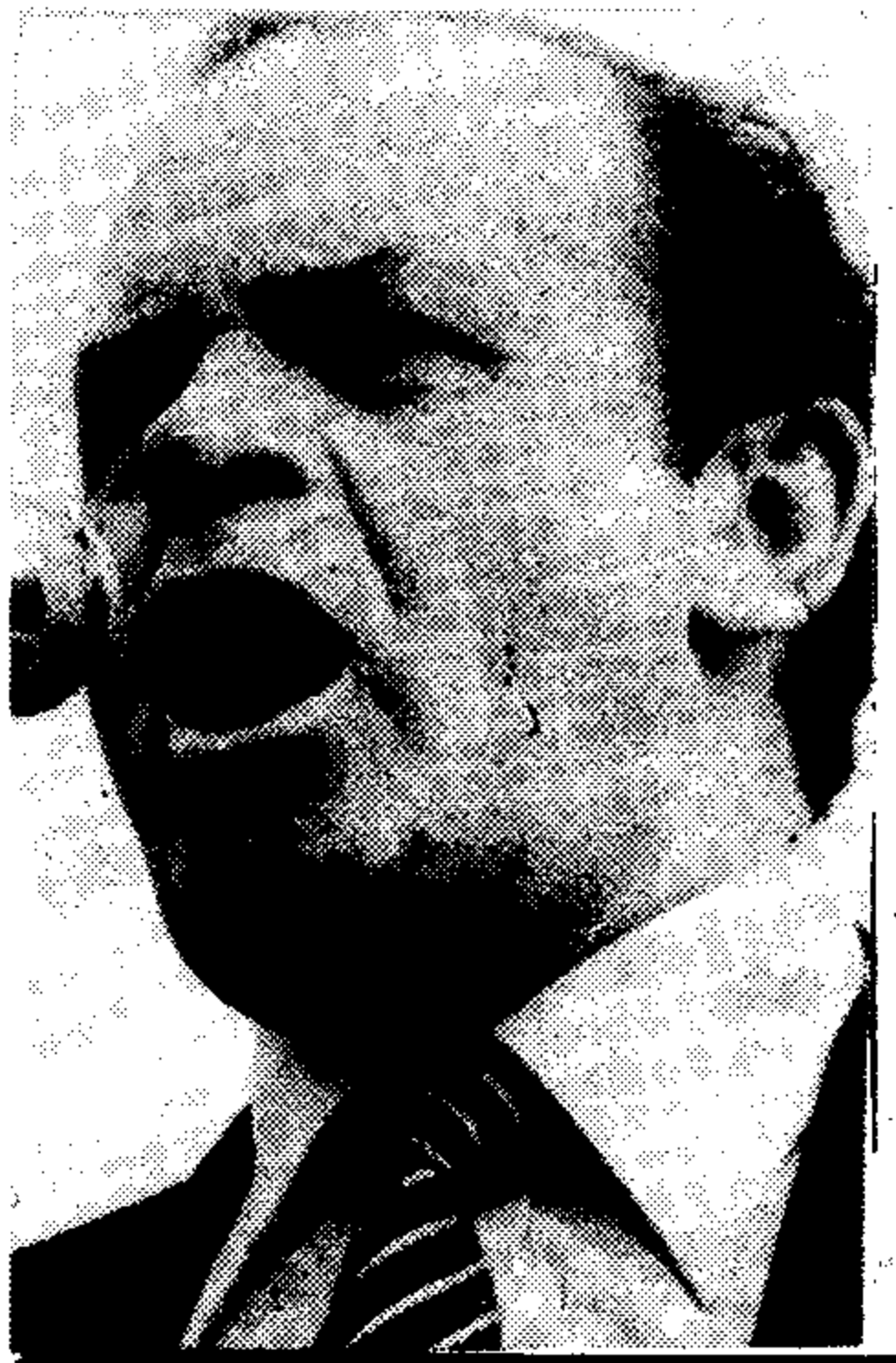


PHOTO: Andrew Ward Report

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BL convenors pull out of 'worker participation' London Division votes to step up fight

Grudgingly and reluctantly, under massive pressure from the membership and after Leyland management left them high and dry, BL Cars Senior Stewards last week voted to give the company six months notice of union withdrawal from the "workers' participation" scheme.

Management had repeatedly ignored pleas by the senior stewards to consult them more prior to imposing policies on the workforce: while most senior stewards are willing servants of management, they like to know and discuss exactly the kind of policies they have to help ram down their members' throats.

Opposed decision

Clearly many of the Senior Stewards hope that the company will use the six months notice period to come up with some straw at which they can clutch. So too will leaders of the Confed—headed by Lord 'Keep Working' Scanlon—who opposed the decision to withdraw.

But this is easier said than done. The principled stand against participation taken by WSL members and supporters and other left wingers in the Cowley Assembly Plant has paid off, in that Cowley now stands

as the main force fighting for a withdrawal.

And mounting hostility to BL management after the miserable 5% pay settlement and the general offensive against jobs and conditions helps to create the material basis to show the need for workers to fight independently for their interests—and to expose the 'participation' scheme with its talk of 'joint' interests between worker and management.

No way forward

Of course the senior stewards' decision does not resolve this question: while forced to pull out of 'participation' they offer no way forward.

But the unveiling of the company's 1978 Statement of Results points to the necessary next steps.

The statement shows a profit of £71.3 million which was slashed by £56 million which went on interest payments—£25 million of which was to the government.

The remaining £31 million in interest presumably found its way into the pockets of private bankers and investors, who cream off therefore the lion's share of profit from this supposedly "nationalised" firm.

Buckle down

The other £15 million profit was transformed into a loss by

Leyland's job-slashing programme, involving £13.6 million in redundancy payments and £24.7 million in plant closure costs.

The Statement however blamed the "losses" on unsatisfactory manning levels and strikes—ignoring the fields full of unsold Leyland Cars which testify to the fact next to no sales have been lost through strikes.

Chairman Michael Edwardes has called for the axing of another 3,000 jobs.

So having borne the brunt of speed-up and rationalisation, the Leyland workforce is now expected to buckle down still further in order to make good this "loss"—and effectively pay the redundancy money handed out last year to their fellow workers by the company!

The call must be raised at once for the opening of BL's books, along with those of the profitable component firms, and the banks—to show exactly how many sections of British capitalism are profiting from the exploitation of BL workers.

These firms and banks must be nationalised, without compensation, under workers management as part of a planned, nationalised engineering industry.

Meanwhile all moves towards further sackings in Leyland must be fought, with the demand for work-sharing on full pay backed up where necessary by strikes and occupations.

At a NUPE stewards' conference on Thursday night, called by the London Divisional Council of NUPE, over 200 stewards called for all-out, indefinite strike action in pursuit of the £60/35 hour pay claim, beginning from this Wednesday.

The conference included a large delegation of ambulance drivers from SE London. Speaker after speaker spoke in support of indefinite strike action.

The conference also decided to form a London strike committee in the health service and ambulance service, and agreed to give support to local authority manual workers who are still in dispute at a local level with their own boroughs.

Important step

The resolution for indefinite strike action, which was moved from the platform by Divisional Council members, is obviously an important first step in resuming the fight for the full claim amongst health workers.

The Divisional Council, however, have taken no steps at all to spread the action on pay to other sections of NUPE, and to public sector workers in COHSE, TGWU and GMWU—despite the fact that many local authority sections from all four unions are at this moment on strike for the full claim.

This serious weakness, which virtually amounts to a betrayal of those local authority sections still on strike, was reflected during the conference itself.

At one stage during the meeting, the delegations from Tower Hamlets and Hackney, who have been on strike for

several weeks over pay, walked out of the hall as an expression of their disgust at the lack of a lead given by the Divisional Council—who actually proposed that the pay offensive was finished in the local authorities.

The only concrete proposal for spreading the strike to the local authorities was put in the form of an amendment to the main resolution by John Seymour, from Camden General branch.

Defeated

Bro. Seymour proposed that the Divisional Council should call a conference of all sections in the four unions to discuss ways of resuming action for the pay claim.

The amendment was given no support from Divisional Council members, was attacked by Divisional full time officer Harry Barker as being impractical, and was finally defeated by a majority of about 2-1 with a large number of abstentions and after the Tower Hamlets and Hackney delegations had left the hall towards the end of the meeting.

As well as this the Divisional Council made no challenge whatsoever to the Executive's ruling that nurses should not take strike action over pay—a position identical to that of the RCN, which separates nurses from other trade unionists in the Health Service.

This was challenged from the floor by Gillian Brear, a nursing shop steward from the Westminster Hospital, who asked how the NUPE EC could back nurses who have struck in support of the ancillary workers' pay claim, and then instruct them not to strike on their own claim?

Hospitals in danger

A conference of NUPE stewards in London last week adopted a policy of taking industrial action if called to do so in defence of the threatened St. Columba's hospital.

The resolution, moved by Arthur Steel from the Samaritan Hospital, did not offer a complete policy for the struggle against the closure of St. Columba's, but pointed in the right direction—towards independent working class action to stop the cuts.

Meanwhile the still-threatened Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital—which has been saved from closure for the past three years only by a prolonged work-in backed by the threat of immediate strike action should it close—faces a new test on 20 March.

Health Service axeman David Ennals is due on that date to take the final decision about the hospital's future.

And all the signs are that, after limbering up with his strikebreaking speeches and anti-union statements throughout the public sector pay fight, Ennals is likely to decide to close the EGA.

The Save the EGA campaign, aware of this danger, is calling on all organisations wishing to fight the cuts to support a public meeting on March 21, at the EGA, at 7.30 p.m.

March 28 will see a "lunch-time action" at the EGA, assembling at 12.00 midday and lasting until 2 p.m. Trade union delegations are particularly important.

And local union branches are urged to invite a Campaign speaker to their next meeting, to outline the savage programme of cuts scheduled or in progress in the Camden and Islington area.

Other health union branches must also declare or renew pledges to take all-out strike action should Ennals attempt to close the EGA, which has become a national focus for working class resistance to the cuts.

Officials gang up on steelworkers

The real face of Concordat-style leadership is being exhibited by leaders of Britain's biggest steel union, the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (ISTC).

General Secretary Bill Sirs is one of the extreme right wing rump on the TUC that signed the document *A Better Way*, advocating permanent wage controls.

Steelworkers are likely to start paying the price for this policy this year if Sirs has his way.

The ISTC's pathetically small 8% claim—garnished with a series of other demands including a shorter working week, extra holidays and a 4% payment for past productivity—has been turned down flat by British Steel management, who have offered only 5% plus a productivity deal.

Sirs—who opposes class struggle—has responded to this insult ... by calling in ACAS!

The scene is therefore set for a pay deal which will leave 90,000 steelworkers worse off than they were a year ago.

But there is also little chance that there will be anything like 90,000 steelworkers this time next year. BSC's rationalisation programme, which has already axed thousands of jobs, now threatens 1,700 jobs at Scunthorpe and 2,300 in the closure of the Bilston steelworkers.

"Better way"

Bilston was temporarily reprieved last year after Sirs got up at the ISTC conference and noisily threatened an all-out steel strike in its defence.

Not this year. Now he has found "A Better Way". Accordingly, ISTC leaders meeting last Friday made no decision even to fight the closure until

they had heard more details of their members' case!

Presumably therefore it is now necessary for ISTC members to argue with union leaders why they should keep their jobs!

With the advanced level of union "participation" alongside BSC management, a meeting with Sirs and the ISTC executive must seem like an interview with the CBI.

But the pinnacle of Sirs' squalid class collaboration so far must be his invitation to "people's prince" Charles Windsor to address the ISTC's delegate conference in Bournemouth in June.

While the fellow feeling between Sirs and his fellow parasite and reactionary is probably not unique, there are few union bureaucrats more in need of a royal decoy to divert attention from their total betrayal of the membership.

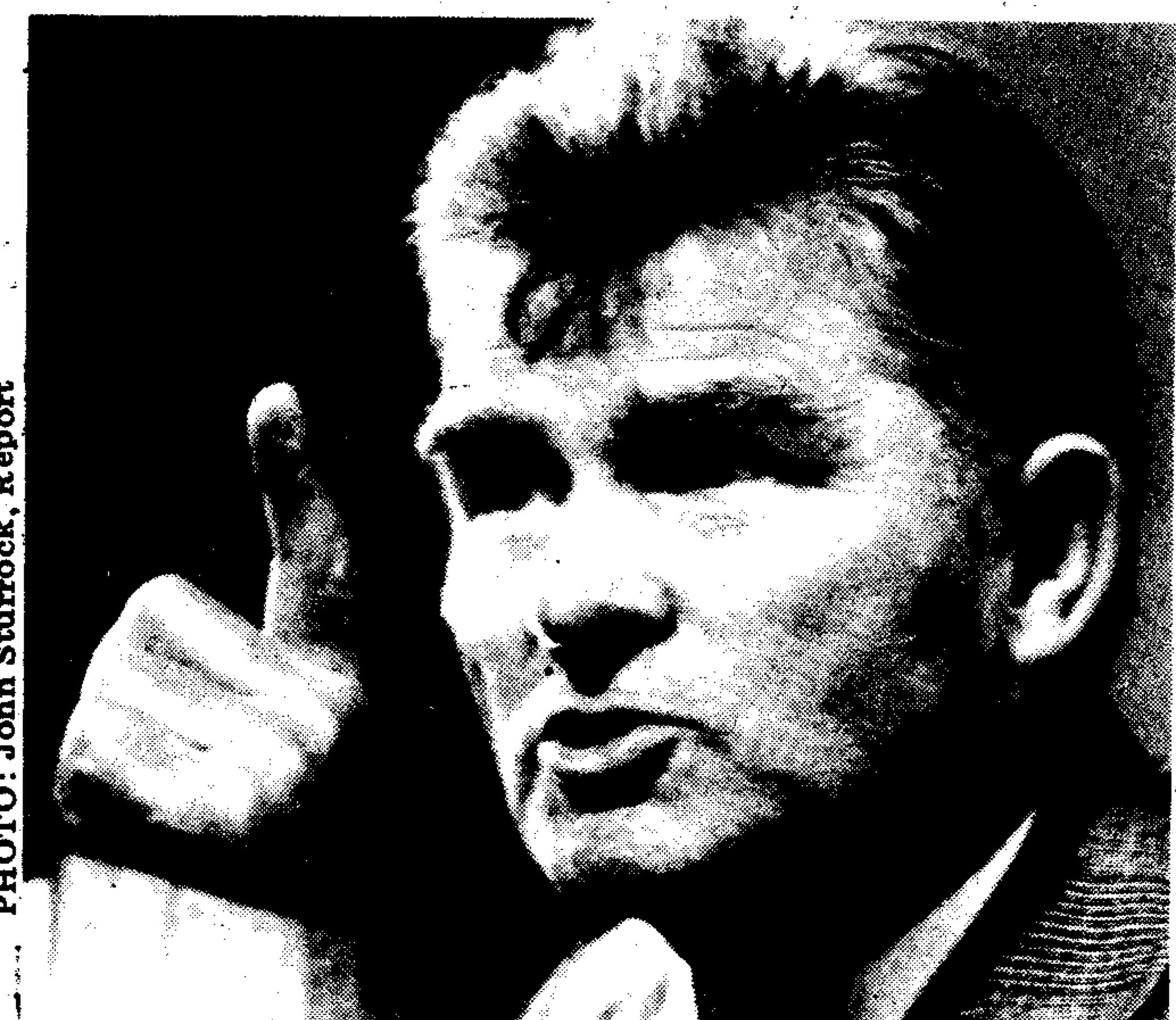
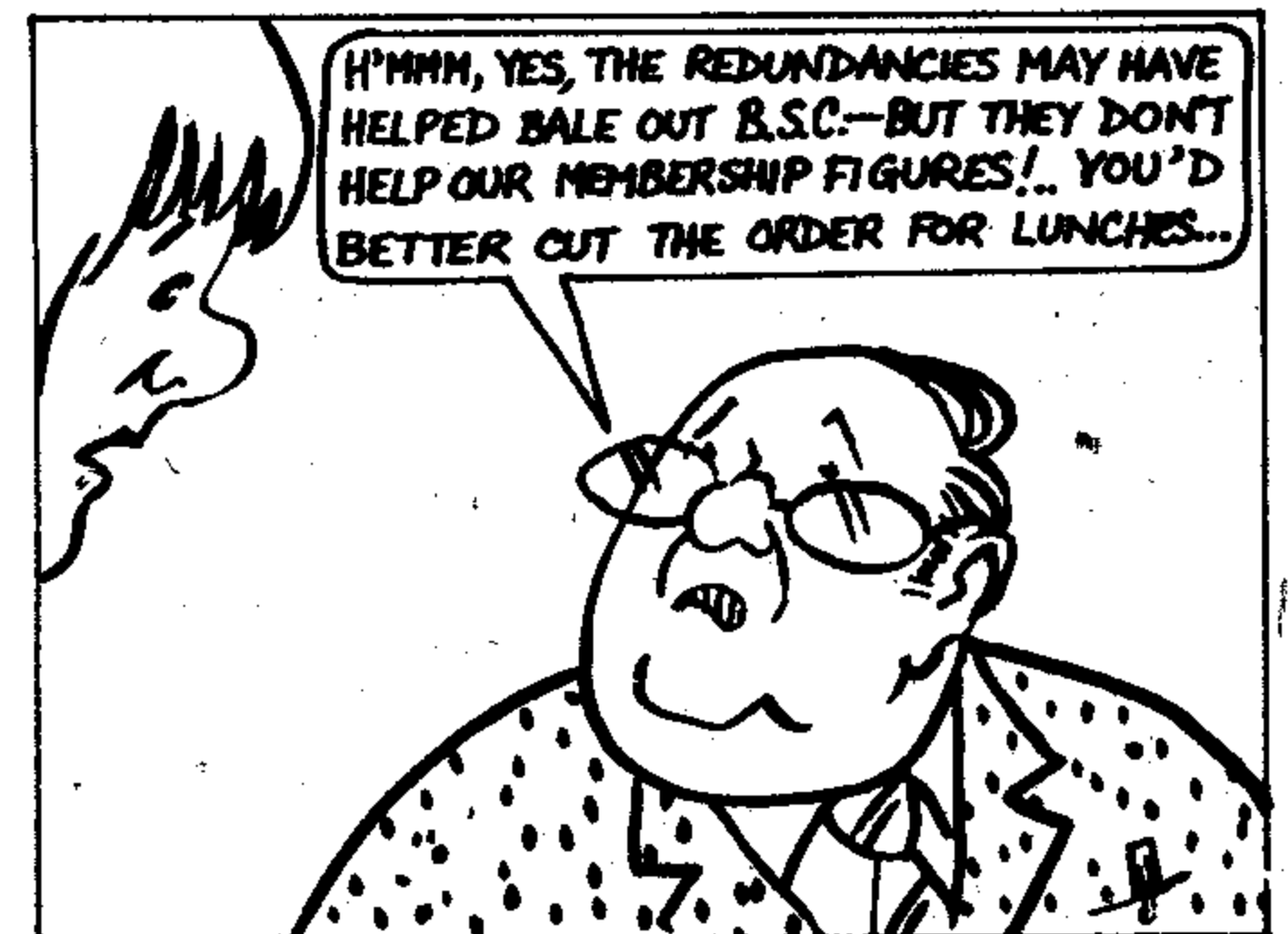
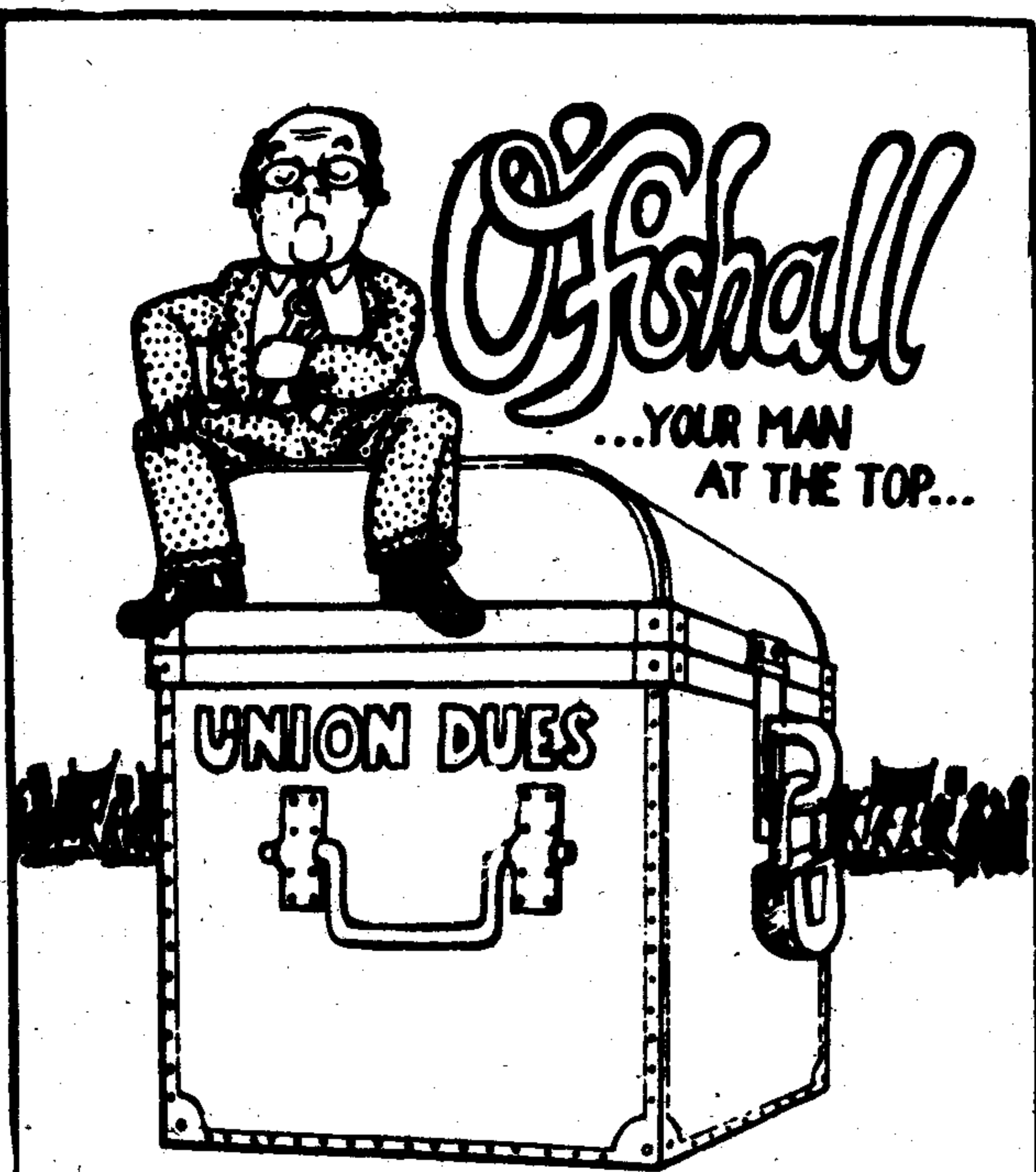


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Sirs



SOCIALIST PRESS



TGWU Region 5 climbs down

The Midlands Regional Committee of the TGWU acted out one of the final scenes of the long story of the Cowley 9 in Oxford last Friday.

The Committee took the

decision at its February meeting to find eight of the nine members from Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant guilty of a breach of union rules—but to take no action against them other than ask for assurances that in future those involved will work within the rules of the union.

The Committee adopted this position having been faced with the probability of a strike in the BL plant if the original recommended sentences of expulsion from the union in the case of Alan Thornett and banning from office in the case of most of the others had been carried out.

Last Friday the eight appeared in front of the Regional Finance and General Purposes Committee—who carried out the disciplinary hearing—and were asked to give the assurances required.

Completely innocent

Whilst giving the assurance (since working within the rules of the union is a condition of membership anyway and every member signs to that effect when he or she fills in the application form to join) they made it clear they were and remain completely innocent of all the allegations made against them.

All the eight intend to appeal against the decision that they were in breach of rule 11—covering general conduct.

The other member of the nine—Frank Corti, secretary of the 5/293 branch—is to appeal to the Final Appeals Committee against the decision of the General Executive Council of the TGWU to uphold the recommendation from Region 5 that he be banned from holding all office until the GEC so decides otherwise.

Callaghan plays the EEC card

Is Callaghan really out to upset the Common Market apple-cart?

Or is he just grasping for handfuls of rotting fruit to throw at the Tory leaders?

This question arises from a spate of anti-EEC rhetoric from Callaghan during last week in which he even threw in warnings that Britain might refuse to pay its full EEC budget contribution from 1981 if there was not extensive reform of its policies and expenditure.

In true tub-thumping style he denounced the well-known fact that three-quarters of the EEC budget is allocated to agriculture—including the subsidising of the notorious food mountains, wine lakes and olive oil puddles.

Alienated support

But his remarks have a good deal more to do with seeking to regain alienated Labour support in Britain than seriously wanting any changes in the Common



Valery—I'm so worried about Jim

Market—which has changed little if at all since Callaghan and Wilson in 1975 toured the country jointly with Tory leaders campaigning for a 'yes' vote in the referendum on membership.

Presumably preliminary soundings on the June 7 European Assembly elections have revealed massive hostility to the EEC among workers, who foot the bill for membership of a

capitalist club which benefits only the bosses.

Sick to the teeth of trying to pay Common Market prices with British wages, the working class would undoubtedly respond to a principled campaign designed to pull Britain out the EEC and to fight for a Socialist United States of Europe.

But Callaghan of course offers neither that nor any

other kind of socialist or internationalist perspective.

Instead, as the government stumbles around in the wreckage of the devolution fiasco—offering buy offs to irate bourgeois nationalists and squalid political deals with reactionary Ulster Unionists—he looks certain to end up leading the Labour Party into an enforced early General Election unable to offer even a shred of a policy to benefit the working class.

With inflation climbing back into double figures (and big increases in petrol and food prices to come), mass unemployment, and millions of workers still waiting to challenge the remnants of government pay policy, an election could hardly seem a less attractive prospect for Callaghan.

Chin up

The one consoling factor that must keep his chin up

is the fact that even under these conditions there is no sign whatever of any challenge to his leadership from the so-called 'left' within the Party.

The so-called 'alternative manifesto' drawn up by 'lefts' on the Party's liaison committee does not even mention nationalisation, and confines itself to pathetic generalities and gestures such as abolition of the House of Lords.

Principled fight

Only if a principled fight is waged within the ranks of the Labour Party for the removal of the Callaghan leadership and a socialist, internationalist programme can there be any prospect of changing this situation, exposing the 'left' fakers and driving out the right wing.

Such a struggle is crucial. Socialists must take it up at once.

Signs of a split in Iran regime

The continued upsurge of the masses in Iran is producing new tensions in the camp of the country's new would-be rulers, new betrayals on the part of would-be leaders of the working class and a new urgency to the task of building a revolutionary Trotskyist leadership.

Khomeini's Islamic committees have continued to impose summary justice on many agents of the old tyranny, including military officers and the Shah's secret police SAVAK.

This terror, however, which

is in no way controlled by the mass movement, is being increasingly redirected by its reactionary Islamic leadership into violence against the democratic rights of women and other groups.

The violence is an embarrassment to the government of Bazargan and Sanjabi who desperately want to rebuild a bourgeois state apparatus in Iran and to mend the country's fences with the imperialists.

Immense obstacle

The armed Khomeini committees and the other workers' and factory committees are an immense obstacle to this aim.

Workers' committees have launched a wave of wage claims to cover loss of wages during the strikes and lock-outs of the last few months.

Bazargan has dismissed these as "excessive" and economically damaging.

He has also described widespread demands (encouraged by Khomeini) for free water and electricity as dangerous demands which will lead to bankruptcy.

He and Sanjabi have been equally vehement against rising demands for national autonomy or self-determination from the people of Kurdistan, Baluchistan and Azerbaijan.

Open bickering

Bazargan has even specifically warned the Soviet Union against supporting such demands.

These concerns of the

capitalist Bazargan government are not so central to Khomeini and his more fanatical Islamic forces and there is increasingly open bickering between the two.

Bazargan has even pointedly stopped talking of the "Islamic republic" which is due to be voted on in a referendum on 30 March.

But Bazargan has publicly welcomed the increasingly abject support being given to his pro-capitalist regime by leaders of the "Marxist-Leninist" and left-wing Islamic guerrillas.

These "left" leaders are playing an increasingly treacherous role.

They have tried to stop the mobilisations of women fighting Khomeini's orders for them to wear the veil, arguing that these demonstrations might provoke reaction.

And the same leaders have given support to the reactionary Bazargan regime.

This treachery points to the urgency of building a genuinely revolutionary party in Iran which can lead and unite the fight for democratic rights (a Constituent Assembly, rights for women, self-determination for the nationalities); for workers demands on wages, jobs and nationalisation of industry and the banks; for the establishment of genuine organs of workers' power independent of the bourgeoisie and the Islamic hierarchy; and for a workers' and peasants' government in Iran.

An immediate part of such a revolutionary programme should be a campaign to boycott the March 30 referendum in which the masses are being given the Hobson's choice of two reactionary alternatives—the Shah or Khomeini's "Islamic republic".

Fight the SUS law!

Opposition to police use of the SUS law, especially against young blacks, is growing within the labour movement.

The SUS law, a section of the Vagrancy Act 1824 gives the police the power to arrest someone "being a suspected person loitering with intent to commit an arrestable offence".

Police have the power of arrest in such cases without a warrant on "reasonable suspicion".

No independent witnesses need be produced in court; trial is before a magistrate, not a jury; and the defendant will almost certainly not have committed any crime.

The SUS law is one of the main ways in which police harass black youth. In 1977 'L' division of the Metropolitan Police which includes Brixton, made 244 arrests for SUS.

178 of these were of black youth. Hundreds of other black

youth would have been stopped by the police and questioned but not charged.

The Scrap SUS Campaign was recently formed by immigrant organisations to fight for the repeal of the SUS law and Students Unions are increasingly taking up the fight against SUS which poses a threat to black students.

Demonstrated

Only last month a student from South London College was arrested on SUS while walking with a friend in Portobello Road on a Saturday afternoon. Fellow students later demonstrated outside Notting Hill Police Station.

Now the question is being taken up within the Labour Party. A resolution went to the last Labour Party Conference from Lambeth Central CLP and 50 Labour MPs have signed a Commons motion on the subject.

The Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party has also passed unanimously a resolution condemning the law. The LPYS have now called a demonstration against the SUS law for April 7 in Brixton.

The failure of the Labour government to repeal the SUS law comes as no surprise from a government which has strengthened police powers; extended the arming of the police; used the strike breaking thugs of the SPG against pickets and is even today using the police and army as scabs against the ambulancemen.

That is why the fight to end the SUS law and all these other reactionary moves must be taken up by every trade unionist and Labour Party member as part of the fight to remove the right wing Callaghan-Healey leadership and defend the democratic rights of the working class.



Hackney march against the SUS law last month

FUND

£393.93 in towards our £600 March target and eleven days to go. A tough challenge but one we cannot afford to fall short on.

All donations should be sent to: Socialist Press Monthly Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

SP Lottery London

February Draw Winner. No. 080 (prize £13.50).