



# LABOUR LEADERS CRAWL TO TORIES

Only three weeks after the election of Thatcher's savage Tory government, there has been a panic-stricken rush of trade union leaders seeking talks and agreements with it.

As even the pretence of price control was swept away, with the abolition of the Price Commission and a barrage of price increases hitting every working class family; as 22,000 civil service jobs were axed and a freeze imposed on local authority jobs; and as millionaire asset-stripper Heseltine limbers up for the total destruction of council housing, TUC leaders have been meekly staking their claim for "talks" with the Tories.

### 'Best deal'

Head of the queue was miners' President Joe Gormley, who proclaimed that:

"The people have made their choice of government. I am going to talk to Ministers to get the best deal I can".

But he was quickly followed by Alan "we've got to live with this government" Fisher—whose willingness to collaborate with Thatcher was hindered by a NUPE conference resolution mandating him to oppose TUC talks with the Tories.

ASTMS leader and former 'left' Clive Jenkins, however, succeeded in ramming through a conference resolution calling for a continuation of TUC/government talks begun under Labour.

Meanwhile TUC General Secretary Len Murray was lecturing an audience of 600 police cadets at Hendon, warning the Tories against rushing into hasty changes in the law on the unions.

### Ignorance

Showing his willingness to tame struggles, his concern for the plight of the police, and his profound ignorance of the daily harassment already meted out to pickets under existing laws, Murray announced that:

"By and large, local police and pickets are able to agree [!] mutually satisfactory arrangements within the framework of keeping the peace.

"And I think this is the best way to proceed—not by changing the law and giving you [the police] jobs which are impracticable to carry out".

TGWU bureaucrats did their bit towards collaboration by finally crushing the marathon recognition strike at Garners Steak Houses.

And Electricians' leader Frank Chapple outlined proposals for a pact with the Tories that would outlaw strikes prior to the end of each agreement and all political strikes.

### Social contract

These moves to collaborate with Thatcher echo not only the reactionary "social contract" under Labour, but the 3½ years



of TUC collaboration with the hated Heath government.

Time and again while workers clamoured for action, top union bureaucrats traipsed obediently to Downing Street for 'talks' with Heath, and returned to sabotage strikes and head off action against the anti-union laws.

Now in 1979 the new lurch in the international crisis of capitalism, symptomised most sharply by the fuel crisis, is drawing the reformist union leaders into even more profound and open collaboration with the employers and the Tory government.

### Brazen

But it has been Callaghan who has most brazenly summed up the prostration of the labour bureaucracy in front of the Tory offensive.

Lashing out at Labour's National Executive meeting last week, Callaghan brushed aside all the 'left' talk that has been bandied about by Labourites in the wake of the Election defeat.

Neither he nor the Party would support a trade union that took strike action for political reasons against the elected government, he declared.

He would condone no action which tried to thwart the implementation of the Tory government's policies, he went on.

Instead Labour should use the next five years to show up "the weaknesses of Tory policies"!

### Arrogant

Stamping on talk by NEC 'left' Neil Kinnock of renationalising without compensation industries denationalised under Thatcher, Callaghan arrogantly proclaimed that:

"As long as I am leader of the Labour Party I will do all I can to ensure the Party occupies the same middle ground in Opposition as it did when in government."

But of course none of the 'left' talkers present at the meeting took up this renewed challenge to them to launch a struggle for the removal of Callaghan, and it was his reactionary statements that were gleefully publicised by the Tory press.

But such capitulation to the Tory offensive by all wings of the labour bureaucracy is miles removed from the mood of the working class.

Two weeks of union conferences have seen time and again

workers seeking ways of censuring and removing their right wing and 'left'-talking leaders, and of pressuring their potentially powerful unions into action to defend jobs, trade union rights and living standards against attack.

The mass movement that destroyed Callaghan's 5% pay limit has stirred the entire working class and strengthened its confidence.

### Wrath

Those labour leaders that today under the Tories seek to continue the collaboration with the employers that marked the last five years of Labour government do so under conditions where they can very quickly face the wrath of their membership.

Far from it being possible simply to "unite against the Tories", the last 3 weeks shows that it is essential to break with and drive out the right wing and left talking collaborators from leading positions if any serious fight is to take place against Tory attacks.

### Principled lead

Such a break requires a principled political leadership,



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

### Callaghan

and a programme that can defend the independent interests of the working class and mobilise the kind of mass action that is necessary to drive this vicious Thatcher government from office.

## Spain's fascists call for coup

The Spanish fascist organisation, Fuerza Nueva, which four weeks ago mobilised a demonstration of 250,000 on the streets of Madrid, is now calling openly for a military coup on the pattern of July 1936.

Last weekend gangs of fascist thugs attacked the Madrid headquarters of the Communist Party and of the anarchist trade union, the CNT.

Fuerza Nueva have close sympathisers in the top echelons of the armed forces, which virtually seized control of the streets after four more assassinations of army officers and the explosion of a cafe bomb which killed ten in Madrid.

This new armed threat to the working class must be resisted by the formation of workers defence squads and a redoubling of the struggle to destroy Francoism through the mobilisation of the whole working class.

## Harlech envoy to puppets

As the Tories move hell-for-leather towards recognition of the reactionary Muzorewa-Smith regime in Rhodesia, Lord Harlech has been named the unofficial ambassador to the puppet regime.

He will operate a virtually continuous shuttle diplomacy between Salisbury and the so-called "front line states", seeking sufficient signs of weakness from their bourgeois governments for the Tories to proceed with full-scale recognition of Muzorewa.

The Tories have abruptly abandoned the strategy jointly developed between Labourite collaborator David Owen and Carter's token "black" reactionary Andrew Young.

The switch of line under Thatcher has forced Carter's US administration to reconsider its own policy, as Senate pressure mounts for the dropping of sanctions to open up supplies of cheap chrome and other raw materials from Rhodesia.

The British labour movement must act now to sabotage the Tories' plans to strengthen Muzorewa's puppet regime as a buttress against the independent struggles of the black masses.

A demonstration has been called in London on June 30, assembling at Spitalfield Market at 2.30 p.m.



## INTERNATIONAL

# FRENCH WORKERS OFFERED NO LEAD BY SP OR STALINISTS

The French Communist Party's 23rd Congress took place between 9-13 May against a background of intense struggles by the working class to defend jobs, working conditions and democratic rights and one month after the Congress of the Socialist Party.

After the massive 'March on Paris' two months ago, the government is trying to ban all demonstrations where there is a "threat of violence".

The struggle in the steel industry is still very intense against closures and redundancies.

### Occupations

Steel plants are occupied by workers, managers are being taken hostage, demonstrations are taking place and fights continue with the CRS riot police.

On a demonstration in Longwy, steel workers attacked a police station where some of their colleagues had been detained, and tried to destroy it with the help of a lorry driven against the walls.

Faced with this level of militancy, the trade unions are offering no perspective whatsoever except token strikes or marches.

One such was the march organised by the CFDT on Dunkerque, and not supported by the Stalinist-led CGT.

Only 2,500 workers took part and the workers' lack of confidence in their leadership was made very clear.

"It was not necessary to have come 400 kilometres to listen to this twaddle. In Longwy we have been fighting for four months and our actions are better united and structured", declared one worker at a meeting after the march.

Workers also called for a general strike, the stopping of

## U.S. gays clash with police

San Francisco contains one of the world's largest and most politically active gay communities.

The militancy of those gays was sharply expressed in a major riot last Tuesday, after the trial of former city councillor Dan White.

In November, White, a campaigning reactionary bigot, assassinated the city mayor and a prominent gay councillor who had lobbied against White's holding office.

Despite clear evidence that the crime was premeditated, the jury returned a verdict of 'voluntary manslaughter'.

5,000 demonstrators marched in protest the next day from the centre of the gay ghetto in Castro St.

From the reports available at present, it is far from clear how this mobilisation was organised, or what its political basis was.

At the City Hall they confronted riot police and tear gas.

When an unexploded canister was lobbed back at the police they broke ranks and rioting began in earnest.

A police car was set ablaze—the first of 30 to be wrecked or burnt out—and the indiscriminate police baton charges started.

As the demonstrators smashed their way into City Hall, over 80 were injured by the police attacks.

production in all sections of industry and occupation of "all official places where decisions are taken".

If the workers were looking for some leadership in the Socialist Party their hopes must have been shattered.

### Do no differ

Most of the Congress's time was taken by polemics between the two main sections, namely the Mitterrand section—claiming that his line of socialism went back to Leon Blum and Jaures—and the Rocard section, claiming that his faction's line of socialism went back to Jaures.

The rest of the time was spent in attacking the role of the CP in the "Alliance of the Left".

On the struggles of the working class and on socialist policies Mitterrand and Rocard

do not differ.

Mitterrand's position is "I am one of those who does not recognise myself in Marxism".

Rocard's position is similar: "without a free market freedom is not rooted anymore in the economic order and is therefore threatened."

Another leading Mitterrand supporter also made their politics very clear. "We do not stand for nationalisation".

Obviously the working class looked eagerly to see what the CP Congress would have to offer.

But predictably, it offered no alternative policies to the working class.

There were no arguments on the political line of the party.

This was ensured by bureaucratic manoeuvres in the selection of delegates and the total exclusion of militant workers from the Congress.

The Congress reaffirmed its main political line on government politics—against the enlargement of the EEC, defence, France's right to a "national defence" and a cautious move back towards the USSR with the attendance at the Congress of the head of the Russian trade union movement.

Marchais also defended the economic balance of the Communist countries. This was the only contentious remark of the Congress.

### No alternative

Marchais also emphasised the need for grass roots unity without jeopardising unity at the top—a reference to the CP-SP alliance.

Emphasis was also conspicuously placed on the need for unity within the CP, and also on the need for more democracy.

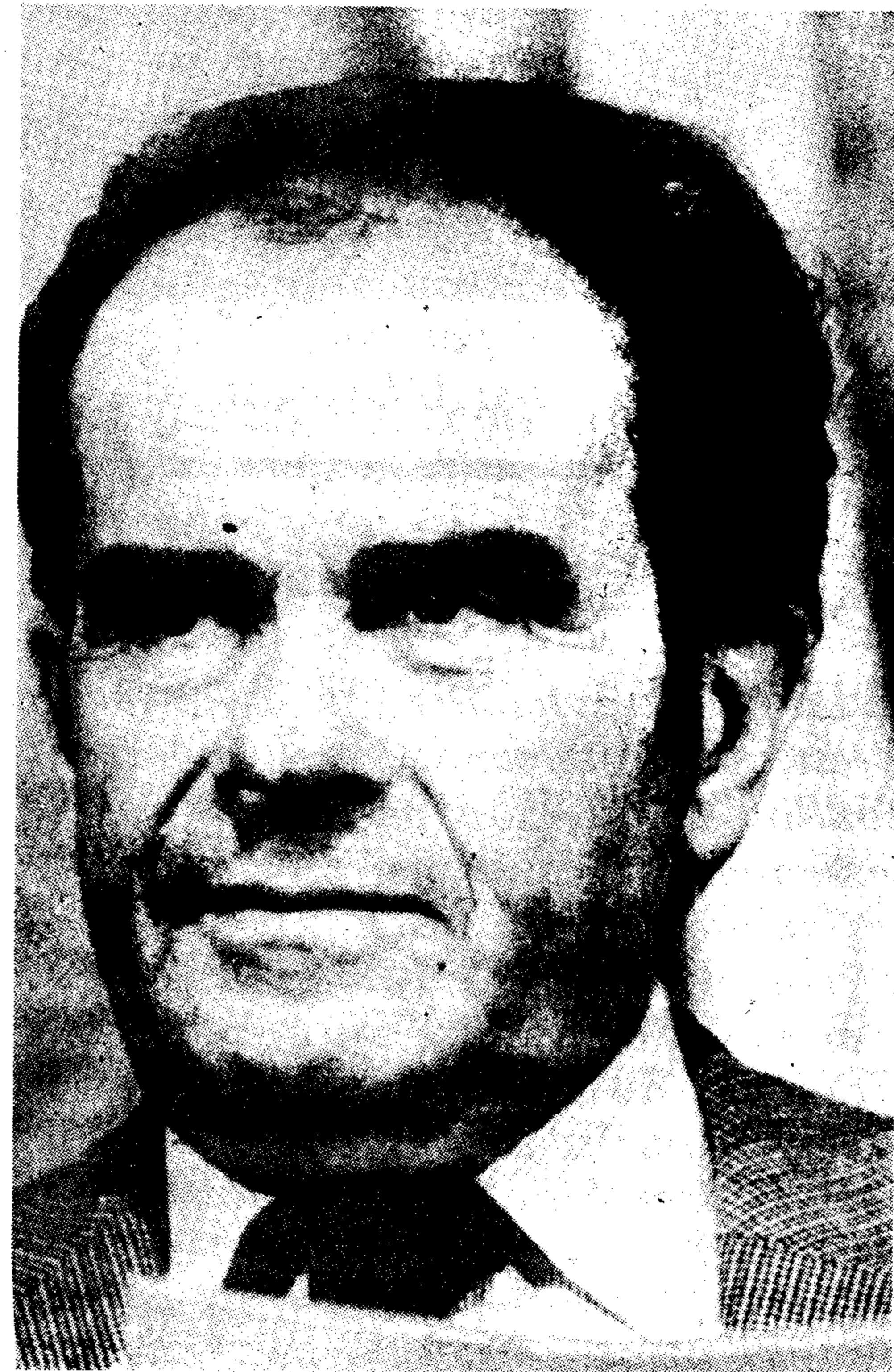
Workers in struggle would have a very difficult task if they were looking for a lead in the CP.

Its politics stay exactly the same. No call for mobilisation of the working class to fight for their jobs and basic rights was on the agenda.

After the bankrupt congresses of both CP and SP the working class confronted by economic threats to their living standards, has no alternative but to build a Trotskyist party which is prepared to fight for the independence of the working class against both the bourgeoisie and the CP and SP bureaucracy.



French steelworkers march



CP leader Marchais

# Moroccan tyrant faces mounting pressure

Royal despots have always looked forward with confident anticipation to lavish hospitality from Hassan II of Morocco. The latest to sample these extravagant pleasures has been Khalid, feudal monarch of Saudi Arabia.

The two kings met to find ways of buttressing their reactionary alliance against the gathering tides of revolution by the Arab masses which threaten to overwhelm the established imperialist order in the Middle East.

Hassan chose the occasion to make a 'moderate' statement on the spiritual duties of rulers and the proper uses of religion:

"I think we have no right to stir the faith of peoples or to light fires in the name of the Koran".

His talk of a "vast subversive conspiracy" at work within the Islamic sects was prompted, of course, by the Iranian revolution and the part played there by the Shi'ite leaders.

### Real concern

Neither Hassan nor Khalid however, will find much difficulty in reaching a satisfactory relationship with the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Their real concern is with the forces of opposition that have been spurred on by the overthrow of the Shah, and with the remaining threat that the proletariat may come to power in Iran through the still-unfolding revolution.

The pattern of the Iranian revolution will not be repro-



Hassan with Carter

duced in Morocco or Saudi Arabia. The political and economic history and conditions of these tyrannies are significantly different from Iran's for all the points of similarity.

Hassan has good reason to be alarmed at a certain revival of fundamentalist Islam in student circles—not for the development in itself, but because it is symptomatic of the impact made by events in Iran.

Within Morocco, Islam has a massive social weight that works for inertia; it does not represent a dynamic political force.

Hassan claims to be religious leader of 'his' people, and the Islamic clerics have not gained the political status which the ayatollahs acquired through the

Shah's process of secularisation.

At the same time, the Moroccan proletariat is far more strongly organised than the Iranian workers who had experienced the far more brutally thorough repression of the 'White Revolution'.

### Mass strikes

Already this year mass strikes have broken out in every major sector of industry, and college students have taken their place alongside workers in a movement that almost reached general strike proportions.

The character of the students' participation—as allies in solidarity with the working class, rather than an isolated

vanguard—has marked a new stage in the class struggle within Morocco.

The economic crisis, driven on more sharply by the continuing war in the Sahara, has also placed new burdens on the peasantry with limited, more extortionate credit and requisitions of food below market prices for the troops.

But at every turn the militancy of Moroccan workers confronts the barrier of the existing labour leadership.

Here, too, major developments have taken place—revolts within the opposition parties, and a split in the trade unions leading to the formation of a new national union confederation.

The present band of populist, reformist and Stalinist misleaders have nowhere been more united than in their shameful 'patriotism' and determination to prosecute the war of occupation in the Sahara.

Indeed for all its militancy and recent displays of strength, the Moroccan proletariat lacks any revolutionary leadership and has not yet shown a fixed determination to overthrow Hassan's tyranny.

In many ways, therefore, the war in the Sahara presents the Moroccan king with a more immediate threat.

These days one eye of Hassan's troubled vision is fixed on the fate of Iran. But he does not have far to look at Portugal for the equally dreadful example of disastrous colonial wars which led to the overthrow of a dictatorship far more deeply entrenched than his own.

In the past, sections of the armed forces have attempted various coups. Hassan's well-grounded fears have placed restrictions on senior officers which obstruct effective military operations against the Polisario.

The whole army has become demoralised by the experience of steadily losing a war, while the discontent among rank and file soldiers and the junior officers grows daily.

So long as the Polisario sustains its successful offensive, the threat of a new and more serious military coup grows to alarming proportions.

As an unwelcome guest of his fellow despot, the Shah was greeted with hostile demonstrations, wherever he travelled in Morocco, before being forced to take his ticket to the Bahamas.

Hassan has a justified reputation for shrewdness and prudence.

No doubt preparations to follow his royal brother into an exile of luxury have been well made against the day which is drawing closer at an ever swifter pace.



# CRISIS ROCKS SPAIN'S REFORMISTS

The right-wing General Secretary of the Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE), Felipe Gonzalez, was forced to resign at last week's party congress.

It was widely rumoured that, after he had made his dramatic and unexpected resignation speech, the first desperate plea for Gonzalez to change his mind came from the Francoist Premier Suarez.

Whether or not such a message was sent, the results of the PSOE Congress will produce nothing but alarm in Spain's capitalist class.

### Open fight

They now see the prospects of an increasingly open fight between the socialist aspirations of large sections of the PSOE rank and file and the right-wing leaders for control of the temporarily headless party.

The occasion for Gonzalez's resignation was his humiliating defeat in a vote which, against his bitter opposition, reaffirmed the PSOE's paper commitment to "Marxism".

But the dispute in the party in the six months before the emergency conference to elect a new general secretary is bound to rage not only around questions of words but also of policies and leadership.

### Disappointed

The two years of the PSOE's now legal operation have deeply disappointed millions of Spanish workers who have voted for a class party in the hope of opening the way for the socialist policies of which Gonzalez

demagogically spoke. They have seen a Francoist dictatorship change its form but not its personnel or its anti-working class policies.

And it has been allowed this freedom to operate

by the collaboration of reformist leaders like Gonzalez, along with his Stalinist counterpart, Communist Party leader Santiago Carrillo.

Disillusion with the leadership appeared at the

very start of the congress when the PSOE's parliamentary leader, Gregario Peces Barba, was rejected by the congress first as Chairman and then as Deputy-chairman, even though he was backed by the whole leadership.

Later, Gonzalez was only able to win the vote on his political report by making a demagogic self-criticism of the PSOE's support for the wage-cutting strike-breaking Moncloa Pact in 1977.

32% of the delegates to the PSOE congress voted against the main political report.

### One third

And in the vote on "Marxism" Gonzalez was reduced to a minority of only 31%.

These votes indicate a rough division of the delegates into three groups: one third open right wingers who lined up behind the main leadership on all questions; another third who wish to commit the PSOE formally to "Marxism" and "socialism" but who accepted the collaborationist policies of the leadership; and a final third who oppose both the policies of the leadership as well as its more symbolic efforts to point the party to the right.

This group includes "Trotskyists" and the Spanish equivalents of sections of the Tribune Group, as well as many independent militants.

### Demands of masses

But there is no doubt that they reflect the demands of the mass of the working class for policies to beat the capitalist and Francoist offensives.

The extent of the left



Stalinist chief Carrillo

opposition in the PSOE congress was certainly less than in the party as a whole.

Nonetheless it was a disagreeable surprise to the leadership who have spent the last year organising massive purges of socialists from the PSOE, especially in Euskadi and Andalucia.

The left forces at the congress remain, however, without any bold revolutionary leadership.

After Gonzalez' resignation none of them were ready to present themselves as an alternative leadership.

### Exploited

This failure was swiftly exploited by the bureaucracy who managed to get agreement for a 5-man committee of right wingers and the fakes of fake lefts elected to run the party until the special congress.

The militancy of the rank and file and the weakness of the bureaucracy, which the events of the PSOE congress have revealed, is a major new threat to the treacherous policy of consensus in post-Franco Spain.

And it has exploded at the same time as new threats of right-wing military takeover as ETA steps up its successful

terrorist campaign against army officers and the fascists organise with growing aggressiveness.

### Destroy

Only the mobilisation of the working class around socialist policies can destroy these threats from the extreme right.

The crisis which has opened in the PSOE offers a new opportunity to Spanish revolutionaries in the fight to build a revolutionary leadership.

## Fight French ban on Mandel!

The reactionary Giscard-Barre government last week expelled Ernest Mandel, leading member of the 'United' Secretariat of the Fourth International, from France.

He was detained on arrival at Charles de Gaulle airport.

They were applying a ban originally imposed on Mandel by De Gaulle and Pompidou.

We condemn this flagrant violation of democratic rights and call on labour movement organisations in France and elsewhere to denounce and fight against the growing use by capitalist governments of reactionary bans of this kind.

# Living hell on Bolivian tin mountain

Last week's powerful and moving documentary, *The Tin Mountain*, was the first of Jonathan Dimbleby's trilogy on Latin America to be screened by ITV.

The 30 minute film was a vivid insight into the crushing exploitation and poverty borne by Bolivian tin miners.

It is an almost feudal slave camp isolated from the rest of humanity, situated on a tin-rich rock 15,000 feet high in the Andes.

The miners work 12 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year for £1 a day.

Even this meagre sum is not their own. They are forced to queue for hours to spend it on a staple diet of potato and maize at the Company store.

Occasionally the Company, which is nationalised and controlled by the Bolivian

government, brings in putrid meat as a special "treat" reserved for underground workers—at 25% off.

Most of the meat finds its way onto a flourishing black market to raise money for the bare essentials or to pay off the massive debts which almost every family has to the Company store.

The mines are unventilated. 25% of the miners suffer an advanced stage of silicosis caused by the stone dust.

### Tuberculosis

This is combined with tuberculosis, which is endemic and untreated, to produce an illness which is quickly fatal.

Workers die at the rate of 38 a month from the labour force of 6,000. The average life expectancy of a miner is 37 years.

Medical treatment is poor and expensive.

Most miners have to lay and die in the cold damp Company houses in which they live.

Company houses are one-room stone constructions with

corrugated iron roofs. In some cases they house 2 families.

The rent for these hovels is deducted from wages and when a working man dies his family is evicted into the street destitute to make way for a family with a 'fit' worker.

### Disentry

Running water and sanitation is non-existent in these 'houses'. The lavatory is the street. Disentry is rife.

Unemployment is high. Those not "fortunate" enough to work for the Company are forced to scratch a starvation existence out of abandoned workings and from slag heaps.

Others, more "fortunate" gather the last grains of tin left in the sludge pits after the processing.

They work waist deep in sludge for long hours for a few pounds a week.

Even for this job there is a two year waiting list ready to take their jobs when they can no longer stand the pace.

The workers chew opium

leaves to numb their bodies against the effects of the work and to take away the hunger pains.

Despite these appalling conditions an amazing dignity is maintained by these Indian workers and their families.

Bolivian tin miners have a long and proud history as class fighters.

But with 60 military coups in the last 50 years, they face incredibly difficult conditions.

Last time they went on strike the town was sealed off by the military and the strikers were gunned down.

Dimbleby's film included moving interviews with women who described the brutality of the military at that time.

But as a documentary, of course, the film offered no way forward for these oppressed people.

Political activity in Siglo Veinte was evident from the Graffiti on the walls—mostly the work of the Bolivian Communist Party and the 'Trotskyist' POR.



Former dictator Banzer

The conditions of the Bolivian miners is getting steadily worse. Other cheaper sources of tin, together with the use of plastic has hit the tin market and reduced the price.

The reaction of the Bolivian military dictatorship is to increase the rate of exploitation even more.

But for the miners there is nothing left to give.

For the heroic tin miners of Bolivia the only way forward is to struggle against imperialist and capitalist slavery.

This requires a leadership with a programme which can prepare the conditions to end capitalism in Bolivia and throughout Latin America.



Gonzalez



Mandel

# ICTU FAILS TO FORCE IN NO-STRIKE PAY DEAL

Right wing leaders of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions were last week heavily defeated in their bid to force through their proposed 'National Understanding' with Jack Lynch's capitalist government.

By 318 votes to 119—nearly 3-1—the Congress threw out the Understanding, which offered a package comprising a 15% pay rise over 15 months, promises of reforms in the PAYE tax system, and talk of government measures to ease unemployment in exchange for a stringent no-strike agreement.

But it began to run into trouble as the Irish Transport and General Workers Union—the biggest union in the Republic—voted for rejection, mandating its 65 delegates at the ICTU to oppose the deal.

What was conspicuous about the ICTU debate last week was the absence of delegates prepared to oppose the deal on principle.

Rather the issue at stake appeared to be the exact price at which the independence of the trade unions should be sold to Lynch's pro-imperialist government—which has become a by-word for massive profits among the world's bankers and industrialists.

One delegate who seemed to break from this pattern of argument was NUJ speaker Brian Trench, who described the Understanding as little more than the old National Wage

Agreement "with knobs on".

He questioned whether the ICTU had been given any mandate to draw up such a deal, and challenged ICTU leaders to reveal whether there had been secret talks with the employers prior to the March 9 delegate conference.

Trench called for a return to free collective bargaining.

## Praise negotiators

Other speakers however were at pains to praise the negotiators and to avoid ruling out the possibility of reaching agreement with Lynch.

ITGWU Vice-president John Carroll, making the keynote speech against the deal, was careful to state that while its terms were unacceptable the emergence of the Understanding was "a very significant and historic event" in the relations between the unions and the State.

He haggled most over the no-strike clause and the minimum pay increases of only £4 under Phase One and £2 under Phase Two, which do nothing towards the ITGWU's stated policy of alleviating the conditions of the lowest paid.

The ITGWU, he said, would pursue its own policies on pay. There is no immediate evidence of what these policies are—or, for that matter, what the ICTU bureaucracy will do now to retrieve the situation.

Many pay reviews are already overdue from April 1 this year—and workers are likely

Lynch (second from left) with Finance Minister Colley and ICTU bureaucrats launching the Understanding.

to press forward more than ever for action.

Meanwhile, despite savage police violence against pickets, the marathon 15 week pay strike by Irish Post Office workers continues to halt mail and telephone communications—a further clear testimony to the mood of the Irish workers and their readiness to fight in defence of their living standards.

The Leicester April 21 Defence Committee has begun a major campaign in the labour movement for support for those arrested opposing the National Front's St George's Day march.

## Work starts on bulletin

The Oxford labour movement conference on Ireland (reported last week) is taking steps to bring proposals for a bulletin on Ireland back into the local trade unions and Labour Party.

A meeting of an ad hoc committee comprising trade unionists, Labour Party activists and local members of the

UTOM/'H' Block committee has made the first proposals for a campaign in the labour movement for a delegation to be sent to Northern Ireland.

In last week's report we omitted the constructive role that the Oxford UTOM/'H' Block Committee played both in helping to organise the conference and in proposing three out of the four resolutions carried by the conference.

LONDON UTOM Demonstration Saturday 16 June Assemble Speakers Corner, 2.00 p.m.

# Campaign defends anti-fascist victims

This opened with an intervention into the Leicester May Day celebration.

Since then meetings have been held with local people facing charges, and on May 14 when all those charged appeared before magistrates only one of the remaining 73 pleaded guilty.

His reward was a £660 fine for threatening behaviour and carrying an offensive weapon on a day when the going rate for 'non-political' assaults was no more than £150.

## Vengeance

This clearly demonstrated the determination of the state to wreak exemplary vengeance on all those prepared to take to the streets on basic class questions.

It also indicated the stand of the Defence Committee that what was involved was a political victimisation campaign designed to intimidate anti-fascists, which could only be fought by winning labour movement support and fighting a concerted and unified defence against all the charges.

Against the threat of massive fines and even prison sentences, the Defence Committee has asserted the need for a clear explanation of the role of the police and the thugs of the SPG on April 21—in particular their indiscriminate use of violence against demonstrators.

## Witnesses sought

Witnesses are being sought in defence of individuals and evidence is being compiled to expose the totally random way in which anti-fascists were rounded up and picked off by selected officers.

To finance the defence campaign and the court



cases in June, collections are being raised in factories and colleges and appeals have gone out to local unions.

The aim is to win broad labour movement support for a serious defence of the rights of those arrested to oppose fascism free from police harassment.

This means winning support for the policy of no platform for fascists and spelling out the critical importance of the demand for workers' self defence now, before the major Tory attacks on the unions begin.

## Evidence

Meanwhile further evidence continues to emerge on the scale of police violence against anti fascists in the Southall riot, in which ANL supporter Blair Peach was murdered by the SPG.

Socialist Worker this week reports the case of one Asian youth who has had to have his testicles removed following a vicious assault by police.

And speaking in Oxford last week Southall IWA leader Vishnu Sharma estimated total arrests on Monday 23 April at 700-800—with large numbers of Asian youth as young as 11

years old released without charges onto the streets from police stations miles from home at 2-3 o'clock in the morning.

It is essential that the struggle for a full-scale labour movement enquiry into this brutal police assault on Southall's Asian community is taken up with trade unions and Labour Parties everywhere.

A Leicester Defence Fund has been set up to cover fines and costs of those arrested on April 21. Send donations to: April 21 Defence Fund, Co-op Bank, Hotel St., Leicester.

## THE WAY FORWARD FOR YOUTH

A 16-page pamphlet detailing the policies of the Socialist Youth League. Price 20p plus 10p postage from SYL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

# PRESS GANG



Don't worry about price rises—it's all just a public relations failure.

The Daily Telegraph gave some prominence to a meeting last week between Angus Maude, Tory minister "responsible for information" and Tory Central Office officials, in which the officials deplored Maude's failure to pin the blame for price rises on the late Labour government.

It was one of those reports where no one is quoted and sources are not revealed, but which presents a detailed account of what went on dressed up in phrases like "it appears that..." and "there is disquiet in government circles that..."

The Telegraph correspondent says:

"The view is that this failure entitled the public to (believe) price increases were just as much the work of Mrs Thatcher's government as the axing of the Commission.

"It is also accepted that it will be an extremely difficult task to convince the public

otherwise, especially through the popular press".

There is nothing new in arranging for the press to present policy in a "correct" light and Tory officials will no doubt find a way around the problem.

## Problems

Problems Maude certainly has:

"Party officials told him that the abolition of the Price Commission followed by the announcement of a range of price rises, including those for gas, electricity and petrol had provoked an adverse public reaction and called Conservative policy on inflation into question".

The way this will be done was also made clear in that kind of cloudy way that the Telegraph has:

"It is felt that Ministers themselves should spell out the political case for a policy, when possible in advance of the factual Departmental announcement".

Or to put it more plainly, information will only be released by the department (on

price rises, etc.) after the Tory politicians have paved the way for their release with a political "explanation".

It is not only the Tories who have their problems. The Soviet Union has expelled two West German TV men and lampooned the correspondent of US News and World Report for being drunk while working.

Izvestia published a picture of the reporter—English-born Robert Knight—being sick after drinking Vodka at an official reception.

The Telegraph said he had been drugged and the picture had been a set up job.

Since the Soviet bureaucracy is quite capable of drugging drinks and since Western correspondents are quite capable of "drunken brawling, and a hatred towards Russia" it would be foolish to plump for truth on either side.

Maybe Maude might like to take note of the dispute. A couple of crates of vodka for pliable pressmen should iron out any little misunderstandings liable to arise over prices, jobs, etc.

# Why EEC fat cats are begging you to vote on June 7



The Common Market has been in existence for over 20 years. Britain has been a member for over four years.

During all this time the EEC has been run by a group of highly paid (on tax free salaries) appointed bureaucrats in Brussels.

All major political decisions have meanwhile been taken by the Council of Ministers which represents the individual capitalist governments making up the EEC.

The European Parliament has always been envisaged as a completely irrelevant side show to divert attention from the absolute policy-making power of these two powerful bodies.

Its main purpose is to allow politicians from the local parliaments let off steam in Europe and posture as "reformers" of EEC institutions.

## Not influenced

It also enables the Commission of bureaucrats in Brussels to have direct contact with local MPs so that they could be easily influenced in the hot house of Brussels far away from any "normal" pressures from Constituents.

All this remains unchanged with the advent of direct elections.

The powers of the European Parliament are strictly limited.

They can reject the EEC budget—but they cannot amend it or add to it.

They can also remove the entire Commission—but not any individual.

They can ask questions about the running of the EEC—but cannot start any legislation!

## Insight

These powers will remain the same with the direct elections.

An insight into the reality of the "work" of the European Parliament was offered recently in a *Labour Weekly* supplement



Thatcher and Schmidt—wondering how to get out the vote on June 7?

financed by EEC funds.

Describing a jet-set trip to Luxembourg by would-be Labour Euro-careerists, the article waxed lyrical about how "taxing" such tax-free jaunts can be:

"One day you will spend hours at an official lunch [!], but the next you may be unable to find time even to grab a sandwich.

"And meetings lasting late into the evening may be followed by protracted discussions in the hotel bar until the dawn breaks.

"Such informal contacts, however, often prove to be the most fruitful part of any meeting and it was these, no doubt, that the candidates in Luxembourg found most useful [!]."

The question we have to ask is why the individual capitalist governments and the Commis-

sion are willing to spend millions of pounds on promoting direct elections to such a weak and ineffectual body.

## £200 million

Practically the whole of the budget of the Information Department of the Common Market is being spent on promotion of the election, along with allocations from other EEC sources. The total cost will exceed £200 million.

The EEC is giving money to every political party that stands. This will include the Communist Party and the Labour Party.

Money has also even been given to the Official Sinn Fein.

These organisations share these grubby handouts with organisations such as the fascist MSI in Italy.

It is not just at the level of the Common Market that this benevolence has been shown to the Labour Party.

In Britain itself every call by Labour politicians to vote in the elections on June 7 has been given a maximum fanfare of publicity in the television and newspapers.

The big problem—admitted by the media—is the immense apathy shown towards the elections, not just in Britain but in every Common Market country.

In reading the various accounts there seems to be a competition going on among the working class of Europe to achieve the lowest turnout in these elections.

Every British politician both Labour and Tory are working themselves into a frenzy over

this massive indifference.

It is, of course, not indifference to the Common Market, but hostility to participation in it or support for it.

If the poll was about leaving the EEC the interest would shoot up and the politicians of every stripe would face an uphill battle to prevent a vote to pull out.

## Recession

But why are the capitalists so keen on getting everyone to vote?

The reason lies in the place of Europe in the present developing world economic recession.

It is going to be necessary to make even harsher the attack on the working class of each of the European countries.

The employers hope that the

Parliament will provide a body that will aid them in carrying out these attacks.

It will certainly be a "representative" body that will not be influenced by any reaction from the working class.

Once elected MPs are there for five years. They cannot be removed.

They are cocooned from the working class by the vastness of their constituencies and their £25,000 a year salary plus expenses.

And, above all, there is a built-in Tory majority in Britain and in the Common Market because of the rigging of the Euro Constituency boundaries.

## "Representative"

The more votes cast in this election, the more the Tories, and the Labour collaborators, will be able to claim the European parliament "represents" everyone.

It does not matter who you vote for in this election—the Tories will win it and the EEC will remain unchanged as an anti-working class alliance of European capitalists.

Only last week, explaining away a runaway increase in the EEC's scandalous "butter mountain" and defending the ludicrous Common Agricultural Policy, a top EEC Commissioner arrogantly pointed out that no matter how much candidates may talk of "reform", this wasteful policy is a *fixture* within the EEC that cannot be removed.

## Charade

Nor can any other basic EEC institution. The "Parliament" is a charade designed to con the European working class.

This is why we have consistently argued for a *boycott* of the June 7 elections throughout Europe, and a struggle in each country for the overthrow of capitalism and withdrawal from this capitalist bloc.

Only such a struggle, as opposed to any illusory hopes of internal "reforms" of the EEC—can lay a foundation for the internationalism of a Socialist United States of Europe.

# FIGHTING FOR NURSERIES

# PTA used in crackdown

**SERTUC CONFERENCE**  
"Care of the Under Fives"  
Saturday 30 June 1979  
Congress House, Great Russell St, London WC1  
Credentials (50p) from Jim Watson, 106 Mount View Road, London N4  
**Speakers:**  
Arthur Latham, Chairman, London Labour Party  
Reg Race, NUPE  
Margaret Cohen, National Campaign for Nursery Education  
Chair: Tess Gill, NCCL

**OXFORD TRADES COUNCIL CONFERENCE**  
The TUC Under-fives Charter  
Saturday July 8  
OCCR Hall  
Princes Street  
  
Speakers from Oxford City Nursery Campaign and the NUT among others

**LEICESTER TRADES COUNCIL CONFERENCE**  
Saturday June 16  
2.00 p.m.  
Highfields Community Centre  
"Women's Right to Work and the need for Day Care"  
Speaker from Oxford City Nursery Campaign  
More details from 74, Highcross Street

Peter Grimes, former London organiser of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, was released from Paddington Green police station last week after being held for two days under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Police released him before a hearing on an application for habeas corpus, after a doctor reported his mental condition was deteriorating.

Grimes told the *Observer*: "I was so frightened I was prepared to write anything, confess to anything,

name anybody, just so they would give me a period of peace".

## Third time

It was the third time Grimes had been picked up and grilled about the Neave bombing as part of a police campaign in London which has dragged in several republicans for questioning.

Grimes, aged 31, was in the army for four years and has been out of the IRSP for three months.

About 300 police are now engaged in an all-out campaign of harassment under the guise of their investigations. The PTA is their basic tool.



PTA architect Roy Jenkins

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

## NEXT WEEK

*Socialist Press* will feature a report of last week's SYL conference and a reply to a letter received from a Militant supporter.

# Social democracy : there never was any 'golden age' !

By Johnny Byrne

"To say 'not replace the apparatus but reform it' means to be a reformist, means to become not a revolutionary but a reformist democrat. Reformism means nothing more than concessions on the part of the ruling class, but *not* its overthrow; it makes concessions, but power remains in its hands."

(Lenin: *Can the Bolsheviks retain State Power?*)

The Labour Party in Britain represents the archetypal model of social democracy in practice.

It is the living example of a reformist approach to politics, a walking condemnation of the view that capitalism can be tinkered with until it yields (in the words of the Party's constitution) "the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange".

The Labour Party is affiliated to the 'Second International', the grandiose name for a whole rag-bag of the world's social democratic parties.

The Second International is, however, nothing more than a pathetic charade, an occasional excuse for bureaucrats from different nations to get together to swap stories about how they are propping up capitalism in their respective countries.

## Imperialist war

Formed in 1889 the Second International failed to survive the impact of the First Imperialist War in 1914 when the most powerful section (the German Social Democratic Party) voted in the Reichstag for war credits for its own imperialist ruling class.

At the crucial moment, when the bourgeoisie in every country was forcing workers into a horrific blood-bath to defend "the national interest" through imperialist war, the so-called 'socialist' parties in Europe showed their true colours and fell in behind their "own" national capitalists.

The lessons of this historic betrayal are of vital importance to the revolutionary movement.

The key question for us remains the breaking of the mass of workers from their reformist leaders.

## Expose record

To do this, the record and practice of social democracy must be relentlessly exposed, as Trotsky wrote in 1915 when he referred

to:

"the old Socialist Parties which have become the main hindrance to the revolutionary movement of the working class."

It was necessary, he said, that these parties should:

"demonstrate to the full their extreme backwardness; that they should discredit their utterly inadequate and narrow methods; and bring the shame and horror of national discord upon the proletariat, in order that the working class might free itself, through these terrible disillusionments, from the prejudices and slavish habits of the period of preparation and become at last that which the voice of history is now calling it to be—the revolutionary class fighting for power". *The War and the International*.

In Britain, the Labour Party gained enormously from its support for the war.

The ruling class saw that here was a ready-made intermediary to fool the workers into believing that "national interest" was greater than class interest.

The role that the bureaucracy was already playing in the labour movement was widened and deepened by the government, who knew only too well that military success depended entirely on efficient industrial output.

## Opposition

The militancy of the working class erupted continuously in "unofficial" struggles, but the rewards of historic betrayal were finally reaped by the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucrats when in 1918 Labour became for the first time the biggest opposition party.

1918 was a key year for the Labour Party. A new constitution was adopted and it was transformed from a loose federation of affiliated organisations into a centralised party, organised into local constituency parties subject to discipline and national cohesion.



TGWU leader and later Labour minister Bevin after betraying the 1926 General Strike

The party's officially adopted platform was "Labour and the New Social Order", an anaemic document which set the tone for piecemeal advance and capitulation to capitalism in all its forms.

The formation of a Labour Party as a break from the confines of the openly capitalist Tory and Liberal parties had represented a political gain for the working class.

But the Labour Party was born deformed with the cancers of parliamentarism, reformism and class collaboration.

Many workers today have the illusion that the Labour Party was once a genuine fighting socialist organisation and that it is simply a matter of returning to some 'golden age' of principled politics.

## Bourgeois

Nothing could be further from the truth. The Labour Party *is* and always was, as Lenin termed it, a "bourgeois workers' party".

It has *always* fought against those who seek to expose the sham of parliamentary democracy, and it has *never* attempted to do

more than smooth some of the roughest edges of capitalism.

As such, Callaghan and Healey are simply the latest running sores on a body that has produced such monumental traitors as MacDonald, Henderson, Attlee, Gaitskell and Wilson.

The best conditions for exposing social democracy occur when the reformists are in power.

## Unemployment

The first Labour government was formed in 1923 when 191 Labour MPs were returned against a background of rapidly rising unemployment.

The leadership was in the hands of Ramsay MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas, Henderson and the petit-bourgeois Fabian banner Sidney Webb.

Policy was decided by these men in private meetings at Webb's house.

After one such meeting Snowden wrote the following comment in his memoirs:

The conversation turned upon what we might be able to do in the first session of Parliament. There would be two courses open to us.

"We might use the opportunity for a demonstration and introduce some bold Socialist measures, knowing that we would be defeated.

"Then we could go to the country with this illustration of what we would do if we had a Socialist majority.

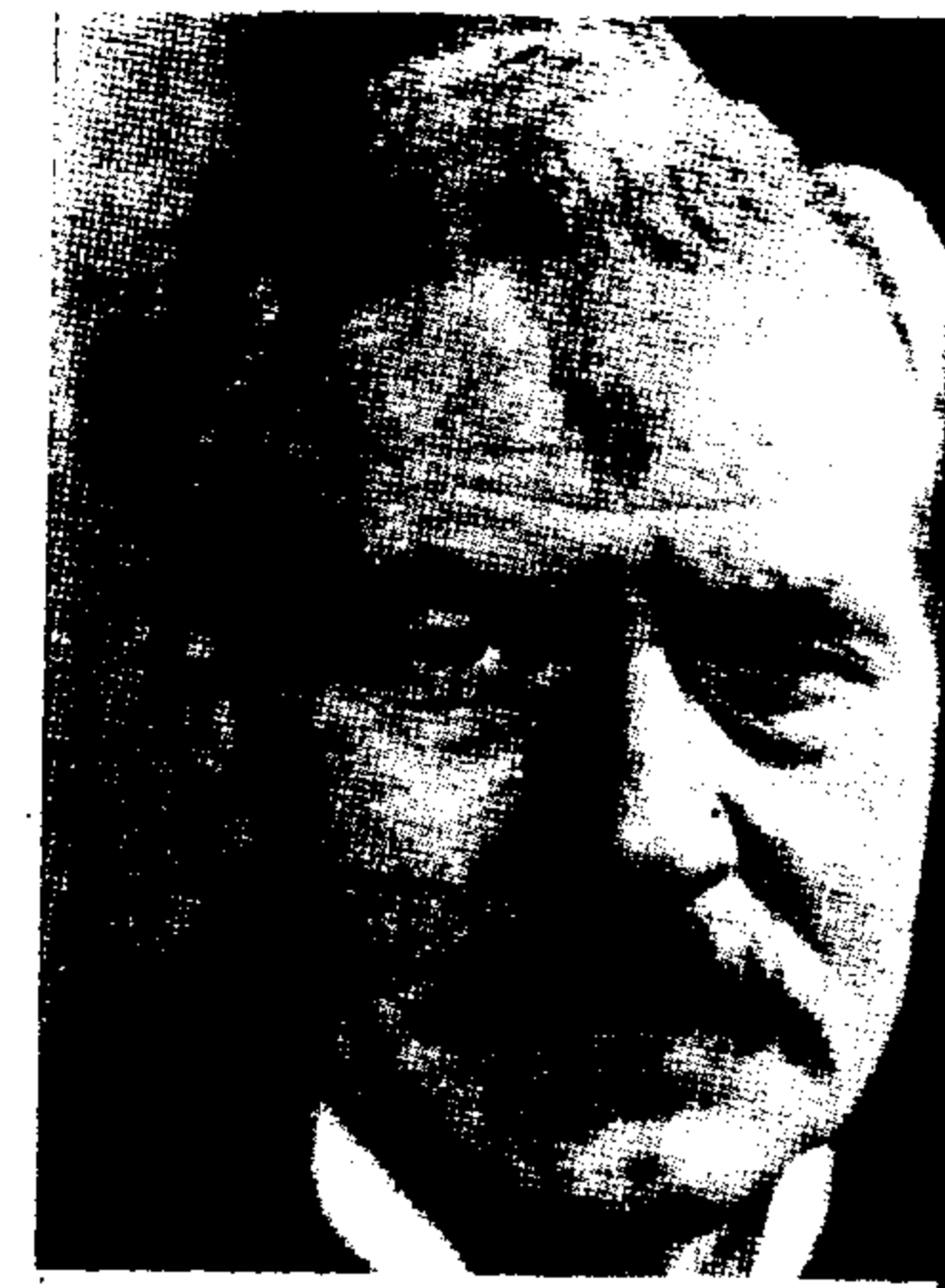
"This was a course which had been urged by the extreme wing of the party, but it was not a policy which commended itself to reasonable opinion.

"I urged very strongly to this meeting that we should not adopt an extreme policy but should confine our proposals to measures that we were likely to be able to carry . . . We must show the country that we were not under the domination of wild men."

MacDonald himself promised repeatedly to "bring the wild socialist members to heel".

## Minor reforms

The record of this first Labour government speaks for itself—a few minor reforms on housing and welfare benefits, complete refusal to repeal the Emergency Powers Act



MacDonald



Labour's 1973 conference —

(which chained the unions to war-time restrictions), full support for British imperialism (especially in India) and vicious repression of strikers (notably the London transport workers).

Jimmy Thomas, Colonial Secretary, proposed a toast to the Empire at the 1924 Exhibition with the words that Labour intended:

"above all else to hand to their successors one thing when they gave up the seals of office, and that was the general recognition that they were proud and jealous of, and were prepared to maintain, the Empire".

Indeed the most striking feature of those, the first British social democrats in power, was their absolute desperation to appear as decent middle class diplomats who kept their caps firmly in their hands.

The Labour leaders vied with the Tories as to who could be the most virulently anti-Communist.

Accordingly, after 10 months and despite increasing class polarisation, the first Labour government collapsed—learning nothing from its defeat.

The next two years were marked by a huge upsurge of working class militancy in the face of rising unemployment and wage-cutting.

## 'Red Friday'

In 1925 major strikes by textile workers and miners won important gains, notably the 'Red Friday' victory of the miners which forced the Tories to scrap the wage-cutting proposals and subsidise the mines.

The Labour Party leaders responded with expressions of "concern" that a government and employers were being compelled to give concessions through "force rather than reason".

This prepared the ground for the historic defeat of the British working class in the General Strike of 1926, when the Labour leaders kept up continual secret talks with the government in attempts to engineer grovelling settlements.

This collaboration by the reformist bureaucrats was not some monstrous aberration. It was simply a natural and inevitable consequence of the implicit support for capitalism which is built into the social democratic consciousness.



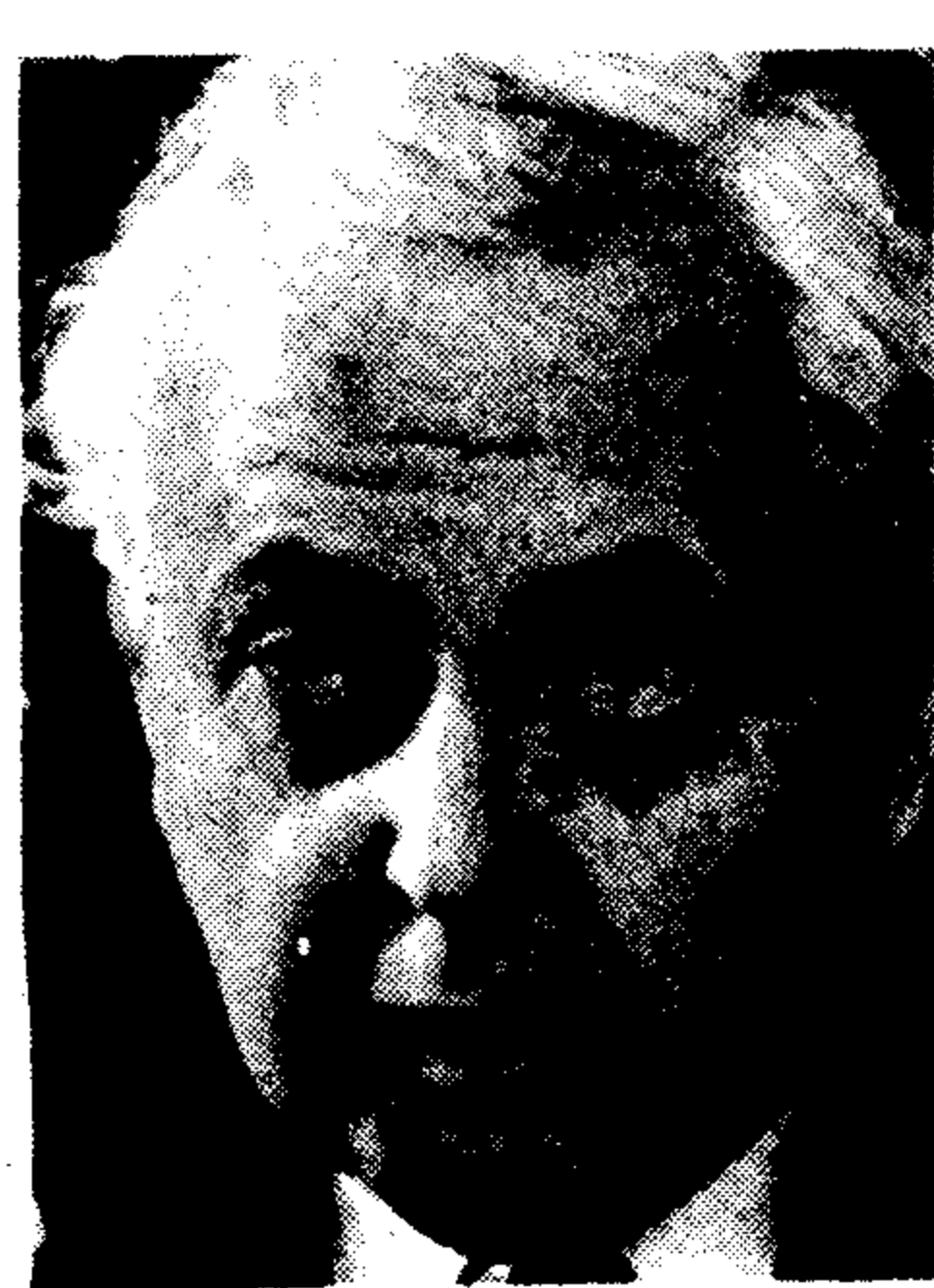
Sankey



Thomas



Gaitskell



Wilson



Callaghan

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Commonly portrayed as a key shift to the left.

As Jimmy Thomas himself admitted:  
 "I suppose my usual critics will say that Thomas was almost grovelling, and it is true.  
 "In all my long experience I have never begged and pleaded like I begged and pleaded all day today, and I pleaded . . . because I believed in my bones that my duty to the country involved it."

**Paramount**

Capitalist Britain was of paramount importance, dwarfing any case that the three million strikers, spear-headed by a load of starving miners, might have.  
 When the working class moves and flexes its muscles the reformists are invariably frightened out of their wits.  
 One single independent action by workers threatens the whole mandate that the ruling class has granted to social democracy.  
 As the capitalist crisis intensified and employers pressed home their advantage on a demoralised workforce, the Labour Party elaborated a "tentative

doctrinless socialism" (MacDonald's words) that it hoped would soften the blows of capital.  
 The crisis of 1929 was so sharp that a gut class vote returned Labour to power with 287 seats (the Tories had 260 and the Liberals 59).  
 This second Labour government presided over 2½-3 million unemployed. It resolutely set its face against those who had put it in power, and stepped up cooperation with the Tories and Liberals (especially the latter).  
 The collective impotence of the Labour 'lefts', the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Stalinists of the Communist Party — then engaged in the ultra-left policies of the 'Third Period' — contributed to a strengthening of MacDonald's position.  
 In his first speech as Prime Minister of the new collaborationist government, MacDonald wondered:  
 "how far it is possible, without abandoning any of our party positions, without

in any way surrendering any item of our party principles, to consider ourselves more as a Council of State and less as arrayed regiments facing each other in battle".

Thus the way was cleared for the betrayal of the National Government in 1931.

It was gradually dawning on the centre of the Labour Party that MacDonald and his circle were losing even the most tenuous connection with the labour movement.

The crunch came when Snowden introduced £96 million worth of public spending cuts in the summer of 1931.

£66.5 million of this was accounted for by a 20% cut in unemployment benefit!

Even the TUC turned on the government, who accordingly resigned. The National Government which followed was a coalition of Tories, Liberals and four leading Labourites—MacDonald, Snowden, Thomas and Lord Sankey.

These four were expelled from the Labour Party, though no political break was made with their policies.

This episode is crucially important to an understanding of just how useful social democrats are to the bourgeoisie.

**Prefer Mac Donald**

One of the Opposition leaders, Sir Herbert Samuel, told the King that:

"in view of the fact that the necessary economies would prove most unpalatable to the working classes, it would be to the general interest if they could be imposed by a Labour government . . . or the best alternative would be a National Government. It would be preferable that Mr. MacDonald should

remain Prime Minister in such a National Government".

In the subsequent election, Labour was, not surprisingly, smashed—returning only 52 MPs opposed to the National Government.

As unemployment continued to rise and wages to fall, and with fascism looming larger, the 1935 election saw Labour regain a further hundred seats.

**Coalition**

The Second Imperialist World War in 1939 saw wholehearted participation from the social democrats; Attlee, Morrison, Cripps and Bevin all holding important posts in Churchill's coalition government.

Again, with millions of workers being put to death in defence of competing sections of capital, working class militancy began to reassert itself.

The miners' strikes towards the end of the war and the return of the troops in 1945 prepared the ground for the first post-war election.

Labour was returned with its biggest majority ever (a majority of roughly 160 over all other parties).

Anyone who had illusions that this big majority would usher in a period of socialist policies, however, was in for a rude awakening.

The Labour Party was as incapable of changing its spots in 1945 as it is today.

There are still many myths about the 1945-51 Labour government that need to be nailed.

Tribunites point to the nationalisations and the National Health Service and other reforms as a triumph of socialism.

Nothing could be further from the truth. The concept of socialism played little part in the nationalisations Labour undertook.

Already the demands of war had extended the State's role in industry. The reformists simply extended this State intervention further.

Nationalisation, where it occurred was understood as a means of rationalising failing, but basic, sectors of the economy, not as a means of destroying capitalism.

**No planning**

What nationalisation was done was carried out with no attempt at socialist planning of production nor any reference to the supply and distribution of commodities.

Excluded from the process of nationalisation was any form of workers' control or management of the newly nationalised industries.

At the same time, however, the previous owners of these largely bankrupt firms were very handsomely compensated by the Labour administration.

The NHS, which represented a gain for the working class, on the one hand, also became a sitting target for private supply industries on

the other.

All that the reformists had achieved for a consenting bourgeoisie was a way of keeping workers healthy to promote the post-war reconstruction of capitalism.

Similarly with the educational reforms which were carried out.

The Labour government and the TUC set out quite consciously to stifle any militant action by the working class. In the six years after the First World War, 190 million working days were 'lost' by strikes; from 1945 to 1951 only 13 million were so 'lost'.

And where the trade union bureaucracy lost its stranglehold the Labour government was quick to act. Troops were used to smash up strikes on an unprecedented scale—notably continuing struggles by dock workers.

The government consistently refused to revoke the repressive anti-union Order 1305 (passed early in the War in 1940).

**National oppression**

The British army was used to oppress national rights abroad (particularly in Palestine and Malaya) and Labourite Ernie Bevin became one of the main architects of NATO.

Despite these betrayals, the 1951 election saw hatred of the Tories and bitter memories of the 20s and 30s give Labour its highest ever percentage of the poll (48.8%).

But this was not enough to stop the Conservatives taking over the job of rebuilding capitalism themselves by a small majority of seats.

For the next 13 years the cancerous body of British social democracy was haggled over by the right wing leadership, under Gaitskell, and the windy 'lefts', like Bevan.

Any attempts to build a serious challenge to the reformists of right or left were met with witch-hunting and expulsion.

Gaitskell at least had the honesty to back moves to drop Clause 4 from the Labour constitution (that is the clause that pontificates about achieving common ownership "by hand and by brain") but the majority of Labourites fought to keep the clause with a passion that mirrored the depth of their own delusions that the Labour Party could ever carry it out.

By 1964 Harold Wilson, after careful manipulation of a moderately 'left' image, had replaced Gaitskell and led Labour to a narrow victory in the election.

**Efficient capitalism**

"Modernisation" of the economy was Wilson's watchword, a policy which mainly consisted of making capitalism more efficient by encouraging a greater concentration of private economic power.

The middle classes showed their appreciation of Wilson's efforts by deserting the Tories in the

1966 election. For Harold Wilson the conclusion was clear:

"It proved that Labour could give national leadership, that we rejected the Conservative concept of cynical conflict between class and class".

Class conflict, however, has a hasty way of continuing despite the verbal denials of bureaucrats.

The seamen's strike of 1966 provided a particularly sharp reminder for Wilson, who succeeded in helping the NUS bureaucracy to regain control by witch-hunting strike leaders.

This, and the attempts to railroad in anti-union laws in 1969 of course were merely a prelude to the massive attacks on workers launched by Wilson, Healey and Callaghan in the last Labour government.

These attacks were carried out under conditions where working class action, led by the miners, had smashed the Tories under Heath and returned Labour to power (for a chronological survey of the record of social democracy between 1974 and 1979 see *Socialist Press* 145).

The key aspects to stress in the patient exposure of the reformist parties by revolutionaries are the consistency of social democracy's betrayals and the continuity of its support for capitalism.

Arguments about whether Callaghan is worse than MacDonald, whether Attlee was better than Wilson and so on are pure diversion.

Reformism does not follow a downward course from some more principled point in the past.

Reformism follows a consistently anti-working class strategy.

**Traditional leaders**

Moreover, whilst advanced layers of workers have broken with reformism and taken up the struggle for a revolutionary perspective, the mass of the working class is still bound to its traditional leaders.

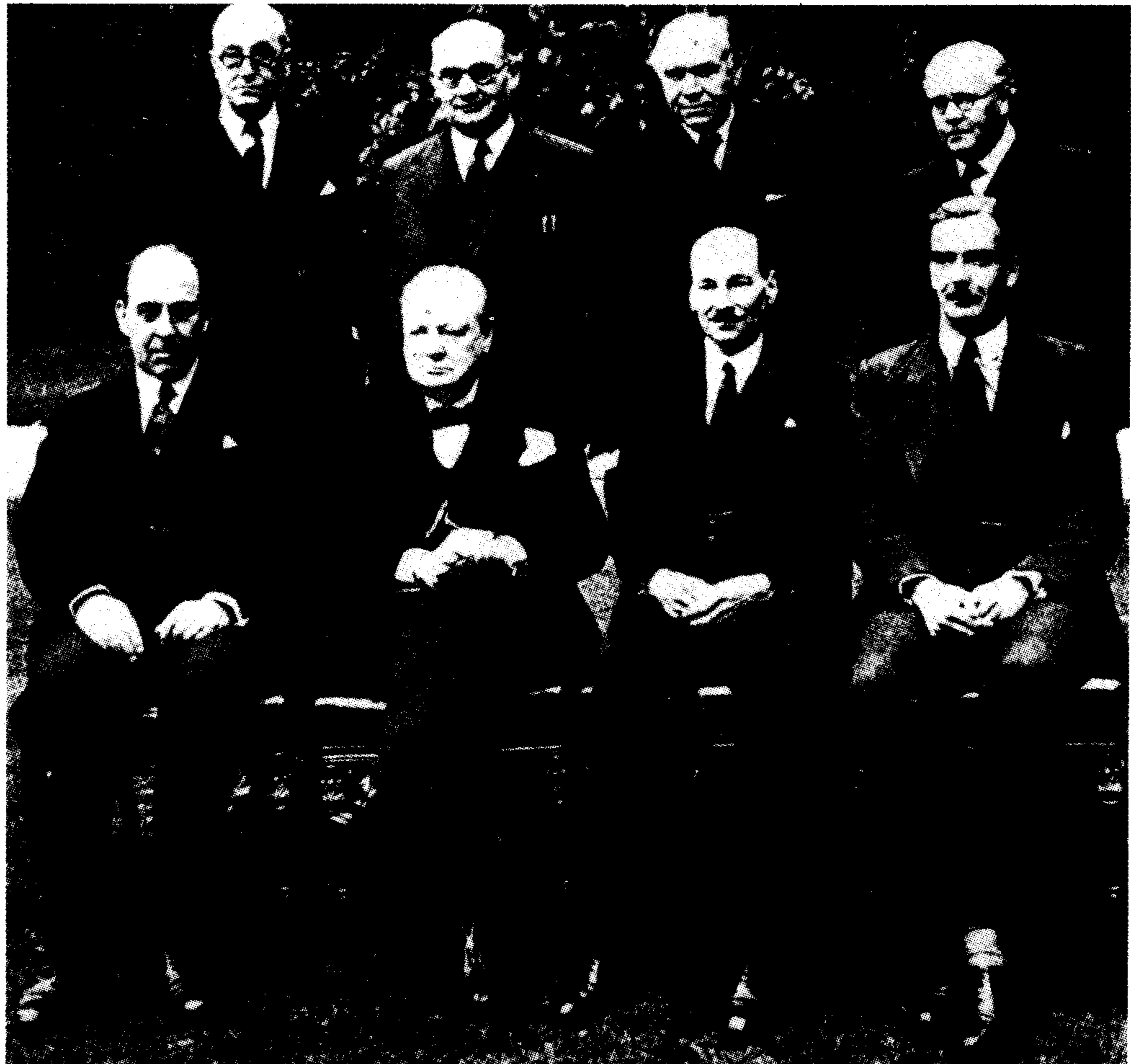
The degeneration of the Third (Communist) International, the counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism, and the splitting of the Trotskyist Fourth International by opportunism and sectarianism have all contributed to this.

Only Trotskyists, fighting patiently and consistently on the Transitional Programme with the transitional method can expose the reformists for what they are.

The Workers Socialist League stands for the reconstruction of the Fourth International on the basis of a struggle for the principles of the Transitional Programme.

As Trotsky wrote in 1935 (in *Once Again the ILP*):

"An absolutely clear programme is the first condition. A small axe can fell a large tree only if it is sharp enough".



Labourites Attlee, Morrison, Bevin and Cripps served in Churchill's reactionary war coalition.

# USFI LEADERS 'UNITE' TO

The immense revolutionary upheavals that toppled the Shah in Iran; that continue to rock the racist regimes of Southern Africa and military dictatorships throughout Latin America; that in 1974 brought down Portuguese fascism and today still threaten the stability of Franco's heirs in Spain; and that have found their reflection in recent mass struggles by the working class in nearly every European country, are clear testimony to the colossal strength and tenacity of the working class.

But they also indicate—each in its own way—the continuing and historic crisis of leadership that has proved the key factor in limiting these struggles to spontaneous explosions of militancy which have failed to attain the level of consciousness necessary to carry through the socialist revolution, sweep away once and for all the repressive machinery of the capitalist state, and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## Programme

To lead such struggles, Trotskyist parties are needed. Such parties must be based on the programme, the principles and the method that were developed out of the experiences of the Russian Revolution, and the continuous struggles against Stalinist degeneration of the CPSU and the Third (Communist) International, as well as against every form of centrism.

This kind of clarity is also vital in the struggle to construct a leadership capable of mobilising and directing the struggles of the workers in the deformed and degenerated workers' states of Eastern Europe, Asia and Cuba towards the political overthrow of the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies that monopolise political power in these countries and feed off the progressive nationalised property relations established there.

## Contradictory

It was with this historic political task in view that the Trotskyist Fourth International was founded in 1938. But since Trotsky's death and the complex and contradictory changes in the balance of class forces in the post-war period, the FI has found itself wracked by successive crises, each revolving around the problems of analysing the manoeuvres and counter-revolutionary politics of Stalinism.

This led in 1953 to a major split in the International, which divided into the two main currents that remain with us today:

1) an opportunist wing, grouped around Michel Pablo and Ernest Mandel, which responded to the post-war changes by throwing overboard the established Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism, and instead adapting to emerging "progressive" forces;

and 2) an "orthodox" wing, around Cannon, Lambert and Healy, which responded to the new problems by clinging on rigidly to formulations drawn up in the past, and refusing to examine their own past mistakes.

## Cuban revolution

The Cuban revolution, in which Trotskyists were faced with the necessity to chart a path that steered clear of adaptation to Castro's petty bourgeois nationalism, and that correctly analysed the role of world Stalinism in moulding the evolution of the Cuban state, produced a further split in the "orthodox" forces, with Cannon's American SWP breaking politically from the International Committee to rejoin the political camp of Mandel and Pablo.

The inability of the remain-



ing IC "orthodox" forces to agree on anything beyond the repetition of general political truisms and hostility to Pabloism opened the door for a further split in its forces, and in 1971 Lambert broke away to form the present-day OCRFI, based around the French OCI.

To compound the confusion, both the OCRFI and the IC have since 1971 each in their own way moved towards the opportunist adaptationist politics that are the hallmark of the Pabloite USFI.

In which direction, then, are militants to look for the continuity of the Trotskyist

programme and method? To the "orthodox" statements and opportunist practice of the OCRFI? Or to the grotesque combination of sectarianism and capitulation to bloodstained petty bourgeois nationalist regimes of the Middle East, embodied in the "anti-Pabloite" IC?

## Promise of "unity"

Of course neither of these offers the answer. But large numbers of would-be revolutionaries, while rejecting both of these options wrongly seek the answer in the promise of

"unity" held out by the much larger USFI.

Of course every revolutionary seeks to be part of a mass-based revolutionary movement. But there is no virtue in numbers if they are achieved at the expense of programmatic clarity.

A revolutionary party must prove itself not by its size but by its ability in practice to offer correct leadership to the working class under the fire of great events. The USFI's record makes it unable to offer such a lead.

Its "unity" is indeed an artificial creation based on

common confusion, evasion and an opportunist "agreement to disagree" on crucial questions that divide its main component currents. It is a paper unity that cannot be extended into the practice of its various sections.

## Bitter divisions

After five years of bitter factional divisions over the question of guerrilla war in Latin America, the 1974 events in Portugal found the American SWP (barred by reactionary US laws from affiliating to the USFI) and its supporters in the LTF at loggerheads with Mandel's supporters, in a conflict that still has not been resolved.

The SWP's supporters adapted to the Portuguese Socialist Party, while Mandel's IMT signed joint agreements with the Stalinists and trailed after the petty bourgeois Armed Forces Movement. More differences emerged over the war in Angola.

But in 1977 moves were made to dissolve these factions and produce a "united" leadership—"united", that is, on a refusal to discuss past differences and an equally opportunist assessment of current tasks.

Subsequent events have brought the rapid collapse of even that "unity".

The recent wars in South East Asia brought forth a huge spectrum of opposing assessments throughout the USFI's various sections—with none of them able to arrive at a principled or consistent analysis of Stalinism.

The SWP has dug in and defended its position of refusing to call for the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Kampuchea, against public polemic from Mandel.

And the SWP is persisting in this stand despite a majority vote by the USFI to adopt a "troops out" position.

Far from offering a cohesive organising centre for a world party of socialist revolution, therefore, the USFI offers a confused debating chamber for all manner of undisciplined tendencies—in which even on the occasions that votes are taken, the minority feels free to disregard the result!

## Common struggle

Nor is the discussion within the USFI equally open to all tendencies. The "united" front between Mandel and pro-SWP supporters is waging a common struggle against the oppositional Bolshevik Faction, led by Nahuel Moreno, which commands the allegiance of a majority of USFI forces in Latin America.

A lengthy document by Moreno attacking the "united" USFI leadership's document *Socialist Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* has been effectively suppressed by the USFI.

And the WSL discussion document, *The Poisoned Well*, submitted to the USFI early in 1978 for circulation in the discussion prior to the XIth World Congress, has also been suppressed, by a joint decision of pro-Mandel and pro-SWP

# Unanswered questions for the IMG

The following letter was sent on October 25, 1978 to Brian Grogan of the British IMG and to other leading members of the USFI and of its sympathising sections, pressing the case for the circulation of *The Poisoned Well*. No reply has yet been received to any of the points it makes.

Dear Comrades,

Our National Committee has now discussed the letter dated 29 September from Comrade Grogan of the IMG (copy enclosed). In it, he spells out the changed attitude of the IMG and the USFI towards the long-standing proposals for the WSL to become involved in the pre-conference discussion prior to the USFI XIth World Congress.

We noted in particular Cde Grogan's statement that:

"In the first place, we need clarification as to your exact characterisation of the FI. It is essential that we start from a mutual recognition of the revolutionary character of our two organisations." (para 4)

This is quite clearly a marked change of position from that expressed in the USFI resolution "Relations with Trotskyist organisations or

groups claiming to be Trotskyist which are outside the FI" which was adopted on April 3-4 1976. That resolution stated that:

"While this (the WSL) should be clearly characterised by us as a Trotskyist organisation, it maintains a slightly different relation towards us than the other currents previously mentioned—stating simply that it will not pre-judge in advance of discussion whether the FI is a Trotskyist organisation or not. However, as it clearly does not characterise the International as "counter-revolutionary destroyers of Trotskyism" etc, as do the WRP or OCRFI, we should maintain the same essential framework of relations with the WSL as with the other groups mentioned in this section..." (p.3) [the resolution then goes on to talk of some unspecified "unfortunate

sectarian moves" by the WSL, of which we have heard no mention since]

Our position on the characterisation of the USFI has not changed from that day to this. Nor, in the absence of discussions, could it have done so.

## Clear

Our latest statement on the matter, therefore, in the WSL document *The Poisoned Well*, makes this absolutely clear:

"It is necessary for the world Trotskyist movement to re-examine the issues bearing on the post-war role of Stalinism in order to clarify and correct the wrong positions that have been adopted. For this purpose, the USFI, the IC and OCRFI leadership and sections, for all their false positions, cannot be regarded in advance as having placed themselves outside the world Trotskyist movement."

It comes as some surprise to us therefore to find that—after two years of exchanges on the proposals that we submit material for the XIth Congress discussion—Cde Grogan's letter now attempts to persuade the WSL that we should start the discussion with the USFI at a point which could only be reached as a conclusion of a thorough process of discussion: an acknowledgement by us that the USFI is, beyond question, a revolutionary organisation.

## Discussions

For our leadership and cadre to be convinced of such a position it would first be necessary for discussions to begin, and for these discussions to be connected—as outlined in *The Poisoned Well*—to a thorough examination of the practical work carried out by the USFI and its sections.

We had understood that this

was the purpose of the long-standing USFI invitation to the WSL to submit material to, and become involved in the discussions prior to, the XIth World Congress.

It was for this reason that we responded positively when, first of all in the summer of 1976 Comrade Grogan wrote to us proposing the following:

"... we could go rapidly forward to a membership meeting, with the participation of a member of the United Secretariat which could take forward the discussion. We think the WSL should agree to this proposal as well as taking up the proposals of the USEC concerning making a contribution to the World Congress discussion."

That same letter (August 1, 1976) concluded:

"(iii) The WSL should make a submission to the discussion for the next World Congress. The IIDB [Discussion Bulletin] would be circulated to WSL members. To further debate this, a membership meeting should be held at which half the time should be devoted to the submission of the WSL and half to the discussion in the FI—with the basis of this the two Political Resolutions of the last World Congress..."

We would point out that there was no mention either in this letter or in the USFI's preceding April resolution of any preconditions being imposed on our submitting a document to the World Congress. Nor was there in existence at that point—to the best of our knowledge—an agenda for that Congress.

And when, some six months later, Cde Grogan wrote again, arranging for us to receive our first consignment of IIDBs in line with our prior agreement, he made no attempt then to lay down preconditions or to prescribe any topics to be covered

by our submission to the discussion. He merely informed us that the projected date for the Congress was, at that time, May 1978.

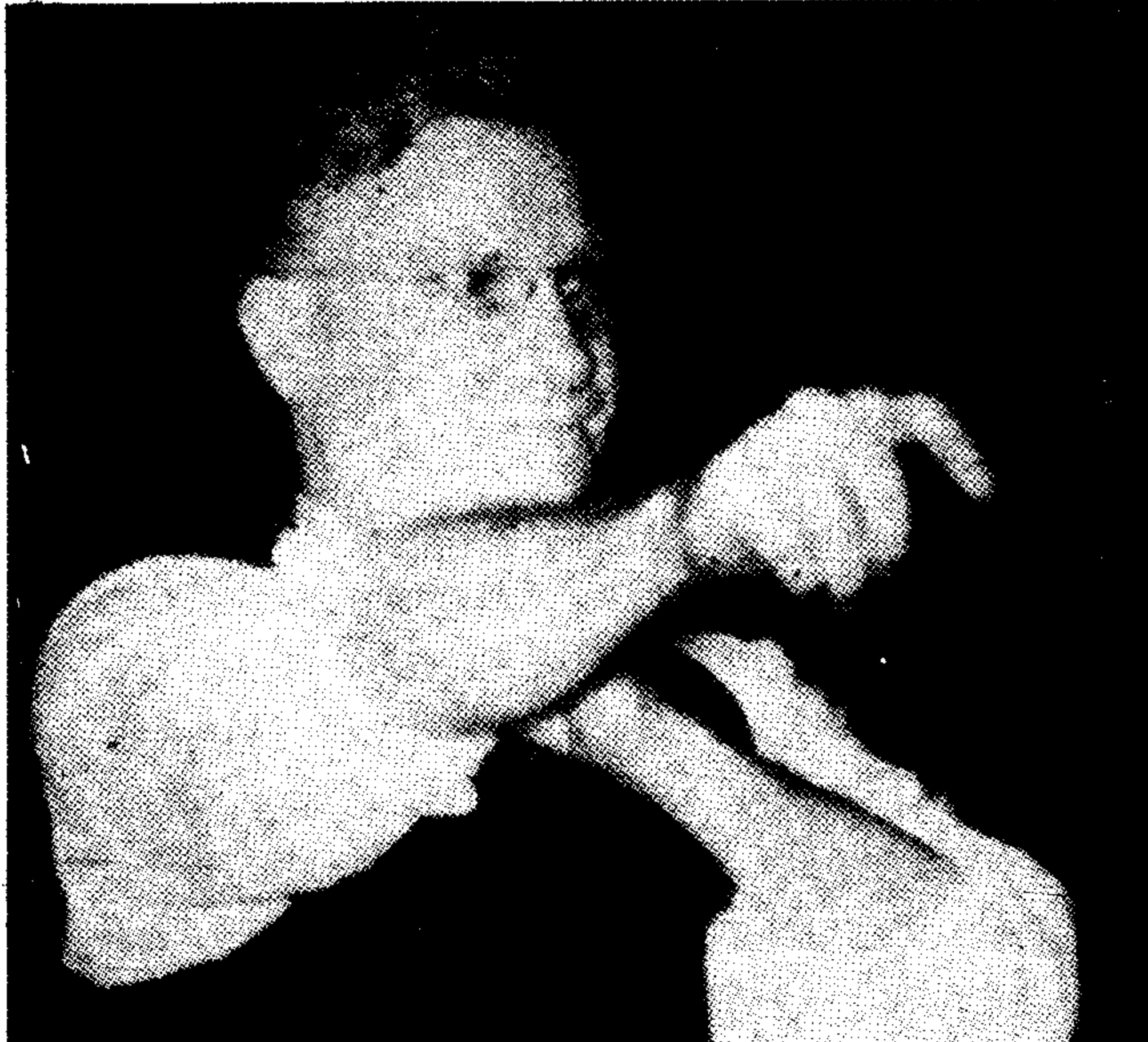
## Timetable

Drawing on the material contained in the IIDBs, and having regard initially to this tentative timetable, we drew up our document *The Poisoned Well*.

As it became clear that the XIth Congress would be delayed well beyond May 1978, we made discussion of our contribution a part of the discussion for our own Second Annual Conference, and it was finally adopted in an amended form in February 1978.

Our intention remains to complete the second half of this project, which will be a document dealing with the lessons of the recent class struggle in Europe.

At no point during this entire preparatory period—d



James P. Cannon

**TROTSKYISM TODAY**

**INSIDE:** • Mandel's dance with Stalinism  
• The significance of the Transitional Programme  
• The US SWP 40 years on.

Price 45p plus 15p postage from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.



# BLOCK DISCUSSION

We reprint below the Introduction to the French and Spanish language editions of the WSL document *The Poisoned Well*, published this week.



Healy



Lambert

forces within the USFI. What are they afraid of? The document focusses on an analysis of the historical evolution of the USFI and its present political positions from the time of the 1953 split in the International. It sets out to prove that the most recent wrong positions of the USFI on guerrillaism, Portugal, Angola, etc., are far from being isolated errors of assessment, but the fruits of the history of the USFI itself.

### Wrong method

It shows that these "mistakes" form part of a fundamentally wrong method of

analysis and a wrong approach to the fight for programme in *method* of analysis and a wrong approach to the fight for programme in the working class, which leads, *inevitably*, time and time again, to opportunism. Why, then, since the USFI has from 1953 been based on essentially false positions and remains inadequate to the demanding task of giving Trotskyist leadership to the workers' movement internationally, did the Workers Socialist League accept an initial USFI invitation to participate in the discussion prior to its XIth World Congress? Our view is that the Fourth International entered a

profound crisis in the post-war period and has been essentially destroyed as an organising centre by the opportunist politics of Pabloism.

All that remains are its degenerated fragments—chiefly the USFI, the OCRFI and the Healyite IC. Within these three groupings are to be found the bulk of the forces that on a world scale regard themselves as Trotskyist.

Any attempt to resolve the crisis of the FI must direct towards these forces and seek to break them from their present opportunist course.

The Workers Socialist League is not a part of any of these groupings.

We recognise *none* of them as the exclusive continuity of Trotskyism, but in *all* of them we recognise historic links to the crisis-ridden Fourth International.

Remembering our own origins in a struggle within the British WRP against Healyite sectarianism and opportunism, we see the need to wage a fight to develop the struggle for principle and programme within each of these international groupings.

### Reaffirm

*The Poisoned Well* is intended to argue with USFI militants and others the necessity in today's political situation for a re-examination of the lessons of the Trotskyist movement, and for a reaffirmation, both in theory and in practice of the

basic political principles and method on which the FI was founded, but from which its present-day remnants have strayed in the last 30 years.

Only such a self-critical approach can provide the basis for a thorough-going *break* from the opportunist methods of the past, and for a genuine struggle to reconstruct the FI as a disciplined, centralised International capable of carrying forward the struggle for revolutionary leadership against Stalinism and all forms of petty bourgeois nationalism.

### United rejection

The USFI leaders are certainly "united" in rejecting any such approach.

Though a USFI resolution in July 1976 spelled out an invitation to the WSL to submit a document to the XIth Congress discussion without preconditions, the appearance of *The Poisoned Well* has prompted repeated moves by the USEC bureau to reverse this decision and exclude the document from the discussion.

There has, however, been no attempt whatever to reply to its political content.

And while the USFI's British section, the IMG, has made token moves towards discussing the documents, the USFI itself has *withdrawn* its original offer to translate and circulate *The Poisoned Well* to its sections.

We consider that such moves indicate the political weakness of the USFI's position on the issues raised in the document.

In essence the "united"

leadership knows that it does *not* agree on a range of fundamental political questions essential to the defence and application of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme in the class struggle—in particular the characterisation and post-war role of Stalinism; and the need for *Trotskyist* parties to be built to counter Castro-style "progressive" petty bourgeois nationalist formations.

These questions are of course *not* dead issues that can be relegated to past history but arise again and again as living problems in today's struggles of the working class internationally.

In ourselves now making *The Poisoned Well* available in French, Spanish and soon Danish, the WSL and its co-thinkers are setting out to fight the USFI's attempts to suppress discussion on these key issues.

We aim to press forward our struggle for the kind of objective and thorough political discussion that is necessary to lay a solid basis of genuine agreement for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

### Demand answers

We call on all militants of the USFI, the OCRFI and the IC to raise these questions within their own organisations and to demand that their leaders respond.

But we warn also that they will be met by bureaucratic obstruction and stony silence from leaders who have no intention of allowing discussion of their own past errors, or of

allowing themselves to be pushed aside by forces determined to break from opportunism and sectarianism.

We say that such leaders must be exposed and fought.

For 30 years, thanks to them and their predecessors, the FI has been wracked by crisis and political confusion: time and again major turning points in the class struggle have found would-be Trotskyists disorientated and ill-equipped to intervene and struggle for the Transitional Programme.

*This is 30 years too long!* Join our struggle for the political clarification of the forces that today wish to adhere to the banner of Trotskyism; join our fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International!



Trotsky



USFI leader Mandel



Jack Barnes



WSL—fighting for discussion on principles

during which, in one conversation, Cde Grogan was informed as to the general content of the document—was any agenda for the Congress forthcoming, or any attempt made by IMG or USFI to place preconditions on our submitting a document.

### Circulated

On the contrary, according to repeated pronouncements from the IMG, our document was, without doubt, to be circulated throughout the sections of the USFI.

This position was echoed by Joe Hansen, Jack Barnes, Mary Alice-Waters and Tim Wohlforth—all leading members of the US SWP, which although barred from affiliation to the USFI, is in political sympathy with it. They, too, urged us to complete and submit our document and stated their belief that it would be discussed.

Indeed it was not until *after* our document had been completed and received by both IMG and USFI that the first change took place in this position.

In June 1978 the USFI Bureau wrote urging us to discuss with the IMG "concerning the best possible forms through which we can begin a discussion".

### No plans

We thought it strange that, while acknowledging receipt of *The Poisoned Well*, the letter gave no details of plans to circulate it. In contacting the IMG

we then discovered for the first time that there was a reluctance to circulate our document.

In August we received a copy of the XIth Congress agenda. We were astonished to see that it tries to *exclude* any discussion of the factional struggle that has marked the last ten years of the USFI.

But we observed that it did clearly state that "Discussion of remaining points previously placed on the agenda remains open".

We naturally took this to mean that, since *The Poisoned Well* refers to substantial discussion documents already tabled for the Congress, there was still no impediment to its circulation within the USFI.

But in our recent meeting with Cdes Grogan and Pugh for the IMG—now documented in Cde Grogan's September 29 letter—we were amazed to hear a completely different, and two-pronged position argued, which would effectively exclude the WSL from any meaningful involvement in the Congress.

On the one hand we were told that there is now a prior requirement that we abandon our long-held position and now declare the USFI a "revolutionary organisation" *before* our document—or any WSL document—is circulated.

And on the other hand we are told that, since the factional struggles and the dissolution of the IMT and LTF tendencies are not on the pre-congress agenda, our document would not be circulated to USFI sections in any case.

We are told that this is

because the pre-congress discussion "would not be the best arena to take up your positions" and the WSL might not feel satisfied that our points had received sufficient attention!

Of course the IMG comrades make no suggestion as to what is the 'correct' arena for such points.

It seems to us that such moves serve only to *obstruct* the necessary discussion on the Marxist method and on programme which alone can enable the WSL to arrive at an objective characterisation of the USFI and its sections and their role in today's class struggle.

### Decided against

It further appears that the IMG and the USFI have already decided that *no* document by the WSL on any topic will be circulated, since we also see from the letter that—"given a favourable clarification" as to our characterisation of the USFI, the IMG leadership would support the circulation of a new WSL document tackling a topic from the Congress agenda "at least in the ranks of the IMG".

We would point out that a similar bilateral exchange of documents has previously taken place between us and the IMG, and led, unfortunately, to *no* development whatever in terms of international discussion with or within the USFI.

To put it bluntly, we feel that the abrupt about-face that has taken place in relation to our submission to the pre-Congress discussion is designed to prevent our political

positions becoming known and discussed within the USFI as a whole and its sympathising sections.

This in our view can only impede the struggle for the reconstruction of the Fourth International on the basis of a theoretical and practical reaffirmation of its founding principles and programme.

As such, it casts grave doubts on the sincerity of the USFI leadership when it proclaims that its objective is to ensure that:

**"All forces standing on the programme of revolutionary Marxism should be united within a single democratic centralist International"**

The very purpose of the discussion and examination of practical work which we are proposing is to establish beyond doubt *which* forces genuinely do stand on the programme of revolutionary Marxism in today's class struggle.

### Reverse course

We therefore call upon the USFI to reverse this course of obstructing the necessary discussion and clarification, and to speedily facilitate the circulation of the WSL discussion document *The Poisoned Well* within its ranks and those of its sympathising sections internationally, in line with the USEC's own resolution of 3-4 April 1976.

The Workers Socialist League, for our part, will continue to encourage our members to study the Interna-

tional Internal Discussion Bulletin material and will attempt wherever possible to work for the fullest joint discussion with the IMG and USFI leadership and members prior to the XIth World Congress.

We also welcome the decision of the IMG to prepare a reply to *The Poisoned Well*. We will certainly accept cde. Grogan's September 29 proposal that we arrange a full discussion of this reply. We also remain willing to proceed with the proposed debate on the Fourth International, to be held in London as soon as a mutually satisfactory date can be agreed.

In this context, and without preconditions, the WSL therefore accepts the proposals made in cde. Grogan's letter of September 29 for us to observe local and national discussion meetings of the IMG, and for us to submit, in addition to *The Poisoned Well*, a document on Eurocommunism to be circulated in the IMG.

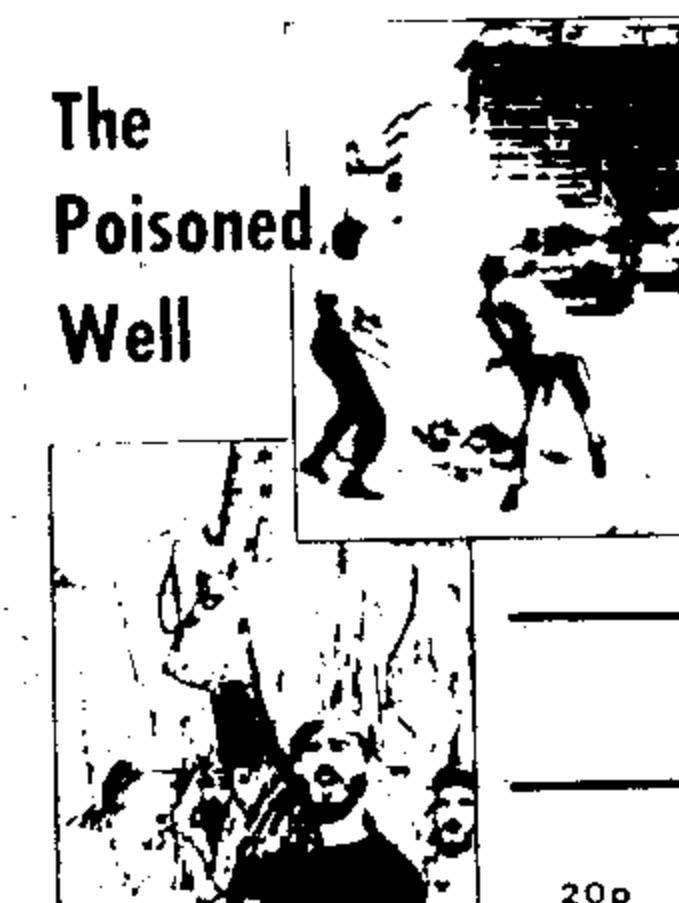
We await your reply with keen interest.

Yours fraternally  
John Lister

For the National Committee  
of the Workers Socialist League

## Now in English, French and Spanish!

The Poisoned Well  
Price 20p plus 15p p&p  
From WSL, 31, Dartmouth  
Park Hill, London NW5  
1HR



# INDUSTRIAL NEWS



Clive Jenkins

## JOIN OUR FIGHT AGAINST TORIES!

Returned to office after five years of Labour betrayals, the Tory government has immediately begun wielding a sharpened axe on jobs, conditions and social services. Trade Union rights face imminent legal attack. Prices are already beginning to rocket upwards.

Plum sectors of state industry will be handed to the Tories' profiteering big business backers; and the pay rises to police and armed forces mark only the prelude to increased state violence against pickets and anti-fascists, and an intensified army crack-down in the occupied North of Ireland.

The Callaghan-Healey leadership has made it clear that it will oppose any perspective other than settling down and meekly accepting five years of Tory devastation.

And, though they have once more dusted off their near-forgotten "socialist" speeches, Labour's "left-wing" MPs have continued to duck away from any fight to remove Callaghan.

TUC leaders, too, have set out to establish a basis for collaboration with Thatcher and the Tory cabinet, paralleling their anti-working class alliance with Wilson and then Callaghan.

But the working class has experienced and overcome such betrayals before—to topple Heath's union-bashing government in 1974, and smash through Callaghan's reactionary Phase 4 of wage controls in a series of monumental pay battles last winter.

These experiences are not dead. They point to the way that jobs, social services and hard-won union rights can be defended against renewed Tory attacks.

But a principled, revolutionary leadership is needed if the Labour traitors, the TUC collaborators and their hangers-on in the Communist Party are to be exposed and pushed aside, and the mass struggles mobilised that can defeat and remove the Tory government.

Such a leadership must fight day in and day out for a programme of *transitional demands* which, starting from today's conditions and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers to grasp the necessity for socialist revolution.

And in taking up democratic demands—such as an end to racial and sexual discrimination, it must show the crucial role that must be played by the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class capable of leading the struggle for the emancipation of mankind.

And it must fight on an *international* basis—mobilising solidarity for anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles—whether in Ireland, in Southern Africa or elsewhere throughout the world, and drawing strength and political lessons from revolutionary upheavals such as that which ousted the hated Shah in Iran.

This means fighting for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

This method of approach, rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, or concessions to any wing of the labour bureaucracy, is the method fought for by the Workers Socialist League.

The next period will see major class struggles in Britain. A principled, Marxist leadership is essential. Our movement though strong in programme remains small in numbers.

JOIN US and take forward the struggle for socialism!

# ASTMS CHIEFS LURCH TO THE RIGHT

The ASTMS Conference last weekend was opposite to all expectations.

Unlike other unions who are trying to repolish their left face in verbal stands against the Tories, ASTMS can no longer be classed as a 'left' union.

There was no longer the pretence of the NEC going through the motions of supporting left wing motions, knowing they need only carry out protests against the Tories instead of forcing action from a labour government.

Instead they blatantly supported the right wing.

The slogan over the platform was "Reverse the trend—Regenerate British Industry". This slogan under a Tory government is a blatant defence of capital.

### NEC motion

The NEC emergency motion on economic policy called for no sale of the profitable sections of the public sector, and for the money they make to defray the impact of new technology; for the honouring of commitments from the comparability commission; and for TUC/Government discussions to continue on "matters of central economic importance"—in particular monitoring imports—social sector spending policies.

It finished with opposition to attempts to amend laws on the unions.

This motion was taken by General Secretary, Clive Jenkins as a mandate to leave the Conference early on the Tuesday to rush hot foot to Downing Street for talks with Thatcher.

It was a Rules Revision Conference so much of the time available was spent talking about "devolving power down to the membership".

The nature of the rule changes did not take that vital step as far as the branches but stopped at the level of the Divisional Councils—effectively reinforcing another bureaucratic layer in the union's structure.

### Bureaucratic control

The Programme of Business which was submitted by the Standing Orders Committee was another case of bureaucratic control.

They had, in conjunction with the Divisions, chosen Priority Items for the Agenda—and had then chosed (with virtually no compositing) the motions they felt appropriate for these Priority Items.

The result was that a majority of rule changes submitted reflected the NEC requirements.

The response of the Conference to this was to refer the Agenda for the two days on rule revision back to the SOC and to agree to work through all the amendments to rule which had been submitted.

### Later this year

This was under the assumption that the motions not reached would be taken at an adjourned conference later this year.

But later that day it became obvious to Conference the NEC just meant to "adjourn" issues with no commitment as to when they would

reconvene.

This caused an uproar which due to the general lack of control and incompetence of the President (ex-MP Doug Hoyle) almost became a riot!

He refused to take three separate challenges to the Chair!

When order was eventually restored, it was done by referring the SOC report back, demanding they decide what they meant by "adjourned".

The next day the NEC won the battle by announcing we would probably need a 16-day conference to take all the amendments to rule that had been submitted.

As a result the Conference accepted the original Programme of Business which was proceeded through at such a speed it became obvious we could have completed all the motions in a couple of extra days—not 16!

This victory for the NEC left a lot of Conference delegates demoralised at the power of the NEC and apparent strength of the bureaucracy.

One of the main factors producing this appearance of 'strength' was the way the Communist Party, after opposing the NEC in the initial fight, caved in and did nothing to follow it through.

### Backed NEC

They had made their protest—and from then on they backed the NEC for the rest of the Conference.

The CP have a lot to answer for in the right turn of the union.

Not only are a fair number of the NEC CP members, but all bar two of the union's National Officers are CP or ex-CP members.

### 'Rank and file'

The 'Rank and File' group in ASTMS, called 'Red Collar', made a paper impact in the form of mass leaflets of every session of the three and a half day Conference.

But in spite of holding

meetings every evening (two were well attended) they did not organise their intervention into the Conference itself in any thing resembling a disciplined way.

So in spite of having quite large forces, their whole intervention hinged on a couple of delegates.

They are going to hold a 'Red Collar' conference in the Autumn where they must be challenged on their minimal programme—which does not even call for the election of union officials.

Their programme is so minimal any Divisional Officer could support it.

### Turn into union

There must be a turn into the union on a principled programme instead of setting up an alternative body along side with minimal demands.

Any socialist in ASTMS must take the latest rightward turn seriously, and fight to take part in every level of the union to prevent the growth of bureaucratic control and force more democracy, especially in Divisional Councils and Branches.

# NOTTINGHAM Spread the strike!

A new mass picket in support of trade union rights at the Nottingham Evening Post has been called in the town for June 16.

The demonstration called by the local Trades Council and print union branches must become the focus of a decisive turn in the semi-dormant campaign for reinstatement of 28 sacked journalists and for recognition of print unions.

Since the NUJ annual conference called for a national one day strike in the provincial press in support of the Nottingham journalists the union's new right wing executive has done nothing to mobilise the membership in support.

But the NGA national council has agreed in principle to support such a strike.

Despite the obvious limitations and weaknesses of one day protest actions

such a strike would draw provincial NUJ members back into struggle over the jobs of journalists sacked for joining the seven week pay strike.

Former mass pickets have been pitifully attended. A real struggle must now be taken up throughout the print unions and NUJ for delegations on the picket line and for supporting strike action.

At the same time the Nottingham journalists must themselves break from reliance on the diversionary 'alternative' paper (*The Nottingham News*) which wins sympathy without advancing the struggle and restart regular picketing. Build the mass picket! Spread the strikes!

### MORE DETAILS

Please send me more information about the Workers Socialist League.

Name .....

Address .....

Send to WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.



PHOTO: Laurence Spaham, IFL

## DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!



GET SOCIALIST PRESS ★

For a clear

lead in the struggle against wage control, cuts and redundancies

## SPECIAL OFFER

10 ISSUES POST FREE!

If you would like to take advantage of this offer fill in the coupon below.

Please send me 10 copies of *Socialist Press*. I enclose £1.50.

Name .....

Address .....

Send to Socialist Press, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

# NOT ENOUGH TROTSKYISTS IN THE UPW!

The UPW Conference last week narrowly rejected a call for the re-election of officials by a vote of 10,587 to 8,124.

This indication of simmering discontent was also reflected in the passing of a censure motion on the behaviour of the union's Executive Council "for bringing the UPW into disrepute during the 1979 negotiations on pay, which culminated in the recommendation for acceptance in the national ballot".

But in moving this resolution Derek Walsh from London stressed the difference between 'no confidence' and censure. No confidence means the sack; censure means a rap on the knuckles, he declared.

### High point

Five motions of no confidence in the leadership had actually been tabled prior to the conference, but one was withdrawn and four defeated after

speakers had tortuously argued that since the conference had already rejected the re-election of officers it would be wrong to remove the existing leadership!

It was indeed the pay debate which marked the high point of interest at the conference, with delegates straining at the leash for its commencement on Thursday.

Despite the limited time available, over 200 amendments had been tabled by branches to the Executive's Report on pay.

### Conveniently 'lost'

17 of these were ruled out of order, and others conveniently 'lost' by the Standing Orders Committee, who declared that they would have been out of order even if found!

Jackson's speech in the pay debate was prefaced by a warning to delegates from the chair that "slandrous statements should not be made".

Jackson argued that the

stringent productivity strings attached to the rejected pay offer were "phony"—though he was unable publicly to reveal this to the membership.

And though the deal also included agreement to the introduction of part-time and casual staff, he argued that any branch refusing to accept such staff would receive support from Maurice Styles at Union headquarters.

Anyone with experience of the special brand of backstabbing "support" offered by ex-Stalinist Styles would have immediately smelt a rat at this point.

A Peterborough delegate expressed members' anger that £3 of the money already earned should be wrapped up in a "phony" productivity deal.

"It is better to fall flat on your face than to bend over backwards to compromise. We don't want blood but justice".

Referring to the overwhelming rejection of the Executive's proposed settlement, the delegate asked if there weren't



Censured—Jackson

"more Trotskyists in the UPW than the rest of Western Europe".

This however was clearly not the case to judge from the almost complete absence of any serious alternative for future struggles. Jackson was able with some justice to refer to the negative tone of the entire pay debate, and to stress that nobody seriously put forward a lead for pay claims to come.

But it is not only on the pay front that a decisive political lead is required.

A stir was created at conference when a confidential management circular, spelling out their policy of understaffing international telephone exchanges by at least 25% was

revealed seven years after it was first implemented.

This serves only to highlight the continuing drive of management to slash manning levels throughout the Post Office.

### Combatted

And the first tentative signs of private intervention into the Post Office were combatted by a composite resolution calling for action to prevent the handling of mail from Pharos Inland Periodicals.

As the Tory axe sharpens and the war on jobs is stepped up, the fight to build a new, principled socialist leadership in the UPW must be pressed ahead with urgency.

# NUPE militant sacked

Bill Geddes, a London Divisional Council member of NUPE, has been sacked from his job at the Hammersmith Hospital in West London.

The reason given for the sacking—that Geddes was allegedly caught painting slogans on the hospital wall—is a complete red herring.

Geddes—a member of the SWP—has been sacked because he is a militant trade unionist working in the Health Service who has played a part both in organising the fight against health cuts and in the action on pay in the London area.

The sacking cannot be seen in isolation. It is the latest episode in a series of victimisations of trade unionists working in the Hammersmith Hospital and Ealing Area Health Authority.

It began last year with the sacking of Stan Hunt and Alan Pinfold at the nearby West London Hospital.

This was swiftly followed by the sacking of Bill Tizard, who also worked at the Hammersmith.

If the AHA succeeds in sacking Geddes—who is at present appealing against the decision—they will have effectively cleared out the whole leadership of NUPE hospital workers in the district.

Not only will they find it easier to implement the massive programme of cuts planned for the district—which has already involved the closure of the Kidney Transplant Unit at the Hammersmith—but they will also have struck a major blow in advance against NUPE's proposed campaign against private-practice in 1980.

It was of course Geddes who moved the successful resolution to black pay beds at the NUPE conference.

It is vital that NUPE is made to lead and organise a strong programme of action for the reinstatement of Geddes.

It is obvious, however, that Fisher and the NUPE leadership will do nothing to defend Geddes unless a relentless campaign is taken up inside the union.

The major weakness in the approach of all the victimised unionists in the district is that they failed to take up any such fight against the local and national NUPE leadership.

Hunt and Pinfold, with the strongest trade union base in the district, meekly followed the full time officer through ACAS and appealed to management, failing to fight for the one thing that could save them—the mobilisation of Health Service workers in strike action.

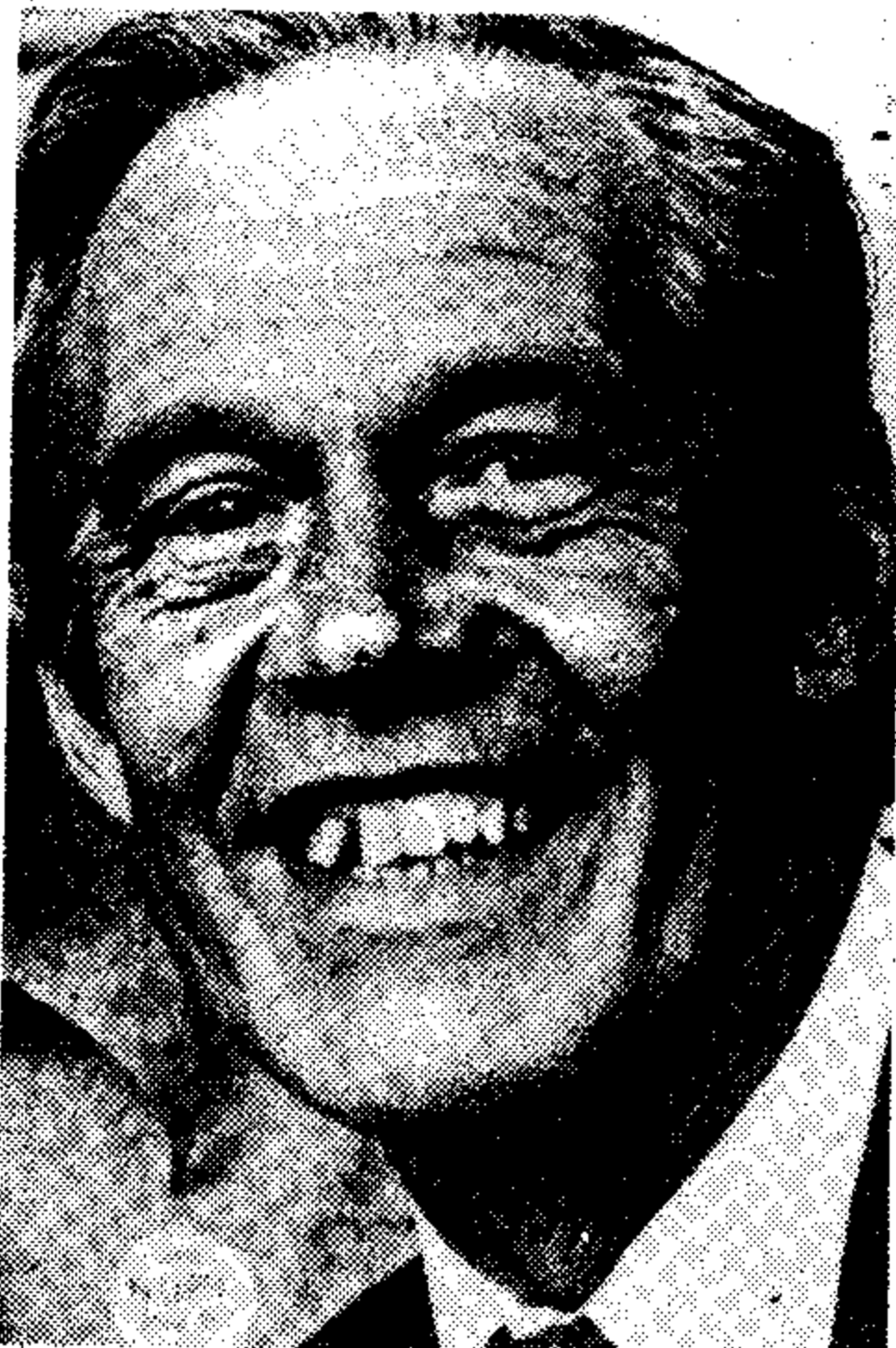
The London Divisional Council of NUPE of which Geddes is a member, must be forced to call an immediate all-London Health Service stewards' conference to prepare strike action to force Geddes' reinstatement.

# Fisher survives!

In a three-day cover-up operation NUPE leaders emerged comparatively unscathed from their miserable betrayal of last year's £60/35 hour week pay claim.

General Secretary Fisher was able to brush aside a call by ILEA schoolkeepers for his resignation. And clouds of synthetic anti-Tory rhetoric from conference chairman Tom Griffiths, Assistant General Secretary Bernard Dix and others helped to lay the basis for avoiding any move to formulate a wage claim for next year.

But nevertheless the leadership did suffer a number of body blows, all of which indicate the mounting militancy within NUPE's rank and file.



Survivor—Fisher

for:

- 1) Relaunching an active campaign involving the mass membership of the union to defend the public sector and to call for support for such a campaign from all other unions.
- 2) To support occupations in hospitals, clinics, schools and other public sector units threatened with cuts and/or closures and to place all possible resources at their disposal.
- 3) To ensure that all branches are informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any actions against cuts and/or closures in their divisions.
- 4) The Executive Council

### Collaboration

Fisher, who in the Economic Policy debate defended the policy of collaborating with the Tory government, was instructed to cease any talks with the Tories on restrictions on trade union rights and to campaign through meetings and demonstrations and industrial action to resist Tory attacks on the public sector.

Also passed was a Westminster Hospital motion fought for at branch level by WSL Health Service supporters which called

should publicly give support to any such campaign and strikes against the cuts.

### Paybed deadline

And an Edinburgh motion calling for the immediate nationalisation of the pharmaceutical industry without compensation was also carried.

The most publicised setback for Fisher and the bureaucracy was the passing of the Hammersmith motion calling on the Executive to instruct NUPE members to provide no further services to private patients from January 1, 1980, and for faster moves to phase out private beds.

Dix had unsuccessfully asked for this resolution to be remitted to the EC because he believed that "we should be fighting now to make sure that the Tories cannot phase in private beds."

### Grovelling praise

On pay policy, a Westminster Hospital motion calling for the protection of wages against inflation through a sliding scale of wages was inadequately moved by delegate Jamie Morris, who spent his time delivering grovelling praise for Fisher and attacking the addendum to the motion which called for the resignation of Fisher and Assistant General Secretary Ron

Keating.

Camden General Branch secretary John Suddaby made the hardest-hitting contribution, attacking Fisher's earlier statement that "anyone who thought that the £60/35 hour claim could have been won in one go must have been mad."

Suddaby quoted the example of Camden, where all-out strike action had actually won the claim for a large section of the workforce.

### Leadership

But he, like ILEA delegate and fellow IMG member Ray Varnes, failed to make the call for Fisher's resignation a priority. Even so Fisher used a special suspension of standing orders to reply to Suddaby's contribution and portray himself ludicrously as "the most accountable General Secretary in the Trade Union Congress".

The extent of the NUPE leaders' willingness to collaborate with the Tories as further cuts loom underlines the urgency of fighting at shop floor level to force officials to implement many of this year's conference policies, and for the building of a leadership capable of fighting Fisher and his bureaucratic hangers-on.

## Garners

From back page

the ending of the strike rests entirely at the door of the TGWU leaders—including Communist Party Stalinist Syd Staden and his "comrades" on the Regional Committee.

The fact that Moss Evans wrote personally to rule out of order an amendment on Garners for July's Biennial Delegate Conference of the TGWU amply demonstrates the way the struggle haunts the bureaucracy. The Conference on June 9 is still on.

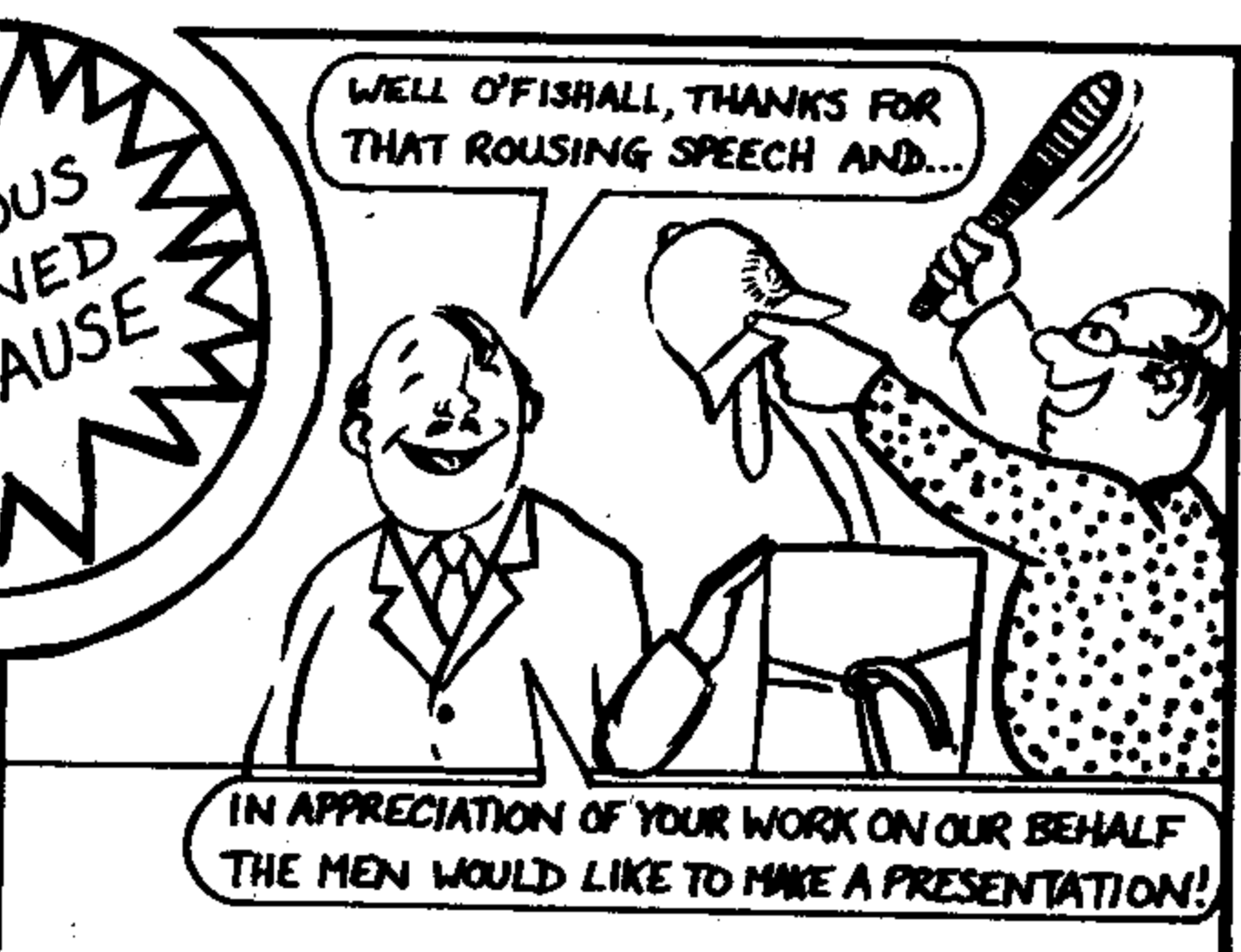
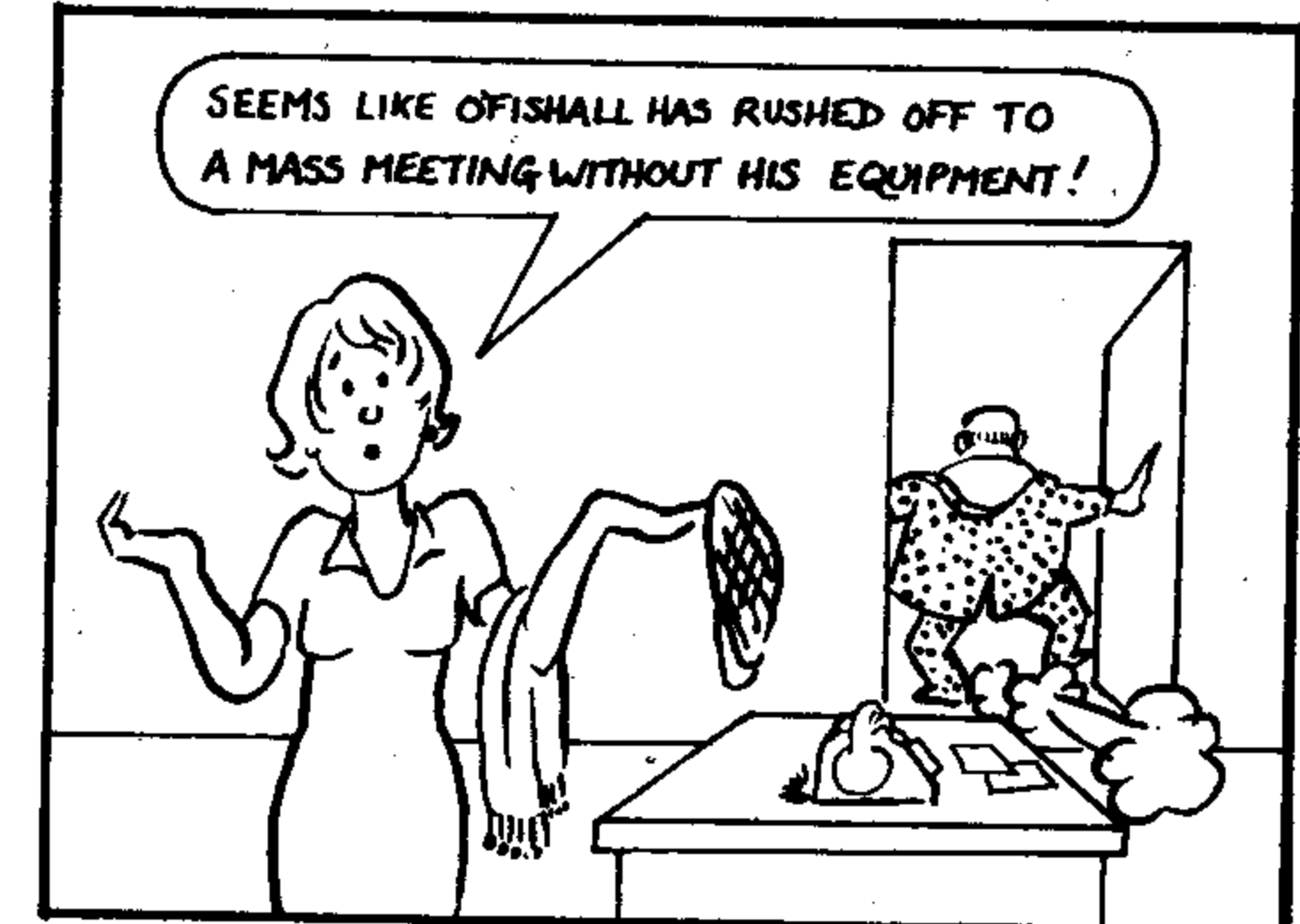
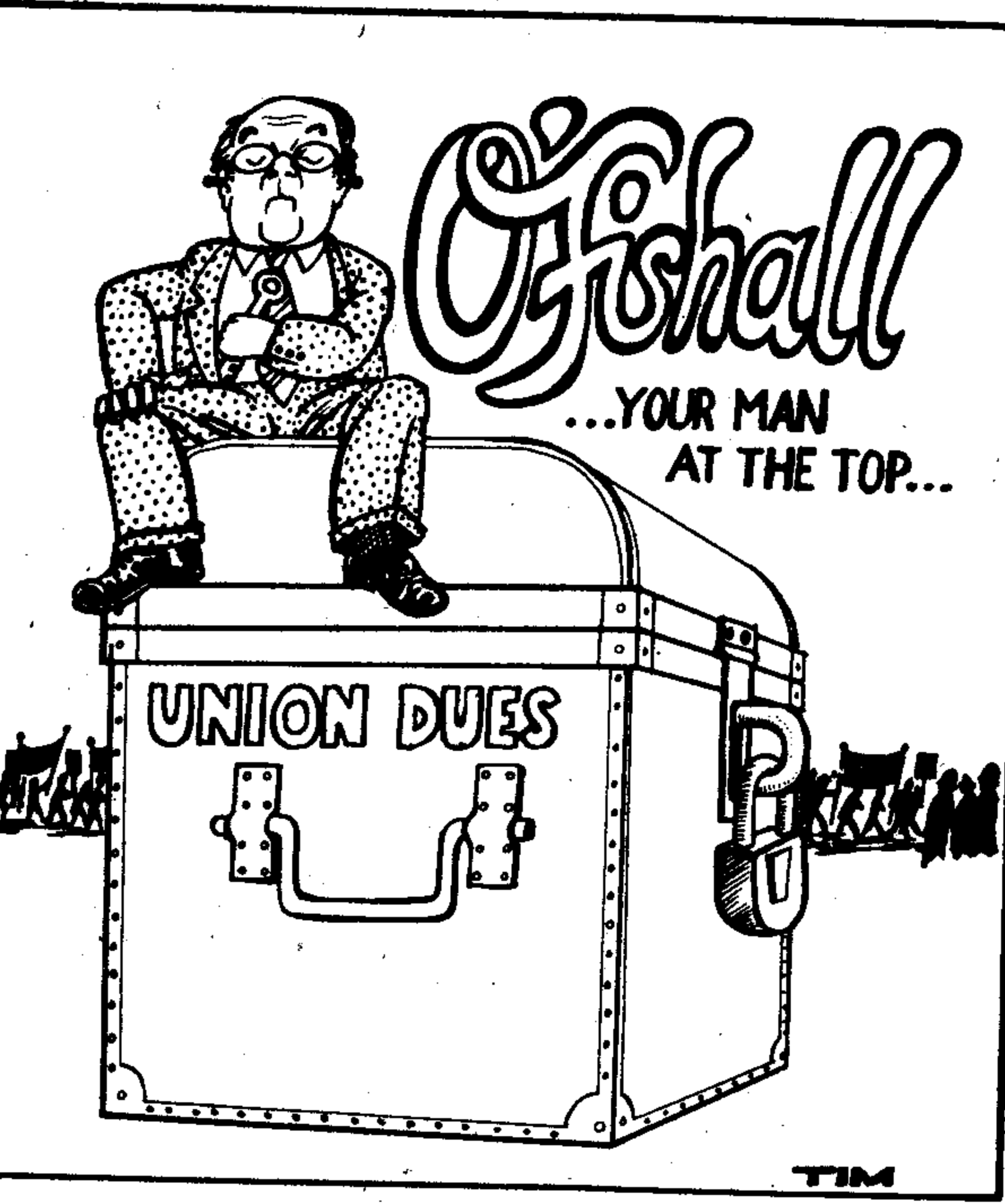
On the platform will be representatives from many recognition struggles.

Socialist Press calls on all supporters to work for and attend this event in order to bring together the lessons of bureaucratic betrayal of union rights—a vital part of the preparation of new leadership that will not betray.

### GARNERS CONFERENCE

"The Lessons of the Garners Strike"

Open to delegates and visitors from all unions  
Saturday June 9  
University of London  
Union, Malet St., WC1  
Full details from Strike Committee, 12/13  
Henrietta St., London WC2



# SOCIALIST PRESS



# FIGHT NEW ATTACK ON THE EGA!

## GARNERS STRIKE SOLD OUT

Last Thursday the bureaucracy of TGWU Region 1 fulfilled an ambition of 17 months standing.

By a slim majority a meeting of the remaining strikers in the marathon Garners Steak Houses recognition struggle were cajoled into ending the dispute.

At the beginning of the meeting officials Cook, Shorter and Staden found themselves faced with a group of strikers which, despite all the hardship suffered in 17 months of isolation and bureaucratic sabotage, was unwilling to talk in terms of giving up and swallowing the promises of "new jobs".

But as the bureaucrats systematically attacked any notion that the strikers' consistent demands for the mobilisa-

tion of the colossal strength of Region 1's 500,000 membership and resources would be met, the balance of the meeting was finally tipped.

The strikers had asked for support for their June 9 conference and for union assistance in building for it.

### Blacking

But the officials recognised that the conference would be used as a platform to press once again for the backing they refused to give—mass picketing, finance and blacking.

For 17 months the strike had stood as a public condemnation of the bankruptcy of leaders whose support for the anti-working class policies of the Labour government rendered them incapable of mobilising

mass action, even in defence of the elementary right of union recognition—whether at Grunwick, Desoutters, Trust Houses Forte, Sandersons or Garners.

Now, despite their facade of anti-Tory rhetoric these same leaders have demonstrated their utter unwillingness to defend low paid workers against police harassment and vicious management.

The strike has continued so long because the officials did not dare to call it off themselves—thus committing an open betrayal in the eyes of the whole movement.

They will now say that the strikers called off the action as a fig leaf to cover their treachery.

This cheap lie must be exposed. The responsibility for

Continued on page 11

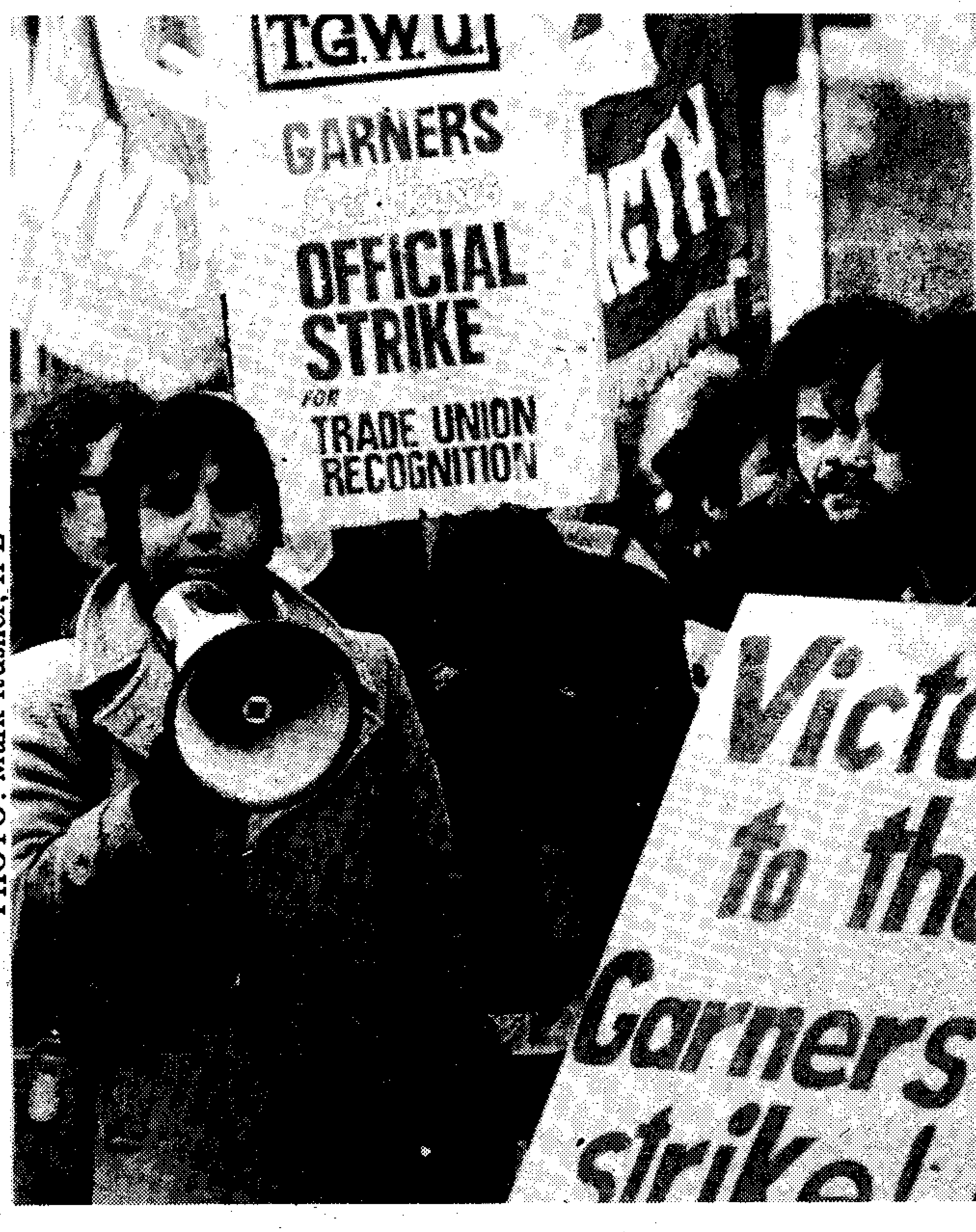


PHOTO: Mark Risher, IFL

## Benn's 'left' posture blasted

Former labour government minister Tony Benn's campaign of rebuilding his 'left' image received an unexpected setback last week at a packed meeting of London School of Economics students called by the Economist Bookshop strikers.

The strikers have been fighting for seven months for recognition of ACTSS, the TGWU's clerical section, in the teeth of opposition from the LSE Board of Governors who own the shop jointly with the Economist



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

magazine.

Governors' spokesman Professor Yarney's latest move to break the strike has been to make a direct approach to TGWU leader Moss Evans calling on his backing for the dispute to be referred for arbitration to ACAS.

This proposal has been correctly rejected on principle by the strikers as a diversion which would be used to sell out their demands.

Benn, who declared himself a fellow ACTSS member, told how he had personally arranged blacking of the shop by the Fabian Society and launched into a predictable round of left

rhetoric.

Stressing the importance of 'learning the lessons' of the strike he added solemnly that there was nothing like action to tell you who your friends were!

This was quite a statement from someone who, less than two months ago was crossing a civil service unions' picket line.

The utter hypocrisy of this and his other remarks was only brought out by a strong contribution from WSL member Pat Lally speaking on behalf of bookshop workers in Blackwells Oxford.

Attacking the refusal of the TGWU leadership to organise

support for these struggles, he pointed to the link between this and the union bureaucracy's collaboration with the Labour government in its attacks on workers' living standards.

Drawing widespread applause from the meeting, he condemned those who now spouted from platforms about the need for socialism, yet had gone along with those policies without protest.

Strike fund contributions and further information from Helen Miller, c/o ACTSS, 173, Clapham Road, London SW9.

The latest moves by the government and the Camden and Islington AHA represent the most serious threat yet to the continued occupation of the EGA hospital in London.

Following the lobby and occupation of the emergency AHA meeting on May 9, two proposals have been made which would effectively end the existence of the EGA as a women's hospital in the NHS.

One is to drastically reduce the hospital to treating 40 gynaecological patients—which would mean the closure of most of the wards and the reduction of staff.

The other is that the hospital is reduced in size and is partly funded from private sources. This would represent a major tactical victory for the Tories' intentions of bringing private funding and investment into the NHS.

### Opposed

The hospital staff action committee and campaign committee are resolutely opposed to these proposals.

They are continuing to call for the upgrading of the EGA on its present site, with full staffing levels, and for the repair of the lift, which would enable several of the closed wards to be reopened.

They have called for a 24-hour picket of the hospital to prevent the imminent removal of patients and are sending speakers to local trade union branches to gain support.

Local hospitals and other trade union branches in the London area must begin now to prepare for strike action in defence of the hospital.

A resolution passed at the NUPE conference committed the union to defend the EGA. It is now up to NUPE members to force the leadership to act.

## FUND

With the first month of the Special Fund now behind us we are still well short of the first £1,000.

The total received so far now stands at £740.90. The target is £2,500 which will enable us to embark upon an ambitious publishing programme throughout the next six months.

But without the full fund that publishing programme will not be fully realised.

There is no time to be wasted therefore in quickly reaching the first £1,000 and pressing ahead towards the target which must be raised by the end of July.

All donations to this fund or to the monthly Socialist Press Fund should be sent to 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

## Fist fights at Ecevit's Congress

The rightward turn in Turkey by the government of Prime Minister Ecevit met huge opposition in his party's National Conference last week.



Turkish troops imposing martial law restrictions

The majority of his Republican People's Party's MPs and Senators were among the opposition.

There were violent conflicts and physical fights within the conference itself, as the political

fight polarised around the question of party democracy.

And though the opposition's call for constitutional changes was narrowly defeated, the Congress illustrated that Ecevit has lost overall support within his own party.

The oppositionists sharply criticised the record of the government and its capitulation to the extreme right wing.

Such attacks reflect the growing hostility to Ecevit's governmental measures within the Turkish working class and toiling masses.

One delegate said that the RPP came to power to attack the privileged rulers, but now we are under attack!

Other delegates raised the RPP's promises to abolish the anti-communist laws 141 and 142, to unify the trade union movement and to expand democratic rights.

All we have done is repress those rights, they declared.

The Conference has yet to finish but this opposition has special significance at a time of acute political and economic crisis for the bourgeoisie in

Turkey.

But of course even such opposition is in no way truly democratic or revolutionary.

It is simply aimed at reforming the bourgeois RPP as the 'left' face of Turkish capitalism.

In that sense, it offers no serious alternative to the working class movement in Turkey, which faces the danger of an historic defeat.

### Prosecute

The recent anti-government advertisements by TUSIAD (Confederation of Employers) have sparked off sharp exchanges between Ecevit and business organisations.

Ecevit called on attorneys to prosecute those responsible for such advertisements and said that if Polder or Tobder (Police and Teachers' Federations) made such statements, attorneys would prosecute them too.

This sharp turn by Ecevit again shows the contradiction within his unstable bonapartist regime.

It must be remembered that the leaders of the trade union

confederation DISK and the Turkish Labour Party along with hundreds of supporters have only just been released from prison after their actions on May Day.

Ecevit and his generals remain determined to play a balancing role over the classes for the sake of "national unity" and "national salvation".

But this is no more than a transitional regime for the bourgeoisie.

As long as Ecevit can hold back the working class movement and introduce anti-working class measures, they will keep him in power; but at the same time they are preparing for openly dictatorial rule.

The main question facing the working class movement is to mobilise independently against fascist threat and the attacks of the Ecevit government, and armed workers militias must be organised to fight the attacks of the fascists on the streets.

In the fight to break from Ecevit and for a united front of the working class, a Trotskyist party must be formed in Turkey.