

SOCIALIST PRESS



Weekly paper of the Workers Socialist League * No. 159 * July 18 1979 * 15p

Next issue
August 1

The Workers Socialist League International Summer School means that we will not be publishing an issue next week. Socialist Press 160 will contain a feature of the workers in Namibia and a review of 'Pig Earth' by Terry Eagleton.

STRUGGLE FOR POLICIES AT TGWU CONFERENCE

EVANS DUCKS PAY FIGHT WITH TORIES

"The Tories would love nothing more than seeing all our troops rising up out of their industrial trenches, carrying the banner of a fixed percentage claim and marching forward into a barrage of hostility like lambs to the slaughterhouse of public opinion."

This was Moss Evans at the TGWU Conference spelling out the determination of the leadership of the TGWU to avoid a full-scale confrontation with the Tory government over pay.

Inflation, he said, has been deliberately created by the Tories—"it is a trap, a provocation, a bait, a test to see how our industrial strength is doing."

carried unanimously, declared itself for "unfettered collective bargaining" and opposed "government intervention in wage bargaining whether in private or public sectors of industry, through sanctions, formal incomes policies or cash limits in the public services."

Strategy

But in his major speech Evans was clearly laying out his strategy for controlling the wages struggles which will rapidly develop in the face of the massive onslaught being launched on all fronts against the working class by the Tory government.

He is determined that the struggles that do erupt should be kept isolated within individual firms and industries.

The last thing he wants to see is the spread and generalisation of pay strikes into a political confrontation with the Tory government.

Moss Evans' politics, for all his tub-thumping 'left' rhetoric, are those of social democracy—seeking piecemeal reforms for the working class within the framework of capitalism.

While he can countenance even militant strikes in individual profitable firms—such as Fords—the prospect of mass action uniting different sections of the working class and forcing the Tories out of office is one that frightens him.

Bankruptcy

Nor does he have any understanding of the utter bankruptcy of the capitalist system on a world scale.

By describing inflation as "a provocation" deliberately engineered by the Tories he avoids any consideration of the soaring price of oil, or the mounting world recession that have forced the Tories into an all-out attack on the working class.

And by committing himself to "responsible" claims and respecting the "viability" of capitalist firms he turns his back on a socialist solution to the crisis.

Such a solution must reject any concern whatever for the problems of the increasingly bankrupt capitalists, whose difficulties are the product of the crisis of their own system of exploitation, and start out instead from the independent interests of the working class.

Far from shrinking like Evans from an all-out confrontation with the Tories, it is essential to prepare for such a confrontation and to create the conditions to bring down the Thatcher government.

While Evans and his fellow TUC bureaucrats struggle to keep their main troops in the trenches, and to send individual sections of workers "over the top" one by one to fight the Tories alone, socialists must fight for a programme of demands to unite the coming struggles and direct them at the task of bringing down the government.

Spread

This means fighting for the development of *councils of action* through which delegates from local strike committees can act jointly with representatives of other trade union and labour movement organisations, and fight for the spreading and generalisation of strikes.

And it means struggling within the labour movement for a principled revolutionary leadership capable of fighting at every level against Evans and those bureaucrats, who dread nothing more than the mass movement of the working class.



Conference chairman Stan Pemberton - forced to call in tellers for vote on cost-of-living clauses.



Big support for cost-of-living clauses

"This Conference believes that the defence of our members' living standards against inflation can only be achieved by TGWU negotiators including a cost of living clause in wage claims, in addition to general increases. To ensure the fullest protection, such claims should be based on figures calculated by elected committees of Union members."

This motion, moved by Alan Thornett and seconded by Tim O'Sullivan, both delegates from the Cowley Assembly Plant made history in the TGWU.

Tellers were used to count the votes for the first time in over 20 years in a union where the platform normally commands overwhelming support and has only been voted down once—in 1977 when Jack Jones was defeated on the Social Contract.

A large number of delegates remain convinced that chairman Stan Pemberton judged the vote wrongly in declaring the motion lost in the first vote.

Appeals against this ruling immediately led to tellers being organised.

But in the five minutes or so required to organise tellers, large numbers of delegates who were in the bars and tea rooms when the vote was first taken rushed back into the hall to vote—without having heard the debate.

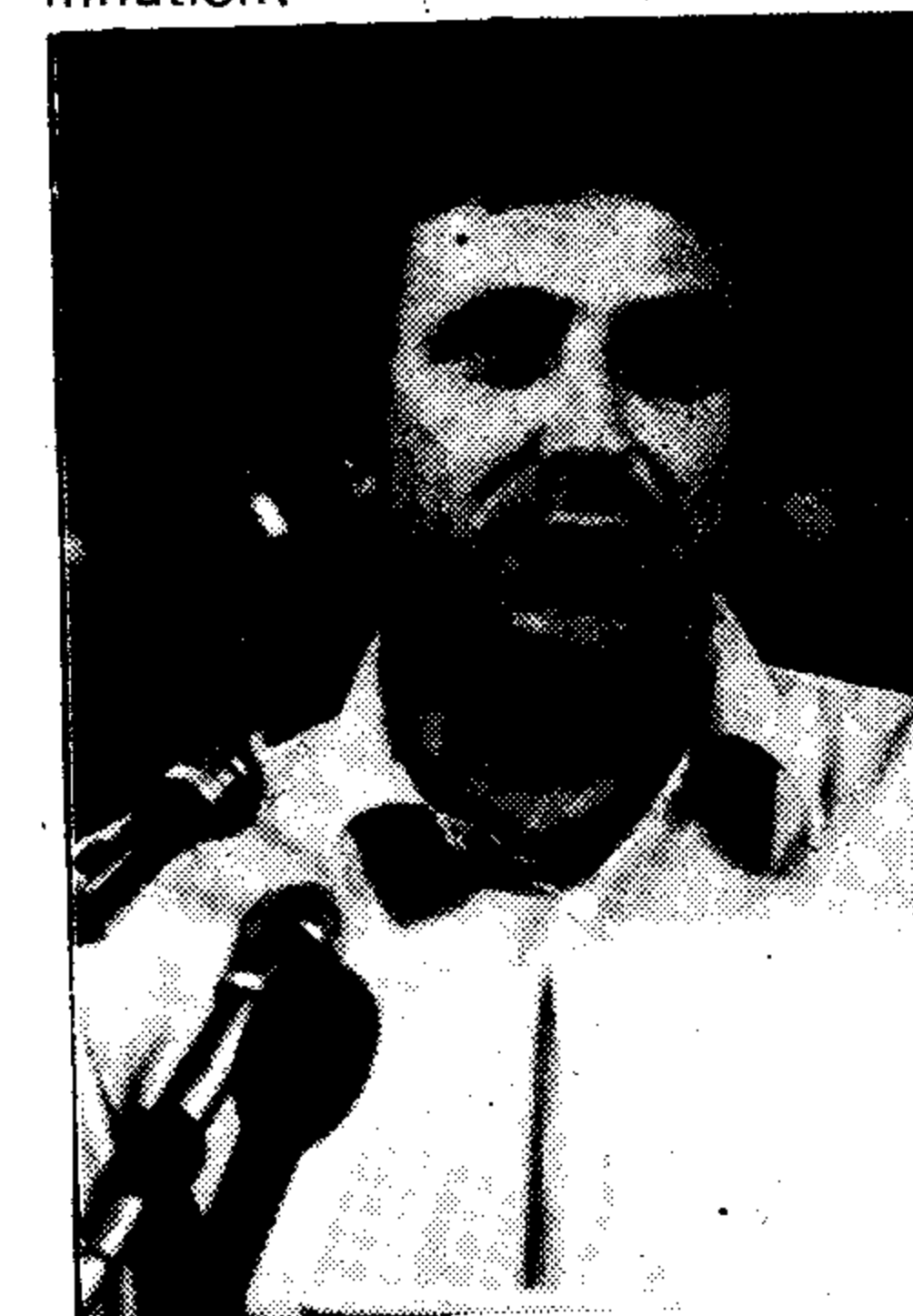
They heard only the platform's recommendation to vote against.

In this second vote the motion was lost by 348 votes to 437.

The debate had stood in

complete contrast to the line of Moss Evans arguing against confronting the Tories and committing TGWU negotiators to any policy on wages.

It sought to mandate the TGWU at plant and industry level to defend their members' wage packets by building cost of living clauses into agreements which would increase wages by the full amount of price inflation.



Thornett

In moving the motion Alan Thornett said that Moss Evans obscured the real nature of inflation by calling it a Tory provocation.

It arose from the world crisis of capitalism and in recent months particularly from the Iranian revolution and the devaluation of the 'green pound'.

He said the full implications of the new oil prices had not been grasped.

Conservative estimates put the rate of inflation to be reached by the end of the year

at over 20%.

Already the gains of the wages struggles of the beginning of the year had been taken away. 20% inflation cut the value of the average wage by £16 a week.

Under these conditions, he said, he was amazed that the General Executive were opposing the motion.

Opposed

At the 1977 conference Jack Jones had opposed a similar motion. He had argued that pay restraint would halt inflation. He was clearly wrong.

The only answer workers can give to inflation is to defend themselves against it.

MPs, he said, who had been awarded a £5,103 increase over two years, had been given an inflation-proofed deal.

Their cost of living clause would be worth an estimated £2,000 over the next two years.

Cost of living clauses have become the property of the privileged few, said Thornett.

If they were good enough for MPs and top Civil Servants they are good enough for the working class.

Committees

Seconding, Tim O'Sullivan stressed the importance of the motion. Only if general increases were linked to cost of living clauses could wages be successfully defended.

Mike Eade, from Bristol NHS, stressed the importance of the second part of the motion which called for cost of living clauses to be based on figures worked out by elected committees of workers.

He said Thatcher's statements about taking the price of petrol out of the government's official figures showed the importance of this part of the motion.

Con't back page, col. 6



Evans

In the speech which was also heavily flavoured with rhetoric Evans said the TGWU would lead strikes on pay, but negotiators would act "responsibly" and base claims on the profitability of the company concerned.

In a clear reference to the next debate to follow—on cost of living clauses—Evans insisted the TGWU should give no instructions to negotiators on what they should include in claims.

We don't want to "tie their hands", he declared. Claims should each be formulated at local level.

The Executive motion,



Nicaragua junta set to continue capitalist rule

Basque truce

"We are studying the political and diplomatic situation to see whether our military position lets us be more flexible without hurting our principles or endangering our victory."

So said Radio Sandinista on 11 July.

As the National Guard fights for its life in Managua and the southern town of Rivas the provisional Junta established by the FSLN is showing every sign of coming to a settlement with the imperialists on terms thoroughly acceptable to both Somoza and Washington.

Ferocity

The extreme ferocity with which Somoza has pursued his campaign, most evident in the saturation bombing of the workers' quarters of Managua itself, has confirmed the National Guard as the most deeply loathed section of Nicaraguan society. The dictator, obviously touched by the loyalty of his butchers and yet recognising that he is in a hopeless situation, has repeatedly offered his resignation over the last ten days on the condition that the Guard is maintained and given firm guarantees.



Sandinista guerrillas

Now the Junta, which on July 4 proclaimed that this 'praetorian guard' would have to

be 'totally eliminated', has offered full guarantees of safety to officers and men and given

them the option of joining the 'new' army alongside militants of the FSLN.

This is the part of the settlement proposed on July 10 that will be most immediately abhorrent to the Nicaraguan masses. Yet the Junta has proffered further concessions which denote its policies as flagrantly capitulationist and its politics as unashamedly capitalist.

What has become known as the 'holiday war' appears to have ended—with a compromise.

The politico-military wing of the Basque national liberation movement ETA has in the last two weeks exploded 16 bombs in Spanish tourist resorts, though with scarcely any casualties.

ETA(p-m)'s demands were originally for the removal of 100 Basque political prisoners from Soria jail to another prison in Euskadi.

The government, while starting with a refusal to make any concessions, has ended up by withdrawing the armed police from the immediate guarding of the Basque prisoners and replaced them with prison officers.

It is objectively a very minor concession, and far from meeting ETA(p-m)'s demands.

But it seems to have been accepted by ETA(p-m)—under pressure from the bourgeois-led Basque General Council which is trying to negotiate an autonomy deal with the Suarez government.

But in spite of the trivial nature of the concession it has undoubtedly intensified the political crisis which the Basque national issue has created for the regime and has thrown fuel on the growing ultra-right and military campaign for a full reinstatement of Francoism via a military coup.

Right wing propaganda for such a move was also strengthened last week by a half day strike called by the CP-dominated Workers' Commissions (but opposed by the Socialist UGT) against government plans to introduce new anti-strike laws.

Masses resist Islamic reaction

A new stage has opened up in the struggles against the Khomeini-Bazargan regime and its fight to impose a counter-revolutionary dictatorship in Iran.

The 'revolutionary guards' of the black Islamic republic are continuing their campaign of violence and repression, with increasing arrests of opposition forces.

The mullahs' crusade against 'corruption' and 'vice' has rolled on from the execution of gays to sending prostitutes to their death before firing squads.

The bourgeois and clerical leaders are pressing ahead with their efforts to rebuild for their own uses the armed forces of the Shah's dictatorship which were shattered during the revolution.

But they now face growing resistance from the masses they seek to oppress.

On Thursday, 'revolutionary guards' fired on a demonstration in Abadan of 3,000 Arabs demanding autonomy for Khuzestan, main home of the large Arab minority in Iran.

Other militants from this struggle for national rights have launched a widespread campaign of sabotage.

But probably the most dangerous threat hanging over Bazargan's cabinet and Khomeini's 'revolutionary council' is the news that Kurdish nationalists have visited Khuzestan in a bid to link their struggle for national self-determination with that of the Arabs.

Even such limited democratic movements will find their aims rejected by the 'revolutionary' leaders.

The struggle to win their demands will be successful only if it is integrated into a struggle by the Iranian working class to overthrow Khomeini and Bazargan with their allies and move forward to a socialist revolution in Iran.

ITALY'S SICK JOKE PM

President Pertini's appointment of Socialist Party leader Bettino Craxi as Premier-designate is a graphic illustration of the impasse of bourgeois rule in Italy.

For Sig. Craxi is not a leader of the largest parliamentary party (the Christian Democrats); nor of the second largest (the CP); but of the very much smaller third largest party.

This at first sight extraordinary appointment comes about because of the following dilemma; the Christian Democrats don't have a parliamentary majority; the CP will not support them (or benevolently abstain) unless it gets seats in the Cabinet and these the Christian Democrats will not concede; and none of the other centre parties will support or benevolently abstain unless the CP does the same.

They know they cannot afford to let the CP "reap the gains of opposition" to a bourgeois government which in the deepening capitalist crisis is destined to be massively unpopular as it unleashes attacks on the working class.

Impasse

The impasse seems absolute, and the appointment of right-wing Socialist leader Craxi has certainly produced no immediate prospect of even a short-term way out.

In fact it seems to have deepened the split in all the main political parties.

The Christian Democrats are deeply divided.

On the one hand are those unwilling to let the Premiership pass to another party for the first time since the war.

On the other are those who are willing to work with Craxi given rigorous conditions about the policies of his government. While the CP might hope to

gain an advantage by opposing a Socialist/Christian Democratic government, Craxi certainly won't go on without at least CP abstention if not support.

But within the CP the Craxi appointment has produced a new and to the leadership a very alarming division.

Obvious

Many sections of the rank and file of the party are asking the obvious question "If there is a Socialist Premier then why not a government composed of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party acting in the interests of the working class?"

Last week, in a widely publicised speech to the party Central Committee, Party Secretary Enrico Berlinguer went out of his way to reject what he called the "left alternative" as 'impossible' and 'dangerous' because it would be provocative to the bourgeoisie and could lead to nothing but civil war.

It is equally clear that Craxi will not so much as consider the "left alternative" even though sections of the rank and file of his own party are also pushing for it.

Craxi, like Berlinguer, knows that even to admit the possibility of a government of workers' parties would find an enormous flare-up of demands from the working class against the class collaborationism which the Stalinist and reformist leaders say is the only way to avoid civil war.

Avoidance

Popular Frontist collaboration with the main capitalist party is the principle way in which they fight to avoid taking responsibility for fighting for the interests of the class they claim (though with less and less conviction) to lead.

So the Craxi appointment has produced a crisis in his own

Socialist Party, a large section of which is opposing any Socialist participation in or government with the Christian Democrats.

This is especially the case when the Socialists nominally head the government but would in reality be Christian Democratic prisoners.

Italy's latest, more than half serious political joke is that Craxi can only form a government if the Socialists abstain!

The joke points to the extent to which parliamentary democracy as a whole is unable to answer any of the problems of the bourgeoisie which is increasingly in search of some alternative.

But it also highlights a situation in which the slogan for a Socialist Party-Communist Party government is a powerful pole around which to mobilise the masses in defence of their interests and against the class collaboration of the Stalinist and reformist leaders.



Indian Premier Desai's resignation after a mass defection of ministers from his Janata coalition has opened up a new period of political crisis in India. For analysis, see the next issue of Socialist Press.

Appointed

The entire rebel offensive will be brought to an end on the basis of Somoza's resignation to his congress, the establishment of an appointed government of 'National Reconstruction' and the abolition of the present constitution. These are the only conditions.

This deal corresponds in almost every detail to the various schemes trotted out by Vance in recent weeks. The move by the Junta, to which the US insists two representatives of conservative interests are added, reflects the increasing influence of the Venezuelan, Panamanian, and Costa Rican regimes over the Tercerista wing of the FSLN which is now greatly distanced from the politics of the 'Marxist' wings of the Sandinistas.

The question is not whether the fighting should stop but under what conditions the fighting should stop. If the cynical manoeuvre of the bourgeois junta is implemented the masses will be presented with a regime that is actively courting the support of imperialism and committed to the defence of a major part of Somoza's state apparatus.

This will undoubtedly allow it to tinker with the political infrastructure but it also strengthens its ability to defend imperialist capital.

Break

Now more than ever the 'intransigent' sectors of the FSLN and the Nicaraguan Marxists must break with the bourgeois parties and deepen the political and social struggle for socialism within the civil war.

This mobilisation must be directed against both Somoza and the politics of the junta which, far from acting in alliance with the masses, is preparing to take power on behalf of the parasitic reformist bourgeoisie on its own terms.

The impending defeat of Somoza makes it more essential than ever that the fight is taken up for the construction of factory committees and soviet-type bodies, alongside the struggle for a constituent assembly in Nicaragua.

CP mayors' outburst

Nine Parisian Mayors—all members of the French Communist Party—have made a joint statement in *L'Humanite* the party's daily paper, dealing with the "boat people".

They correctly point to the hypocrisy of the French government which is at present trying to drive out North African and other immigrants while at the same time appealing to the Parisian Mayors to take more anti-communist Vietnamese.

Having said this, however, the Mayors then make a series of outright racist statements themselves.

Instead of demanding the right to travel and live anywhere, that any genuine communist would fight for, these Stalinist hacks say:

"We have already from 20 to 30% of immigrant workers in our towns, gathered in special living areas or low-cost housing blocks; their children fill as much as 50% of classes in our schools, creating difficulties for all the children, both French and immigrant."

Echoing all the 'worst excesses' of recent National Front propaganda, these Stalinists go on to say that the Vietnamese would 'worsen the unemployment situation' in France.



INTERNATIONAL

Nigerian elections: a bid to stabilise capitalist rule

Since January 1966—less than six years after its nationalist movement had won formal 'independence' from colonial Britain—Nigeria has been ruled by military dictatorship.

The ban on political parties is now lifted and this month sees a series of elections calculated to provide bourgeois rule with a more acceptable "democratic" skin.

The transition to civilian government in October will be watched with some apprehension by imperialism and the indigenous bourgeoisie: although it is certain that a bourgeois party will win the elections (only bourgeois parties have qualified to contest them), it is by no means certain that the Nigerian masses, whose pressure has to some extent prompted this move, will consent to submit to continued poverty, exploitation and repression—even when its superintended by their 'own' elected representatives.

Disappointed

The people's expectations of civilian government are bound to be disappointed—for the election victors will continue the essential role of the military: to weave Nigeria ever closer into the rotting fabric of international capitalism as a source of profit and as a vital imperialist agent in Africa.

Vague promises of welfare state benefits have been made by all five contesting parties, but the necessity of producing profits for the capitalists and the effects of the international capitalist crisis will ensure that the military government's anti-working class economic and political policies remain at the head of the agenda.

Stalinist and reformist labour leaders will no doubt enthusiastically connive at the attempt to convince the masses that a civilian repression is worth suffering for, and that a return to military rule would be the awful consequence of any fundamental challenge to the new regime or of any pressure for a solution to the appalling poverty of the masses.

Such deceptive and treacherous politics must be vigorously opposed and the fight taken up for a programme, party and leadership based on the independent class interests of the proletariat and the strategy of permanent revolution.

Coups

This is the only way to carry forward the struggles of both the industrial workers and the masses tied to the crumbling subsistence-farming system.

The present dictatorship goes back through various coups, counter-coups and attempted coups to its origin in the instability of the post-independence government.

The emerging national bourgeoisie, weakened by competition between its sectors (particularly between the traditional rulers of the largely Islamic north and the newer Ibo bourgeoisie of the south-east) was confronted soon after independence by the proportionally small but increasingly militant industrial working class which had expected something more than attacks on its living standards from its 'independent' government.

General strikes in 1963-4 quickly led to the posing of questions of political control and prompted political slogans: "Down with the Balewa government!" and "Imodu (the leading Stalinist union bureaucrat) our



Obasanjo

leader!"

The treachery of the labour leadership during this strike followed the established Nigerian pattern.

First, mass pressure forced a fragile unity on the major union federations—the Nigerian Trade Union Congress and Labour Unity Front, and the reformist United Labour Congress of Nigeria and the Nigerian Workers Council.

Then the resulting Joint Action Committee used its unity to collaborate with a government-chaired reconciliation committee to sell out the strike, before retreating to its original constituent structures. Widespread political and economic dissatisfaction among the workers after the strike aggravated the problems resulting from the internal dissension of the ruling class—which came

to a head in the general elections of 1964-5.

Countrywide protests and rioting followed a blatantly rigged election in the Western Region.

These conditions provided grounds for an attempted coup by a group of (mainly Ibo) dissident majors in January 1966 which succeeded magnificently in destroying the government (through assassinating the Prime Minister, two Regional Premiers and the majority of senior army officers).

Martial order

The army commanders, however, regained control, and the remnants of the Cabinet handed over to General Ironsi the task of imposing martial order on the country.

This initial experiment in military politics proved unstable and did not solve the struggle between the rulers of the North and the Ibo bourgeoisie.

The Northerners were convinced that Ironsi's moves to centralise the country's administration were to ensure the dominance of the Ibos through the consolidation of his own control.

Inter-tribal antagonism was fostered, and anti-Ibo riots broke out in the North.

Then, in July 1966, Northern army officers staged the coup which eventually brought General Gowon to power, led the Ibo regional military army leader, after further massacres of Ibos took place in the North, to declare the secessionist republic of Biafra.

Imperialism took a great interest in the resulting civil war—with France thirsting for Biafran oil, Britain looking to preserve its traditional monopoly of imperialist exploitation in the area, and South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal exulting in the prospect of a splitting-up of Africa's potentially most powerful nation; meanwhile millions of Biafrans and Nigerians died.

With the bloody defeat of the secessionists in 1970,

Gowon was left in power with an enormous army as the base for his political moves to diminish inter-state and inter-tribal rivalries and conflicts within the ruling class.

His overall strategy was to stabilise Nigeria for development as an imperialist agent in Africa and a site for imperialist exploitation.

Gowon's rule lasted only until July 1975.

His government proved unable to control prices and to accelerate infrastructural and industrial development and despite mounting opposition to military government he cancelled the programme for hand-over to civilian government in 1976.

Killed

One of the first actions of the new government under General Murtala Muhammed was to set a new date for hand-over.

Murtala Muhammed was killed in an abortive coup seven months later and was succeeded (there being no shortage of generals in Nigeria) by the present ruler Olusegun Obasanjo.

The central function of the military regime is revealed in the mass of legislation it passed restricting workers' democratic rights.

But the strength and willingness to fight of the Nigerian working class has been equally revealed in its day to day struggles.

In 1970-1 and in 1974 illegal mass strikes took place in defiance of the repressive laws, securing large wage rises—though not large enough to secure a decent standard of living for workers, with inflation running at an annual rate of about 30%.

In these struggles the Stalinist and reformist leaders played the treacherous role at



Ironsi

which they are so adept—refusing joint action over economic demands when they can help it, and subordinating workers' interests to their own and to the 'necessity' of achieving bourgeois democracy and capitalist economic growth.

Whenever economic strikes threatened to move beyond the limits of narrow economism, these leaders are quick to insist on the 'proper' function of trade unions.

Dr. Otegbeye, leader of the banned Stalinist Socialist Workers Party and of the NTUC waxes eloquent on the necessity of a "natural front of the army, workers, farmers and progressive businessmen" as the only way forward.

Adventurist

Anybody, he suggests, "who talks of a revolutionary situation in Africa is an adventurist". (Dr Otegbeye is no adventurist: at present he is appearing on the platform of one of the major

bourgeois parties).

The Nigerian workers, who have so often been betrayed by the bureaucratic disunity, as well as the reformism, of their trade union leaders, have to fight against the type of 'unity' imposed on their unions by the bourgeois state in 1977-78.

Banned

The whole trade union structure was reorganised and the four former union federations banned and replaced by a government sponsored (and controlled) Nigerian Labour Congress.

Recently this NLC revealed itself as the true heir of Nigerian trade unionism (corrupt and bureaucratic to a degree which would astonish even British workers) when it collaborated with the government's latest austerity programme—which continues a wage freeze and makes fresh attacks on workers' living standards. The National President of the NLC, Hassan Adebayo described the anti-working class budget as desirable and in the best interests of the nation.

But mass pressure forced even sections of the NLC leadership to backtrack and to confront the government with an ultimatum demanding some concessions to sweeten the pill and to help the NLC to maintain the vestiges of its credibility.

Treachery

The ultimatum has now been dropped in favour of a joint agreement to "negotiate" on the demands.

This latest evidence of the treachery of the Nigerian labour leaders reveals dramatically, once more, the urgent need for workers to struggle for independent trade unions, as well as for an independent political party, which will fight for the workers' own interests.

Conditions are ripe for workers to break from the leaders who have so conspicuously, so frequently and with such contempt betrayed them.

They must reject the favourite Nigerian method of governmental Wages Commissions and to press for wage rises in line with their independent assessment of their needs.

The bourgeois civilian government that comes to power in October will by no means find a working class crushed by 13 years of military repression—despite the generals' best efforts.

Militant

And in schools and universities, too, there has been a militant response to the government's attempts to make anybody but the bourgeoisie pay for the deepening of imperialism's international crisis.

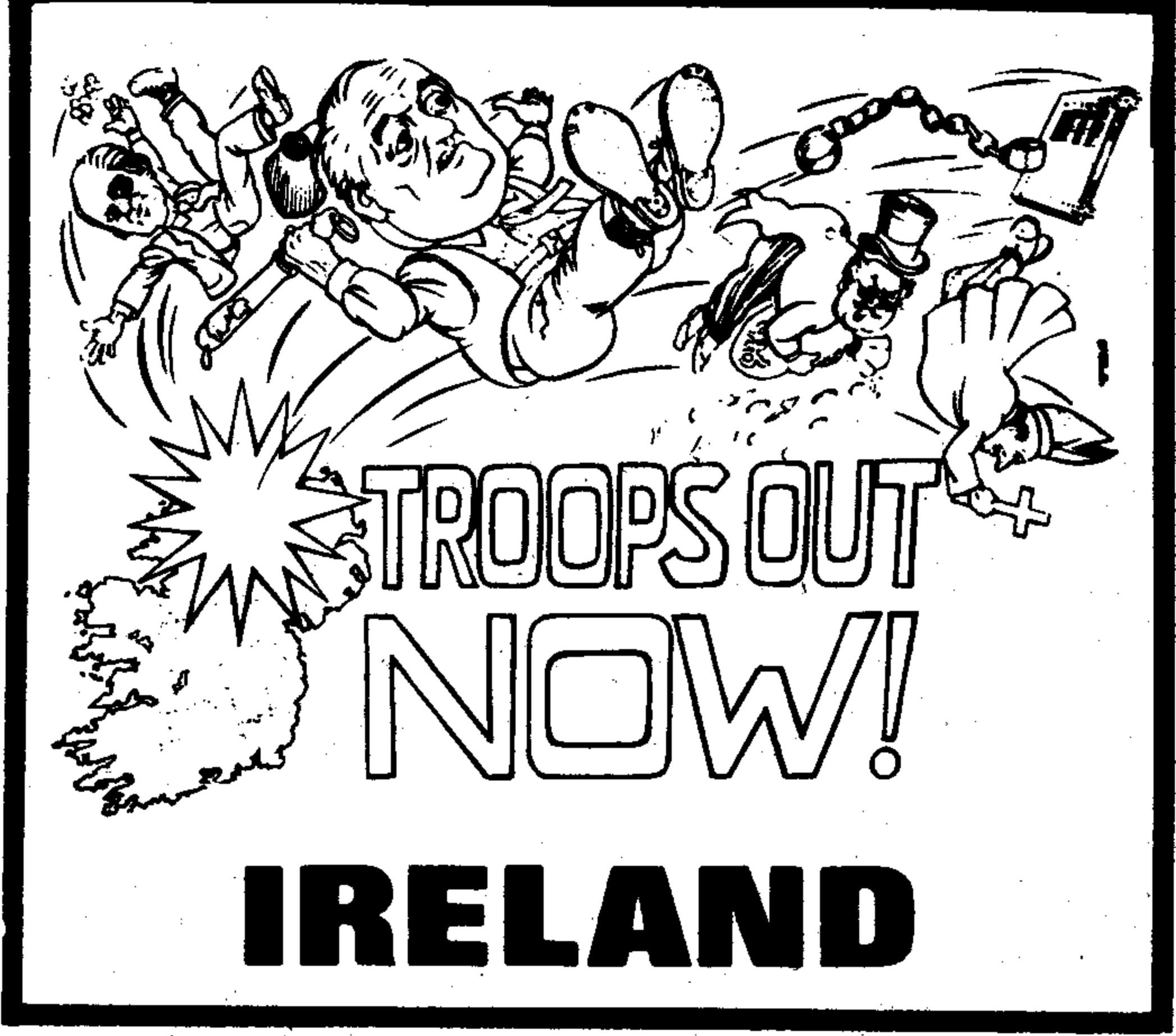
Government spending cuts, restructuring of courses and attempts to post military personnel to secondary schools "to maintain discipline" have met with staunch resistance.

In 1978 when universities were closed in response to student riots, students took to the streets where they were joined by workers protesting against rising food prices.

The military dictators again used their teeth and many were killed or injured in the savage repression.

This repressive force will remain to attempt to crush the struggles of workers and youth so long as imperialism reigns in Nigeria—whether the government wears generals' stars on its shoulders or not.

Tribunal exposes British crimes, but fails to call for Troops Out



The organisers of the entirely peaceful International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland, held in London on 7-8 July, could have been arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act if the police authorities had so wished.

The wide-ranging powers open to the police can be used to declare such a conference as 'giving support to' or furthering the interests of an illegal organisation.

This was one of the many facts that were hammered home to delegates from the labour and trade union movement in the case presented to indict British imperialism in Ireland.

The British government failed to respond to an invitation to present their defence.

Out



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

Lawyer

But Kieran McAnally, a lawyer from the 26 counties, presented the historical account using entirely British government documents.

He outlined extremely well the relationship between the three parties involved, British imperialism, Irish nationalism and the plantation settler group in the North.

He also scotched the various misconceptions which surround the Irish struggle.

Irish Republicanism is not parochial; it drew inspiration from the American and French revolutions.

And, since the Irish were already fighting British domination three centuries before Luther came on the scene, therefore this could not have been based on religious differences.

McAnally highlighted the legal duplicity of British governments as well as the brute force, repression, economic exploitation, media distortion and cultural deprivation.

For example in 1783 the Renunciation Act signed in Westminster gave up "for all time" any so-called right to legislate for the Irish people.

UDI

This "forever" lasted only seventeen years—until the 1800 Act of Union!

He likened the movement among the Colonists in the North in 1782 to Ian Smith's UDI and claimed that apartheid was first introduced in Ireland, not South Africa.

Ernie Roberts chaired the first day and reported that only 18 Labour MPs had voted against the continuation of the Special Powers Act the previous day in Parliament.

SDLP careerist Gerry Fitt had revealed in the debate that 29 complaints of torture had been made since the discussion on the Bennett Report and that systematic torture clearly formed an integral part of British oppression in Ireland.

The constituency Roberts represents, Hackney North and Stoke Newington, has put forward a motion on Ireland to the Labour Party Conference.

Special conference

It calls for a Special Conference on Ireland. Although Roberts continually stressed the need to find ways of fighting for British withdrawal inside the labour movement, he failed to give a lead himself and put forward a depressing view of the difficulties.

Republicans are 'on the blanket' fighting for the restoration of political prisoner status—some for as long as three years.

The attempts to criminalise and brutalise the prisoners by prison screws receiving enormous special supplements and bonuses were shown to be insufficient to overcome the unbreakable spirit of the liberation fighters.

Censorship

Evidence was given by other prosecution witnesses under the headings: censorship; repressive legislation; economic and social, women and police and army.

The indictment was passed nem con. It stated:

"We Indict Britain on the following counts:

1. That throughout the period of rule of Britain in Ireland it has persistently pursued policies which have resulted in the death of countless Irish men and women, the denial of their human rights and in their economic and political exploitation.

2. That in 1800 by an international tort, namely by bribery, corruption and coercion exercised against the then independent Irish Parliament, Britain reneged on the Renunciation Act 1783 whereby it had voluntarily renounced forever the "right" to legislate for the people of Ireland, by the

Ernie Roberts

But before blaming other people, Roberts himself needs to answer why he voted for the re-election of Callaghan as leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party given his long-standing record as a torturer and murderer in Ireland.

H Block

The most moving speaker was Lily Fitzsimmons whose eldest son is in 'H' Block at the Long Kesh concentration camp.

She read a letter smuggled out from 'H' Block, where 350



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

An early press conference of the Tribunal: speaker Phillip Flynn, Irish union leader

Act of Union in 1800 it sought to reassert its domination of Ireland and that its "right" to rule in any part of Ireland was in breach of her prior commitment and renunciation.

3. That the creation of the Northern Ireland statelet was brought about by the encouragement of and submission to Orange/Unionist terrorism and in flagrant disregard of the democratically expressed wishes of the Irish people in the 1918 General Election.

4. That Britain sponsored and planned the creation of a sectarian state wherein the Irish people were deprived of the right of effective self-determination and the nationalist minority in the north of Ireland were deprived of basic human rights and relegated to the status of second class citizens.

5. That Britain can only rule in Northern Ireland by committing breaches of internationally recognised Human Rights Charters and with general breaches of the rule of law.

6. That the presence of British rule in Northern Ireland constitutes a crime against international peace and justice and that the methods used to enforce it constitute a crime against the internal peace of Ireland.

And that in the event you are satisfied that the charges mentioned above have been clearly established against the British government, the prosecution invites you to conclude that the only effective remedy for these wrongs is for the British government to reconstitute its international relations

with Ireland on a basis of mutual equality and respect and to recognise the right of the Irish people to self-determination in accordance with Article 1 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

The impact of the evidence on the struggle in the British labour movement for immediate withdrawal of troops was lessened, however, not only by a small attendance, but also by a failure of the indictment, amid its legal phraseology, to spell out the simple demand: Troops Out Now!

Without building support for this demand as the centre of campaigns on Ireland, no amount of well-intentioned calls for "Civil and Political Rights" can hope to succeed.

PRESS GANG

Bolting the lid on the Irish war



Tory 'outrage' at the late night BBC TV interview with a member of the INLA is likely to cause the final collapse of BBC resistance to demands for total censorship.

Already the BBC has promised to review its policy—which for years has been 99% total censorship/1% token defiance. That 1% is now likely to disappear.

The press has played a Judas role in the affair, turning on the BBC with savagery and refusing to defend the right which it claims to hold most dear—freedom to publish.

Cant

Although on the part of owners and most senior editorial executives this 'freedom' is total cant and hypocrisy—like avowals of chastity in a brothel—there is at the same time a genuine contradiction.

Bourgeois democratic rights were not given to the press; they were taken in defiance of Kings

and Governments.

The right to criticise and the right to report Parliament are two examples of such rights won in struggle.

This material origin ensures that within the press—and within TV and radio—there are those for whom the right to publish is taken seriously.

Pressured

It was that element within the BBC that pressured for the INLA interview to be shown and it was to that pressure that Ian Trethowan, BBC director general, bowed.

In renouncing his decision and saying that he had clearly 'misjudged the emotional impact' of the broadcast, Trethowan is set to wipe out that thin seam of defiance for ever.

The programme was shown late at night and without any 'trailing'—a deliberate decision according to Trethowan. It was seen by only a small audience.

The immediate reaction was muted. Most papers gave the gist of the interview, in which Neave

was accused of being a torturer, and published protests from hard-line Tories.

Widow

It was a week before the row broke out in earnest with a denunciation in the *Daily Telegraph*, followed swiftly by protests from Neave's widow—whose family had decided not to tell her the programme was on but who had nevertheless switched on.

Trethowan was in full retreat. Already his boss, Sir Michael Swann, chairman of the Board of Governors, was promising a review of the guidelines.

Trethowan, who thinks they do not need altering, responded by boasting that the BBC had shown only four interviews with 'terrorists' in ten years.

Too little

In a letter to the *Telegraph*, Trethowan said:

"We are, indeed, more often accused of attempting too little in this field of reporting.

The impact of an appearance on film is so strong that one does have to apply special criteria, but we believe that, on very rare occasions, the public can be reminded directly of the nature of the terrorists by the normal methods of television reporting."

After Thatcher's broadside against the BBC in the Commons—backed by Labourite Merlyn Rees—the *Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Mirror* all led on the subject.

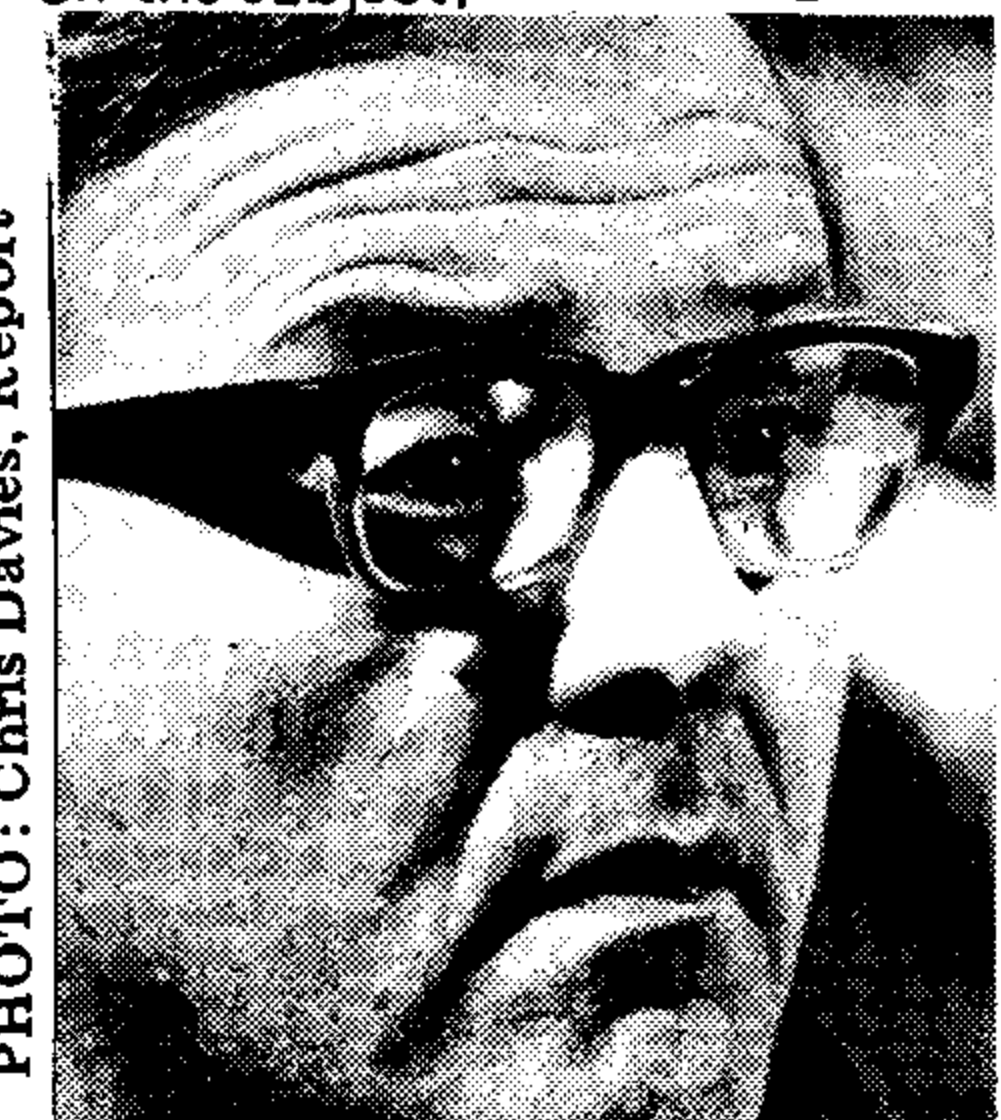


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Rees

The *Mail* headlined "Appalling Error by BBC"; the *Mirror* "Terror Quiz at the BBC".

But even the threat of prosecution under the PTA of BBC staff was not sufficient to persuade the press to support them.

The gutter press managed to avoid open comment while running large stories slamming the BBC and—in the care of the *Daily Mail*—exhuming an interview with Neave himself condemning interviews with IRA members.

The *Guardian*—in one of the most mealy-mouthed leaders even they have published—gave a defence of the BBC which was worse than the attacks.

Accusing the BBC of errors and lapses the *Guardian* said that such interviews should not be banned—so long as they were rare events.

That is the authentic cowardly and whining voice of liberalism.

Defend Leicester anti-fascists

The Leicester April 21 Defence Committee has called a demonstration on July 21 under the slogans "Drop the Charges—Disband the SPG".

Meanwhile the stream heavy fines imposed by Leicester Magistrates Court has continued and a third anti-racist has joined Bill Hemmings and Yorkshire miner Martin Hughes in prison.

The Defence Committee is distributing a leaflet spelling out the implications of these sentences, not just for anti-racists, but for the labour movement as a whole.

Paramilitary

The police and the SPG, backed up by the courts, are increasingly no more than a paramilitary force used for smashing strikes and breaking up labour movement demonstrations.

That is why the SPG was used 750 times at industrial disputes last year.

That is why their snatch squads were out in force at the Grunwick mass pickets.

However, the campaign against the charges and for the disbanding of the SPG needs a clear principled perspective if it is to be carried forward from the Leicester demonstration.

As the attacks of this Tory government over wages, jobs, public sector cuts and anti union legislation hit home, they will constantly bring the working class into conflict with the "forces of law and order".

The labour movement, whether at Leicester, at Grunwicks, on the picket line or in occupying a



Police bundle off anti-fascist on April 21

factory to defend jobs, must reject the rule of Tory class justice and its apparatus of courts and uniformed police thugs.

We must organise defence of our meetings and picket lines from attack whether by fascists or the police.

Concrete assistance

The workers' movement must also be prepared to offer concrete practical assistance to members of the black community who need to defend themselves against fascist attacks and police harassment.

We must demand a workers' inquiry into the death of Blair Peach, murdered at Southall by SPG thugs.

Local 'left' MP Jim Marshall is expected to address the Leicester rally after the demonstration and it is hoped that a delegate from Yorkshire NUM will attend.

A huge turn out is necessary if they are to be pressed into taking the fight for these demands into the labour movement.

MOBILISE FOR LEICESTER VICTORIA PARK 1.00 p.m. Saturday July 21

Bishop above the law!

Labour MP Joan Lestor failed last week to get a warrant for the arrest of imperialist stooge Bishop Abel Muzorewa.

Ever mindful of the legal window dressing which covers the real face of oppression the Tory government rushed through an Order in Council which gave Muzorewa the immunity he knew he could count on before he came to Britain.

Joan Lestor and the Anti-Apartheid Movement were delighted in that the government move proved to them that the Bishop was indeed what they had argued all along—an enemy of the Crown.

The most important point about the Bishop's visit is not whether or not he is an enemy



Lestor

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

of the Crown in strictly legal terms—he is in every sense a friend of the British Crown, a stooge of imperialism and no more than Ian Smith a traitor.

The real traitors are those within the labour movement like Callaghan and Owen who have fought hard to defend imperialist interests in Southern Africa.

The Tories are simply continuing the talks in public here that they have taken over from the Labour government which carried them out in public in 'Rhodesia-Zimbabwe'.

And more important still is the fact that these 'public' talks are in no sense public. Behind the scenes deals are being cooked up in the constant round of secret diplomacy which continually goes on between imperialism, the Smith-Muzorewa regime, the Front Line states and the Patriotic Front.

The strategy of the imperialists continues to be around splitting the Patriotic Front or at best winning both wings to a negotiated settlement.

They are attempting to prepare for this by bringing pressure to bear on the Salisbury regime to remove the constitutional guarantees for the whites which effectively exclude

blacks from leading positions in the judiciary, security and public services.

The visit of Muzorewa is designed to bring pressure particularly on Nkomo to bring him into an all-party conference.

Nkomo's response, "the moment Thatcher decides to formally recognise Muzorewa's regime we shall make it impossible for her to do so the same way we have done it in the past by intensifying even further the armed struggle" shows that he sees the armed struggle as something to be turned off and on for diplomatic manoeuvres.

The antics of Joan Lestor and the anti-apartheid movement over the last few days have in no way helped the working class to take independent class action in support of the Zimbabwe masses. In associating acts of solidarity with appeals to jail 'enemies of the Crown' they confuse and disorient the solidarity movement.

Joan Lestor would be much better employed campaigning for the bringing to account of Callaghan and Owen for their role in imperialism's plans for Southern Africa and the mobilisation of workers to black supplies to the racists.

Force TUC to fight anti-abortion Bill!

The utter contempt of the Labour leadership for women's rights was ably expressed last Friday in the miserable 98 votes rallied against the latest Tory anti-abortion Bill.

John Corrie's Private Members Bill, which plans to drastically restrict women's right to legal abortion, swept through its second reading with a thumping 144 majority.

Opposed

Among those supporting it was former Labour leader Sir Harold Wilson. But Callaghan too had done his bit to ensure it a safe passage.

At the previous week's Parliamentary Labour Party meeting he had opposed plans by 'left' MPs Oonagh MacDonald and Jo Richardson to 'filibuster' the Corrie Bill off the order paper by talking through the night on the preceding business.

Callaghan announced that he was concerned that Labour should not be seen as taking an official "pro-abortion" line.

And in the event the 'filibuster' failed to get off the ground.

The miserable turn out of Labourites to oppose Corrie's reactionary plans certainly leaves no room for anyone to conclude that the Labour leadership favour even defending the existing, inadequate, rights to abortion.

Fifth attempt

With the Third Reading of the Bill due in September and a hefty Tory majority in Parliament only the most concerted effort by the labour movement can hope to forestall this, the fifth attempt to restrict the 1967 Abortion Act.

The proposals in this Bill are—according to Corrie—not meant to be anti-abortion.

But on television on 3 July he made it clear that his intention is not for safer abortion but less opportunity for legal abortion.

It calls for the time limit during which abortions can be performed to be cut from 28 to 20 weeks.

Late abortions, currently less than 5% of all performed, occur for several reasons—some



Callaghan

medical tests for foetal abnormality cannot be carried out in early pregnancy.

Also cases of German Measles may not be detected or even occur until late in the first three months.

Other circumstances may also change—but it is all the more agonising for those women who are forced to seek late abortion.

In addition, in some areas women legally entitled to early abortions are obstructed by anti-abortion doctors and the lack of NHS facilities.

The Corrie Bill also insists that at least one doctor referring a patient for abortion has been in practice for five years. This is not required for any other operation.

The final blow is that all referral and counselling agencies must be registered.

This is a blow to the charitable agencies as well as free support groups provided by NAC and women's groups, since they would find it difficult if not impossible to register. It would require extra finance.

Workers must demand that in the face of this dire threat to women's rights the TUC immediately put into practice the motion passed at the 1978 TUC Women's Conference:

"In line with TUC and TUC Women's Conference policy for a woman's right to choose and against restrictive legislation on abortion, this conference calls upon the Women's Advisory Committee to press the General Council to support campaigns:

a) for amending legislation with a view to improving the

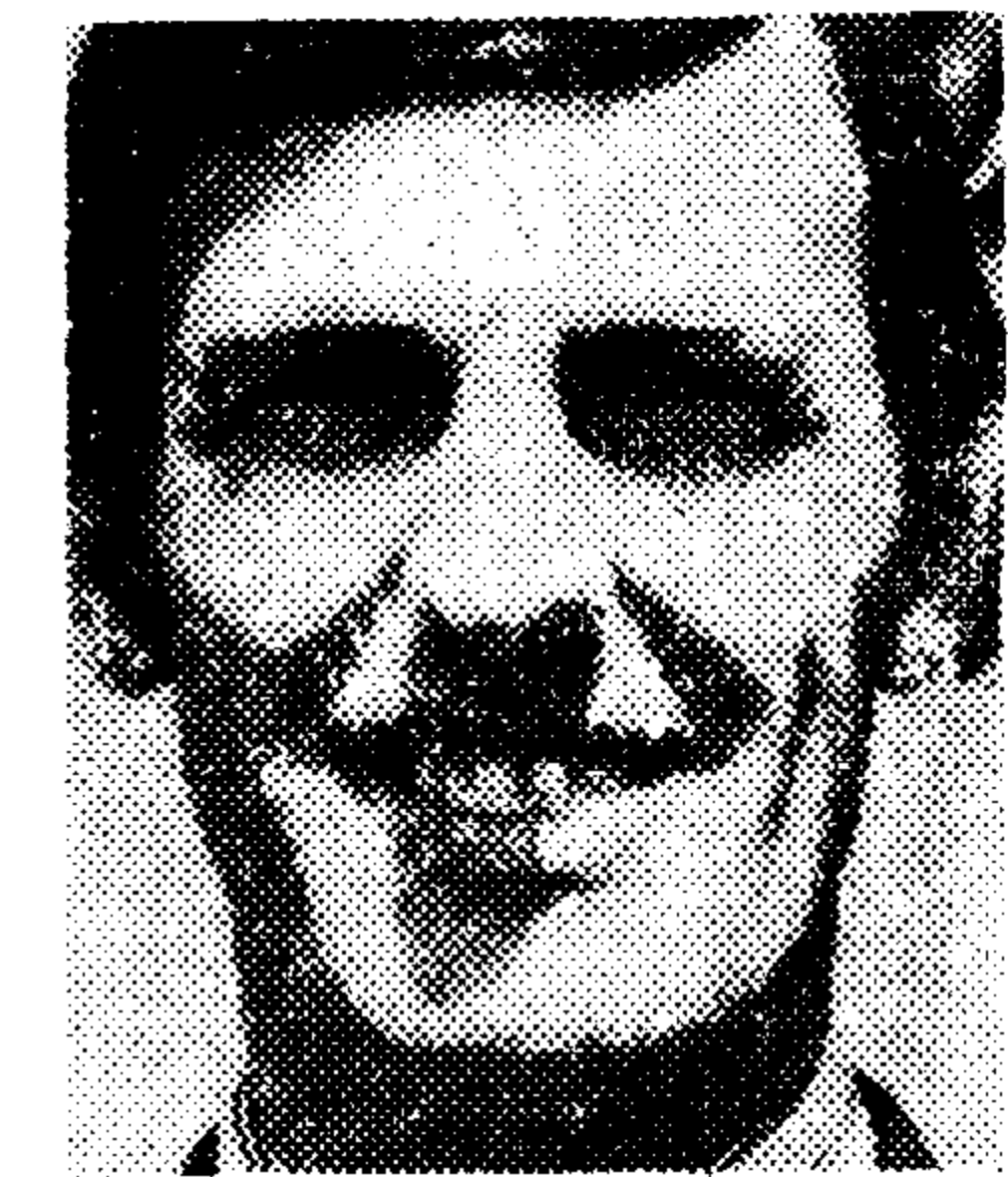
existing facilities available through the NHS.

b) for publicity and education to extend contraceptive knowledge; for early pregnancy diagnosis; skilled counselling; outpatient abortion clinics free on the NHS; and against any further restrictive legislation whether by government or private members bill.

Council also calls upon the General Council to organise a national demonstration against any restrictive legislation before a final vote is taken on it in Parliament, so that MPs are aware of the weight of feeling in the labour movement against such legislation." (Our emphasis).

Resolutions

Supporters must at once put resolutions through their union branches to go to their National Executives instructing the TUC to carry out the Women's TUC policy.



Corrie

And within the Labour Party the fight must be taken up against those reactionary MPs that absented themselves from the debate last Friday or even supported Corrie's mediaeval attempts to restrict women's rights.

GMCs must call their MPs to account, and call also on the Labour Party NEC to demand a three line whip on Labour MPs to oppose the Corrie Bill on its Third Reading.

Those MPs that declare themselves in favour of such a struggle must also be pressed to launch a campaign for the removal of the reactionary Callaghan-Healey leadership that clearly opposed the slightest fight for women's rights.



Massive demonstration for abortion rights earlier this year

WILL IMG 'UNITE' WITH SWP CENTRISTS?

In this short series it has been impossible to make a complete critique of the politics of the Socialist Workers Party—this has been an initial contribution.

We have shown, however, that in relation to Stalinism, permanent revolution, economic theory, Leninism, and its modern continuity Trotskyism, the SWP has little or nothing in common with revolutionary positions.

The International Marxist Group, however, clearly prefer an orientation to the SWP to one towards the Trotskyists of the Workers Socialist League.

That this is the case can be seen from the IMG's stated positions and from its initial reluctance to take seriously the discussion of our document the Poisoned Well—which was prepared specifically for the pre-11th World Congress discussion which is taking place at present.

Syndicalist

In August of last year the IMG Central Committee discussed its orientation to the SWP.

The resolution which was framed says that the SWP: "represents a syndicalist break from revolutionary Marxism, i.e. Trotskyism."

"Nonetheless, since the middle sixties the SWP has defended a basic class struggle orientation and has been able to express the revolutionary instincts of the most advanced layers of the vanguard."

The SWP, says the resolution:

"combines an attempt to bypass the struggle in the official organisations—in favour of militant vanguard action and the creation of party fronts in the trade unions—with a minimalist combination of demands upon the official leadership."

"This difference in view is not a small matter: it concerns the central political problems facing socialists in Britain today."

"The SWP's line does not today lead it to cross class lines—it leads it only to abstain from real struggle against the bureaucracy."

"But when the bankruptcy of this leftism is exposed before the SWP comrades in the heat of major turns in the class struggle, the absence of a correct grasp of the united front and the transitional method can produce a dangerous lurch to conciliation with the bureaucracy in practice through a tailing of the average consciousness of the class."

"A second issue of divergence is the question of socialist democracy, inner party democracy and the question of the Fourth International."

"It is differences around these key programmatic issues which present obstacles to a genuine and lasting fusion of our cadres with those of the SWP."

Real face

Strong stuff! But the real face of the IMG's attitude to the SWP can be seen a few lines further on, when the resolution blandly states:

"But since these programmatic differences have not become yet the burning issues around which the basic social forces in the class struggle are



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

polarising, there is a real chance of these divisions being resolved between ourselves and the SWP as a whole in the coming period.

"But such an outcome will require that we strengthen to the maximum our practical political collaboration with the SWP and at the same time discuss these political obstacles to fusion in a fraternal way with the object of overcoming them."

Out of the door, then, go all the basic weaknesses of the SWP! These apparently don't really matter to the IMG, because they are not yet 'burning' issues around which the basic social forces in the class struggle are polarising.

What, we might ask, about the years of principled preparation which must go into preparing for the time when the basic social forces in the class struggle 'polarise' around the question of power?

Actual betrayal

What about the actual betrayal by the SWP of the Irish people in 1969 when the British troops went into Ireland?

Was the IS/SWP's failure to call for their withdrawal not a direct result of the SWP's refusal to conflict with the consciousness of British trade unionists and the Catholic population in Ireland—combined with its lack of any perspective for the Irish struggle?

What about the SWP's dreadful role only last year in covering up for the jobs sell-out at Speke?

The situation becomes even worse as the resolution goes on.

The principal illustration of the SWP's supposed "healthy" turn is given by the IMG as the Anti Nazi League, a cross-class pacifist propaganda group vigorously opposed to workers defence squads against fascism.

According to the resolution, the ANL shows an attempt by the SWP to turn to left unity!

The resolution suggests that the SWP is now more vulnerable to IMG pressure to enter or create further swamps such as the ANL—this time in the unions, specifically NUT, CPISA and NUPE.

Swamp

The NUT is a good example of the IMG's attempts to create a political swamp.

Here there is not even the pretence of a fight for transitional demands. The Socialist Teachers Alliance went as far as arguing for *token strike action* around the NUT pay claim while the much smaller forces of the WSL were able as result of their fight to bring to the NUT conference a mandate from at least one NUT association for all-out strike action.

The same association had adopted the sliding scale of wages as its policy.

The IMG's real politics dovetail in practice with the tail-endism of the SWP on many occasions in the trade unions.

The IMG can show no evidence of any serious political fight against the sort of line which their resolution correctly denounces in the extreme (for the IMG) language quoted above.

It would of course be wrong to give the impression in this article that the IMG is uniformly enthusiastic about fusion with the SWP.

Orthodox

There exists a sizeable section which rejects that path and prefers an orientation to the 'orthodox' Trotskyist groups such as ourselves.

The main spokesman of these comrades is John

Strawson who put forward an alternative resolution at the CC debate.

While this resolution did not characterise the SWP as centrist, it did argue that the SWP had broken from revolutionary Marxism and was a block to building the revolutionary party.

However, the method which Strawson used to attack the majority view was one which, as we shall see, left him open to attack from forces who are even more enthusiastic about the SWP than are the IMG leadership.

The substantial criticisms Strawson puts forward are concentrated not on the whole theoretical basis of the SWP's centrism, but on isolated examples of its consequences.

Examples cited include Korea, Ireland 1969, and the SWP's support for the Portuguese PRP which signed with the Stalinists in Portugal in August 1975.

Incapable

The strongest section of his critique is where he shows the SWP incapable of giving a lead against the bureaucracy—citing amongst others the example of Speke (see Socialist Press 158).

Similarly his objection to their self-proclaimed Leninism concentrates purely on the SWP's total lack of internal democracy.

Strawson is incapable of really coming to grips with how to oppose the drift to the SWP because he, too, wishes to give them some credit for "class struggle positions" and, of course, the launching of the ANL—of which he strongly approves.

Worse still, he makes the ludicrous diversionary point that the SWP as a whole 'under favourable circumstances'

(whatever those are) might well be won to revolutionary Marxism!

But while Strawson's opposition is fundamentally flawed, for the average IMG member (and this is not intended to be an insult) the pages of contradictory 'theorising' which characterise the contributions from the IMG majority leadership on the SWP must be confusing in the extreme.

Gyrations

Lesser mortals than the top intellectual gurus have clearly grown tired of the ceaseless theoretical gyrations contained in such documents as the resolution quoted above.

They prefer to go straight to the heart of the matter.

Impatiently they demand to know what differences exist in practice between the IMG and the SWP.

In the CC debate, a group of IMG members from Birmingham put forward a resolution which at least has the unusual merit of being straightforward and honest in its total capitulation to the politics of the SWP.

It is no good the IMG bleating about the fact that the document received only one vote—the authors include important IMG members with a record in the trade unions.

We would argue that they articulate a feeling widespread in the IMG—and one which flows logically from the leadership's own positions.

In their 20-odd page document these comrades argue for an immediate fusion with the SWP.

The only barrier they see to this is the need for agreement on internal democracy.

They are able to point to weaknesses in the IMG's characterisation of the SWP which they see, without the

slightest qualification, as revolutionary.

Embarrassingly for the IMG leaders, they are also able to marshal a whole series of examples—such as the fact that the IMG's sister party, the LCI signed the same document as the PRP in Portugal; the lack of an orientation to autonomous women's groups in the history of the FI; and the SWP(USA)'s wrong line on the war in Angola—to show that 'errors' such as those listed by Strawson in relation to the British SWP are not decisive in defining the organisation as outside of revolutionary Marxism.

They are also able to show that the SWP's particular brand of centrism is different from that of the PSU in France, the POUM in Spain and Avanguardia Operaia in Italy.

Massive

Their overwhelming rationalisation for demanding an orientation to the SWP is that it has not crossed class lines; that it is massive compared with the IMG; and will continue to grow.

They even hold out the hope that the SWP will spontaneously confront the Communist Party rather than continue to attempt to join up with it or go round it.

"Just as we cannot 'beat' the SWP by building around or outside of it, so the SWP must establish a route to the base of the CP in their case, to destroy it."

We have cited one example (Socialist Press 158) of the SWP's actual approach to the CP—total capitulation to it over the Speke closure.

We can add to that the SWP's appeal to the CP for a joint candidate in the Hamilton by-election, and the recent call by the Rank and File organising committee for a joint conference with the Stalinist-dominated LCDTU.

The IMG supports the last of these policies anyway, clearly having no understanding themselves of the thoroughly counter-revolutionary role of Stalinism.

It is also interesting to note that while during the Speke closure crisis *Socialist Challenge* printed one generally correct article on the question, the author is a leading supporter of the Strawson tendency. We don't think the authorship is an accident.

Incidentally it was recently said of this article (by a more than usually disgruntled IMG member) that it was one of four 'Trotskyist' articles to appear in *Socialist Challenge* since it commenced publication. But back to the Birmingham resolution.

Majority

What do the Birmingham IMG oppositionists propose as the political basis for this joint organisation with the SWP?

In the words of the comrades:

"Are we simply wanting to build a big organisation in which the IMG's politics can quickly win a majority, and in which the SWP's politics can be rapidly disposed of?"

Their answer is firmly 'No!' The reason for this is apparently their belief that the experience of the IS/SWP tradition should be 'synthesised with the tradition of the FI!

WITH

The final part in Keith White's series of articles examining the politics of the British Socialist Workers Party.



Socialist Challenge editor Tariq Ali



PHOTO: Laune Sparham, IFL

WSL fights racist attacks through fight for workers defence squads.

It is no accident that the shift in the IMG from *Red Weekly* to *Socialist Challenge*—premised on the need for 'revolutionary unity'—has resulted in a *retreat* from the struggle for the transitional programme, however, inadequate that struggle was in the first place.

The IMG's issuing of 'Our Common Ground' in October 1977 marked an important step away from the transitional programme.

This document contains not one transitional demand: and it specifically *excludes* the defence of the deformed and degenerated workers' states from imperialist attacks.

Not a programme

In January of this year the IMG and the ISA (International Socialist Alliance) issued a 'New Year resolution on Revolutionary Unity' (*Socialist Challenge* 4.1.79).

On a number of occasions the resolution stressed that it was not a programme and one had to be worked out but the signatories did consider that it provided 'the basis for developing joint work in order to test out in practice the viability of building a unified organisation.'

The method here is one in which the organisations concerned try to come to agreement on joint work by progressively whittling down the theoretical and programmatic differences until a distorted 'synthesis' of two very different positions emerges.

The whole of the resolution avoids programme from start to finish and thus the practice on which the 'unity' is to be forged will be and indeed is already subject to the pressures of the struggles in which the comrades will be involved.

The IMG are travelling down the road to centrism—this is an inevitable result of its present orientation.

We approach the IMG

differently from the SWP because the IMG still retains a formal commitment to Trotskyism and the building of the Fourth International.

Pabloism

We do not agree with their argument that the USFI is "the" Fourth International—which we believe to have been destroyed as a single organising centre by the politics of Pabloism.

We see our task as the reconstruction of the Fourth International on the basis of the method of the transitional programme.

This reconstruction is at present fought for by the WSL through the fight in the world Trotskyist movement for a re-evaluation of the experience of the post-war history of Trotskyism with the aim of re-directing those who are fighting for the building of the Fourth International towards a correct course in that fight.

For us, therefore, significant unity of the 'revolutionary left' can only be achieved on a Trotskyist programme, with agreement on the theoretical underpinnings of that programme.

To members of the SWP we say: study our positions—compare the practice of our two organisations. We will fight for practical unity in the working class in struggle around our programme—or aspects of it.

We do not start from seeking to jettison that programme which we see as the *only* basis for a successful seizure of power by the working class.

That is the distinctive feature of the politics of the WSL which equips our members to do battle with the reformist and Stalinist bureaucracies. It is on *this* basis, and this basis alone that we seek political unity.

CONCLUDED



May-June 1968 in France—IS adapted to these events by becoming 'Leninist'

... the break up and dispersal of the organisational capital of this group would represent a big set-back to revolutionary politics in this country.

"What we stand for is a fusion of two revolutionary traditions, a synthesis of our experiences rather than an obliteration of one by the other... it follows from our characterisation of the SWP as a revolutionary organisation."

There is in this document not a single mention of the transitional programme; indeed there is not even a mention of what the programme of the united organisation should be, except for a heavy emphasis on what the comrades choose to call "the united front".

By this vague term they appear to mean firstly rank and file groups which are *not* dominated by one organisation; secondly *not* actually leaving the mass organisations of the class and forming red unions; and thirdly *not* denying the class basis of the Labour Party.

No wonder that Strawson called this document 'dreadful' and called for an official reply from the IMG CC.

We do not know whether such a reply has been drafted or indeed whether the Birmingham comrades still hold to their 'dreadful' positions.

What we *do* know is that the CC meeting which voted down the document almost unanimously, also voted that *no* reply should be written.

We can legitimately suggest that the reason for this was a reluctance to confront these arguments—all of which logically flow from the IMG leadership's own refusal to seriously confront the SWP.

Their muddled concept of a principled basis for fusion being around the simplistic formula of 'whether an organi-

sation has crossed class lines' has opened the door to the Birmingham document—and possibly still worse to come.

The most positive contribution to the CC discussion was a document entitled 'A small question of method: the IMG and the SWP(UK)'.

Gulf

Its principal strength was to draw out the deep political gulf between the SWP and Trotskyism. Its opening paragraphs hit the nail right on the head with the contention that the document finally adopted by the IMG:

Mistakes the contemporary manifestation of the SWP's politics (syndicalism) for its nature.

"It isolates the essentially pragmatic nature of the SWP which continually leads to capitulations... which are little now that the pressures on the organisation are small, but will be big if this method is retained in a period of crisis."

The document correctly points to the conscious *rejection* by the SWP of the central theoretical gains of the Trotskyist movement—the theory of permanent revolution, the Transitional Programme, and the Leninist revolutionary party.

Centrist nature

The resolution presented for voting also clearly states the centrist nature of the SWP.

But it then goes on to call in a confused way for an approach to it for unity.

The resolution suggests a schema whereby the SWP leadership will refuse the approach and a political debate will ensure, enabling the IMG to make inroads into the SWP membership.

That document received two votes.

We would certainly not agree with all the formulations in this document, but its general thrust is essentially correct.

How, then, should Trotskyists regard and approach the SWP?

The IS/SWP left the FI in 1950 and has systematically revised the basic tenets of Trotskyism.

It has abandoned and now opposes the struggle for leadership, the transitional programme and the Fourth International.

Without a programme it is subject to pressures from the bureaucracy and trails behind the present level of consciousness within the working class.

It can only react to the struggles of the working class—inevitably tailending it.

Public opinion

In 1950 it bowed to 'public opinion' and betrayed the Korean masses.

Until the late 1960s it opposed Leninism in favour of Rosa Luxembourg.

When the Vietnam war became a popular cause, it supported the solidarity movement.

It adapted to the May events in France in 1968 by becoming 'Leninist'.

It adapted to the syndicalist response to the 1970-74 Tory government.

When syndicalism became untenable under Labour, it turned to 'Right to Work' and electoral campaigns.

When these failed, it launched the ANL. Now it is returning to syndicalism.

The SWP is a *centrist* organisation because it sets its face *against* the struggle to build the FI as the world party of socialist revolution.

This does not, however, mean that the mass of the SWP membership and even the leadership are not 'revolutionaries' in the sense that they fight in their own way for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

Barrier

It *does* mean that the SWP is a barrier on the road to the overthrow of capitalism.

It systematically miseducates and diverts those who find their way into its ranks.

We say that all talk of the possibility of the whole of the SWP coming to revolutionary Marxism is a diversion (at best) because it is irrelevant at this stage.

That is why at present any approach for unity is to breed illusions in the SWP.

An organisation like the SWP could only be won—and we doubt the possibility anyway—by the building of a determined Trotskyist alternative.

Those SWP members who joined that organisation to fight for the building of a revolutionary party will have to compare the WSL's theory and practice with their own. Increasingly as the WSL grows, we will win SWP members not through diplomacy and soft peddling our differences but through a sharp principled and fraternal *battle* with them.

The fight for a Trotskyist party will create problems and shifts in the SWP of which we will be able to take advantage.

Manoeuvres

We cannot say now what tactical manoeuvres will be necessary.

We don't however, start from the position that "unity would be a good thing, so we'll base our work around it".

Now in English, French and Spanish!

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



TROTSKY ON 1905

By David Whitfield

1905—available in Penguin Books.

"The events of 1905 formed a majestic prologue to the revolutionary drama of 1917."

In that first great revolution, the young proletariat of Russia pitted its strength against the ferocious might of the Tsarist autocracy.

The Tsar emerged victorious from those struggles.

But the triumph of reaction was short-lived, beset with doubts—and haunted by the revolutionary power of the working class.

Defeated in this battle, and thrown back into a new period of deeper repression, the Russian workers had, however, made valuable gains through the revolutionary upheavals of 1905.

The courage, determination and discipline to be found in the working class had been proven in this first major confrontation between the ruling class and its future gravediggers.

Tested

Working class cadres and leaders had been tested in action; its allies and its enemies had been revealed in a sharper light.

Above all, the events of 1905 offered crucial lessons for revolutionary strategy—lessons which could be grasped and transformed into practice only by Marxists who formed the conscious vanguard of the working-class.

Trotsky was uniquely placed to perform this vital task. He played a key role in the revolution as the leading figure in the St. Petersburg Soviet.

Before the outbreak of the mass struggle, he had already begun to develop the traditions of the communist movement by analysing the specific conditions of the socialist revolution in Russia.

His intimate experience of the 1905 revolution itself deepened and enriched this understanding which was expressed in the theory of permanent revolution.

Legacy

The book *1905* was produced to pass on the legacy of those two revolutions—the struggle of the Russian masses against their oppression by the Tsarist autocracy, and Trotsky's own revolutionary contribution to the science of historical materialism, that had been developed by Marx and Engels.

Together with the short work *Results and Prospects*, it forms an essential introduction to the essence of Trotsky's theoretical work and to its expression in revolutionary practice (*Results and Prospects* is generally published in one volume with *Permanent Revolution*).

1905 is constructed in two parts: the second deals with the aftermath of the revolution, while the first presents the background to the first Russian Revolution and records its development.

Trotsky opens by analysing the economic and political conditions of Russia under the yoke of Tsardom at the dawn of the 20th century.

Firmly and concisely, he shows the specific character of the Russian state, and the features which distinguished it from the older, more slowly developed capitalist states of Western Europe.

"A population of 150 million people, 5.4 million square kilometres of land in Europe, 17.5 million in Asia. Within this vast space every epoch of human culture is to be found: from the primeval

Leon Trotsky was born in the Ukraine 100 years ago in 1879.

His whole life was devoted to the struggle for socialist revolution.

In 1905, Trotsky was the leading force in the St. Petersburg Soviet.

In 1917, he fought as a Bolshevik for the dictatorship of the proletariat, and became Commissar for Foreign Affairs after the October Revolution.

With the outbreak of the civil war, he built the Red Army.

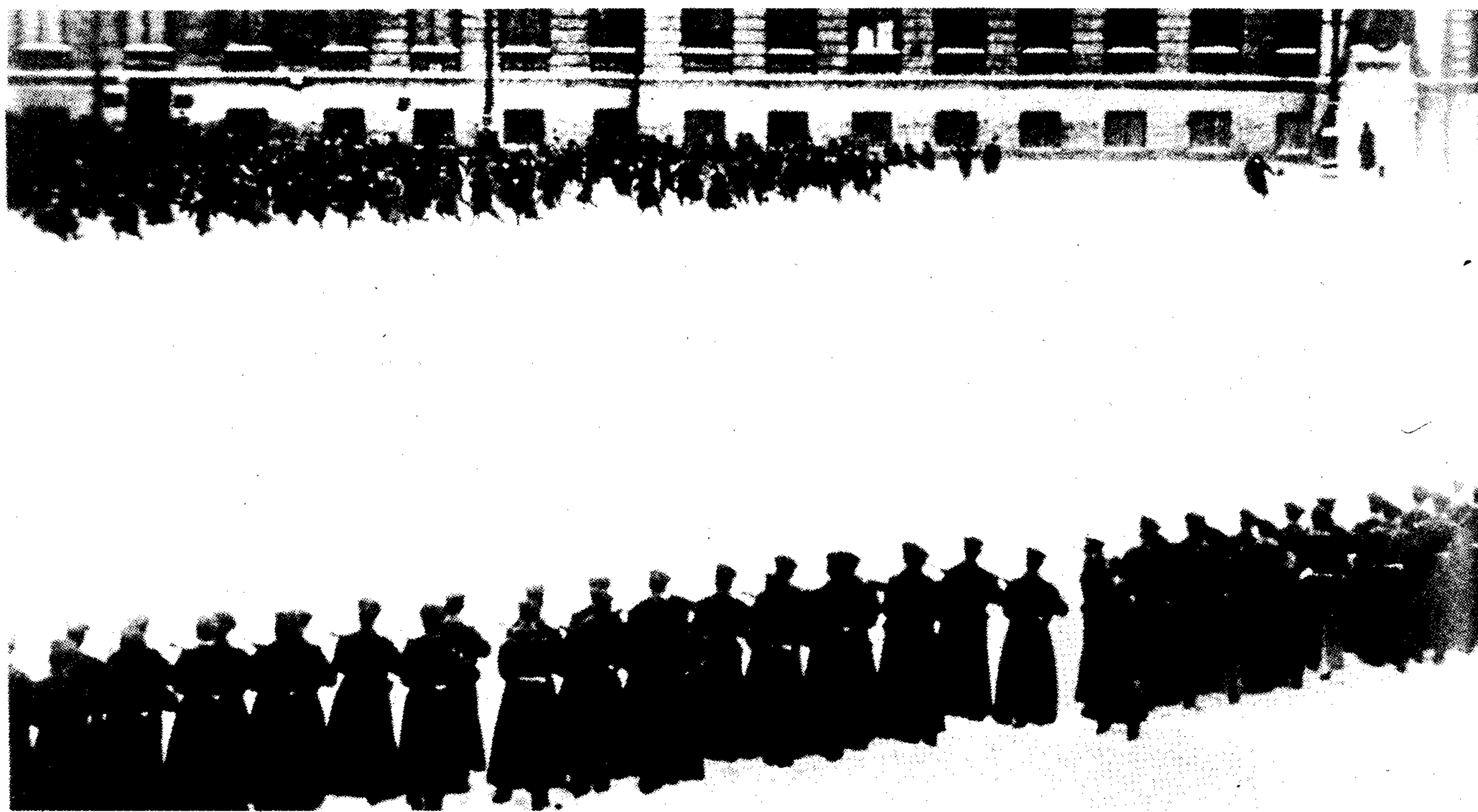
After Lenin's death, Trotsky fought against the

bureaucratisation by the forces led by Stalin.

Although expelled from the party and exiled from the Soviet Union, he organised the International Left Opposition, and then fought for a new, Fourth, International to carry forward the banner of world revolution which had been betrayed by the Third International under Stalin.

He was assassinated in 1940 in Mexico by a Stalinist agent.

To mark the centenary of his birth, *Socialist Press* is publishing a series of 16 articles to present many of Trotsky's major writings.



Troops fire on workers in St. Petersburg, January 22, 1905

barbarism of the northern forests, where people eat raw fish and worship blocks of wood, to the modern social relations of the capitalist city, where socialist workers consciously recognize themselves as participants in world politics and keep a watchful eye on events in the Balkans and on debates in the German Reichstag. The most concentrated industry in Europe based on the most backward agriculture in Europe. The most colossal state apparatus in the world making use of every achievement of modern technological progress in order to retard the historical progress of its own country."

In these early chapters, Trotsky reveals the historical and social forces which produced the contradictions of this picture, and brings to the surface all the hidden class relations and antagonisms.

The worsening plight of the peasantry and the crisis of agricultural production is analysed as the outcome of the conflicting interests of the nobility, the state and the industrial bourgeoisie—and Trotsky shows how this crisis in its turn intensifies those conflicts and drives them inexorably forward to disaster.

Analysis

For the first time, Trotsky provided a Marxist analysis of the role played by capitalism in its highest stage of imperialism as it expanded into regions previously undeveloped by the profit-system.

At every stage, this development is presented in its relations with the central state apparatus built up by Tsardom.

The massive growth of the absolutist state itself, with its vast and suffocating weight of repression, is also presented so as to reveal its true political significance:

"the administrative, military and financial might of absolutism, which enabled it to continue existing despite and against social development, and only did not exclude the possi-



Nicholas II seeks scientific advice on how to deal with the demands for a constitution

bility of revolution—as the liberals thought—but, on the contrary, made revolution the only possible way of development."

Under these conditions, the vast mass of Russian society was increasingly drawn into violent conflict with its despotic rulers.

But this superficial unity of the opposition contained major conflicts between classes of diametrically opposed interests—above all, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

It was his understanding of this conflict which lay behind Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, which he summarised in a preface to *1905*

"This rather high-flown expression defines the thought that the Russian revolution, although directly concerned with bourgeois aims, could not stop short at those aims; the revolution could not solve its immediate, bourgeois tasks

except by putting the proletariat in power.

"And the proletariat, once having power in its hands, would not be able to remain confined within the bourgeois framework of the revolution.

"On the contrary, precisely in order to guarantee its victory, the proletarian vanguard in the very earliest stages of its rule would have to make extremely deep inroads not only into feudal but also into bourgeois property relations.

"While doing so it would enter into hostile conflict, not only with all those bourgeois groups which had supported it during the first stages of its revolutionary struggle, but also with the broad masses of the peasantry, with whose collaboration it—the proletariat—had come to power.

"The contradictions between a workers' government and an overwhelming majority of

peasants in a backward country could be resolved only on an international scale, in the arena of a world proletarian revolution.

"Having, by virtue of historical necessity, burst the narrow bourgeois-democratic confines of the Russian revolution, the victorious proletariat would be compelled also to burst its national and state confines, that is to say, it would have to strive consciously for the Russian revolution to become the prologue to a world revolution."

Armed with this revolutionary class analysis, Trotsky moves on to give a swift-moving and gripping account of the events of the revolution: Bloody Sunday and the storming of the Winter Palace; the mass strikes of October and November; the peasant riots and the mutinies in the Fleet; the Tsarist pogroms led by the 'Black Hundreds'.

Shift

Throughout the narrative stresses the shift in relationship between the classes and the rapid fluctuations in the mood of the workers—and of their enemies.

Bestrident all these events, and central to the book, is the creation of the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies,



Barricades in 1905

the major achievement of Russian workers in 1905.

Trotsky gives a full account of its formation and workings, and assesses its historical significance:

"The Soviet's strength was determined by the role of the proletariat in a capitalist society. The Soviet's task was not to transform itself into a parody of parliament, not to organise equal representation of the interests of different social groups, but to give unity to the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

"The principal weapon in the Soviet's hands was the political strike—a method unique to the proletariat, which is the class of wage labour.

"The homogeneity of its class composition eliminated internal friction within the Soviet and rendered it capable of revolutionary initiative."

The St. Petersburg Soviet was crushed by the Tsarist reaction; its leaders were imprisoned and exiled (Trotsky reports on the trials, his own experiences in exile and his escape). The 1905 revolution failed to achieve its aims.

But the lessons of this 'majestic prologue' were learned by Trotsky and other revolutionary Marxists.

April theses

They were central to the *April Theses* with which Lenin won the Bolsheviks to a consistently revolutionary position in 1917, and so enabled them to lead the proletariat to victory in October.

Those lessons have lost nothing of their power and importance since then.

Time and again, the theory of permanent revolution has been 'negatively' proved in the failed, compromised and betrayed struggles of workers led by forces which are unable to grasp the principles of scientific Marxism, or are even hostile to its methods.

Today the same danger confronts the oppressed masses of Nicaragua and Iran in their revolutionary struggles against imperialism.

1905 offers an antidote to the endless betrayals of Stalinism and bourgeois nationalism; it shows a way forward for the working class to break from its old, counter-revolutionary leadership and move with its independent strength to the seizure of state power and the building of a socialist society.

I WANT TO WORK - BUT WHAT ABOUT THE CUTS?

Johnny Byrne reviews *I Want to Work but What About the Kids?* published by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Of all the inept bodies dreamt up by tired 'liberal' reformists the Equal Opportunities Commission must be amongst the most cynically diversionary.

Set up in 1975 to monitor the workings of the Equal Pay and Sex Discrimination Acts, the Commission has kept its head well down in the sand as wage control and public spending cuts have made a hollow mockery of "equal opportunity for women".

The EOC has the power "to investigate and make recommendations on anything that may put women at a disadvantage including educational practices."

Hence the publication of this pamphlet, along with two alternative reports by academic hacks Robin Simpson and Peter Moss, *I Want to Work but What About the Kids?* starts from the basic principle that capitalism must be preserved at all costs but that if we all close our eyes and make a wish then we might just be granted one or two reforms.

PHOTO: Laurence Sparham (IFL)



It makes the TUC Charter on the Under Fives (reviewed earlier in *Socialist Press*) seem almost revolutionary by comparison.

The pious opening remarks set the tone for what follows:

"The Commission would like to see the implementation of policies which maxi-

mise choices for both sexes and which make it feasible, for parents who wish to do so, to combine work and family, their domestic and public lives."

There is reference to "the present shortage of day care facilities" but the effect of the cuts is carefully skirted around.

As if discovering some deeply hidden truth for the first time ever, the EOC announces that millions of women are being forced to stay at home because of the lack of nursery facilities!

However, it is when the report comes to its recommendations that the nature of its politics is exposed.

Mingled with correct demands for flexible hours and all-year round provision of child care facilities are some proposals which go directly against the interests of working people.

For instance, the EOC is clearly *against* free state nursery education—"day care provision must be available at a price parents can realistically afford".

The report only briefly touches on the unsuitability of playgroups for working parents; and it advocates the setting up of workplace nurseries by employers.

Some of the EOC's findings are very similar to points in the TUC's Charter.

One of the better sections spells out the need for a unified administration of nursery provision, ending the present division between the Education Department and Social Services.

School age

The report also brings in the need for facilities to cater for school-age children

of working parents, though again the demands are totally inadequate.

The additional document "Day Care for School Age Children" by Robin Simpson is mainly concerned with showing how cheaply such care can be provided.

The nearest the main *I Want to Work*... report comes to discussing funding is to say that:

"We recognise that the proposals we are making will require considerable re-allocation of scarce resources".

Priorities

In other words the EOC falls straight into the trap of arguing priorities.

A further major omission is the lack of any real reference to day care workers themselves.

Child-minders and nursery nurses in particular are amongst the most exploited and oppressed of all women workers.

Even by its own standards of woolly-minded liberalism one would have thought the EOC would have more than a paragraph to say on their position.

Perhaps the most fundamental assumption behind the EOC's work is that the family unit must be maintained come what may.

Threat

Inevitably the huge increase in the number of women going out to work is seen as a threat to the family as an individual unit.

So the EOC attempts to make liberal adjustments to the relationship between the needs of working women and the needs of capitalism and the family.

This is why whole sections of reformists, Stalinists and bourgeois feminists, whilst claiming to have no illusions in the EOC, continue to boost it and demand that it be given more teeth.

The EOC, whether its powers are increased or not, will remain by its very nature a watch-dog not for working women but for the ruling class, and this report offers no way forward for women who want to fight for more nursery provision.

TRADES COUNCIL MEETING FIGHTS FOR CLEAR LINE ON NURSERIES

The Oxford Trades Council's one-day conference on 'Day Care for the Under Fives' was attended by over 50 delegates eager to hammer out real policies for fighting the cuts as a basis for extending nursery provision.

The conference was the outcome of the latest initiative by the Oxford City Nursery Campaign.

It had been launched as the result of a resolution to Trades Council from the Cowley Assembly TGWU 5/293 branch.

Predictably the right wing leaderships of both the Trades Council and the Oxford Labour Party chose to ignore the conference.

The conference was opened by the chairman Ted Eames (NUT) who set the fight for nurseries in the context of past and future cuts in public spending.

The TUC speaker, full time research worker Robert Barnes, gave a basic introduction to the TUC's Charter for the Under Fives.

52 nurseries

Whilst Barnes referred to the effect of the cuts (including the threatened closure of 52 nurseries in Clwyd) he gave absolutely no indication whatsoever of any TUC plans to fight closures and job losses.

Later, when it was forcefully pointed out that the TUC's record on opposing past cuts by both Tory and Labour governments was one of treachery and collaboration, Barnes could only repeat the bureaucrats' stock answer—that it is the union



Ann-Marie Sweeney and Ted Eames campaigning during the nursery occupation

membership to blame and that all the officials can do is "educate" them!

Ann-Marie Sweeney, speaking for the Nursery Campaign, showed clearly how fighting for nurseries is a fundamental part of the struggle against women's oppression.

She brought out the history of the occupation of the South Oxford Nursery last year, stressing the importance of a consistent orientation to the organisations of the working class.

She then drew out the lessons of the campaign's fight to win supporting strike action, the only tactic that, combined

with occupation, can possibly reverse the cuts.

She showed how the leadership of the NUT, NUPE and NALGO had sweated to undermine the militancy of those sections of members willing to make a stand.

After workshop discussions on the needs of children, campaigning in the unions, workplace nurseries, fighting the cuts and unionisation of child-care workers, the conference heard Connie Norman (NUT and the National Campaign for Nursery Education) give a detailed account of the importance of nurseries to the development of children socially

and educationally.

She was followed by Vice-President of Trades Council, Gerry Casey (UPW). Casey, like Ann-Marie Sweeney, focussed on the crisis of capitalism that produced the cuts and he stressed the importance of an all-out fight to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class to oust the present bureaucratic misleaders.

In moving the resolution from the Organising Committee he made special reference to the need to fight for independent elected committees to investigate local authority spending on education, to open the books of capitalism in order to expose the profiteering carried on at the expense of the public sector.

After a period of strong political discussion the following resolution was passed 'nem con':

"This Oxford Trades Council conference declared support for the following policies to defend and extend nursery education which delegates are urged to take back into their branches and other organisations:

a) that a statutory duty be placed on local authorities to provide full free nursery facilities available on demand. Central government must undertake the financing of all such projects.

b) we oppose the raising of the school entry age to six and demand the reinstatement of rising fives into first schools.

c) that all state pre-school facilities should have flexible and extended hours to meet the

needs of working parents, and for school-age children a service of extended day and holiday schemes should be made available.

d) nursery centres should be set up to combine education, care, health and welfare facilities for the under fives.

e) all lost nursery places should be restored and where cuts are threatened we declare full support for trade union and community action to defend the nursery places, if necessary by occupation and supporting strike action.

f) that committees of trade unionists and parents be given full access to the accounts of all aspects of education and social services spending by both central government and local authorities.

g) that local trade union branches, Labour Party wards and community groups be urged to begin discussions on the TUC Charter (the Oxford City Nursery Campaign can provide speakers).

h) that Trades Council and NUPE locally be urged to undertake a campaign to unionise childminders, nursery nurses and student nursery workers."

In addition to this resolution the conference agreed to produce a full report to circulate with the motion, to support the calling of a similar conference in Reading and to establish links with organisations in Clwyd who will be affected by the complete shut-down of all nursery provision in that area.

Socialist Press urges all its readers to fight for the above policies in other areas.

Workers Socialist League MANIFESTO

VOTE LABOUR SACK CALLAGHAN!

THE CRISIS OF CAPITALISM

STILL AVAILABLE: WSL Manifesto - spelling out the programme of the WSL and our attitude to the 1979 General Election. 5p plus 7p post from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

London NHS jobs to be axed

Following the proposals for a massive series of cuts to the health service in the Westminster area of London, hospital workers have taken steps to defend threatened hospitals and wards.

At a mass meeting at St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd., which is on the list for almost complete closure workers voted unanimously to oppose the closure, and pledged to continue working in all threatened wards and departments, not accepting jobs elsewhere.

Strength

Other hospitals in the area followed suit during last week, and similar meetings are planned in threatened hospitals throughout the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster AHA throughout the coming week.

The growing strength of the opposition to cuts and closures in the area was demonstrated at a lobby of a meeting of the AHA on Wednesday 11 July, where the implementation of the proposed cuts was to be finalised.

Even though the AHA decided at the last minute to take the item on cuts off the agenda, between 150 and 200 workers turned up to the lobby.

The lobbyists were mainly from St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, and contained a large cross section of Hospital staff, including doctors and a large number of nurses.

Hostility

The size and militancy of the lobby showed the absolute hostility to any further cuts in the area, and frequently took up the chant of "Occupy St. Mary's! No more cuts!"

Despite the scale of opposition, the AHA are still determined to go through with their programme of cuts, which include the virtual closure of Harrow Road and St. Columba's hospitals, and closure of wards in virtually every hospital in the area.

The final implementation of the cuts has been deferred to two meetings—an emergency meeting of the AHA on 21 July and a meeting of the NW Thames Regional Health Authority on 23 July.

This is the area that is likely to see the first major battles against the Tory cuts.

Isolated

Despite the strength of opposition in hospitals so far, an obvious weakness has been the failure to force the trade union leadership to give a strong lead in fighting the cuts.

Isolated occupations are in great danger of being picked off individually by authorities, given confidence by the anti-union mood of the Tory government.

Victimisations of individual militants are on the cards.

Resolutions from all threatened hospitals must force the leadership of the London labour movement to organise an all-London conference of health service delegates and prepare a programme of all-out strike action to defend the London National Health Service.

UNIONS UNITE IN ACTION TO DEFEAT CUTS



Thatcher—knows all the best cuts

At least 160 jobs in the Health Service in Oxfordshire are to be cut by "natural wastage".

This is the grim recommendation the Management Team is to make to the Area Health Authority at the end of this month.

The reason? Wage awards are only being partially funded; only the first 8% of this year's price increases, none of the VAT increases and none of last year's underfunding are being met by the Tory government.

Waiting lists

We, the working class, are to pay in lost jobs, longer waiting lists, an even less adequate health service.

To cap it all, these cuts are to be carried out by a Health Authority that is appointed and responsible to nobody.

In response to the coming attack, the local Joint Trade Union Committee of the Health Service unions has resolved unanimously to:

1) Defend all jobs and establish for every unit and occupation safe manning standards against attempts at de-manning the service.

2) Organise a stoppage of work with essential patient cover, to attend a lobby of the Health Authority's meeting.

The JTUC is also demanding that the Authority announce all job losses.

The JTUC itself is to publish news of the intended cuts and the fight against them in a regular bulletin.

These militant decisions must be concretised into an absolute refusal to work below established manning levels or to cover for jobs left vacant by the non-replacement of staff who leave.

Freeze

Finally, if the management continues to refuse to fill vacancies the unions must reply with a freeze on patient admissions.

If the closure of any unit or hospital is threatened, the only possible answer is to occupy to keep the unit working and to back that action with an area-wide indefinite strike in support until the unit is saved.

In last winter's pay dispute, despite the divisions created locally and nationally by the union leaders' calling only 'selective actions', there were many individual hospitals where union branches did take strong action, taking control of the hospitals themselves.

The response of the press and politicians showed how they dread this control.

As the profits of private firms, for whom press and politicians speak, sink into deeper crisis, it is only a matter of time for the Tories before an NHS which the capitalists 'cannot afford' is abandoned to the tender mercies of private medicine.

But for us this means we must fight for the books of the Health Authorities to be opened now to show to all workers and

consumers of the Health Service how it is being sapped off all the time by private capitalist firms supplying drugs, furniture, equipment, buildings.

Why should workers accept cuts imposed by irresponsible authorities, while these private firms continue to bleed our Health Service?

It is our Health Service: at this crucial period we either take control—or lose it.

The complete inaction of the union bureaucrats in the face of the previous Labour government imposed cuts have shown what will be their cringing avoidance of a fight against these new cuts.

Yet our strength, organised in the unions, is well capable of gaining control. The essential fight is to force the union misleaders to harness this strength.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

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 crackdown 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!

WHEN IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S NO WAY OUT



Get the answers in **SOCIALIST PRESS** fighting policies to defend jobs, wages and social services

SUBSCRIBE to Socialist Press

RATES:

Trial sub (UK):
10 issues, only £1.50

Six months £5.00
One year £9.00

Europe:
Six months £6.50

Rest of the World:
Six months £8.00

Please send me trial sub/six months/one year of Socialist Press. I enclose

Name

Address

.....

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

TGWU HOT AIR ON UNION LAWS

The 28th Biennial Delegate Conference of the Transport and General Workers Union ended in Scarborough last week with the new 'left' leadership of Moss Evans, Alex Kitson and Ron Todd struggling to establish their authority on the union.

The platform was a marked shift to the left when measured against the past six years when Jack Jones pursued a right wing opening class collaborationist, social contract policy.

But the swing to the left was largely a paper exercise.

Whilst Evans and the Executive, tabled a motion calling for "unfettered collective bargaining" on wages, they opposed a specific proposal to defend wages in the form of cost of living clauses.

Similarly with the Tory proposals for anti-union legislation. The executive tabled a motion attacking the Tories:

"This Conference notes the Conservative Government's declared intention to restrict

trade union activity through legislative measures and to penalise the families of workers involved in industrial action".

But when it comes to proposals on how to defend the trade unions against the Tories, they had nothing to say on what the TGWU should do, simply that:

"Conference urges the TUC (!) to mobilise maximum trade union resistance against those measures and pledges full support for the strongest possible defence of basic trade union rights".

Do nothing

As one delegate put it: "If the TUC decide to do nothing about it the TGWU will give them full support".

Similarly on Equal Pay-Opportunities-Nursery Creches-Women, the resolution was largely empty words.

Alan Thornett pointed out in the debate that the resolution had no conception of the severity of Tory cuts and no proposals on how to confront them.

The Tory cuts would drive women back into the family unit which was the root of the oppression of women, he said.

Although the motion called for women to be brought into the everyday life of the union,

they were confronted with sexist attitudes at all levels which were reflected in the way the BDC itself was organised.

On Unemployment, Reduction of Working Hours the executive-supported resolution attempted to deal with unemployment entirely in terms of calls for the 35 hour week, longer holidays and early retirement.

Defence of jobs

There was not a word about the defence of jobs or opposition to factory closures.

Made unemployed by the closure of the Dunlop, Speke, factory, conference chairman Stan Pemberton was himself a living example of a powerful union's refusal to confront the employers in the slightest way in defence of jobs.

The European Economic Community resolution was a marked swing to the left from the Jones line of complete support and cooperation with the EEC following the referendum decision.

The motion declared opposition to any attempts in further monetary or economic union with the EEC and for a further referendum.

Similarly on the Criminal Trespass Law the executive-supported motion:

"recognises that occupations—including work-ins, sit-ins and squatting are an important tactic for our movement in the workplace, in the community and in colleges; and condemns the creation of new criminal offences and the use of the police and the courts against working people who adopt this tactic to defend their interests.

Conference calls on the General Executive Council to give full support to the Campaign Against a Criminal Trespass Law and to affiliate to it; to distribute to all branches information on the nature and implications of this law; and to mobilise the membership to demonstrate against any attempts to implement this law."

This motion is a leftward move since Harry Urwin in 1977 defended the Criminal Trespass Bill as an advance. Its implementation must be fought for within the union.

BL strikes loom

On Tuesday of last week British Leyland management gave out a pointed statement to all their employees, relating to parity payments and the implementation of their contentious grading scheme.

In response to the breakdown of negotiations at national level and at most plants the company say:

"While joint arrangements at either plant or central levels are not being maintained, management members will take appropriate action to complete the exercise."

In other words they say they are going to force the scheme through unilaterally. They hope to do this in August.

In response to this in Cowley TGWU Senior Stewards have called a meeting for the Tuesday after the two weeks works shutdown.

They have invited other combine Senior Stewards who want to fight the company's dictatorial measures.

In the Cowley Body Plant the TGWU stewards, representing about 5,000 members immediately passed a resolution which included:

"3. Recommend to members a complete withdrawal of labour if the company attempts to impose their Grade Structure."

Already in Cowley a number of stoppages, overtime bans and work to rules have taken place and there is no doubt that these will build up after the shutdown.

IPCS shows muscle

Over the last three weeks the majority of the members of the "most moderate" of unions, the Institution of Professional Civil Servants have been engaged in "extreme" industrial action.

60,000 of them, government scientists and technologists, have engaged in one-day strikes, selective longterm strikes and a work to rule.

The impact has been considerable.

All processing of drunken driving certificates in the forensic science laboratories has stopped.

An atomic reactor supplying electricity to the national grid has been closed.

Most of the bullets and ammunition for the army has been held up at the Ordnance Factories.

Devonport Dockyard has ceased to operate and Polaris submarines are going to sea with only half their missiles operational.

The air conditioning of the Houses of Commons and Lords has stopped.

A selective picket on the British Museum and British Library in London has also brought chaos.

The results of these actions combined with rallies and marches have brought a new awareness of their strength to the members of the IPCS.

The point of the industrial action is twofold:

1) to ensure that this year the pay of the scientists is linked directly to the pay of the administration grades of the general civil service.

2) to ensure that the technologists get in their pay settlement something "extra" on top of the average they have been offered.

Civil Service pay is decided by comparison with private industry.

This year the Civil Service Department has departed from its usual custom of offering more than the average in order to allow for the fact that they could not get accurate income estimates for the architects, and quantity surveyors who are in partnerships.

But in an attempt to split the union, the Department has given the scientists their full claim.

The national executive committee of IPCS accepted this—thus weakening the struggle of the technologists.

The NEC have urged the work to rule to continue throughout the membership but are now restricting the selective strike action to the technology grades.

IPCS has proved in the last three weeks that it has immense industrial muscle.

It must use this muscle to win the technologists' pay claim.



Kitson



Todd

Talbot trial of strength

Workers at Chrysler UK's Ryton plant have now been joined by those at the Bagington and Stoke plants in a strike for a 20% pay rise.

The strike has followed 90% plus votes at Ryton and Stoke, and shop stewards report the membership still strong in the face of a management determined to hold out.

24 hour pickets are in operation at Stoke and Ryton and successful pickets have been mounted at the Gosford Green rail-head (where components are shipped to Linwood) and the Long Lawford transport depot.

Unfortunately the important blacking of Chrysler cars from the continent has not yet been carried out at the docks—despite the fact that the Ryton strike committee, composed of the convenors, has been charged with this task for over two weeks!

This is particularly important as the Chrysler Alpine is also produced in France where production is at present under capacity and it would be comparatively easy for

Chrysler to cover the supply of Alpines from there.

The lack of leadership from the convenors is also illustrated by their backing down to threats from management over the picket at Ryton and their policy of rejecting pickets from non-Chrysler plants.

When the strike started the picket was established inside the gates—total control of the plant passed into the hands of the workers, forcing management to continue its work either at home or in local hotels.

A handful of senior management stayed inside the plant for essential maintenance purposes. We understand they were not comfortable there.

After a week management attempted to serve high court writs on the pickets who refused them—they were read out over the gate.

The convenors, however, were not prepared to fight it out and last Tuesday held a meeting which decided to take the picket outside the gates.

This paved the way for management to assert their 'right' to access and on Friday of last week management and

clerical staff turned up at the gates and demanded entry.

Eventually police succeeded in escorting 40 senior management through the picket.

Management will now attempt to widen the crack and as we go to press the convenors have called for extra pickets when management and clerical staff turn up for work on Monday.

ASTMS has given assurances that its members would respect the picket line.

The strikes at Ryton, Stoke and Bagington are extremely important for four reasons.

Firstly they show the willingness of workers to take action in defence of living standards despite the efforts of management and the local press to whip up fears around the 'threat to viability' which the strike poses.

The strike also marks the high point of the reassertion of their power by Ryton workers following the defeats and redundancies of the last few years.

Thirdly the strike is an important test of strength with Chrysler UK's new owners Peugeot-Citroen who bought

Chrysler International's European holdings and last week changed the company's name to Talbot.

Both sides are trying each other out and a defeat would open the way for more management offensives.

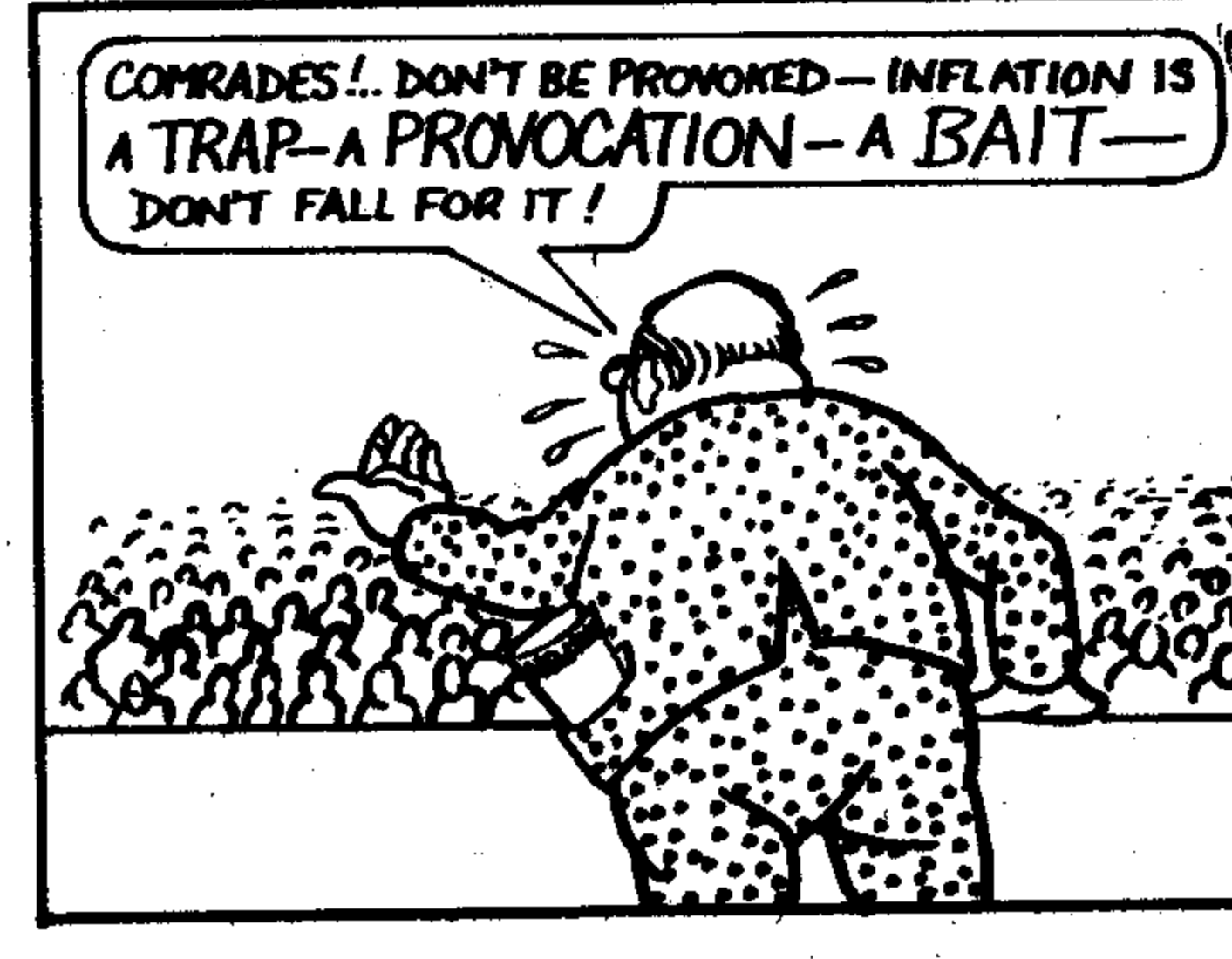
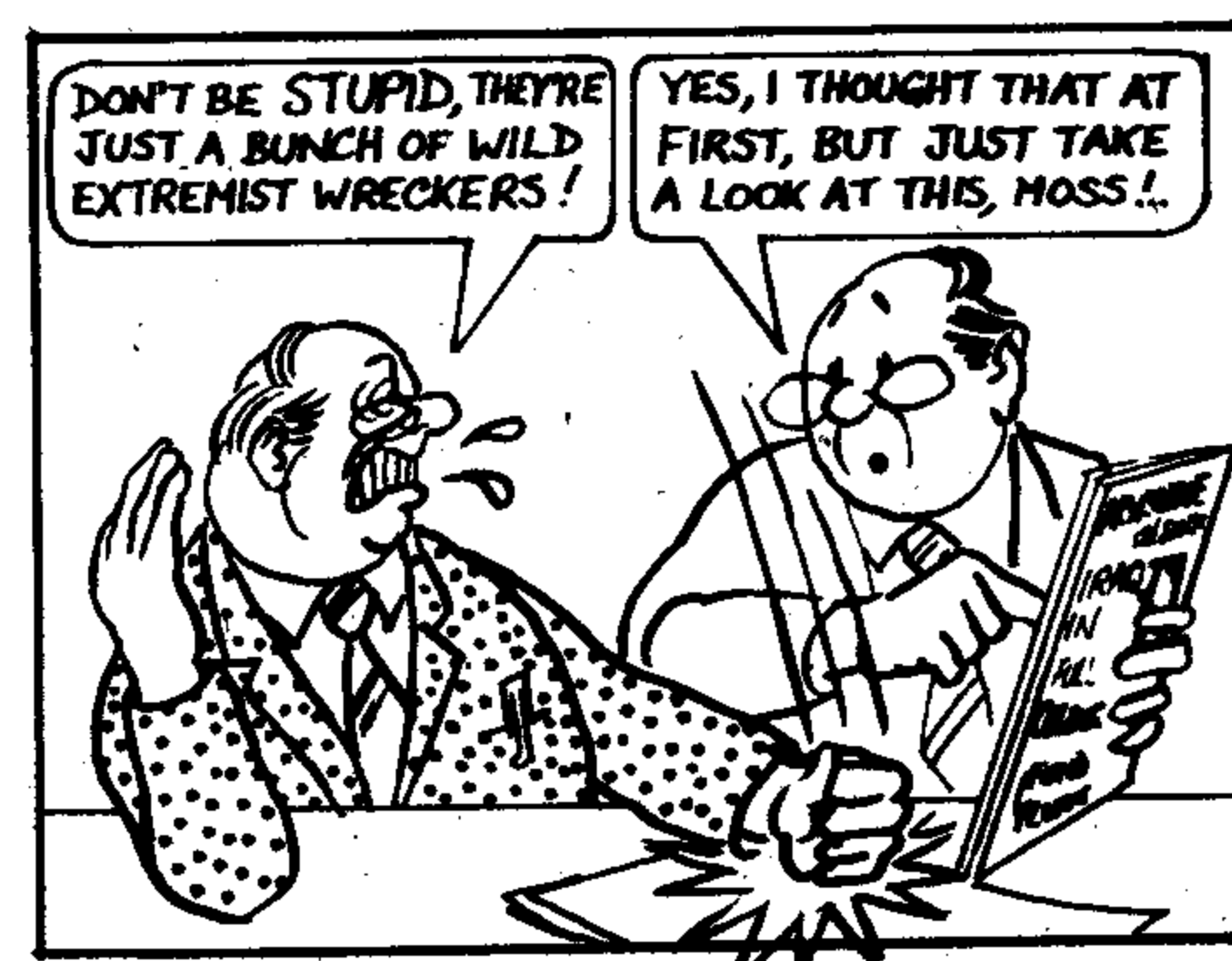
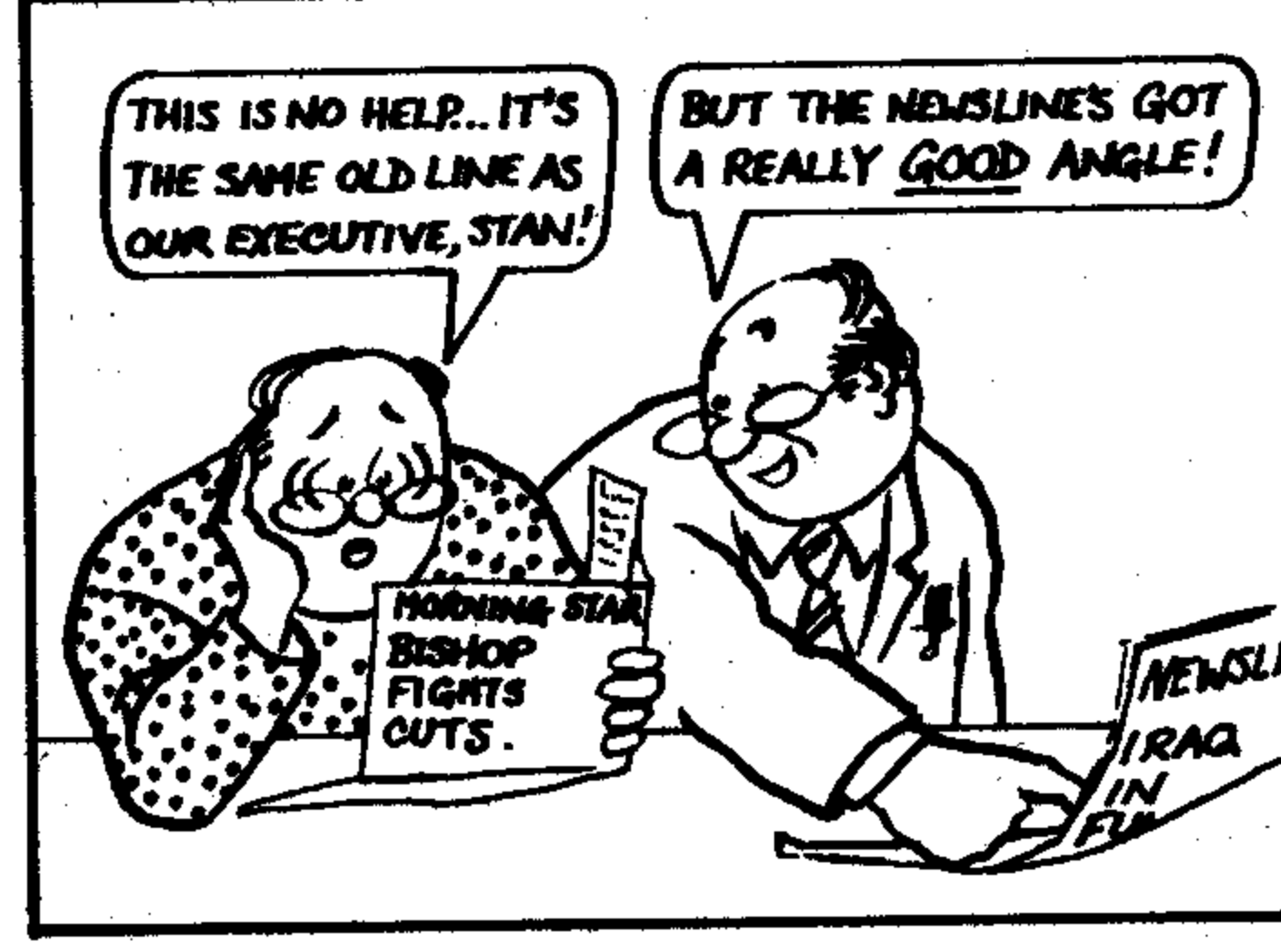
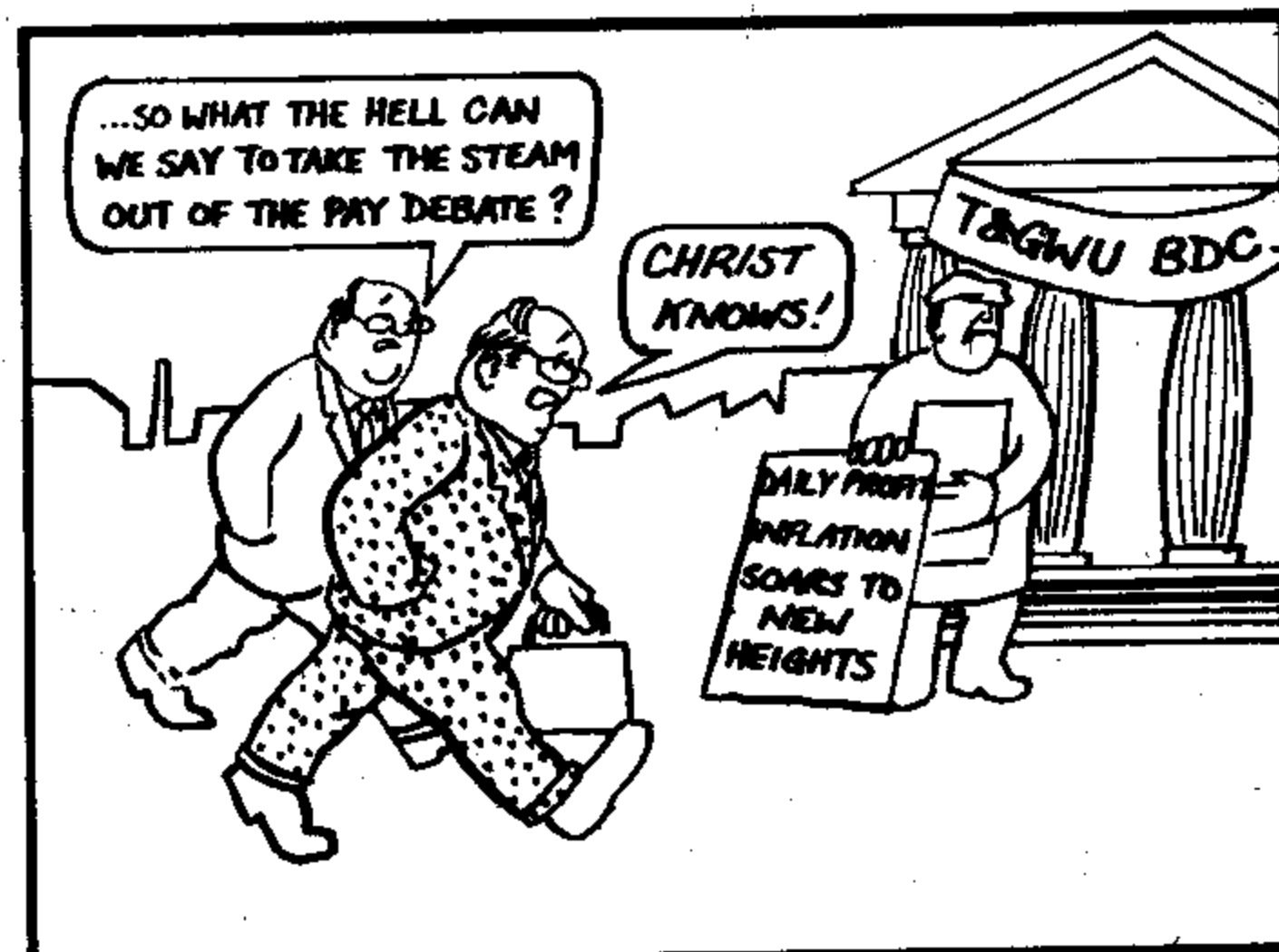
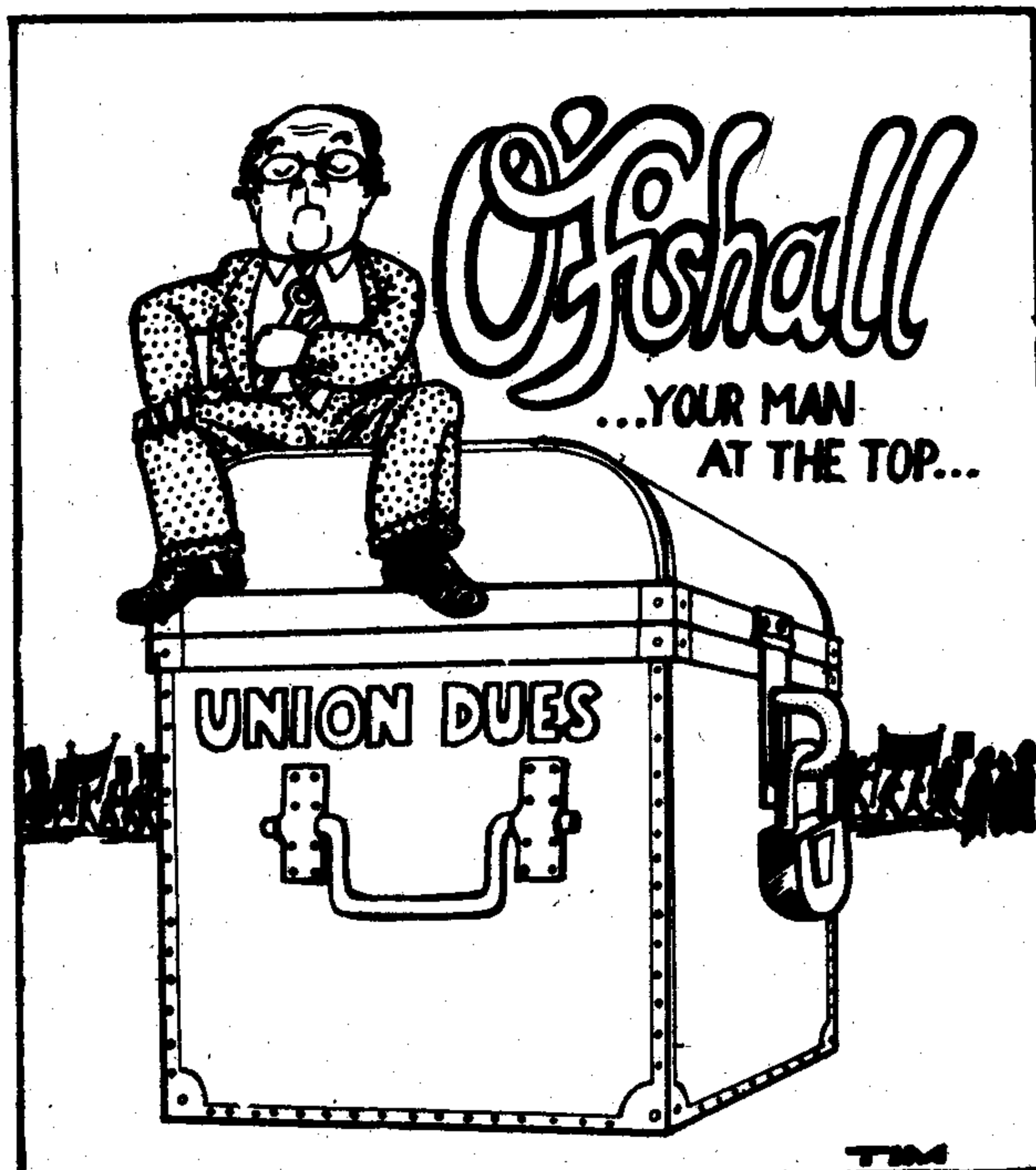
Fourthly the strikes, if successful, would be an important stimulus to other workers to take militant action in defence of living standards.

The company has offered 5% and an incentive-bonus which they are proposing be based on weekly rather than quarterly production figures. This allows for stoppages to ruin workers' chances of the bonus more easily.

Workers at all three plants which bargain independently must be ready to oppose any attempt by the convenors to settle for less than the 20%.

The will is there. It must be sustained and developed if Peugeot/Citroen is to be beaten.

And the company's phony 'bankruptcy' figures must be challenged through the election of trade union committees to demand full access to the firm's books.



SOCIALIST PRESS



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Dennis Healey

Healey's gifts to wealthy

The changing fortunes of the very rich were detailed in last week's report from the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth.

The figures show that although the holdings owned by the top 1% did not change significantly from 1972-76, their revenue shifted dramatically.

As the economic crisis of capitalism bore down with greater severity, the share of the wealth owned by this 1% fell from 30% to 22.5% in 1974.

Restore profits

But as Wilson, Callaghan and Healey moved in to restore capitalist profitability through wage control and other attacks on the working class, this decline was reversed.

In particular, the fall in share prices was turned, and by 1976 the top 1% had regained a comfortable share of 24.9%—one-quarter of total income!

The bigger the parasite, the bigger his debt of gratitude to the Labour leaders for their slavish service to his exploitative interests.

TORY JOBS MASSACRE HITS STATE FIRMS

The Tory instruction to British Steel Corporation management to end its current £309 million per year losses and get into profit by next March has unleashed a jobs massacre at Shotton and Corby steel-works.

The premature closure of the plants will throw 12,000 steel workers and thousands of others in local supply industries onto the ever-lengthening dole queues.

BSC claims that each plant loses £40 million per year.

But no union leader has attempted to challenge these figures, or to initiate any kind of workers' inquiry into the steel industry—which is wracked by losses and crisis throughout the capitalist world.

Warning Tories

Indeed far from starting out from the needs and interests of steel workers, Iron and Steel Trades Confederation leader Bill Sirs has hurried to warn the Tories that their wholesale destruction of jobs in the industry could trigger off militant resistance.

"It will be impossible to hold them because of the pressures upon us" he bleated, in the hopes of persuading the Tories to pull back.

The ISTC has pointed out that government cash limits on BSC threaten as many as 30,000 jobs in the next year. But it has offered no strategy to defend



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Bill Sirs

those jobs. No strikes or occupations have been called for. Yet management talk of savings through "good house-keeping" are certain to mean intensified shop floor speed-up even for those workers remaining in the industry.

Nor will the Tory axe stop with the steel industry. Joseph is currently meeting with the

National Enterprise Board to spell out government plans to shut down whole shipyards and cut off aid to many other sections of industry.

An estimated 100,000 further jobs could be at risk in firms ranging from International Computers to the Meriden Motorcycle cooperative.

And while local MPs in

Corby and Shotton whine about the need for government grants to tackle unemployment, Joseph is planning to slash regional aid by nearly £200 million.

Such is the crisis of bankrupt British capitalism that the Tories argue they now face a choice between concentrating remaining grants on the most

needy areas or making the whole of the country an assisted area!

These attacks on jobs in state industries run alongside massive jobs losses flowing from local authority and health service spending cuts.

They point to the fact that the Tories are consciously creating a huge pool of unemployed in a bid to rationalise British industry, and to drive down wage levels in general.

The *Sunday Express* has revealed that the government is to launch a concerted crackdown on unemployed workers and youth—clearly designed to force them to take low-paid jobs or face the loss of benefits.

In this way they hope the soaring unemployment figures can be turned to the profit of Tory employers—and that desperate unemployed workers can be mobilised to break strikes.

The Tories are responding consciously to the massive world economic crisis of capitalism. They cannot be persuaded to change course.

Class action

Rather, in the fight to open the books of the state industries and the private monopolies, and defend all jobs through work-sharing on full pay, workers must be mobilised in united class action to bring down this reactionary government.

Factory and plant occupations to prevent redundancies and closures must be strengthened and extended through the fight for *councils of action*, bringing together public sector workers, trade unionists from private industry, and workers' political parties.

*Open the books of industry! Reveal the utter bankruptcy of capitalism, and the need for a socialist planned economy!

*No redundancies! Work sharing on full pay! No closures. Occupy threatened plants!

*Unionise the unemployed—Trades Councils must campaign to recruit from the dole queues. For a workers' plan of useful public works in each area!

*Prepare to kick out the Tories! Drive out the Callaghan-Healey leadership; fight for a socialist alternative!



Joseph

The demonstration is likely to be large. Many of those who come out for the first time onto a demonstration which they will consider to be opposed to British presence in Ireland will not share the reactionary positions of the organisers or may be won to break from them.

The demonstration will also be seen by the state as a threat to its policy. It will therefore objectively—despite its programme—weaken the grip of imperialism by raising in the minds of many workers the possibility of opposing those policies.

We call on all our supporters to join the march not behind the banners of reaction, but behind the policies for the defeat of imperialism.

August 12: march for Troops Out of Ireland

Since the formation of the Workers Socialist League our members have taken part in many demonstrations called against British imperialism in Ireland and fought inside the mass organisations of the working class to support them.

Our policies by no means coincide with the demands of the nationalist movement in Ireland.

We call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops, for

the restoration of political status to republican prisoners and for their release.

We call for the self determination of the Irish people as a whole.

But we also call for an Irish workers republic and for a revolutionary struggle against the bourgeois government of Lynch in the South, and the reactionary force of the Roman Catholic Church.

The demonstration called for August 12—the 10th anniversary of the sending in of British troops to Derry—differs markedly from any of the demonstra-

tions we have previously supported.

The list of sponsors starts with four Lords and progresses through Cyril Smith, Liberal MP to a variety of Labour 'lefts' and not so 'lefts'.

As the list lengthens it grows more radical. Brendan Gallagher has signed it, the Young Communist League, Big Flame and the SWP have all signed it. The International Marxist Group have signed it.

The sponsors' statement makes a number of points—every single one of them reactionary.

It states that the troops went into Northern Ireland "to arrest a situation where civil order had broken down" and that "it was assumed that this intervention would be short term".

That is untrue. The army went in to defuse the emerging republican opposition in the working class areas of Derry and Belfast. It stayed on to break the back of that movement through shootings, torture and repression. In ten years it has not succeeded.

The statement says that the cost of the British troops has been a burden to the British taxpayer—a reactionary nationalistic argument.

It ends by declaring support for Lynch's call to 'bring the Unionists to the negotiating table'. All the sponsors have signed beneath a sentence which

FUND

Another good week for the Special Fund has put us in striking distance of our target of £2,500. Our first-ever London Summer Fair (complete with escapologist!) made £140 and readers and supporters have responded well to our appeal for donations to the fund. So the total now stands at £1932.55, leaving us £567.45 to find.

An all-out effort is now needed to ensure that we complete the fund on time by the end of this month.

All donations should be sent to:

Socialist Press Special Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill,
London NW5 1HR