

SOCIALIST PRESS

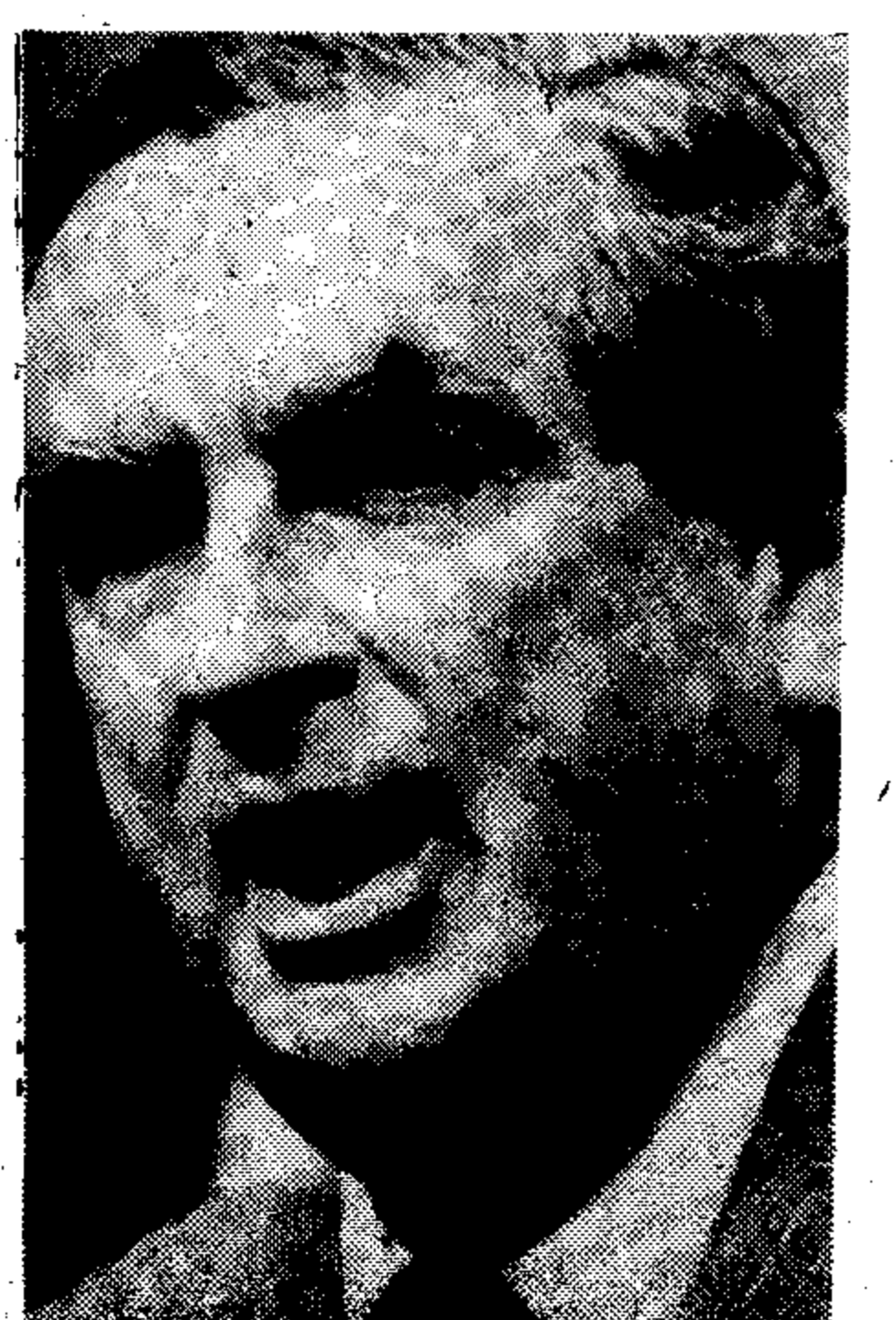
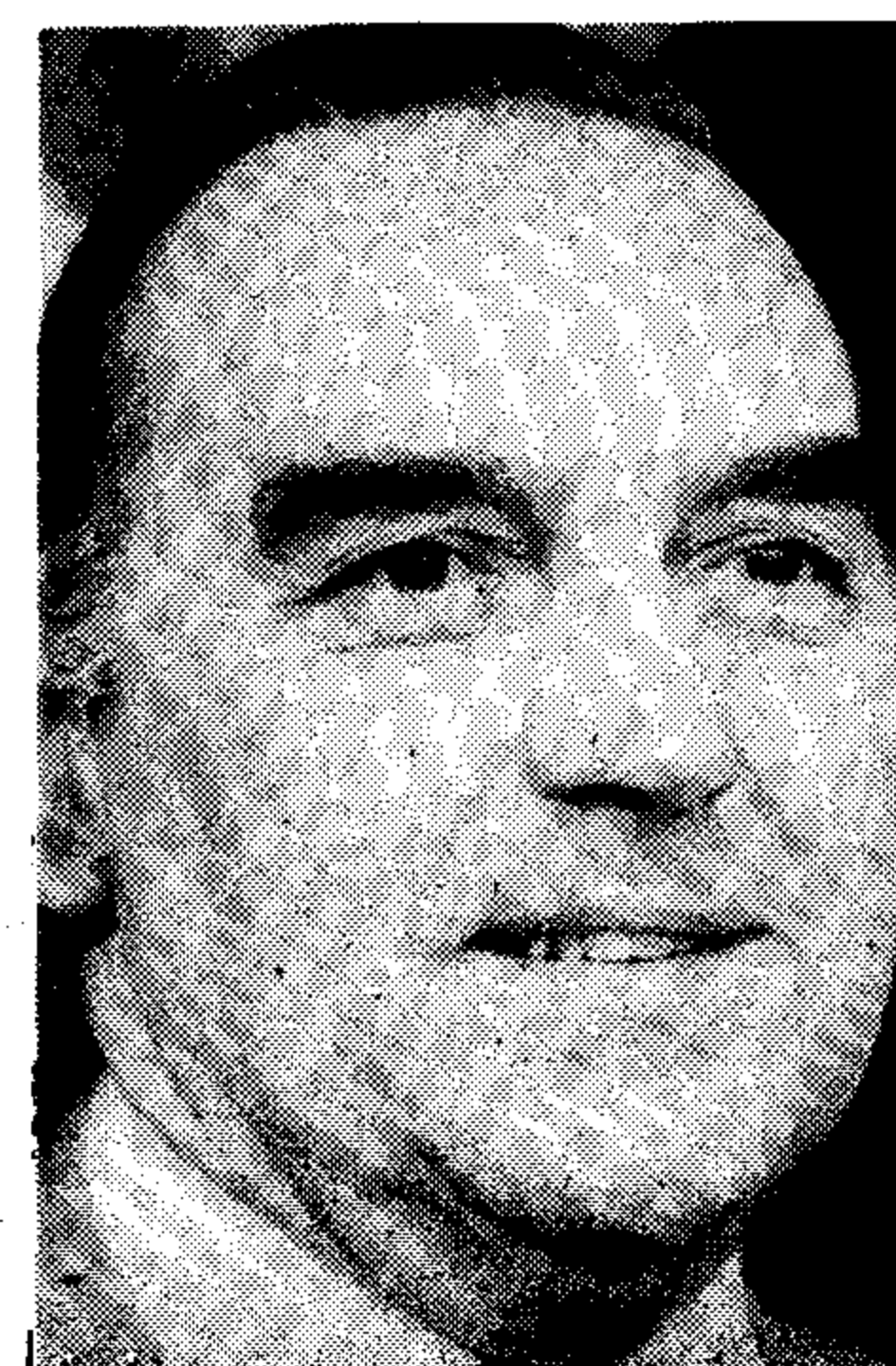
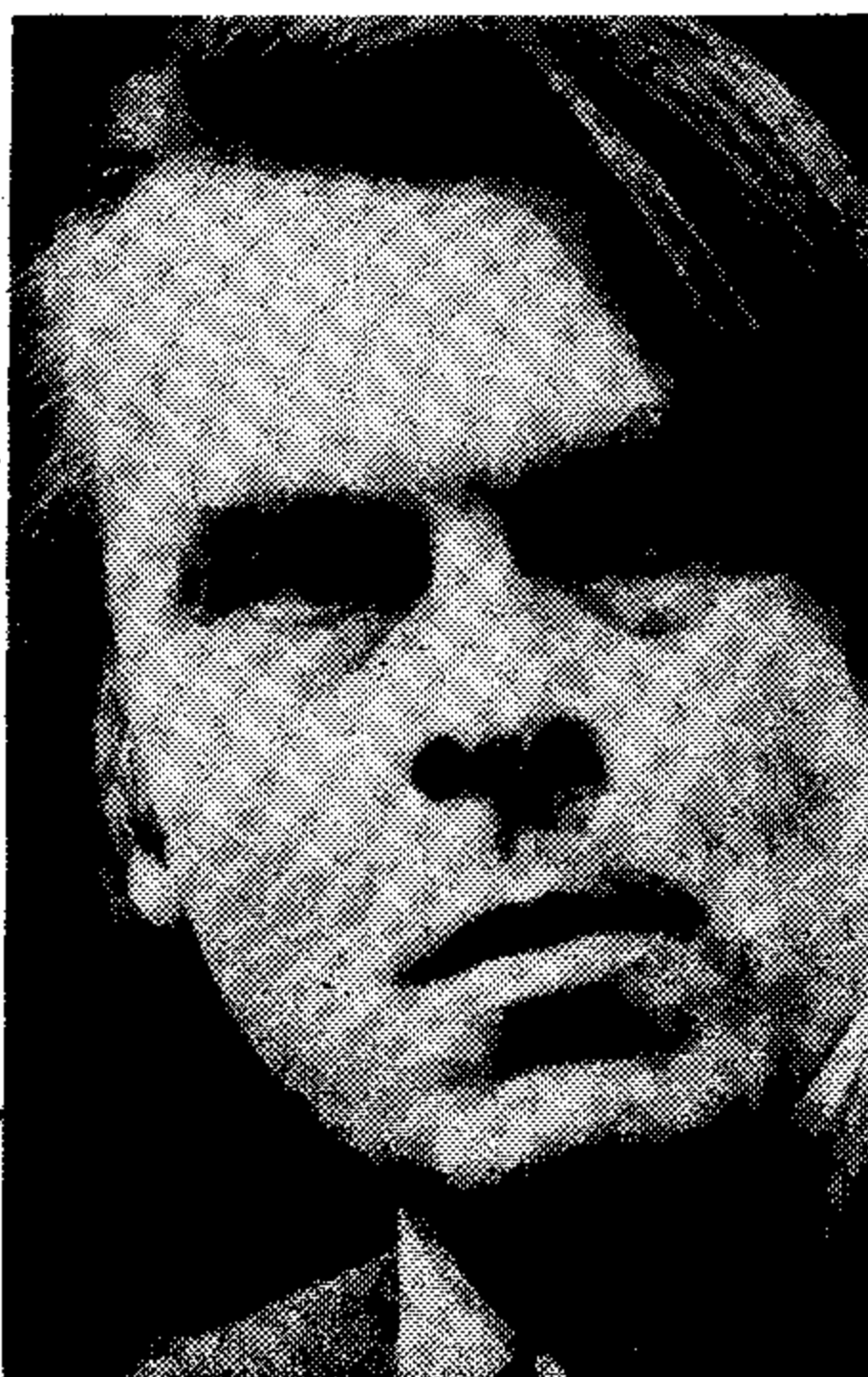
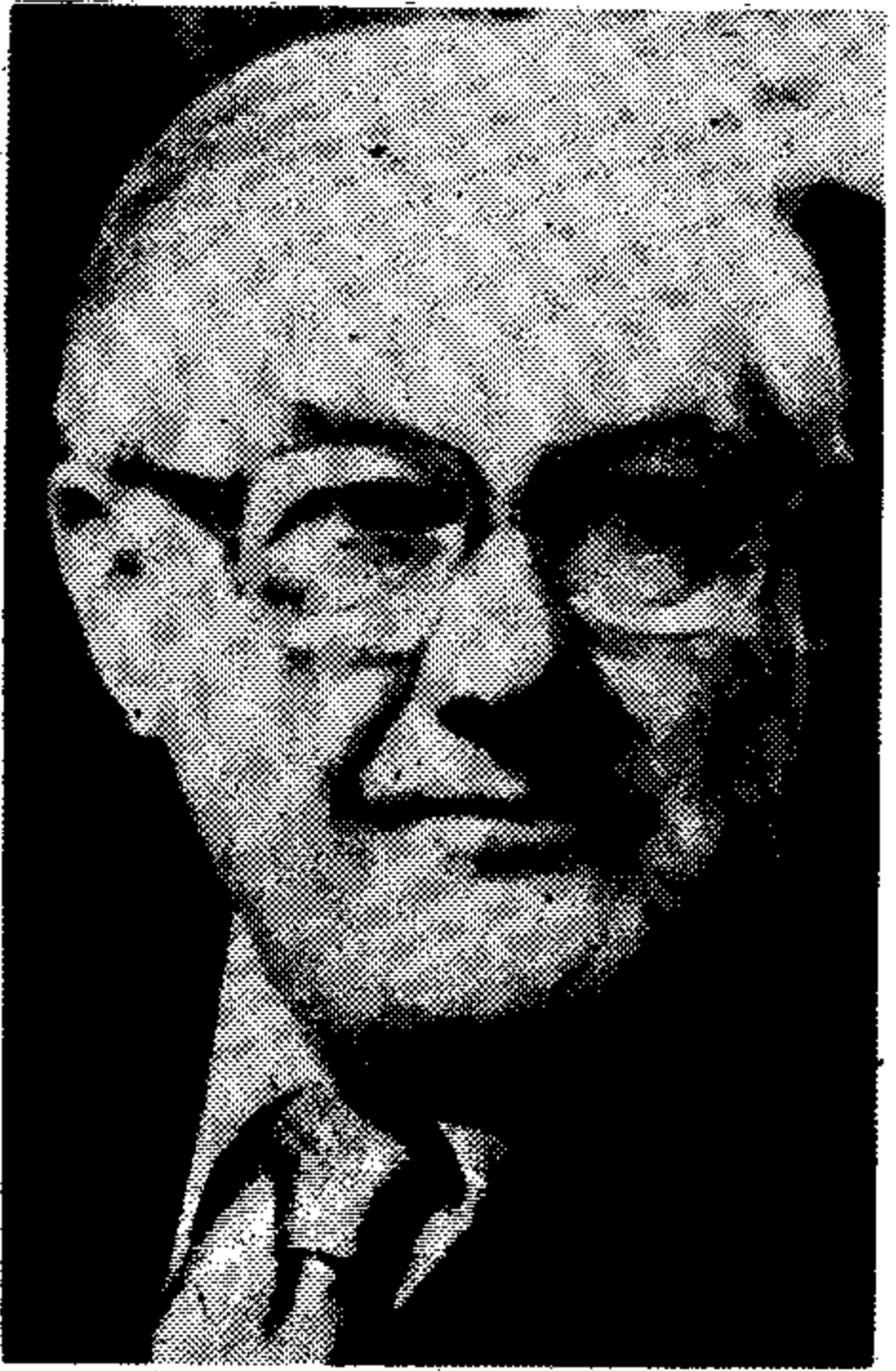


BOLIVIA pp 2-3

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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Not just the 'Gang of Three'... DRIVE OUT THE WHOLE



CALLAGHAN GANG!

In July 1931 Labour Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, faced with a run on the pound, decided to implement a savage package of spending cuts, including a cut in the dole.

Nine Labour cabinet ministers announced they would sooner resign than vote for such a policy, making it clear that the minority government could not carry on.

MacDonald formed an alliance with the Tories and Liberals, and became leader of a new National Government which forced through the measures.

As a result, in October 1931 a General Election saw Labour reduced from 288 seats to a rump of 52. MacDonald and his supporters were expelled from the Labour Party, and MacDonald stayed on as Prime Minister of a largely Tory coalition government until 1935.

Now in 1980 three leading Labour right wingers and former cabinet ministers—David Owen, William Rodgers and Shirley Williams—have written a 3,000 word open letter to the *Guardian* and the *Daily Mirror* declaring that the Labour Party faces "the gravest crisis in its history—graver even than 1931".

Comparison

Indeed the comparison is interesting. The authors of the open letter, now dubbed the "Gang of Three", emerge as the strongest 1980 advocates of MacDonald's politics of class collaboration and evolutionary "socialism".

And they conclude their diatribe against the Labour Party's left wing by threatening to split off and form a new "democratic socialist party" if they do not get their own way at this year's Party conference.

So what are the issues that have brought these latter-day Ramsay MacDonalds to adopt these unusual tactics?

Clearly the main problem that they, like the whole of Labour's right wing, face is the increasing militancy and leftward movement of the rank and file membership in the trade unions and the Party itself.

Confined

While at present much of this growing left wing current remains confined in the channels of the so-called "alternative economic strategy" peddled by Tony Benn and others, the Gang of Three fear that it could develop further politically and also force through democratic constitutional reforms which would weaken the right wing domination of the Party leadership.

Seeking to cloak their essentially Tory views in the language of social democracy, the three signatories declare their unwavering allegiance to three main principles:

"Our commitment to the success of the mixed economy; our commitment to a truly international socialism; our unshakeable commitment to representative democracy".

What is the reality behind these trite phrases?

The "mixed economy" in normal language is the present capitalist system, in which a handful of nationalised service industries are used to provide a basis of profitable production for exploiters in the private sector, for bankers and speculators.

Bankrupt

It means, therefore, precisely the bankrupt and moribund system that has brought industrial collapse, two million unemployed, the destruction of social services, and the prospect of still

further attacks.

As the Gang of Three make clear, their vision of the "mixed economy" also includes a permanent system of wage controls, and opposition to nationalisation.

Instead, they call for cash handouts to private employers and "more public firms" financed by the National Enterprise Board.

And they insist that new forms of class collaboration should be devised to persuade workers to work harder for their exploiters, since:

"What happens inside a factory or office is at least as important as who owns it".

Out of the window, therefore, if the Gang of Three have their way, goes Clause IV (4) of the Party constitution and even a verbal commitment to a planned socialist economy.

What of their "international socialism"?

This in reality means unstinting support for the imperialist NATO alliance, for the deployment of Cruise missiles

in Britain, and for the US Cold War offensive on the question of Afghanistan.

It means undying loyalty to the reactionary and anarchic Common Market.

And it means a policy of import controls to protect "British" capitalists—but only on a "temporary" basis.

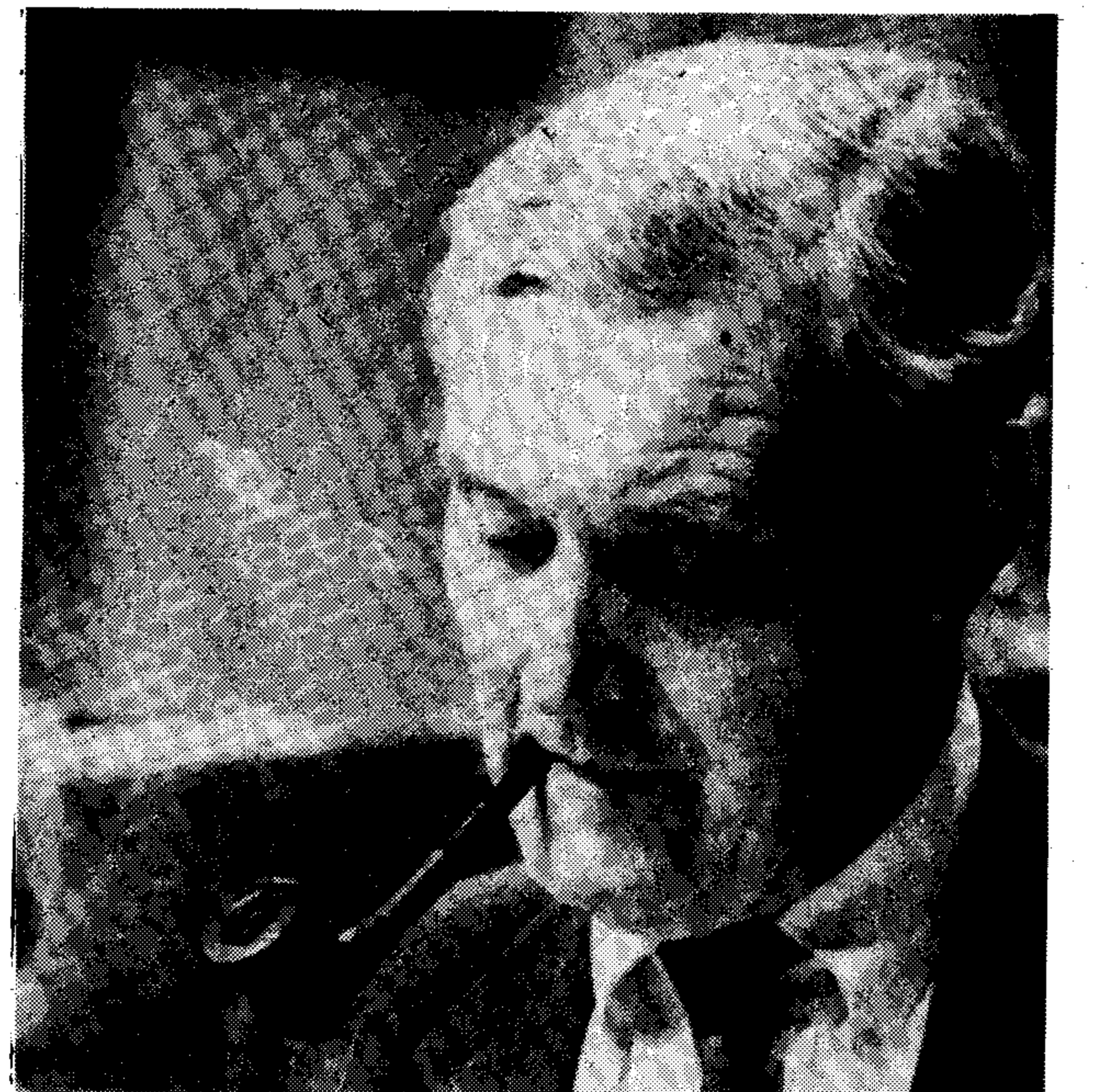
Alliance

Such "internationalism" is in reality an alliance between social democracy and international capital against the working class in Britain and throughout the world. It has nothing whatever to do with socialism.

But the Gang of Three also pledge themselves to "representative democracy" What does this mean?

It means opposition to the left wing demand for mandatory reselection of Labour MPs; it means opposition to all proposals to democratise the

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Benn attacked by Gang; will he fight back?

More S. Africa strikes



The opposition of black workers to their oppression and exploitation continues to mount in South Africa.

Each struggle is characterised by the workers' determination, militancy and solidarity binding together wide layers of the working class.

Municipal workers

During the course of the last week more than 10,000 municipal workers in Johannesburg, South Africa's industrial centre, have come out in support of wage demands and

union recognition.

The strike began when about 600 labourers in the municipal Electricity Department rejected an offer of £2.50 on their existing wage of £16 and came out on strike in support of a £14 increase and a £30 minimum wage demand.

They were immediately joined by about 60 black electricians on the same site.

The employers, the Johannesburg City Council, took immediate steps aimed at isolating the strikers and smashing the strike.

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INTERNATIONAL

BOLIVIAN MINERS RESIST NEW MILITARY JUNTA

Despite a well-coordinated and systematic campaign of disinformation and outright propaganda on the part of the Garcia dictatorship in Bolivia, it is plain that two weeks after the bloody coup that brought it to power the military have been unable to break the heroic resistance of the miners who remain on strike.

For the last week the international capitalist press has been reporting confusing and contradictory articles on the state of the workers' resistance.

Agencies

Almost all of these, (emanating from the American UPI and AP agencies largely reliant upon official communiques in La Paz) have depicted a crumbling strike with gradual return to work in various mines after 'truces' with the army.

However, as of 3 August, no major mine has returned to work—although some have given up their arms to avoid an all-out aerial bombing of the camps that house the miners and their families.

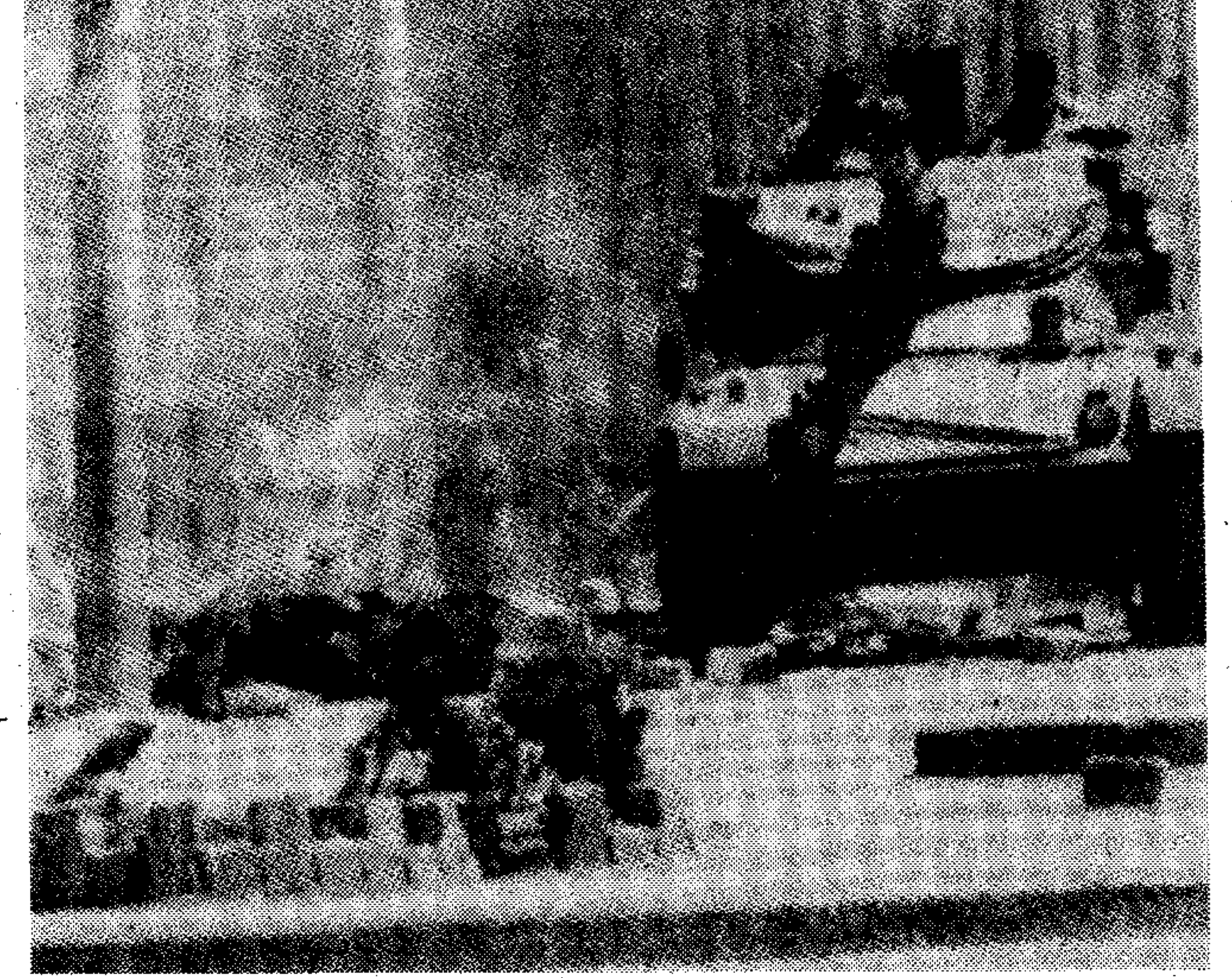
This is the case in the San Jose and Huanuni camps which remain at a complete standstill with the majority of the workforce staying down the mine-shafts.

The military have now changed their tactics to destroy the major threat to their Chile-style coup.

At first, following a long-prepared plan, they embarked on an infantry assault on the mines.

But this proved unproductive and dangerous since the conscripts either fired high or mutinied in solidarity with the workers.

This apparently occurred at the strategic mine of Huanuni,



which controls the road to the vast Catavi-Siglo XX complex, where the miners were able to retake the town.

At the northern mine of Corocoro soldiers refused to fire, and some eighty were immediately shot by their officers.

Killed officers

Three lorry loads of rank and file troopers moving out of La Paz to the mining area killed their officers and deserted taking their arms to the workers.

Now all conscripts, including those who were kept on longer than their two-year term of service especially for the coup have been withdrawn and replaced by the US-trained elite Ranger battalions

It was this unit that tracked down and executed Che Guevara in 1967; that massacred hundreds of students in Santa Cruz during Banzer's 1971 coup; that later beat to pieces their own mentor Colonel Andres Selich Chop under "questioning"; and since then has been used frequently both as a civilian "death squad" and as the major strike force for repression of mass struggles.

As always occurs in periods of intense class conflict, the military apparatus becomes severely tested and only those sectors which are highly professionalised, distanced from the masses and compromised with the crimes of the bourgeoisie can be fully relied upon.

In Bolivia in 1952 a major portion of the army and police

joined the MNR revolutionaries; in 1971 the Banzer coup was opposed by the Colorados regiment led by Major Ruben Sanchez (once captured by Guevara) and only gradually supported by other units.

This time, however, it is exclusively amongst the rank and file that disaffection is evident; the political magnitude of the coup required extensive lobbying and preparation.

When the miners resisted the attacks and the first troops mutinied the generals tried to bomb the workers out: but while they could silence the miners' radio stations they stood in danger of destroying the very surface plant they need to continue the exploitation of the miners.

Now the miners are being starved out as Banzer did to

them in 1976—then it took over three months to break the strike.

Now, as then, the strikers remain in the mine shafts—but they need to be fed. In this the local peasantry has displayed its political advance by smuggling in food bought in the highland town of Oruro. The last time the peasants did this was in 1947.

It now appears that the coup was not only backed by Argentine soldiers (200 of them in civilian dress), carried out with tried Argentine terrorist methods, but also manned over months with their assistance.

This, then, is an 'Argentine-style' coup with 'Chilean' ends in mind.

But the Brazilians who saw the plans in May, are also involved—they were quick to recognise the dictatorship—along only with Argentina and Paraguay (Chile has no diplomatic relations with Bolivia) in the entire world.

When Garcia now says he will stay in power for 20 years

to rid 'Bolivia of the cancer of Marxism' he is christening a new alliance of dictatorships: the southern cone of Latin America.

The mark of this can be seen in the new concentration camps in Bolivia, in the hundreds of people herded into the La Paz football stadium for days without food or water, in the total censorship and high number of deaths; in the persecution of the liberal clergy and pushing aside of the civilian bourgeois politicians.

This is the inevitable lesson of Bolivia's futile efforts at "democracy", one which should be learnt by those 'revolutionary' groups which sowed electoral illusions in what proved such a tragic trick for the Bolivian working class.

The overthrow of the dictatorship is the prime objective of the vanguard—the miners—and in this they will require the greatest international solidarity which must now become an absolute priority for workers in the imperialist metropolis.

economic failure ; electoral liability CALAMITY CARTER

The ruling class of the world's greatest imperialist power is experiencing an acute and prolonged crisis of leadership.

After the disgrace of Richard "Your President is not a crook" Nixon, they wound up with Republican Gerald Ford, of whom it was generously said that he couldn't walk and chew gum at the same time.

The 1976 election saw peanut millionaire Jimmy Carter take office on a "whiter than white" platform—only to prove himself incapable of walking anywhere without tripping.

Failures

After four years of fiascoes and failures at home and abroad with US unemployment rising at record pace, the economy in recession, giant car monopolies turning in billion dollar losses, and the election pledges with which he won trade union support all abandoned, Carter now faces the systematic destruction of even his "Mr Clean" image in a traumatic series of revelations of the activities of his brother Billy.

It is partly "Billygate", and partly the catastrophic plunge in Carter's popularity since its high

point in the heady days of the Iranian hostages affair and the Cold War moves over Afghanistan, which have created the current problem for Carter.

Open convention

A growing body of Democratic party leaders and even AFL-CIO union bureaucrats are calling for the New York party convention to be not the expected rubber stamp for Carter's candidacy but an open convention, able to choose another candidate.

But the alternative choices available to the Democrats are none too promising either: there is Edward Kennedy, who trailed Carter throughout the primaries and who cannot even drive a car over a bridge; there is Secretary of State Edmund Muskie whose tail-ending of Carter scarcely equips him to fight Ronald Reagan; or there is an anonymous crew of hopefuls, none of whom command wide party support.

Meanwhile the Republicans have settled for a far from perfect "B" team—composed of geriatric 'B' movie actor Ronald Reagan and former CIA chief George Bush—who stepped in after Reagan had failed to persuade Gerald Ford to offer

his campaign a "moderate" cover by running as Vice President.

It is this team that seems likely to win the 1980 elections and unleash a period of increasing international aggression and instability.

Seldom in recent history can the fate of the world have hung on the antics of such a bunch of incompetents and scoundrels.

Yet the powerful US labour movement remains tied by its leadership to these two capitalist parties.

As Carter fights for his political life and Reagan promises to undergo regular senility checks, it is vital that trade unionists take up the fight for the AFL-CIO and other unions to break from the Democrats and form a Labour Party based on a socialist programme which alone can offer an independent way forward.

TURKEY

Last week's Socialist Press should have pointed out that the lobby of the Turkish Embassy which we supported was called by the Committee for Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey.





INTERNATIONAL



South African state forces

SOUTH AFRICA ... from page 1

They were returned to the municipal compounds in which they are housed, their wage demands rejected, and all sacked.

City Council spokesmen announced that the strike had been 'contained'. The mass of workers employed by the City Council paid little attention to the announcement.

They met the sacking with a massive show of solidarity and more and more workers came out in struggle alongside the initial group of strikers and in support of their joint wage demands.

Within days the vast majority of the council's 15,000 black workers had joined the strike.

The strikers resisted employers attempts to impose appointed stooge-negotiators and demanded negotiations with, and recognition of their own elected union representatives.

Having failed to halt the development of the strike with the threat of dismissal, the

employers turned more directly to other strike breaking weapons provided by the repressive labour system.

Housed for the most part in 17 primitive compounds, groups of council workers are isolated, not only from their fellow strikers in other compounds, but from the massive non-migrant urban working class.

During the strike, riot police have cordoned off workers inside compounds, and repeated efforts have been made to force workers, under armed guard, to break the strike.

"Homelands"

As migrant workers, the majority of strikers are only allowed to remain legally in the urban areas if they have employment. Dismissal means immediate return to the "homelands".

The mass of unskilled labourers are particularly strongly threatened by dismissal and replacement from the pools of unemployed workers forced to

remain in the totally impoverished 'homelands'.

Tribalism

In their efforts to break the strike, employers have also turned to the tribal authorities to intervene to "restore discipline".

Tribalism—a reactionary relic of pre-capitalism has been assiduously nurtured by the state as a means of disciplining and dividing workers, misdirecting workers' anger and frustration away from the class enemy and against other workers.

In the municipal compounds in which workers are housed, every effort is made to maintain traditional tribal allegiance and repressive tribal authority structures over workers.

It is testimony to the decay of capitalism that bosses, in their quest to control workers and boost profits, are forced to reinforce backward social systems of the past.

Yet despite the persistence of tribal traditions and culture,

workers have repeatedly forged levels of unity in struggle which break through state-fostered divisions such as tribalism.

Even with the protection of the police, tribal leaders have been terrified of testing their authority by facing the anger of the workers in an open strike-breaking role.

At the present time, reports indicate that the massive employers' onslaught on the strike, culminating in the direct intervention of armed strike breaking police has forced groups of strikers back to work.

Forced back

The union leader Joseph Mavi has been arrested and more than 1200 strikers have been forced back to the 'homelands'.

The only thing which has stood between the strikers and the strike-breaking attacks has been the organised strength, determination and solidarity of their action.

This struggle must be supported and strengthened by the solidarity of their class brothers and sisters.

In particular, the working masses and youth of Johannesburg must take the lead in building support for the struggling migrant workers.

With proposed rent increases for Soweto serving to fuel developing determination and combativity which recently led to a series of substantial victories on pay by black car-workers, the struggle of workers is bound to sharpen further in the coming period.

Committees

Workers' committees must be built to take up each issue facing workers, to build action in support of each demand serving workers' interests.

As morn and morn workers take action in support of these demands, councils of action must be built to link and develop different struggles alongside each other.

*Build united working class action against every state attack.

*For a national minimum wage determined by workers' committees and protected through a sliding scale.

*For worksharing on full pay.

*Build a South African Trotskyist party, section of the reconstructed Fourth International!

No let-up in Polish strike wave

Poland's strike wave shows no signs of abating.

On the contrary: in the last week workers have taken industrial action in support of wage and other demands in yet more cities.

The upsurge of the working class is now more of a nationwide phenomenon than even in the previous risings of 1970 and 1976.

Last week the workers of the Baltic conurbation of Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot—the scene of some of the most dramatic events in 1970—entered the stage in a way which is deeply ominous for the Stalinist bureaucracy.

In these cities the workers organised a disciplined half-hour "warning strike".

Their representatives said that if the warning was not heeded and wage increases granted then all out strikes would begin.

In this game of cat and mouse it is the bureaucracy and not the working class which is the mouse.

In other cities, such as Wroclaw in Lower Silesia, workers have sharpened the political point of their wage struggle by demanding the same wages and material privileges as the police and army.

Rejected

It was in Wroclaw, too, that the workers showed how far they had gone in breaking out of the institutional straight-jacket in which the bureaucracy tried to confine them.

They firmly rejected the efforts by the leaders of the official bureaucratic "trade unions" to put themselves at the head of the struggles in order to divert them from their inexorable assault on the political power of the bureaucracy.

So far, that bureaucracy has been forced to cave in on every one of the mounting demands of the working class.

There is now clearly no chance whatever that the present agitation can simply

peter out at some cost to the bureaucracy.

It has shown itself to be powerless. It is looked to with contempt by the vast majority of those whom it rules.

Not only in Poland but throughout the Stalinist-ruled states of Eastern Europe the ruling caste knows that this situation must be reversed or it will spread like wildfire as it has done through Poland.

So it was not surprising that Polish Party Secretary Edward Gierek rushed off for a rapid 'holiday' in Moscow to ask his Soviet masters what to do.

Arrests

As growing numbers of militants are subjected to arrest, interrogation and intimidation, Polish radio has issued scarcely veiled threats that if the agitation does not subside the Soviet army will intervene.

Poland's "friends", it says, are concerned by what is happening.

At present there is every sign that these threats are producing not the terror which is intended but contempt and greater resistance.

In Poland today the political revolution against the Stalinist dictatorship is underway.

But a great danger is posed by the continued strength of the Catholic Church, with its readiness to exploit the situation for the building of a reactionary movement, designed to destroy the nationalised basis of the Polish economy.

It is vital that in their struggle for political independence from the Stalinist bureaucracy—whether right or "left"—Polish workers build and strengthen workers' councils as a direct counter to the existing state apparatus.

At the same time a Trotskyist leadership must be built to carry through the conscious struggle to defend the progressive property relations in Poland while fighting for the overthrow of the parasitic and reactionary bureaucracy that feeds off these gains.

USFI, Parity Commission duck debate

Despite a frenzied witch-hunt by the *Daily Mail* a week prior to its opening, the summer school of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee proved a great success.

Nearly 200 members and sympathisers of the Workers Socialist League and other TILC sections attended, along with observers from Workers Power (Britain), the IKL (Austria), the RWG (USA) and the Fourth Internationalist Tendency (FIT).

On Wednesday July 23 many of those attending the school came to the rally in London called by the TILC on the theme of the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International.

To develop the debate on this question, speakers were invited from Workers Power, the International Communist League, the International Marxist Group (British section of the USFI) and the Socialist Labour Group (British section of the Parity Commission), and the FIT.

The IMG, for undisclosed reasons, failed to send a speaker. The SLG, after initially accepting the invitation to speak, withdrew at the last moment, stating that they would not speak from the same platform as the FIT.

The SLG's turn-about is the more conspicuous in view of the fact that the Parity Commission is still formally pledged to convene an open conference of Trotskyists on the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

It is obvious from their reluctance to argue their positions publicly in a 240-strong rally that neither the USFI leaders nor the leaders of the Parity Commission wish to discuss the evident crisis that continues to split and confuse the world Trotskyist movement.

We invite the membership of these organisations to challenge this sectarian position and wage the necessary fight for a thorough and open discussion on the problems and tasks facing Trotskyists in the class struggle of the 1980s.

Fight for solidarity with Bolivian masses

The resistance of the workers and peasants of Bolivia against the Junta is referred to in a separate report in this issue of *Socialist Press*.

Revolutionaries in Britain must now build a campaign to fight for solidarity action in defence of democratic rights in Bolivia.

The development of this campaign will be covered in *Socialist Press*.

As a first step the following resolutions are proposed for raising in trade union branches, particularly the NUM, TGWU and other unions with present and potential links with Bolivian workers.

NUM leaders recently visited Bolivia and had a return delegation from the Bolivian miners' union, the FSTMB.

NUM leaders must translate words into material support.

Transport workers and dockers in the TGWU must take up the call for blacking of all trade with Bolivia in defence of the working class against imperialism.

The export of arms to the Junta and the import of Bolivian tin in particular must be stopped.

RESOLUTIONS FOR UNION BRANCHES.

i) This (trade union branch) deplores the recent military coup in Bolivia and expresses its solidarity with the struggle of the miners, peasants and other workers of Bolivia against the new Junta.

It calls on the union to give maximum material support to this struggle in:

i) blacking of all trade with the Junta and calling on the TUC to organise a full-scale

blacking campaign.

ii) participating in building a national campaign of solidarity;

iii) using all necessary means to ensure that recognition and aid are withheld from the Junta by the British government.

RESOLUTION FOR LABOUR PARTIES

This (Labour Party) deplores the recent military coup in Bolivia and calls on the NEC to support all trade union action in Britain in solidarity with the miners, peasants and other workers of Bolivia in their struggle to overthrow the new Junta. It calls on the NEC to ensure that all necessary means are used to prevent British government recognition of or aid to the Bolivian Junta, and further calls on the NEC to give active support to a national campaign of solidarity in Britain with the Bolivian working class.



While the young, the old, the sick and the unemployed face a barrage of cuts, the Thatcher government is unstinting in its allocation of cash to the police and armed forces. Indeed so generous are the spending plans in this field that the all-party Commons Public Accounts Committee last week criticised the decision to spend £921 million on developing a new British Sting Ray torpedo sooner than purchase a similar weapon from the USA for £200 million.

The Committee points out that spending on four underwater weapons projects has increased tenfold in ten years from £165 million in 1969 to £1.62 billion in 1979.

The loss of jobs were the Sting Ray to be cancelled is estimated as "negligible". The loss of life were this and other military hardware actually used would of course be catastrophic.

HULL TRADES COUNCIL BACKS TAMESIDE

Communist Party and Labour Party members had lined up with Tories and the National Front in a conspiracy to sabotage a conference on Ireland called by Tameside Trades Council.

This was explained by Tameside secretary Dave Hallsworth, speaking at the July meeting of Hull Trades Council.

The Tameside conference had been called under the slogan "Bring the War to Britain".

Hallsworth told how the Labour leader of Tameside borough council, George Newton, had intervened to prevent the conference taking place on council premises as had been arranged.

And the local AUEW District Committee had refused to allow its hall to be used.

In late February the TUC itself lent its weight to the witch-hunt of the conference, which had already been joined

by the Tory press.

As National Front fascists threatened a counter-demonstration and to break the conference, TUC bureaucrats informed Hallsworth that if the conference went ahead the TUC would withdraw recognition from Tameside.

Despite all this pressure, the Tameside Trades Council voted to defy the TUC's bully-boy tactics, and to reconvene the postponed conference.

On March 7 came the TUC ultimatum: abandon the conference or face disaffiliation. When Tameside stood firm, it was disaffiliated on March 26.

Hallsworth was challenged by Walter Greendale, a TGWU docks steward in Hull and a member of the TUC General Council.

Greendale asked the Hull Trades Council to support the TUC's decision.

Tameside, he argued, had failed to abide by the terms of TUC Congress policy and to

carry out the proper function of a Trades Council as set out in the Model Rules.

He likened the TUC to a club. If you won't abide by the rules, you should get out, he said.

When discussion was opened up to the floor *Socialist Press* supporter George Nix spoke in support of Tameside.

He pointed out that although he regarded the slogan 'Bring the War to Britain' to be dangerous since it is open to misinterpretation, he believed that the Irish war was an issue that should be discussed in the labour movement.

A resolution was later carried by 19 votes to 8 declaring that:

"This Hull and District Trades Union Council calls for the immediate reaffiliation of Tameside Trades Council to the TUC and further calls for the freedom of speech of all trades councils to debate questions on all industrial and political issues;

it also condemns the dictatorial and bureaucratic measures taken by the TUC in respect of Tameside Trades Council".

The Hull resolution, coming from one of the country's largest Trades Councils is an important step forward in the campaign for the reaffiliation of Tameside.

We urge our members and supporters to raise this issue throughout the Labour and trade union movement.

It is only by securing the right to debate the Irish war and its implications for the labour movement that the way can be cleared to argue for the necessary policies of:

- *British troops out of Ireland now!
- *Self determination for the Irish people!
- *Restore political status!

Coventry Labour rebels expelled

Stalinists split over Ireland gag

Over the last ten days the Coventry labour movement has experienced major developments.

The increasing pressure from the working class has brought an intensification of the conflict between the left and the right of the Labour Party, and expressed itself sharply with the expulsion of ten 'rebel' Labour councillors.

The ten were expelled by the Labour Group for voting against an increase in school meal prices—in line with Labour Party policy.

But this is not the only indicator of resistance to Tory attacks.

As industry after industry announced further lay offs and closures in the Midlands, an area-wide toolmakers' committee to defend jobs, stop closures and fight for workers' control of the industry has been set up.

It aims to launch a conference on October 15 to be hosted by none other than Tony Benn, who has recently taken up the toolmakers' cause.

Combined with depth of opposition generated over the school meals issue and the closure of Wheatley Street Nursery, these developments reveal the angry mood of workers facing dramatically worsening living standards under the Tory offensive.

Militants

Militants are directing their fury towards forcing the left in the Labour Party and trade unions to act in defence of services and jobs and by attempting to develop broad based organisations of resistance.

The fight must be taken up now to show that there are no partial solutions, and that the struggle to defend hard-won gains must be linked to the overthrow of the present system of

inefficiency and waste.

The immediate way forward in Coventry must be to link these disparate struggles and construct a new, principled leadership in the working class.

The struggle to reinstate the rebel councillors must be linked to a fight for socialist policies and a clear programme of action against the cuts.

The fight to stop school closures, school meal price rises and redundancies can only be extended by preparing for all-out strike action.

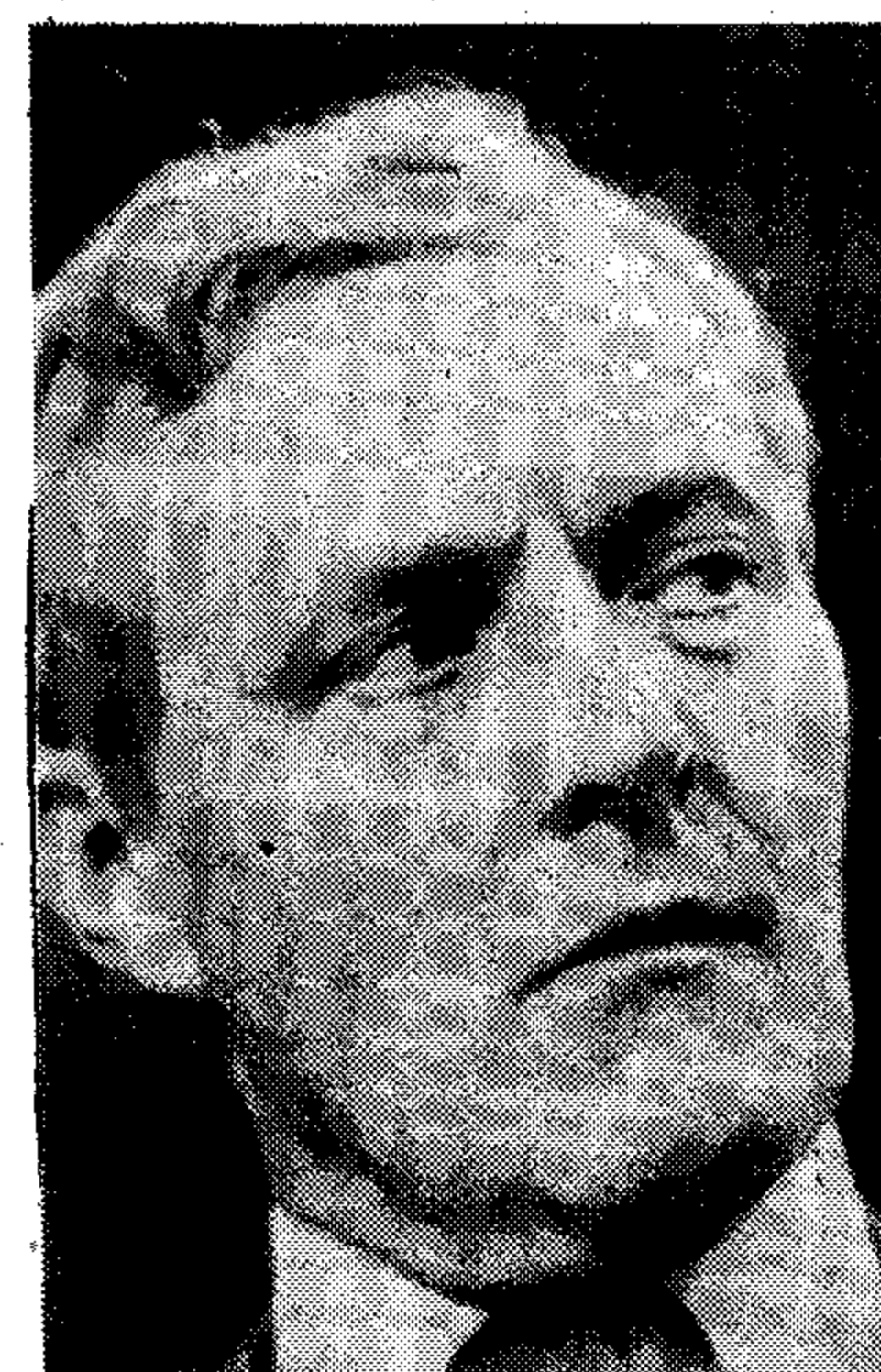
Militants in Coventry must raise these demands upon the presently docile trade union leaders and force them to make a stand on the issues involved.

The toolmakers' committee must broaden its struggle to bring in all sections of industry and defend every job through joint union action.

*Commit the rebel councillors to a total no cuts platform!

*No redundancies! Occupy to save jobs!

*Kick out the Labour and trade union leaders who won't fight!



Benn

'Gag union discussing Ireland' ran a headline in the *Morning Star* last week.

The article that followed contained an attack from the CP's newly-formed advisory committee on Ireland on the prosecutions against 'Hands off Ireland' supporters.

The *Morning Star* reports its secretary, Bert Ward, as saying, that "it was important to establish the principle that free speech on Ireland was an essential part of political debate and controversy in Britain today".

The statements which follow contain the standard CP renunciation of violence, but link them to a call to defend democratic rights.

What makes the article noteworthy is that its criticisms could be more accurately pointed against the CP itself.

It was CP members at the Annual Conference of Trades Councils who made the key speeches denying the right of admission to the disaffiliated Tameside Trades Council.

The CP has itself supported this disaffiliation.

CP members in Oxford went so far as to distribute leaflets outside the BL Cowley plants last year calling for convenor Bobby Fryer to be voted out of office on the grounds that he had defended free speech on Ireland.

It reflects that there is internal opposition inside the CP to the blatant collaborationist policies which the party has consistently pushed over Ireland.

Some rank and file CP members signed the petition condemning Tameside's disaffiliation, and some voted against disaffiliation when it was debated on Hull Trades Council.

But it is doubtful if the statement will reflect any change in the CP's practice.

PRESS GANG



The editors of Fleet Street are queuing up to go to prison.

Ever since it became clear that the courts were going to rule that Granada television must reveal its source inside British Steel an enthusiastic 'me too' martyrdom has gripped the liberals and not so liberal editors.

The majority are in no danger of having to carry out their threat. The BSC memorandum revealed by World in Action would have been suppressed by many Fleet Street papers, which would have left them with no source to worry about.

But there is little doubt that some editors, notably Harold Evans of the *Sunday Times*, would be quite prepared to go to jail rather than reveal a source.

It may be—though political expediency makes it unlikely—that an NUJ member inside Granada might actually be forced to make that choice.

What does this tell us about liberal editors? Does it mean that there is an identity of interest between these editors and the working class—which clearly has an interest in the democratic right to an 'uncontrolled' press?

That question has been worrying the editors a great deal. The echoes of Arthur Scargill and even Bill Sirs, who have put in bids for a prison cell over the right to picket, ring too close for comfort in their ears.

As a result a new field of legal humbug has opened up. The editors themselves have been striving to draw a distinction between on the one hand

the right to defy a law in the interests of bourgeois freedoms and on the other the right to challenge a law in defence of working class freedoms—the right to strike, to picket, to black.

For many working class militants the choice is not one of abstract debate. The Shrewsbury pickets among others have actually been in jail—and not for a few days, with the world's press calling for their release, but for years, with all liberal editors determined that they should stay there.

The history of the class struggle is littered with the real martyrs of the working class for whom prison, or even execution, is not a romantic boost to their circulation figures but a harsh and sometimes final reality.

Harold Evans in a television interview said that what distinguished the editors from mere law breakers was that the editors were prepared to accept the consequences of refusing to comply with the law.

Since they were prepared to go to prison they were not undermining the rule of law!

This is nonsense even in bourgeois terms. A burglar could make just as much use of the argument, by saying that if caught he or she is prepared to do time.

The *Sunday Times*, in an editorial presumably written by Evans, amplifies this argument.

"Is Granada by refusing to disclose, putting its foot on the shores of anarchy? It is understandable fear but there are differences between Granada and Mr Arthur Scargill.

First the duty which the press seeks to discharge is not to its owners or its workers but to the whole public. It is not a

sectional but a general duty . . .

Secondly, the press practices persuasion not coercion. There is a difference between honouring a promise (albeit in the law's eyes an invalid one) and physically preventing someone from exercising his lawful right to work, which is what Mr Scargill threatens and threatens in defiance of a new criminal law, fully debated . . .

Thirdly the press is prepared to take its medicine. Where there is an inexcusable conflict of duties, it does not call for insurrection nor challenge the basis of society; it recognises not only the power of the court but its right to impose a fine or prison sentence. There is honour in that".

The desire of the liberal editors to distinguish between their own position and that of working class victims of anti-union law is natural.

What it also demonstrates very sharply is the validity of the permanent revolution—that it is only by the working class itself taking power that even bourgeois democratic rights can be guaranteed.

It leaves only this question for Evans and his friends to answer. What would be their position (in the event of they themselves or a Granada executive being jailed) to a strike by journalists throughout television and newspapers to demand his or her release?

To ask the question is to answer it. Evans does not call for insurrection or even a strike.

His answer even from his cell to those workers would be the answer the *Sunday Times* has given to every group of workers taking strike action for what ever reason: Get back to work!



CBI pleas ignored by Tories

Maybe you are furious at soaring prices, soaring rents, rates, electricity, telephone, postal and other charges; maybe you are bitter at the mass unemployment; maybe you are sick to the teeth of social service cuts, health cuts, education cuts and police spending; but spare a thought for the poor old employers.

Many of them eagerly boosted Thatcher as she rode to power along a path cleared for her by five years of right wing Labour governments.

They threw their hats in the air as she secured a hefty majority in Parliament and gave them tax handouts and looked to her government of diehard reactionaries to force the whole burden of the crisis onto the working class.

Dull witted

Only now are some of the duller-witted and weaker sections of employers beginning to realise that the Thatcher strategy does not only hit workers: it involves driving whole sections of industry to the wall in the process!

Now, as these employers shriek in panic for a change of course, they find that Thatcher and Joseph have plugged their ears to all pleadings and are hell-bent on a relentless drive to restore the profitability of the strongest sectors of capitalism at the expense of *destroying* the weakest.

Last week saw further anguished and unsuccessful appeals from local and national CBI leaders for Thatcher to reduce interest rates and bring down the high international value of the pound before even more firms go into bankruptcy.

A CBI survey showed that 56% of 1,960 manufacturers have cut their workforce during the last four months—and that 61% expect to do so in the next few months.

76% of firms report order books "below normal". As a result, the CBI predicts that private manufacturing investment will fall by a massive 10% in 1981.

And while the bosses' confederation expects industrial prices to ease slightly as employers try to remain competitive in a fading market, the CBI points out that many of their *costs* continue to rise, and that therefore profits are again tending to fall.

But don't spend too long weeping for these failed exploiters who at last are facing the dog-eat-dog logic of their own historically outmoded system of production.

Because one thing is certain: there will be no lack of trade union and Labour leaders ready and willing to argue the employers' case, and to tell workers that they should sacrifice their jobs and wages to restore the profits of private capitalists.

Yet the harsh fact is that the present system, which creates mass poverty and unemployment on the one hand, while leaving wealth-creating means of production idle on the other, cannot be reformed to secure the basic right of every worker to a job.

Unemployment, recession and capitalist crises can only be ended through the defeat of the Tory government and the *nationalisation* of basic industry and the banks under workers' management as part of a planned socialist economy.

Preparation

The task of leadership in the workers' movement is to prepare for such a fight.

In the meantime the employers' strategy of rationalisation and mass sackings must be combatted at each stage by occupations, supporting strikes and blacking action, and the struggle for work sharing *without loss of pay* to defend all jobs.

Less

people at work

The total number of workers employed in Britain fell by over 150,000 in the first quarter of this year, to 22.06 million.

Even the public sector and service industries in the private sector which have steadily enlarged their workforce over the last ten years have now begun to contract.

And manufacturing industry has cut back a staggering 300,000 jobs since last June.

The latest government figures confirm that while the working population is now growing at a rate of 200,000 per year, the numbers actually employed are falling.

The employment figures also reveal an important discrepancy: the fall in jobs is much larger than the official increase in the number of unemployed.

While government officials claim that this is largely due to older workers taking earlier retirement, a much more significant cause seems to be the wholesale redundancies facing married women who are not eligible for unemployment benefits and thus are not reflected in unemployment statistics.

Bringing Hong Kong conditions to Clydebank

The vicious exploitation imposed by employers in the sweat shops of Hong Kong, Singapore and Kowloon has long been the envy of every Tory businessman.

But it took a former chairman of the Fabian Society, Professor Peter Hall, to have the gall to propose instituting a similar set-up in Britain.

He suggested a system of "freeports" in which employers are given carte blanche to expand, freed from any legal restrictions.

Seized upon

The idea—harking back to the "laissez-faire" politics of nineteenth century capitalism—has been eagerly seized upon by the Thatcher cabinet, and last week they announced the first seven "Enterprise Zones" centred on areas already left derelict by the ravages of capitalism.

Within these zones—in Clydebank, Belfast, Speke, Swansea, Isle of Dogs, Manchester and Newcastle—employers are offered:

- *Exemption from Development Land Tax.
- *Exemption from rates.
- *100% capital allowances for commercial and industrial buildings.
- *Exemption from many planning restrictions.
- *Exemption from the need for industrial development certificates.
- *Exemption from the need to train young workers.
- *Faster customs facilities.

Though Tory spokesmen claim that they will uphold health and safety laws on pollution, there is no doubt that the most vicious and unscrupulous employers will be the first in line to transfer their operations to such zones.

Anti-union laws

The plan should also be seen in conjunction with James Prior's anti-union laws: new firms set up in these "Enterprise Zones" would be among the first to cash in on the need to secure an 80% ballot vote to secure a closed shop agreement.

And since all of the "Enterprise Zones" are in ruined industrial areas they will of course be the first test of the Tory plan to drive unemployed workers into low-paid and unhealthy jobs under threat of a withdrawal of dole and social security payments.

Labour councils—which control most of the towns where the new Zones are sited—

have actually welcomed this Tory scheme to restore nineteenth century conditions of work in the 1980s.

Many Labour MPs, however, have opposed the plan. The attitude of the union leaders is likely to be parallel to the attitude they have taken to every Tory attack: there will be verbal rumblings of opposition, but no attempt made to challenge this latest move.

Yet it is more essential than ever in the next period that unemployed workers and youth are *organised* by the trade union movement and mobilised in joint struggles with employed workers to ensure that union rates of pay and conditions are defended and extended.

Clive Jenkins of ASTMS—which recruits no unemployed workers—has tabled a resolution for this year's TUC calling for a campaign to organise the unemployed: TGWU leader Evans has already announced this as union policy.

Now is the time therefore to press for Trades Council's to create special sub-committees



for work amongst the unemployed and the general unions to mount an intensive recruitment drive aimed in particular at youth and women who at present are shouldering the heaviest burden of unemployment.

Council house building at 1920s levels

Council house building under the Tories is set to return to the levels of the 1920s.

Is this a wild statement by a left-wing fanatic? No, it is the forecast of an all-party Parliamentary Committee which last week criticised Environment Secretary Heseltine for failing to spell out the full impact of his programme of cuts.

New public sector housing starts by 1983-4 are predicted to slump to a miserable 25-30,000—less than *half* the inadequate figure for 1979-80.

As a result, there could be a shortfall on official figures of 500,000 houses by the mid 1980s!

By the end of this year Heseltine's 48% cut in the housing budget will have brought the rate of council house building to 100,000 a year *less* than the minimum required.

And this is linked to a slump

in private housebuilding as soaring interest rates and mortgage costs bar many families from even contemplating buying a house, and force would-be developers into financial crisis.

Meanwhile special steps are being taken to steamroller through the House of Lords Heseltine's pet scheme for further *reducing* the stock of council housing—by flogging off existing council houses at knock-down prices to those tenants rich enough to be able to afford them.

This move alone will cost hundreds of millions of pounds in lost rents and further intensify the housing crisis.

Only the defeat of the Tory government and a socialist programme for the nationalisation of the land, the construction companies and the banks and building societies can lay the basis for a crash programme of action to end the housing shortage and stabilise rents.



Glasgow housing

Fighting Labour's right wing leadership WHICH WAY IS 'WORKERS ACTION' HEADING?

There is no doubt that in the wake of the heavy electoral defeat brought upon the Labour Party last year by the policies of Callaghan and Healey, the Party itself has been wracked by a growing political crisis.

A left wing opposition, reflecting albeit feebly—the militancy of the working class, has emerged from the original successful challenge to Phase 4 of wage controls at the 1978 conference, to push through the call for mandatory reselection of MPs at the 1979 Brighton conference.

Since then, the new dominance of this left-wing within the Party's rank and file has been underlined by the contrast between the chilly reception for Callaghan and the standing ovation by constituency delegates for Tony Benn at the Party's Special Conference on May 31.

As a result of this shift, an increasingly irate and isolated right wing has begun to weigh its options. Shadow Defence Secretary William Rodgers has come out into the open in defiance of Party policy on the Cruise Missile question.

Social Contract

Callaghan, Healey and many top union bureaucrats have begun feeling their way towards a new wage-cutting 'social contract'.

There is even talk of right wingers splitting from the Labour Party to join an explicitly anti-socialist 'Centre Party' along with Eurocrat Roy Jenkins.

Meanwhile in the run-up to the October conference Callaghan is busily buttonholing TUC chiefs to prepare the ground for what he hopes will be the defeat by their block votes of democratic reforms demanded by the left—reselection of MPs; NEC control over the Party manifesto; and democratic election of the Party leader.

There is no doubt therefore that the Labour Party in 1980 is very different in its internal life from the Labour Party of two or three years ago.

This change opens up new political possibilities for revolutionaries.

It is essential that Marxists fight alongside the Labour left in demanding democratic reforms to the constitution, while fighting against the inadequate and misleading political programme advocated by the left in the NEC's Draft Manifesto.

United front

While it is correct to seek in this sense a united front with the left in the struggle against the Party's right wing, it is essential to find ways to dispel in the course of the fight any illusions that the Labour left has a correct or coherent political alternative to offer.

And it is equally important not to allow Labour militants to draw from the appearance of



The Brighton conference

the present political ferment the false conclusion that the Party as a whole is on the verge of being transformed into some kind of revolutionary party.

On the contrary, it is more vital than ever that Marxists fight to construct a disciplined revolutionary organisation capable of giving consistent and principled direction to the struggle for new leadership and for socialist and revolutionary policies—within both the trade unions and the broader labour movement, including the Labour Party.

Different emphasis

A very different emphasis, however, emerges from a series of three major articles spelling out the orientation of the paper *Workers Action*, whose politics are a reflection of the International Communist League.

Workers Action draws from the 1979 Brighton conference the conclusion that the political wing of the Labour movement has begun to change.

"and to change sufficiently for it to be now not fantastic to set as a goal its transformation (at least partially and on condition that further changes are pressed through) into a real instrument of the working class.

The decisions of the Brighton conference, if they are pushed through and consolidated to make the Parliamentary Labour Party accountable and therefore more or less controlled by the labour and trade union movement, open up

a new perspective".

(WA 174)
To envisage the Labour Party, after 75 years of commitment to piecemeal parliamentary reform of the capitalist system, being transformed by one or two constitutional changes into 'a real instrument of the working class' is, to say the least, extraordinary.

But for *Workers Action* precisely this view is made the starting point of a whole political orientation towards demanding a 'workers' government' which would effectively amount to a 'left' Labour government.

"The Brighton decisions are—or rather can be made to be—the beginning of a process of renovating and reconstructing the labour movement..."

Brighton demonstrates that transforming the political wing of the labour movement is a possibility, and thus that it is possible to raise the transitional demand for a workers' government in Britain..."

(WA 174)
This 'workers' government' demand centres exclusively on the Labour Party and the existing organisations of the working class—which *Workers Action* argues need to be simply "renovated" to equip them for service in the hands of the working class.

Contrast

But *Workers Action* goes even further—and explicitly justifies its abrupt turn towards

the Labour Party by politically contrasting the Party in 1980 with its positions in earlier years:

"so far [!] the Labour Party in office has never been other than a capitalist government based on the reformist organisations of the working class".

(WA 173)
"To spread the idea in 1973-4 that the Labour Party could be a workers' government would have been to spread confusion". (our emphasis).

(WA 173)
But surely to spread the idea in 1980 that the whole Labour Party, with the aid of a few yet-to-be-implemented constitutional reforms and no substantial change of political direction, could now form a workers' government, is equally to spread confusion?

Demand on 'lefts'

Sooner than raising the sharp demand on the left wing NEC fakers that they embark on an open campaign for the removal of the Callaghan right wing and abandon the class collaborationist strategy spelled out in the new Draft Manifesto, *Workers Action* merely follows on the existing leftward current in the Party and implicitly subscribes to its illusions.

The articles studiously avoid any call for a revolutionary party—satisfying themselves with an enigmatic formula declaring that:

"It is not required that the

Labour Party becomes a revolutionary party—or that one should think it can or will become that".

(WA 174)
Maybe it is not "required" that *Workers Action* readers cherish such illusions: but if they do, they certainly receive no categorical rebuttal of them in the three articles!

Abstentionists

Indeed in attacking the abstentionist stance of the SWP and others who refuse to champion a struggle inside the Labour Party, *Workers Action* effectively argues that the Party as a whole can be made into a revolutionary instrument:

"When the SWP and others denounce the idea that the Labour Party can be made an instrument for socialist change, we explain that they are actually doubting that the working class can be in the period ahead. Can the trade unions be such an instrument? Can the class itself? If so does that not mean action through the Labour Party, with the necessary reorganisations and replacements?"

The Labour Party—for all its undoubted political dominance in Britain—remains only a component of the working class, not the class itself.

So while a strategy for the construction of a revolutionary leadership and the fight for a workers' government is useless if it leaves out the problem of the Labour Party, it must take

account of it in the context of an overall fight to win and mobilise the working class as a whole.

This means fighting for more than "reorganisations and replacements" in the Labour Party apparatus: it means developing the independent strength of the class in practical struggles which alone can offer the basis on which to implement a socialist programme.

We can of course wholeheartedly agree with *Workers Action* when they attack the sectarianism of the Socialist Workers Party (whose reluctance to fight the reformist bureaucracy takes, in the unions, the form of the building of "Rank and File" organisations which spearhead no real struggles, and in the Labour Party the form of organised abstention):

"There is nothing revolutionary about abandoning the political wing of the organised labour movement to bourgeois agents, naive or shamming semi-leftists, and the passive sectarianism around Militant".

(WA 175)

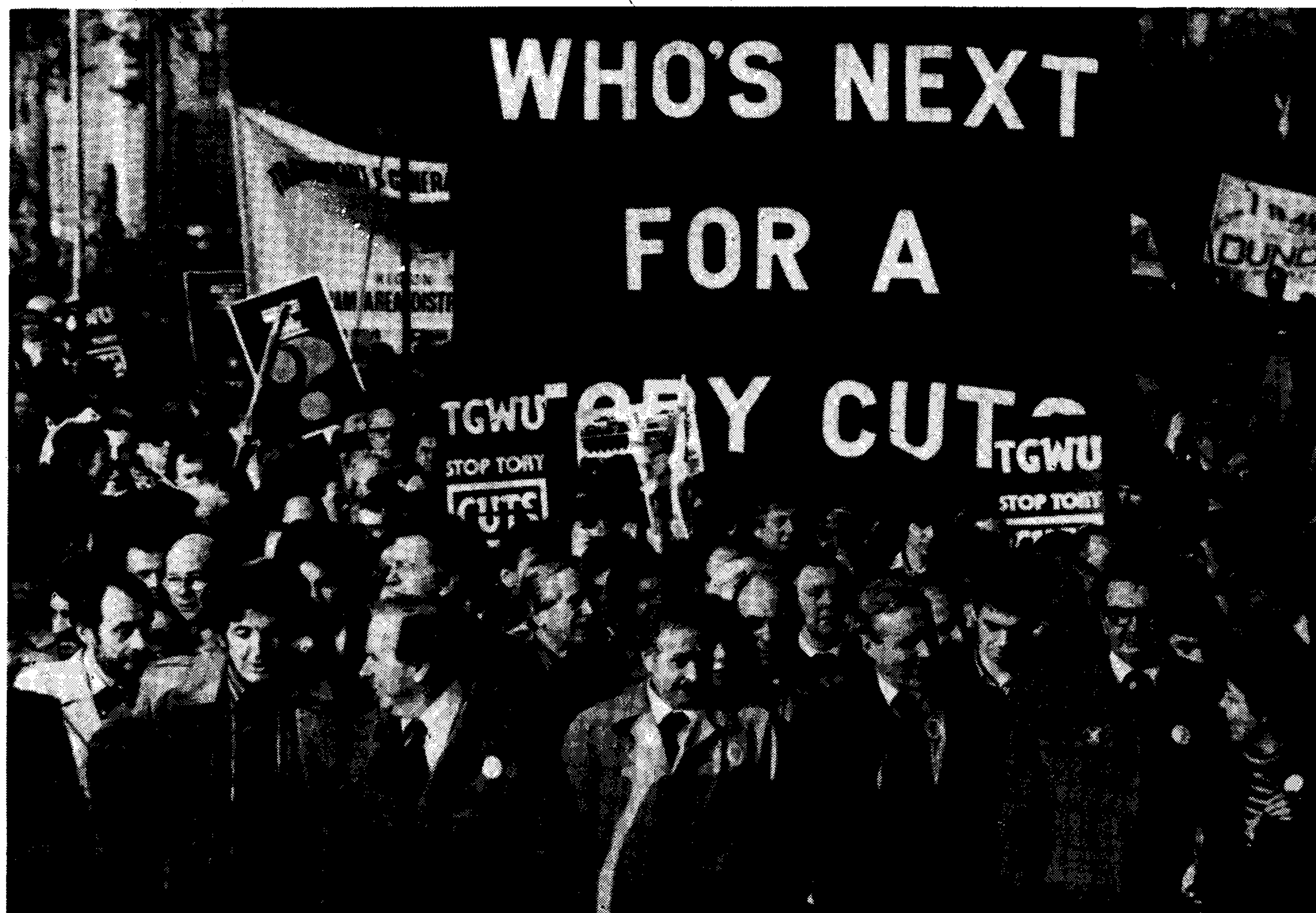
Party split

But while this correctly spells out the necessity for an intervention into the Labour Party, there is only one reference in the entire three part series to even the possibility of a split in the Labour Party.

"To the pedantically-minded who ask 'Do you think the

Leadership WORKERS

This is the second of two articles by JOHN LISTER and COLIN MORROW examining the political positions contained in a series of three articles on the fight for a workers government in WORKERS ACTION Nos 173-175.



Leftward move within the ranks forced Labour leaders to call national anti-cuts march last November

beyond our control . . . To the degree that we win support for our programme and for the work of renovating the labour movement, we become a force to help ensure that there will never again be a Labour government like the ones of the past".

(WA 174)
It is not only people in the broader labour movement, but also some *Workers Action* supporters who have been taken aback by this latest policy turn, and begun raising questions about its political wisdom.

Founding statement

It is clear for instance that the current *Workers Action* indifference to the question of building a revolutionary party stands in stark contrast to the founding statement of the International Communist League in 1975.

In Britain its declared aim was:

"to build the League as the most healthy revolutionary tendency. We are pioneers of the future revolutionary party or we are nothing".

(Political Resolution of the ICL fusion).

Yet as the prospects of winning cadres to such a party become more favourable than ever before under conditions of a leftward movement in the working class, we see *Workers Action* displaying all the hallmarks of political and organisational liquidation.

The paper itself, expanded only a year ago to a 12-page weekly in order to provide more detailed background and theoretical material for workers coming towards Marxism, has contracted to 8 pages, as Marxist theory takes second place to involvement in the currents of left reformism.

Workers Action has indeed ceased for some months even to appear on a regular weekly basis, since its production takes second place to the production

of *Socialist Organiser* (paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory) and *Women's Fightback*—both publications of "broader", left-reformist groupings within the Labour Party.

The refusal of *Workers Action* supporters to fight in practice for its Action Programme among such "broad" forces was graphically demonstrated at the abortive June conference of Women's Fightback, where a vacuous series of proposals divorced from the slightest commitment to practical struggle was passed with their assistance.

In other words *Workers Action* is engaged in a process of political adaptation to the left reformist forces now emerging in the Labour Party: an adaptation which involves the junking of previously established political positions.

In 1975, for instance, the ICL declared that the Labour Party:

"is not a two-class party, nor are its left reformists a proletarian tendency. It can neither be ignored syndicalist fashion, nor transformed into a revolutionary party.

It is a dual party, politically and tactically capitalist and sociologically working class. Not to recognise its overall, fundamental capitalist character is to fall into illusions in its potential for transformation".

Opposite

As for work in the Labour Party, again we find a somewhat different emphasis than exists today.

"Such work must be seen as a tactic and not a strategy. The guiding principle must be the idea that the direct struggle of the working class is primary, above any parliamentary or Labour Party considerations".

These formulations stand in direct opposition to the current positions being adopted by ICL in its drive to 'renovate' the labour movement.

But the contrast is not simply between 1975 and 1980. In fact, as recently as July 1979 we find the ICL still arguing:

"A revolutionary programme bases itself on the organisations thrown up by the working class in the course of the struggle against the bosses, seeing these organisations as simultaneously fighting organs within capitalism and also as the basis for a future workers' state. Although revolutionaries are in favour of using parliament as a means of propaganda, a revolutionary programme is not centrally based on parliament but on the self-activity of the working class".

(WA 148)

Finally, it is impossible to ignore the following statement from WA 156 on the question of the tasks of revolutionaries in a general strike:

"... Revolutionaries in such a situation would raise the slogan of a workers' government as the immediate objective of the strike and move to co-ordinate and consolidate the

organs of workers' administration and defence into a counter state which could challenge and decisively smash the bosses state and establish a workers' state".

This last passage in fact veers towards sectarian schematism in that it leaves out any real account of how the working class can be broken from reformism and the Labour Party in the course of mass struggles.

But it certainly rings very differently from the line in *Workers Action* twenty issues later!

Critical support

Socialist Press has consistently pressed for a strategy that will lead workers in the course of their struggles towards the necessary break from their existing Labour and trade union leaders and the development of independent organs of power as the basis for a workers' state.

This strategy in no way precludes, but at present actually would require a critical vote for Labour were an election called: a critical vote which would in no sense depend upon the supposedly 'new' nature of the "post-Brighton" Labour Party, but upon the need for the comparatively small revolutionary forces to adopt in 1980s conditions Lenin's formula for Communists in the 1920s:

"At present the British Communists very often find it hard to approach the masses and even to get a hearing from them. If I come out as a Communist and call upon the workers to vote for Henderson [Labour] against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I will be able to explain in a popular manner not only why Soviets are better than parliament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised by the signboard of bourgeois "democracy"), but also that I want with my vote to support Henderson in the same way as the rope supports a hanged man—that the impending establishment of a government of Hendersons will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will hasten the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowdens just as was the case with their kindred spirits in Russia and Germany".

(Left Wing Communism)

No faith

Our critical support for Labour in elections is thus a tactic to hasten its political exposure and its death—and to win the support of the masses to the struggle for socialist revolution.

For us to vote Labour is not a sign of our faith in the possibilities of a Labour government being transformed constitutionally or programmatically under mass pressure into a "workers' government", but an essential part of our fight to demonstrate to the masses the inadequacy of reformism of the left and of the right.

Indeed it is curious that the

ICL and *Workers Action*, who were some of the most pessimistic proponents of the view that the working class had accepted the social contract and the class collaborationist politics under the last Labour government, should now come forward with a perspective that leans so heavily on workers making a spontaneous political development.

Boldly they declare that even if the Labour Party is not immediately transformed:

"... given these conditions and given the activity of organised revolutionary militants, raising revolutionary political perspectives, the ferment and mobilisation of the working class against a Tory government will do the rest".

(WA 174) (emphasis added)

The deluded belief that existing reformist, Stalinist or petty bourgeois nationalist leaderships can be pressured by the mass movement of the working class into adopting centrist or even revolutionary politics has a long and unsavoury history in the post-war Trotskyist movement.

The *Workers Action* view of the transformation of the Labour Party from a reformist roadblock into an "instrument for socialist change" fits in with this method of approach, and leads towards the same conclusion: effective political liquidation—in this case into left reformist layers within the Labour Party.

Dispel illusions.

If the present crisis within the Labour Party is to provide a source of strength and not of confusion and crisis for Trotskyists, it is essential that in fighting alongside the lefts against the right wing, the fight to dispel the illusions of the left is also stepped up.

This means spelling out unambiguously that a reformist Labour government elected through the ballot box will never seriously break from the bourgeoisie, and that in order to carry through the fight for a government to genuinely represent their interests, workers need to mobilise in mass struggles and construct independent bodies, including councils of action and workers' defence squads, to confront the power of the capitalist state.

To lead such a struggle a revolutionary party is required. And though *Workers Action* and the ICL appear to regard the task of building such a party as secondary to their work in the Labour Party, the Workers Socialist League believes that only in the context of the overall struggle to build a new leadership in the labour movement can Labour Party work be seen correctly.

We know which way we are headed. Which way is *Workers Action* going to go?

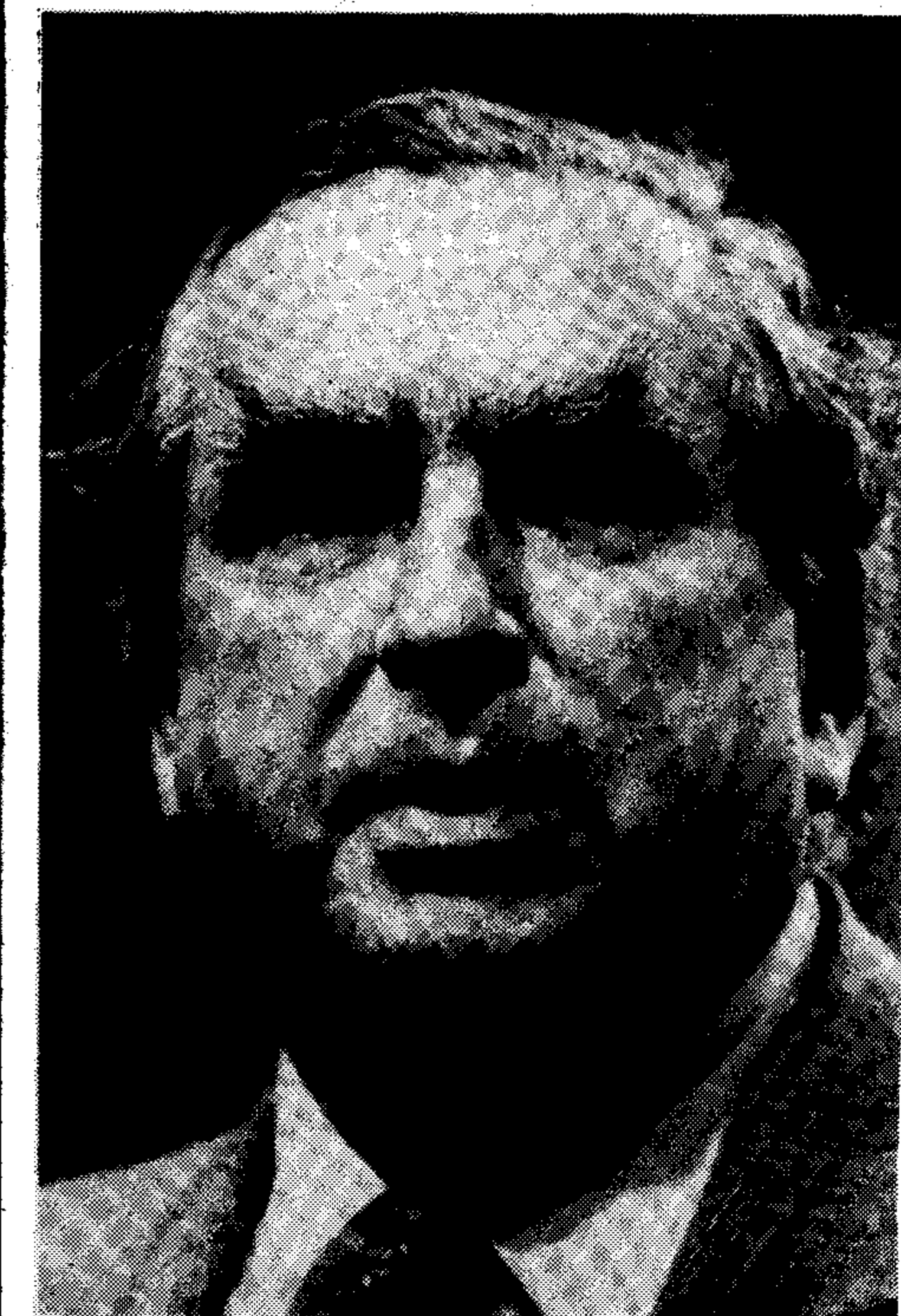
revolutionaries can take over the whole Labour Party?", we say that it is the wrong question. Do they themselves think that the whole of the trade unions can be won for revolutionary politics without divisions and splits?"

(WA 175)

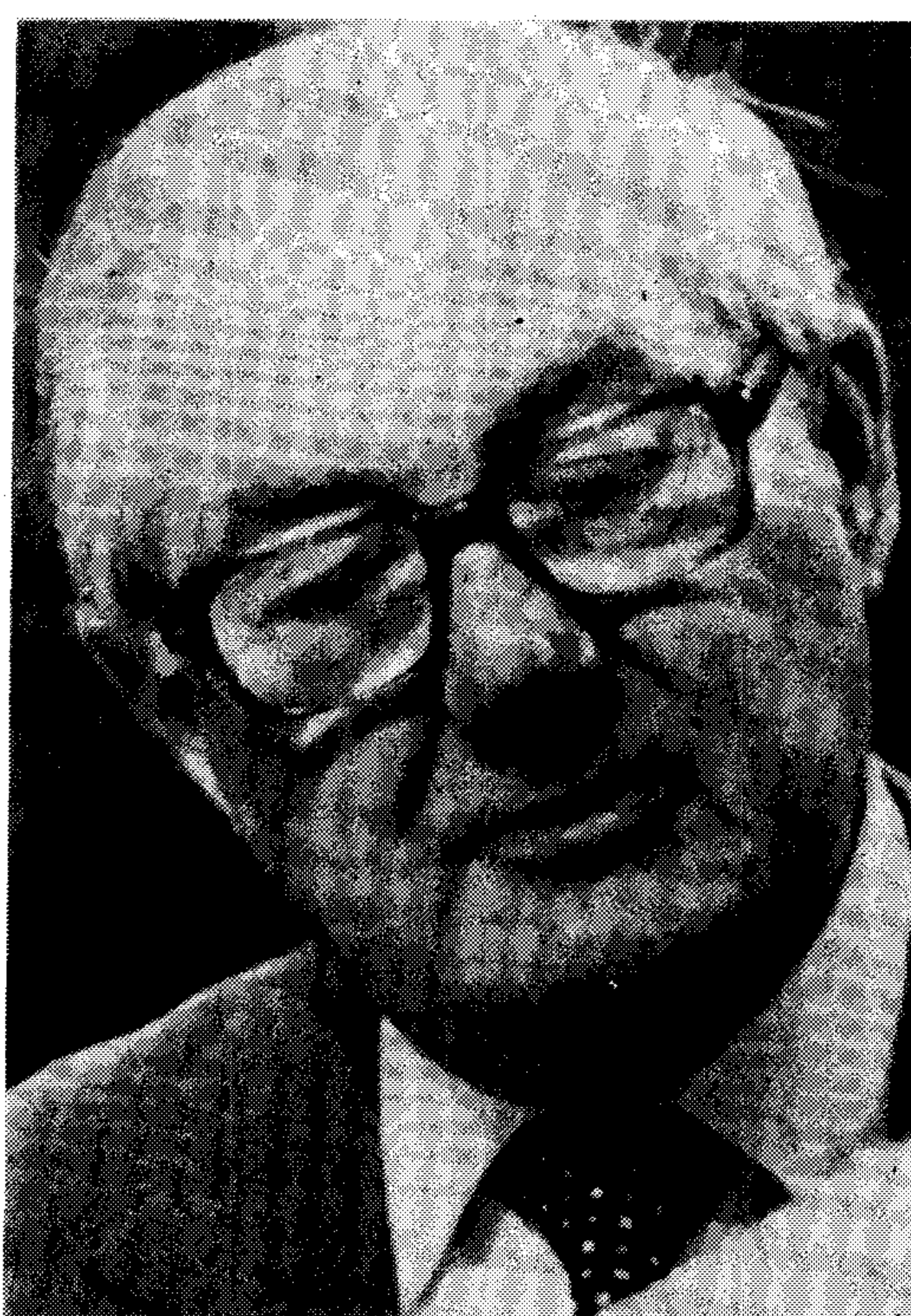
With *Workers Action* thus stressing at every turn the possibility of "transforming"

the Labour Party with or without a split into 'a real instrument of the working class' and into an instrument of socialist change', it is hardly surprising that the authors should complain that:

"Many people in the labour movement now are likely to interpret our call for a workers' government as just a call for a Labour government. That is



Healey



Callaghan

TORIES SLAM INTO CLOSED SHOP

Second in a series
of articles by
JACK BURNETT

The recognition that the individual worker by himself is weak in any argument with his boss has always been the basis for fighting for 100% trade union membership.

And the other side of this coin is the deep contempt and hostility that trade unionists feel to those workers who take all the benefits of pay, conditions and security that the union fights for yet refuse to join, to assist bodily and financially the organisation that protects them against the ravages of the capitalist market.

The aim of the Conservative government with its Employment Bill is to give every encouragement to these backward elements in the working class.

It does not outlaw the closed shop and in that sense it is approaching the question of undermining the organisation on the shop floor with a greater degree of subtlety than the previous Conservative administration.

(Under the 1971 'Fair Deal at Work' Act a closed shop or 'agency shop' could be run for workers after they had started work but not before.

Register

However, only unions who had registered under the National Industrial Relations Court were allowed to set up an agency shop and as Registration meant accepting all the repressive legislation that the Act directed against the unions, most unions refused to register).

At present it is possible to refuse to join a union because of religious conviction.

This exception which unions already cater for can be used as a cover by many people.

It does not just apply to religions that expressly forbid their faithful to be members of a trade union.

For instance there are certain Christian sects like the Exclusive Brethren (a kind of 'spartacist' split-off from the Plymouth Brethren) who will quote St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians in the Bible which sternly says "be not unequally yoked with non-believers".

This advice, clearly a blank cheque to every sectarian, is at least consistently carried

"The compulsory enforcement of the closed shop by parliamentary statute is the greatest disaster which has befallen liberty in my lifetime."
Paul Johnson, New Statesman, September 1976.

through, not stopping at trade union organisation but embracing every kind of organisation; the family, husbands, wives and children are all relations that are severed or soldered on the basis of programme.

The law at present also grants exemption to those whose fellow worshippers are active trade unionists.

Exemption

An Anglican or a Catholic could claim exemption from trade union membership despite the fact that those religious organisations not only don't proscribe trade union activity amongst their flock but on occasion actively encourage it.

Recently a union called upon the services of the Industrial Chaplain to the Archbishop of Coventry to investigate the depth of religious conviction of some twenty workers who were trying to avoid joining a closed shop.

The unworshipful Chaplain (less obsessed about declining membership and disappearing tithes than some union bureaucrats) only claimed a tiny minority for his celestial general-secretary!

The new proposals of James Prior's anti-union laws would greatly extend this area of religious exemption which is anyway considerably vague.

He intends to allow workers the right to refuse to join a union on grounds of 'deeply held personal conviction'.

'Personal conviction'

Even vaguer than the religious exemption it is a "personal conviction" that a worker could have not only against unions in general but any union in particular.

So that if a worker thought that the GMWU was becoming too militant (no matter how democratically its militancy had been achieved) or if another worker thought that the TGWU was becoming too moderate (no

matter how undemocratically its spinelessness had been secured) that worker's hostility to militancy or moderation could be regarded under the Employment Bill as amounting to a "deeply held personal conviction" that would justify him or her leaving the union in question.

This provision is specifically intended to undermine the effectiveness of any progressive developments in any union.

For its intention is to give a green light to all those backward elements who want to oppose, flout or otherwise ignore left-wing policies successfully fought for in the union.

Any resolution that becomes policy in the unions; equal pay, opposition to wage control, racist discrimination and legislation such as immigration control, British troops out of Ireland, greater accountability of union leaders to the members, etc., will inevitably have its opponents.

Legal cover

Rather than accept the will of the majority this extension of grounds for union exemption is designed to give a legal cover for all those who wish to sabotage the carrying out of agreed policy.

Having made it easy for any one who disagrees with any union policy to walk out of the union, Prior quite logically has also to clear the ground to allow such scabs to then walk into any union they wish to.

If a person for whatever "deep personal conviction" he or she "suddenly" acquired decided to leave the AUEW and join the TGWU the latter union would normally refuse to take such a person into membership if the two unions had a closed shop agreement inside the company.

Under this proposed Bill however, a tribunal could regard the refusal of admission by the TGWU as "unreasonable". Not only could such a worker then claim compensation from an employer who was honouring the closed shop agreement in his factory but he could involve the TGWU, in this example, in his compensation claim as well.

In determining whether the union was acting "unreasonably" the Act specifically instructs Tribunals to ignore union rule books, constitutions and agreements that they have with other unions.

Senile

Instead the Tribunal, (whose normal composition is an employers' representative, a bent or senile trade unionist (frequently both) and thirdly as chairman an independent guardian of the interests of capital), will judge "unreasonable" in accordance with "the substantial merits of the case".

Where the courts force admission of such a scab upon a union, compensation of up to £9,850 can be claimed for the period the union's action kept him waiting while compensation for someone who is still waiting



for admission will be up to £16,090.

This attack on the closed shop brings into the light of day something that is normally hidden and obscured in capitalist class society.

Bourgeois law based as it is on the protection of private property legislates on the assumption that the labour-capital contract is a free and equal one.

The employer and the employee only dispose of what they rightfully own. The former brings his capital to market, the latter his labour power.

No compulsion to either side forces one into a contract with the other.

Right to sue

Yet while this Act gives individual workers the right to sue trade unions who refuse them membership there is no equivalent right for workers to sue employers who refuse to take on trade union members!

To form a closed shop after this Bill becomes law (Friday) will indeed be quite an achievement.

It can only be done by secur-

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demand when you consider that the Government's mandate for this and other reactionary legislation it is hoping to impose on the country is derived from less than 33% of those eligible to vote.

The attack on the closed shop is far indeed from having the unanimous support of all employers.

Firms, especially the multi-nationals who need continuous production to feed their huge markets, generate sufficient profits to be able to make concessions to their workers and in return they have found through experience that many union officials, convenors and shop steward committees constitute a far more efficient police force than their own foremen and supervisors.

For Margaret Thatcher and her team it is these very cosy relationships that symbolise the diseased and stricken conditions of Britain's domestic industry.

The strong medicine she wishes to administer has therefore no place for those "sweet-heart" agreements, those corrupt and venal understandings so eagerly sought by employer and union alike.

Given the close bonds (perhaps chains is a better word) that developed between unions, employers and the state after the second world war any real shake up of British capital cannot also avoid also having a purgative effect on the trade unions in which the fight for new leadership can emerge at the centre of political and trade union struggles.

EXTRACTS FROM THE BILL.

(2) Every person who is, or is seeking to be, in employment to which this section applies shall have the right:

- (a) not to have an application for membership of a specified trade union unreasonably refused;
- (b) not to be unreasonably expelled from a specified trade union.

(4) A complaint may be presented to an industrial tribunal against a trade union by a person that an application by him for membership of the union has been unreasonably refused, or that he has been unreasonably expelled from the union, in contravention of subsection (2) above.

(5) On a complaint under this section, the question whether a trade union had acted reasonably or unreasonably shall be determined in accordance with equity and the substantial merits of the case, and in particular a union shall not be regarded as having acted reasonably only because it has acted in accordance with the requirements of its rules, or unreasonably only because it has acted in contravention of them.

(58A) - (1) A union membership agreement shall be taken for the purposes of section 58(3C) to have been approved in relation to the employees of any class of employer if a ballot has been held on the question whether the agreement should apply in relation to them and not less than 80 per cent of those entitled to vote in the ballot voted in favour of the agreement's application.

(3) A ballot under this section shall be so conducted as to secure that, as far as reasonably practicable, all those entitled to vote have an opportunity of voting, and of doing so in secret.



Remember the Peasants' Revolt

BANNERS AGAINST THE WIND, by Winifred Haward (New Horizon, 1980) reviewed for SOCIALIST PRESS by Wendy French.

1981 marks the 600th anniversary of the Peasants' Revolt and plans are already afoot to produce suitably rough-hewn commemorative plates to remind the working class of this important but discredited aspect of their history.

Bourgeois historians have continually written off the events of 1381 as a 'flash in the pan', an aberration by a handful of foolhardy yokels who apparently didn't realise that the class struggle wasn't invented until the Industrial Revolution.

Dr. Haward's novel traces the history of Geoffrey Litster, the leader of the revolt in Norfolk, and less well-known than his Kentish counterpart Wat Tyler.

This vivid reconstruction of

the development of the insurrection illustrates not only the political significance of the revolt, but places it firmly in the context of the social and religious ambience of the Middle Ages.

Brutal

These were brutal and blood-thirsty times. Whilst the Bishops and aristocracy enjoyed good food and drink and mused over gold treasures nicked from the Crusades, your average peasant, if lucky enough to survive the Black Death and/or childbirth, was likely to lose various limbs or be decapitated in battle or for not bringing forth the relevant dues to the feudal lord.

And it's no comfort to know that roughly the same conditions still obtain in large areas of the world today.

Dr. Haward's serious and

scholarly approach combined with her obvious admiration for the bravery of the participants in the revolt brings out sharply the way in which the crisis of feudalism with its extortionate taxes brought about a stirring of class forces with disaffected sections of the rising bourgeoisie, lending assistance to Litster and others of the "great commonwealth" in order to unsettle still further the shaky regime of Richard II.

One interesting aspect of the consciousness of the peasants is their view of God as a liberating force as opposed to the corrupt and oppressive manifestations of the feudal Church.

One of the leaders of the revolt was John Ball who preached the then seditious text that men and women should stand free and equal under God.

The peasants' faith in God

was linked to their faith in the King, whom they saw as their friend and ally against the nobility.

The principal tragedy of the revolt is the inevitable betrayal of this trust by Richard II, who, after agreeing to concede to their demands had the leaders of the revolt butchered and imposed more rigorous oppression on the peasantry.

Needless to say, the peasants' bourgeois allies cut their losses and withdrew their support, having exerted their pressure on the King and established themselves, not the peasantry, as the emergent class of economic power.

The novel contains many fine characterisations and passages of powerful writing.

The death of Skerritt, one of the peasants' leaders, as he gives way to delusions induced by fatigue and lack of food and



Peasants' Revolt: the King crosses the river to address rebels

water is reminiscent of a similar incident in Zola's *Germinal*.

The main political lesson is that any oppressed class must rely on its own strength to obtain its liberation, and not to place trust in other forces which will ultimately betray the

struggle.

Banners in the Wind is a worthy tribute to the peasants' struggle. At present, no paperback version is available, so I urge readers to order it from their local library.

Zombies who love shopping

DUNCAN BUSH reviews 'Zombies: Dawn of the Dead', directed by George Romero.

The German Marxist philosopher Theodor Adorno once observed that the American "King Kong" movies—and "monster" movies in general—represented a projection of the nation's collective unconscious in the face of totalitarian capitalism.

And, having seen the remarkable *Zombies: Dawn of the Dead*—now on current release—one is tempted to say that its author/director George A. Romero has elected to satirise, in this particular "monster" movie, at least one aspect of contemporary American capitalism: namely, that of consumerism run riot.

The action of the film takes place almost entirely in a "shopping mall"—a kind of gigantic supermarket for luxury goods, such as can be found, surrounded by huge car parks for its customers, within easy driving distance of most American towns and cities.

The place has been occupied by the four humans who are the film's central characters: a black man, a white man, and a white couple.

Sustenance

Outside, the entire country is slowly being taken over by "zombies"—the dead reborn, and stripped of all human characteristics except that of basic "instinct" and the desire for human flesh, which is their only means of sustenance.

For the four humans, the shopping mall represents not only a reasonably secure hide-out, but also an endless supply of the commodities they will need for survival.

Unfortunately, there is a vast, mindlessly-milling population of zombies even here. As one of the humans puts it: They keep coming here, just as they used to do.

The only difference is, now they can't remember why.

Romero gains splendid satiric effect from the scenes of the listless, catatonic zombies moving among the escalators and covered gardens and sales counters of the huge shopping



precinct, while in the background, the cheerful, omnipresent "muzak"—piped music meant originally to encourage spending, in the way that farmers have discovered that a radio in the cow-shed increases milk production—plays on and on with glorious incongruity.

The point is obvious: they may be dead, but this is also how they were in life.

Romero also, however, most interestingly combines with the "monster" movie a use of the "gang" motif: a theme familiar from such recent commercial successes as *The Warriors* and *The Wanderers*.

The mall is stormed by a gang of what appear to be Hell's Angels—a mercenary army of humans which is roaming the countryside on motorbikes and looting unchallenged everywhere, except by the slow-moving zombies: who represent, anyway, little more than an outlet for sadistic impulses, an endless series of almost-human victims for target-practice.

The popularity of the recent spate of gang-movies is worth commenting on, for it is deeply reactionary in its implications, however much these films may offend middle class audiences.

In Adorno's terms, this trend might be seen, in fact, to represent a projected collective

bourgeois fear of the teeming urban sub-proletariat or lumpen element: a huge, disaffected, multi-racial urban population whose frustration and aggression is, however, always safely contained by being turned against those in its own predicament—other gangs—rather than against authority (which seems, in fact, and significantly, to inspire an almost mystical fear in these cult "rebels" as they are portrayed on the screen).

Romero seems fully aware of these reactionary tendencies in the genre: the very first shot we have of the Hell's Angels is a close-up of the brutal face of one of its leaders in a Nazi helmet.

The film is above all, in fact, one that remains very conscious of the genres in which it works: how much it aims to subvert these genres through the deliberate use of satire or parody is, clearly, open to debate.

But the whole point is that not only is *Zombies: Dawn of the Dead* one of the very best of the "horror" movies or "gang" movies, but that it clearly refers to things in real life outside the structures of these cinematic conventions: Adorno's "unconscious" projection has become in this horror movie, highly conscious, and that is at least a step towards criticism of the

society that determines how the original repression operates.

Thus, not the least significant aspect of the film is the fact that it is the black man who is the acknowledged, "natural" leader of the group and one of its ultimate survivors, and that the other survivor, the white woman, emerges clearly as the stronger, more competent member of the couple she is part of.

These points are not stressed, and indeed should not be: but they are there, as the role of blacks and women have always been there—though usually in subservient or dependent roles—in the previous history of the capitalist cinema in America.

Zombies: Dawn of the Dead seems to be one of those titles that might have come from stock.

But don't be deluded into thinking that the film itself is one of those—like the Hammer horrors, for example—that is made of some more-or-less familiar mixture of entirely interchangeable parts.

It is not a film for the squeamish, as they say; but it is nevertheless one that is, perhaps, ultimately concerned not to reinforce assumptions—social or cinematic—but to challenge them.

Dissecting the poseurs

I confess all! I have been a Drabble addict ever since, as an 'O' level student and 'great-novelist-to-be', her image as the holder of the 'glittering prizes'—a starred first, three kids and a large house in Hampstead—hovered enticingly over my struggling efforts.

Well, the passage of time has cut my aspirations well down to size, but I still find an enduring fascination in the enchanted world of everyday trendy folk in NW6 that Ms Drabble so skillfully creates, or re-creates, in her novels.

At first glance her clutch of characters in *The Middle Ground*, a 'liberated' woman journalist, an earnest social worker, a womanising medical researcher and a writer who fashionably lost an arm in Eritrea would seem to be as fatuous a bunch of poseurs as ever infested the columns of the *Guardian*.

Mastery

And yet . . . and yet . . . Ms Drabble's erudition and mastery of the novelist's craft draw the reader into the haphazard but interlinking world, where strikes and insurrections are counterposed with alleged infidelities and children falling off skateboards.

I do not think it is an idle comparison to rank Margaret Drabble alongside Jane Austen and Elizabeth Gaskell as being amongst the most acute observers of the ironies and absurdities of contemporary social pretensions.

It is easy to feel anger at Drabble's heroine, Kate, as she complains that her eighty-quad boots are uncomfortable, and spends as much on flowers in ten minutes as most of us earn in a week, but Drabble is aware of this herself, and as the backgrounds and contradictions of her characters unfold—well, 'to know all, is to forgive all'.

More than in her previous

WENDY FRENCH reviews Margaret Drabble's latest novel *The Middle Ground* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson)

novels Drabble acknowledges the growing impact of the class struggle on the lives of people hitherto uninvolved.

Kate's father, for example, a lifelong trade unionist, becomes embittered as a result of the (implied) sell-outs of the bureaucracy during the 1970s; and the Tory voting physiotherapist who nonetheless comes out on strike when instructed by her union.

Drabble fans will not need encouragement to obtain their regular 'fix' but I would advise those who regard her simply as 'just another trendy-smart woman novelist' to appreciate her subtleties of observation, and look, not for ruthless analysis, but a masterpiece of the novelist's craft by a brilliant creative talent.

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STEEL LOSS MEANS MORE CLOSURES

British Shipbuilders MORE ORDERS MORE LOSSES!

Even after the loss of 13,800 jobs, a wage-cutting pay deal and a savage programme of productivity proposals have been forced through, workers at British Shipbuilders face an uncertain future.

Management has won sufficient orders to keep most yards busy into next year: but the

nationalised firm is still unable to compete with modern Japanese yards on anything other than the building of warships.

The result is that British Shipbuilders is due to run out of money before the end of the year—posing once again the prospect of more cutbacks and closures.

ers underlines the futility of union leaders' claims that by making concessions to employers, jobs can be 'saved' within the existing system.

The world slump of capitalism has brought a simultaneous plunge in the rate of profit and a gross overcapacity in the productive forces.

Every retreat before the employers' offensive simply lays the basis for the next attack: shipyard workers must instead prepare the ground and a new leadership that will fight for all out strike action and occupations to defend all jobs in the industry.

Cost of credit

British shipowners, driven on by the massive cost of credit in Britain and the rising value of sterling against the yen have joined the world-wide rush to buy cheaper Japanese ships—leaving European shipbuilders high and dry. In the first quarter of 1980 Japan took 60% of orders—thn EEC a measly 8%!

But the Tory government has little time for the tales of woe told by British Shipbuilders management.

Impatient to get their hands on the vast profits turned out by the warship yards, they are talking of selling these back to private industry, while at the same time contemplating moves to close down further merchant vessel shipyards.

Yet again British Shipbuild-



Asset-stripper Joseph

No Oats for Quakers

450 workers at Quaker Oats, Southall, are on strike against the sackings of eight women for allegedly sleeping on the premises during working time.

Management claim to have caught the women sleeping in a rest area "before their official tea break" which begins at 4.30 pm. Yet their foreman testifies to having seen them at work on the shop floor at 4.25 p.m.

Willing to strike

The workers on strike against the sackings are all members of the TGWU, leaving only the maintenance and office staff inside the factory but ready and willing to come out in support if necessary.

Management have now shown their real reason for sacking the eight women by threatening to axe 53 jobs in the plant.

Picketing has been strong, with 80 pickets out on the first day despite police warnings that there were "too many" and that they "shouldn't be there at all"

Blacking

This strike calls for the widest possible support from the labour movement to implement the necessary blacking action.

Two scab firms already noted are Dodds Transport of Acton and J. Lyons.

Donations and offers of help should be addressed to Wally Churchouse, TGWU, Transport House, Southall, Middlesex.



Bill Sirs

to prepare to fight closures and sackings—thousands of which have been carried through in the industry without the slightest practical opposition from the ISTC.

They have no interest in directing workers to the opening of BSC's books to expose precisely the levels of profit being extracted from steelworkers by private exploiters.

Instead, Bill Sirs, ISTC general secretary, claimed that if the strike had not taken place and if BSC carried through a revaluation of its assets and juggled with its various loans, the loss could have been

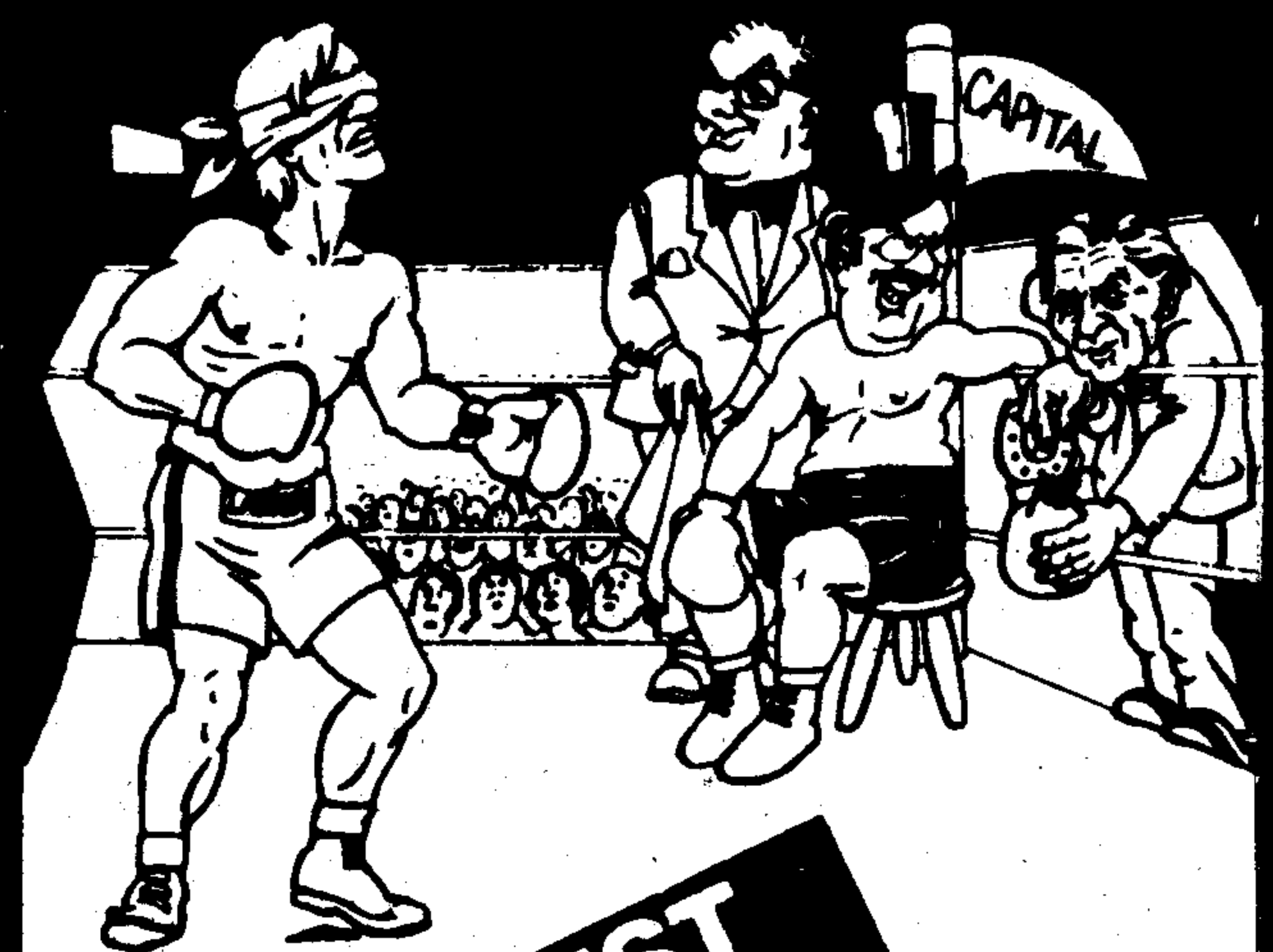
reduced from £545 million to £185 million.

But the Tory government is not interested in the wheedling, grovelling and snivelling advice handed to it by union leaders like Sirs.

Thatcher and Joseph are fully aware of the consequences of their strategy in terms of lost jobs and wages.

The only way steelworkers can defend themselves against still further attacks is to join forces with workers throughout the public sector and private industry in all-out action to bring down this reactionary Tory government.

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JOIN THE WSL!

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

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

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

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

economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

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

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

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

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name

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Send to WSL: BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

Tractor jobs to go

International Harvester, the multinational tractor firm, is to sack a further 740 workers in Britain, over and above the 500 jobs lost in the last year.

The bulk of the jobs lost will be in the firm's Doncaster plant.

The worldwide drop in tractor sales - reflected in the 25% slump in sales in Britain - is one factor in the cutback.

Another is the financial plight of the American parent firm, which, after provoking and eventually conceding to the longest-ever strike by members of the United Auto Workers union, has recorded a loss of over £200 million in the first six months of 1980.

Yet again, the problems created by the employers themselves and their anarchic system are being foisted onto the workforce, in the form of mass redundancies.

It is ironic that at a time of mounting world hunger and starvation giant tractor firms are slashing production and laying off workers: only a socialist planned economy can offer an alternative to such insanity.

Workers at the Doncaster plant should be demanding a programme of work sharing on full pay, and calling for access to the books of Harvesters to show the need for it to be nationalised without compensation, under workers' management.

BBC sellout

MEMBERS of the Musicians' Union voted by 5-1 to end their two-month strike and accept a sell-out deal with the BBC which agrees to the axing of three of the original six threatened orchestras.

While in London musicians declared themselves pleased with the outcome - which will save the BBC no money at all - Scottish union members were fuming at the sell-out.

Yet after two months of isolated action, many members no doubt saw the 'compromise' as the best deal that could be achieved.

It is obvious that as further cuts are planned, all the media unions must unite in common action to prevent still more wholesale cuts in jobs.

Tories to axe pay?

Only a shortage of Parliamentary time seems likely to stop the Thatcher government throwing down the gauntlet to the teaching unions.

Thatcher has declared her intention to reject a binding arbitration pay award to the teachers of 14-16%, and to prune it back to a figure between 7-11%.

This desperate move to hold back public sector pay would require the approval of both Houses of Parliament, since it would otherwise infringe the Teachers' Remuneration Act of 1965.

Indeed it is more these legal technicalities than any

serious fear of industrial action by the utterly spineless leaders of the teaching unions that has held back the Tory move.

Whether or not the NUT fights back, the Tory moves make it clear that they intend to hold down pay rises throughout the public sector: and the only answer from the unions must be all-out co-ordinated strike action to defeat this government.

Welsh jobless

Unemployment in Wales is in some areas near 20%. And, according to a Tory-led Commons Select Committee, this could lead to 'public disorder' if no action is taken.

The Committee condemned a series of Tory government policies, including the scrapping of development areas status for mid-Wales, the cutbacks in temporary employment programmes, and the huge closures in steel and coal.

It unanimously recommended government grants and aid to relieve the worst symptoms of this Tory-sponsored unemployment.

Callaghan gang from front page

they are, in all essentials, Conservatives'.

This, as far as it goes, is correct. But it is necessary to point out that the Gang of Three's policy statement is identical to the line adopted by the whole Callaghan leadership.

And while Callaghan sees the preparation for the Party conference taking the form of backstage manoeuvres to win the block votes of top union bureaucrats, the Gang of Three have complemented his efforts by threatening the union chiefs with a major split if they do not vote down the democratic reforms demanded by the left.

It is therefore not simply a question of calling upon the Gang of Three to "resign": in the growing fight within the labour movement it is necessary to begin a campaign for their expulsion from the Party, and for the removal of the entire Callaghan gang whose consistent anti-working class policies laid the basis for last year's Tory election victory.

As the manoeuvres and negotiations gather pace prior to the conference, it is essential that union branches in particular demand that their delegations vote in favour of the democratic constitutional reforms put forward by the left and reject any bloc with Callaghan and the Gang of Three.

At the same time the political inadequacy of the 'lefts' - who have no coherent socialist alternative to the class collaborationist politics of Callaghan and the Gang of Three - must be challenged, through full debate on the NEC Draft Manifesto in Labour Parties and union branches.

A principled socialist leadership must be built within the labour movement, committed to the mobilisation of the working class in all-out action to bring down the Tory government and the fight to build councils of action in each area to carry on the fight for socialist policies under a returned Labour government.

Such a leadership will be able in the course of struggle to show that parliamentary democracy is a sham, a cloak concealing the capitalists and bankers who use the machinery of the state to protect their class rule.

In the struggle for a genuine workers' government to implement a socialist programme to defend jobs and wages, a new form of democracy - workers' democracy - will emerge, as the majority sweep aside the hypocrisy and double talk of the Callaghan Gang of crypto-Tories, and their motley hangers-on.

election of the Party leader (at present chosen only by the right wing dominated PLP); it means opposition to any moves to give the Party control over the election manifesto.

"Representative democracy" therefore means opposition to every proposed democratic reform: instead the Gang proposes to leave reactionary Labour MPs a free hand to do what they will; to gerrymander the NEC in order to drive out its present left-wing majority; and to give the choice of parliamentary candidates not to active party supporters but to "every member" in a system that would in reality give the main say to the Tory press and mass media.

Threat

Along with this call for "representative democracy" comes the final threat: if the Party conference does not toe the line drawn by the Gang of Three they will do their level best to split the Party sooner than submit to the will of the majority.

At the same time the Gang slam into those Labour 'lefts' - in particular Tony Benn - who have opposed witch-hunting moves against socialists and Trotskyists within the party denouncing:

"the willingness of some leading NEC members to flirt with extremists who openly regard democracy as a sham. Parties of the autocratic left cannot be our allies, and the Labour Party should repudiate them".

The response from the 'left' has been varied. Eric Heffer has limply complained that the open letter seeks to divide the party instead of uniting it against the Tories.

But Frank Allaun suggested the Gang of Three should resign at once, and the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, which made its appearance at this year's Special Conference, declared:

"If the Gang of Three would only stop threatening to leave the party and actually do it, they would spare us all a great deal of trouble. They are out of place in the Labour Party for

APOLOGY

We apologise to readers for the numerous typographical errors to be found in this issue of Socialist Press as a result of a breakdown on our IBM machine.

Grain deadlock

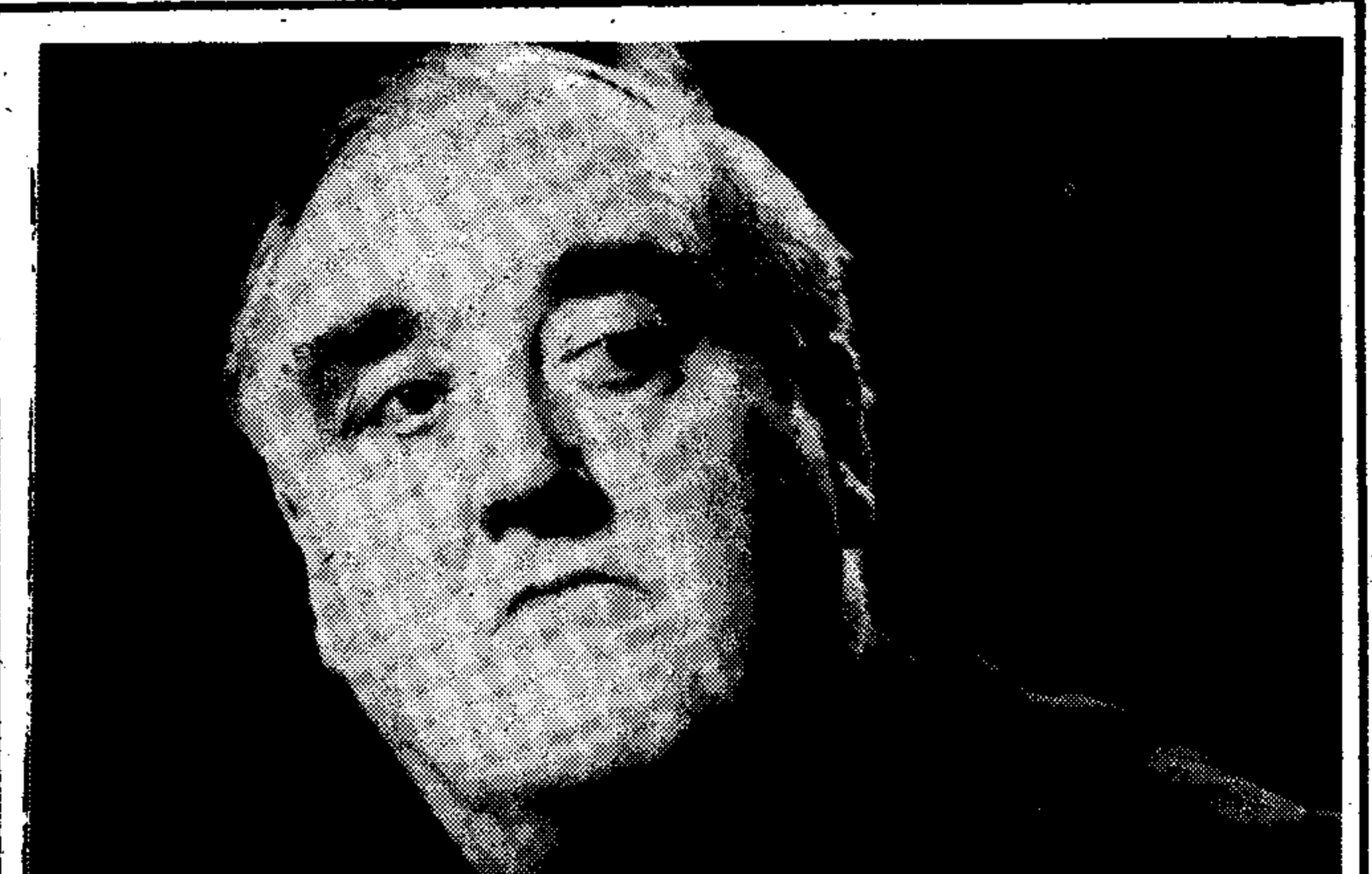
The stubborn scabbing of the AUEW Construction Section in the Isle of Grain laggards' dispute continues to block even the efforts of the TUC to railroad through a 'compromise' which would limit laggards' potential earnings.

The TUC has threatened to suspend those unions that refuse to accept the 'peace' formula.

But the AUEW continues to stand firm against the removal of the blackleg non-GMWU laggards from lagging work to other jobs on the Isle of Grain site.



The bitter struggle for reinstatement of sacked shop stewards and workers and for union recognition at the Adwest Engineering plant in Reading continues despite police attacks on picket lines and lack of official support from the TGWU. A mass picket is to be held on Monday August 11 - all Socialist Press supporters are urged to attend, and to fight in their union branches for urgently-needed donations to the strike fund: cheques should be made out to J.Dhoot, and sent to Danny Broderick, 46, Berkley Avenue, Reading.



TORY PROVOCATION (from back page)

Four skinheads, aged between 15 and 17, have been charged with the murder. Two of them are well-known among local youth as active supporters of the National Front and the British Movement.

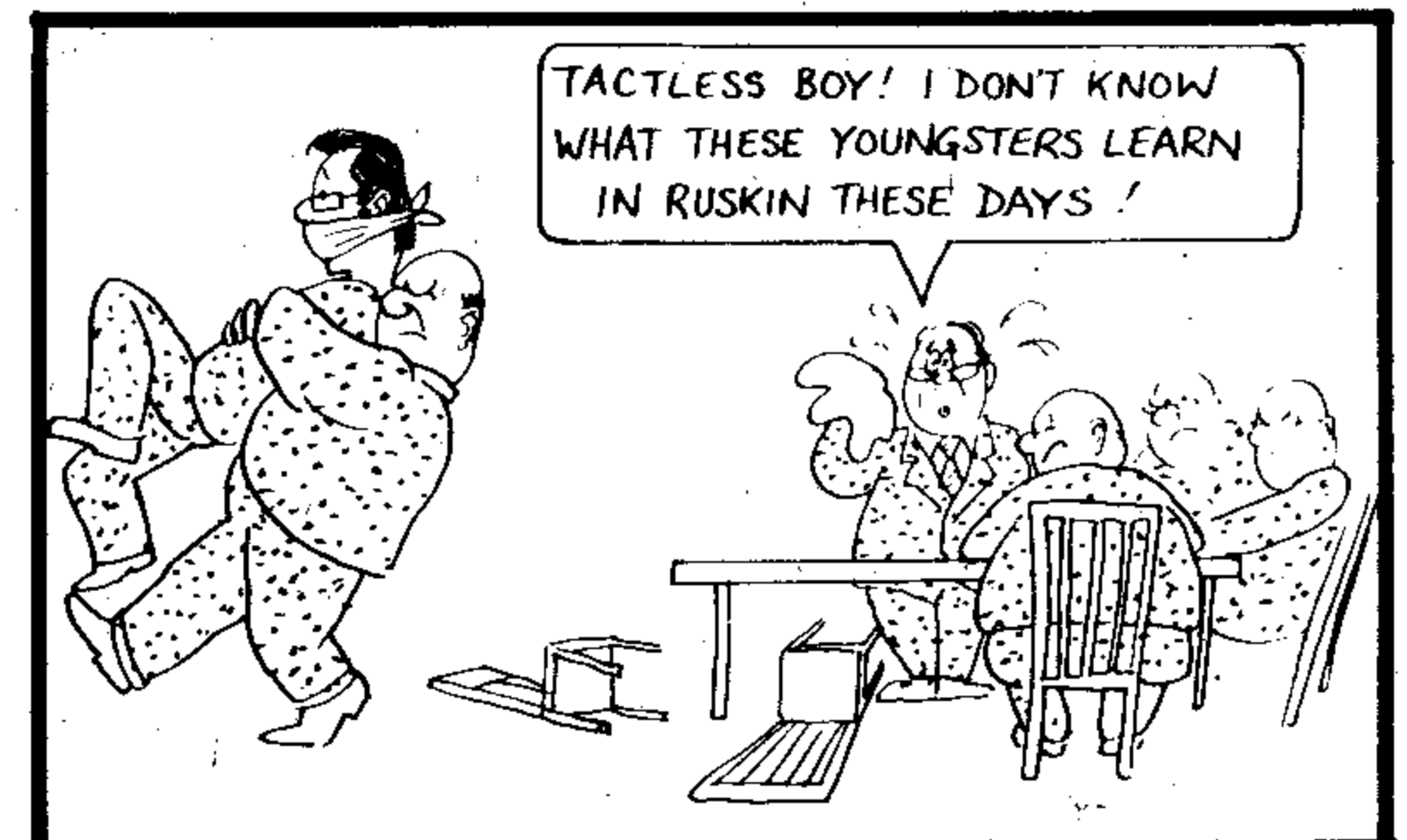
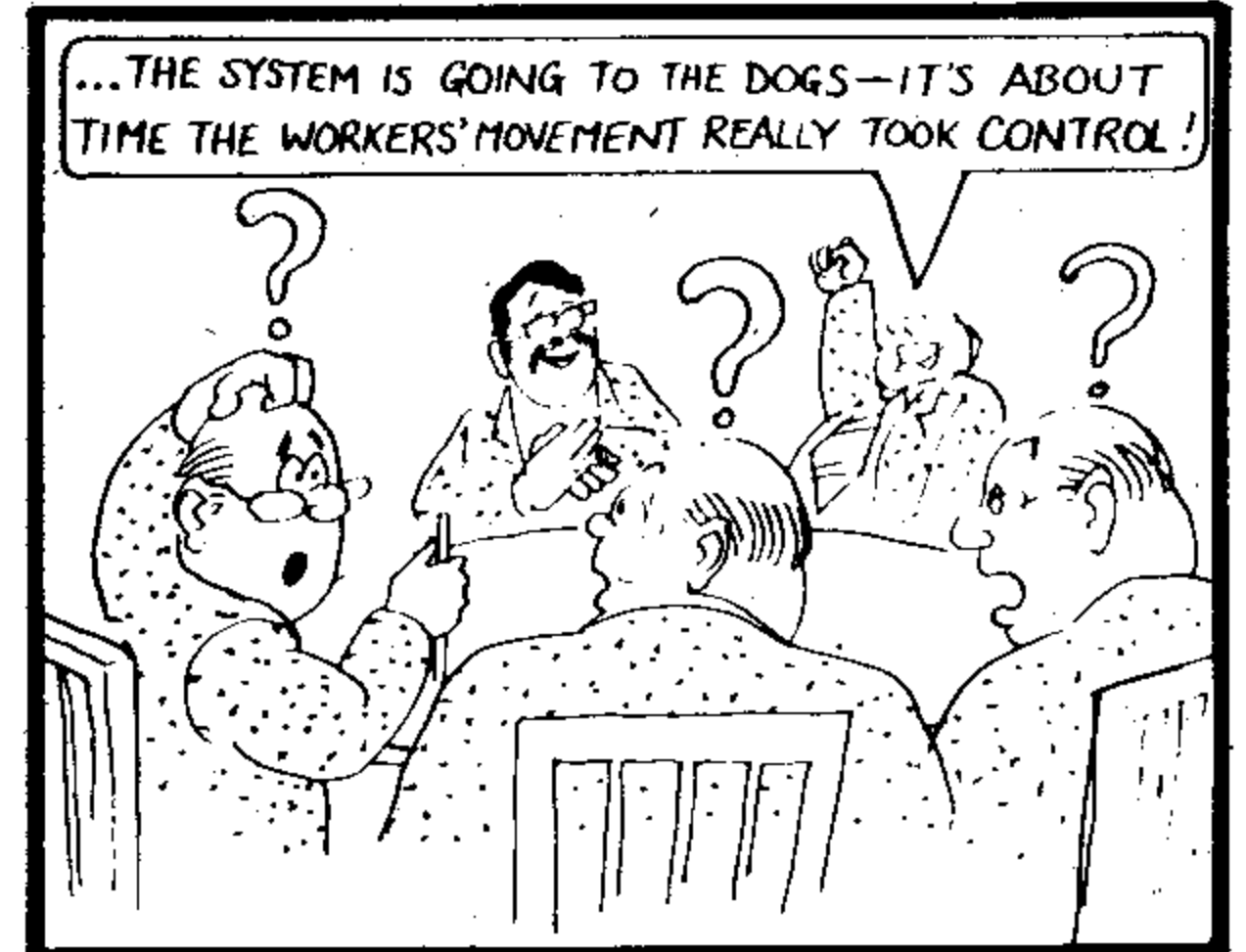
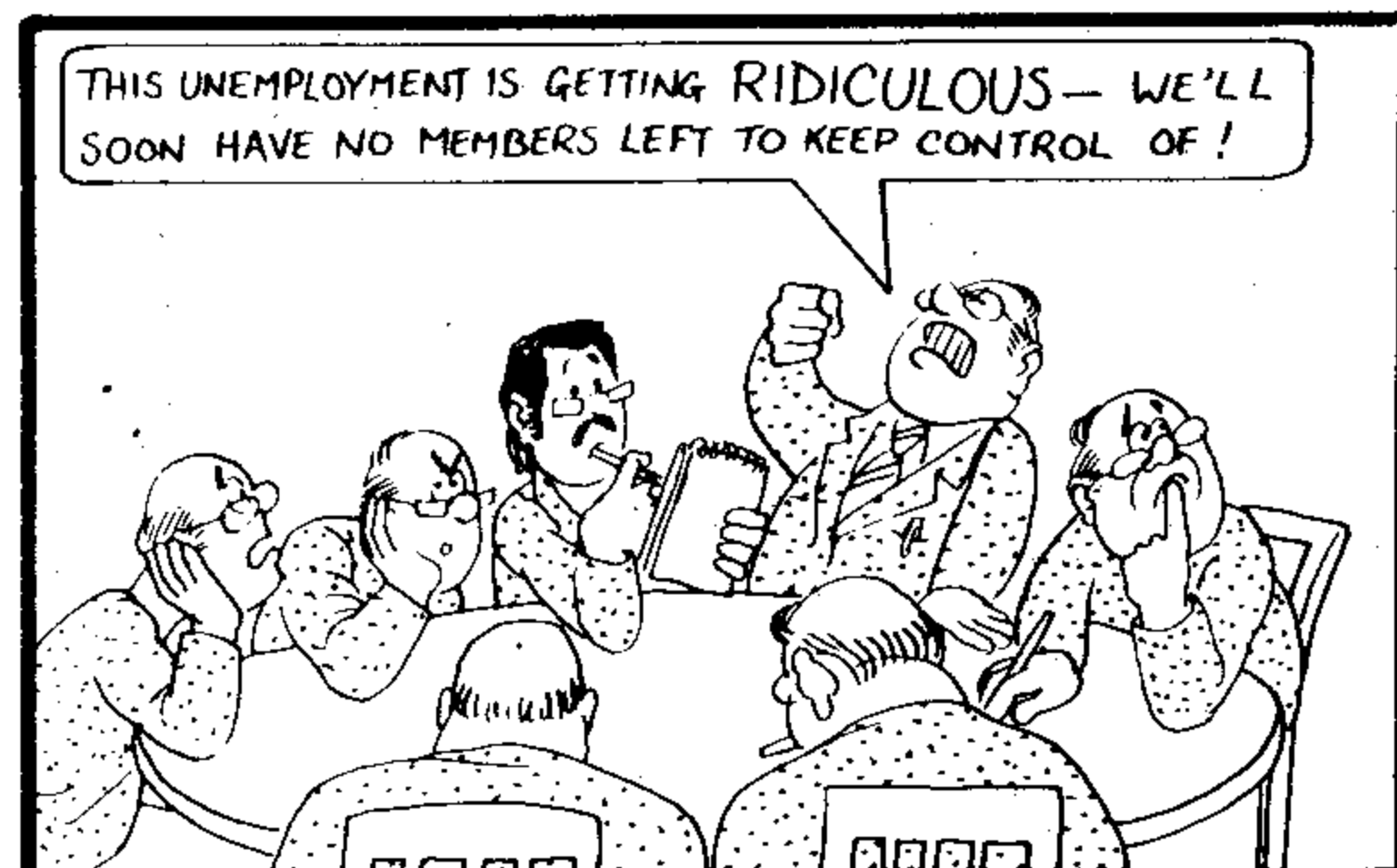
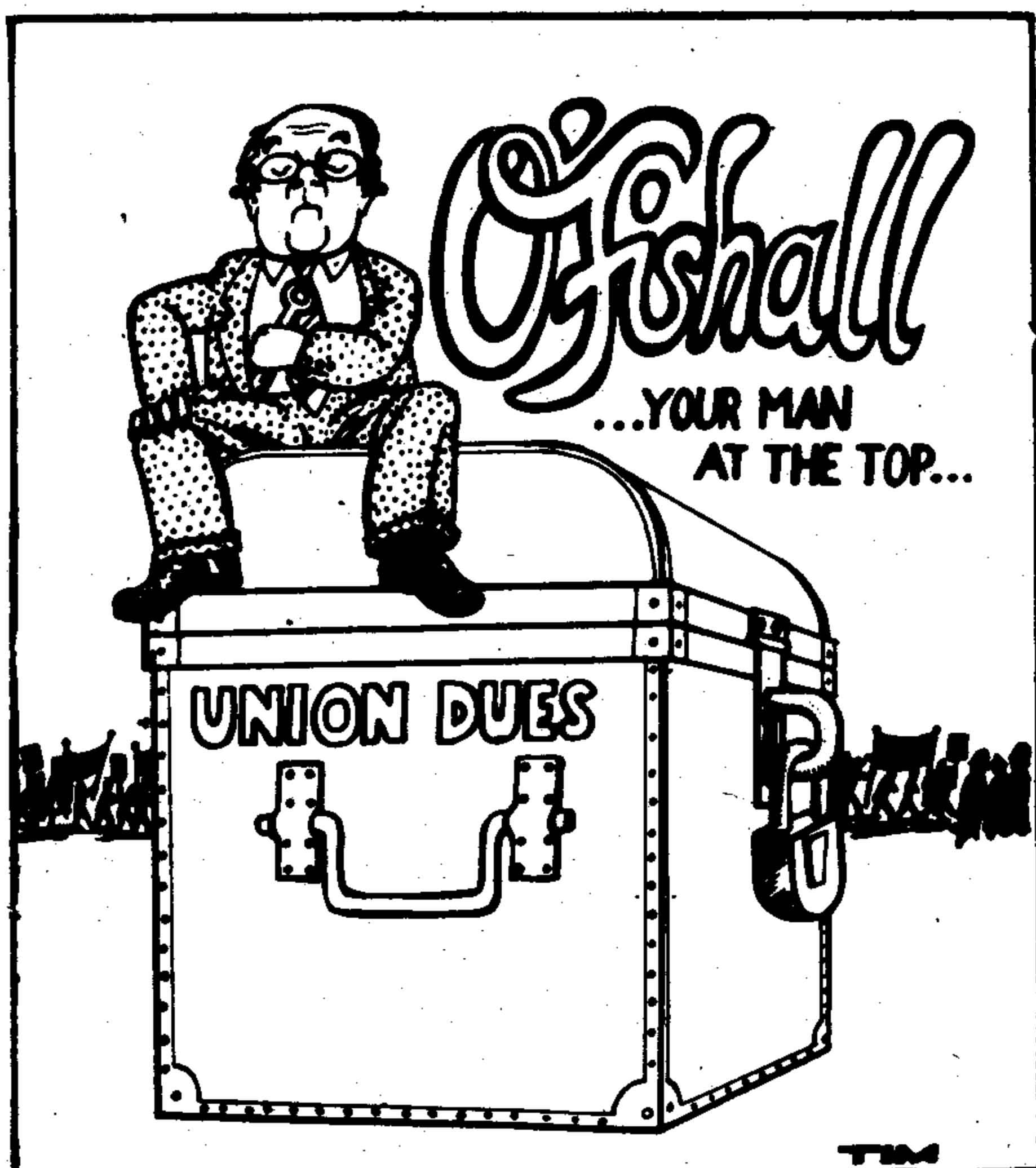
Anger among local black youth has not declined in the period since the killing. Efforts are now being made to set up a Newham Youth Movement which will focus its activities on self-defence and the creation of facilities for immigrant youth.

Socialist Press supporters and members of the Socialist Youth League will be participating in this movement to

ensure its success, but also to argue for perspectives that go beyond the self-defence of immigrant minorities.

Correct though the self-defence slogan is, it is inadequate by itself to ensure that anti-fascist activity achieves the kind of class-wide support that is necessary.

We will argue for the slogan of workers' defence organisations, based on the established bodies of the working class - the unions, the Trades Councils, and the Labour Party.



SOCIALIST PRESS

TORY WAR ON DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS!



Lord Scarman

of the Act.

This means that any journalist who interviews even at second hand, a member of a proscribed organisation in Ireland, faces prosecution!

Formalise

This is an attempt by the government to formalise their massive censorship on the war in Ireland.

There is only one way in which such attacks can be met. The trade unions involved in TV and the press—notably the NUJ must commit themselves to strike action in defence of any journalists who are prosecuted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act or to any journalist jailed for refusing to reveal a source.

Only the strength of the organised working class can resist these attacks.

The Law Lords ruling on British Steel was underlined by two other rulings on the same day.

The journalists' union, the NUJ, is still to be subjected to a state ban on disciplining scabs who broke the 1978/9 provincial newspapers pay strike.

The Law Lords have declared that the matter must go to trial and that an injunction in favour of the proposition that the strike was unconstitutional must stand.

NUJ rules are crystal clear.

A ballot must be held of members if a majority of members are affected by a strike. The provincial journalists are a minority and a ballot was not necessary.

But because other journalists were ordered not to break the strike, by giving elementary blacking support, the courts, approached by scabs, has ruled that a majority were affected.

The effect of this ruling could be that a strike by ten journalists in one newspaper office could be unconstitutional unless there had been a secret ballot, if other journalists are told not to supply copy to the paper!

The union, by having provision in its rule book for secret ballots, has opened the way for the courts to force a secret ballot down its throat on every occasion.

The union must now learn its lesson. The long road through the courts has crippled the NUJ financially and led nowhere.

The scabs should be expelled and the TUC called on to defend the union.

It was another union—the Post Office Engineers (POEU) that highlighted the lying in government circles over the extent of phone tapping.

Although prevented by law from giving full details, a pamphlet produced by union member Roger Darlington says that tapping is much more widespread than admitted.

Darlington is a leading moderate, who was special advisor to Rees when he was Labour Home Secretary.

He is himself almost certainly underplaying the amount of tapping.

Individuals

Nevertheless the pamphlet points out that political organisations, individuals, trade unions and strike leaders have their phones tapped.

It called for an inquiry which would allow union members the right to give evidence free from the threat of prosecution.

The names of those engineers who carry out the tapping are removed from all official lists—including the union's own lists.

Again a solution is demanded which point to the independent interests of the working class.

A workers' inquiry is needed with evidence freely given and a guarantee of protection from prosecution by the TUC.

Democratic rights are always trumpeted by governments and press as being particularly related to the 'British way of life' and as a distinction between 'democracy' and a 'communist, totalitarian state'.

But the existence of such rights is merely a tactical question for the employers.

To defend them, a workers' solution is needed. Only the working class using its independent strength can force back these attacks, and secure a genuine guarantee of democratic rights by overthrowing the system of exploitation which requires their extinction.



Rees

The rights of the press, the right to strike, the rights of immigrants and the right not to have your phone tapped have all been dramatically curbed in one seven day period.

The stripping away of traditional democratic rights is escalating week by week under the Thatcher government—testimony to the fact that a government bent on destroying the organisations of the working class must take many 'bourgeois' democratic rights along with them.

Imprisonment

Granada TV has been told that executives will face a fine or imprisonment if they do not reveal the name of the person who gave them an internal British Steel Corporation memorandum during the steel strike.

The memorandum was used by the World in Action team to prove that the government lied when it said it was not 'intervening' in the strike, and that the pay offer had been deliberately pitched lower than BSC had wanted.

The Law Lords have upheld a Court of Appeal ruling that the name of the informant should be handed over.

The Court of Appeal itself had justified its scandalous ruling by saying that the programme had not treated the chairman of British Steel with sufficient deference, and that the document had been 'mutilated' before it had been handed back (identifying marks had been cut off).

The ruling is a warning to all newspapers whose journalists consider that they have certain freedoms: the state will not hesitate to axe these in defence of capitalist property relations.

Attacked press

Lord Scarman, one of the law lords who made the judgement, even attacked the press for hostile comment on the ruling—saying that comment should have been suspended until the Lords publish their reasons in a couple of months time!

Granada, meanwhile, have been given seven days to hand over the name.

A further attack on the rights of the press came in a Parliamentary statement from Sir Michael Havers, Attorney General, over the BBC's right to report events in Northern Ireland—a right which, it must be said, is hardly exercised by



the BBC.

Havers told the Commons that future interviews with 'terrorists' would face a tougher government line.

"If similar incidents take place again I could take a

stricter view, and those who had participated would be warned that, subject to the evidence and the circumstances of the case, they risked criminal proceedings under the Prevention of Terrorism Act".

He was referring to a BBC Tonight interview with a member of the Irish National Liberation Army and to the filming by a Panorama team of an IRA roadblock at Carrickmore.

Havers said he was confident that the INLA interview had been in breach of the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

In deciding not to prosecute he underlined the fact that there are no rights to a free press which the government cannot attack:

"I was determined that my decision should not be interpreted as a licence to journalists to have responsibility to the public, but outside the legal restrictions which operated on all others. There is no such licence, and that must be clearly understood."

Preparation

In a letter to the BBC Havers had already said that the preparation for such an interview was a breach of Section 1

TORIES' RACIST PROVOCATION



Youth arrested in Newham demo, July 19

The publication of the Tory government's new nationality White Paper is both a concession to the huge racist lobby within the Tory Party and an attempt to rekindle racist agitation with a view to dividing the working class.

The White Paper proposes three tiers of British citizenship with only the top tier having automatic right to enter and live in Britain.

The two categories of British overseas citizens—with no right to anything—are composed largely of blacks in British dependent territories and former colonies.

Since vicious immigration laws already virtually prohibit new immigration into Britain, White Paper is simply a provocation—at a time when the National Front is again emerging.

The NF plans to exploit Tory unemployment by calling

a march on the theme 'British jobs for British workers' through the immigrant area of Handsworth, Birmingham, on August 17.

Anti-fascists are organising a counter-demonstration, while reformists and pacifists try to persuade the Tories and police to ban the fascist march.

Supported

Meanwhile the London Region of the Labour Party has backed the call for protest demonstrations in the Newham area of East London against the continued attacks against immigrants by racists and fascists.

The second major march, on August 2nd, attracted some 3,000.

The protests have been triggered by the murder of a young Pakistani man in East Ham High Street during the afternoon of Thursday July 17 by four skinheads.

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