

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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## HUNGER STRIKES: LABOUR IN DISARRAY

This time last year Labour's leadership presented a solid wall of opposition to discussion or debate on Ireland.

Their line was fixed and immovable—and indistinguishable from that of the Thatcher government. It was an entrenched, "bi-partisan" defence of the partition of Ireland and the preservation of the six county Orange statelet of Northern Ireland with the assistance of the British army and dictatorial repressive legislation.

Of course many of these political positions still predominate in the Labour leadership. Foot, Concannon and their fellows still vie with right wing Tories in their denunciations of the republicans who resist British rule, and in their praise for the thugs—military and paramilitary—who help preserve it.

### United Ireland

But the unity of line has been shattered. First to break ranks was Tony Benn (who as a minister under Wilson and Callaghan shared responsibility for the military repression in the North).

He declared for a united Ireland before floating his ridiculous idea that UN troops might be more acceptable than British troops. All of a sudden Ireland became a "legitimate" talking point for Labour left-wingers.

Then we heard former torture chief Merlyn Rees question whether it is right for Labour to maintain the bi-partisan "guarantee" to the Protestant majority—which gives them a veto over any moves towards a united Ireland.



Anti-H-Block demonstration, Belfast

Last week came further cracks in the monolith.

A Labour Party study group set up 18 months ago produced a draft report proposing that the objective of policy should be a united Ireland.

An additional proposal—which may be deleted before the document is approved by the NEC—discusses the repeal of the emergency powers legislation under which British troops carry out their reign of terror on the streets of the six counties.

### Meaningless

Another section discusses the repeal of the so-called "Prevention of Terrorism" Act—which only a tiny handful of Labour MPs have ever bothered to oppose.

All this sounds very radical: it is a far cry from the orthodox "bi-partisan" support for imperialist repression that has become the hallmark of Labour policy.

But it is rendered virtually meaningless by the

proviso that the unity of Ireland should be achieved only by "agreement and consent"—while offering no tangible basis on which such consent could be secured.

### Unsuccessful bids

Meanwhile James Callaghan re-emerged last week, floating a call for an independent Northern Ireland—a plan warmly welcomed by the extreme Loyalists of the UDA, who have been campaigning for just such a solution for the last two years.

Where does this leave party leader Michael Foot? He is reportedly happy with the vague "united Ireland" call from the study group, though he sternly rebuked Tony Benn for making equally innocuous statements a few weeks ago.

But last week Foot felt obliged to attempt to damp down debate on the issue, making unsuccessful bids both to prevent Callaghan airing his latest ideas, and to halt the demonstration through Mansfield called by

the Labour Committee on Ireland to protest against the statements and actions of Don Concannon.

The confusion now prevailing within the Labour leadership is no accident: it is a reflection of growing concern on the Irish issue within the rank and file of the Labour Party. This concern has gathered strength since the 'H' Block hunger strikes began last autumn, and particularly since the success of the Bobby Sands election campaign and his courageous fast to the death in early May.

### Long overdue

The break-up of the old unity by no means suggests that the new proposals coming forward are necessarily progressive alternatives. On the contrary, many are simply seeking to present a more economical and effective plan for the preservation of imperialist rule.

But the ferment of discussion on Ireland within the

British labour movement is a necessary and long-overdue development: it offers socialists new opportunities to argue for a consistent policy of opposition to British military rule, the immediate withdrawal of British troops, and the right of the Irish people as a whole to self-determination.

### Pilloried

And the breach of the bi-partisan block also further weakens the stand of the Thatcher government, now pilloried throughout the world for its barbaric treatment of the 'H' Block prisoners.

New is the time to go boldly into the Labour Party and fight for a thorough break from imperialist policies on Ireland. We urge every reader to join us in this fight.

**POLITICAL STATUS NOW!  
TROOPS OUT OF  
IRELAND!**



## Concannon rabble roused

Demonstrators protesting against the pro-imperialist and callous actions of Labour's Northern Ireland spokesman Don Concannon ran into an unholy alliance coalition last weekend.

Concannon's constituency of Mansfield had been the subject of frenzied witch-hunting by the local Tory press, the Labour Party, and extreme right wing groupings. The result was horrifying.

Fascist thugs mingled with racist Labour right wingers and frenzied ex-military types in a seething hostile counter-demonstration, which besieged the 400 or so anti-imperialist marchers mobilised by the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Violent attacks were averted only by the energetic activities of a huge squad of police, who marched three abreast alongside the demonstration and used horses and special detachments to corner the reactionaries.

### Exercise

Police with dogs patrolled the numerous building sites overlooking the route of the march, which began at the suicidal time of 3 p.m.—by which time the pro-Concannon mob had completed several hours in local pubs.

For the police it was an

exercise in crowd control. For the demonstrators there was the unaccustomed and eerie awareness that without the protection of these state forces they would have been unable to march even a hundred yards through the town.

The march—with few trade union or Labour Party banners—brought an unforgettable lesson in the uphill struggle that remains to be carried through within the British labour movement in raising the struggle against British imperialism in Ireland.

### Dregs

While Concannon and his ilk can rely on the most reactionary dregs of the fascist movement, on local rugby clubs and Tory press barons to back their stand in support of British imperialism, those fighting for internationalism are forced to fight against the stream.

There can be no shirking this fight: but the LCI has a long way to go before it can command the broad support needed to clear out pro-imperialist stooges like Concannon from the leadership of the Labour Party and the trade union movement. It is urgent that all readers and supporters of Socialist Press take up that fight.



# ZIONIST LABOUR PARTY— NOTHING TO DO WITH SOCIALISM

As we go to press Israeli Prime Minister Begin looks set to cobble together a new coalition with the religious extremist parties Agudat Yisrael and the National Religious Party sufficient to maintain the desperate grip of the Likud block on state power.

The Israeli Labour Party (ILP) under Peres may gain the largest number of seats but fail to regain office by a small overall margin.

The *Daily Mirror* comments as follows:

"The result of Israel's election looks like being the worst one possible. Bad for Israel. Bad for the Middle East. Bad for world peace."

We are told that a Begin victory will "send a shudder through the world."

The real concern of the *Mirror* editor expressed in the usual squalid editorial can be gauged by the total failure to even mention the dispossessed Palestinians from start to finish!

The above comments reflect a feeling of some annoyance on the part of imperialism and their backers that Begin will continue to make their job difficult in explaining away and excusing the repeated atrocities of the Zionist state of Israel.

Repression costs money, and many western governments had hoped that an ILP-led government could have stitched together some kind of deal for a Jordanian-Palestinian state which would have been attractive enough to buy at least a section of the Arab bourgeoisie, thus weakening the resistance to Israeli rule.

## Support

*Socialist Press* has consistently argued the need for British workers to support the Palestinians.

Prior to the election, the Labour Friends of Israel circulated Labour Party branches in Britain requesting speaking time to argue the case for British Labour Party support for the ILP.

It is necessary to reaffirm that the ILP has nothing in common with socialism and nothing of substance to differentiate it from Begin's

# SOCIALISM

Barry Turner looks at the Israeli Labour Party's Election Manifesto and the aftermath of the elections.



Illegal West Bank settlement

Likud coalition. Peres has earned the description of 'moderate' from a series of press interviews. History however tells a different tale.

It must be asked how the ILP which created and perpetuated the Palestinian tragedy can be considered a force to contribute to its solution. It was Peres who became minister responsible for the Zionists' economic expansion in the 1967 occupied territories.

Peres, not Begin, set the pattern of settlement in the period 1967-77 with over 60 settlements established, Jerusalem annexed, army protection for Gush Emunim thugs and the demolition of over 15,000 Palestinian houses.

Labour also initiated collective punishments in the occupied territories. Labour has controlled Israel from 1948 to 1977.

A brief look at the 1981 Election Manifesto makes clear the real face of Labour Zionism. Article 18 calls for the liquidation of the PLO, the chosen representatives of the Palestinian people.

Recognising that the

physical liquidation of the PLO cannot be achieved within the borders of Israel, requiring attacks on bases in Lebanon and Syria, Article 27 states:

"Israel shall uphold her right to active defence and prevention of sabotage and terror even when they originate beyond her borders."

The raid on Iraq's nuclear plant holds no horrors for the ILP! Article 29 refers to the West Bank settlement policy as follows:

"It constitutes, like any Zionist pioneering project, an educational, social and pioneering value; and it is designed to prove valuable in the political struggle for shaping the borders of peace. The government of Israel led by the Labour Alignment will work for its consolidation and development."

Leaving aside the lack of Palestinian enthusiasm for 'pioneering educational values' basic support for massive expropriation and expulsion of the West Bank Arabs is clearly stated.

An ILP election advert in *Ma'ariv* (2 June) criticises

Likud's poor settlement record!

"The Likud government has spent millions on the production of mere dots, most of which are bogus settlements . . . far from establishing, and planting many new settlements the Likud is actually evacuating existing settlements in the Rafah Approaches. Painting dots on maps in newspaper ads does not make one into a settlement party—Vote Labour!"

Central to many arguments supporting the ILP is the vague notion that it supports the establishment of some form of Palestinian state, the ever present hint of liberalism supposed by 'eager bourgeois political commentators and carefully encouraged by vague interviews given by Peres.

Such a state was never envisaged by the ILP as the Manifesto makes clear. As mentioned Article 18 calls for the liquidation of the PLO.

Having thus disposed of the people's chosen representatives, Article 17 talks of an alternative in the form of:

"authorised representatives of the inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza," who will be "coopted into the negotiations on realisation of the Autonomy and in the peace negotiations with Jordan."

## Rejected

A separate Palestinian state is totally rejected in Article 13:

"Israel rejects the establishment of an additional Palestinian State in the territory between Israel and Jordan which would be a source of danger and hostility . . . The Palestinian problem cannot be solved in a separate State without the territory and population of Jordan . . ."

Article 14 demands that the "Territory of the Jordanian-Palestinian State is to be demilitarised . . ."

A further price is the loss of Jerusalem under Article 5 which states: "United Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty is the capital of the State of Israel."

Article 30 guarantees the abdication of the settlement zones:

"The government of Israel will insist that in peacetime the deployment of the Israeli's defence forces and of the settlements including the Jordan Valley (including the area to the North-West of the Dead Sea), the Etzion bloc, the surroundings of Jerusalem and the Southern Gaza strip, will be included in the sovereign territory of Israel."

The harsh reality of the above article is that it denies a further 40% of the West Bank and Gaza and it contains around 90% of the arable land and nearly all the water and other natural resources.

## Bankruptcy

These policies show the bankruptcy of the ILP manifesto and its total failure to represent any viable alternative to Begin.

Of course it was never intended to do so—such intentions only breathe life in the mythology of groups such as the Labour Friends of Israel backed by Wilson, Heffer and Benn.

The price required by the ILP makes it unlikely that Jordan will accept such a deal involving the signing away of Jerusalem and tracts of territory, violating the 1974 resolution of the Rabat summit (which designated the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people), disrupting 'Arab unity', defying Arab sentiment, assuming the onerous economic burden of a West Bank-Gaza population robbed of its means of existence through the confiscation of nearly all the arable land, as well as the burden of rehabilitating the Palestinian refugees.

Still—the imperialist argument runs—a state has been offered!!

Under these conditions the old lie about "Arab intransigence" can be dragged out to excuse further atrocities and annexation of the whole of Gaza and the West Bank.

The other aspect of the election which must be drawn out in Labour Party and trade union branches is the whole tone of the election campaign itself. Racism has been rife, violence an everyday occurrence reflected in the Israeli press.

*Al-Ha'mishmar* (22 June) describes the wrecking of Labour Party offices by Likud thugs in Ramle:

"Not satisfied to have smashed the furniture and destroyed information material, the 'burglars' smeared excrement all over the walls."

*Ha'aretz* (15 June) tells us:

"A rioting mob in Petah Tiqva tried to break up a Labour Alignment election meeting addressed by Mr Shimon Peres . . . About 500 Likud supporters equipped with wooden boards, placards, bike chains and tomatoes rioted throughout the meeting."

*Al-Ha'mishmar* (22 June) quotes:

"Jerusalem mayor Mr Teddy Kollek emphasised that the events he was now observing in Jerusalem were familiar to him from his experiences in Europe of the 1930s. (He came to Israel in

1939 from Nazi-controlled Vienna)."

The naked racism involved in the campaign can be seen in this excerpt from an election advert for the Kach movement printed in *Ma'ariv* on 29 May.

The advert shows a picture of a Jewish girl and continues:

"This is a Jewish girl and your sister, daughter or grand-daughter. But can you be sure she will marry a Jew. You will see Arabs loitering in the streets of these Jewish towns and chasing Jewish girls. Their pockets are full of money because they do not serve in the army.

While we are defending the homeland they are getting rich . . . In order to put an end to the defilement of our national honour we shall propose the following law: As a discouragement to those who want to seduce the daughters of Israel into assimilation, any non-Jew engaging in sexual relations with a Jewish woman will be punished by five years imprisonment . . . And this is only the beginning. Vote for Kach."

So much for the Zionist claim that Israel is a 'safe haven for the Jews'.

## Racist

The election highlights Zionist bankruptcy and the anti-democratic, racist nature of Israeli society, lovingly referred to in last Thursday's *Guardian* editorial (2 July) as an "intricate democratic system".

Begin boasts that he will rule for the next 4-5 years; in the real world the Israeli economy threatens to tame his arrogance.

Inflation still runs at over 130% and economic concessions designed to catch votes will soon rebound to blacken the picture further.

The ILP offers no alternative to the Arab or Jewish workers, promising as it does continuing war against the Palestinians.

Alliances must be built between Jewish and Arab workers to oppose Begin's war drive, oppose a Labour Party in office, defend the PLO as the legitimate representatives of the Palestinians and demand Israeli arms and influence out of Lebanon.



Begin

# Poland: Kremlin pressure makes its mark

With Soviet party leader Brezhnev slipping away to the Black Sea for a few weeks' holiday and friendly visits from Kremlin foreign secretary Gromyko, Poland no longer hangs under imminent threat of invasion.

The threats and pressure brought to bear on Polish Communist Party members in the last few months by Moscow have had their desired effect.

Almost the whole of the present Stalinist leadership has secured re-election as

delegates to the party congress in ten days' time.

Militants who looked set to secure a majority of delegates at the conference have failed to win elections in the key Katowice and Warsaw districts. And even hardliner Stefan Olszowski has been re-elected, while lending support to the new ultra-Stalinist weekly *Rzeczynistosc*.

But the conflict between the workers and the bureaucrats is postponed rather than cancelled: in the long run the Stalinists cannot co-exist with a genuinely independent trade union movement.





# Five years since Soweto

# TUC LEADERS IGNORE

# STRUGGLES OF S. AFRICAN

# WORKERS

By Jim Farnham

Last month, the workers and youth in South Africa commemorated the fifth anniversary of the Soweto rebellion.

Inevitably, there has had to be a drawing back from the level of direct confrontation which developed during June 1976.

The youth and workers could not spontaneously answer the question of power which their actions had posed.

The ANC leaders could not keep up with events, let alone lead them.

Left without leadership and the political programme and perspective to carry them through to victory, the youth and workers stepped back from mass confrontation on the streets.

But this was a step back to gather forces, prepare for struggle, draw on the experience of the rebellion, consolidate and deepen militancy and organisation.

From the lull which followed the Soweto rebellion, the movement—spearheaded by the revolutionary strength of workers—has been moving consistently forward.

## Tested strength

There has been a long period of struggle in which group after group of workers has moved into action—on wages and working conditions, on rents and living conditions, on the lack of power over decisions affecting their daily lives.

Workers in struggle have tested their strength, developed their organisation, drawn on the support of their class.

They have seen that they can create a class strength strong enough to force the bosses and the government to do many things that they would never voluntarily do—such as spending far more on education, and giving wage increases of up to 100%.

Both the bosses and the government have been forced to recognise the living reality of growing workers' organisations, even if they do not give them formal recognition.

Because so many different groups of workers have spontaneously moved into struggle—those with strategic industrial power and those without; those with skills and those without; those with legal rights to live in the urban areas and the migrant workers; the highest paid and the lowest paid—there have inevitably been setbacks as well as gains.

## Absorbed

But no single setback has been allowed to reverse the direction of the class. Every single setback has been absorbed, used as experience, leaving workers not demoralised and defeated, but determined to be better prepared next time.

And no single gain has satisfied the movement, which is demanding not only that there be advances and



Soweto rioters, 1976

improvements, but something much much more—that the real needs of all people be met.

It is the determination to fight for their real needs which lies at the base of the developing workers' movement. It is that which is taking them into struggle after struggle, even against the repressive brutality of the South African state.

Workers are now better organised, more confident, more militant than ever

before. To defend the gains of the past and build on them, there is only one path open to workers—the path of struggle, based on the development and mobilisation of their independent class strength. The ruling class are perfectly aware of where the real challenge to their rule is coming from.

That is why they are so concerned to stem and drive back the day to day struggles of workers.

Every single genuine step forward that black workers have ever taken has been a step against the control of the government and the capitalists.

The growing struggle for the real needs of workers will have to be more and more consciously directed against the control and power of the capitalist class.

For while production continues to be organised for profit, there is no single lasting concession which the capitalists can make to meet workers' real needs.

If they could, the same bosses who talk today about improvements and reforms would already be launching all their planned attacks on workers.

It is not the lack of desire on their part which stops them—it is the depth of strength and mobilisation inside the working class, and the division and confusion inside the ruling class about how to strangle the workers' movement.

Behind all the talk of reforms in South Africa, there has always been the reality of consistent efforts by the ruling class and their apartheid regime to tighten control over the mass of the working class.

While plenty has been said about the new legal rights to organise open to black workers, the reality has been consistent state limitations and attacks on almost every workers' struggle.

For the ruling class, faced with a growing workers' movement and a developing economic crisis, there is no real option but to lash out to try to stem the workers' movement and drive it backwards.

## Evidence

In the arrests, the mass sackings, the bannings of meetings and leaders there is every day evidence of this.

Now a secret government document has been uncovered, as further evidence, if any is necessary, of a government/employers conspiracy to smash the power of the mass organisation SAAWU, organised mainly in the East London area.

The strike at Wilson-Rowntree (reported in SP 250), in which 500 workers in solidarity with three victimised workers in February, has become a crucial focal point of this capitalist conspiracy.

This involves the use of the police against strikers, the establishment of a list of scabs, and attempts to foster the growth of TUCSA unions at the expense of SAAWU (to which all the strikers belong).

The leaders of TUCSA have long since proved their reliability as reformist class collaborators after years and years of acting as functionaries for management.

All the strikers have already been replaced by unemployed workers taken on as scabs (although some of them left the job after having the strikers' case put to them).

In the last weeks, more and more of the strikers have been reported to have been arrested by the bantustan puppets of the South African government and bosses.

The bosses see in the Wilson-Rowntree strike the threat of the future—a mass united workers' movement, using collective class strength mobilised in struggle, drawing on wider and wider layers of the class and promoting more and more class action to fight for workers' needs.

Victory in the Wilson-Rowntree struggle would add enormous strength to every struggle. It would open up a new wave of demands and action by workers who saw a way of protecting themselves against the bosses strike-breaking.

## Confusion

But it has become clear that victory will not come easily.

The bosses and their apartheid government have been forced to attack SAAWU from their own position of confusion and division, faced with a workers' movement growing in strength.

But this does not make the blows with which they are hitting the Wilson-Rowntree strike any the less heavy.

It has already been a major advance for the workers' movement to have mobilised support to maintain the strike in the face of all attacks. Now to be carried through to victory that strike must be massively strengthened.

Inside South Africa, a consumers' boycott has been put forward and mobilised as the means with which to fight the sackings. From this base of support must be built stronger forms of class action to support the strike.

The profits of many bosses do not depend on workers' purchasing power. But the profits of every single boss depend on workers' labour power. Workers have the power to halt production, even when the bosses draw on scab labour.

The Wilson-Rowntree strike has already been strengthened through the building of supporting strike action by more and more Wilson-Rowntree workers.

Hand in hand with the fight to organise the unemployed workers and build a

leadership which can take their struggle forward, must go the struggle to build supporting strike and blacking action to strengthen the Wilson-Rowntree strike.

SAAWU leaders, who have emerged to reflect the militancy of the working class are looking, with workers, for a way forward. To do this they have turned to the Rowntree-Mackintosh management in England, the British government and the TUC for support.

## Disgusting

Of course nothing has come or could ever come from Thatcher's bosses' government or capitalists in England to strengthen workers' struggles anywhere.

But the disgusting reality is that no aid has come to these embattled South African workers from the TUC leaders either.

There have been reports of union officials seeing Rowntree Mackintosh management in Britain but these secret meetings were held without either shop stewards or workers being informed.

The unions involved are the TGWU, GMWU and USDAW.

The strike depends directly on the level of material aid which can be built in its support. Militants must take up the struggle for effective solidarity action at all Rowntree Mackintosh factories inside Britain.

The massive feeling of solidarity for black workers in struggle inside South Africa must not be allowed to be swallowed up in a series of bureaucratic manoeuvres and meetings behind the backs of workers, without them even being informed.

Steps must be taken to ensure direct factory to factory links, so that British workers can be sure of knowing of every appeal for support.

## Trades Councils

And the lead given through the fight in the Leyland Combine Committee to prepare effective solidarity action in support of South African workers' struggles must be taken up elsewhere.

Trades Councils in York and in Oxford have sponsored public meetings on solidarity with South African workers: such meetings should be held in every area, inviting SAAWU speakers.

Links with South Africa must be investigated at every workplace, to lay the basis for immediate supporting strike and blacking action in solidarity with South African workers.

**NEW!**

**Socialist Press pamphlet on Southern Africa**

Price 60p (including postage) from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX



# Building a national union for the unemployed

Socialist Press spoke to Pam Owalade about the conference called by the Leicester Unemployed Workers Union and the perspective they have for launching a National Unemployed Workers Union

What was the response of the delegates who came to the conference from the different areas?

The response was two-fold. Firstly they were pleased to have covered so much ground in getting the conference organised; and secondly there was a strong feeling of support for setting up a national movement to link up all the isolated groups.

We had delegates from Edinburgh, Liverpool, Telford, Newcastle, East and West Midlands, South East, London—all of whom put delegates onto a committee which is to work for the formation of a national movement.

It was felt by everyone that we all wanted to build a national organisation and this was reflected in the co-operation of the delegates, especially the willingness of movers of motions to composite their views into the main motion where there was common agreement. This helped us to fully cover the agenda.

After areas had been working by themselves for such a long time it gave them a lot of encouragement to see they were not alone and there was such a positive line of unity throughout the conference.

The Newcastle delegates however thought the conference was too soon. And the Claimants' Unions on the other hand felt our aims and theirs were so similar we should look to joining together.

The main resolution called for a conference in the autumn. What is that about?

The conference is to actually set up a national organisation. In the meantime the steering committee will guide all the groups into working towards the conference.

There we can pool all our resources.

We are also immediately asking for trade union support. Locally all the Unemployed Workers Unions should be building for the autumn conference and then we shall be discussing what type of action we can take.

What has the response been to the UWU in Leicester? How have the Trades Council and the trade unions been?

What we have found is that the way to recruit members is through practical work.

The Beal Street Nursery occupation gained us support locally and new members; and the support we gave against the closure of Markfield Hospital has led to NUPE giving us help.

One of our members is in NUPE and is the Trades Council delegate.

Our campaign for free access to travel on the buses for unemployed workers also gained a lot of support. We had over 50 people on the lobby of the council offices.

Already NUT and AUEW have given us financial support, and we are in the process of writing to other unions.

What we desperately need in Leicester is an office because we have so much paper work spread around members' houses, which it is becoming difficult to cope with.

Also after the conference we have been approached by areas around Leicester who



want to set up UWUs.

As for the Trades Council we received total hostility from the start. They refuse to recognise us—though now they want to start up an unemployed section, with an EC member of the Trades Council to be in charge.

This new section is to have the People's Marchers from Leicester as its founding members. But the fact is that out of the ten People's Marchers from Leicester, six are in the UWU.

An AUEW motion went to Trades Council when we were setting up, asking for recognition and a £50 donation. It was lost by two votes (one of them a SWP member!).

So there seems to us a big contradiction in Trades Council unemployed section. They refuse to recognise the UWU—but then want to set up this unemployed workers section which they know will be all our members anyway.

But they could not overlook the way the UWU built for the People's March—here they were forced to recognise us.

The increase in militant action against job loss is clearly an important development with occupations at Lee Jeans, Gardners and Plansee. How do you see the NUWU relating to these developments?

At the conference we adopted Leicester's proposed statement of aims which includes in it the call: "To campaign alongside workers

fighting redundancies, contacting various community organisations in the area to highlight the effects of mass redundancy on the area as a whole and thus mobilise support for the campaign in the whole community and not

just in the work place."

We see the NUWU as having and practising the policy of supporting occupations and strike action to stop closures and opposing the selling of jobs by voluntary redundancies. In Leices-

ter we supported the picket in Nuneaton fighting the closure of the Camden Journal newspaper.

One of the by-products of unemployment has been an increase in racism. I believe

the UWU has a very definite position on this.

Our new constitution clearly states that "we must try to prevent racism by offering the disillusioned unemployed a constructive alternative to the evils of

fascism, which must be totally opposed by the whole of the labour movement."

The conference also decided to direct special attention towards minorities and women. We know if we do not provide an alternative to unemployed youth, the National Front will.

Therefore this is one task which always has to be in the forefront of our minds.

What do you see as being the central task of the labour movement for the immediate period?

To start defending the interests of the working class and seriously fighting against unemployment.

The labour movement should be leading the offensive to defend existing jobs and create new jobs.

The central task for the labour movement has to be around the bringing down of the Tory government by mobilisation of the membership into all-out action.

## YOPs workers walk out in fares dispute

A big development in the YOPs struggle took place last week when 200 youth from the Consett area walked out on strike with the support of their union NUPE.

The reason they walked out initially was because they were having to pay up to £4 a week on fares out of their lousy £23.50 'allowance' from the Manpower Services Commission.

Under present MSC rules the YOP workers have to pay up to £4 on fares before they can claim any money back. So if they spend £6 they would only get £2 refunded.

The strike seems to have raised the issue of the wages on YOPs schemes and the

strikers have received support from other schemes throughout the country.

They say they want to form a national co-ordination with a view to a one day national strike being organised.

The National Council for Young Workers was set up this year for that purpose.

NUPE are presently recruiting the YOPs workers and we should be taking that up and joining the unions. But this will bring a fight with the union bureaucracy, as the NUPE programme fails to call for the essential demand for full trade union rates of pay.

### Struggles

Union leaders are only looking to reforming YOPs, and fail to challenge the

whole basis of these cheap labour schemes.

This action could prove to be the outbreak of a wave of struggles in the YOPS schemes.

Trade union leaders and Labour leaders alike have been happy to see YOPs become an institution like school. Now they are going to have to take a clear position who they support: the

victims of cheap labour or the exploiters.

### Trade union rates

This action needs to be followed up nationally with demands for:

\*Full trade union rates and rights on YOPs.

\*For an independent trade union inquiry on YOPs involving YOPs workers. This can be done on a

national basis in the unions and also through local trades councils.

\*For all unions to initiate a full unionisation programme on YOPs. Support for the NCYW.

The National Council for Young Workers can be contacted at: NCYW, UMIST Students Union, PO Box 88, Manchester M60 1QV. Tel: 061-861 0317.

## Fighting for abortion facilities

On Wednesday 1 July the first attempt to further liberalise the 1967 Abortion Act was made in Parliament.

Under the Ten Minute Rule, Jo Richardson proposed an "Abortion Facilities" Bill, which attempted to put an obligation on health authorities to provide abortion services.

This Bill highlighted the disparities between different areas in abortion facilities.

At the moment, a woman's ability to get an abortion varied enormously according to where she lives.

Since the effect of the 1967 Act is to give doctors the right to decide on whether a woman can have an abortion, a reactionary, Catholic or otherwise, anti-abortion gynaecologist can

effectively stop abortions in the hospital he (or much more rarely, she) controls.

Thus in Glasgow there are only half as many abortions performed on the National Health Service as in the Tayside area in East Scotland.

At the same time there are many more private abortions in Glasgow than the average for England and Wales.

So many women who should be entitled to NHS abortions are forced to pay for private operations—or go to an area where the all-powerful gynaecologists are more sympathetic to the 1967 Act.

The Abortion Facilities Bill tried to remedy this situation.

It would oblige Health Authorities to provide abor-

tion facilities, thus undermining the power of reactionary consultants.

Opposition to the Bill came mainly from Tory anti-abortion campaigner Jill Knight, who claimed that the Bill would take resources away from essential operations and facilities like kidney machines.

This argument is a red herring. The Facilities Bill was not about diverting resources: abortions are much cheaper for the NHS than childbirth.

The Bill was defeated by 215 to 139. Labour Party members should be asking their MPs which way (and if) they voted, and making abortion an issue in approaching reselection conferences.







*Socialist Press*, which has appeared without interruption for the last 6½ years, is to cease production with issue 254, dated July 9, 1981.

This is not the result of any setback, but the prelude to a new step forward in the fight for a principled programme and perspective for action in the workers' movement.

We have decided to sponsor and add our forces to those already grouped around the paper *Socialist Organiser*.

This will become a 16-page weekly paper on July 30. And we will fight to ensure that it embodies the strength of both papers in a new expanded form.

We are sure that with our support and participation the new weekly will confront the major political problems facing the working class in the current situation.

We will seek to support and champion every struggle, every protest by the working class in its battles against capitalist exploitation and repression in Britain and internationally.

The weekly will obviously continue as both *Socialist Press* and the fortnightly *Socialist Organiser* have done, to promote the struggles of women for genuine sexual equality; of gays against their oppression; of black workers and national minorities against discrimination and repression; and of youth against the capitalist system that dooms them to a lifetime of misery and exploitation.

The paper will campaign to publicise the demands of those in struggle, and fight for the broadest possible concrete solidarity action.

It will analyse developments in major struggles week by week, offer political guidance and leadership, and fight to expose manoeuvres and betrayals by trade union and Labour bureaucrats. But it will not stop there.

*Socialist Organiser* will also attempt to educate readers to grasp the broader significance of their local and immediate problems and struggles in the context of the national and international class struggle.

It will seek to show the necessity to go beyond the limits of trade union militancy, if workers are to develop a revolutionary leadership which is capable of tackling the political attacks now being waged by the Tory government, and the political betrayals carried out by the Labour bureaucracy.

It will explain the political limitations which make the confused politics of the Labour 'left' inadequate to the needs of the working class.

The paper will attempt to popularise the political and theoretical heritage of Marx, Engels, Lenin and

# NEW PAPER WILL SPEARHEAD FIGHT FOR LEADERSHIP



Leadership of the labour movement: dynamic Len Murray and thrusting Michael Foot

Trotsky, and to carry forward the programme of Marxism in a positive and concrete way into the day-to-day struggles of the labour movement.

This means of course that the new paper like both *Socialist Press* and *Socialist Organiser* before it will also conduct continuous propaganda arguing the case for socialism and socialist revolution against the various currents of reformism and Stalinism.

In our capacity as sponsors of the new weekly, we will seek to spell out not simply immediate demands but also our general perspective for the development of struggles: the generalisation of struggles; the fight for new leadership; the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism and the possibilities opened up by a workers' government and a planned socialist economy.

We will argue the case for the complete reconstruction of the crisis-ridden Trotskyist Fourth International: the world party of socialist revolution.

We will explain as clearly as possible the gulf that separates our revolutionary Marxism from the Stalinist politics of the mass Communist Parties and the so-called "Communist" states in which political power is in the hands of a minority, parasitic Stalinist bureaucracy.

We will spell out our perspective of working class political revolution in Poland and other deformed workers' states.

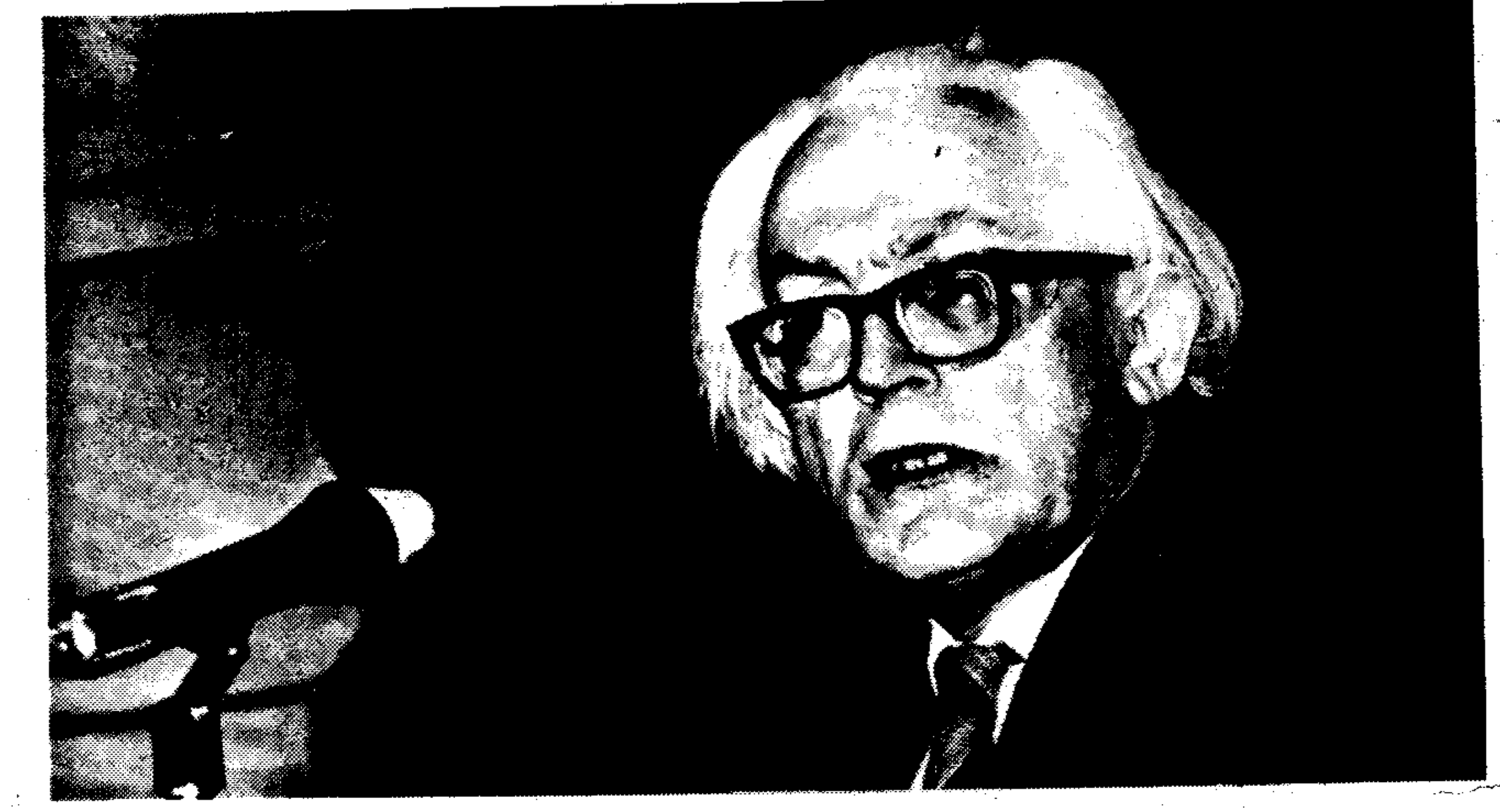
We believe that only by presenting such material can we provide the basic information needed to develop the large numbers of leftward moving militants now taking up the struggle in the labour movement into Marxists who will recognise the need to join us in building a new, revolutionary

leadership.

And of course as a weekly paper speaking both to organised militants and to a wider readership in the labour movement, *Socialist Organiser* can (as its name suggests) play a crucial role in organising the forces most committed to the struggle for socialism.

We will offer them a regular analysis of the class struggle, and slogans and policies on which they can act together in common with comrades and co-thinkers in other towns and other unions.

We do not see this in any sense as a one-way process. To achieve its purpose our new paper must draw a response from its readers and supporters: they must be encouraged to enter into a dialogue with those who sell and produce *Socialist Organiser*, and themselves take copies to sell and participate in our fight to build a new, revolutionary leadership.



The 16-page weekly offers new scope which we are keen should be used to open it up further to debate and dialogue with readers. We want to see at least a page in *Socialist Organiser* every week allocated to readers' letters and debate on basic political topics currently under discussion in the workers' movement.

Readers in every locality should be urged to submit letters, articles, cartoons, news cuttings and photographs.

A News Desk telephone would make the paper still more accessible.

Nor do we simply want to merge the existing readerships of the two papers.

In every area we will be pressing existing supporters of *Socialist Press* and *Socialist Organiser* to take increased numbers of the new paper to sell.

We want to see it sold in or outside every union branch, every Labour Party

ward, women's section and GMC; every labour movement conference, rally and demonstration.

We want to see sellers taking our new paper to every factory gate, dole office, picket line and mass meeting. We want teams assembled in each town where we have supporters to canvass the working class estates door to door, selling copies of the paper, seeking out new regular readers for weekly deliveries and new forces willing to come forward in the fight for socialism.

As the colleges and universities reopen, we want *Socialist Organiser* taken into student unions and halls of residence, to establish supporters' groups and mobilise students in the fight against the Tories.

Teams of supporters should be organised to campaign on High Streets and

shopping centres in the big towns, stopping passers-by and explaining to them exactly why they should be involved in the fight to kick out the Tories and carry through a fight for socialism.

It is plain from every union conference that there is now a strong leftward tide of political development within the labour movement: local elections and even opinion polls in the Tory press confirm that this reaches through the whole working class.

In sponsoring together with the *Socialist Organiser* comrades a new, expanded paper we are confident that we can reach a new, expanded, readership, building a firm base of support on which to build a new, fighting leadership in the labour movement that will increasingly represent a major challenge to the present reformist and Stalinist bureaucrats.



# SOCIALIST PRESS: revolutionary leaders

We didn't know very much about the technicalities of producing newspapers when we launched *Socialist Press* as an 8-page fortnightly in February 1975.

But we knew what kind of political approach we wanted to take in relation to the struggles of the working class and the fight for the demands of the Trotskyist Transitional Programme.

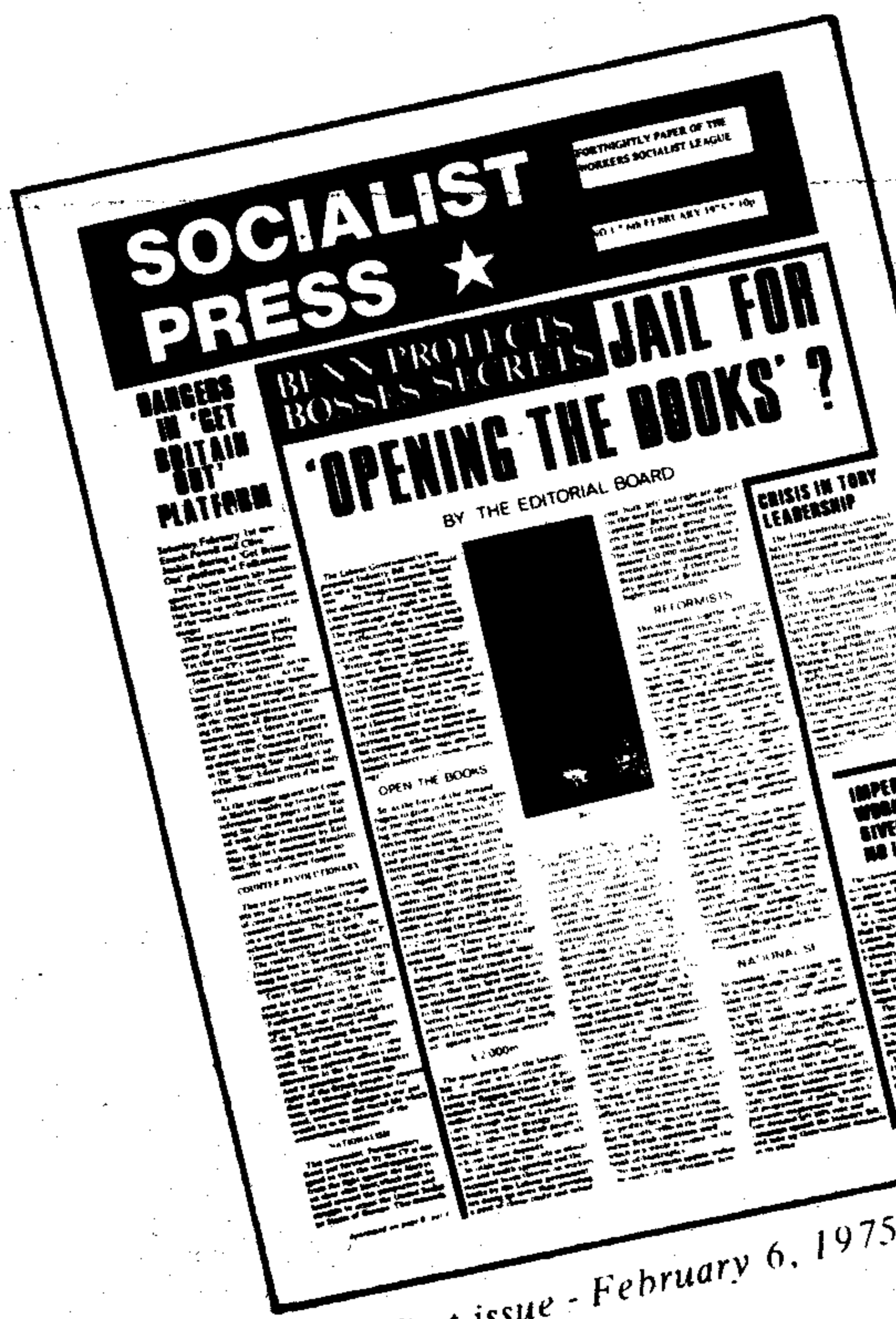
None of us had ever seen a typesetting machine before. None of us knew how to rule out columns or paste up artwork. Luckily a friend who had worked on *Red Weekly* helped out and showed us which end of a T-square to hold.

We may have got lots of lines crooked, with pictures few and far between on those first agonising all-night productions, but we knew what kind of material we wanted to go in the paper.

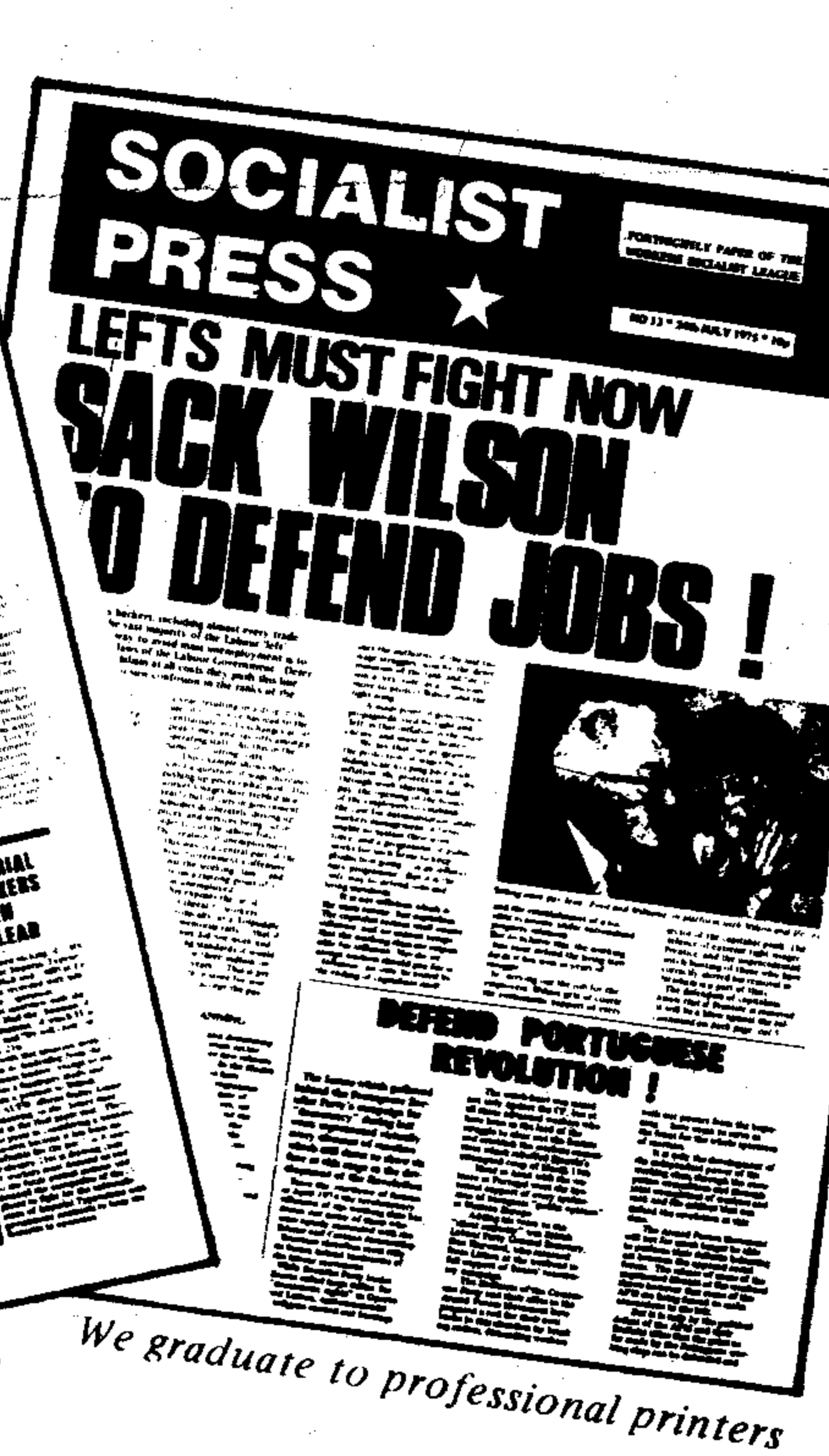
Most of us had spent the preceding few months engaged in a sharp political struggle inside the Workers Revolutionary Party.

We had argued there for a turn towards popularising and campaigning for workers to act upon the demands of the Transitional Programme—such as cost of living clauses to protect wages against inflation, work sharing on full pay, opening the books of the employers, and occupations to force the nationalisation of particular firms and industries.

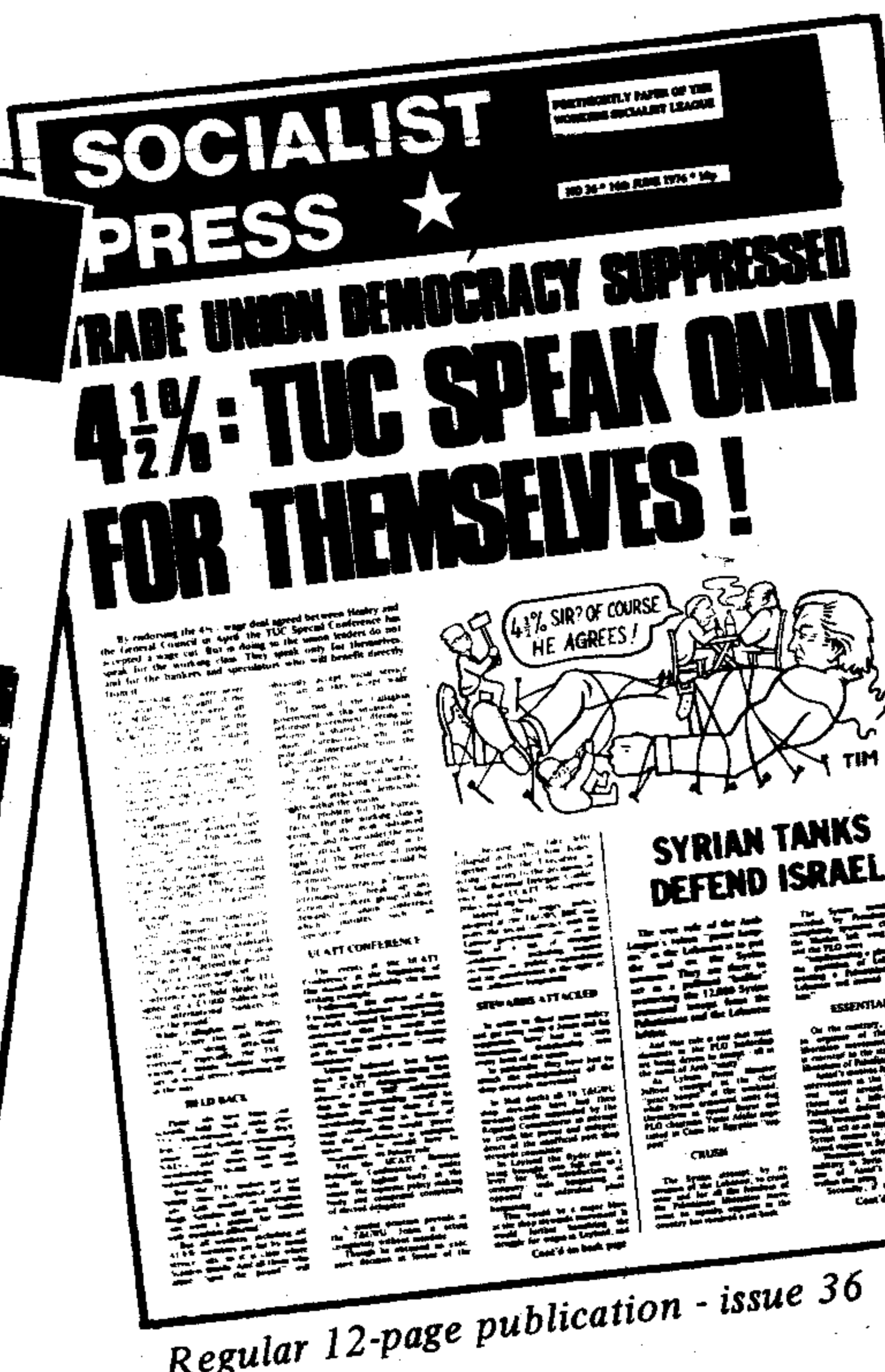
We had argued for this approach in opposition to the repetitive abstract propagandist calls for "nationalisation without compensation under workers' control" which formed the major con-



The first issue - February 6, 1975



We graduate to professional printers



Regular 12-page publication - issue 36



First weekly - November 2 1977

tent of the WRP's demands in the trade unions.

We argued for a flexible and sensitive approach to the fight to expose the waverings and betrayals of the 'left' Labour MPs and left-talking bureaucrats, who command mass support within the workers' movement.

While the WRP leadership contented itself with merely denouncing them as "corporatists" and traitors, we argued that the best way to expose the weaknesses and inadequacy of these leaders was to encourage workers to place demands on them, demands that they fight the right wing, and mobilise action in defence of jobs and living standards.

Insofar as they do so, we argued, they advance the class struggle and must be given critical support and urged to go further: insofar as they refuse to respond to such demands, they expose their own weakness in the eyes of their supporters.

### Foundations

In embracing this approach and attempting to reverse the sterile propagandism and ultimatism of the WRP leadership we were laying the important political foundations for the launching of *Socialist Press*: we were also making life impossibly difficult for the

WRP leaders. They had set their faces against this, the method of the early Comintern and the Transitional Programme: sooner than change from their sectarian and propagandist stance they expelled us all from the WRP on the eve of the Party conference which was supposedly to discuss our positions.

In launching *Socialist Press* within six weeks of the formation of the Workers Socialist League, therefore, we were taking up the challenge before us: we were beginning the fight to make the Trotskyist programme a living force in the daily struggles of the working

class. We recognised, too, that while we could immediately begin this fight in the British labour movement—in particular the trade unions—our fight was part of an international struggle for revolutionary leadership in the struggle against imperialism, capitalist exploitation and the repression of the Stalinist bureaucracies in the deformed workers' states. From our first issue therefore international news and analysis have played a major role in the development of *Socialist Press*.

### Festering hulk

Our initial cadres emerged from the festering hulk

of the WRP as a partial reflection of the growing strength of the international working class in the struggles in Vietnam, Portugal, Ethiopia, Angola and South Africa: and we have acknowledged our responsibility not simply to observe and applaud these struggles but to analyse and draw lessons from them for the workers' movement on a world scale.

### Independence

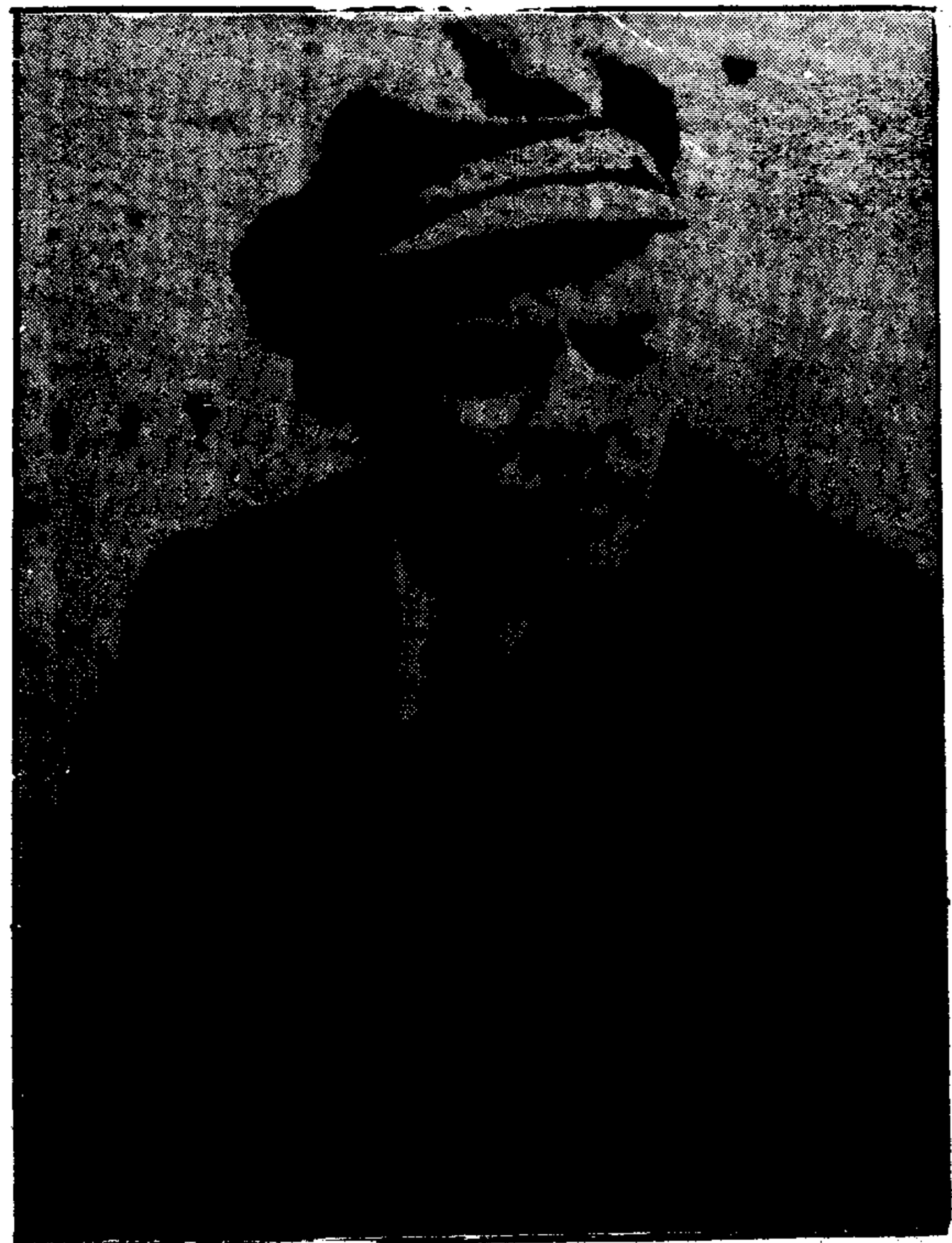
Above all we stressed in each arena of struggle the necessity for the political independence and the central revolutionary role of the working class in the

struggle against oppression and exploitation.

While recognising the need in many cases for the working class to spearhead the struggles of poor peasants, the urban middle class and other oppressed groups in society we have opposed every form of class collaboration which restricts workers' independent demands or shackles their struggles.

*Socialist Press* has therefore developed a distinctive political line and method of approach to struggles. And we have recognised the need not simply to echo and reflect struggles taking place but to offer analysis,

# Lenin on the role of the revolution



In our opinion, the starting-point of our activities, the first step towards creating the desired organisation, or, let us say, the main thread which, if followed, would enable us steadily to develop, deepen, and extend that organisation, should be the founding of an All-Russian political newspaper.

A newspaper is what we most of all need; without it we cannot conduct that systematic, all-round propaganda and agitation, consistent in principle, which is the chief and permanent task of Social-Democracy in general and, in particular, the pressing task of the moment, when interest in politics and in questions of socialism has been aroused among the broadest strata of the population.

Never has the need been felt so acutely as today for reinforcing dispersed agitation in the form of individ-

ual action, local leaflets, pamphlets, etc., by means of generalised and systematic agitation that can only be conducted with the aid of the periodical press.

It may be said without exaggeration that the frequency and regularity with which a newspaper is printed (and distributed) can serve as a precise criterion of how well this cardinal and most essential sector of our militant activities is built up.

### Utopian

Furthermore, our newspaper must be All-Russian. If we fail, and as long as we fail, to combine our efforts to influence the people and the government by means of the printed word, it will be utopian to think of combining other means, more complex, more difficult, but also more decisive, for exerting influence.

Our movement suffers in the first place, ideologically, as well as in practical and organisational respects, from its state of fragmentation, from the almost complete

immersion of the overwhelming majority of Social-Democrats in local work, which narrows their outlook, the scope of their activities, and their skill in the maintenance of secrecy and their preparedness.

It is precisely in this state of fragmentation that one must look for the deepest roots of the instability and the waverings noted above. The first step towards eliminating this shortcoming, towards transforming divers local movements into a single, All-Russian movement, must be the founding of an All-Russian newspaper.

Lastly, what we need is definitely a political newspaper. Without a political organ, a political movement deserving that name is inconceivable in the Europe of today.

### First step

Without such a newspaper we cannot possibly fulfil our task—that of concentrating all the elements of political discontent and pro-

test, of vitalising thereby the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.

We have taken the first step, we have aroused in the working class a passion for "economic", factory exposures; we must now take the next step, that of arousing in every section of the population that is at all politically conscious a passion for political exposure.

We must not be discouraged by the fact that the voice of political exposure is today so feeble, timid and infrequent.

This is not because of a wholesale submission to police despotism, but because those who are able and ready to make exposures have no tribune from which to speak, no eager and encouraging audience, they do not see anywhere among the people that force to which it would be worth while directing their complaint against the "omnipotent" Russian government.

But today all this is rapidly changing. There is

such a force—it is the revolutionary proletariat, which has demonstrated its readiness, not only to listen to and support the summons to political struggle, but boldly to engage in battle.

### Duty

We are now in a position to provide a tribune for the nationwide exposure of the tsarist government, and it is our duty to do this.

That tribune must be a Social-Democratic newspaper. The Russian working class, as distinct from the other classes and strata of Russian society, displays a constant interest in political knowledge and manifests a constant and extensive demand (not only in periods of intensive unrest) for illegal literature.

When such a mass demand is evident, when the training of experienced revolutionary leaders has already begun, and when the concentration of the working class makes it virtual master in the working class districts of the big cities and in the factory



# 6 years fighting for ship

JOHN LISTER has edited Socialist Press since its first publication. Here he points to what has distinguished ours from other papers—the qualities that we want to see carried forward in the new Socialist Organiser.



Our response to Tory government - May 1979

Issue 250 - June 11 1981

perspective, programme and leadership to those struggles, even if we were not directly in a position to implement such policies in practice.

Our paper has never been hoodwinked by the headlines simply posing questions to the readers. We have set out consistently in each issue to take positions on the problems confronting the working class.

As a fortnightly or even as a weekly paper our function has not been so much to present "news" to our readers: in many cases our news is necessarily less up-to-date, less detailed, less immediate than that available in the bourgeois press

or larger scale publications.

Our strength has rested in our ability accurately to draw out the political content of issues and struggles, to present clear slogans and conclusions, and to expose the various manoeuvres and betrayals of the reformist and Stalinist misleaders.

It is as a Marxist paper rather than a newspaper that our readers have turned to Socialist Press.

And with this in mind we have presented as true a picture as we can of the Marxist world view—not simply on industrial, economic and overtly political questions but also on cultural and

historical issues.

We have brought into the pages of the paper over our 6½ years a range of theoretical contributions—ranging from a 25-part series on the Russian Revolution, to a ten-part series on the struggle for Irish liberation; series of articles on women's oppression, on Popular Front governments of the 1930s, the Spanish Civil War, and Fascism.

We have explained basic policies and demands of the Trotskyist programme, explained the origins and politics of Stalinism, and we have explained our disagreements with other political tendencies on the left in

Britain and internationally while spelling out our call for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Of course we have learned and developed in the last 6½ years—particularly in areas of struggle in which the WRP had no practical involvement.

Socialist Press has markedly strengthened its coverage and analysis of the Irish struggle and the fight for solidarity in the British struggle for revolutionary leadership in the labour movement has taken on a more concrete and practical form with the emergence of powerful leftward currents in the Labour rank and file.

We have of course made labour movement.

We have developed our grasp of the problems of women's oppression and the necessity to mobilise working class women and men in the struggle for sexual equality.

And in the last two years we have strengthened our analysis and ability to play a role in the political upheavals now taking place in the Labour Party.

Socialist Press supporters have come to the fore in numerous struggles within the Labour Party. And our initial, formal, understanding of the necessity to "make the lefts fight" in the

some mistakes in the course of 254 issues. But in general we would argue that the mistakes have been more technical than political: that the record of Socialist Press is one of consistent struggle for a Marxist analysis and for Trotskyist intervention into the struggles of the working class.

Our turn now to support the expansion of Socialist Organiser and to argue in that paper for our politics stems from our conviction that we can carry forward this record into a new, enlarged readership. The last few months have confirmed that the comrades around Socialist Organiser share our political approach, and

that cooperation can be of mutual benefit.

The new paper is a further step forward in the struggle to root the Trotskyist programme in the living movement of the working class.

In sponsoring the new weekly, we intend to see that it picks up on the strengths and record of both Socialist Press and Socialist Organiser.

We continue to set ourselves squarely in opposition to barren sectarian sloganeering, while at the same time offering workers a principled alternative to their existing labour movement leadership.

Our history takes a new step forward.

## Primary paper

We reprint here an article by Lenin, written in 1901 and taken from Volume 5 of his Collected Works in which he stresses the importance for the Social Democratic movement (the Marxist movement of his day) of an All-Russian Party paper.

settlements and communities, it is quite feasible for the proletariat to found a political newspaper.

Through the proletariat the newspaper will reach the urban petty bourgeoisie, the rural handicraftsmen, and the peasants, thereby becoming a real people's political newspaper.

The role of a newspaper, however, is not limited solely to the dissemination of news, to political education, and to the enlistment of political allies.

A newspaper is not only a collective agitator, it is also a collective organiser. In this respect it may be likened to the scaffolding round a building under construction, which marks the contours of the structure and facilitates communication between the builders, enabling them to distribute the work and to view the common results achieved by their organised labour.

With the aid of the newspaper, and through it, a permanent organisation will naturally take shape that will

engage, not only in local activities, but in regular general work, and will train its members to follow political events carefully, appraise their significance and their effect on the various strata of the population, and develop effective means for the revolutionary party to influence those events.

The mere technical task of regularly supplying the newspaper with copy and of promoting regular distribution will necessitate a network of local agents of the united party, who will maintain constant contact with one another, know the general state of affairs, get accustomed to performing regularly their detailed functions in the All-Russian work and test their strength in the organisation of various revolutionary actions.

### Skeleton

This network of agents will form the skeleton of precisely the kind of organisation we need—one that is sufficiently large to embrace

the whole country; sufficiently broad and many-sided to effect a strict and detailed division of labour; sufficiently well tempered to be able to conduct steadily its own work under any circumstances, at all "sudden turns", and in face of all contingencies; sufficiently flexible to be able, on the one hand, to avoid an open battle against an overwhelming enemy, when the enemy has concentrated all his forces at one spot, and yet, on the other, to take advantage of his unwieldiness and to attack him when and where he least expects it.

### Easy task

Today we are faced with the relatively easy task of supporting student demonstrations in the streets of big cities; tomorrow we may, perhaps, have the more difficult task of supporting, for example, the unemployed movement in some particular area, and the day after to be at our posts in order to play

a revolutionary part in a peasant uprising.

Today we must take advantage of the tense political situation arising out of the government's campaign against the Zemstvo; tomorrow we may have to support popular indignation against some tsarist bashibazouk on the rampage and help, by means of boycott, indictment demonstrations, etc., to make things so hot for him as to force him into open retreat.

Such a degree of combat readiness can be developed only through the constant activity of regular troops.

If we join forces to produce a common newspaper, this work will train and bring into the foreground, not only the most skilful propagandists, but the most capable organisers, the most talented political party leaders capable, at the right moment, of releasing the slogan for the decisive struggle and of taking the lead in that struggle.

**SUBSCRIBE!**  
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One year ..... £16.00

Send to Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, Essex Rd., London N1



# Where has Socialist Organiser come from?

By Martin Thomas,  
Editor, SOCIALIST ORGANISER

*Socialist Organiser* started in October 1978. It came out of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, an alliance set up to provide a distinctive voice for the left during the General Election.

One of our major tasks in the first few months was campaigning on the theme "Vote Labour—but prepare to fight for socialist policies against the next government—Tory or Labour".

We produced special election broadsheets and leaflets, got some Constituency Labour Parties to support us, and tried to organise the left. But from the start we aimed to make *Socialist Organiser* more than just a Labour Party paper.

And we tried to combine openness towards broad sections of the left with political sharpness on the key issues.

Thus, for example, the first issue of *Socialist Organiser* carried a front page call for the labour movement to help defend Brick Lane against a planned fascist march—while most of the Left's press found it more important to get people to the Anti-Nazi League concert on the same day in South London.

From January 1980, *Socialist Organiser* raised the



Card vote at last year's Labour Party Conference in Blackpool

call for a General Strike to stop the Tories. And it consistently supported Ireland's struggle for freedom.

During 1979 there was much debate in *Socialist Organiser* about rate rises as a way to counter the cuts. In November 1979 an SCLV conference decisively (165-67) confirmed the position of the original SCLV platform of June 1978 against rate rises.

After that decision, some

(by no means all) of the comrades who had supported rate rises moved away from *Socialist Organiser*.

But *Socialist Organiser* soon broadened its scope again, with our initiation of Women's Fightback in March 1980 and the launching of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy in June 1980.

We took the initiative for the RFMC and managed to win support from nearly all

the Labour left.

Even before then, we think it was a strength of *Socialist Organiser* that it analysed the importance of the Labour democratic struggle—and mapped out the tasks both for the wider left and specifically for Marxists—earlier than most.

Last August, *Socialist Organiser* moved from a monthly to a fortnightly, and started to become more of an all-round socialist

paper.

Industrial reports now cover 3-4 pages regularly. We have more review articles and historical articles.

Both sales and the number of active supporters have nearly doubled.

Criticising a paper produced by his co-thinkers in the USA in the 1930s, Leon Trotsky wrote:

"The paper is very well done from a journalistic point of view. But it is a

paper for workers, not a workers' paper."

In spite of its literary brilliance, to a certain degree the paper becomes a victim of journalistic routine. You do not hear at all how the workers live, fight, clash with the police or drink whisky.

The task is not to make a paper through the joint forces of a skilled editorial board, but to encourage the workers to speak for them-

selves.

The paper must have correspondents, researchers, reporters everywhere. Three lines from a [work] shop or meeting can often give more than a well-written article by the staff.

The paper is too wise, too scholarly, too aristocratic for the American workers."

We have tried to make *Socialist Organiser* a workers paper—a paper that is inside the labour movement, not commenting and proclaiming from outside.

We have tried to combine breadth of debate and contributions with a clear but patiently argued line on the key issues.

What are the faults of the paper? At our national gatherings supporters have told us (the Editorial staff) that the paper is too crammed, that it is not popular enough yet, that the trade union coverage is patchy, and that the coverage of women's issues and international news is poor.

And these faults we are trying to correct. The relaunch, with the added help of the *Socialist Press* comrades who will now be supporting *Socialist Organiser*, should enable us to make big steps forward.

But—more important—we are sure that the *Socialist Press* supporters will bring new resources of political experience and political strength developed in struggle, to the common pool.

We asked a number of campaigners in the labour movement why, in their personal capacities, they will be supporting the new *Socialist Organiser*.

## Militants look forward to new Socialist Organiser

Godfrey Webster, National Committee of the Labour Committee on Ireland.

"With the new upsurge of struggle initiated by the H. Block hunger strikes, the question of Ireland has once again been forced to the centre of British politics.

The greatest contribution which socialists in Britain can make is to challenge the existing policies of the labour movement and commit the Labour Party to a policy of withdrawal of British troops and self determination for the whole Irish people.

The LCI has taken up this fight and has naturally incurred the undying hatred of the fascists, the mass media and the right wing labour bureaucracy. *Socialist Press* and its supporters have been among our staunchest allies. I hope the new weekly *Socialist Organiser* will both continue the tradition of reporting the struggle in Ireland and Britain and will find space for more analysis of the history and prospects of the fight for a united socialist Ireland."

Dave Murphy, chairperson of the Winsford Council of Action in Cheshire said:

"*Socialist Press*'s consistent coverage of international politics, coupled with its detailed treatment of labour

movement struggles, has made it an organiser of the first importance.

I will expect these qualities to be carried into the new weekly *Socialist Organiser*."

Jo Thwaites, Joint Editor of the new youth paper *Class Fighter* and a member of the Steering Committee of the National Left Wing Youth Movement:

"*Class Fighter* and the National Left Wing Youth Movement arose as the ideas of *Socialist Organiser* supporters.

While I think it is important that there be a separate youth paper, it is also important that there is a link made between youth and older workers. *Socialist Organiser* can provide that link.

Of all the left press, *Socialist Organiser* gave the best coverage to the anti-racist work in Coventry of LPYS and Labour Party members which led to the formation of anti-racist defence squads.

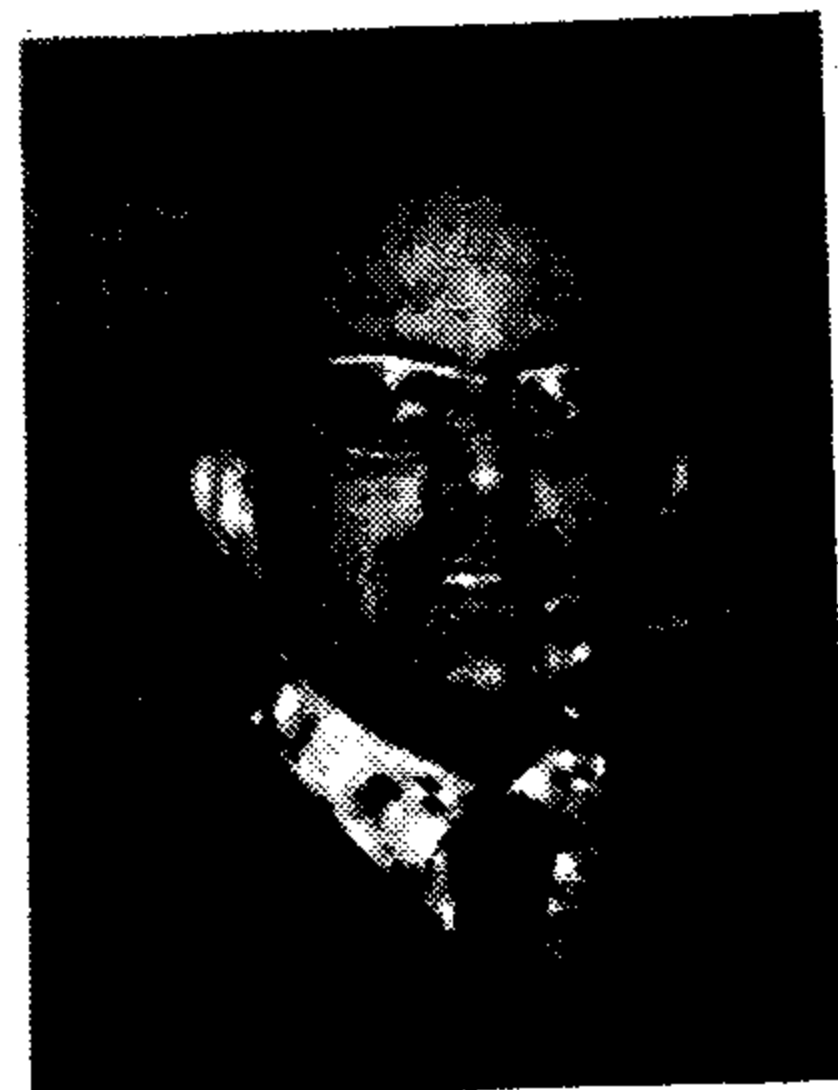
The National Left Wing Youth Movement will be fighting to apply the lessons of these struggles in every area where blacks face racist violence.

The merging of *Socialist Press* and *Socialist Organiser* is a great step forward and will undoubtedly help us build the National Left Wing Youth Movement."

Rowland Sheret, Secretary of Stirling and District Trades Council, told us:

"*Socialist Press* won my support because of its coverage of struggles of working people and the way in which the political meaning of these struggles was analysed.

With all its limitations on resources, *Socialist Press* gave political leadership, by



Rowland Sheret

placing theoretical analysis always in the context of the class battles and the problems facing working people in struggle.

I am sure that this will continue in the 16-page *Socialist Organiser*. In particular I want to see the new paper expand its background analysis of the developments in the unions—such as the emerging role of Alex Kitson in the TGWU, for instance, or the leftward moves in the NUR."

Anne McKinley, nursery campaigner and member of the Steering Committee of the National Child Care Campaign:

"I think the strength of *Socialist Press* has been its detailed coverage of struggles—even those that have seemed to some to be small or less important.

And the paper's campaign for solidarity with the Irish struggle has been particularly good over the last year or so.

But I also hope that news about the struggles of women won't be relegated to a token "women's page" like in the capitalist press. I want to see the demands of women raised centrally throughout the paper.

And hopefully the *Socialist Organiser*'s wider layers of supporters in the Labour Party can also help us broaden the base of the National Child Care Campaign."

John Bloxam, organiser, Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy:

"*Socialist Organiser* was the paper that first put forward the proposal of organising the maximum unity both to defend and extend the democratic gains won in the Labour Party.

The Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy came out of that proposal. Throughout its

existence *Socialist Organiser* has been the main socialist paper to carry the news and views of the campaign.

This fight and the need to link it with industrial struggles of the working class will be greatly strengthened by the joining of forces between *Socialist Press* and *Socialist Organiser*."

Anne-Marie Sweeney, Longworth Hospital Occupation Committee and anti-cuts campaigner:

"*Socialist Press* is the only paper I know where you read not only what's happening in the struggles of the working class, but also in each situation gives guidelines and an insight into what is needed in order to win.

*Socialist Press* shows always that it is possible to struggle and succeed. It is never demoralising or pessimistic, always pointing to the willingness of the workers to fight; and above all it has a unique understanding of the present leadership of the working class which betrays the struggle for international socialism.

The new paper must continue and develop this, keeping the blend of industrial news, international news and features."

Ray Davies, Llanwern Steel Action Group, Labour councillor:

"*Socialist Organiser* has played a vital part in the campaign for democracy in the Labour Party, and it's largely as a result of *Socialist Organiser* and other left wing

papers that the rank and file in the Labour Party has a far greater say than before.

With regard to the cuts campaign, *Socialist Organiser* and its supporters have assisted in formulating a fight back at grass roots level. Even though we are pleased with what *Socialist Organiser* has done we recognise that there is still an uphill struggle.

We're confident *Socialist Organiser* will play a vital part in the campaign."

Rachel Lever, Steering Committee, Women's Fightback:

"*Socialist Organiser* helped us get off the ground. It put out the call for a campaign in response to Prior's first threats to maternity rights (which later were put into the Employment Act).

Women who supported *Socialist Organiser* got together and planned the first Women's Fightback conference.

Together with the women comrades of *Socialist Press* who will now be working with us, we will be trying to improve the coverage of the struggles of women against oppression, and to develop a real debate on women's liberation and socialism."

Jim Denham, victimised TGWU shop steward, BL, Longbridge:

"*Socialist Organiser* supporters have been active in the Longbridge BL plant for a number of years, intervening at the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, at mass meetings, producing a regular factory bulletin and arguing for their politics day-to-day on the shop

floor.

When I and five other militants were sacked last Christmas, the "SO" bulletins were of vital importance in organising the strike in our support, and *Socialist Organiser* printed a special supplement on the sackings to publicise the issue.

Of the other papers on the left, *Socialist Press* gave us our most valuable publicity and support, and we received considerable advice and information from *Socialist Press* supporters at Cowley.

The decision of *Socialist Press* supporters to come in on *Socialist Organiser* is most welcome, and should qualitatively strengthen our intervention in BL.

I certainly hope and expect that *Socialist Press*'s impressive coverage of industrial and trade union affairs will be carried over into the new *Socialist Organiser*."

Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity:

"Our campaign has always been impressed by the high profile given to international topics within *Socialist Press* and the consistent principled support given to the fight of the Palestinians.

The need to direct anti-imperialist work into the labour movement and present a socialist perspective has always been evident in the paper.

The Bradford Campaign sends its fraternal greetings to *Socialist Press*, a principled fighting socialist paper, and our best wishes for the new *Socialist Organiser* which we are confident will continue that fight."



# Lothian council at sharp point of new cuts crisis

## Labourites collapse on house sales

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party are setting up a council of action to support the seven front-line Labour-controlled local authorities who face cuts totalling £63 million from their rate support grants.

The council of action will involve the Scottish Executive of the Labour Party, the STUC General Council, the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Group, and Labour groups in Scottish local authorities.

In announcing this decision, George Galloway, Chairperson of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party, explained that the Scottish Executive would be advising councils on the "hit list" to make a "reasoned statement" to Mr George Younger, Tory Secretary of State for Scotland, justifying every penny of their spending proposals.

### "Hit list"

He further recommended that the same position should be adopted by all other councils who have been asked to revise their budgets by 31 July.

The seven councils on the "hit list" had been asked to cut their 1981 budgets by

£63 million or risk the whole sum being deducted from their rate support grant in the coming months.

### Conference

All 7 had been ordered to reply by July 3. A majority of councils have replied along the lines

CUTS IN £m	
Lothian Region	£53.00
Stirling District	£1.25
Dundee District	£2.75
Refrew District	£3.80
Dumbarton Dist.	£0.75
Cumnock Dist.	£0.45
East Lothian Dist.	£1.35
<b>Total</b>	<b>£63.35</b>

recommended by the Scottish Executive.

A special conference was called by the Scottish Executive at which local authority Labour Groups, District Labour Parties, Regional Labour Parties and the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Group were represented.

This conference endorsed the proposals of the Scottish Executive and helped stiffen the resolve of local authorities such as Renfrew, where the Labour Group had been

considering making an offer of less cuts than Younger wanted, hoping to find some compromise solution.

Unfortunately the conference came too late to prevent Cumnock District Council making a similar compromise offer.

However the real test for the Scottish labour movement and the newly formed Council of Action will centre round Lothian Regional Council.

### Redundancies

£53 million of the proposed £63 million cuts are sought from Lothian. Huge redundancies would result even if only half the figure were cut. Lothian Regional Labour Party are determined to fight it out with Younger, and if the Secretary of State goes ahead with his cuts in the rate support grant, the council faces bankruptcy.

Local authority workers were on strike in the Lothian region on Tuesday June 30 and a mass demonstration was held.

### Question

The question to be asked is whether the Council of Action will be capable of mobilising the whole of the Scottish labour and trade union movement in similar

opposition to Younger's attacks.

Labour councils all over the country are meekly carrying out the Tory ultimatum to sell off stocks of council houses at a time when new council house building is grinding to a standstill.

15,000 council houses are empty because local authorities—hit by Tory cuts

cannot afford to repair them. Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children are homeless.

Yet once again council leaders have buckled under to threats from Environment Secretary Heseltine to sell off the precious houses at cut price terms.

The Tories place great store on this: it is central to their measures to increase the profits and rack-renting

of private landlords, developers and property spivs.

As council property is snatched out of public hands and placed in the private market, the housing queues grow longer—and rents for private accommodation, together with the prices of private homes for sale, can rise even higher.

This spells abject misery for working class families—and rich pickings for the property-owning elite.

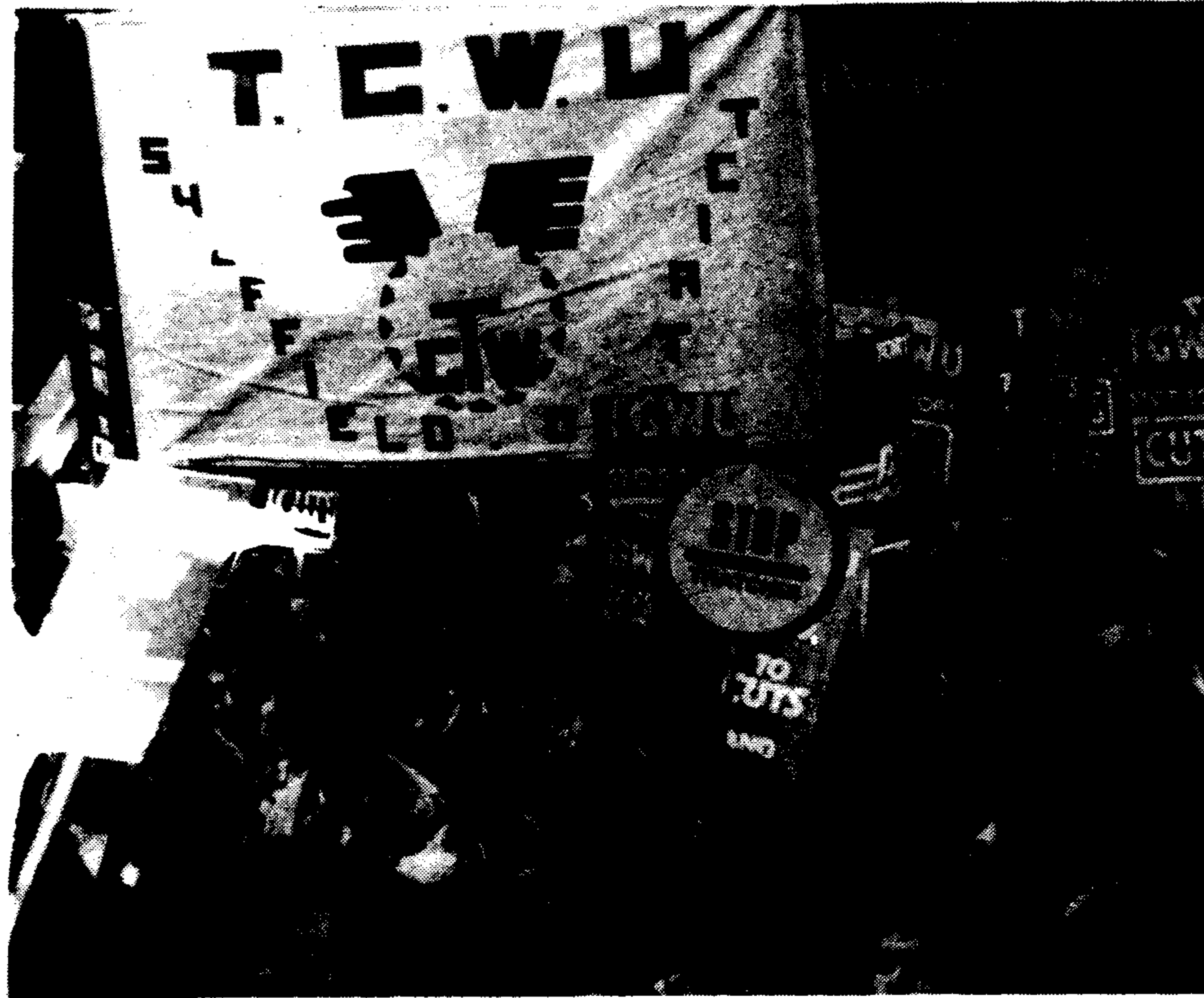
Last week the Tories delightedly revealed that all but one of the last seven Labour-controlled councils that had held out against this cynical measure had fallen into line.

Barking, Camden, Newham, Sheffield, Stoke-on-Trent and Wolverhampton councils have all begun to implement the sales—with Sheffield having been set the target of disposing of 100 houses a week between now and February.

They are now no longer faced with the prospect of a confrontation with Heseltine. Only Greenwich council is still threatened with penalties for non-compliance but here too council leaders have backed away from any defence of council housing.

Despite having cut their housing staff by 10% as a result of Tory cuts, they have now drafted in extra reinforcements to speed up the disposal of the housing stock.

Once again the failure of Labour councils to act as anything other than local agents for the Tory government is painfully confirmed.



TGWU militants oppose cuts

## TGWU policy to back Lothian stand

If Lothian councillors take a stand in defiance of Heseltine's threats, and confront the Tory government, then Britain's biggest union is committed to mobilise full-scale supporting action.

This is the result of a resolution passed—despite strong opposition from the union's leadership—at the TGWU's Biennial Delegate Conference last month.

The resolution, which maps out policy to defeat all Tory spending cuts, declares: "That this conference is totally opposed to cuts in the public services and supports direct action against the cuts. Where workers take direct action and occupy to defend jobs and services the TGWU will call for strike action to support such occupations to create the best conditions for success.

In addition the TGWU will support Labour councils who refuse to implement the cuts, put up rates or refuse to pay interest debts to the banks."

Though the first part of the motion is focussed on supporting action to defend and back up occupations,

the main debate on the resolution focussed on the issue of local councils.

Acting General Secretary Alex Kitson spoke out strongly against the motion, but failed to win the backing of conference delegates.

Immediately after losing the vote he told witch-hunting *Daily Mail* reporter Robert Porter:

"The implication seems to be that if any group of councillors defy the government and call on us for support, we will be bound to follow them."

### Clay Cross

Aware of the possibility of such a confrontation arising Kitson warned that:

"We could have a Clay Cross or Clydebank situation again, where individual councillors are taken on by the government."

According to Porter, Kitson:

"predicted that the decision could soon force the TGWU into strike action in support of the left wing Lothian Regional Council in Scotland, which faces a £53 million cut in rate support grant that could mean the loss of 6,000 jobs."

Despite the trepidation,

Kitson went out of his way in his winding up speech to the Conference to pledge that the TGWU leadership would do all it could to implement all of the policies carried during the week's proceedings.

For Lothian councillors there is therefore a clear choice. The "middle road" adopted by "left" Labour councils in England—levying a supplementary rate to avoid confrontation at the expense of working class ratepayers—is not an option: Scottish councils have no power to raise a supplementary rate.

They can either knuckle down to Heseltine—and demolish the public services built up and protected over recent years, causing untold misery and unemployment; or they must confront the government and demand the full scale backing of the TGWU, the public sector unions and the whole British labour movement.

So far no Labour council has been prepared to wage such a fight. Will Lothian take up the challenge and seize the opportunity offered by the TGWU?

## PRESS GANG



Ted ("The Brat") Heath paused in the entrance to the press room. His hair clung to his forehead with sweat. Under his arm he still carried the rolled up notes for the contest.

Outside he could hear the faint sounds of hissing and boing.

The umpire was climbing from his perch with as much dignity as a man who has just been called the armpit of the universe can muster.

Inside, the murmur of the press died away and Heath walked to his seat in front of a battery of cameras. The tall figure of the *Times* reporter rose to his feet.

"If I may say so, sir," he began, with the faintest of sneers on the word 'sir'. "It is a great honour for us to ask you a few questions."

He turned to the rest of the press bench and gave a broad leer, and there was a rumble of approval.

Heath blushed. "Well thank you," he said. "I must say I am pretty pleased

with my form. I thought I hit her with the main points pretty well."

He launched into an account of his speech. A forehead down the line of the crisis; a back-hand volley on the unemployed turning to crime.

Nobody took any notes, except the man from the *Newstime* and he in fact was not listening to Heath but trying to decide who to tip in the next round when the Iranian hopeful came up against the Iraqi hero.

It was the *Daily Mail* who broke the phoney peace. "That's all very well, Ted. But can you comment on reports about your sex life?"

His eyebrows twitched convulsively as he asked this question. He tried to keep his face fixed in an inquisitorial glare but the muscles of his mouth began to judder, not quite in time with his eyebrows. A trace of spittle rolled down his chin.

Heath stared at him blankly. Before he had time to reply, a crumpled jacket and a pair of hornrimmed

glasses had shouldered his way to the front.

It was the *Express*. "Can you deny that you regularly take off all your clothes?" he demanded.

And then, not waiting for a reply, produced a handful of photographs from his inside pocket.

"What have you got to say about these pictures taken inside your bathroom which show conclusively that you have in fact taken your clothes completely off?"

His moment of triumph was spoiled.

Outside in the corridor the man from the *Sun* finished his phone call to an old people's home in Hampshire where an elderly but distant relative of Heath's lived out her final days in miserable confusion. She had not denied one single thing!

Even as the man from the *Express* produced his coup de grace, the man from the *Sun* threw open the door. A little shower of dandruff escaped from his head and fell gently around his shoulders catching the sun.

He thrust out a finger in the direction of Heath. "You came into this world naked", he said. "And naked you will go out of it. It says so in this book you left by your bedside."

He held up the crumpled black book with its waver thin pages and a cross on the cover.

"It's too late to lie. We are serialising it in three parts starting tomorrow. Confessions of a Nail Fetishist!"

Heath got to his feet and stumbled for the door. "Out of my way you trash", he yelled. "The gutter's too good for you rats."

### Writhing mass

As he closed the door behind him the man from the *Telegraph* punched the man from the *Mail* on the nose. Within seconds the floor was a writhing mass of bodies, fists and feet flying.

The chairperson of the seedings committee watched with satisfaction through the window. She could safely leave the *Mail* unseeded for another year.





# This Weighell's under fire!

## Laurence Scott: make Scargill give support!

The gulf between Arthur Scargill's left words and his willingness to deliver in practice is starkly illustrated by the struggle against redundancies at Laurence Scott Electronics in Manchester.

Workers there have been 3 months in occupation against plans by the parent company—Mining Supplies—to close the factory, with a loss of 650 jobs.

They have maintained a solid action with nearly the whole workforce actively involved in picket rotas.

Arthur Scargill spoke out strongly at the People's March rally calling for precisely such action to defend jobs.

Yet so far no action has been taken by Yorkshire NUM to implement blacking of Mining Supplies equipment, 60% of the firm's output is sold to the NCB!

### All six

At a meeting last week, Scargill and Yorkshire secretary Owen Briscoe eventually promised that they would black all new machines from Mining Supplies—but only when all six factories in the group become involved in the dispute!

While workers at Laurence Scott plants in Norwich are already blacking work originally destined for the threatened Manchester plant, the workforce at Mining Supplies' three Doncaster plants have yet to be persuaded to lend any support to the jobs struggle.

The Yorkshire NUM stance would allow the reluctance of the Doncaster workforce—rather than the courageous struggle of the Manchester occupation—to set the pace of the action.

It must be challenged—and Scargill forced to fight to put his militant words into practice.

Meanwhile the occupation was used last Friday by MP John Silkin to boost his credibility in the contest for the deputy leadership of the Labour Party.

He was shown round by Openshaw's MP, Charles Morris:

### Deadline

Tony Benn has sent a message of support and promised to visit in September when he is fully recovered from his illness.

The dispute has sharpened this week as the July 10 deadline for closure approaches. Each worker has received notice and redundancy pay.

This in itself represents a certain climbdown by Arthur Snipe the owner of Mining Supplies, the parent



Scargill

firm, from his position that by occupying the plant the workers had forfeited their right to redundancy pay.

Snipe is clearly getting worried by the determination of the 650 workers in Manchester.

He asked for a meeting with AUFW officials last week in Ayr (where the Confed was meeting). But the officials were met not by Snipe, but a negotiating team who were under orders to concede no more than 10 jobs in Manchester—if the occupation was terminated immediately.

Needless to say this was rejected.

Stewards have recommended that no worker touches the redundancy money—since that would be tantamount to accepting Snipe's terms.

A mass meeting has accepted that recommendation and decided to step up the action.

Manchester City Council is supporting the dispute and

has instructed its committees to consider further action to save jobs at the factory.

Charles Morris, the local MP, has promised to initiate a debate in the House of Commons.

However last time he asked the question about the legality of Snipe's appropriation (or rather misappropriation) of government subsidies for a factory threatened with closure, he was told that it was legal but that from then on the law would be changed to prevent further misuse of government money in that way!

This dispute is at a crucial stage in the fight for jobs. After July 10, Snipe will step up his offensive; and the workers are preparing to meet him with all the strength they can muster.

Funds and messages of support should be sent to the JSSC, c/o George Fryer, 20 Round Crost, Romilly, Cheshire SK6 4LL.

Don't think I'm abandoning it just because it's getting rough."

These words from Sidney Weighell, one of the labour movement's more rabid right wingers came after he had been resoundingly defeated by his union conference on the issue of Labour democracy, and struggled to stave off defeat on the issue of the deputy leadership election in the Labour Party.

The conference had appeared to start off well for Weighell.

Union President Tommy Ham had argued a line which amounted to "make the British Rail Board fight". If the management could not get the funds from the Tory government to run the rail service, then they should resign, he argued.

### Triple alliance

How this was supposed to benefit railway workers was not made clear. Nor were doubts resolved by Sidney Weighell's insistence that the management would face "triple alliance" strike action if they did not implement the union's plan for increased investment and higher wages in exchange for productivity improvements.

In other words the NUR leadership is virtually forcing management into imposing more job-cutting productivity increases.

BR chairman Peter Parker is plainly willing to be forced. Speaking to the union conference he repeated his objective of slashing 38,000 jobs in the next four years.

Unabashed, Weighell went one step further and spelled out his latest proposals for a renewal of wage controls under a new Labour government.

### Vote loser

Having repeatedly attacked those currently "squabbling" within the Labour Party, suggesting that they will be to blame if Labour loses the next election, Weighell himself is doing his best to encumber the Party with the very policies that lost it millions of working class votes and paved Thatcher's road to office.

He successfully steered through the 77-strong conference a resolution calling



Weighell

for an "incomes policy" which would rigidly police wage increases in the private sector, incorporate a statutory minimum wage and protection for the low-paid, and run alongside price controls and the regulation of profits.

collaborationist approach. He is after all, the latest in a long line of right wing general secretaries of the NUR.

This helps explain his argument in favour of the closed shop—which he insists operates to the advantage of industrial relations, since it helps union officials to enforce agreements against any resistance from the membership.

The NUR conference has not collectively broken from this political stance: but it has at least begun to wake up to the movement for democratic rights within the Labour Party which has so disturbed Weighell and his

### Rehashed

This rehashed "social contract" nonsense has been proven time and again to mean nothing other than plunging living standards for the working class—especially the low paid—and rising profits for the employers.

But it sums up Weighell's

tellow bureaucrats.

Weighell had vocally denounced the Wembley conference decision for an electoral college giving unions a majority of votes.

But his own conference embarrassed him by throwing out the Shadow Cabinet's pet plan for a college giving 50% of the votes to the Parliamentary Labour Party, and then voting unanimously to uphold the Wembley decision!

It seemed as if even worse could have been in store had the conference voted to allow the union's executive—now dominated by a left wing majority—decide which way to vote in the deputy leadership election in October.

Weighell has promised the NUR's 165,000 votes to Healey. But his only chance of securing this was to put the question to a ballot of conference delegates.

The decision to hold such a ballot was carried by only four votes.

The outcome is far from certain, though Michael Foot will no doubt do his best in his address to the conference on Monday to drum up some support for an increasingly isolated Dennis Healey.

Meanwhile moves by the NUR and the left-wing led ASLEF towards a federation of rail unions seems likely to increase Weighell's political isolation and further question his ability to retain control over the union in the way NUR leaders have done since time immemorial.

Indeed it is not simply on the Labour Party issue that a change is needed: only the building of a leadership committed to act in defence of the independent interests of the union's 200,000 members can protect railway workers against the Tory offensive.

Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

Summer School 1981 JULY 19-26

"The Crisis of Imperialism and Stalinism"

Seven days of lectures and discussions on basic questions of Marxism and the fight to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International, ending with the Fusion Conference of the British WSL and ICL.

A series of more basic lectures and discussions will be held simultaneously with the main lectures. There will also be films, fringe meetings on various topics, an Irish evening and other more informal activities as well as a grand social on Saturday evening.

Total cost, including transport by approved means, is £22 for the week. Further details can be obtained from the Workers Socialist League, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

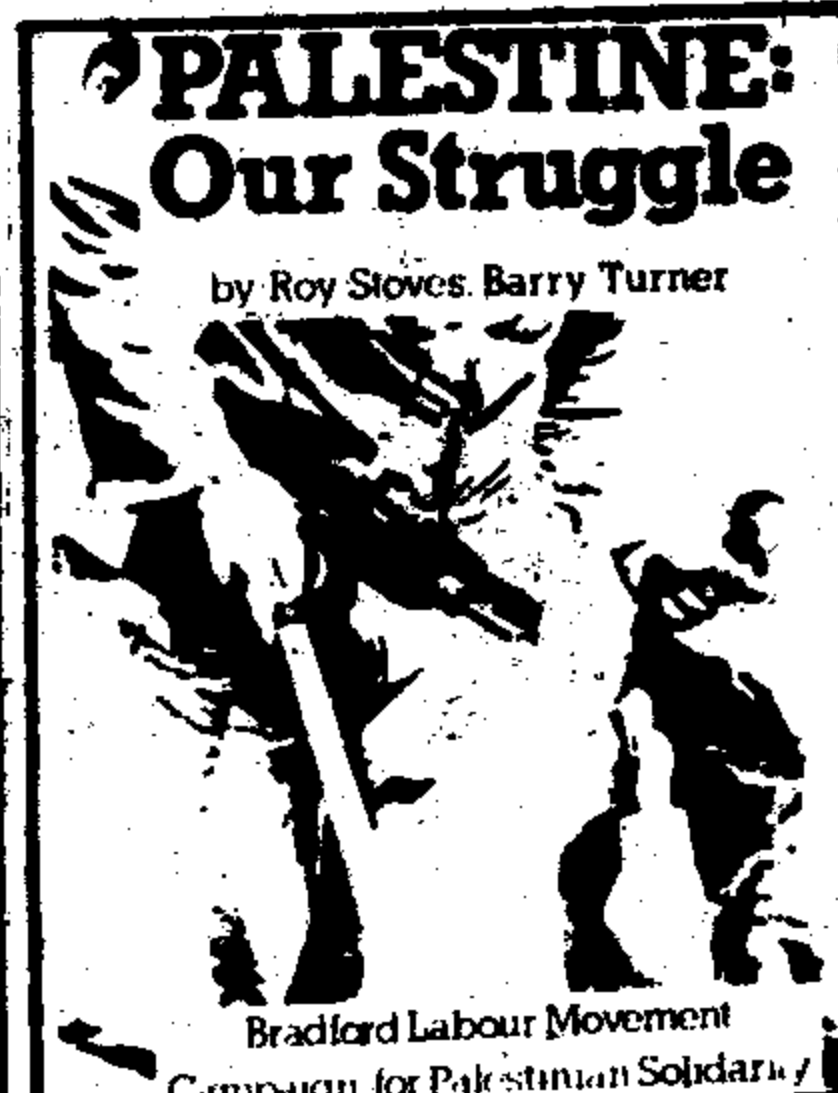


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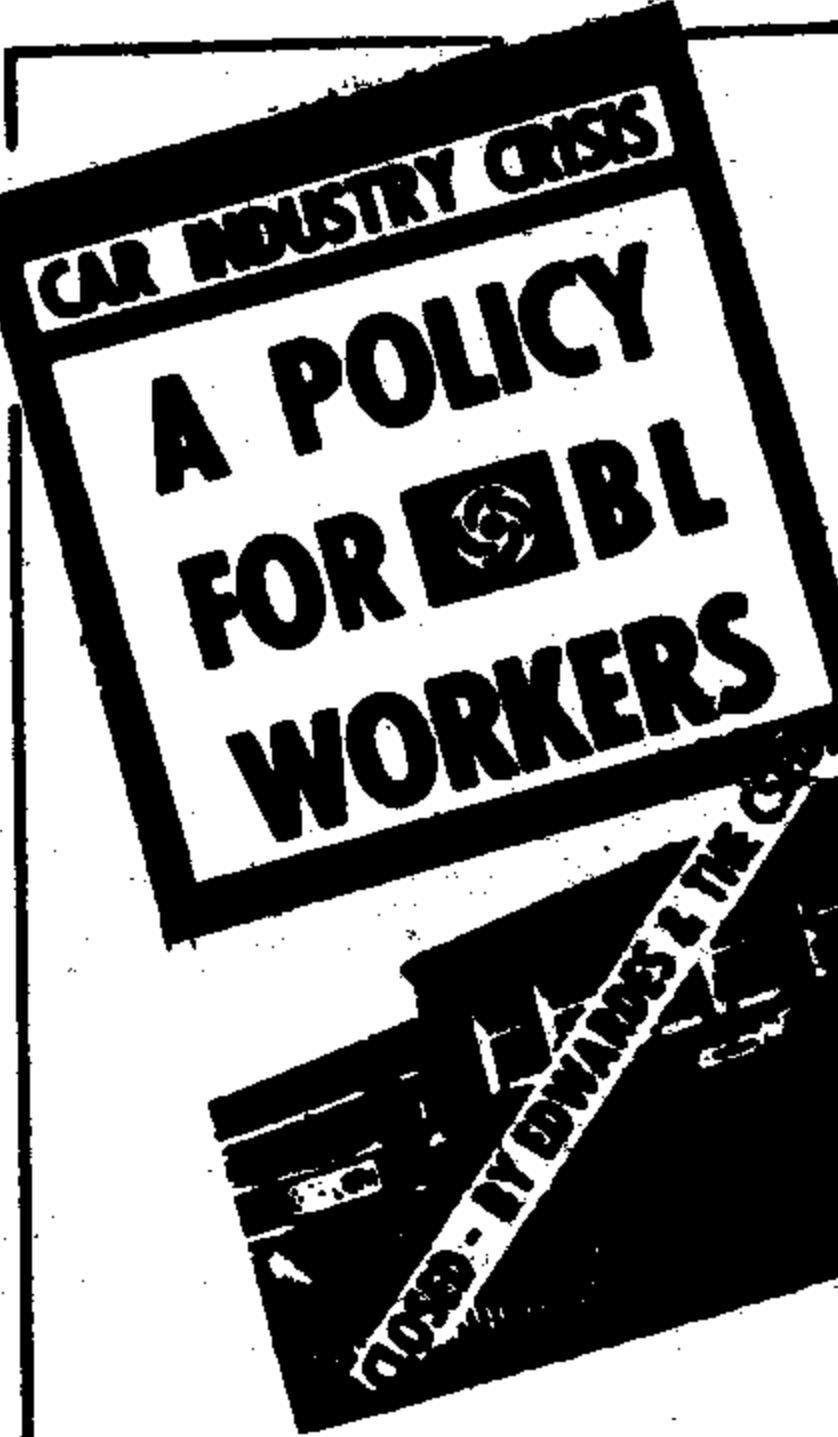
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Send to: WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX



Available from Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity, Flat 3, 40 St Paul's Road, Bradford, price 85p including postage.



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



# Rover retreat: a blow to the fight for jobs

The struggle to save the 2,300 jobs at BL's threatened Rover SD1 plant at Solihull received a setback last week.

A mass meeting of all SD1 workers heavily voted down shop stewards' proposals for interim action to prevent the transfer of work from Solihull to Cowley.

The plans had included:  
\*An overtime ban.  
\*A refusal to work on paint shop equipment which is to be moved to Cowley.

\*Resistance to management preparations to move testing equipment and tyre bay to Cowley by mounting a picket on the SD1 plant during the summer break.

## Defeated

The stewards' proposals were defeated amid shouts from some workers for them to negotiate redundancy payments.

But the fight has not yet been conceded. The stewards stepped up the struggle to inform workers on the situation with bulletins and leaflets.

At a national conference with the company taking place as we go to press, Rover stewards have registered a 'failure to agree' on the closure.

They have been support-

ted in this stance by TGWU automotive secretary Grenville Hawley.

But Hawley has refused to address a recall mass meeting at Solihull on Tuesday July 7. Stewards appear divided on what proposals should be put to that meeting.

The struggle is at the crossroads. Until Edwardes is confronted and a stand taken in BL jobs and conditions will continue to fall as the dole queues grow in the Midlands.

# Maxwell calls off talks

Robert Maxwell last week cancelled talks on the 16-week old strike at his Oxford-based publishing house Pergamon Press.

Fulminating against the supposed "irresponsibility" and "political motivation" of the strikers for holding a mass demonstration on the gates of Pergamon Press the day before the talks, a management letter bleats that NUJ General Secretary Ken Ashton should have kept the meeting "confidential".

Ashton, of course, has no right to engage in "confidential" meetings without the strikers' involvement: and

the mass demonstration successfully confirmed the solid trade union and Labour Party support for this anti-union millionaire "socialist".

Maxwell in fact obviously never intended to conduct serious talks.

Print union leaders and local Labour Party representatives are now being called upon to resume their efforts to pressurise Maxwell into negotiations with the strikers.

Labour movement support is still vital. Messages and donations should be forwarded to the Strike Committee, 5 Union Street, Oxford.

# No lead from Civil Service union chiefs

Last week's meeting of the leaders of the nine civil service unions resulted in no new initiatives to build for the all-out strike action necessary to win the four-month old pay campaign.

Despite a strong lobby outside the meeting and the CPSA delegation's mandate to raise the all-out demand again, there was little real discussion on stepping up the campaign most time was in fact spent discussing the merits and demerits of various forms of the selective action.

Despite this latest boost Thatcher's drive to break the Civil Service unions, the morale of the key sections of the membership remains high, a fact borne out by

the excellent response to the call for increased levy money (even from those who have already broken from any illusions in selective action).

It is clear now, as the data comes in, that already it would have been cheaper for the government to have paid the 630,000 civil servants their 15% claim.

The costs in revenue loss, interest on loans, overpayments and disruption of all normal financial administration will never in fact be accurately calculated.

This makes it all the more obvious that for the Tories the fight is not about money this year, next year or in 1983. It is about smashing the unions.

That is why Thatcher is carefully picking her moment to go for major punitive action, such as can-

celling back-dating of the offer or mass suspensions.

An important extension to the selective action last week could well change that situation and lead to wholesale suspensions; that is the decision to bring out staff who issue blank Giro cheques to local Department of Employment and DHSS offices.

Picketing has been successful so far and it could start to bite in about a fortnight's time as management are faced with suspending people or paying out millions of pounds in cash daily over office counters.

Another factor to emerge in the dispute is the government's use of an archaic conspiracy law (used only in the Des Warren Shrewsbury building pickets trial since 1919) to attempt to convict

an Inland Revenue Staff Federation union official in Scotland.

Ted Elsey, the official involved, was arrested after following scabs who were smuggling mail out of the strike-bound tax computer at Cumbernauld in their private cars.

## Intimidating

He is alleged to have been guilty of "intimidating" the scabs by simply following them to their destination.

We urge *Socialist Press* readers, particularly in Scotland, to watch for details of the court proceedings; to support any lobbies and fund-raising events; and to raise support for Elsey within the labour movement and fight this blatant victimisation.



Staff at St Mary's hospital, Harrow Rd in London are now in the second week of occupation against an expected decision by Health Minister Vaughan to axe 120 beds.

The struggle, the first of its kind in a major acute and general hospital, is an important focus for the fight against Tory cuts

# BL aims to demolish shop stewards movement

By Bill Peters

Last week the press gave wide coverage of BL's proposal to force full time convenors back on their jobs.

It is important that these reports are seen in the context of the overall situation facing BL workers.

Over the last two years BL have launched an increasing onslaught on the shop stewards' movement. Victimisation alongside the threat of and preparation for more victimisations are now an everyday fact of life on the shop floor in BL.

## Dossiers

Day by day dossiers are prepared on shop stewards, "investigations" are carried out by management and the discipline procedure is used against stewards following stoppages on their sections.

Managers obstruct the release of stewards who need to deal with problems on their sections and there is a clamp-down on stewards' meetings.

There is no doubt that BL have set themselves an objective of destroying the shop stewards' movement; and they don't see this as a long term project.

The proposal to clamp down on convenors is an aspect of this all round attack but it is not the actual spearhead of it. BL strategists are well aware

that the role that most of the convenors play is far too important for them to make the convenors' system a prime target too early.

That will come later—if they are successful in crushing the shop floor movement.

## Not new

BL comments on convenors are no new development. They are contained in a document tabled to the unions in March of this year (reported in SP 241) covering new negotiating and disciplinary procedures.

The most dangerous clauses of course have not been mentioned by the media. They include:

\*a new National Negotiating Committee dominated by full time officials;

\*a new discipline procedure, giving BL the right of summary dismissal for what they choose to define as "gross industrial misconduct";

\*a clause making the new procedure legally binding, which would make any worker on unofficial strike in breach of his or her contract of employment and therefore liable to instant dismissal.

TGWU convenors have rejected the document while the AUEW national officers under the leadership of Ken Cure have equivocated. BL are tabling the document



Ken Cure

again for "discussion" this month, after which they are likely to try to force it in, perhaps as part of the forthcoming November wage review.

Despite this most convenors are deliberately playing the document down. No attempt has been made to prepare BL workers to face such a challenge.

So if the document is 4 months old why did the clause on Convenors hit the headlines last week?

It is not simply that it is the issue which concerns the convenors the most.

In fact the press took it up when it was raised from the rostrum at the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (CSEU) conference last week by former BL Longbridge clerical staffs convenor Bill Linthwaite.

Linthwaite was until

recently chairman of the National BL Cars Clerical Staffs Negotiating Committee.

## Long list

He revealed to the CSEU conference that he had recently taken voluntary redundancy because he was: "not prepared to stand for the continual harassment and vicious nit-picking to which my colleagues and I were continually being subjected."

He had decided therefore not to fight the company, but to add his name to the long list of BL senior stewards who have gone voluntarily redundant in the last year.

But he still had the nerve to turn up to the CSEU conference—claim his expenses from the union—and give everyone the benefit of his opinions.

He told the conference "The regime in Longbridge is now like Colditz. The atmosphere is a powder keg."

## Leadership

That is certainly true and 13,000 workers—unlike Linthwaite—still have to work there.

Linthwaite's example says a lot for the crisis of leadership which exists in BL: there are dozens of



similar examples.

Senior stewards who sought out positions under "participation" and before when the perks were around now sell their jobs and get out when management clamp down.

## Process

Linthwaite is not prepar-

ed to be harassed. Yet trade unionists have been harassed and persecuted since capitalism began and will be until it is ended. What is so different now?

Those leaving BL are part of the process in which the struggle for new leaders in that company must take place.

BL workers must have a leadership at combine level

who are prepared for an uncompromising struggle against a brutal and ruthless management, and are prepared to see that struggle through to the end.

That is why we urge BL workers to support and join with the Leyland Action Committee in its fight for such a new leadership.



# SOCIALIST PRESS ★

# Liverpool: the revolt of the downtrodden



Police cower behind riot shields, Liverpool

Once again the Tory press is wringing its hands. Toxteth youth have fought pitched battles with the police.

But nobody should be surprised - least of all those papers which argue every other day in favour of Thatcher's policies of cuts and mass unemployment.

After years of social deprivation, slum housing, growing unemployment, rising poverty, miserable facilities and dwindling prospects, thousands of youth in Britain's big cities are on the brink of open revolt.

### Misery

While many adult workers, schooled in more peaceful means of struggle and protest during the 'boom' period, or cherishing the dream that eventually reforms will improve the present system of daily misery and degradation, have quietly suffered the Tory onslaught, youth are by no means so restrained.

Thrown from crumbling schools onto never-ending dole queues, harassed and provoked each day by police who deliberately pick on black and unemployed youth, rejected by arrogant and vicious employers, offered no perspective by the labour leaders for organ-

ised struggle to defeat government and the capitalist system, youth have become a simmering hot of frustrations, confusion and potential revolutionary zeal.

### Skinheads

It is this situation which has allowed the fascist, the NF and British Movement to cull a harvest of confused and oppressed young skinheads for their racist anti-communist squads.

But the strength and energies of the youth are not being channelled in such a reactionary direction. The bulk of young people and detest the fascists - are prepared, given a leadership, to fight against racist violence.

And they hate the police who, as agents of the Tory system of exploitation and repression, see their business to harass and intimidate the young unemployed who show contempt for the authority of the state.

### Rebellion

That hatred is a politically progressive element among the youth. The eruption of anger into insurrection in Toxteth weekend contained a rebellion against the capitalist state itself.

But the rebellion is clear or conscious one - police are fair game for retaliation - but nobody regards it as progressive youth to smash working class homes, terrorise own community, or from small shopkeepers their own neighbourhood.

The Toxteth revolt firms the arrival on the political scene of the hit victims of Thatcher's savage policies. They spoken out in St Paul, Bristol, in Brixton and in Liverpool.

### Leadership

No socialist would have the youth to revert to a state of apathy or acceptance. But at the same time it is vital that a leadership - able to win the allegiance of the oppressed youth, black and white alike - is built to the way beyond spontaneous individual anger to mobilisation of young and old in the struggle to bring down Thatcher government.

The National Left Youth Movement launched last month in perspective of precisely such a leadership issue of its paper *Fighter*, is now on sale. We urge our readers to give this new movement their support and financial help to root it in the communities and working class estates.

**CLASS FIGHTER**  
Paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement. First issue now out! on fighting racism, March, The Bomb, YOFs and youth movement. Price 25p in postage from NLW, Box 135, London N1

# SOUTHALL: build workers defence squads

Fascists who come kicking, beating and smashing their way into black neighbourhoods can expect an increasingly prompt and militant retaliation from local youth already pushed to the limits of endurance. And if cops move in to

carry out their customary role of protecting the fascists they too will suffer the brunt of the anger of an enraged community. This was the clear message from last Friday's riot in Southall, which left the pub hired for a racist "gig" a smoking ruin and led into spreading street violence as police allowed young fascists to launch attacks on

Asian homes. The clash had been prompted by the conscious decision of the concert organisers to have the coaches bringing racist youth from East London drop them off half way along Southall Broadway. As they made their way towards the gig at the Hambrough Tavern they abused Asian shopkeepers and

smashed windows. The word went quickly out that the fascists were in town. The group the thugs had come to see were the 'Fore-skins' - a band which supported the fascist 'Rock Against Communism'. Yet police claimed they had not been aware that there would be any trouble in Southall that evening and were apparently sent on a

decoy call to a disco in Greenford. No left wing activity would have found the police wrong-footed in this way: the whole affair appeared to have gone the fascists' way - until local youth hit back. There can be no doubt that if the Asian community had not mobilised at once and besieged the fascists in the Tavern, then a rampaging gang of skinheads would later have smashed their way through whole areas of the town.

The black community has learned through bitter experience that it cannot look to the police to protect it against racist violence. A mounting toll of immigrant homes, community relations offices, community centres and anti-racist organisations have been subjected to firebombs, vandals and violent attack in recent months. Police are slow and reluctant to respond and arrests are few and far between.

### Run riot

In Southall on Friday, the first energies of police were diverted to letting the skinheads out of the beleaguered pub and leaving

them to run riot in nearby streets while angry Asians were kept at bay by police cordons.

GLC leader Ken Livingstone was quite right to point out that the Asian youths arrested had been "fighting to defend their community" and should be released.

### Readiness

The Southall events show the growing readiness of the black community to combat racist violence. It fits into a pattern of increasing self confidence among black youth, who have been prepared to challenge not only the unofficial racists, but also the harassment and discrimination they face daily at the hands of the police.

In Coventry, a spate of racial murders has brought a mass mobilisation of blacks, growing labour movement support, and the formation of anti-racist defence squads.

It is plain from the rapid development of the confrontation in Southall that there, too, the labour movement must work with the youth and workers of the black community to establish defence squads ready at short notice to combat gangs of marauding racists.

# SPECIAL FUND £650 to go!

This is the last opportunity to appeal for donations to our Special Fund, the deadline for which falls on 19 July, the first day of the TILC International Summer School.

The target is £2,500. So far we have received £1,397.00 and a pledge of £450.00 which brings our guaranteed total to £1,847.00.

That still leaves us £653 to raise in the next ten days or so - a tall order indeed.

So can we appeal to all our readers and supporters in this our last issue of Socialist Press to pull out all

the stops to help us complete this fund on time. Socialist Press may be ceasing publication but this does not mean we do not need the money. Every penny that comes in will be used to lay a sound financial basis for the new enterprise - a 16 page weekly new-look Socialist Organiser.

Send your donation to:  
Socialist Press Special Fund  
BM Box 5277  
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