

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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# OCCUPY SPEKE DEFEND ALL JOBS



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Stalinist Combine Committee chairman Robinson: attempting to divert fight down blind alley of "economic arguments" for preserving the plant.



Pickets at the Speke plant

A mere three weeks after British Leyland chairman Michael Edwardes drew a standing ovation from convenors for his plans for speed up, rationalisation and the elimination of 12,500 jobs, the casualties are beginning to mount up.

3,000 jobs are to be axed in the closure of the Triumph plant at Speke in Merseyside which manufactures the TR7 sports car and body shells for the Dolomite.

### Betrayal

And already Leyland convenors and union bureaucrats under a cover of 'left' rhetoric are laying the groundwork for a betrayal of the Speke workforce, who have already shown by their 16 week strike against speed-up that they are willing to fight the employer.

The convenors know that throughout the Corporation management are moving to impose speed-up, throwing up hundreds and thousands of jobs.

By supporting the Edwardes plan they have committed themselves to supporting this strategy.

At Longbridge cutbacks in the Mini and in the paintshops and at Cowley cutbacks in the Princess are typical of this, with the company using the changes to implement speed-up as well as throwing up labour.

Convenors dedicated to collaboration in such schemes cannot afford to have this challenged by determined resistance at Speke.

And yet if they are to fulfil their tasks as spokesmen of Leyland's 'participation' committees, enforcing management policy on the shop floor they must seem to oppose wholesale redundancies.

This is why the supreme 'participation' body—the Cars Council—was the first on the scene, claiming to oppose the closure, alleging that there had been a "fundamental change of philosophy" since Edwardes took over.

But union officials were getting down to the serious business of bartering a price for the jobs to be destroyed—hoping to force home acceptance of "voluntary" redundancy at a mass meeting.

### Payments

Leyland let it be known they wanted to cooperate in this—and announced that redundancy payments would be well above the legal minimum.

TGWU organiser Richard Palmer replied to Leyland's figures describing the offer as "meagre".

"Men I have talked to were thinking of £2,000 as a bottom-end figure and it is not going to be conducive to an easy transfer."

In other words union officials are starting not from the defence of all jobs at Speke, but from obtaining the right buy-off to defuse a struggle.

The danger is that, with union officials intending to recommend a return to work at the mass meeting of Speke workers on Friday, the stewards' failure to give a clear rejection of voluntary redundancy will open the door to acceptance of Leyland's buy-off payments.

It is in anticipation of such a development that the Leyland Combine shop stewards executive has issued its call to all plants to give "maximum support" "in the event of the membership in

### Liverpool taking action"

They are doing everything to ensure that no action is taken at Speke.

So determined are some of these convenors to stamp out any resistance to Leyland's plans that they are spearheading moves within the TGWU to victimise the elected leadership in the Cowley Assembly Plant, known for their outright opposition to speed-up, closures and sackings.

One of these leaders — deputy convenor Alan Thorne — is threatened with expulsion from the union.

To collaborate with the government-backed assault on jobs and working conditions in Leyland demands of union leaders that they bureaucratically repress those forces capable of leading a principled resistance.

The task in Speke is to ensure that action is taken to throw out the management's closure plans and mount a fight for defence of all jobs.

### Confrontation

The only way jobs can be saved is through all-out confrontation with management. The plant must be occupied and the strike against speed-up continued.

Workers must demand Leyland open its books to an elected trade union committee, so that the "losses" on TR7 and Dolomite production at Speke can be related to the huge profits of privately owned component suppliers.

The Combine Committee must be called upon to make good their words and mobilise genuine support for this action, and to take up the demand for nationalisation of the component firm.

And if the TR7 or Dolomite turn out to be unsaleable vehicles, then the demand must be added for a programme of useful public works to employ the whole Speke workforce.

In the meantime there must be no sackings, but a programme of work-sharing on full pay under the control of trade union committees.

Such a fight will bring Leyland workers into head-on conflict with the Lib-Lab coalition government and its defenders 'left' and right and highlight the need to build a principled leadership in the trade union and labour movement.

# Stop black leaders' Zimbabwe sell-out

IT WAS ALL self-congratulatory smiles from the Bishop (Muzorewa) and the Methodist priest (Sithole) and the Chief (Chirau) as they emerged from their "settlement talks" with racist leader Ian Smith last week in Salisbury.

At last, they said, they had achieved majority black rule. The Africans were free!

The black masses, whom these opportunist stooges claim to lead, may be a bit surprised to say the least to see that this "freedom" leaves Ian Smith and his racist Rhodesian Front still in the government.

It also leaves in being the same racist-led army and police which have oppressed them for half a century, and at least for now, the same

"parliament" of racists and stooges that has protected white interests for decades.

The agreement includes a new parliament of 100 in which 28 seats will be guaranteed for whites and, in the first election, eight guaranteed for Smith's Rhodesian Front.

For these the mass of black voters will be able to select from 16 candidates the eight white racists they would prefer to rule over them.

The deal is an extraordinary coup for the wily racist Premier who is in his fifteenth year in office—now one of the world's longest surviving heads of government.

The only reason that Smith has been able to survive for so long and win

this new victory is the appalling bankruptcy of the black Zimbabwean leadership.

Joshua Nkomo, joint leader of the Patriotic Front, and long-time obstacle to a serious fight against white racist rule, called last week's so-called internal settlement "the biggest sell-out in the history of Africa".

Well, he should know; he's an expert in sellouts.

In fact he is himself, along with ZANU leader Robert Mugabe, planning what, if he were consistent, he would have to call the second biggest sellout in the history of Africa.

This is a hoped-for deal with the imperialist representatives Andrew Young and British "Labour" foreign secretary David Owen to

install a different but equally collaborationist regime to that of Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau.

Owen is now the key figure in an attempt to reconcile the internal and external collaborationists so as to put an end to the developing liberation war and so forestall the threat of a real mass struggle against racism and the capitalist system which rests upon it.

Socialists in the labour movement must mobilise all their strength to prevent the recognition of any sellout collaborationist government and for the labour movement to send material assistance to the Zimbabwean freedom fighters.



## 99.8% boycott in Soweto poll

The failure of the racist government to crush the resistance to apartheid of the black masses of South Africa was shown up in the general boycott of the elections in Soweto last Sunday.

These elections were to the "Community Council", a powerless local authority set up by the racist regime.

In Soweto the vast "township" close to Johannesburg, one million blacks live in squalid conditions.

Of these one million, 300,000 are eligible to vote; 126,700 of those are registered as voters. And of these only 492 actually went to the polls on Sunday.

### No candidates

Only two out of the 30 seats were contested and in 19 of them there were no candidates at all.

The boycott was supported by the imprisoned petty-bourgeois leaders known as the Soweto 10 and other opportunist leaders including Chief Buthelezi who forbade

any member of his Zulu-based Inkatha organisation to stand in the elections.

Buthelezi and the Soweto 10, however, oppose the racist elections not from the standpoint of the interests of the working class and the total rejection of the racist apartheid state.

### Adjusted

The Soweto 10 advocate an adjusted form of apartheid in which towns like Soweto would have "black autonomy" and would, therefore, be under the political control of the opportunistic black capitalists and professionals and chiefs.

The crisis of leadership of the South African proletariat has allowed the Soweto 10 and Chief Buthelezi to assume a mantle which they would be sure to lose if there were an independent proletarian leadership which could consolidate and extend the gains of the last two years in Soweto.

But the strength of the boycott shows that the diversions cooked up by the petty-bourgeois leaders have not yet destroyed all those gains.

# ITALIAN CP GIVES ROPE TO BOSSES



CP leader Berlinguer (left).

Signor Giulio Andreotti, whose minority Christian Democratic government quit office on January 16, is to be given more rope (in the form of extra negotiating time) by the leaders of the Italian Communist Party.

Not—it goes without saying—to hang himself, but in order to continue his efforts to tie the Italian working class to another three years of 'austerity' measures.

Virtually the whole of the political capital on which Andreotti is relying to float a new cabinet is provided courtesy of the Stalinists.

Most importantly, they have been the main force in organising—Jack Jones-like trade union support for an economic strategy directly designed to cut workers' living standards.

### Architects

Through their control of Italy's largest trade union confederation, the CGIL, they were the architects of the fraudulent 'rank-and-file' conference in Rome last week which rubber-stamped the three main planks of the bureaucrat's economic platform: three years of wage freeze, speed-up and redundancies, and higher charges for public services.

Almost 1,500 'delegates' from all three national trade union confederations (CGIL, CISL and UIL) voted by a big majority for acceptance.

But fewer than a third of the 'delegates' had been elected by membership bodies, and those selected sections of the membership who have been 'consulted' and had given approval of the package had been tricked into believing it was voluntary and would not limit the right to free collective bargaining by sections of workers.

### Rigged

But with his rigged vote in his pocket, Stalinist CGIL leader Luciano Lama put paid

to such hopes:

"This turning point binds everyone. Autonomy does not mean anarchy."

In theory, wage cuts are supposed to provide 'investment funds' (a flimsy euphemism for larger profits) and thus protect jobs.

### Firings

But Lama has already made it clear he supports firings—in firms which are 'over-manned'.

Italian 'Eurocommunism' thus lines up directly and explicitly with the employers, at the same time as it drops all pretence that the policy of 'sacrifices' will defend either wages or jobs.

But the Italian 'social contract' is only part of the Communist Party's efforts to keep Andreotti in office.

They have also dropped their demand for cabinet posts in a future government, and are now seeking only a formal recognition by the Christian Democrats that their government depends on Communist votes in Parliament.

The 'historical compromise' has now been compromised to the hilt. The economic bloodletting carried out on workers is now not even to serve as dowry for the Stalinist chiefs to enter into a properly arranged marriage with the Papal Tories, but merely as the *quid pro quo* of a squalid, informal liaison.

### Fear

Nonetheless, the government crisis has now lasted over a month, with further behind-the-scenes 'consultations' this week.

But the real obstacle to a new coalition is not disagreements between Andreotti and the leaders of the workers' parties, but their common fear that any policy agreement will break on the rocks of massive working class hostility.

Recent demonstrations—opposed by the CP leadership—brought tens of thousands onto the streets of Rome to march against unemployment.

### Terrorism

Under these conditions, terrorist acts—such as last week's assassination of magistrate Riccardo Palma, claimed by the so-called 'Red Brigades'—can be expected to multiply.

For all the crocodile tears shed by the Stalinist leaders, the real effect of terrorism is now to reinforce the Communist Party as a supporter of 'law and order' and to sow confusion among workers and socialists who wish to build an alternative, revolutionary leadership to break the Stalinists' grip on the labour movement.

## French left alliance heals the breach



Mitterrand (left) and Marchais

French Communist Party leader Georges Marchais has revealed that in all probability the CP and the Socialist Party would reach an electoral agreement between the first and second rounds of the election scheduled to take place on March 12 and March 19.

With opinion polls still indicating that a "Union of the Left" slate could win up to 54% of the total votes, Marchais is mollifying his seemingly aggressive stance vis-a-vis SP leader Mitterrand in an attempt to carve out for himself and fellow CP leaders a niche within a possible "Union of the Left" government.

### Dropped

In line with this growing rapprochement, Marchais has now dropped his previous stance of refusing to partake in government if the CP received less than 21% of the vote.

His position is now that the CP would be prepared to accept ministerial appointments, but that these should be allocated in accordance with the votes cast for each party, rather than on the basis of seats won.

In a television interview last week Marchais was quite unambiguous about this:

"We want to participate in a

government with the same rights and duties as our partner. We want a solid team behind a prime minister ready to apply the policies which the majority of people will ratify".

Such a Prime Minister would of course be Francois Mitterrand; and the policies he will "apply" are none other than the Union of the Left's "common programme".

### Exposed

The utter fraudulence of this programme's claims to be in the interests of the working class was perhaps best exposed last week when right wing President Giscard announced that he would not oppose the programme should the union win a majority.

### Dubious role

Meanwhile Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac has been touring the country in a series of pre-election meetings, each of which has as its theme the dubious role played by Francois Mitterrand while he was a government minister in the Fourth Republic.

Chirac's message is straightforward: Mitterrand was weak and vacillating then; what is there to suggest that he will be any stronger now?

Ironically though, Chirac's veiled calls for a 'strong' government and his resurrection of the past serve to show precisely what a sordid history Mitterrand has.

# German Lib-Lab government crisis

The instability inherent in any coalition government is being rapidly accentuated in West Germany.

Only three weeks after the humiliating resignation of the Defence Minister after revelations about the huge extent of illegal military spying against civilians, the Social Democratic (SPD)-Liberal Free Democrat (FDP) alliance suffered a major blow last week.

In a parliamentary vote over increased repressive legislation Chancellor Schmidt scraped home by a margin of one vote.

### Separated

The alliance normally has a 10 vote margin over the Christian Democrat (CDU) and Christian Social Union (CSU) opposition.

Under the new legislation lawyers will be separated from their jailed clients by a partition to prevent the passing of objects, police will have widened powers of search including access throughout a whole apartment block not just a single flat, and the possibility is opened up for the state to refuse contact between a lawyer and a jailed client in the case of suspected terrorism!

### 'Lefts'

Four 'left wing' SPD members voted against these measures, which follow on a year of consolidation of the already extreme repressive powers, including the build

up of the Federal Criminal Bureau; the establishment of a special anti-terrorist squad; and the refusal of contact between lawyers and their jailed clients in situations of 'special danger'.

SPD-FDP rebels voted against this latter measure last year, similarly threatening the majority of the coalition.

This move by the 'lefts' has undoubtedly been forced on them, not least by the conference of Young Socialists (JUSOS).

On February 12, this body elected a 'left' president, resolved to cooperate with 'democratic communists' and supported the Bertrand Russell tribunal investigating the violation of human rights in Germany.

In an attempt to head off the rising opposition to his coalition, Schmidt's government has softened its attacks on pension levels.

### Pension cuts

But even the revised plans mean cuts in pension increases this year and next—to rises of less than 5%—and increases in employee contributions (in effect, a form of income tax) to almost a tenth of total earnings.

From 1982 workers will also have to pay towards their sickness insurance.

Attacks like this are helping to fuel an increasingly militant offensive by the working class against the 'Lib-Lab' coalition government's 5% wage norm—an offensive which is growing despite the recent sharp rise in unemployment to 1.2 million or 5½% of the workforce.

A month ago the first official dock strike for decades was called in support of a 9% wage claim.

The port employers had offered 6%, already in excess of the government's guideline.

The rebuff for the coalition government was followed by an even ruder rebuff for the union leadership when workers decisively rejected the compromise of 6½% negotiated which they had proudly negotiated.

### Settlement

The bureaucracy skulked back to the employers to get yet another increase in the offer to 7% which was in the end accepted.

Last week a settlement within the norm was reached in the depressed steel industry.

But in other sectors, deadlock is being reached in an increasing number of negotiations which break the government's norm.

In the important North Rhine-Westphalia region the engineering employers have refused to offer more than 3% in response to an 8% claim by the union IG Metall.

### Forced agreement

The official mediator last week failed to force an agreement and unofficial strikes began.

And in Stuttgart printers rejected an outline agreement on wages and the introduction of new technology which was designed to end a series of recent strikes.



Popular Unity was used to head off mass movement of working class

# MIR to re-run fatal "Popular Unity"

The exiled leaders of the Chilean Popular Unity—the class-collaborationist, popular front alliance on which Salvador Allende's presidency was based—have always maintained an open door towards the large bourgeois parties of the right, in particular the Christian Democrats.

In the last crisis-ridden months of the Allende government in 1973, sections of the Popular Unity, especially the Communist Party, made their strategic aim the forging of an alliance with the reactionary Christian Democratic Party led by former right wing President Eduardo Frei.

In the final weeks of the Popular Unity before the coup of September 1973, the Communist Party leaders openly advocated that the government should abdicate in favour of Frei and the Christian Democrats.

### Savage reaction

It was a grotesque confession of the way in which the class collaboration of Popular Front government leads inevitably to the most savage reaction.

But an even more horrifying illustration of this was to be provided. The Christian Democrats would not accept the Stalinists' offer of government.

They did not dare to take power in conditions where growing sections of the working class were engaged in bitter struggles against capitalists, landlords and the government.

The Christian Democrats, like the whole of the Chilean ruling class and the American imperialists they were so closely allied to, saw the clear need to smash the organisations of the working class.

### Supported coup

The Christian Democrats, therefore, supported the bloody coup carried out by Pinochet and other "democratic" generals who had been raised to high military office by the Popular Unity government itself.

Of course, once the most brutal period of anti-working class repression was over, with independent unions and workers' political parties all but destroyed, and tens of thousands of workers dead, jailed or in exile, the Christian Democrats hoped

informed hands.

Pinochet and the generals had other ideas and, even though they have asked Frei to join the powerless Council of State, they have made it clear they will not hand back power even to the most reactionary of civilians in the foreseeable future.



All this means that, over the last two years Christian Democrats, deeply implicated in the crimes of the junta, have nonetheless moved opportunistically into "opposition" to the dictatorship.

There is not an ounce of political principle behind this change. They would support another bloody coup in the future if that is what is needed to break the back of the organised working class.

### Welcomed

But that does not matter to the Popular Unity leaders who have always been ready

arms.

The Christian Democrats are now presented by the Popular Unity as the "progressive section of the bourgeoisie" with whom their Stalinist and reformist political "principles" tell them to ally themselves in defence of bourgeois democracy.

The Popular Unity leaders

direction of unity".

A Christian Democrat leader, Fuente Alba, echoed this, supporting:

"... a regroupment of social and political forces in a great pluralist movement ... to struggle against the dictatorship and build a future in Chile.

"The contacts between Popular Unity and our party are more and more cordial

and are progressing".

The Stalinist and reformist leaders are thus heading towards building the all-embracing class collaborationist alliance in exile and opposition which they tried to construct when in government.

They do not, however, stop there.

Corvalan has recently talked of the need to build an alliance also with the "progressive" and "democratic" officers in Pinochet's army!

### Sidling together

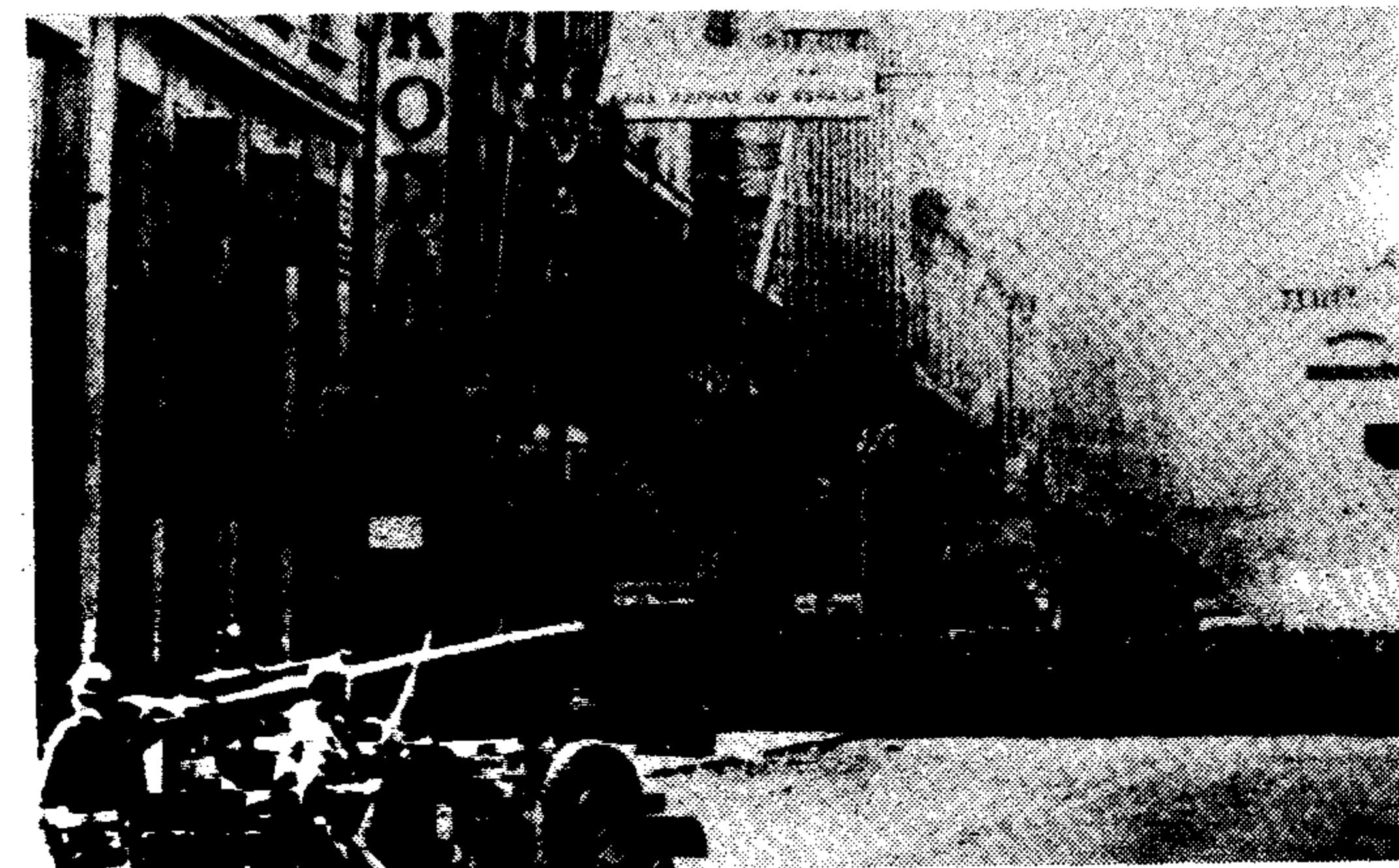
Now as the Popular Unity sidles up towards the Christian Democrats, the MIR, far from resisting this, is simultaneously sidling up to the Popular Unity.

To illustrate this we are reprinting below a recent joint declaration between the MIR and the Popular Unity.

Mention of "differences" between the organisations are redundant since this statement, like others made by the MIR leadership, proves that these "revolutionaries" can provide no socialist alternative to the class collaboration of the Popular Unity.

Now, as between 1970 and 1973, they can only cover up for it.

The reformists and Stalinists show again that they are thus prepared to carry their class collaboration to include the extreme right of the bourgeoisie.



Days before the coup

## Their shameful joint declaration

The Popular Unity and the MIR (exterior) have held conversations with the object of arriving at an understanding which allows them to undertake common action against the Military Junta.

They have stated that there remain differences of understanding between the MIR and the Popular Unity about very important political and ideological questions on the course of the Chilean revolution.

Moreover, in a number of countries, problems remain on the plane of practical action.

However, we believe that these must be settled through a frank and respectful ideological struggle, always placing the emphasis on unity to confront the common enemy.

The Popular Unity and the MIR, taking into account the experiences acquired from the coup of September 1973 and everything which has happened since then, have reached an understanding to co-ordinate and push forward joint actions in the areas listed below:

1. To combine efforts to forge unity and understanding of all those who are ready to fight against the Military Junta, convinced that the only true alternative to it must be based on the widest possible unitary base, starting with the unity of the popular movement and its parties.
2. To combat repression

and disappearances, demanding the real and effective dissolution of the DINA, freedom for prisoners and the re-establishment of political rights; to insist on the overthrow of the legislation which suppresses trade union rights, especially those of meeting, free election of leaders, collective bargaining and the right to strike.

3. To fight for the defence of the standard of living of the masses, supporting their specific demands, combatting the economic policy of the Junta, based on the super-exploitation of the workers, on handing over the national wealth to imperialism and on the rule of the economy of the country by national and foreign monopolies.

4. To defend the culture and spiritual heritage of Chileans, to fight against militarisation and fascistisation of education and in favour of university autonomy.

5. To stimulate international solidarity with the Chilean people. To intensify the political and economic isolation of the Junta, especially promoting a boycott on the supply of arms on the granting of loans and investments which benefit the international economic monopolies, on the export of food needed for the people.

To strengthen for this purpose the unitary work in

In doing this they are making a shameful offer to the capitalist class and to imperialism as a whole.

They are saying in effect: "Your military dictatorships are unnecessary because we will go to any lengths to defend capitalism and police the working class under the cloak of democracy".

The Chilean workers and peasants must reject this policy which would spell disaster for their interests.

This popular front policy led the Chilean working class to catastrophe between 1970 and 1973 when it paved the way for Pinochet's repression.

It can carry them to disaster again. The way forward for the Chilean working class lies in the total rejection of class collaboration, in the fight for organisation and a revolutionary socialist programme completely independent of the capitalist class.

### Duty

It is the elementary duty of revolutionaries to fight for that independence.

The leaders of the MIR (the Left Revolutionary Movement) are failing in that duty now, as they failed in it during the Allende period.

Between 1970 and 1973 the MIR, claiming to be independent of the Popular Unity, nonetheless clung cringing to its coat-tails and failed utterly to prepare the working class for the attack which the popular front inevitably led to.

thing which favours division and duplication of organisations, ensuring leadership shared among all the participating forces.

6. To promote and strengthen trade union unity outside the country around the single Trade Union Centre of Chile (the CUT), opposing every attempt at dividing and duplicating trade union organisations.

The above agreements assume the maintenance of fraternal, loyal, friendly and constructive relations between the different popular organisations, no interference by any of them in the internal affairs of the others, and the unreserved carrying out of all the agreements reached.

The common actions promoted will first be co-ordinated by the political leaderships, for which purpose they will have periodic meetings.

As to the interior of the country, the implementation of common activities is the responsibility of the leaderships in the country.

Tactical unity in joint actions against the dictatorship is at the same time a condition and stimulus so that practice and ideological dialogue go on developing and deepening within the people and its organisation.

(Undated—issued late 1977).

# Stagnant production deepens crisis

Have the promised "benefits of North Sea Oil" ended even before they began?

After Dennis Healey's frequent promises of impending tax reductions and economic expansion, the mood of Whitehall statements has suddenly changed.

Partly no doubt this is because the tax reduction

promises were meant to be a carrot which union leaders could hold out to their members as they sabotaged key wage claims.

## Not resolved

But also it is becoming increasingly clear that the flow of oil is not calming the troubled waters of the capitalist crisis in Britain.

One symptom of this was the publication of figures which showed that industrial production in Britain has remained stagnant.

## Lower than 1974

Despite a scarcely perceptible rise in December, production in the last quarter of 1977 was lower than earlier in the year, much lower than it was during the 3-day week in 1974 and only just over 1% higher than it was in 1970.

The government also published its index of long term "forward economic indicators", a kind of economic long range weather forecast, and this showed a decline for

the third month running.

Another more unexpected sign of the continued crisis was the large trade deficit in January.

At \$324 million this was higher than the average in 1975 before North Sea Oil production began.

The government issued its usual warnings about not attaching importance to one month's figures.

## Special factors

Unfortunately, however, last month the "special factors" should have led to more exports and less imports and not the other way round. What increased the deficit

was the continued inability of British manufactured goods to compete in world markets.

This is predictably leading to increasingly clamour from manufacturing capitalists (backed up by the opportunists of the Tribune group and the Communist Parties) for chauvinist measures like import controls.

Last week British Leyland management called for import controls against Japanese cars which are now supplying more than half of Leyland's own share of the British market.

Ex-economic advisor to the Wilson government, Nicolas Kaldor, was also

wheeled out to put in his plea for import controls as a solution to the British economic crisis.

As Trotskyists we utterly condemn these protectionist measures. We say there is no solution to the British economic crisis.

## World solution

There is only a world solution to the economic crisis created by capitalism.

That solution requires the international unity of the working class in the fight for the expropriation of all the capitalists and a planned socialist economy.

# Devolution diversion defeated

The Lib-Lab coalition was defeated on its major item of Parliamentary legislation last week.

No, it was not nationalisation of any major industry or the banks. It was not measures designed to restore the devastated social services and education system.

It was a policy designed to divert away from these

central issues that concern the working class—the provision of a "devolved" bourgeois assembly in Scotland.

Such an assembly, functioning within the framework of British capitalism could obviously do nothing to remedy the chronic mass unemployment, falling living standards and other material



Heath

problems from which the reactionary Scottish Nationalists have made such capital.

It would represent nothing more than a vehicle for the

most profit-seeking and avaricious sections of the bourgeoisie in Scotland.

These forces, stimulated by the smell of profit from North Sea oil, have conducted a long and well-orchestrated campaign to create the illusion that life would be better under "Scottish" capitalism than under "British imperialism".

## Free hand

But the continued betrayals of the Labour leaders in the Lib-Lab coalition, and the refusal of Stalinist or reformist trade union leaders to oppose cuts, sackings, speed-up and wage cuts have left the 'Tartan Tories' a free hand to peddle their reactionary line among sections of workers.

However even in these conditions, bourgeois opinion polls—notoriously unreliable as they are—suggest that only 55% of Scottish voters would back a devolved assembly.

If this is the reality in Scotland, then the provisions forced on the government's Devolution Bill—calling for 40% of the electorate to vote 'yes' as a precondition for the establishment of an assembly—will ensure that the measure is defeated.

To attain the 40% figure on a 60% turnout, more than 65% of those voting would have to vote 'yes'.

The fact that 44 Labour MPs joined with the Tories to institute this brazenly undemocratic provision indicates not the slightest progressive instinct on their part—in the main they are diehard supporters of Callaghan.

## 'Heath men'

They found their counterparts in a number of "Heath men" who crossed the floor to vote with the Lib-Lab coalition against the 40% rule.

But if Callaghan should—

as rumoured—make the Devolution Bill a question of confidence in the Lib-Lab coalition government, then those 'left' MPs who claim to oppose its policies are naturally obliged to vote against this diversionary and worthless piece of Lib-Lab legislation.

## Break coalition

Trade unionists and Labour Party members must demand that they do so, and couple such a stand with the beginning of a fight throughout the labour movement to break the coalition with the Liberals and for a socialist answer to the problems of Scottish, English and Welsh workers.

A refusal to take advantage of such an opportunity not only assists Callaghan but, by offering no alternative to Labour's betrayals in Scotland, must hand over disillusioned workers to the reactionary Nationalists.

# ABORTION RIGHTS FIGHT NEW ATTACKS!

The Abortion Law Reform Association (ALRA) has been agitating for changes in the abortion law since 1937 and are still proposing that the 1967 Abortion Act should be superseded by a law which enshrines a woman's right to free abortion on demand.

The "Open Door" programme made by ALRA and shown on Monday 13 February on BBC 2, was a half-hour long exposition of their bankrupt and reformist politics.

Woodcraft and Hilary Jackson pointed to the real deficiencies of the 1967 Act: that doctors and not women have the right to choose whether a woman is "entitled" not to have a child.

## No obligation

There is no obligation put on the DHSS or the Area Health Authorities to provide abortion facilities.

However, the only solution ALRA puts forward is to pressure pro-abortion MPs to introduce a Private Members Bill which will change the law so that

The policy of fighting for "positive legislation" is also being advocated by certain elements in the National Abortion Campaign at the moment.

It promises to divert the struggle for abortion rights further into the realms of parliamentary pressure politics and away from the fight against the NHS cuts, for expansion of abortion facilities and for workers and patients control of the health service.

The experience of the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Pay Act should be ample evidence that legislation cannot grant women their rights.



A recent National Abortion Campaign in Birmingham

the Lib-Lab government's policies of wage-cutting, creating unemployment and slashing the social services are attacking the working class and pushing women back into the home and family.

Not only has there been a long string of restrictive Private Members Bills appearing in parliament since 1967 (the James White and Benyon Bills are the most notorious),

discussions with anti-abortionists about the possibilities of a government sponsored restrictive "compromise" Bill.

The latest in this string of anti-abortion Bills comes up in Parliament on Tuesday 21 February.

It is proposed by Tory MP Bernard Braine, and follows the lead of the Benyon and White Bills in attempting to

from 28 to 20 weeks and to impose restrictions on the charitable sector.

Restrictive Bills must be defeated through mass pressure, but abortion rights will not be conceded in Parliament as ALRA proposes. They must be fought for as part of the campaign to stop and reverse the cuts, and to defeat the reactionary policies of

# NO CHALLENGE FROM LEFT ON RACE COALITION



A new depth of class collaboration was struck last week when Lib-Lab Prime Minister Callaghan asked for joint talks on immigration controls with racist Tory leader Margaret Thatcher.

Thatcher, revelling in the news that her call for an end

to coloured immigration had helped the Tories take an 11% lead in opinion polls, rejected Callaghan's appeal.

### Split

Meanwhile the Tory press was desperately trying to create the impression of a "split" between Thatcher and Heath on the race issue.

The only "division" in Tory ranks is on whether or not the viciously reactionary 1971 Immigration Act passed by the Heath government and energetically implemented by both Wilson and Callaghan governments, is adequate to the task of barring the entry of further sections of black workers and their families.

### No call

Thatcher herself has made no call for new legislation on the issue.

Indeed it is very doubtful whether or not she is the slightest bit interested in the issue of immigration as anything other than a means of gathering a base of reactionary support for the attacks a Tory government will need to wage on the unions.

Home Secretary Merlyn Rees pointed out that existing legislation now being enforced by the Lib-Lab government represents, (in Thatcher's words):

"a policy which is clearly designed to work towards the end of immigration as we have seen it in this country in post-war years".

Rees vigorously denied that the government intended to "play it soft" on immigration.

### Steady drop

Current legislation is producing a steady drop in immigration, he boasted.

Yet aside from their ritual denunciation of the Tories, Labour 'lefts' have remained almost silent on this issue.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

### Rees

It means nothing to attack Thatcher for "going for the Alf Garnett vote" if at the same time 'left' MPs are endorsing the Lib-Lab coalition government's racist policy on immigration.

For the Labour leaders as with the Tories, such reactionary policies are part and parcel of all-round attacks on the jobs and living standards of the working class as a whole.

For socialists it is a matter of principle to oppose all forms of immigration controls enforced by the capitalist state, and to insist on the right of a worker to live and to work in the country of his or her choice.

Labour Parties must demand a clear statement from their MPs and prospective candidates on this key question.

Those that claim to oppose immigration law must be called upon to follow this policy through in practice by campaigning for workers to break the Lib-Lab coalition, by voting against in Parliament and by taking up the fight to remove the Callaghan-Healey leadership.

Those that—however fully—declare support for such legislation must be hounded out of the labour movement within which they act as agents of the Tories.

## Import controls—Callaghan joins 'left'



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

imported Russian steel and is busily engaged in forcing other importers to impose "voluntary" quotas restricting their sales in Britain.

And last Wednesday in Parliament Prime Minister Callaghan spelled out the connection between such protectionist moves, his own capitalist policies and moves to head off working class opposition.

### Extremism

Warning that a rise in world unemployment would "encourage political extremism", Callaghan spelled out a series of pro-capitalist measures to run the crisis-ridden system more efficiently.

He then went on to urge British firms to buy components made in Britain in order to cut imports and "reduce unemployment".

But, like the Tribunes who share this view, Callaghan avoided any attempt to explain how

"world unemployment" would benefit from simply transferring work at present done overseas to British factories.

### Prospect

Nor did he investigate the prospects of other capitalist classes undertaking similar measures elsewhere.

Callaghan of course makes no secret of his solidarity with British employers. The Tribunes tend generally to be rather more guarded in their attitude.

But the import controls argument always forces them into a bloc with British bosses.

### Deplored

This was demonstrated when 'lefts' Joan Lester and Oonagh McDonald joined with 'left wing' junior minister Bob Cryer to deplore discounts offered on sales of imported cars.

Purchasers of Fiats were

being offered hire purchase at 5% interest, announced a scandalised Ms McDonald.

Yet even while this indignation was being voiced by the 'lefts', British Leyland and Ford were doing their best to compete in the home market—by determined efforts to impose speed up on their workers at Speke and Halewood.

### Foreign

Not a whisper of protest was raised against 'our' bosses: the whole fury of the 'lefts' remains directed at those sneaky "foreign" bosses—and, implicitly, at their equally sneaky "foreign" workforce.

Callaghan must have followed the affair in delight.



PHOTO: Mark Risher



Callaghan with Tribune MP Brian Sedgemore

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

## PRESS GANG GOEBELDYGOOK

On March 3, 1945 Goebels, Minister of Propaganda and Enlightenment made a significant entry in his diary:

"In England strike fever has reasserted itself. Labour in the docks and ports stops work for trivial reasons. One does not have to look far to detect political reasons behind these strikes. The Kremlin is taking a hand in the game.

"The Daily Mail has just made a truly sensation admission; it says that for two years now I have been the only person to analyse the case of Poland correctly and forecast accurately the way in which England would succumb to the Kremlin.

"Churchill comes in for criticism of rare severity. In general terms the Daily Mail entirely supports our viewpoint in its estimate of the Polish problem and accuses Churchill of more monotonous repetition of the battle cry 'Beat the Huns' while England is slowly going to the

dogs". It is good that the Observer has decided to reprint (for reasons of its own) extracts from Goebels' diary in the last months before his suicide in a Berlin bunker.

The quotes have come at a particularly appropriate time. The Daily Mail—forced to choose between fascism and what it incorrectly diagnosed as Bolshevism made it clear that it would choose Hitler.

As in 1945 so in 1978. The Daily Mail enlisted the NOP to poll blacks in Britain last week and published its results blazoned on its front page under the enigmatic heading "The Urge to Go Back Home".

What their pollsters discovered was that a significant percentage of blacks of West Indian origin said there was some chance of them taking the money and going if they were offered a £5000 inducement.

The Mail has learned from the outcry following the Sun's 1976 stories on Malawi

Asians nothing but a little circumspection. It reminded readers it was cold. It warned readers against too hasty adherence to the obvious conclusion it was trying to draw—that the racist 'solution' of mass deportations was justified. The victims themselves supported it!

There is no need to play the percentage game. Every single one of the blacks interviewed—100%—is a victim of capitalism. Why should we be surprised at how many express their frustration in a search for a utopian solution?

The Daily Mail may be saving up for their air tickets. We have another proposal. We propose to bring them Bolshevism—and this time the real thing.

The answer for the black workers is the same answer for the white workers. A turn to the Bolshevism—against which the Daily Mail and the successors to Goebels stand united.

## £4 bn. PIPE DREAM

Latest gimmick in the concerted campaign by coalition minister Tony Benn to reupholster his threadbare 'left' reputation is a utopian plan for a £4 billion budget—double the amount likely to be allocated.

Benn, as chairman of the Labour Party's largely ignored Home Policy Committee, has put his name to a call on Chancellor Healey to raise child benefits, pensions and health service spending.

### Scorned

He does so in the firm knowledge that while such policies will be lapped up by the Tribune Group of 'lefts', they will be completely scorned by the Callaghan-Healey cabinet—of which



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

### Healey

Benn is a member. But one other aspect of Benn's plan may well appeal to Healey.

He seeks an extra £810

million to be allocated to National Enterprise Board the body that is pre-carving up British Leyland and British Shipbuilders, troying thousands of jobs

### Rationalise

The NEB—set up originally by Wilson in 1974 to out and rationalise bank sections of capitalist industry—has always been loved by Labour's 'lefts' who see it as a means of averting the fight for nationalisation. The views of workers privileged to be on growing redundancy lists are not likely to be so enthusiastic.

# STALIN'S DEFENSIVE EXPANSION IN POST WAR EUROPE

Paul Stein reviews "Communist Power in Europe 1944-49", edited by Martin McCauley, published by MacMillan, 1977, at £10.

In May 1943, as the Red Army was forcing Hitler into the retreat, Stalin disbanded the Communist International. The first of the reasons he gave was that its dissolution 'exposes the lie of the Hitlerites to the effect that "Moscow" allegedly intends to intervene in the life of other nations and to "Bolshevise" them'. There can have been few predictions on a very important subject. The essential political shape of Europe today was formed during the period which it covers.

At the end of the Second World War the 'allied' great powers (the USA, the USSR and Britain) had a common policy of reconstructing capitalist states right across continental Europe—under Soviet occupation in the east, and under the Anglo-American armies in the west and south.

At that time it was expected that private property, in land, industry and banking would continue everywhere outside the Soviet Union.

## Not foreseen

Few people—and least of all Stalin—had any inkling that by 1948-9 an 'iron curtain' would divide the two hostile, armed camps, and that to the west of it atrociously anti-communist regimes would be in power, while the countries to the east would be transformed into smaller images of the Soviet state.



Togliatti

The 'grand alliance' for 'democracy' against German fascism had completely broken down and the 'cold war' against the Soviet Union was in full swing.

This collection of papers aspires to say of Stalinist policy in this period what happened, how it happened, and why.

In the first aim it has some, relative, success; in the other two it completely fails.

Even so, merely to provide an overview of some of the main diplomatic and political

events in a period which has been so systematically distorted by Stalinist and bourgeois historians gives the book some value.

But the genesis of the book cuts it off from any serious attempt at explanation.

The individual chapters were prepared as contributions to the European Studies, London University, in 1974-6.

## Anti-communists

Most of them deal with their selected countries in isolation from the European or international political situation.

All of the authors are anti-communists and several have acquired their specialist knowledge partly by working for the British intelligence services.

What, then, is there in this book to recommend it to workers and socialists in the class struggle today?

Simply the fact that it collects between two covers details of the policies of the European Communist Parties during the most critical years of the post-war period—details which cast a sharp light on the political character of Stalinism and which, consequently, the leaders of today's Communist Parties (many of whom served their political apprenticeships in that period) would much rather keep discretely buried.

The point is best

illustrated by referring to some of the countries described in the individual chapters.

## Monarchy

Take the question of monarchy. So far was Stalin from any intention to establish 'socialism' in eastern Europe in 1944-5 that he the first two countries the Red Army entered: Rumania and Bulgaria, both of whom had been allied with Germany.

In Rumania, where the monarchy had traditionally been backed up by the native anti-semitic Iron Guard fascist movement, King Michael was kept on the throne and given, in 1944-5, a substantial political role.

He was regularly toasted by Stalinist officials as 'the people's king' and continued to reign, protected by Soviet bayonets, until the 'Cold War' was well under way.

He was forced to abdicate, almost by accident, at the very end of 1947.

## Wedding

He had just returned from London, (where he had been attending the wedding of Elizabeth Windsor) with a prospective bride of his own—Princess Anne of Bourbon Parma—and he seems to have expected (reasonably enough, given the circumstances) to continue the dynasty indefinitely.

Stalin, though, apparently drew the line at this prospect and His Progressive Highness was sent packing—along with a large quantity of the Rumanian people's property—into exile (the Soviet bureaucracy was never inclined to treat autocrats too unkindly).

In the chapter by Professor Bela Vago the role of the King and monarchist politicians in alliance with the Stalinists in Rumania are usefully sketched, including several of the details given above.

## Strength

In Bulgaria, the strength of the wartime resistance and of the underground Communist Party were much greater—an estimated 15,000 members compared with 883 in



Rumania, on the eve of the Red Army's entry.

Moreover the monarchy was in suspension; the last occupant, the notoriously savage and decadent King Boris, had died after returning from a visit to Hitler in 1943.

But the Stalinists did not simply let the monarchy lapse. They appointed a

The chief figure on this body was the official 'theoretician' of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Todor Pavlov!

## Referendum

Only later, when a referendum (the first and only free vote in Bulgaria's history) massively rejected the

the old ruling class and brought within the Anglo-American orbit.

## 'Ex'-fascist

In July 1943, with the alliance with Hitler obviously hopeless, Mussolini was ousted by a palace coup.

In September King Victor Emmanuel (who had not lifted a finger against fascism in almost twenty years) and his government under the 'ex'-fascist Marshall Badoglio were forced to flee from Rome to the south, where they surrendered to the American and British forces landing on the mainland.

But, with Hitler having taken over direct control of almost the whole peninsula, and with such recent and



monarchy, was the heir, Prince Simeon, sent into exile (with £5 million to console him).

Rumania and Bulgaria were destined for the Soviet 'sphere of influence'. In Italy the Communist Party leadership slavishly respected Stalin's agreement that the country should be restored to

flimsy 'anti-fascist' credentials, their political authority was virtually nil, and the Americans hesitated to give them any sort of recognition.

It was Stalin who injected life into Badoglio's monarchist circus, and in so doing paved the way for the rescue of capitalism in Italy.

CP leader Palmiro Togliatti



Rumanian fascist leaders



as soon as he returned from the Soviet Union (which was the first power to recognise the Badoglio government) demanded that the entire left collaborate with Badoglio and the King, postponing 'political questions' until the war was over, and himself accepting a cabinet post. Only the 'left' camouflage which this provided enabled the government and the Anglo-American military command to reassert their control after the insurrection of April 1945, when the mass uprising of the working class and the partisans liberated virtually all the cities of northern Italy ten days before allied troops arrived.

Chapter 10 outlines this and later policies of the Italian CP.

### Church privilege

The monarchy was finally ended by referendum, though the new constitution preserved most of the privileges of the Catholic Church.

In France it was a little late to retrieve the monarchy. But Edward Mortimer's lively chapter describes how the French CP gave its full support to the next best thing: de Gaulle's government.

Returning from Moscow with his policy of 'One nation, one state, one army!' CP chief Maurice Thorez concentrated his political fire against the left and the most militant sections of the working class.

The partisan detachments were disbanded and dissolved, or absorbed into the Gaullist army, though not before a number of political opponents of the Stalinists within the resistance and the trade unions had been 'liquidated'.

### Battle for Production

From autumn 1944 the French Stalinists threw their full weight behind the 'battle for production', abandoning the wartime wage demands, branding strikers as 'agents of the trusts' (!), and so on.

France was the only nation of continental Europe with a substantial empire to recover. In this task the Communist Party assisted de Gaulle with the maximum of nationalist gusto.

and ought to remain a great African power'.

The nationalist demonstrations for independence in Algeria in May 1945 were accordingly condemned as a 'fascist conspiracy', a lie which helped to hold back opposition within France to the bloody reprisals unleashed by de Gaulle in Algiers.

### Indochina

In 1946 Communist ministers voted for the credits to escalate the aggression in Indochina against the Vietminh, clearing the way for seven years of the most brutal colonial war.

Immediately after the war, therefore, Stalinist policy right across Europe supported capitalism. In the west and south Stalinist leaders collaborated with the new governments (France and Italy) or retreated before them, as in the British-backed civil war to restore the King and his pro-fascist politicians in Greece, where Stalin cynically sacrificed tens of thousands of Communists to his agreement with Churchill.



French imperialist troops murder Algerian nationalists

In Eastern Europe the nationalisations that were carried out in the immediate post-war period were not done to establish a planned economy, but to ship more resources to the Soviet Union or, sometimes, to recover control over factories whose owners had fled and which had been occupied by the workers.

The main socially progressive steps at this time were partial land reforms (without

would have been paralysed, anyway).

Dr. McCauley's book includes many political details of this period, but it never identifies the continent-wide process that gave rise to them: the enormous growth, from 1943 on, of revolutionary mass movements right across Europe, which thrust the Stalinist parties in many countries to the head of events (for lack, usually, of any other leadership) but which Stalin's men then systematically deceived, betrayed and derailed.

What is virtually ignored in the book is the extent to which in Eastern Europe, the Stalinists and the Red Army command contained and suppressed the many organs of workers' power that were formed spontaneously as the rule of the Nazis collapsed.

### Disorientated

By 1947, therefore, the working class in most of Europe was disorientated and confused by the retreats which had been forced on it by its leaderships.

Largely as a result of this, imperialism felt strong enough to resume the offensive against the Soviet Union and its territories in Eastern Europe.

In the spring the Stalinists were unceremoniously chucked out of the French and Italian governments: the US launched a strategy (the Marshall Plan) for economic penetration and recovery into both East and West Europe.

Truman announced the US's responsibility to rescue peoples threatened by 'Communist aggression'—external or internal.

### Pragmatic

It was this renewed offensive which brought, as a pragmatic reaction by the Kremlin, the piecemeal social transformation of the Eastern European countries, mainly in the years 1947-9.

By a combination of police action, political mergers, and ballot rigging they were all converted into 'People's Democracies' modelled on the Soviet state.

Almost everywhere the working class played a passive role as spectators to a police operation.

Only in the last country to be 'sovietised'—Czechoslovakia, with more industry, a larger workers' movement and a more well-established Communist Party than the rest of Eastern Europe—was there any scale of mobilisation, and even that was short-lived and carefully controlled.

In any case, the very fact that the political takeover came last (February 1948) in Czechoslovakia, the country



which was politically and socially most advanced, shows how subordinate was the role of the working class.

There was, in fact, much greater Stalinist mobilisation of the working class in west Europe. The Italian and (even more so) the French Communist Parties were turned sharply to the left to serve the requirements of Soviet foreign policy.

At the founding conference of the Cominform (in



20 years after Stalinism's defensive expansion into the buffer states, a Stalinist tank enforces Kremlin domination over Czechoslovakia

Thorez was torn off a strip for his opportunist policies at the end of the war, and sent back to lead a suicidal strike movement against the government and its pro-American policies.

But the essentials of the war-time agreements Stalin had made with the imperialist powers were not breached.

Europe remained carved into 'spheres of influence' and the fate of a nation was decided by where it lay.

### Peoples' Democracies

Thus France, Italy and Greece, which had had powerful Communist Parties even under the illegal conditions of the war period, remained capitalist, while Rumania and Hungary, both very backward countries in which wartime Communism was a negligible force, were transformed into 'People's Democracies'.

Dr. McCauley and his colleagues are prevented by their method of approach from examining this process as a whole, and therefore from understanding it. They have no sympathy with (and very slight appreciation of) Marxism.

### Balkanised

And, reflecting this, they have 'balkanised' their subject to give a 'country-by-country' treatment of it. Theoretically speaking, they are disciples of the school of studying 'socialism in one country'.

What never emerges clearly from their book is that behind all the national peculiarities international political forces were at work.

Stalin and the Soviet bureaucracy occupied Eastern Europe at the close of the war for essentially defensive purposes, to use it as a buffer and hostage to protect them in their future dealings with imperialism.

It was not, initially, a matter of concern to them what the class character of the states was; they were prepared to work with whatever political forces were to hand and appeared (like the monarchy and a number of 'reformed' fascists) cooperative.

Only when the Cold War showed that they could not have stable political and military conditions while leaving the old ruling classes in place, did they move to depose them.

### Not local

State power in Eastern Europe had never been a purely local or national question; in the years after the War it almost entirely ceased to be so.

The essential decisions were taken not in Warsaw, Budapest, Sofia or Bucharest, but in Moscow and Washington.

An interesting example is that of the Czech Communist Party, whose leadership initially accepted, along with

the rest of the government, the attractive terms of the US's Marshall 'aid'; only after urgent redirection from Moscow did they turn round and refuse.

### Finland

*Communism in Europe 1944-49* almost entirely loses sight of the general forces acting on Stalinist policies, allowing each individual academic author to indulge his prejudices and impressions about the country he is writing on.

Its standpoint is the polar opposite of (and presumably intended as an antidote to) the theory widely offered to students that every step taken by any Communist Party, anywhere and ever, is part of a Machiavellian Leninist plot, coordinated from Moscow for the last sixty years, for the world conquest of power—a plot miraculously frustrated by the representatives of bourgeois democracy (with the help of a number of happy accidents).

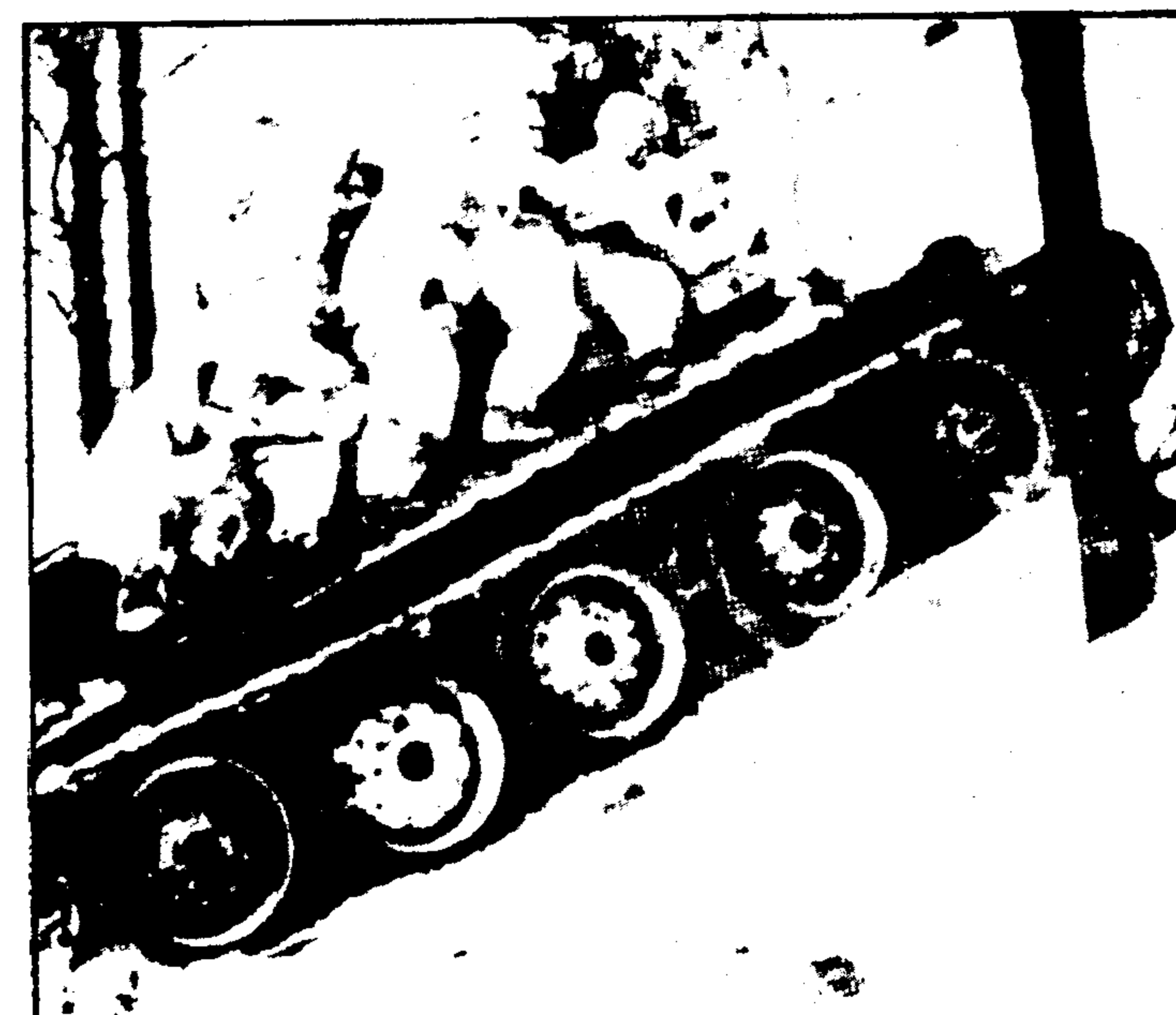
### Improvement

Dr. McCauley's book is an improvement on this genre, but not by very much. Its contributors share a taste for *realpolitik*.

This is occasionally reflected in an unintentional appreciation of the essentially bourgeois, hypocritical and profoundly anti-democratic character of Stalinist political methods, as when one of the *doyens* in the subject (Prof. Seton-Watson) concedes that: "the manoeuvres and ingenuity of the Communists in Eastern Europe can provide a good deal of intellectual pleasure".

### Patchy

But the book is patchy not only in method, but in selection. It lacks, for example, any treatment of the Yugoslav revolution or even any systematic discussion of Stalin's split with Tito (June 1948) which affected the world Stalinist



Soviet tank fighting invading German forces

movement, and the Eastern European states most of all.

As compensation, however, it covers some topics on which little material is available.

There is an informative chapter on the assimilation of the 'Baltic states' (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) into the Soviet Union.

And there is a chapter on the little-known exception which proves the general rule of 'defensive expansion' in the Stalinist takeovers of Eastern Europe in 1947-9: Finland.

Early in 1948 the Finnish CP leadership made a 'left' turn, led major strikes and even prepared for insurrection under the impression (held by some of them, at least) that, backed by the threat of Soviet force, they were going to take power.

But there was to be no 'Prague coup' in Helsinki. At the height of the political crisis Stalin signed a treaty with the right-wing government leaders which secured Finland's military neutrality.

He gave the right wing economic concessions which brought them a consequent landslide electoral victory over the Finnish Communist Party, which was driven into the wilderness for over a decade.

### 'Neutral'

The Kremlin had decided that a weak 'neutral' state, out of bounds to foreign armies, between them and the Baltic, offered just as good protection, with much less fuss, than 'liberating' the Finnish people.

This book, therefore, uneven and partial though it is, has value as a source of facts and further references for a crucial period of the European Stalinist movement.

Its value, however, is nothing like sufficient to justify its price: at £10 (slightly over 4p a page) all but the most devoted students of the subject will wish to order it through their public library.

# IN REVIEW

## Amnesty has no answer to apartheid

A Review of 'Political Imprisonment in South Africa', an Amnesty International Report. Price £1.00 from Amnesty International Publications, 10, Southampton St, London WC2E 7HF.

Under a new law proposed in South Africa black workers who lose their jobs and remain unemployed for three months will be open to arbitrary jailing or immediate 'deportation' to the African homelands.

This move, to accelerate the process of coralling black workers in the 13% of land mass reserved for them under apartheid, seeks also to tie the policy to the immediate needs of capitalism.

### Unemployment

Unemployment in South Africa has increased steadily from 580,000 in 1962 to that there is a gradual easing of the police state and apartheid regime.

Despite Soweto, despite the murder of Steve Biko and at least 20 other political prisoners since August 1976 in police custody, defenders of trade with South Africa try to give the impression of a gradual end to a dark age which stretches back into the dim and distant past.

The booklet—*Political Imprisonment in South Africa*—produced by Amnesty International—has therefore an important educative role to play, though not necessarily the one that the authors intend.

### Valuable

Far and away the most valuable section in a booklet which will undoubtedly be widely read among the labour movement in Britain is the

section which outlines the introduction of the police state measures.

Far from emerging from a dark age, the barbarous leaders of the South African regime are driving the black population into ever more horrifying conditions.

### Repressive

The demands of capitalism and the logic of the racist regime push always towards more repressive legislation, more imprisonments and more economic and social deprivation.

The apartheid programme was introduced in 1948. Before that time many of the racist features of the state were already apparent. But the powers to extend them to their logical conclusion did they were placed on a separate roll and were empowered to elect three white representatives to the House of Representatives.

### Rights removed

Blacks throughout the country were empowered to elect three more white 'spokesmen' to the Senate. (If this has a familiar ring that is perhaps because it bears an uncanny resemblance to the method proposed by Ian Smith in Zimbabwe to secure white rule there under a sell-out settlement).

It was not until 1959 that these minimal rights were removed. For Cape Coloureds the charade of electing four white representatives was allowed to continue until 1968.

This is mirrored by the strengthening of the powers of the police state. The Sup-

pression of Communism Act was introduced in 1950. It was largely replaced by the Internal Security Act in 1976—an Act which considerably extended police powers.

In general the laws have been introduced in response to whatever form black resistance was taking. The Criminal Law Amendment Act in 1953 was aimed at passive resistance.

It allowed for three year prison sentences for persons convicted of offences committed in protest against any law.

After Sharpeville when the passive resistance turned active the laws became more direct.

### Retroactive

Police were given extensive powers to hold and detain incommunicado and without charge indefinitely. Communism had previously been defined as:

"... any doctrine which aims at bringing about any political, industrial, social or economic change... by the promotion of disturbances or disorder, by unlawful acts or omissions or by means which include the promotion of..." (our italics).

### 'Prejudice'

The Terrorism Act was equally loose with its language. It included activities which could cause "prejudice to any industry or undertaking" or which would cause "embarrassment to the administration of the affairs of the State".

The mandatory minimum sentence is five years jail. The maximum sentence is death.

The Internal Security Act of 1976 is probably the high point in legalised gansterdom. It extends almost all the powers of the Prevention of Communism Act and allowed for banning of all and any opponents of apartheid.

Under one section of this Act witnesses or potential witnesses in a state trial can be held for up to six months, if the state thinks they will abscond or be intimidated.

In the 15 months up to September 1977 official South African figures said 2430 people had been arrested under the various provisions of these and other overtly political laws. More than 1300 people have been banned since 1950.

### Torture

The booklet outlines many examples of torture used as a casual part of the state system. In its solemn careful way, always it seems trying to convince a reluctant and disbelieving audience, Amnesty International comes to the conclusion that torture has been an everyday occurrence for the past 15 years.



But Amnesty International is Amnesty International. If it could send its reporters to hell it would come back with a careful and accurate account of some of the boiling in oil and skewering of the inmates. It would build up a picture of the barbarity of the Satanic regime. It would then inevitably demand a series of reforms.

Amnesty International stands for the release of all political prisoners, a position very different from that of a Communist.

### Exploited

Our responsibilities as Trotskyists to those men and women who are being tortured and murdered, who are being economically exploited and politically sup-

pressed are great.

We cannot demand an easing of the nooses around their necks. We must lead them to settle the account with the hangman in full.

### Integrated

There are conditions when demands for rights for political prisoners, integrated into a programme for the overthrow of the regime, have a progressive role.

In South Africa such demands are meaningless and irrelevant.

The black workers have shown again and again that they have the will to stand up to the regime directly, to confront it physically. That they cannot do so is a consequence of the lack of Trotskyist leadership.

The demand for the release of political prisoners is one that must be a part of the campaign. But it is only a part.

What Amnesty International will not recognise is that the apartheid system it abhors props up a system which it tolerates—capitalism.

When the day of the South African revolution dawns and those racist leaders and treacherous collaborators face their reckoning, then those who escape the gallows or who fail to flee the country will be hurled into the prisons of their own making.

How then will the demand from Amnesty International to free all political prisoners look? The freedom we demand is for the enemies of apartheid, not its friends.

## CHARITY STRIPPED OF ITS DISGUISE

The lid was unceremoniously ripped off the middle class 'charity' world by last Tuesday's BBC 1 'Play for Today'.

The *After Dinner Joke* by Caryl Churchill tore into the illusion that charity is somehow "outside politics", dealing particularly memorably with the question of colonial exploitation and "disaster relief".

Selby, a young employee of a big business charity, seeks out ways and means of "selling" charity to an audience.

Her efforts threaten to lead from drawing polite attention to the poverty of Ceylonese tea-pickers to the point of outright agitation against the swollen profits and vicious exploitation of the tea monopolies.

Her employers in embarrass-

ment transfer her to the job of spending some of the enormous sums of money contributed by bourgeois and middle class supporters.

She is told it makes little sense to give aid in the Gulf States—whose national income is in excess of that in Britain, though monopolised by a handful of Sheikhs, while the remainder of the population exist in grinding poverty.

She encounters the land owner/money lender/grain dealer/supplier in Bangla Desh and hears how the peasant farmer is tied hand and foot in a system that ensures continued starvation.

And she travels to a hurricane "disaster" site, where banana monopolies have driven native farmers out of their valley holdings onto the hillsides, creating the conditions for a massive

landslide.

As she blithely announces that with the charity's aid things will soon be back "as they were" she is challenged by a voluntary worker, who points out that it was "things as they were" that caused the disaster, and that the problem is a political one.

The same point is rammed home by the Mayor, who proves that everything, every word, can be shown to have a political aspect, and that charity cannot be separated from it.

The play offered no answers. But, in wittily and amusingly shooting down the prevalent middle class myth that "charity" is a non-political, non-class question rather than a cosmetic dressing for the horrors of capitalism and imperialism it served a useful function.

Soweto civilian shot down, 1976



# OUR POLICIES Defend the USSR

Part Two. By Ian Swindale



Hungary 1956: spontaneous workers' councils emerged to challenge the Stalinist bureaucracy

To take a 'neutral' position in the struggle between imperialism and the workers' states is to permit the imperialists the chance not only to overthrow Stalinism, but also the nationalised property relations of the degenerated workers' states.

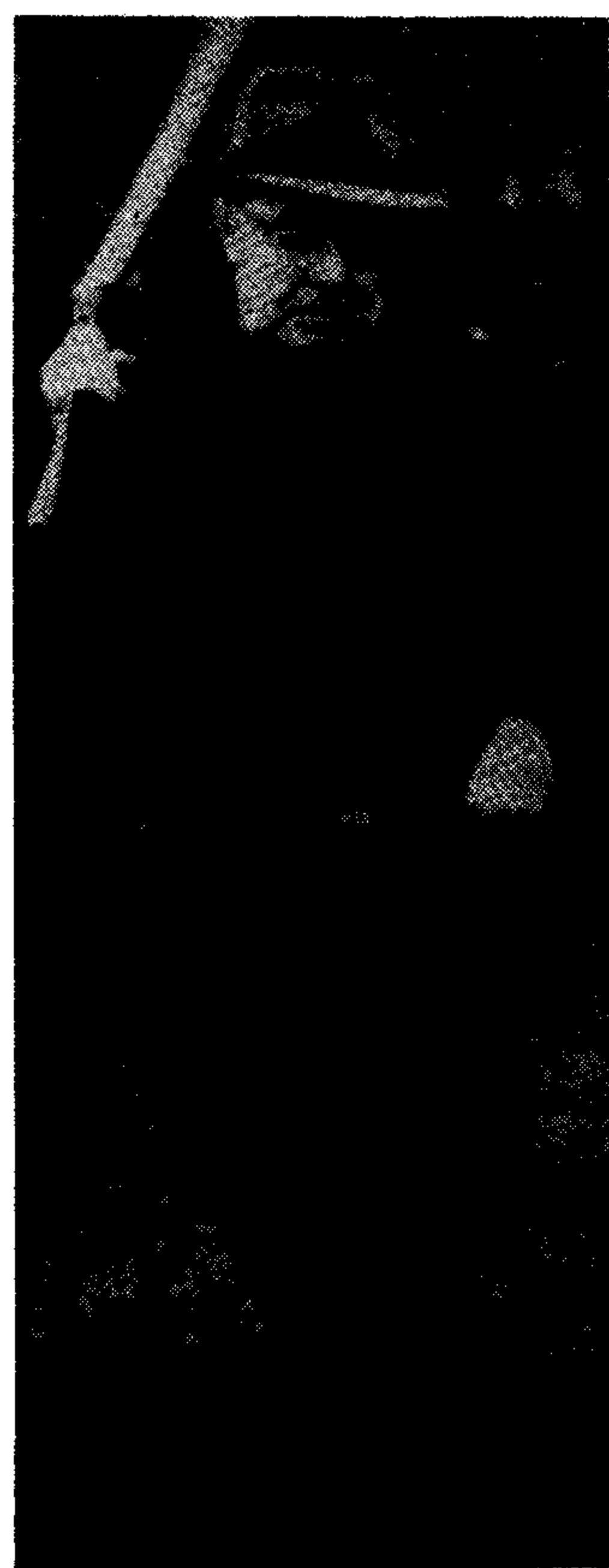
This was precisely the implication of the position adopted by the forerunners to today's Socialist Workers Party when, during the Korean War, they refused to support the workers' states against an imperialist offensive launched under the guise of a United Nations intervention.

By viewing the war as a struggle between two capitalist blocs, these renegades from Trotskyism refused to defend the gains of the October revolution claiming that these had already been destroyed.

## No finger lifted

Unable, of course, (as we pointed out in the first article) to say how or when these gains were destroyed, the state capitalists, in taking up a so-called 'neutral' position, in effect open the way for imperialism to threaten the gains of the October revolution without a finger lifted to mobilise the working class against the imperialist threat.

Our policy must be to defend the gains of the October revolution and, if that means in the first place defending the Stalinist bureaucracy against imperialism, then we do so in the knowledge that it is the task of the international workers' movement and not imperialism to finish off the job and deal with the Stalinist



Brezhnev

bureaucracy once the imperialist threat has been defeated.

How then is the Soviet Union best to be defended? The Stalinist bureaucracy of course is forced to defend the nationalised property relations of the Soviet Union.

But this defence is not carried out for any principled reasons. The bureaucracy defend the

nationalised property relations because it is on this that their power and privileges rest.

The biggest asset that the Kremlin bureaucracy has is the willingness of workers throughout the world to fight imperialism and come to the defence of the Soviet Union. But this is an asset that the bureaucracy dare not use.

## Extended

Lenin and the Bolsheviks, the International Left Opposition and today, the Fourth International all based themselves on the understanding that the October revolution could only survive if the revolution were extended from Russia to the major capitalist powers of Western Europe and beyond.

In this way the isolation and economic backwardness of the Soviet Union, apparent to this day despite the creation of numerous other workers' states, could be overcome.

But the Stalinist bureaucracy has consciously rejected this course of action.

Their attempts to defend the Soviet Union cannot include the independent mobilisation of the working class within the USSR or internationally, for the extension of the revolution.

## Political revolution

To do so would, on the one hand destroy the international relations established between Stalinism and imperialism for the division of the world into two camps, and, on the other hand, would be to invite the working class of the degenerated workers states to carry out the political

revolution that is a pre-condition for the establishment of the rule of the working class through its soviets throughout Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

So the parasitic caste that holds power in the Soviet Union uses its own bureaucratic methods to defend the property relations on which its privileged position is based.

But these bureaucratic methods have time and again, not strengthened the position of the USSR, but actually weakened it.

In the late 1930s, when it was clear to Marxists that war between the USSR and Germany was inevitable, Stalin murdered 70-80% of the army leadership as part of his drive to liquidate any potential opposition to his attempts to buy peace with imperialism through class collaboration.

## Invaded

As a result, when the German imperialists broke the contemptible Stalin-Hitler pact and invaded Russia in 1941, the Red Army was left without any experienced leadership.

Defeat was only averted by the unmovable determination of the Russian workers not to permit the return of capitalism to Russia which cost ten million lives.

This shows why a political revolution, a revolution which has as its task the removal of the bureaucratic caste which rules in the Soviet Union and other workers states is a necessary objective in the strategic defence of the USSR.

To lead such a revolution, a Trotskyist party must be built in the USSR.

The social revolution in Russia

has already been completed. The expropriation of the capitalists has led to the establishment of nationalised property relations and a planned-albeit bureaucratically deformed-economy.

## Restore Soviets

Now the bureaucracy must be removed and Soviet democracy restored. As Trotsky argued in the Transitional Programme, this task can only be carried out under the leadership and on the programme of the Fourth International.

In Trotsky's view: "A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy... Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labour!"

"The struggle for freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and the development of Soviet democracy."

"... It is necessary to return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank and file collective farmers, peasants and Red Army men."

Trotsky goes on to argue that democratisation of the soviets is

impossible without the legalisation of soviet parties with the workers and peasants themselves deciding which parties they recognise as soviet parties.

A revision of the planned economy and the restoration of workers management of production would be necessary to correct the bureaucratic deformations of the soviet economy and the reactionary international policy of the bureaucracy would have to be replaced by a return to proletarian internationalism.

## War threat

As the capitalist crisis continues unabated, the threat of war, including fresh attacks on the Soviet Union and other workers states must increase.

The fight against imperialism, against attacks on the living standards and organisations of the working class internationally and in defence of the workers states is the task which confronts all workers in the capitalist west and the degenerated workers states of the east.

Not the least of these tasks will be the defence of the Soviet Union and the overthrow of the bureaucracy which through its counter-revolutionary policies can only endanger the gains of the October revolution.

Next week:  
"Make the Lefts Fight".

# CHINA-NEW RESPECTABILITY

It can be no accident that the emergence into the world arena both politically and economically of the new Chinese bureaucracy under Teng Hsiao-ping coincided with a sympathetic 'China Week' on BBC TV.

The China that was the terrifying "bogey" of the bourgeois commentators of the past has now become an

apparently harmless, interesting country with smiling stereotyped peasants.

The self-imposed isolation of the 50s and 60s where socialism was to be built while the capitalist world was ignored, has now gone.

The Teng bureaucracy at least recognises that it is impossible to disregard the pressures of the capitalist economies on China.

But instead of proceeding from this understanding to try and strengthen the

workers' movements throughout the world and give assistance to those fighting to end capitalism, they now seek to work within the rules laid down by imperialism.

Hence their new-found admirers among Western TV programme directors and newspaper hacks.

Teng and Li Hsien-nien, following the example of bourgeois politicians, have become Asia-trotters.

Teng spent the beginning of February in Nepal on a state visit after being in Burma.

Li is soon to go to the Philippines, where he is to sign a contract for the sale of one million tons of petrol; and to Bangla Desh.

## Japan trade

February 16 saw the signing of a long-term trade agreement between China and Japan which involves the exporting of Chinese crude oil and coal and the importing of Japanese industrial plant, construction materials and equipment.

Also Japanese steel experts are already in China advising on the setting up of a steel rolling mill in Shanghai.

Three Hitachi computers have been sold to China. The sale was delayed by objections—particularly from the US—that these could be used for military purposes.

It has eventually been agreed that the memory

capabilities be reduced and that three technicians stay for three years to see the computers are just used for weather predictions.

Despite the intentions of the BBC, it was well worth watching the films shown from 4 February.

## Advances

The enormous advances that have been made in post-revolution China clearly shone through Joris Iven's China and even through Julian Pettifer's The Chinese Way.

They showed the great developments that could begin to be made when the profit motive is removed as the over-riding force in a society.

China has been transformed from a divided feudal country to a developing industrial society where the capitalist class has been removed by revolution.

And, although it is not a socialist society, as claimed, with the political overthrow of the parasitic Peking bureaucracy, the basis for a communist society will be laid.

## Advantages

British workers watching the achievements made in China can draw conclusions about the advantages of kicking out the capitalist class here.

Joris Iven's films particularly also showed the changes that have taken place since 1972 (when they were made) and today.

Then, account had to be taken of the upsurge of the youth against the Party bureaucracy during the Cultural Revolution.

Even though this feeling was controlled and channelled by the Maoist wing of the bureaucracy, it could not just be ignored.

The films showed the efforts to eliminate the privileged status of Party cadres and the unquestioned authority of the officers and leading figures.

## Explained

The bad effects of the bonus system and material incentives were explained. Efforts were made to show how criticism and questioning were encouraged.

This period has gone—even if in fact it ever existed as widely as indicated.

Material incentives, productivity deals and bonuses are now the officially sanctioned method of increasing production.

Leadership is to be obeyed without question.

To back this up a purge has been carried out with an unknown number of killings of real or supposed opponents.

The "Gang of Four" has

been used as the scapegoat.

The latest leading member of the regime to lose his position is Saifudin.

He has been removed as First Secretary of the Party in Sinkiang and from all his other posts.

He has been replaced by Wang Feng who was First Secretary of the Party in neighbouring Kansu before the Cultural Revolution, but was removed in 1968.

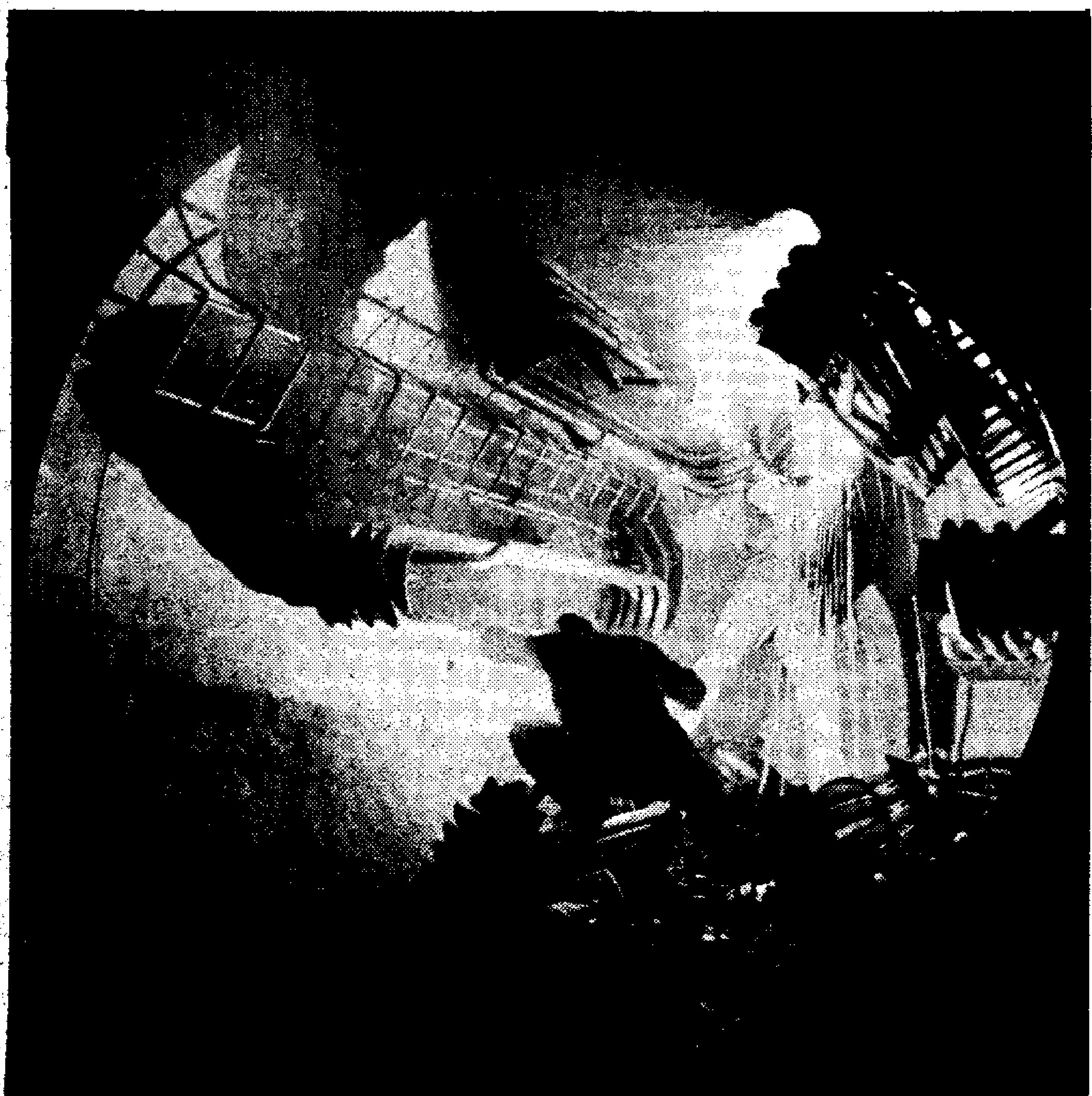
## Authority

This goes alongside efforts to reinforce the authority of the Party in the army.

A complete reorganisation of the main battalions is proposed. Particularly suspect are those who have maintained leading positions for a while and are accused of just "blowing with the wind" and hiding their true positions.

The debate also rages around the relative importance of up-to-date military equipment and professionally qualified soldiers or ideologically steered cadre.

What is certain is that unquestioning allegiance to the direction of the new regime is the quality most required by the Stalinist bureaucracy in China today—while an independent struggle for political revolution, and the construction of a conscious Trotskyist party, are needed by China's huge working class.



Modern technology at work in China



# INDUSTRIAL NEWS

## PLAN FOR NALGO CONFERENCE

On Saturday 11 February, delegates from 128 NALGO branches opposed to the Social Contract gathered in London to plan a campaign for calling a special conference.

From the outset it was clear that Communist Party Stalinists and the Socialist Workers Party had reached a basis of agreement on procedures and tactics towards the special conference but had failed to give the movement any clear programme.

### 'Unity'

The Stalinists, in fact, continued their strategy of stressing the need for 'unity' against the need for a clear programme.

One consequence of this was that a number of the resolutions sent to the meeting called for productivity deals and acquiescence in staff cuts.

The Stalinists' resolution, which was eventually carried, does no more than call for pay rises "in line with the private sector".

While calling for rejection of wage control in general and cash limits in particular, it shows no method of fighting for these demands.

It ignores the effect of inflation on public sector wages under the Social Contract and makes no mention of the problem of the lower paid.

### Amendments

There was a series of amendments, some calling for £10, some for £15, others for productivity deals to compensate for the loss of thousands of jobs in the last two years and so on and on for what seemed like hours.

The high point of the day's entertainment came when a speaker from the Pabloite IMG tried to hand a call for the sliding scale of wages onto a resolution which supported the 12-month rule.

### Ritualistic

As the dreary business dragged on the debate resolved itself into a battle between the Stalinists' resolution and the SWP's ritualistic demand for £15, which they have been making for the last two years regardless of continuing inflation.

The IMG, in desperation at its own irrelevance went through a series of turn arounds that must have left even them dizzy before coming down in favour of the SWP and their £15.

Once the Stalinist resolution was carried a large number of branches agreed to participate in the procedure for calling the special conference.

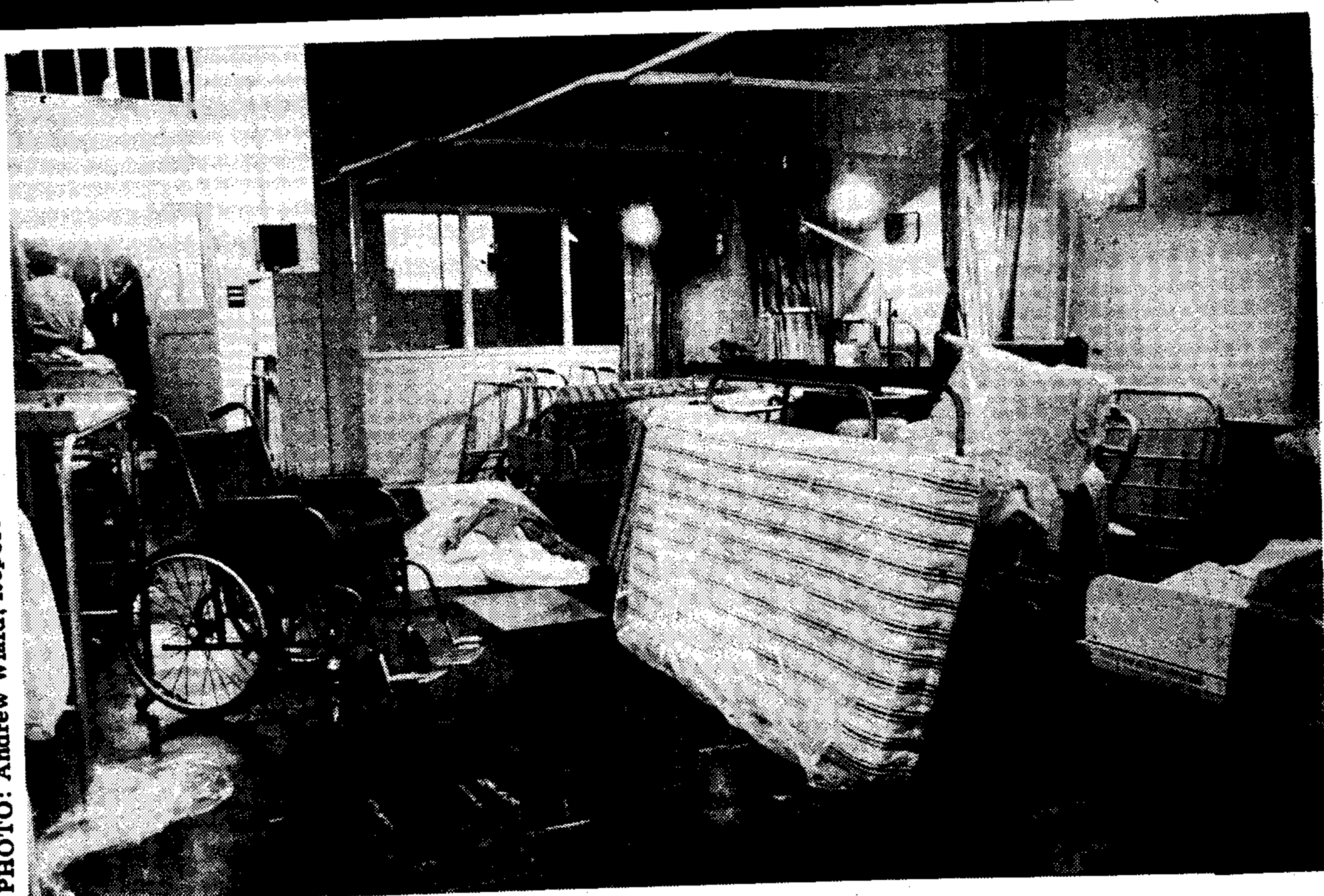
At this stage we should support the call and prepare resolutions that put forward a serious programme for the defence of jobs and conditions in the public sector.

Workers Socialist League members and supporters should take care in giving support to the call for a special conference.

Branch resolutions should be phrased in such a way as to support the moves made by the Scottish branches which are co-ordinating the campaign.

If they support the resolution in other terms they will find that conference procedures rob them of the right to propose amendments.

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Scenes after the sacking of Hounslow Hospital.

# STRIKE TO SAVE HOSPITALS

The period of 'consultation' by the Area Health Authority over the future of Bethnal Green Hospital has drawn to a close.

The threat to the casualty wards and other services vital to the population of this East London area, now looms with full force.

In the wake of the forcible closure of Hounslow Hospital as well as the threat to another East London Hospital in Plaistow, the defence of Bethnal Green stands at the centre of the struggle to defend the health service in London.

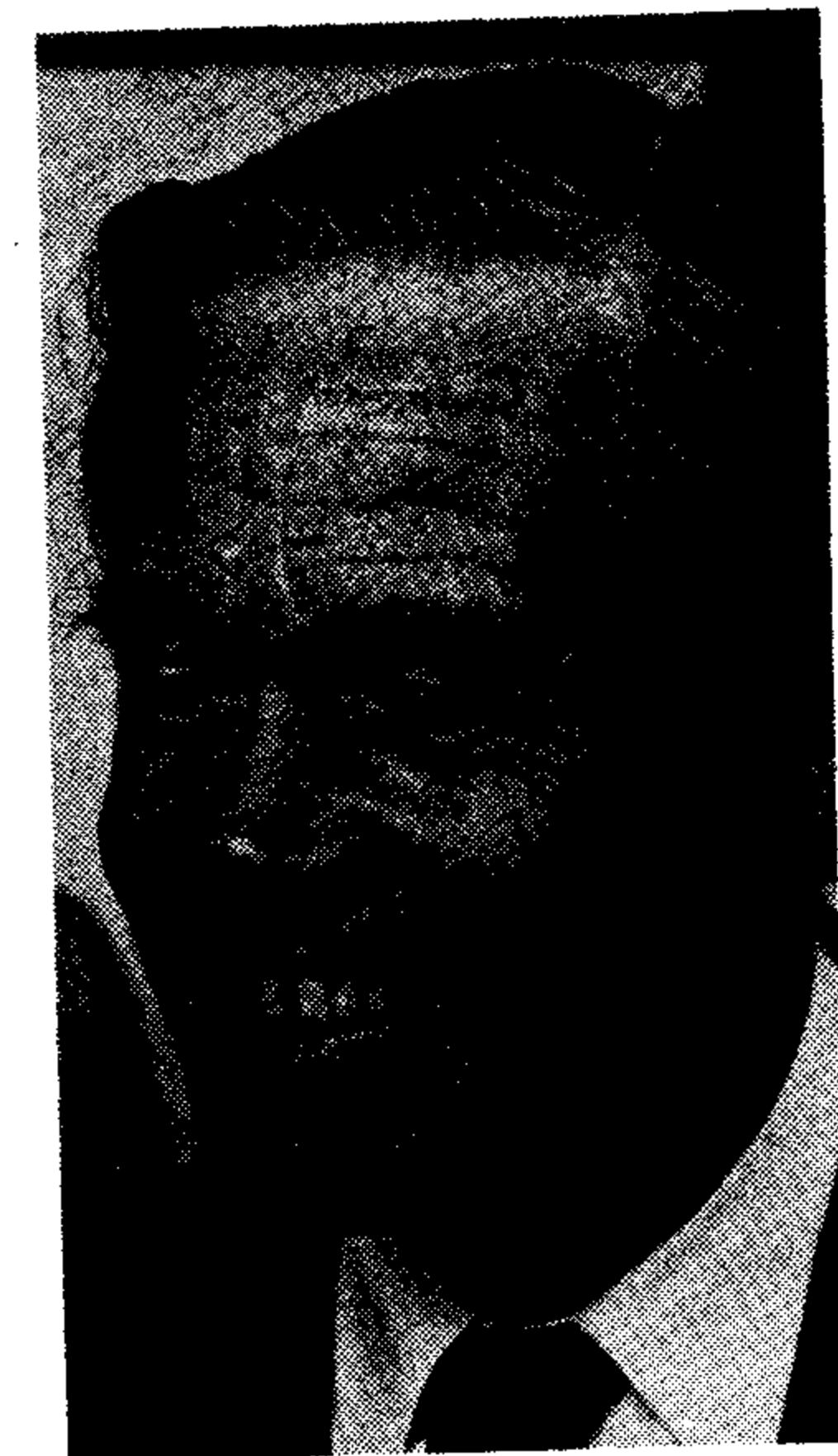
necessary tasks.

However, a step forward was taken. A speaker from the Workers Socialist League proposed a resolution for trade union branches demanding that the leader-

The committee accepted the resolution and it is being circulated to trade union branches.

The Workers Socialist League will now be taking up the fight for the policy of strike action against the cuts through this resolution, and calls on readers working in the health service in London to support this move.

It is through such a fight that the mobilisation of workers in defence of hospitals can be prepared and the inaction of the union leaderships exposed.



NUPE leader Fisher

ships of the public sector unions pledge themselves to call area-wide strike action in response to any attempt to close Bethnal Green.

The fight for this policy, which involves the political mobilisation of the strength of the working class and puts the union leaders, who have done nothing but talk against the cuts on the spot is the next step in the fight to prepare the defence of the health service.

### Discussion

Following a demonstration and various protest actions a discussion has been taking place in the committee composed of hospital workers, representatives of the local labour movement and the Bethnal Green community.

Several necessary steps have been taken to defend the hospital. In particular a resolution has been circulated to trade union branches asking for physical assistance to prevent any efforts by the authorities to move equipment or patients out of the hospital.

However, it is widely recognised that this is no guarantee of success.

### Smashed up

The brutal suddenness with which Hounslow was smashed up by hired scabs demonstrated this in a vivid way.

At the hospital itself the problem still remains of developing a leadership capable of directing the bitter struggle that will be necessary.

The step, for example, of occupying the hospital and enforcing workers control over the comings and goings of Area Health Authority officials and the like, still remains to be taken.

At the last meeting of the committee a speaker from the Socialist Workers Party proposed another petition as the next step.

### Diversion

Such protest methods, outside of a political perspective for struggle, can only serve as a diversion from the

## RAIL SELL-OUT NEAR

After a conference decision last year to demand a 63% pay increase, and after a fanfare of 'left' talk by union boss Sidney Weighell, the National Union of Railwaymen is

poised on the brink of a 10% settlement supplemented by a productivity deal.

Weighell carefully avoided stirring up militancy on wages in his pre-negotiation bluster late last month.

Instead he talked grandly

about demanding British Rail fill 9,000 posts that Weighell and other union bureaucrats have allowed to remain vacant.

Now even this talk is discarded, and the annual pay review will not only throw aside the 63% claim but also, by leaning on productivity dealing, will help slash further jobs on the railways.

Railway workers are seen as the only major sector of workers in the public sector other than the power workers with the industrial strength to cause widespread disruption in pursuit of a claim in excess of 10%.

Weighell's sabotage of the NUR claim is therefore an essential part of TUC moves to enforce the 10% limit now that they have ensured the defeat of the firemen.

But if little else would have been expected from staunch right winger Sid Weighell, train drivers' General Secretary Ray Buckton has cultivated an image as a 'left' opponent of the 10% pay limit.

But when it comes to mobilising his own members on their claim for 30-40%, Buckton is as reluctant as any right winger.

ASLEF train drivers have been called on to strike on March 1 for one day in a bid to achieve the same bonus as offered to NUR train drivers. Such phoney protest action—though the strike must be supported—offers no more than the prospect of an eventual ignominious sell-out.

All-out action is needed to break the 10% limit and regain and defend living stan-

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to construct a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class in Britain and internationally, and for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International on the basis of the Transitional Programme.

The WSL fights at every step against the existing leaders of the trade unions and the Labour Party — now firmly harnessed to the bourgeois politicians of the Liberal Party in an unspoken coalition arrangement.

Against their policies of class collaboration we put forward instead a programme which points to the independent class interests of the working class, its need to organise independently to overthrow capitalism, destroy its repressive state machinery and establish a socialist planned economy.

Only in this way can workers resolve today's problems of tumbling living standards, mass unemployment, slashed social services, racial, national and sexual oppression.

For more details on the WSL and its work, fill in the form below.

Name.....  
 Address.....  
 Trade Union/Occupation.....

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

## BP fold-

In the wake of the decision by stewards representing Shell tanker drivers to abandon their £90 a week pay claim, BP stewards have, as expected, voted to follow suit.

The meeting last Wednesday was much more evenly divided than that of the Shell stewards—splitting 32-28 in favour of a reworded management offer.

The collapse of the pay struggle by this enormously powerful section of workers is one of the repercussions of the TUC betrayal of the firemen's strike combined with the lack of an unofficial leadership capable of fighting the trade union bureaucracy.

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# Demand blacking by Power men prepare

The Garners Steak House strike for union recognition continues into its fourth week, after about 80 people supported a demonstration last Thursday, organised by Westminster Trades Council and the strike committee.

The demonstration, attended by few trades council delegates was diverted into the back streets of the West End, well away from the scab restaurants.

One picket was arrested while he was outside the Oxford Street restaurant talking to customers. Other pickets and supporters are being intimidated by police.

## TGWU!

The TGWU officials have not mobilised the blacking vital to win the strike or the levy inside the unions necessary to finance the strike.

All strikers are on only £6 a week hardship money.

The question of blacking supplies is as vital to the Garners strike as to every dispute in catering. The refusal of the Region 1 bureaucrats to implement it is precisely a statement of where they stand on victory.

Their refusal to organise a levy is the signal—familiar to all hotel and catering strikers—that the union intends to allow destitution to erode the ranks of the strikers.

### Blacking

Against that the strikers must turn their strength and determination back into the union, to demand blacking and adequate financial support.

Mass pickets are held every Saturday from lunchtime onwards.

The demand must be for union officials to organise support for these from the wider TGWU membership.

The scab restaurants must be closed and mass pickets organised to defend the regular pickets from police and fascists.

All donations and messages of support should be sent to the strike headquarters at 12-13 Henrietta Street, London WC2.

Power workers shop stewards have issued instructions to all power stations and depots to prepare for industrial action.

The stewards, meeting at the weekend endorsed rejection of the 10% offer with a £3.60 productivity deal and demanded that the leadership prepare a fight.

At the same time the stewards appeared to accept that the fight should be over bonus payments instead of a straight pay demand in excess

of 10%.

Correctly the stewards have decided not to trust Frank Chapple, general secretary of the EETPU. They have demanded full consultation with the rank and file before any offer is accepted.

The stewards are quite correct to suppose that Chapple is a management agent in their ranks. They are correct to guard against him.

The question for the power workers is however, larger.

The power workers are not

just fighting Chapple. To win their demand they must break the coalition.

Only by mobilising the strength of the working class through the creation of councils of action in the vicinity of every power station and fighting for other workers to strike for their own wage demands can the power workers stride towards winning their demands.

First and most immediately the power workers must decide on all out strike action in support of their full wage claim.

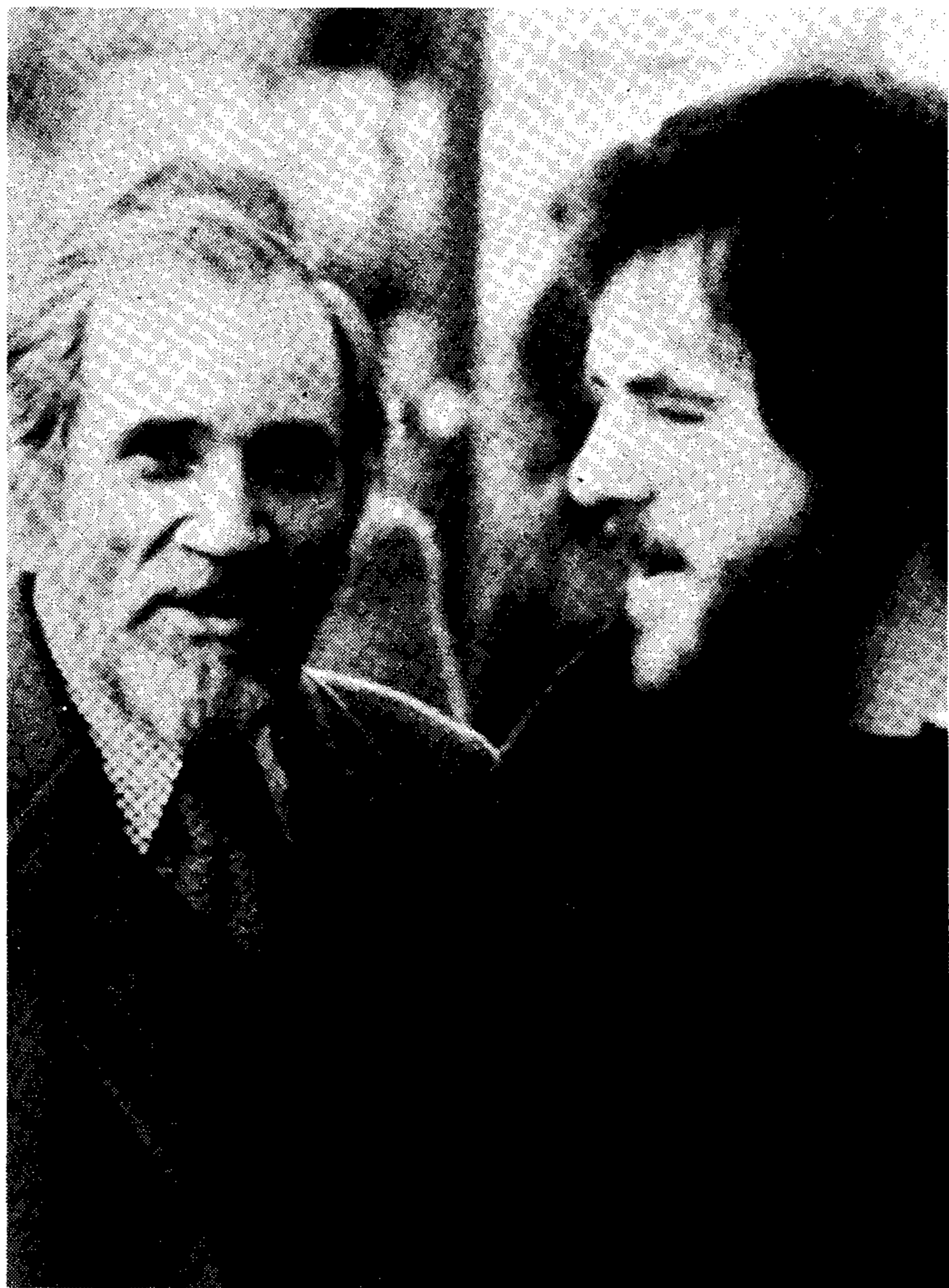


PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

Cyril Margolis and his son Geoffrey, Managing Director of Garners Steak Houses

# Wade cuts out NGA pay claim

Printers have not suffered the usual fate of a sell out halfway through wage negotiations—they have been sold out before the negotiations began!

limit—under the flimsy cover of 'unity' with other print unions.

The original claim for the provincial newspaper and printshop typesetters had been small enough—10%, a 35 hour week, retoration of differentials, consolidation of Phases 1 and 2, and improved bonus and a national sick pay scheme.

But Wade had no intention of allowing members to fight

on wages, despite the union's stance against wage controls and the 12 month rule.

First the Executive Committee decided to seek a joint approach with SOGAT, NATSOPA and SLADE.

Now all members have been told that 'enough common ground was established' for a joint claim—10% plus nothing.

In a letter to members Wade wrote:

'The claim was put forward on the understanding that, as part of the settlement a programme of meetings will be set up to negotiate during the life of the agreement a number of other claims . . .'

'The NGA's negotiations also made the point that we would expect to have, during the life of the agreement, constructive discussions about finding a comprehensive and permanent solution to the problem of our lower paid members and co-operation from the British Printing Industries Federation and Newspaper Society in encouraging the introduction of self financing productivity schemes'.

NGA General Secretary, Joe Wade, has withdrawn the union's claim which would have put it outside the 10%

## NUJ chapels divide

Journalists on provincial papers are paying the penalty of the absence of an adequate struggle over wages.

While a go-slow and work to rule is still being waged against the refusal by the Newspaper Society to back-date the ten per cent wage deal to January 1, the real question—the size of the increases at local level, is hardly being posed.

Those chapels which have won backdating are now engaged in negotiating every diversionary method of trying to win wage increases.

### Bonus

Paging bonus, concealed overtime and deas which threaten jobs are all being agreed.

Meanwhile those chapels which applied the work to rule most strictly are being punished by the Newspaper Society by being refused backdating. Every week the amount of money in dispute grows larger.

By settling a chapel at a

## and lose

time the Newspaper Society have achieved their aim of isolating those chapels which are prepared to fight directly and openly against the 10% limit.

### No challenge

It is the obvious failure of the leadership of the union that this has come about. But more important is the failure of any effective challenge to that leadership.

The SWP-dominated 'Journalists Charter' has had its usual negligible effect. Once the national vote had gone against a strike over the 10% limit the 'militants' of Journalists Charter gave up the fight for wages for another year.

Until a firm revolutionary base is built in the NUG, the willingness of journalists to end years of low wages will never be harnessed to face the political questions involved.

# Support for GEC pay fight

Storemen on strike at GEC's Stoke Plant, Coventry are being supported by those laid off by their action.

The storemen's claim of £2.88 a week backdated to January 1977 is for parity with other storemen within the plant.

Picketing of the stores has led to the lay off of over 1,000 workers, 100 of whom responded by occupying the Personnel Office in solidarity with those on strike.

### Computer room

The occupation has now been extended to the Computer Room. Last week the ASTMS branch meeting voted to give £200 to the strike fund.

Attempts to call off the

dispute through the intervention of ACAS failed last Tuesday when the talks broke down and a mass meeting of the storemen last Thursday voted to continue the action.

### Response

The response from other workers at the factory shows the feeling on wages building up inside GEC.

Low pay in the face of a mounting cost of living have laid the basis for a real fight to defend and regain living standards.

Workers supporting the storemen should extend that support by coming out alongside them on their own claims.

This demand should be raised on the JSSC which has voted full support to the storemen.

Donations to support those involved in the dispute should be sent to the JSSC, GEC Telecommunications Ltd, Telephone Works, Stoke, Coventry.

Henry Frolish, former finance officer of the National Union of Agricultural Workers, gambled away £24,000 of the union's funds. He was jailed at the Old Bailey for four years after admitting embezzling £24,000.

**O'fishall's Diary**  
...YOUR MAN AT THE TOP'S  
FIGHT TO STAY ON YOUR BACK.

AFTER THE EDWARDS MEETING...

TU OFFICE

TOO BAD ABOUT THOSE 12,500 JOBS, BUT WE CAN'T MAKE AN OMELETTE WITHOUT BREAKING EGGS

HELLO, O'FISHALL HERE... SHUT DOWN THIS PLANT? WELL, THAT WILL BE EXPENSIVE...

UT

2,500 WORKERS @ £6,000 EACH— PLUS 10% OF COURSE, LET'S SEE, THAT'S...

NOW LOOK HERE, MR EDWARDS, THIS IS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE... I CAN'T GUARANTEE TO PREVENT AN OCCUPATION FOR ANYTHING LESS THAN...

DON'T WHINE TO ME YOU CREEP, OR YOU'LL GET NOTHING AND WE'LL THROW YOUR UNION BUMS OUT OF THE PARTICIPATION SET-UP!!

NOW PLEASE DON'T BE HASTY, SIR... I'M SURE I CAN PRESSURE THE BASTARDS TO GO HOME QUIETLY WITH... LET'S SAY, \$1,000? ...\$1,600 DONE!!

## US MINERS TIGHTEN THE SCREW

The Carter administration is weighing its options on moves to end the 11-week coal miners' strike that has now begun to cause increasing industrial lay-offs in America's industrial Mid West.

The Chrysler Corporation has warned that it could be

forced to shut down production as a result of electric power shortages in Ohio—the state worst-hit by the strike.

Ford and General Motors both also stand to face factory shutdowns as a result of the gathering power crisis—the effects of which have been intensified by one of the most severe US winters in

memory.

Some 500,000 workers in the Mid West and Appalachia could be laid off.

This is why Carter has become increasingly concerned to force a settlement to the dispute. But his options in doing so are severely limited.

Top level talks between miners' leaders and the bosses' Bituminous Coal Operators' Association have led to a complete dead-end.

### No basis

Emerging from 40 hours of continuous talks, Carter's man in charge Ray Marshall announced that:

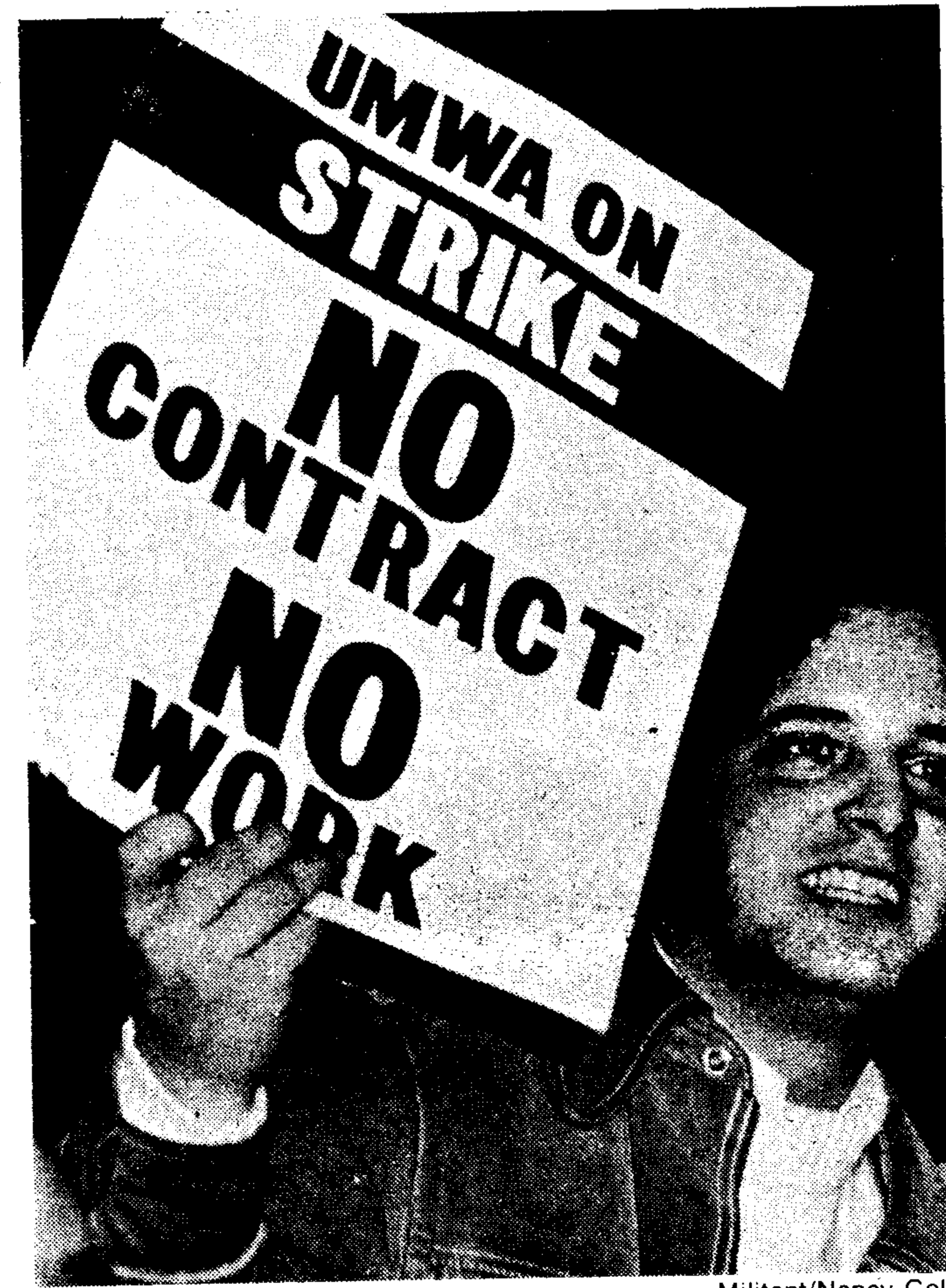
"There is no basis for further negotiation".

But there is no basis either for the UMW bureaucracy to force home the bosses' current offer, which has already been rejected by a 30-6 vote of the union's bargaining council and given rise to a wave of protest throughout the union.

Union President Arnold Miller only ten weeks into his second term of office, has been slammed from all sides for recommending the offer, which would have imposed penalties on miners who take unofficial strike action, effectively abolished cost of living wage increases, endangered medical benefits and pensions, and opened the way for speed-up.



Miller (right) with Carter men Horvitz (left) and Marshall



Militant Nancy Cole

Now, despite reports that the employers have offered not to impose financial penalties on strikers, and to restore cost of living agreements, Miller still clearly feels unable to take the chance of recommending a new deal.

Some of the most bitter resistance to his first effort was from the executive board of District 29 in Miller's own home state of West Virginia.

The board, representing 24,500 members, called for

the proposed contract to be rejected because:

"The proposed penalty clause dealing with wildcat strikes is too restrictive . . . the language concerning absenteeism is vague and should be clarified . . . the proposed increase in wages and pensions is not enough and the cost of living adjustment must not be eliminated."

A similar stand was taken by UMW officials representing 16,000 miners in Ohio.

In Illinois an official announced that rank and file response to Miller's proposed contract was "swift and uniformly negative".

Presidents and vice presidents of 23 Illinois locals sent a telegram to Miller saying:

"This is to inform you that the rank and file miners in District 12 UMW as local union officials feel that after reading the proposed agreement that you should resign immediately".

### Shaken

Miller, who gained office on only 42% of the vote in a three-cornered fight, is obviously shaken by the whole experience.

He has ordered the union's national headquarters in Washington to be closed down after angry miners pushed their way in to make clear their views on his contract.

Now reportedly carrying a gun for self-defence, he told reporters:

"The people who barged into the headquarters are the same right to strike bunch

that caused us all that trouble last year".

It is the instability of the Miller bureaucracy that gives Carter his biggest headache in struggling to end this historic strike.

Though Miller himself would clearly accept anything, it is far from certain that an attempt to invoke the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act against the miners would effectively break an action in which gun-toting teams of pickets have been touring non-union mines.

### Ignored

Mid West state governors have warned the President that a court injunction calling for a return to work for 80 days might well be ignored. Carter himself has remarked that the law has never been used successfully against the miners—who successfully defied the full weight of state military repression to stage strikes at the height of the Second World War.

And any attempt to invoke the law against this basic layer of the US labour movement could severely damage the traditional collaboration between union bureaucrats and the capitalist Democratic Party.

This political question now stands as a central issue in the dispute.

With both Democrats and Republicans openly ranged against the miners, conditions are ideal for the call for the UMW and other unions to break from these capitalist parties and establish a Labour Party to represent the interests of US workers.

But this call is avoided by virtually all the "socialist" elements active around the strike.

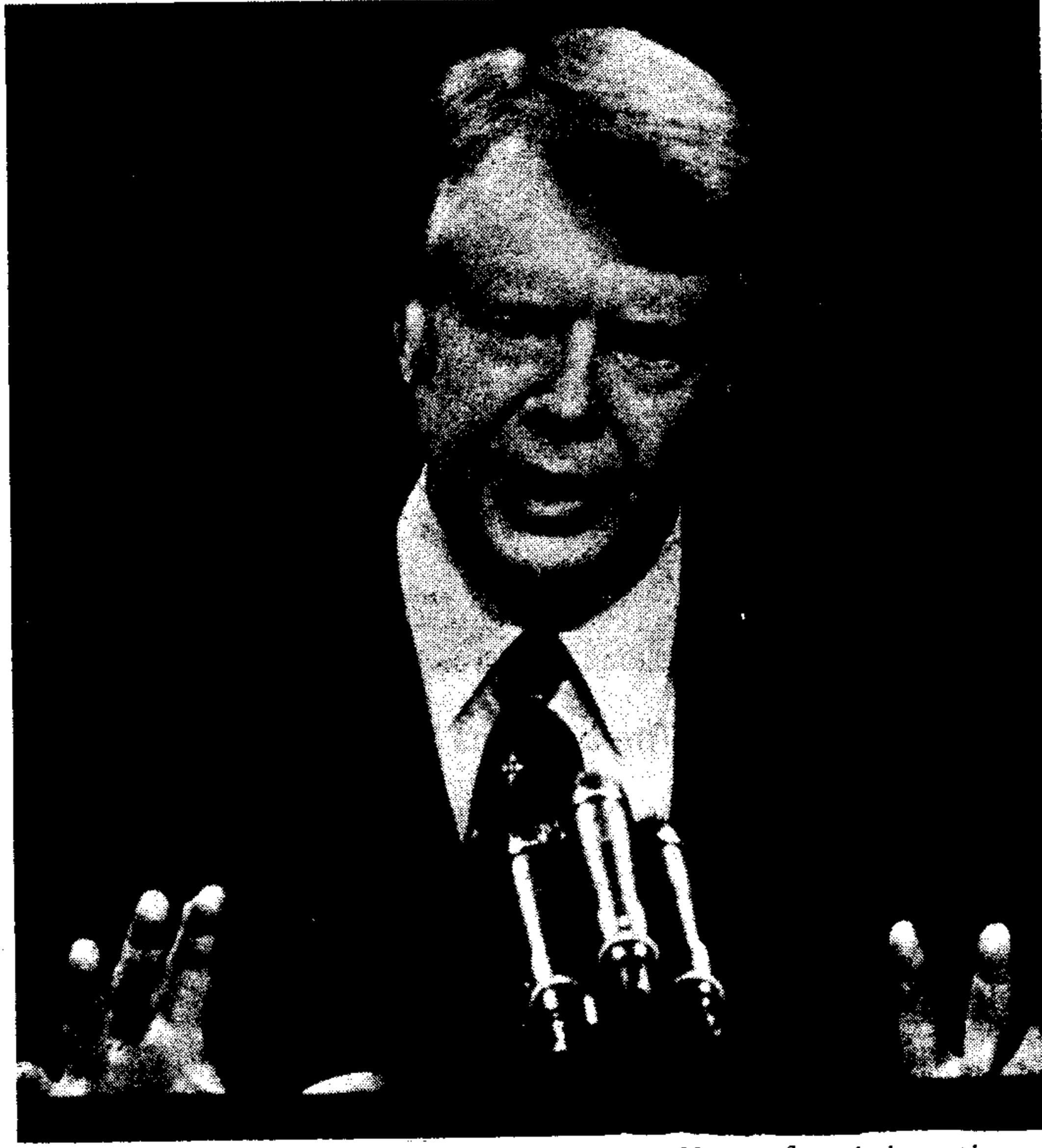
The "Trotskyists" of the Socialist Workers Party have failed in major articles ever to criticise the Miller leadership of the UMW—let alone to link support to the miners to call for a Labor Party.

### Independence

In this they have aped the position of the Communist Party.

And the sectarians of the Spartacist League, while calling for blacking and for elected strike committees, fail to put forward any call for US workers to assert their political independence of the bosses' parties.

Yet for all the impact miners' victory would have on the powerful US labour movement, by far the most important political question is to turn the mass forces of the US trade unions away from seeking concession from Carter and away from his allies in the bureaucracy and towards the fight to construct a party capable of representing the independent interests of the working class as a whole.



Carter—uncertain of effect of an injunction

## WSL: A STEP FORWARD

At the weekend of 18-19 February, the Second Annual Conference of the Workers Socialist League adopted perspectives for the development of its political line and intervention both in Britain and internationally. Details of these decisions and their implementation will be published in due course.

This conference was preceded by a lengthy period of preconference discussion within the League. During this period many fruitful debates took place on such questions as the nature of the call for a workers government, on the struggle against Social Democracy and on our attitude to the national question.

During the course of this discussion there emerged within the League a group, entirely petty-bourgeois in composition and led by refugees from factional intrigue in every other left wing tendency, who—against all their previous attitudes—called upon

the League to liquidate its consistent proletarian orientation in favour of "exemplary trade union work" and to abandon its struggle for the Transitional Programme in favour of discussions with the ultra-left sectarians of the international Spartacist tendency, aiming to "explore the possibilities of reaching programmatic agreement and moving towards fusion".

This grouping won to its ranks a number of new and naive members of the movement as well as a few who have grown tired of the consistent struggle of the WSL to turn away from the circles of petty bourgeois debate and into the fight for revolutionary leadership in the class struggle.

By the time of the conference this grouping, by largely abandoning political work and adopting methods reflecting their petty bourgeois politics, in secret meetings and backstairs intrigue, had recruited about 20 members of the WSL to a faction which declared that the main political task in Britain was to "smash"

such "centrist roadblocks" as the WSL.

Despite severe provocation, including numerous breaches of the WSL constitution by this grouping and the loss of one or two members who might otherwise have been able to make a contribution to the struggle for Trotskyism the WSL leadership fought for this discussion to go through to the end.

The development of a petty bourgeois ultra left tendency at this stage in our history was an inevitable part of the fight which the WSL leadership has taken up to turn its members into the working class.

### Necessary

The fight against this tendency was a necessary part of steeling our members and developing the understanding of our members of the method of the League in fighting within the working class against its bureaucratic leaders and for the policies and principles of the Transitional Programme.

The discussion—unlike that in many other movements—was however allowed to run its course until it was abruptly ended when the defeated Spartacist supporters announced their resignation from the Workers Socialist League and deserted the movement.

### Strengthened

The membership of the WSL emerges much strengthened by this experience and more than ever determined to continue the basic proletarian orientation of the movement to build on the qualitative gains of the recent period, and to develop the theoretical work necessary for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.

We will publish further details both of this fight and of other issues in the development of the WSL in subsequent issues of our paper and of our theoretical magazine.