

# SOCIALIST PRESS



Marxism and  
armed  
struggle  
Centre pages

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Right wing already lobbying for support



You're going to have to get us out of this one, Alex

## Labour Conference victory:

From all sides the Tory press, mass media and politicians have bellowed their anger and frustration at the outcome of last week's Labour conference.

They have been angered by the leftward shift in policy—especially by calls for unilateral disarmament and for a break from the EEC, but they have been even more outraged by the changes to the party's constitution.

By instituting mandatory re-election of MPs, the Labour Party has taken the first tentative steps towards making Labour MPs accountable *not* to the amorphous "electorate" at large, but to the specific political party on whose platform they run for office, and on whose efforts their votes depend.

This challenge to the notion that MPs should be free agents, able to behave as they wish once elected (and thus be drawn, through the apparatus of Parliament and the state machine, into the very structures of capitalist rule) throws into question all the traditional norms of British Parliamentary democracy under which capitalism has cloaked its rule for centuries.

### "Sad week"

Not for nothing has Norman St. John Stevas, Tory Leader of the House of Commons condemned the Labour Conference as "a sad week for Parliament and for Britain".

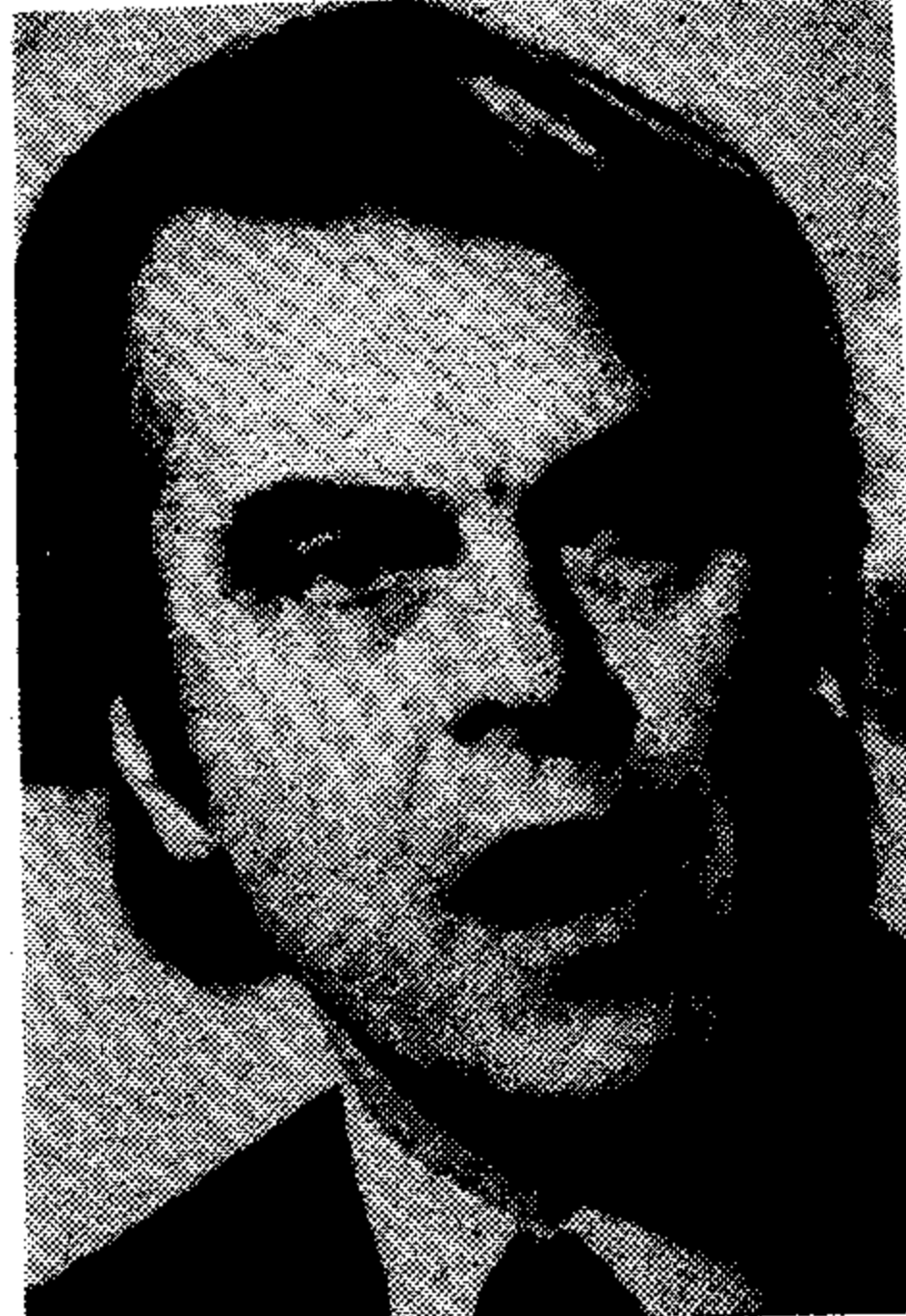
But the implications of these blows at bourgeois democracy go much further when taken in conjunction with the decision to take the election of the Labour leader out of the exclusive grip of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Before the very eyes of the capitalist class there emerges the grim spectre of a Labour leader elected by and therefore in the longer term being made *answerable* to the broader labour movement.

For employers who for generations have relaxed in the knowledge that successive Labour leaders have, the

# NOW KICK OUT

# THE RIGHT WING!



Owen: laying down terms

moment they took office, contemptuously brushed aside left wing Party conference decisions and manifesto pledges, this change has come as an unpleasant jolt.

Instead of providing a reliable second option to direct Tory rule, the Labour Party now threatens to fall into the clutches of the very workers it has fraudulently claimed to represent for three quarters of a century.

Worse, the very furore whipped up by the Tory press in their efforts to pressurise union bureaucrats into casting their block votes against the reforms has now focussed workers' attention on the Labour Party.

Already the declaration by Neville Sandelson, crypto-Tory Labour MP for Hayes and Harlington, that he will vote with the Tories on defence policy has been met by a confident threat from a leading CLP activist that Sandelson would be "booted out" if he did!

Indeed there may not be too much breathing space for Labour's right wing gang of MPs before they feel the impact of last week's changes. Only the frantic manoeuvres of union bureaucrats succeeded in staving off until January an immediate change in the method of election of the Party leader.

The right wing will attempt to use this period in order to regroup, and to work behind the scenes to neuter the moves to greater democracy and accountability within the Party.

David Owen, of 'Gang of Three' notoriety, is already arrogantly laying down the conditions under which he would accept a broader election of the Party leader.

But there is no such tenacity from the left. The Party's NEC, on which the left wing has strengthened its majority, far from pressing its conference advantage, is making still greater concessions to the demands of the right wing.

The latest proposal, aired by 'left' Party chairman Alex Kitson, would offer a staggering 40% of votes on the party

leadership to the reactionary PLP—and a mere 30% each to unions and to the constituency parties.

Nor is it only on the constitutional issues that the NEC is pulling back from the clear stand demanded by last week's conference.

An emergency motion instructing the NEC to "coordinate a united fight of Labour councils and trades unions on a firm no cuts position" and demanding that "the labour movement must be prepared to use its full strength, including industrial action, to defend the most needy in our society and the interests of every working class family" was enthusiastically and overwhelmingly carried.

### Class action

Yet the NEC selected extreme right winger John Golding to reply to the motion: and Golding, in response to a direct question from Roy Hattersley, insisted that the NEC was supporting only a campaign "within the law".

To boos and a slow handclap Golding lamely explained that the Party should not wait for the next election—but get out *now* and canvass for Labour votes!

Despite this hesitancy from the NEC, it is unmistakably clear that Labour activists want a clear call for united class

action to defend the Tory cuts, closures and attacks on trade union rights, and bring down the Thatcher government.

It is equally clear that only in such conditions of mass action could the Party's rank and file hope to see the retiring Callaghan replaced by anyone other than a new stooge from the present right wing leadership clique.

### Call to action

The task is therefore to press home the advantage secured at last week's conference: the Lambeth call to action against the cuts must be taken up by public sector workers, the broader trade union movement, and Labour councils.

Strikes and occupations must run alongside a refusal to implement any cuts or rate and rent increases.

Steps must be taken towards striking right wing Labour MPs: and trade unionists must fight to mandate their delegations at the January Special Conference to vote *against* any surrender of control to the Parliamentary Labour Party in the leadership elections.

### Test

There is no doubt that this Labour Party conference has reinforced the belief of large sections of workers that they

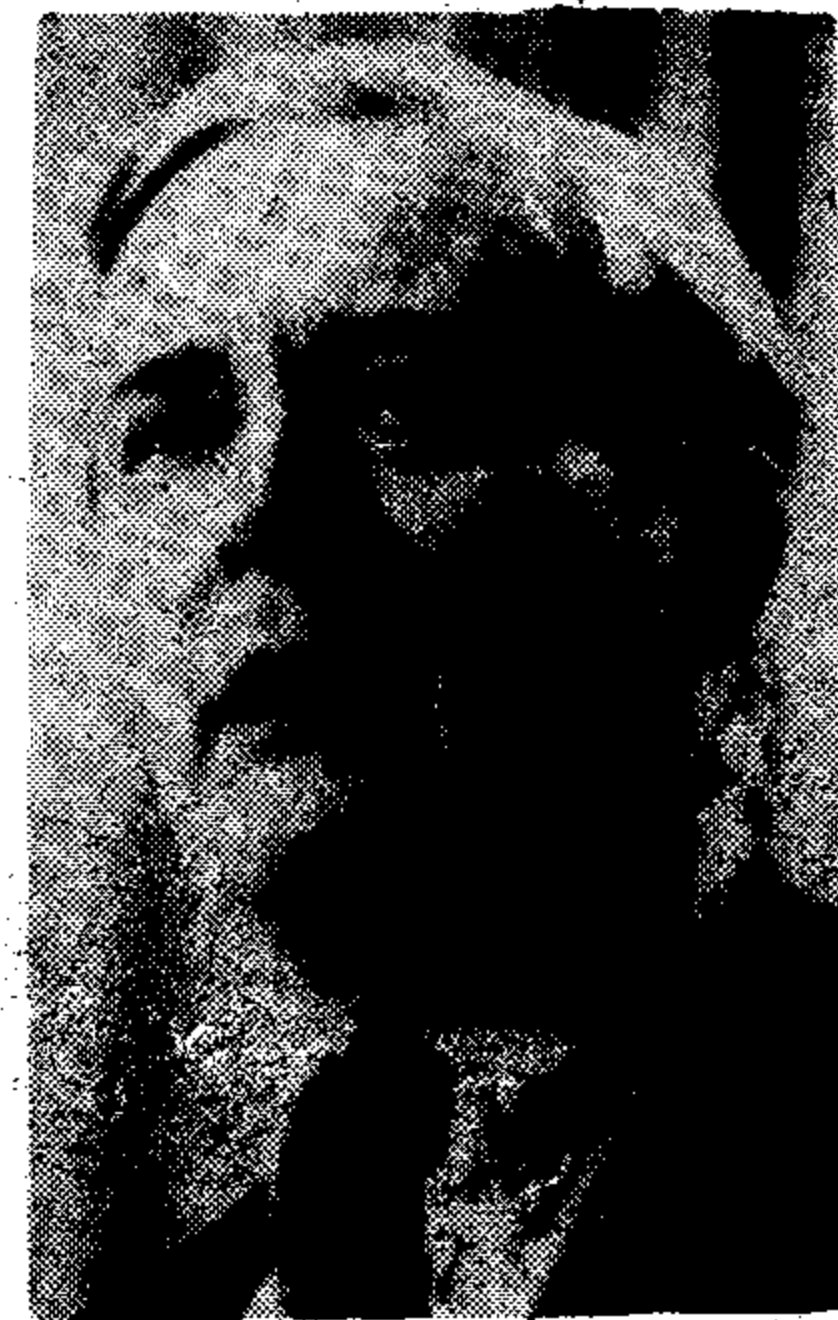
can move towards socialism by the reelection of a Labour government, particularly one headed by leading left wing spokesman Tony Benn.

*Socialist Press* does not share this belief. But the next period offers the best conditions to put such leaders to the test: by their willingness or refusal to fight for extra-parliamentary action to defeat the Tories; by their willingness or refusal to press home the gains of the Blackpool conference and drive out the right wing leadership, workers can quickly assess the real character of those who now put themselves forward as opponents of the Callaghan gang.

### Full support

We offer our full support to every step forward taken by the lefts in the fight for united class action to bring down Thatcher; at the same time we fight consistently *against* the limited policies of the Labour left, to win support for the kind of programme that is vital to defend the interests of the working class in the next period.

In this way we seek to win the most principled sections of trade unionists and Labour activists to the fight for a new, revolutionary, leadership in the labour movement.



Benn



INTERNATIONAL

# KURDS ARRESTED BY TURKISH JUNTA

If the struggle of the Kurdish people for national liberation has been an important factor in the conflict between Iraq and Iran, it is no less so in the mounting resistance within Turkey to the new military government.

For General Evren and the military junta the principle of the sovereignty of the nation against 'divisionism' has been a constant theme.

Long before they moved to overthrow parliamentary rule, it was to the continuing Kurdish resistance to Turkish domination as well as the working class that the army leaders pointed as threatening the

Demirel government's authority.

Turkey-Kurdistan, occupying vast areas of the country's mountainous eastern region, has historically always been an obstacle to the attempts to pass off the Republic as a simple entity.

Despite massacres amounting virtually to genocide in some areas, armed resistance to Turkish imposition of central government from Ankara has continued.

In fact, so great was the fear of Kurdish rebellion from even the earliest years of Turkey's foundation that Attaturk was forced to move the country's capital city away from Istanbul on the far-west Bosphorous into the Anatolian central areas of

the country.

Exact figures of Kurdish nationals are not available. Official statistics, compiled by authorities whose job is to deny the Kurds' existence, as a separate people, put the population at around 2 million.

In reality it is at least four times that number.

Evren himself has been visiting the region recently along with other National Security Council members.

In the city of Van he repeated his theme of the military only taking over 'to prevent a civil war' and going on to lament the continued smuggling of arms into the country.

In response to the military's arms amnesty, he said already

enough equipment had been handed in to arm a 10,000-strong unit!

Since this is only a fraction of the amount still at large, it is possible to grasp the extent to which the population has become militarised during the many years of left defence against state and fascist armed terror.

Evren's appeal for 'moderation' will fall on deaf Kurdish ears. Even as he spoke, mass arrests were taking place in the Kurds' major city of Diyanbakir with more than 1,000 rounded up by soldiers.

Meanwhile the eclipse of democratic rights goes on at full speed. 'Shoot to kill' rights have been given to the security forces against anyone they regard as 'suspicious' or who challenges their authority.

More attacks have been made on any organisation or meetings which in any way represent a potential opponent, to the dictatorship.

Against those inside the country who attempt to organise international condemnation of and opposition to the generals' rule, special steps have been taken.

Contact with 'foreigners' with a view to giving the real picture of repression to those outside and exposing the lying campaign of the world's press to pass off the junta as 'bloodless' and 'democratic' is now illegal.

Selected for special treatment are journalists who face jail sentences of between six months and two years (with no right of appeal) if they 'intentionally propagate erroneous, unfounded or exaggerated information in a manner to create alarm or excitement among the public'.

Meanwhile in Britain the petition of the Turkey Solidarity Campaign was launched at last week's Labour Party conference with enormous success. We list below the delegates and visitors to the conference who signed the declaration which states:

"We declare our total opposition to the military coup in Turkey and its suppression of all democratic rights including the abolition of independent trade unions and the right to strike.

We deplore the British government's refusal to condemn the military dictatorship and its complicity in NATO's war preparations.

We call for:

# New cosmetic purge in Poland

Faced with renewed evidence that the recent upsurge of working class militancy in Poland has in no way evaporated, the Stalinist bureaucracy has been forced into a further face-saving purge.

Six top bureaucrats including former Prime Minister Babuch have been expelled from the Communist Party after an acrimonious all-night session of the Central Committee.

The fate of ousted President Gierk remains undecided until the outcome of his heart attack is known.

All those purged had previously been replaced in their former governmental posts—by new bureaucrats chosen from and by the extensive privileged caste that has held political power in Poland since the establishment of a nationalised economy in the late 1940s.

Behind the latest cosmetic attempts to slap a "clean" face on the Stalinist regime stands the determination of the Polish

workers to see the fruits of the deals that concluded the wave of strikes that have swept the country in the last few months.

A token one-hour general stoppage by hundreds of thousands of Polish workers last Friday was vivid proof to the bureaucrats that their efforts to delay and block the establishment of independent trade unions and the implementation of wage increases have been unsuccessful.

Any hopes that the movement would quickly subside have been dashed. And yet the bureaucrats know full well that the formal concessions they made to the workers would, if fully implemented, stand as a major challenge to their own power and privilege.

So far the Polish Stalinists are still seeking to outflank rather than confront the proletarian threat to their control; but a real danger remains that they may yet conclude that they have no option but to take a firm stand—and call on their Kremlin sponsors for military aid in a savage crackdown.

# BOLIVIA JUNTA DEEP IN DEBT

After more than ten weeks in power, General Garcia's grossly misnamed 'Government of National Reconstruction' remains in crisis.

The junta continues to face resolute internal opposition so that even sections of the military are beginning to distance themselves from the regime which is still treated as a pariah in the bourgeois chancelleries of the world.

Even the dictatorships of the Southern Cone of Latin America have muted their praise of the junta and are now throwing their energies into organising a political readjustment of the dictatorship that will enable the USA to grant it recognition and free the IMF and the banks to renegotiate Bolivia's massive foreign debt.

## Bankrupt

Bolivia is bankrupt. Her external debt is \$3.1 billion (72% of export earnings) of which \$1.6 billion must be repaid to the banks before the end of the year.

Credits to private banks have now been suspended, the state smelting company ENAF is unable to pay contractors for tin, COMIBOL (the state mining corporation) alone is due to pay debts of \$50 million by the end of the year yet it has virtually no cash—and 1980 tin production will be the lowest since 1965.

Within ten days of the coup the price of bread in La Paz had risen by 750% and widespread speculation and hoarding forced the generals to declare a price freeze to avoid bread riots and strikes in the civil service and the army.

Yet the \$100 million in cash the junta received from the leading cocaine traffickers has proved totally useless in holding back unemployment and inflation—it was used to pay bonuses to the troops to guarantee their loyalty.

Similarly, Videla's offer of \$200 million, free wheat and generous terms for the purchase of Bolivian gas is of marginal importance and has, in any case, been partially withdrawn.

The junta is desperate to avoid a devaluation of the peso and further unemployment because this will certainly destroy the tenuous support it enjoys from sections of the national bourgeoisie and leave it isolated in the face of massive popular opposition.

At first the army and the bourgeoisie rallied around the Garcia clique in fear of the alternative: but the fissures in this unity are becoming daily more apparent.

## Cocaine

Local capitalists were unhappy about the junta's decision to leave the Andean Pact, and their representatives forced Garcia to reverse this while supporters of the former dictator, General Banzer, have succeeded in 'playing down' the cocaine connections of the regime and have obliged the junta to allow them to take charge of negotiations with the IMF and the US.

The extent of Banzer's bid for power is still unclear, but what is beyond doubt is that it would mean continued bloody dictatorship, more efficiently administered and more clear sighted in its alliance with the imperialist power.

The IMF's terms for renegotiation of the debt are a political 'clean-up' (i.e. no more talk of legalising the cocaine trade), a major devaluation of the peso, and the sacking of at least 10,000 state employees.

However, this attack on the working class will not be effected, even by a unified military offensive, without massive opposition—for while the working class has suffered a major setback it is by no means decisively defeated.

Although the strike in the major mining areas effectively ended in the last weeks of August, go-slows, sabotage, non-cooperation and union reorganisation have continued and tin production remains extremely low.

## 'Drastic sanctions'

Military commanders in the mining camps have regularly threatened workers with 'drastic sanctions' for this "treason", but even with the physical destruction of the headquarters of the COB (Bolivian TUC), the hundreds of deaths, estimated 2,000 wounded and 2,500 political prisoners, not to mention the thousands of exiles and those in hiding, the Bolivian proletariat is able and prepared to consolidate in retreat.

However, this process is not the same thing as learning the political lessons of the coup, and there remains the overwhelming danger that the forces of the working class will be drawn behind the reformism of

the anti-dictatorial section of the bourgeoisie in alliance with the Communist Party and the petty bourgeois radicals of the MIR.

Siles, the leader of the bourgeois UDP and President of the 'clandestine government' has now left Bolivia for Washington to lobby the State Department, and the call for the overthrow of the dictatorship is treated by international solidarity campaigns as identical with the consolidation of bourgeois democracy.

It was precisely the inability of bourgeois democracy to rule Bolivia that led to the coup—a fact consistently and uniquely proclaimed by the Trotskyist POR (as shown in its material reproduced in SP 215).

Revolutionary Marxists must intervene in the campaign for solidarity with Bolivian workers and work for blacking action and the defeat of the dictatorship: but they must fight consistently against the spurious 'democracy' touted by Siles.

Instead we demand a workers' and peasants' government, which is the only means by which democratic rights will be achieved and the imperialist stranglehold broken in Bolivia.

# Schmidt's election failure

HELMUT SCHMIDT, the re-elected West German Chancellor, greeted the election results with the judgement that "the coalition could be very pleased with them".

In fact this was a carefully worded comment because it was his bourgeois partners in the ruling coalition, the "Liberal" Free Democrats (FDP) who gained most seats, extending the government's majority to over 40 in the Bundestag.

But former Christian Democrat (CDU) voters turned away from the ultra-right Cold War policies of Franz-Joseph Strauss, the Bavarian Prime Minister.

In an almost exclusively two-cornered fight the fringe parties—including both Communists and neo-Nazis—polled less than in previous elections whilst the new factor in West German politics, the Ecological Party (Greens) gained 2% of the vote.



Polish dissidents handing out leaflets

1) the immediate release of all political prisoners in Turkey and a halt to threatened executions

2) an end to all economic and military aid to the junta from the British government

3) solidarity with the Turkish workers and peasants and Kurdish people including Labour Party support for action organised by the trade union movement."

We urge Socialist Press readers to raise these demands in their union branches, and fight for trade union action to black all arms and supplies destined for the Turkish junta.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign invites affiliation from all labour movement bodies. Further details can be obtained from the TSC, c/o BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX.

## Signatories to the petition

### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Alan Adams; Tony Benn; Ron Brown; Ivan Evans; Neil Kinnock; Tom Megahy (MEP); Austin Mitchell; Bob Parry; Reg Race; Giles Radice; Ernie Roberts; Mick Welsh.

### TRADES UNION EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Tony Banks, ABS; John Cowling ISTC; Terry Duffy AUEW (General Secretary); Alan Fisher NUPE (General Secretary); Vincent Hanna NUJ; John Jones AUEW TASS; Bill Keys SOGAT (General Secretary); Joe Martino, Bakers Union (General Secretary); Terry Parry FBV; Mel Read ASTMS; D. Rupper, Bakers Union; Arthur Scargill NUM; E. Scrivens AUEW; Harry Urwin TGWU; David Warburton GMWU.

### COUNCILLORS

Garth Frankland NE Leeds CLP; Ray Garner Wolverhampton District; Alan Hardy, Welwyn Hatfield CLP; J. Lyon-Taylor, Toxteth Liverpool CLP; Neil Taggart, Chairman Leeds District LP; Vice-Chairman, Leeds NE CLP; Jenny Willmott, Camden CLP.

### OTHERS

Andy Bevan, LP National Youth Officer; Frank Cook, AUEW TASS; Gordon McLennan CPGB; Dennis Mills, Region 5 TGWU; C.P. Wall, Chair, Bradford TUC.

### CONSTITUENCY LABOUR PARTIES

L. Hobday, Bristol South CLP  
A. Benyon, York CLP  
Rick Evans, Chair, Cornwall S. CLP  
P. Mulligan, Bosworth CLP  
L. Sodean, Chair, Colindale Br. (Hendon N CLP)  
Geoff Howes, Northampton S CLP  
Chris Ballard, Mid-Oxon CLP  
F. McGrath, Birmingham Ladywood CLP  
Ann Chapman, Tynemouth CLP  
Martin Prestige, Warley W. CLP  
G. Teale, Spalding CLP  
A.E. Pritchett, Angelsey CLP  
Chris Edwards, Newcastle Central CLP  
Valerie Pearson, Newark CLP  
Roger McGowan, Rushcliffe CLP  
Pete Worthing, Daventry CLP  
Colin Ellison, Halesowen and Stourbridge CLP  
Tony Humphrey, Banbury CLP  
Andy Ward, Croydon N. CLP  
Mike Roden, Sec. Withington CLP  
Ian Alcom, Edinburgh W. CLP  
John Braggins, Agent, St. Pancras N. CLP

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Roy Hill, Dorset CLP  
B. Hodgson, Eastleigh CLP  
W.J. Wolfgang, Chair, Richmond CLP  
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J. Thomason, Batley and Morley CLP  
Andrew Price, Cardiff SE CLP  
J. Rosser, Southgate CLP  
W. Moores, Eccles CLP  
G.P. Henderson, Ruislip Northwood CLP  
P. Howarth, Bury St. Edmunds CLP  
D. Chuks, Worthing CLP  
Terry Pitt, North Somerset CLP  
Hugh Jenkins, Putney CLP  
John Archer, Wood Green CLP  
R.E. Hower, East Flints CLP  
A. Ewing, Provan Glasgow CLP  
John Winterlove, Sec. Rye CLP  
Sandra Plummer, Ch. Somerton LP Branch, Holborn and St. Pancras CLP.  
Jim Orpe, Colchester CLP  
Alan Hutchinson, Sec. Beccles LP  
Kate Crowley, Portsmouth CLP  
Diane Atkins, Portsmouth CLP  
J. Stewart, Ch. Dundee CLP  
Andrew Smith, Oxford CLP  
D. Wilkinson, Welwyn Hatfield CLP  
D. Morrison, Chichester CLP  
Ivor Roberts, East Flints CLP  
Gareth Roberts, Bassetlaw CLP  
An Rodgers, Aylesbury CLP  
J.R. Lewis, Coventry NW CLP  
T. Weir, Carshalton CLP  
H. Brock, Ch. Islington South CLP  
Susan Mills, Sec. Fulham LPYS  
Jeannette Gould, Newham S. CLP  
Alan Moggs, Kingswood CLP  
Allan Barclay, Tottenham CLP  
Steve Hall, Hornsey CLP  
Keith Ford, Deptford CLP  
Ken Stratford, Beckenham CLP  
Michael Ward, Battersea CLP  
Hugh Richards, Battersea S. CLP  
Anne Ceseke, N. Islington S. CLP  
Graham Bash, Hornsey CLP  
Jane Stockton, Hornsey CLP  
Angela Sheriff, Brent East CLP  
Mark Feeny, Brent North CLP.



INTERNATIONAL

# Paraguay: pawn of the imperialists

Paraguay Power Game, price £1.50 plus 30p p&p can be ordered from PO Box 134, London NW1 4JY.



The recent Latin American Bureau publication **Paraguay Power Game** ought to promote some vigorous interest in a country whose ruling elite has held sway undisturbed for far too long.

A readable handbook, it is full of useful information including a concise history describing the pattern of acute economic deformation common to all backward countries.

### Throttled

Socialist Press readers will be all too familiar with the Trotskyist analysis that shows how imperialist interference has throttled the development of capitalism almost from its conception in such countries and consequently also prevented the formation of an independent national capitalist class capable of laying the economic, political and social basis for bourgeois democracy.

These positions must be measured against the concrete development of particular countries if they are not to become mere clichés for us.

*Paraguay Power Game*, whatever its other faults or merits, can be highly recommended as a set piece, a five finger exercise for such measurement.

Paraguay's first two national leaders, Dr de Francia who ruled for nearly 30 years from the foundation of the Republic in 1812 and his successor President Carlos López (1842-65), pursued progressive policies of extensive state control over its economic resources, welcoming foreign technical expertise without private investment, and leading the country to become one of Latin America's leading trading nations.

Well organised state farms and a policy of renting land for unlimited periods to peasant squatters boosted agricultural production beyond the point of self sufficiency to the export of timber, cotton, tobacco and fruit.

### Schools

Railway lines were laid and an iron foundry established, all paid for by public money from profitable state enterprises and foreign trade earnings.

Free and obligatory primary schools were set up in a country which boasts a high level of illiteracy over 100 years later.

These policies were viewed as detrimental to the interests of the ruling cliques in Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro and their European capitalist masters.

Matters came to a head when the Blanco Party in Uruguay was overthrown with the help of Brazilian intervention and culminated with the signing of the Treaty of the Triple Alliance by Brazil, Argentina and the new Uruguayan Colorado regime in Uruguay—with the political and financial backing of the powerful British government.

The Alliance aimed to take control of the Paraguayan economy away from the state and annex strategically important areas of its territory.

Five years of fighting reduced the population from 5000,000 to 250,000 destroyed the economy and saw a quarter of its land lost for ever.

### Dependence

Paraguay was thus reduced to its proper place in the imperialist schema of things, to a state



of corrupt and impoverished dependence in which it has since remained.

The economy was denationalised and saddled with a huge foreign debt for loans which vanished into the pockets of the new elite who handed over as collateral the customs, revenues, public lands, railways and all public buildings.

State-owned land was sold off to Argentine and British capitalists at give-away prices while the traitors who had sided with the Triple Alliance squabbled amongst themselves in their Liberal and Colorado parties over the pickings to be gained from foreign economic domination.

There followed a long period of occasional coups, counter-coups and bursts of organised discontent—while far away a new imperialist star was born.

The Chaco war with Bolivia (1932-5) came to a conclusion satisfactory to Standard Oil interests in the area, unsurprisingly negotiated by the US Ambassador to the Peace Conference.

By now the Colorado Party was gradually gaining the ascendancy, consolidated by its victory over the combined

forces of the Liberals, "Febreristas" (bourgeois nationalists seeking a return to the "golden age" before the Triple Alliance debacle) and the Communists.

A certain Alfredo Stroessner was steadily scrambling his way to becoming the undisputed leader of the pack by a military coup on May 4 1954.

He is now the longest surviving head of state in the world.

In present day Paraguay the extent of officially organised smuggling has ensured a constant flow of cheap goods

which has effectively aborted any remaining hope of developing an industrial infrastructure.

Unequal land distribution has produced an agricultural system so criminally inefficient that only 2.2% of land is under cultivation, leaving the most fortunate peasants to scratch a meagre living from tiny "minifundio" plots, and to widespread emigration.

By 1979 a quarter of the population was living elsewhere, mainly swelling the 'villa miserias' in Argentina.

## ITALY: Another one bites the dust!

One was in the lavatory; another couldn't operate the electronic voting machine; and one arrived a few minutes too late from a trip to Hong Kong.

And so, to general astonishment, and by a single vote, Italy's fortieth post-war government fell.

The astonishment resulted from the fact that the secret parliamentary vote which brought down Francesco Cossiga's centre-left government on its important series of austerity economic measures had been preceded a few moments earlier by a public vote of confidence which it had comfortably won.

### Absentees

So it was not the three absentees (the incontinent, the incompetent and the unpunctual) which did the damage but the 30 or so nominal supporters who voted in favour of the government in public then against it in secret.

No-one has admitted to being in the 30 and virtually all tendencies of the Christian Democrats and Socialists are accusing the others of being the

traitors.

But it was not the 30 "traitors" nor even the hundreds of Communist MPs who form the bulk of the opposition who brought down the government, but rather the millions of Italian workers whose patience with inflation and the growth of unemployment is coming to an end.

With its desperate need to solve the problems of low profitability, Italian capitalism now once again lacks even the excuse for a government represented by the Cossiga cabinet.

The government crisis immediately led the Fiat management to retreat from an expected confrontation with its workers by delaying 14,000 proposed forced redundancies.

But Fiat's crisis is so deep that the 14,000 permanent redundancies were replaced by 24,000 immediate "temporary" 3-month lay offs.

But far from calming the explosive situation in the class struggle, Fiat's action has provoked the immediate prospect of a major general strike throughout Italy.

The anger of the working class has forced the CP leadership to intensify its opposition stand in particular by moving

For the capitalists, life is not half so grim. Paraguay has undergone a period of rapid economic growth over recent years with the building of the Itaipu dam together with Brazil and the massive development of the eastern border region.

There has been increasing penetration by transnational corporations attracted by cheap labour and extremely favourable conditions and a huge influx of Brazilian capital, labour and military control in that region.

However, as the booklet points out:

"For the Paraguayan peasants in the eastern border region, the Brazilian invasion and the consequent boom in agricultural production has meant only land evictions and increased repression".

According to the authors, Stroessner's repression has effectively quelled opposition from the base with the exception of the peasant 'ligas agrarias' supported by a section of the Catholic church.

This may well be true, but an analysis of the labour movement beyond the list at the front of the book would have been useful.

The book is essentially 'human rights' orientated, and

there is a well documented liturgy of Stroessner perpetuated abominations, ably supported by his ex-Nazi cohorts locally and his friends in South Africa and elsewhere.

The book's failure lies in that it is entirely reformist and social democratic in character, welcoming signs of a broad based opposition to the regime and stating that "change within the Colorado party itself is a crucial determinant of progressive political change in Paraguay".

Whereas it is true that splits in the ruling class are critical to the dislocation and overthrow of the regime, the crucial determinant for real political change can only lie with the revolutionary organisation of workers and peasants on class lines, not tailing a weak grouplet of malcontent bourgeois reformists.

Not only do such reformists seek their own ends, fundamentally in contradiction to those of the oppressed, but they are historically incapable of carrying them through.

Both options are clearly far from imminent: but a look at Paraguay's neighbours alone should be proof enough of the impossibility of transforming dependent countries into stable bourgeois democracies.



Berlinguer

out of the purely parliamentary arena in order to maintain some kind of control of the mass movement.

Party General Secretary Enrico Berlinguer said of the struggle over the Fiat redundancies:

"If the negotiations fail, we will need to think of harder forms of struggle including occupation".

At the same time Berlinguer has called on the Socialist Party to form a joint opposition to the Christian Democrats and even to form a joint government.

This is a new development though it does not seem to imply a basic change in strategy. Berlinguer's words are rather an attempt to shock the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party into allowing the CP into a broad class collaborationist

coalition.

But Socialist Party Secretary Craxi's purge of left wingers from the SP leadership, and the appointment of Christian Democratic President Forlani as Premier-designate make the admission of the CP to government as improbable as ever.

Berlinguer of course is much too experienced a Stalinist bureaucrat to leave himself no escape from his present left positions.

He still says the CP must be either in government or it will be in opposition.

But the let-out is that he says that the opposition can be more or less strong depending on what policy the government pursues.

Already he says the CP is prepared to support new emergency economic austerity measures to replace those which had to be dropped when the Cossiga government fell, nearly provoking a major run on the lira—only averted for now by raising interest rates to emergency levels.

But no-one expects Forlani to be able quickly to form a government. And a general strike threatens.

There can be no doubt that in these circumstances more and more sections of the Italian bourgeoisie will be searching for something better than the increasingly unstable parliamentary system.

It was a Christian Democratic MP who commented when Cossiga fell that "Turkey is not far away".

TROTSKYIST INTERNATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE



DISCUSSION BULLETIN No. 2

Articles on Nicaragua, Parity Commission and TILC Declaration

Price 40p plus 15p p&p from WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

# Constituencies vote for Troops Out composite

A clear indication of the leftward movement of rank and file Labour Party activists was the extremely high vote by CLP delegates in favour of a composite resolution on Ireland calling for a policy of withdrawing troops, self-determination and political status for republican prisoners.

The motion was seconded by St. Pancras South delegate Sandra Plummer, a Socialist Press supporter. Her speech is reproduced here in full. It was bitterly attacked by Labour's spokesman on Ireland Brynmor John, and opposed by TGWU 'left' Alex Kitson, calling on behalf of the 'left'-led NEC for it to be remitted or rejected.

In the event an estimated 80% of CLP delegates and some union delegates supported the motion, which was defeated on a show of hands.

For many years people have been fighting to end the bi-partisan policy of the Labour Party in regard to Ireland.

At last this fight is gaining ground. Ireland was forced on to the agenda last year and is once again before you today.

Why is it, though, as soon as we raise the question of Ireland in the Labour Party attempts are made to stifle discussion?

Why is it that we can rightly condemn the suppression of democratic rights in countries such as Chile and South Africa and yet deny these same rights in the six counties?

We can call for majority rule in Zimbabwe—but not in Ireland!

To answer this we must look at Labour's record on Ireland.

It was under Wilson that troops were sent in—on the pretext of being a peace-keeping force (a myth that was exploded with the events of Bloody Sunday in Derry, where 13 unarmed civilians, on a peaceful civil rights demonstration were shot dead in cold blood by that "peace-keeping"

force).

It was under a Labour minister, Roy Mason by name, that political status was withdrawn from the prisoners of H Block and Armagh and the incidents of torture increased—as proved by the European Court of Human Rights.

It was under a Labour government that the notorious SAS was sent into the six counties.

## Not mentioned

Then there is the Prevention of Terrorism Act—introduced by another Labour minister, Roy Jenkins (remember him?).

The PTA has sinister implications for workers here as well as in Ireland.

This is why Jim Callaghan omitted to mention the war in Ireland in his parliamentary report yesterday and why Ireland is not mentioned in the proposed manifesto.

Oh, it's fine to talk about peace and freedom, of which we have heard so much: but what about peace and freedom for the Irish?

The manifesto called Peace,

Jobs and Freedom, calls for self-determination in Afghanistan but not in Ireland!

How hypocritical!

Imagine, comrades, if what was happening in Derry and Belfast was happening here in Newcastle and Glasgow.

Would that not be the main item on the agenda this week? Would we be expected to remit on such an issue?

Let us make no mistake: what is happening in the North-East of Ireland can happen here.

It is being used as a training ground and can be turned on us.

Do you know that all police officers over the rank of inspector have to do a tour of duty in the six counties? Draw your own conclusions from that, comrades.

Let us be perfectly clear. There is no British solution to the Irish so-called problem; it is a "problem" because there is only an Irish solution.

It is not for us as socialists to attempt to impose such a solution. That is chauvinism.

In 1920 we had a position of recognising the right of the Irish people to self-determination. Let us return to it.

If we do, we must from that



## IRELAND



Sandra Plummer

logically support the withdrawal of troops from the six counties.

Just a few miles across the Irish Sea, comrades, there is a bloody war going on, one with a history of over 800 years.

Britain has the blood of hundreds of thousands of Irish men, women and children on its

hands.

Such a history, we as socialists should be ashamed of and condemn.

This struggle will continue until there is a just solution. The Irish working class will remain divided as long as Ireland itself is divided.

## Back again

As long as we in the British labour movement refuse to fight for our brothers and sisters in Ireland for national liberation, we ourselves are hypocrites and hamper our own fight for socialism.

If we fail this year, we will be back again and again until we win.

As long as the trade union block vote goes against us we will be defeated.

All trade union conferences must discuss the issue of Ireland.

I urge you to vote for composite 13 and support the demonstration being held in London on November 15.

# Royal Victoria killing sets back anti-imperialist fight

Two members of the Provisional IRA entered the Royal Victoria Hospital last week and shot dead Robin Shields, ambulance station officer at the hospital.

This act—which threw the largely Catholic ancillary workforce into panic and fear for their own lives—and produced and instant "emergencies only" strike from the largely Protestant ambulance drivers must be condemned.

By any class struggle criteria

it has set back the struggle against British imperialism and has raised strong suspicions amongst the hospital workers of a deliberate attempt to provoke a backlash from the UVF.

## Strike

The hospital was the site of a strike by both Catholic and Protestant workers earlier this year against the presence of the British army.

Since the strike the presence of army security has been

reduced.

The reason for the shooting—according to a statement from the IRA—was that Shields had been a police reservist until last year with the RUC.

No allegations have been made that he had used his position to spy on Catholic nationalists.

In previous statements, however, the Provisionals have encouraged Protestants to distance themselves from the security forces by resigning reservist positions—and assuring them that such a step would

ensure their removal from the IRA death list.

Despite his management position Shields was popular amongst the ambulance workers and hospital staff. His killing was certain to provoke a backlash.

On the day before the funeral a Union Jack appeared flying from the hospital roof.

That night two Provisionals returned to the hospital and took the flag down.

They stoked up the tension still further during the funeral by placing a series of booby

trapped vehicles around the city, bringing traffic to a halt.

Many Catholic workers at the hospital attended the funeral of the man from the Shankhill—at least some of them because they feared that the UVF would launch a reprisal attack on hospital workers.

Paisley responded predictably by pointing his finger at the unarmed hospital security staff and alleging that they must have been complicit in the murder.

This statement put the lives of the security guards sharply at risk since they would be the obvious targets for a UVF hit

and run attack on the hospital.

The Royal Victoria had become for a short period an indication that Protestant and Catholic workers could unite in common cause against the British army.

The killing has done its bit towards destroying that embryonic solidarity.

The question that must be raised is whether the Provisionals intended the inevitable backlash.

The killing is a product of petty bourgeois nationalism.

It runs completely counter to the interests of the working class, which demand resolute moves to unify the class—as a class—against imperialism.

We defend the Provisionals when they fight imperialism but Irish workers can have no illusions in their ability to defeat imperialism. Only a programme to defend the working class and unify it can do that.



## WRP 'Public' meetings

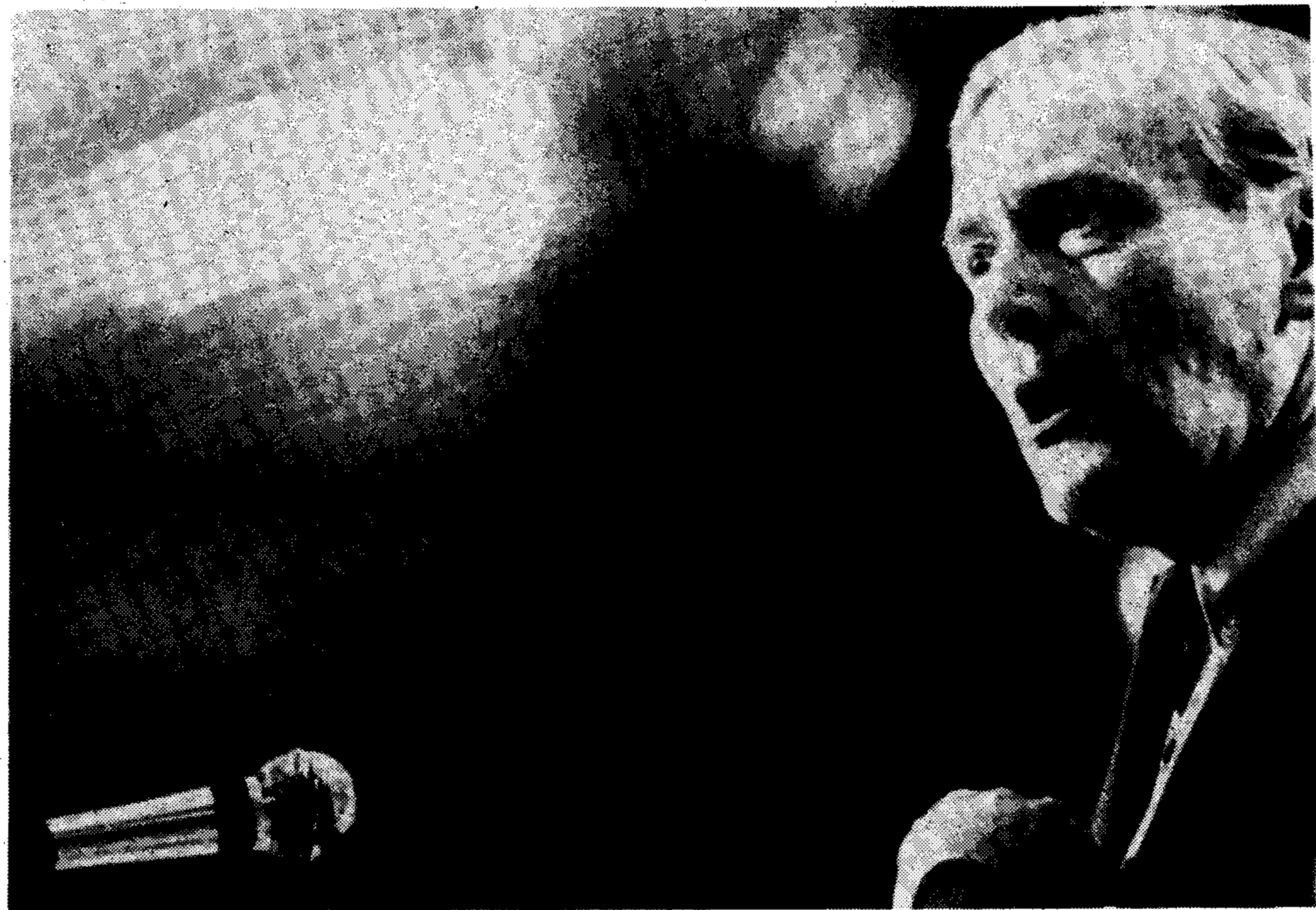
The All Trades Union Alliance, industrial organisation of the Workers Revolutionary Party, has launched a series of public meetings throughout the country to promote the building of Community Councils, the doors of which will specifically be opened to reactionary rate-payers associations.

Yet, although a direct invitation is sent to the forces of reaction, revolutionary socialists need not apply for admittance. When one of these public

meetings was held recently in Glasgow, two supporters of Socialist Press who turned up at the door with tickets in hand were refused entry with the "explanation" that they were "provocateurs" and were asked, "would you allow police into your meetings?"

This refusal of admittance was fully supported by Michael Banda, National Secretary of the WRP.

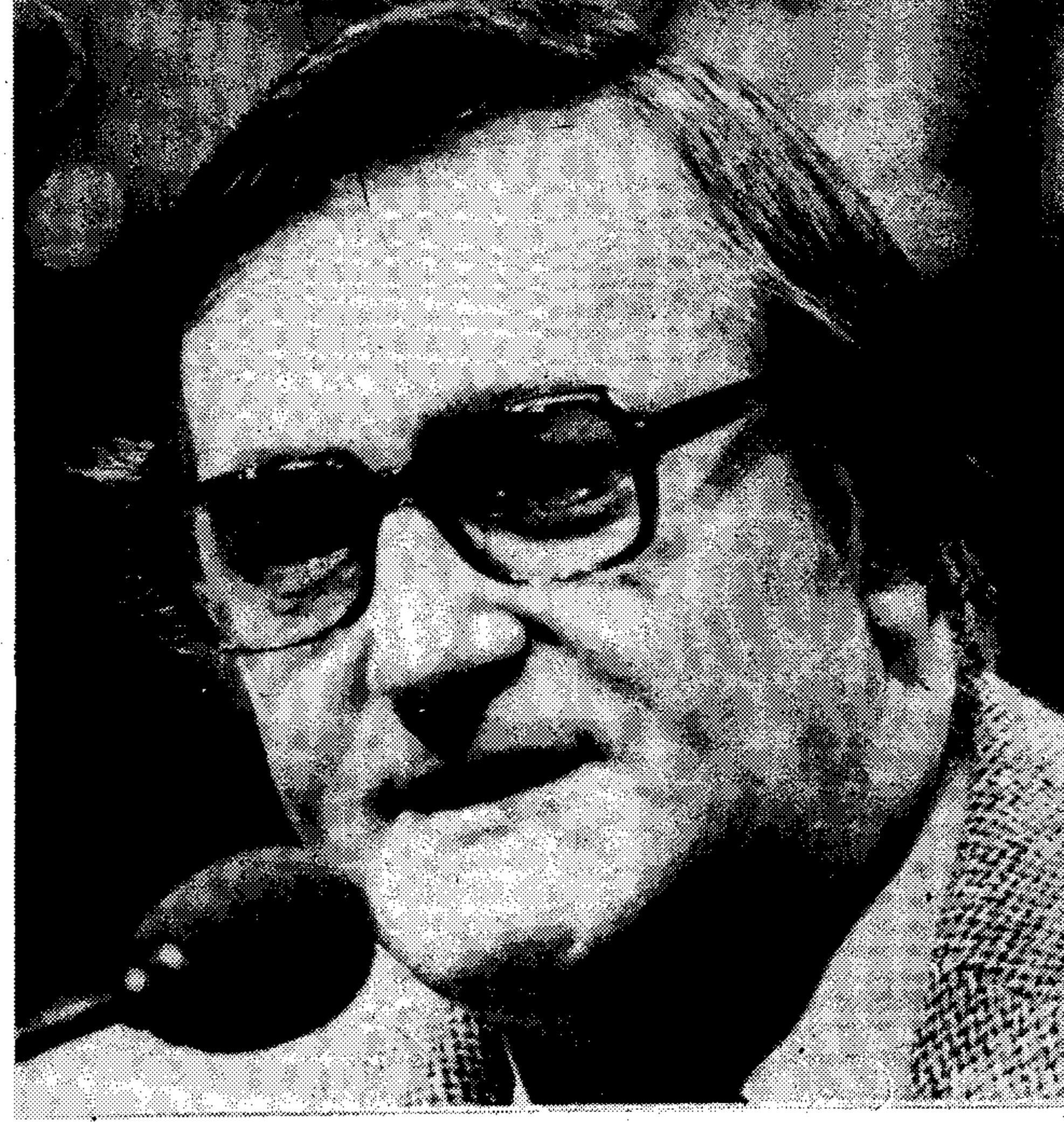
We can be assured that with such slanderous allegations and undemocratic practices, the present campaign of the WRP will be crowned with the same "success" as their recent ventures into the politics of the Middle East.



In the limelight: Benn



Taking a back seat: Fisher



In the hot seat: Ted Knight

# Rank and file pushes Labour to the left

Telling confirmation of the emergence of a mass anti-capitalist current within the British labour movement was offered by this year's Labour Party conference.

Such a political development has brought profound problems not only for the extreme right wing "Gang of Three" and their reactionary supporters, but also for the established 'left' Labour MPs of the Tribune group, who have been overtaken by the militant demands of rank and file Labour activists.

This was particularly highlighted in the contradictory position of Tony Benn.

Benn has emerged as the leading champion of the struggle for democratic reform of the Party. His conference speech last Wednesday arguing the case for NEC control over the Party's election manifesto was a thorough and devastating onslaught on the record of successive Labour leaders—and drew massive, well-deserved applause.

## Abject failure

But a still bigger ovation had taken place that morning, when Lambeth council leader Ted Knight had slammed the 'left'-led NEC for its abject failure to lead or coordinate action to halt the Tory spending cuts, and demanded a campaign for industrial action to support "a firm no cuts position".

Knight's effective call for a general strike to halt the Tory offensive brought the constituency delegates to their feet in wild applause.

Yet that same evening at the Tribune rally Tony Benn came to the platform and unequivocally opposed general strike action to bring down the Tories.

The process of bringing about socialism requires a prolonged period of persuasion and propaganda, argued Benn: the fight for a parliamentary majority is indispensable.

## Thirst for action

In the meantime there should be efforts made to initiate open-ended "discussion" and debate.

Benn's gradualist, parliamentary road—one shared by his co-speakers on the Tribune platform, and especially by former 'left' Michael Foot—stands clearly at odds with the mounting anger and thirst for action among constituency activists longing for a lead against the Thatcher government.

Benn himself, of course, has shifted under the impact of the movement within the Labour Party and the working class.

His speech on the manifesto cast aside the customary diplomatic niceties and revealed a welcome—if drastically belated—insight into the dictatorial rule exercised by Labour leaders over the Party.

His espousal of a "troops out" perspective and call for a united Ireland have a considerable impact in layers of the Labour Party until now unaware of the issues involved.

But Benn's political evolution must be seen in the context of a general shift to the left in the Party which meant that last week's conference saw a composite resolution advocating unilateral nuclear disarmament

carried on the nod; a call for withdrawal from the EEC carried by the two thirds majority needed to make it a manifesto commitment; Ted Knight's call for united action against the cuts carried overwhelmingly; and the endorsement of a succession of other left policies including steps to illegalise private education.

Even the trade union bureaucracy, who only weeks ago in the Brighton TUC Congress carried a succession of mealy-mouthed resolutions spelling out complete surrender to Thatcher, were forced by the evident left swing of the Labour conference into a more militant stance.

The task in the next period is to put to the test those like Knight and Benn who have emerged at the head of the left wing current.

## Full support

Insofar as they take a stand against the right wing and fight for action against the Tories, they must be given full support: yet at the same time the weaknesses of their stand must be exposed.

This is why *Socialist Press* while welcoming the foreful emergence of a powerful left current within the Labour Party stresses once again the necessity for the building of a new, principled leadership in the labour movement which rejects the illusion of a parliamentary road to socialism, and which struggles on all fronts to mobilise the united strength of the working class to bring down the Tory government and thus create conditions to oust the Callaghan gang from the leadership of the Labour Party.



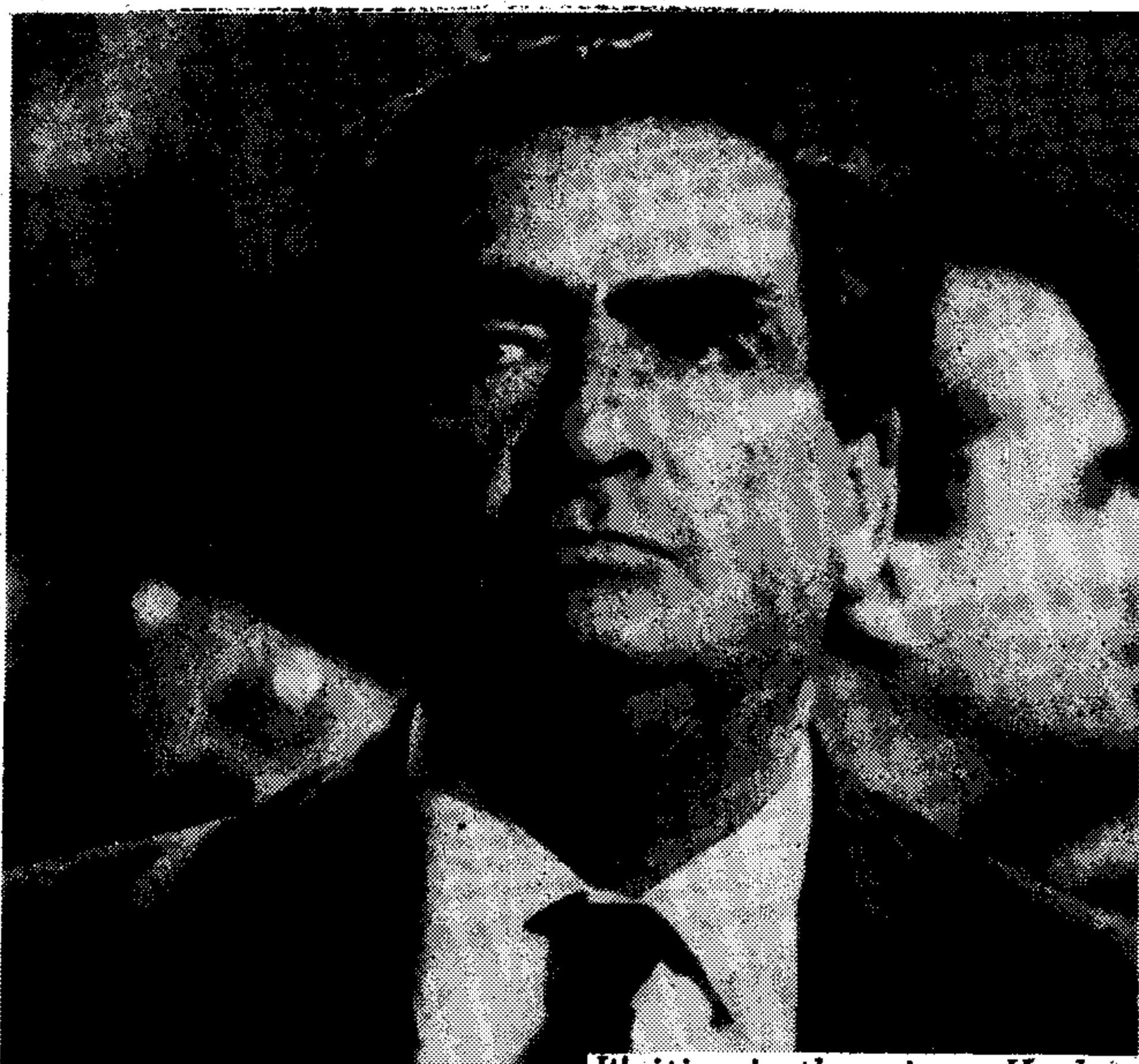
Taking in the bad news: William Rodgers



Well, Shirley, where do we go from here?



GMWU National Officer Warburton: opposed to reform



Waiting in the wings: Healey



Would-be leader Peter Shore

# MARXISM AND ARME



British soldier in Aden.

## Workers face state terror

Throughout the world, the working class faces the growth of capitalist backed violence directed at its struggles, its gains and its organisations.

The revolutionary workers face the crucial task of organising and mobilising the means of self defence of the class. This task is an immediate, burning matter of life and death for the workers in countries like El Salvador, where the class struggle has sharpened into bloody civil war.

Under every openly repressive capitalist regime—from Brazil to South Africa, India and Indonesia—workers in struggle face the constant and growing threat of legal and extra legal armed terror.

The relative "peace" of the imperialist democracies is giving way to the increasing anti-proletarian role and powers of the police and army, and the growth of fascist movements.

And in the degenerated and deformed workers' states, the parasitic Stalinist bureaucracies look to increased repression in the face of growing discontent of the workers (which has already exploded into a mighty movement of the class in Poland).

In different countries, the upsurge of struggle along with imperialist backed counter-attacks unfold in different forms and at different rhythms.

The development of the class struggle is, not steady and unbroken, but an explosive process marked by ebbs

# The violence of the employers

The capitalist state is the instrument of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. Through the state, the bourgeoisie holds control of the means of production and guards its power and profits.

The most important instruments of state power are the police and army. The naked essence of the modern capitalist state is revealed in the military-police dictatorships set up by imperialism and its agents in a bid to impose stable capitalist control.

These dictatorships range from Chile and South Korea (installed after defeats of the working class, but now trembling under pressure of re-emerging struggle), to El Salvador, Bolivia and Turkey—where the working class faces the threat of defeat at the hands of a counter-revolution being mobilised under cover of the official armed forces.

Depending on the balance of class forces and on economic conditions, the capitalist class in some countries and at certain periods, may seek stability through parliamentary forms of rule which rest on the collaboration of the leadership of the working class.

### "Legal" violence

But even in these cases, in any serious challenge mounted by the working class to the interests of capital, the bourgeoisie is ready to use to the maximum the "legal" violence at its disposal—and if necessary, to launch semi-legal or illegal terror against the workers.

In Britain, the traditional home of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, terror squads (SPG) have been set up inside the official police and army—backing up attacks against workers in struggle and against militant working class youth, (especially black youth) and aiding in the systematic military terror in the occupied north-

east of Ireland.

In the face of a forward movement of the working class, big capital has also on occasion financed a fascist movement ready to be launched as a battering ram against the struggles and organisations of the working class.

Similar developments are taking place in all the imperialist democracies in response to the rising militancy of the working class.

### Repression

In the economically backward capitalist countries, where there is no basis for parliamentary democracy and the weak local capitalist classes act simply as agents of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the working masses face a sharpening of the already vicious levels of repression as their courageous struggles gain in strength.

The imperialist bourgeoisie, hanging on to command of a world capitalist system that has long since become a brake on human development, has developed the weapons of violence against the world's masses to awesome levels.

As the historical experience of struggle has shown time and again, it is ready to use any form of violence when caught in severe crisis.

Yet the potentially titanic revolutionary strength of the international working class could sweep away this decaying ruling class and its murderous arsenal.

Only the crisis of revolutionary leadership that holds back the working class has allowed imperialism to maintain itself.

### Finance capital

The big bourgeoisie stands above the government, Parliament, courts and other official organs of state power. The real power in the capitalist state rests in the hands of finance

capital, the dominant section of the ruling class.

Organised in the giant banking and industrial monopolies based in the imperialist nations, finance capital directly controls the main productive forces in the world economy.

From these commanding heights, the imperialist bourgeoisie dominates the governments and other organs of power in the world's capitalist states.

Finance capital rose to global domination around the turn of the century, and this marked the development of capitalism into its highest stage, imperialism.

The age of imperialism is the age of capitalist decay. Capitalism has out-lived its former progressive capacity to develop the productive forces on the basis of the labour of the working class.

### Stranglehold

The control and organisation of production for the profits of a tiny minority has become a stranglehold on the productive forces.

The internationalisation and concentration of production, the levels of technology and skill of the workers provide the basis for satisfying the needs of the world's people and for opening up an era of tremendous material and cultural progress for humanity.

But while production is ruled by the anarchic struggle of imperialist capital for profits, new advances in technology are not applied to raising the living standards of the masses.

Instead, they are harnessed to the drive for profit and to the military protection of imperialist power.

Capitalism has created the economic conditions for the development of a new socialist world, and it has created a class which has the capacity to lead humanity towards socialism.

The working class is the only class whose interests are consis-

tently opposed to capitalism, and whose interests are consistent with social progress.

The ruling capitalist class is totally incapable of solving the problems thrown up by its decaying system. Each temporary breathing-space, which is gained by capital only at the expense of the masses, in fact prepares the ground for the re-emergence of deeper problems.

But the incurable crisis of the capitalist system will not by itself lead to the inevitable collapse of capitalism and emergence of socialism.

Without revolutionary action by the working class to tear state power and domination of the economy from big capital, the ruling class will plunge society into every-increasing poverty and suffering. The only end to this road is the barbaric ruin of civilisation.

As today's world crisis of profitability deepens, the bourgeoisie seeks to offload the full effects of the crisis on the workers, poor peasants and oppressed layers of the urban

petty bourgeoisie.

Guided only by the frantic drive for profit, the capitalist class is propelled to attack the gains of the working class and to accelerate the ruin of the small peasantry and petty bourgeoisie.

But in its offensive, imperialism faces on a world scale a working class which shows tremendous combativity and determination in mounting struggles against increasing oppression and exploitation.

Time and again in the forefront of mass struggles against imperialism and its agents, the working class disrupts capitalist control.

Heavy blows have been dealt to imperialism by mass struggles such as those in Iran and Nicaragua in 1979.

The sharpening of workers' struggle provokes a sharpening of the methods of counter-attack ruthlessly calculated and set in motion by capital.

The bourgeoisie is driven towards ever more desperate measures in a bid to secure

stable capitalist control. "Stability" under capitalism means the ability of the ruling class to impose its will on the oppressed classes.

To this end, big capital will mobilise the most extreme terror if necessary. It is restrained not by any moral or democratic sensitivities, but only by fear of provoking revolutionary levels of resistance.

The growing challenge to imperialist control by the international working class impels big capital to look beyond the established formal niceties of bourgeois democracy in order to perpetuate its rule in each country.

The existing regime, constructed upon the old balance of class forces, proves less and less able to contain struggle. The big bourgeoisie feels the urgency of new methods to discipline the militant proletariat.

This is combined with a reliance on the reformist and Stalinist leaders, and attempts to create conditions for these leaders to head off revolutionary struggles.



Armed demonstration by French Communists in the 1920s

# ...D STRUGGLE

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or

...nd flows. This complexity and diversity makes it impossible to provide a uniform, detailed plan of action to counter the violence and terror mobilised by imperialism and its agents in each situation. But the advanced workers must be armed with a revolutionary programme and strategy based on the general tendency of development. Without such political weapons, the necessary preparation and bold perspective is impossible.

### Workers defence

Throughout its history, the working class has resorted to armed methods of struggle in spontaneous defensive actions. Revolutionary Marxism starts from a confidence in the strength and initiative of spontaneous working class struggle, and seeks to develop them in a conscious revolutionary direction.

The fight for the building of workers' defence squads—trained, armed and ready to protect strikes, demonstrations and meetings against attacks by state and extreme rightwing forces—must be taken up in the workers' movement as part of the fight to mobilise and organise the working class in defence of its independent class interests.

The defence squads must be controlled by independent working class committees of struggle, based on the mass organisations of the class where these exist. Industrial workers must form the core of the defence squads.

As part of a revolutionary programme taken into the day to day struggles of the working class, the slogan for workers self defence starts from the experience and needs of the working class.

### Militia

By turning workers towards reliance on their own mobilised strength, the demand combats any tendency to rely on the supposed "protection" of the capitalist state so eagerly sought by the reformist and Stalinist leaders.

It also prepares the ground for the future offensive on state power under a new revolutionary leadership.

As the struggle broadens and deepens, the necessity arises for the development of workers' militia unifying the local defence squads and linked to the fight to build councils of action as the central organs of mass struggle. A genuinely class-based militia would be controlled by the councils of action.

To the extent that the working class puts forward a bold revolutionary programme including measures to prevent the ruin of the oppressed layers of peasants and petty bourgeois, and thus shows in action its capacity to lead a serious struggle for a new social order, the workers' militia would gain the sympathy and support of the broad masses.

On this basis, the possibility would open up for revolutionary fraternisation between the workers and



FRELIMO freedom fighters in Mozambique

soldiers, through links between rank and file committees in the army and the councils of action.

The development of the militia as the armed combat organisation of the working class is the first real step on the road to the arming of the masses.

The fight to build the militia must be accompanied by persistent propaganda for the general arming of the workers and poor peasants.

The historical experience of the international workers' struggle shows that the working class will get arms when it seriously wants them (for example—Russia 1917, Germany 1923, Spain 1930, Portugal 1974, Angola 1975, Iran and Nicaragua 1979).

As Trotsky wrote in 1934:-

"The proletariat produces arms, the proletariat erects the buildings in which they are kept, defends these buildings against itself, serves in the army and creates all its equipment. It is neither locks nor walls which separate the proletariat from arms, but the habit of submission, the hypnosis of class domination..."

It is sufficient to destroy these psychological walls and no wall of stone will stand in the way. It is enough that the proletariat should want arms—and it will find them. The task of the revolutionary party is to awaken this desire and to facilitate its realisation."

("Whither France") Like the united front of mass workers' organisations, the workers' militia in itself is not enough to secure victory in the civil war.

### Party

A correct revolutionary policy is necessary, as shown in the negative by all the previous examples except Russia in 1917.

The final victory of the working class requires the building of a revolutionary party capable of organising an armed uprising on the basis of a general strike at the opportune moment.

History has provided an example—the Bolshevik party under Lenin and Trotsky that led the Russian workers to power in October 1917.

Only the Trotskyist programme and strategy show a way forward in building the armed self defence of the working class and carrying this defence through into an attack on state power.

The political arming of the working class vanguard with a revolutionary programme, lays the basis for the physical arming of the working class.

This is the central feature of the Trotskyist policy.

Armed struggle conducted by the working class is a form of the political struggle imposed on the working class by the transformation of the class struggle into civil war; and this in turn results from the ruthless fight of the bourgeoisie to maintain its decaying system.

Armed actions, like any tactical act in the political struggle, must be assessed in relation to the over-riding task—to build the political independence and mobilisation of the working class, in defence of its class interests and in leadership of the mass struggle.

The existing reformist and Stalinist misleaders of the working class seek to tie the working class to a class collaborationist strategy of seeking reforms within the system or alliances with so-called "progressive" sections of capitalists.

They attack the class independence and leading revolutionary role of the working class, and attempt to derail the revolutionary mobilisation of the working class into sterile protest action and parliamentary 'pressure'.

These misleaders actively obstruct the tasks of workers' self defence.

By politically confusing and disarming the working class, they obstruct the organisational and physical arming of the masses and open the door to the danger of the physical defeat of the working class at the hands of monopoly capitalists counter-revolutionary

gangs—as took place so tragically in the Spanish Civil War and the Chilean coup of 1973.

The popular frontist policies put forward by reformism and Stalinism are rationalised by peddling the illusion of the peaceful evolution of bourgeois democracy into socialism.

In countries like Britain, where decaying bourgeois democracy is under siege by big capital and its agents, these misleaders try to tie the working class to alliances with "democratic" sections of the bourgeoisie. They look to the organs of the decaying parliamentary regime to stop the drive towards extra-parliamentary methods (police repression, fascism, militarisation).

### Pretensions

The hypocrisy behind even the democratic pretensions of the labour bureaucracy in Britain, is most sharply exposed by its line up behind imperialist repression and propaganda against the 'terrorism' of the IRA and INLA.

The part played by the British ruling class in the systematic terror, starvation and wars organised by imperialists shows clearly who the real terrorists are.

The British bourgeoisie is responsible for the death of each civilian and soldier who dies in the course of imperialist aggression against Ireland.

Revolutionary Marxists fight for the working class movement to support, without reservations or hesitations, the anti-imperialist struggles of national liberation movements, and to defend their organisations and militants against all forms of repression and attack.

This support is the starting point for aiding the fight for a working class leadership of the national liberation struggle.

In political opposition to the programme and strategy of the existing nationalist leadership (which guides the tactics and actions of militants), a Marxist programme and strategy must be advanced.

Under openly repressive capitalist regimes the reformists and Stalinists may at times be forced to cover their popular frontist strategy with the militant facade of a commitment to "armed struggle".

In this approach, the threat of violence is seen as part of the pressure on the capitalist state to force the democratic reform of the regime—which, they trust, will then evolve peacefully into socialism.

This is the perspective of *guerillaism*, a reformist strategy with a particular attitude to the question of armed struggle.

### Guerillaist

The petty bourgeois nationalist and Stalinist leadership of organisations from the ERP (Argentina) to the ANC (South Africa), SWAPO (Namibia), the PLO (Palestine), ETA (Euskadi) and the IRA (Ireland), all embrace the guerillaist strategy as part of their attempts to maintain leadership over militant mass struggles.

Trotskyism is certainly not opposed in principle to all



guerilla actions (assassination of agents, ambush of state forces and so on).

But in themselves, even the most spectacularly successful guerilla acts can in no way weaken capitalist control.

At most they disrupt temporarily the smooth functioning of part of the capitalist system (and this kind of disruption takes place continually through the decay of capitalism).

The legitimacy in each particular case of a tactical use of guerilla methods, must be decided in relation to the political movement of the working class.

Trotskyism is the politics of revolutionary mass struggle. It is this struggle which must command the gun and bomb at all times.

Guerillaism is a popular frontist strategy in which the use (or threat) of guerilla actions politically weakens the working class by fostering the illusion that gains can be won and defended outside of the organised and mobilised strength of the working class.

In periods of upsurge in workers' struggles, guerillaism undermines the working class movement by turning workers away from reliance on their own independent strength towards the false hope of liberation by a petty bourgeois led guerilla army.

At the same time, some of the best militants steeled in the heat of the mass struggle are removed from the struggles of the working class in the illusionary search for a revolutionary way forward under guerillaist leadership.

Removed from the strength

and direct pressure of working class struggle, these militants are increasingly vulnerable to the control of the guerillaist bureaucracy on whom they depend materially for training and arms.

Frustration and disillusion create antagonisms between the militants and bureaucracy—which revolutionary Marxists must exploit in seeking to turn the guerilla (with his or her arms and training) to the political tasks posed by the workers' struggle.

But frustration and disillusion can also foster ultra left adventurism and even acts of terror against the working class—and this tendency will clearly be exploited by the opportunist bureaucracy and by the imperialists.

In periods of lull in working class struggle, guerillaism can even be a means for the reformist and Stalinist organisations to abandon the class.

This was the case for example in China, after the Stalinist policies of the CCP had led to a disastrous defeat of the working class in 1927.

The CCP turned to the peasant revolt that still rolled through the countryside.

Without changing its popular frontist perspective, the Stalinist CCP organised rural guerilla warfare, completely disconnected from the demoralised urban working class.

As Trotsky argued, without the mobilisation and leadership of the urban working class, rural guerilla war can only serve to advance one bourgeois faction against another.



Paris Commune 1871: Armed guards at the barricades

# Lessons from history of British Trotskyism

By John Docherty

A number of important historical questions were discussed at the first full conference of the Group for the Study of Leon Trotsky and the Revolutionary Movement held on 20 September last at the Polytechnic of Central London.

Nor were the items discussed at the conference merely of academic interest, centring as they did on fundamental questions of the formation of a revolutionary proletarian party, the struggle against the Stalinist policies of the popular front and the intervention of revolutionaries in the main processes of bourgeois democracy.

The first paper, read by Geoffrey Littlejohns, dealt with the disaffiliation of the Independent Labour Party from the Labour Party in 1932, and the activities of the Revolutionary Policy Committee within the ILP, particularly before it became an instrument of the Stalinists in the disintegration of the ILP from 1934.

## Opportunism

Comrade Littlejohns, and speakers in the subsequent discussion emphasised that the 1932 break took place for a number of reasons, including the opportunism of the Brockway-Maxton leadership and the independent power base of the ILP in Glasgow, possibly in alliance with local Catholics.

However, it also reflected the crystallisation of a coherent opposition to the betrayals of the 1929-31 MacDonald government and the possibility of a real alternative movement to the complicity in these betrayals of those Labour leaders like Henderson, Morrison and Dalton, who had only drawn back at the last moment from the actual alliance of MacDonald and the others with the Tories.

It was for this reason that Trotsky welcomed the 1932 disaffiliation but said that it was necessary to turn back immediately to the mass of Labour Party members, whose mood was reflected in the left resolutions of the annual conferences of 1932 and 1933, calling for the nationalisation of the banks and much else, well to the left of any programmatic policies of the conferences until much more recent times.

However, the ILP leaders as is well known, did not take the direction advised by Trotsky. There were at least three important reasons for this.

## Centrism

The first of these was the inveterate centrism of the ILP leaders, Maxton and Brockway. They spoke of 'workers' councils', but were quite unwilling to break from a parliamentary orientation.

Brockway in particular spent a great deal of time trying to reconcile the Second and Third Internationals rather than making a break from the betrayals of both.

The second reason was that the ILP rank and file generally largely as a result of this, had little conception of what had been intended to come from their break with the Labour Party. Were they to be simply a more left wing version of the other Labour Party, mainly interested in electoral contests or were they to become a revolutionary party building workers councils and preparing insurrection and the seizure of power?

The fact that nobody even posed such a question, let alone answered it, led to a feel-



National Cabinet 1931. Back: 1 to r, Cunliffe-Lister, Thomas, Reading, Chamberlain, Hoare. Front: 1 to r, Snowden, Baldwin, Macdonald, Samuel, Sanky.

ing of purposelessness and demoralisation which reduced the membership from 16,000 at the time of disaffiliation in 1932 to as little as 4,000 by the beginning of 1934.

The confusion also meant that the ILP did not even carry out agitation of the sort continued by the ultra-left Stalinists in the period amongst the unemployed.

## Confusion

This helped to allow the Stalinists who had originally been taken completely unawares by the development of the disaffiliation movement and who condemned the Revolutionary Policy Committee as being infected with Trotskyism, to benefit from the confusion and take over some of the left wing members of the split.

As a number of speakers pointed out, there was nothing inevitable in this decline. The Revolutionary Policy Committee included at least until the summer of 1934 such figures as Matlow and Palsey who were part of the Trotskyist entry into the ILP.

Their ideas remained influential even after they left, as was shown by the predominance of the slogan of workers sanctions at the time of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935.

Had the Trotskyists been as clear and determined in their intervention as Trotsky himself advocated, then matters could have been very different.

The second paper, read by Martin Upham, dealt with the by-election in Aylesbury in May 1938 where Reg Groves who had been a member of the recently dissolved Marxist League, stood as the Labour candidate.

## Pressure

In this election Groves put forward a clear line against the Stalinist-inspired popular front.

The 'Peace Alliance', Liberal candidate was supported by a few local Labour people, but most especially by the Communist Party who viciously attacked Groves and called on the Labour Party to withdraw support from him and support instead the Liberal candidate.

Transport House did not go as far as this, but put considerable pressure on the local Labour Party to adopt another more conciliatory candidate.

The local Party rejected all these pressures, and fought tenaciously to get Groves a vote of 7,661, by far the highest Labour had ever got in the constituency, making him the

only candidate to gain votes from the previous election.

Reg Groves himself pointed out that his campaign weakened the Liberal Party in the area for good, and was a step in weakening the 'Peace Alliance' by which the Stalinists were at the time trying to revive the popular front policy which had collapsed with the end of the

CP/ILP/Socialist League 'Unity Campaign' in 1937.

Although the policies of the popular front did not collapse altogether, union conferences and other bodies began to pass resolutions against the popular front line, now that the by-election had shown there could be a successful working class alternative to the treachery of

the Stalinist policies.

It is a pity that Comrade Groves did not expand on this, rather than eulogising the class consciousness of rural workers and the pleasures of being away from his previous period of disputes in the Trotskyist movement.

The third paper, given by John McHugh, dealt with the participation of the Revolutionary Communist Party, which brought together virtually all groups of British Trotskyists, in the by-election at Neath in May 1945. The candidate was Jock Haston, at the time General Secretary of the RCP.

The RCP chose to stand in a very strong Labour seat during the wartime electoral truce when the main parties did not stand against one another. It saw the intervention as a general propaganda campaign to argue against imperialist war and for Labour to power on a socialist programme.

Once again the strongest opponents of such policies were the local Stalinists who by now were calling for a 'national government' of Tory and Labour leaders. However the effect of the RCP propaganda compelled them to agree to a public debate with Haston on the eve of poll.

Here the Stalinists accused the Trotskyists of being 'Fifth Columnists' and Haston replied with calls for defence of the independent rights of the working class and for socialist internationalism.

The vote of 1781 was not enormous but the impact of what was then a tiny organisation was as great as could be expected.

LETTER

Socialist Press

## ambiguous on Afghanistan

74 Regina Road,  
London NW4  
12 August 1980

Dear Editor,

You have repeatedly invited discussion of the WSL and TILC's politics.

Brezhnev's war in Afghanistan remains front-page news in the world's press, yet for months *Socialist Press* has preserved a guilty *sotto voce*. The last substantial article, almost a fortnight after the Kabul uprising in February, was demonstrably written by two authors. The first half accurately described the mass uprising and the violence with which it was suppressed, helicopter gun-

ships strafing unarmed crowds.

The second, shifting from facts to programme, recalled that Trotskyists defend the Red Army's presence and, from editorial safety, advised Afghans to 'unite' with them.

Your ambiguities are perplexing. You have said, more than once, that the Russians should not have gone in, but now that they are there (and how!) they should stay, lest others (Afghans, perhaps?) fill the 'vacuum' that would be created by their too precipitate departure.

(Yet you have unaccountably failed to denounce the 'fifth column' which may yet force the rapid redeployment of the Red Army—the workers of Togliattigrad and Poland).

An organisation that prides itself on its Leninist-Trotskyist orthodoxy should have little difficulty in discovering the precedents for a more forthright defence of the Soviet subjugation of Afghanistan.

Has the WSL Executive forgotten the days of the 'healthy workers' state' in 1920 when Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin jointly attempted to force upon Poland precisely that 'revolution by foreign bayonets' that Marx condemned half a century before?

Has it overlooked the similar but more successful military annexation of Georgia in 1921?

And, last but not least, why is the WSL so reticent concerning that classic dry run for

Afghanistan: Lenin and Trotsky's 'satellitization' of Outer Mongolia?

The Red Army invaded Mongolia in 1921 and installed a government thickly laced with Soviet 'advisors'. Moscow had to intervene repeatedly to guarantee the subservience of the tiny Mongolian Party.

Most members of the 1921 cabinet were purged in 1922. At the August 1924 Congress Danzhan, head of the Party and Congress chairman, was foolishly enough to argue for a measure of independence from Moscow. Before the end of the Congress, with full Soviet approval, he had been removed and shot.

So the confusion of WSL members is understandable. They are buffeted on the one hand by the unqualified pro-Stalinist racism of such as the Spartacist tendency and on the other side by their own doubts whether it is possible to carry people closer to socialism by napping them.

Meantime the WSL leadership itself abdicates its theoretical responsibilities, failing to draw out the essential lessons of Lenin's pioneering role as 'proletarian' imperialist.

Trotsky's mature analysis of the USSR was as a 'counter-revolutionary workers' state'. But the concepts of dialectical

science, you have reminded us, must be ever-mobile to escape extinction.

Forty years on, why no clear statement on the historic gains embodied in the expansion of the 'genocidal workers' state'?

Adam Westoby  
Robin Blick

## WE REPLY:

The above letter from Messrs Blick and Westoby indicates the sorry degeneration of two intellectuals who in the past have each made valuable theoretical contributions to the Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism.

Westoby walked out of the Workers Socialist League several years ago, not on the basis of the anti-Leninist positions in his letter, but arguing that he could develop Marxist theory as an individual outside of an organised Marxist movement.

Blick—a former leading member of the SLL—was for some time in the mid 1970s associated with the OCRFI 'Bulletin' grouping in Britain.

Now both individuals have combined forces in a sudden about-face anti-communist offensive—and have the gall to demand that the WSL—which has consistently defended Trotskyist positions now account for itself!

A full reply taking up the historical questions so flippantly thrown around by Blick and Westoby is beyond our scope here—but will appear as a centre page article in our next issue.



Lenin



# Max Eastman—from fellow traveller to witch-hunter

## PART TWO

Ernie Stubbins has been using the occasion of the republication by the WRP of Max Eastman's book 'The Young Trotsky' to examine Eastman's political itinerary as an intellectual Marxist turned anti-communist.

Trotsky's political opposition to Eastman was hardened by the reports of the sharpening discussions within the Communist League of America (as the US section of the Left Opposition was then called).

Shachtman was already leading an opposition against Cannon, early in 1933. Eastman was operating around the fringes of this opposition and a sharp clash occurred within the CLA leadership over Shachtman's attempts to present Eastman as a speaker in a public meeting.

There are no further references to Eastman in Trotsky's published works until November 1935, when in conversation with Earle Birney, he returns to his attacks on Eastman's 'engineering philosophy':

"Eastman talks about the revolutionary who sets about to create a revolution as an engineer conceives a plan and builds a bridge according to it. Engineers! Bridges! Revolution! Eastman knows nothing about them.

He knows nothing about bridge building. Does an engineer build a bridge out of his head or does he receive a command from the capitalists whose economic needs require the bridge? Does he form a plan out of his head or is it the product of the accumulated knowledge of years of bridge building, incorporated in textbooks?

Is the engineer of value as an individual or because of his creative power when, in accepting that command he coordinates in the best interests of those who command him the elements of nature and science, which exist independently of him?

If Eastman meant "engineer" in this sense, we could accept his definition.

But he thinks of the revolutionary genius as a man who conceives a priori and then gives orders. No, there are many engineers and many plans. The mass does its own selecting among them and chooses the engineer and the plan that answers its historic needs. It was this that Marx explained and that Eastman never understood."

A letter from Trotsky to Sara Weber in September 1936 shows that the business relationship with Eastman was suffering as a consequence of the deep philosophical differences.

### Intensity

Trotsky complains that Eastman had demanded 10% of Trotsky's earnings in addition to his translator's fees, in connection with the publication of the 'History of the Russian Revolution'.

Something of the intensity of the past connections between the two men can be learned from Trotsky's words in this letter:

"In this way his work would be paid from two to three times better than mine (I worked almost three years). But I did not find the courage to say NO



Trotsky

(in such matters it is always very hard for me to get up the courage). Thus, up to date I have paid Eastman voluntarily about \$4,000; in addition he received a very high fee as a translator."

He goes on to criticise the quality of Eastman's translation of Volumes 2 and 3 of the 'History', and his demands for 4% of the earnings from 'Lenin' (which was never completed, and sections of which were published as 'Young Lenin' many years later).

### Intolerable

During this period Eastman had advised the publishers, Doubleday Doran, to give up hope of the Lenin book ever appearing. This was in an episode of considerable strain and ill health for Trotsky, during which at Eastman's suggestion he was working on a new introduction to the 'History' which was eventually to become 'The Revolution Betrayed'.

Under any circumstances this would be intolerable behaviour in a literary agent. In an alleged political sympathiser, in a position to control a major proportion of Trotsky's income, it is something much worse.

During 1937 things continued to deteriorate. In February Trotsky made a statement rejecting Eastman's interpretation of 'The Revolution Betrayed' as equating the Soviet regime as fascism:

"I carry no responsibility for Max Eastman. I hope that my readers will understand my ideas better than my translator".

### Participation

It is illustrative of Trotsky's political approach during this period that he was not prepared to allow the Left Opposition to cut itself off from the layer of intellectuals within which Eastman operated.

In June 1937 he argued for the participation of Trotskyists in a proposed weekly journal involving Eastman and other anti-Stalinist revolutionary intellectuals.

In July, replying to the Herring Committee on cultural relations with Latin America, he disagrees again with Eastman's by now much publicised view that the Stalin regime had ended socialism in Russia, but still referred to Eastman as 'my friend'.

Again in January 1938 he makes the same points in an article in the Scottish journal 'Forward'. In February he complains again of Eastman's delays in translating 'The Revolution Betrayed' and 'Young Lenin', which were preventing serialisation. In a letter to Frankel he concludes:

"I see that getting free of Eastman is the only way to succeed".

And he asks the SWP to approach Eastman explaining the impossibility of Trotsky's position as an author subordinated to the convenience of the translator.

### Elementary duty

A second letter to Frankel a few days later makes the same points:

"Somebody should visit Eastman and explain to him that his elementary duty is to let me free".

And he accuses Eastman of siding with the publishers in every disagreement.

This political difference went further in March 1938, when in a discussion with SWP leaders Trotsky argued that it was necessary for the party to maintain elastic and liberal relations with intellectual sympathisers outside the party, while of course maintaining strictest conditions for membership. However, he went on:

"At the same time we must mercilessly attack types like Max Eastman and Eugene

Lyons. We must show them that we take things like Marxist theory very seriously, and we must not permit the impression that Max Eastman can be our friend and at the same time, incidentally, an enemy of socialism".

In a letter to Cannon in April he criticises the prominence given to a letter from Eastman in 'The International':

"Many people will interpret this fact as our willingness to close our eyes on principles when friendship is concerned."

Again in a letter to Dunayevskaya in June he argues for an open polemic against Dewey and particularly Eastman:

"The very confused and equivocal character of his friendship to us is extremely prejudicial to our movement".

The argument continued to rage through 1939 and in April Trotsky wrote in the 'International Bulletin' of the SWP:

"Max Eastman wrote that Trotsky places too much value on doctrine and if he had more common sense he would not have lost power".

By the end of 1939 it was becoming clear that the Burnham-Shachtman opposition was rapidly approaching Eastman's position on dialectics. Thus in his December document 'A petty-bourgeois opposition in the SWP' he praises the earlier attacks by Burnham and Shachtman on Eastman and Sidney Hook, whom they had called 'The League of Abandoned Hopes'.

He traced the material basis of American Pragmatism in the following paragraph:

"Pragmatism, a mixture of rationalism and empiricism, became the national philosophy of the USA. The theoretical methodology of Henry Ford—both regard living society from the point of view of an 'engineer' (Eastman platonically). Historically the disdainful attitude toward the dialectic is explained by the fact that the

grandfathers and grandmothers of Max Eastman and others did not need the dialectic in order to conquer territory and enrich themselves. But times have changed and the philosophy of pragmatism has entered a period of bankruptcy just as has American capitalism".

### Origins

On a number of occasions in the fight against the Burnham-Shachtman opposition Trotsky traces its origins to Eastman, both as the original propagator of the attacks on dialectics, and in his continuous agitation around the fringes of the SWP.

In the 'Open Letter to Burnham' of January 1940 he ascribes Burnham's refusal to discuss dialectics 'I stopped arguing about religion long ago' directly to Eastman, and warns of where such a position always leads:

"In the USA Eastman, Sidney Hook and their friends utilised opposition to the dialectic as cover for their transformation from fellow travellers of the proletariat to fellow travellers of the bourgeoisie".

### Hypocrites

He criticises Burnham's attention to the developments in the Eastman-Hook circles when the focus should have been the problems of the Stalinist party in the USA. He argues that Eastman should no longer be allowed access to the 'New International'.

In February, in the letter to Hansen of the 29th, he has to reply to attacks from the opposition about his 1929 statement repudiating Eastman:

"The new moralists quote, I heard, my terrible crime concerning Eastman and Lenin's Testament. What despicable hypocrites. Eastman published the document on his initiative in a moment when our faction decided to interrupt all public

activity in order to avoid a public split. Don't forget it was before the famous Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee and the Chinese Revolution, even before the emergence of the Zinoviev Opposition."

During 1929 the Troika was prepared to employ Eastman's book to destroy the Opposition. Trotsky was faced with the choice between a fight for which the Opposition was not prepared, and signing the repudiation.

It was wrong to transform this into an abstract moral question, as the petty bourgeois opposition in the SWP was attempting to do. Trotsky writes of them:

"Our old Mensheviks were real heroes in comparison with them".

Trotsky's final reference to Eastman comes in the unfinished 1940 document 'Bonapartism, Fascism and War'. Denouncing Eastman's individualism he writes:

"This anecdote deserves to be included in the text of a history of ideology".

After the defeat of the opposition both Burnham and Eastman moved quite rapidly into the camp of the bourgeoisie. Burnham made a career for himself out of anti-communism, lecturing at the US War College and editing the far right 'National Review' which denounced Nixon for his soft line against Moscow and Peking. He even gave evidence against Shachtman as a subversive.

Eastman's anti-communism was slightly less rabid than Burnham's but equally dedicated.

For many years he edited the 'Readers Digest', one of the most widely circulated right wing journals of the 1950s.

Shortly before his death in 1969 he was an active Nixon supporter.

However there was to be one further twist of the knife to end the sorry tale of Eastman's literary collaboration with Trotsky. The completed sections of 'Lenin' were prepared for publication in 1943 as a first volume towards the completed work.

Before they could be published they vanished from Eastman's home, stolen presumably by Stalinist agents.

Mysteriously, the stolen sections appeared many years later in a library at Harvard University. It was not until then that Eastman 'chanced to find' in his own files the three remaining untranslated chapters.

Thus with bitter irony all of Trotsky's complaints about Eastman's delays in translation were borne out in full.

Finally a few words on the value of Eastman's pamphlet. Eastman originally set out to write a complete biography, but by his own admission (in the introduction to 'Young Lenin') his patience gave out when the book was half done. 'Young Trotsky' is the result.

The pamphlet cannot be recommended to readers coming new to Trotskyism. As biographical material it is poor, containing no more than sketchy accounts of events recounted more richly in Trotsky's own 'My Life' to which the interested reader should turn first. The advanced students will find that Eastman's document adds only a few incidents to what we know of Trotsky's youth, and nothing at all to what we understand of it.



# Oil rig workers stand against sacking threat

The six week old struggle of the 900 men at the oil rig construction site at Hunterston, Ayrshire, must be an inspiration to all workers to go into battle against big business and the Tory government.

Although victimised by management, slandered by the media, harassed by the police and betrayed by their own union leaders, they have stood firm in their determination both to secure their jobs and enforce adequate safety conditions.

What began as a struggle against unsafe working conditions has become a fight to defend their jobs against the management claim that the site is now closed and all 900 men sacked.

## Intransigence

The management intransigence has been carried a stage further with their request to Younger, the Secretary of State for Scotland, for permission to breach the seawall in order to tow away the partially completed rig.

At a mass meeting in Irvine last Monday the men again

rejected union leaders' efforts to push them back to work.

In ballots arranged by the union officials, the GMWU workers voted to return but the boilermakers decided to fight on by a majority of eleven. It was the threat to the safety of the boilermakers that sparked off the dispute in the first place.

## Support

The challenge to the leadership of the Boilermakers Society grows daily as support pours in for the men at Hunterston from the organised labour movement.

Among those who have sent moral and financial support are the workers at Marathon rig building yard at Clydebank and the Trades Councils of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Stirling.

James Murray, the secretary-elect of the union, who failed to get the men back to work is himself in a weak position.

His recent election to the post of secretary was only secured by 200 votes and there is an internal union inquiry as to malpractices in the ballot.

Further dissension at a leadership level has been brought about by the correct decision of the Boilermakers

delegation at the Labour Party Conference to swing their crucially important votes behind the resolution for a change in the method of election of the party leader.

This took place whilst two of the union executive members, John Chalmers and James Murray, were absent from the floor of the conference.

All of these tensions may come to a head in a fortnight's time at the forthcoming Boilermakers annual conference.

The following demands must immediately be taken up in the trade union and labour movement:

\*A mass picket against and complete black upon any effort to remove the rig.

\*Solidarity action by all the rig building yards in the country.

\*Increased pressure by all trade unionists upon the leadership of the Boilermakers Society to make the strike official.

\*More financial and moral support for the struggle to be sent to the Shop Stewards Committee (Hunterston dispute), c/o TUC Club, Ardrossan Road, Irvine, Ayrshire.

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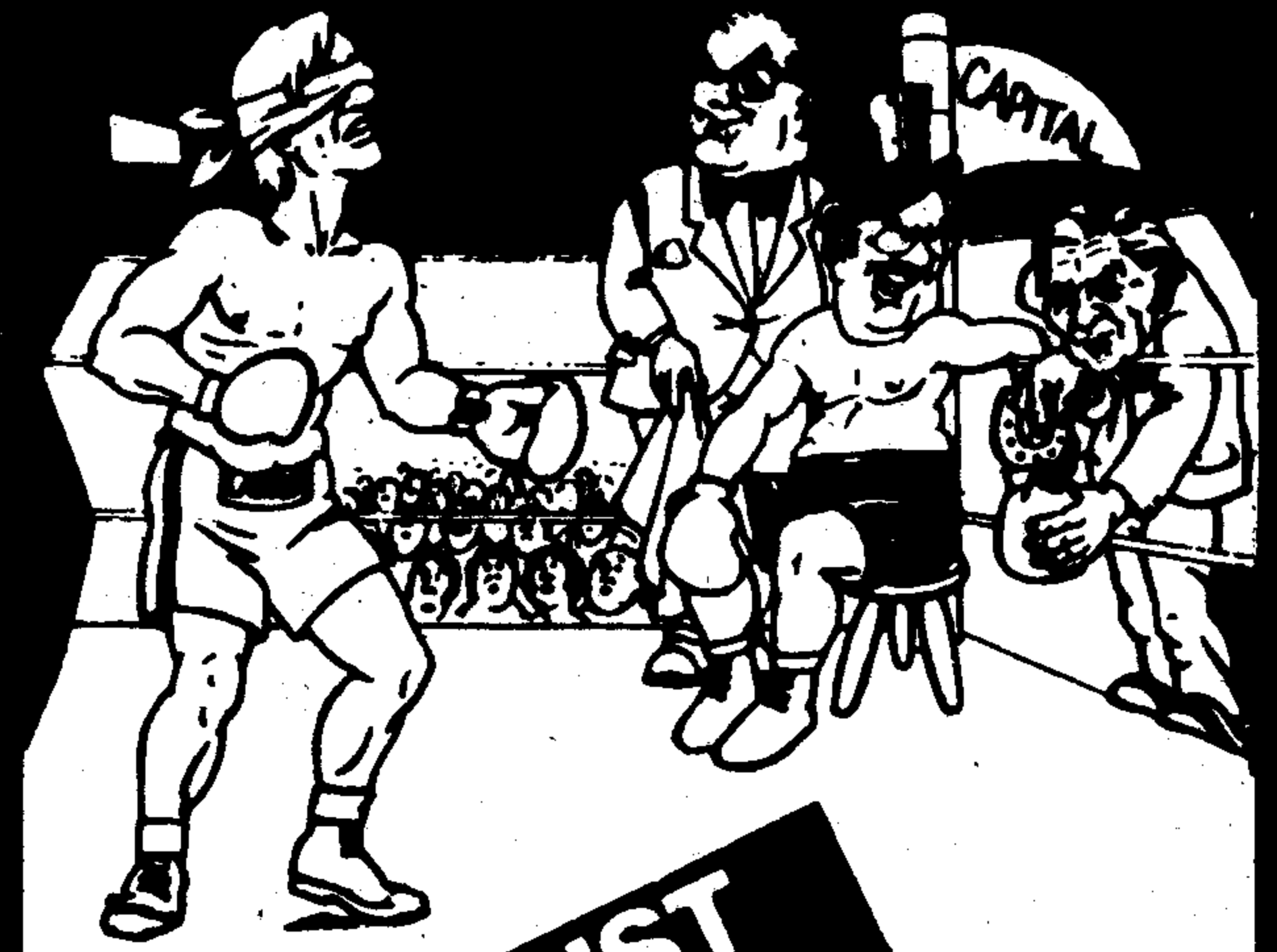


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# Oil no answer to Scots jobless

Recent renewed speculation as to the extent of the reserves of North Sea oil as yet untapped and the possible impact upon the Scottish economy have been the inspiration for fresh political controversy on this issue.

Statements by the chairman of Shell UK, John Raisman, at a recent seminar at Aviemore that increased investment by the oil companies of the order of £40,000 million in the next 15 years will double the number of those directly involved in the industry and claims by oil experts that probable reserves will last into the next century have both refuelled the argument.

## Reactionary

These reports have been seized upon in their usual opportunist fashion by the SNP to bolster their reactionary, divisive separatist campaign, featuring a portrayal of Thatcher as a vampire drinking Scotland's life-blood, i.e. the revenues of North Sea oil.

This expensive publicity stunt cannot be lightly dismissed for, as a recent article in Socialist Press argued, a failure by Labour controlled councils in Scotland to confront

Tory-imposed cuts could create demoralisation amongst layers of workers who could then become possible captives of SNP propaganda.

## Limited impact

As well as combatting the diversionary claims of the nationalists, socialists in Scotland must also point out the limited impact of oil revenues in the context of an economy in recession.

The increased moneys earned from North Sea Oil over the last year have been totally absorbed by the rising cost of unemployment benefits.

All of the hopes of an oil bonanza are being dashed by the urgent necessity of bailing out a bankrupt capitalist economy.

The prospect of 80,000 jobs in oil and related industries by 1995 has to be seen within the context of a recessionary situation in which there is already an overcapacity in the petrochemical industry.

Recent projects, such as that of Dow Chemicals, will have to operate in a climate of falling demand for their products.

Moreover, even an expansion of jobs of the order promised cannot hold back the mounting tide of redundancies as other sections of Scottish industry fold.

The way forward for

Scottish workers is not through the diversionary campaigns for import controls or for a bigger share of oil revenues but along the lines of the fighting perspectives to be discussed at the Conference to Fight Unemployment in Falkirk on October 12, a conference backed by the Federation of Trades Councils in the Central Region and the District Committee of the TGWU in that area.



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

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

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

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

economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

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

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

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

degenerated workers' states.

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

Name .....

Address .....

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

# Manchester engineers occupy to save jobs

Workers at Gardners, the Eccles (Manchester) diesel engine company have occupied the plant against redundancies.

The takeover took place following a mass meeting last Friday. Talks between union and management on the threat made to make 590 of the 2430 workforce redundant had broken down when management insisted on the right to decide for themselves who should be sacked and who should stay.

The occupation at Gardners is central to the fight against unemployment in the North West.

Myers, a nearby mail order firm announced 1600 redundancies only a few weeks ago and just up the road, Chloride, the battery manufacturers, are on short time and threatening a further round of sackings.

A call from Salford Trades Council for a mass demonstration against all the redundancies last weekend was only weakly supported but since the occupation was announced, solidarity has been shown by other local trade unionists.

The local Fire Brigades Union branch, grateful for support during their strike from Gardners' workers, has imposed a levy of £1 per member per week and the occupation com-

mittee was meeting Chloride stewards earlier this week to discuss joint action.

The Gardners occupation committee has yet to work out its programme of demands; but one they must obviously consider is for the opening of the books of Gardners itself, which is spending £17 million on new technology, and of the parent company Hawker Siddeley, as well as the vehicle manufacturers like Scammels, ERF and Foden that use Gardners for 90% of their bus engines.

The extent of the profits made by Gardners' suppliers, bankers and consumers must be exposed.

The social need for the bus engines is shown by the fact that Lancashire United Transport already has lines of broken down buses awaiting new engines from the plant—which raises the need for the nationalisation of Gardners as a part of a planned, nationalised transport system.

And the forthcoming joint meeting of Gardners and Chloride stewards along with the splendid support from the FBU pose the need for a Salford Council of Action based on the Trades Council, but widened to draw in representatives of all local workers' organisations to defend and extend the struggle.

# EDWARDES' NEW PAY INSULT TO BL WORKERS

Edwardes has offered BL workers a 14% wage cut as a settlement on this year's wage review.

6.1% (about £2.50 in the pocket) with inflation averaging 20% over the past year cannot be seen in any other way.

On top of this Edwardes has offered to raise the maximum bonus figure from £15 to £22.50, a 50% increase.

The problem with this little sleight of hand is that most of the big plants, like Longbridge and Cowley have never reached the starting point for bonus, let alone the maximum!

## Lay-offs

A 50% increase on zero is zero. This is not likely to change because when they do get consistent production management announce lay-offs.

BL workers had 5% last year and 5% the year before. 6.1% would make it 16.1% over 3 years—less than the rate of inflation in one year!

Wage settlements in Britain have been averaging 22% over the last year—leaving BL wages further and further behind.

The recent Intucon report which has received much publicity put Britain on the lowest wages in the EEC with the exception of the Irish Republic.

So how can Edwardes hope to foist 6.1% on a workforce who are already the lowest paid car workers in Europe? The answer is in his tactics. Last February, just before the crunch on last year's review, Edwardes created a crisis.

He announced "overstocking" when it largely didn't

exist and introduced cutbacks, short time and voluntary redundancy (VR).

As soon as the 5% was bulldozed through, most of the short-time was called off, and some plants, like Cowley, increased production to its previous levels and switched to recruiting labour even before the VR programme had been completed.

Edwardes has pulled the same stunt this time. No sooner did negotiations begin than he announced short time, cut backs and more VR. Again, (with the exception of some models, like the SD1) there was no overstocking; the move was tactical.

After laying off the Ital they have now reintroduced full time working because of an outcry by distributors that they simply could not get any to sell.

But the fact is that BL workers have considerable bargaining power if they decide to use it, and not just with the Metro.

Far from not wanting cars, the generally low stocks put management in a difficult position to face a strike. The blackmail should be called. Every time management says "if you push for wages, jobs will go" and then jobs go anyway.

One thing is sure. If BL workers are going to win their £17.21 claim this year they are going to have to watch their leaders.

It is significant that the JNC did not actually reject the 6.1%—they adjourned the meeting for three weeks to consider it.

Who needs three weeks to consider 6.1%? It is also clear that the "offer" on the bonus is designed to split the unity of

BL workers—since it is worth money to some plants (mainly small plants) and not to others.

But at senior stewards meetings, which often decide things in BL, small plants have the same vote as the big plants.

The TGWU convenor of Longbridge for example with over 13,000 members has one vote—and a craft convenor from a small plant with possibly a few dozen members also has one vote.

## Conference

This is why it has been so important to press for a democratic structure in BL.

A fully representative delegate conference for example,

reflecting the shop floor workers and with the power to take decisions in BL would change the situation in BL.

But this is completely opposed by the national officers who control everything in BL at the present time.

Therefore BL workers must demand that action is taken on wages this year. They must say no sell out. Edwardes' offer should be taken to mass meetings in every plant. Let the members decide what should be done about it.

The national officials have got their pay rise; they are on over £200 per week. Edwardes is on £55,000 a year. Those who have to try and live on BL rates of pay should decide what is to be done!

## Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement CONFERENCE

"BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER"  
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Digbeth Hall, Birmingham

Open to all labour movement bodies  
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169, Barclay Road, Smethwick, W. Midlands

# Print unions tie hands of NUJ strikers

Journalists on London provincial papers returned to work at the end of last week after a three week strike for a London 'weighting' allowance.

The strike ended three days after a mass meeting narrowly voted by 188-161 with ten abstentions to accept an offer of £4.80 'new money' to take the total London allowance to £9.30 a week.

This sum is considerably less than the journalists could have won towards their claim for a total payment of £1,000 a year (£19.23 a week) but for the habitual treachery of officials of the key union, the NGA.

The narrowness of the vote showed also that even faced with such obstacles and a management, arrogant in its hard faced opposition, the spirit to fight was still alive.

Lessons from the strike must

now be drawn out in preparation for the £20 a week national pay claim that has been drawn up.

First the strike showed that the provincial journalists are by no means a spent force.

## Impressionism

Militants in the union, who suffer badly from impressionism, had been claiming since the end of the 1978/9 strike that the rank and file members had turned their back on militancy and the problem was getting them to strike.

On the contrary the strike has shown that the question is still, as ever, how to win.

The NUJ's Provincial Newspapers Industrial Council accepted that mass meetings of the members should be called and that a rank and file action committee should be elected to take day to day control.

The strike was the most democratically run in the union's history with three mass meetings being held and motions taken from the floor on each occasion.

But negotiations with other unions remained in the hands of the officials.

The task fell, almost by nature, on the CP officials who have suddenly blossomed in the union's head office (despite a complete absence of CP influence in the rank and file).

Before the strike started, freelance organiser Peter van den Berg struck the deal that was to be the hallmark of relations between the two unions—in return for limited support, the NUJ members were to be told not to ask NGA members to respect their picket lines.

In the face of hostility from the membership to this deal the officials reneged.

When the strike started, therefore, NGA members were

instructed to refuse to set anything except advertisements and an editor's columns.

This deal was an obvious stitch-up. But opposition was silenced by the fact that 40 titles did not appear in London during the first week and 15 papers appeared with blank news columns and no cover price.

Those who struck the deal were therefore able to point to the fact that more papers were stopped than during the whole seven weeks of the 1978/9 strike.

But the inevitable result of manoeuvres with the bureaucrats came about.

After ten days the NGA council stabbed the journalists in the back and instructed their members to set all copy that had been claimed by the editor.

Papers began reappearing and hastily put up pickets were ignored.

The NUJ officials, including

General Secretary Ken Ashton, turned for support to SOGAT—and again struck deals.

Some support was promised and a mass picket at Uxbridge saw more papers stopped (although police enforced the Employment Act by forcing pickets to stand on the wrong side of the road).

When SOGAT in turn began to withdraw support, the NUJ membership was left to face a long strike with only their own resources left.

It was at this point that the vote to end the strike came about.

During the NGA lockout earlier this year, the NUJ had instructed its members not to work on scab publications and to refuse to cross picket lines and struggled to enforce this.

But when the interests of the NUJ members were at stake, its officials went like supplicants to beg any deal going from print union officials.

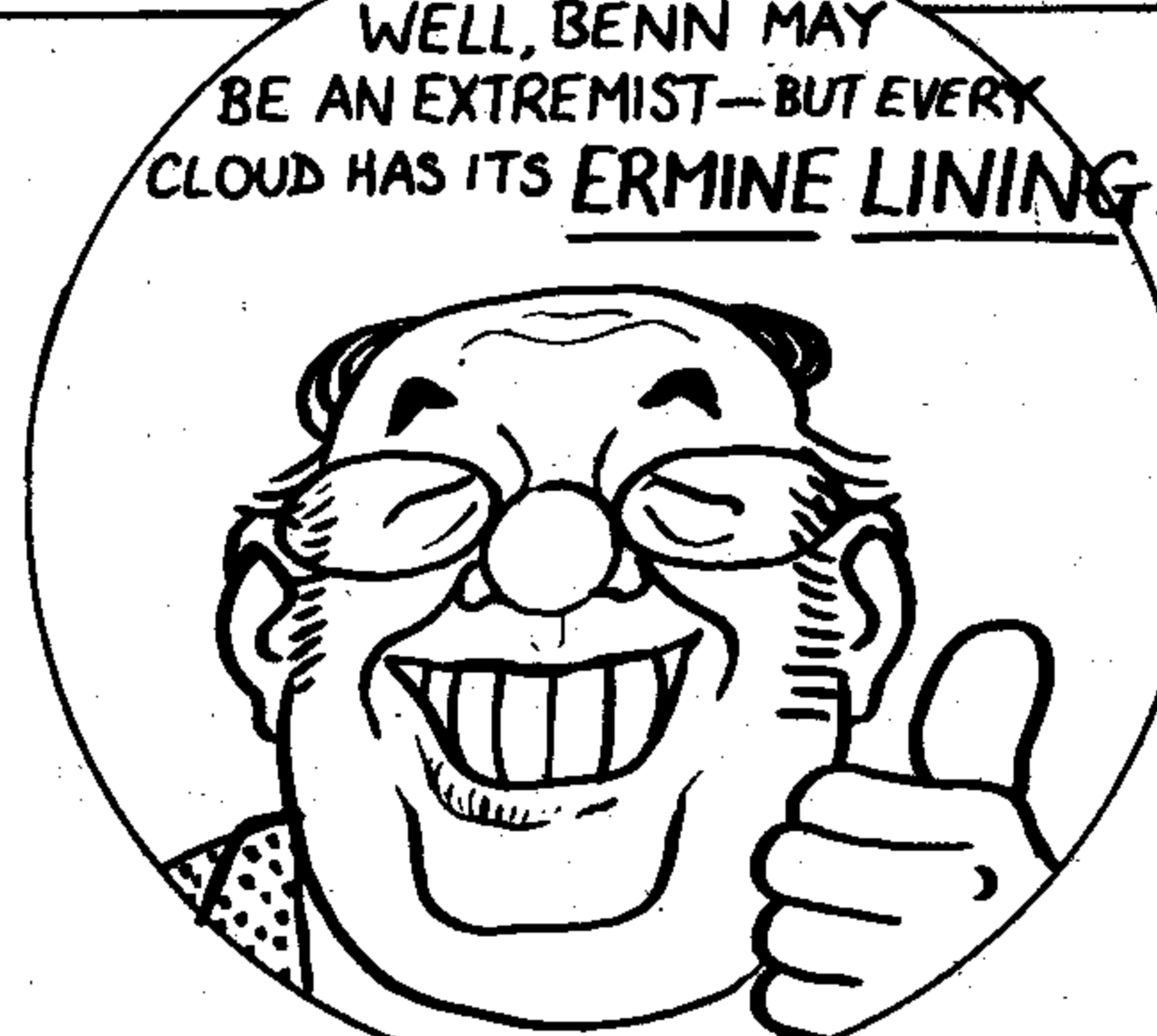
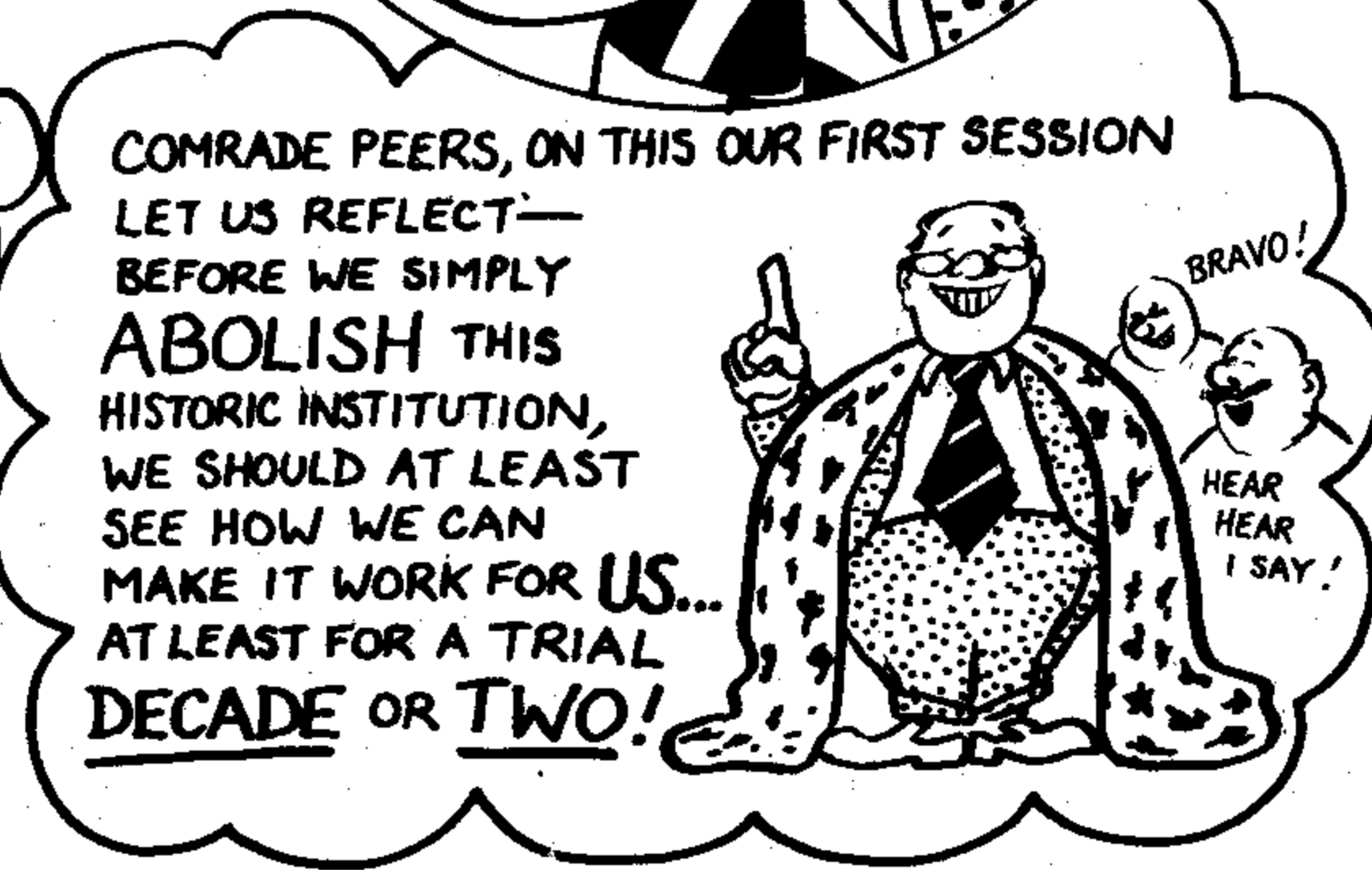
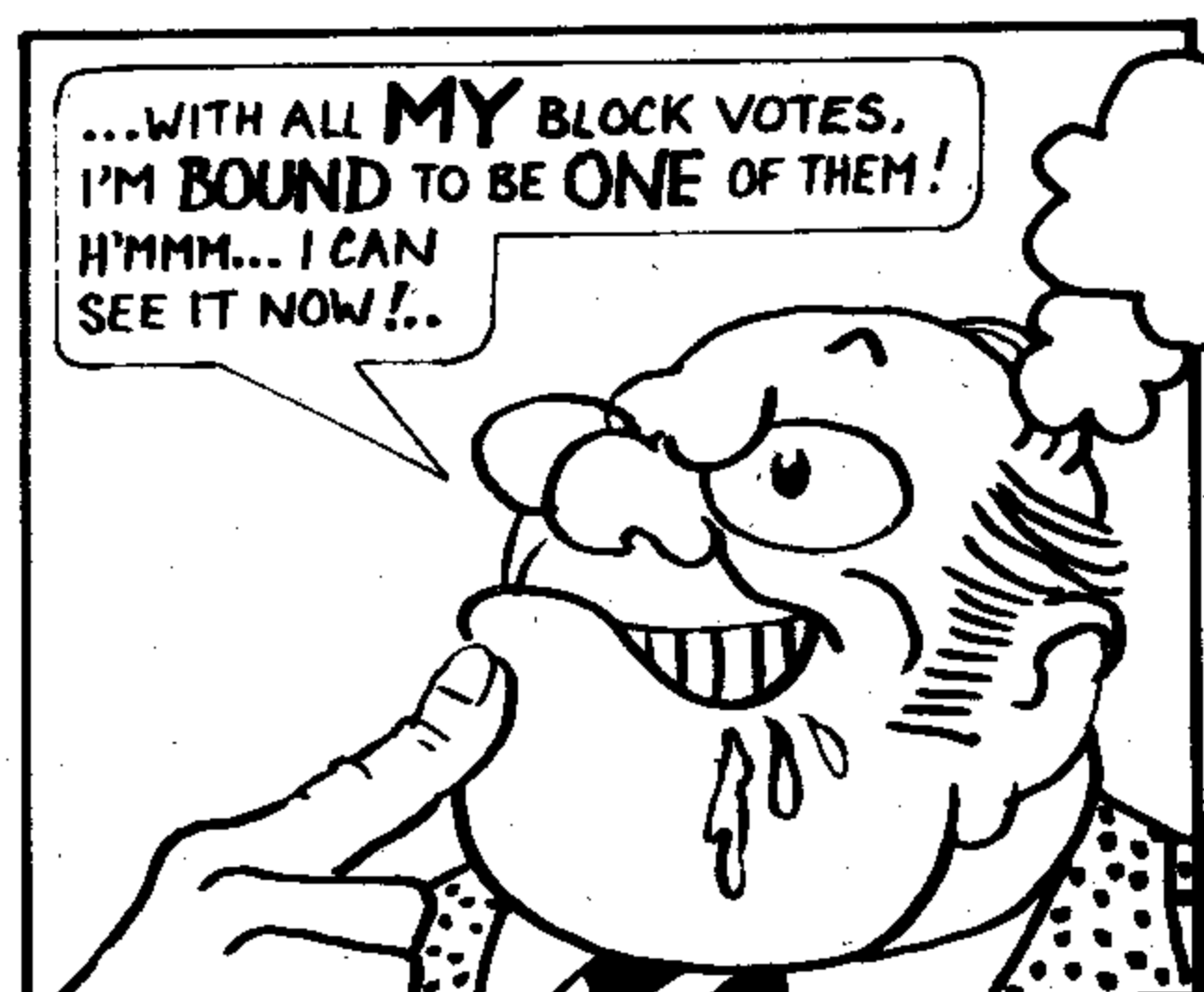
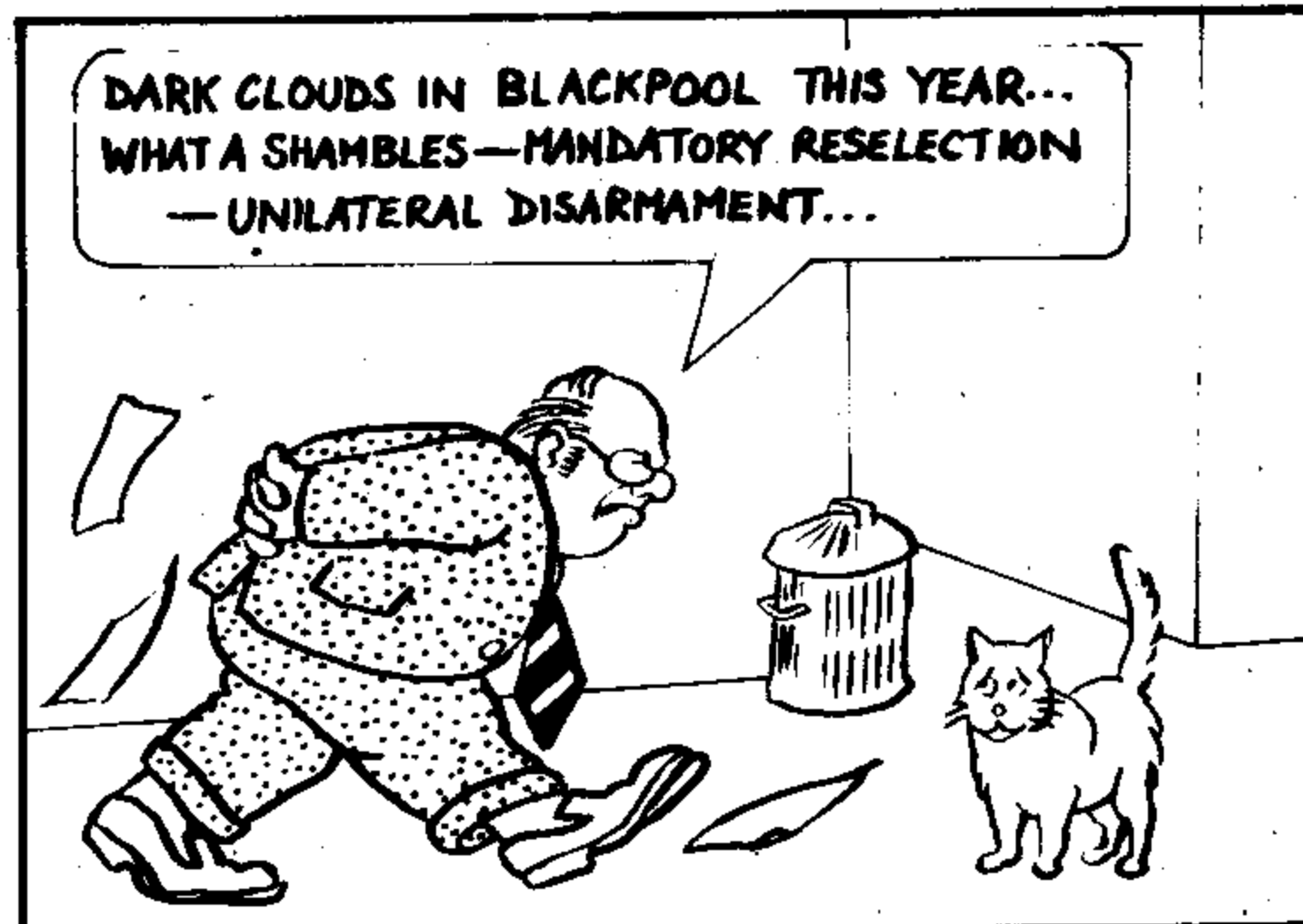
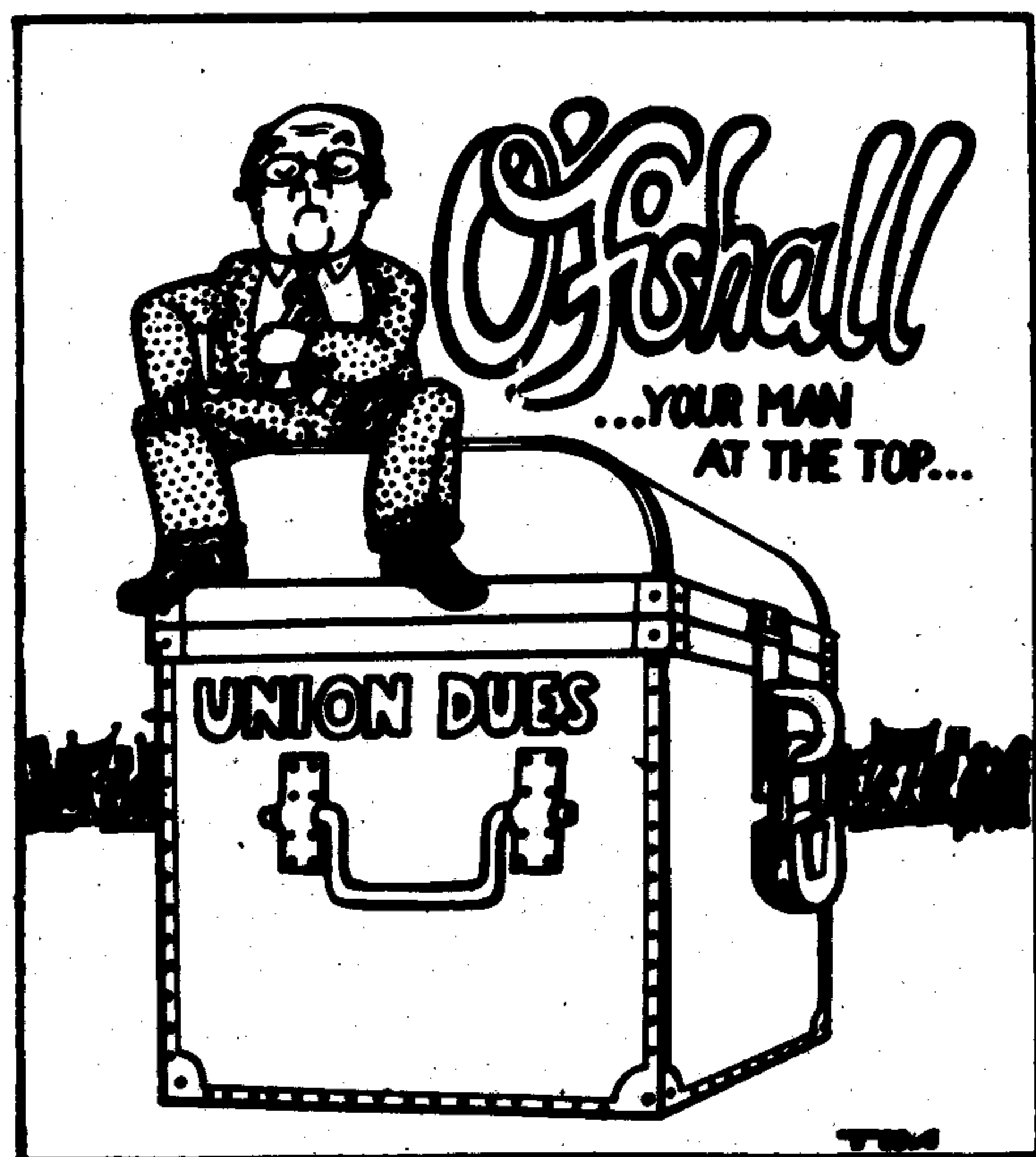
It is clear that NUJ members in future must demand clear solidarity and an end to such 'bargains'.

The strike was not however totally unsuccessful. The employers are now committed to increase the differential in line with living costs for the next three years before there is another review.

## Lessons learned

Moreover when the employers refused an adequate no victimisation deal the members stayed out for another three days before one was agreed, showing that the lessons of the Nottingham Evening Post had been learned.

The political lesson—the crying need for a principled leadership throughout the print unions, must now be learned.



# SOCIALIST PRESS



# THE GULF WAR:

**Fight for strikes to stop the cuts**

This week's Tory Party conference seems certain to be the scene of renewed calls from the floor for still more savage cuts in public spending.

Employers and Tory politicians are equally angry that the monetarist strategy adopted by the Thatcher government has been more effective at bankrupting sections of industry than at cutting inflation.

They see more cuts as the only way in which Thatcher can be pressured into cutting interest rates and thus easing the squeeze on industrial profits.

At the same time the Tory conference has provided Environment Secretary Heseltine with a handy lever for arm-twisting to force the passage of his Local Government Bill through the House of Lords.

This is the Bill which lays the basis for penalising 14 "overspending" councils to enforce Heseltine's demands for a total of £700 million in cuts.

The resistance to these local government cuts has so far focussed on comparatively few Labour councils—some of which have until now sought rate and rent increases as a way of avoiding a confrontation with the Tory government.

Now Heseltine's penalties have stiffened the stand taken, and underlined the importance of the conference convened by Lambeth Labour Council on Saturday November 1.

Delegations are invited from Labour Councils, Labour Groups, CLPs, union branches and shop stewards' committees. We urge Socialist Press supporters to attend wherever possible.

It is important that Labour councillors are prevented from using the occasion to heap the blame for the cuts solely onto the shoulders of the public sector union bureaucrats—whose shameful inaction has certainly encouraged the Tory offensive.

While we support the call for all-out strike action to defeat the cuts in local government spending, this must be linked to a specific pledge from Labour councillors that they will defy Heseltine's ultimatums and themselves fight to mobilise a full scale confrontation with the Tory government.

# IMPERIALISTS GLOAT AT REACTIONARY CONFLICT

As the territorial war between the Ba'athist dictatorship in Iraq and the Islamic regime in Iran enters its second week, the Iraqis appear to be making slow and costly progress into the Iranian oil province of Khuzestan.

The prolongation of the war has drawn out more clearly the line-up of forces within the Arab world.

Only Syria and the Palestine Liberation Organisation appear to have emerged in support of the beleaguered Iranian regime, while the monarchies of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Kuwait and Oman have volunteered more or less tangible support to the Iraqi offensive.

Taking advantage of the war situation, the US imperialists

have sent in four Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) planes to Saudi Arabia—supposedly to offer advance warning to the Saudi airforce of any attack on other Gulf oil states.

In fact the AWACS planes seem primarily designed to plug the evident holes in US intelligence gathering in the region.

## Embarrassment

These holes have led to gross misestimates of Iranian military and airforce strength and the embarrassment of Pentagon staff hearing of military developments through news agencies before their own surveillance reports arrive!

While the solidarity of the Iranian resistance in an increasingly protracted war—in which

the element of surprise has now evaporated—should come as no surprise, the ability of the Iranians to use supposedly grounded Phantom jets and incapacitated Chieftain tanks has staggered not only the Iraqis but also the British and US imperialists who manufactured them.

Yet the war itself can benefit nobody but the imperialist exploiters and the reactionary regimes of Khomeini and Saddam Hussein.

As artillery and bombs demolish Iraqi and Iranian oil installations, the oil monopolies stand to gain from contracts to rebuild, and from a new upwards pressure on oil and petrol prices.

As Iraqi and Iranian armies loose off salvos of missiles, rockets and artillery, wrecking



Iraqi soldier

each other's equipment, it is the imperialist warmongers who stand to gain—from contracts to re-equip with new weapons and ammunition.

And as the military might of two left nationalist Arab nations is expended on mutual destruction, it is the imperialists who benefit—recognising that this reduces the threat of action against the Zionist state of Israel.

The imperialists are also well

aware that both Hussein's supposedly "socialist" Ba'athist regime and Khomeini's Islamic republic stand fundamentally opposed not only to communism but to the basic democratic rights of the masses of workers and poor peasants, and in particular to the rights of oppressed national minorities and women.

## Masses lose

Whichever regime emerges from the rubble of Khuzestan as the "victor", this bloody and costly confrontation ensures that the masses lose either way.

This is why Socialist Press stands opposed to support for either side in the war. We defend neither Khomeini nor Hussein against each other. We would however defend either regime against imperialism were it subjected to a direct attack.

We stand for the overthrow of both Ba'athist and Islamic reaction, and the establishment in Iran and Iraq of workers' and peasants' governments which between them could amicably negotiate control of the waterways of the Gulf in the best interests of the masses in this strategic region.

## Why we need your money

# APPEAL TO ALL READERS

In launching their onslaught on working class living standards, the Tories can count on millions of pounds each year in donations from big business.

Right wing Labour renegades have reportedly been offered up to £8 million for the launching of a new "centre" party, by capitalists anxious to smash the organised labour movement.

The Callaghan leadership receives huge cash backing from the union bureaucracy to propagate its reactionary and right wing policies.

Socialist Press can call on none of these

sources for financial support. In our struggle for policies and action to defend the working class against the Tory offensive, and our fight to build a principled revolutionary leadership in the labour movement, we face the outright opposition of both the capitalists and the labour bureaucracy.

Our income depends solely upon sales of our paper each week and our monthly Fund. And this means that we are feeling the brunt of Thatcher's inflationary policies: our costs are spiralling, while our members and supporters find their own living standards under pressure.

But we are convinced that our political work is now more vital than ever. A mass anti-Tory, anti-capitalist movement is developing within the working class—a movement which clearly lacks a consistent programme or a principled leadership.

We need to expand our political work to reach such forces and fight for demands that can help transform the anti-capitalist movement into mass action to bring down the Tory government and carry through the struggle for socialism.

This is why Socialist Press has now embarked on a programme of new publications. This week sees the appearance of a new pamphlet on the crisis in British Leyland, and a pamphlet on Bolivia.

Next week a new pamphlet 'Bring Down the Tories this Winter' will be published. Further material is in preparation to bring before workers in struggle the key political issues of the day, both in Britain and internationally.

Our international work has also been expanded with solidarity work on Turkey and Bolivia and with the establishment of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee.

But such work requires resources—hard cash—if it is to proceed. For the last few months our Fund has fallen below target. We need to make good this deficit and raise additional money to sustain and expand our work in the next few months.

We are asking every Socialist Press reader to assist us in this. We have launched a special appeal Fund of £1,500 to be raised by mid-December. We need the first £1,000 by November 15.

Every wage-earning member of the Workers Socialist League is being asked to give a day's pay towards this Fund drive. We appeal to every Socialist Press supporter to consider also donating a day's pay, or at least sending a donation to our appeal fund.

And in addition we would ask all regular readers to assist our struggle to expand sales and readership of Socialist Press. Why not take extra copies to sell to your workmates, friends or trade union/Labour Party colleagues? Help us bring the fight for Trotskyist politics before the broadest possible audience of workers.

In this way we can begin to offer practical leadership in the mass struggles to come in the next period.

Please send all donations—however large or small—to:

Socialist Press Special Fund  
BM Box 5277, London WC1V 6XX

