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GRUNWICK STRIKE BURIED ALIVE!

The Grunwick strikers are not yet dead—but they have been buried alive under a smokescreen of left rhetoric.

An assorted array of Stalinists and Labour 'lefts' headed by Jack Dromey did everything within their power to bury the strike at a funeral conference on Sunday.

The end of the 17-month strike for union recognition now looks a formality; unless the strike committee can make an unlikely and last minute break from those who boasted they did everything in their power to win but were the source of its defeat.

Pickets

A defeat would represent a savage blow against the thousands of workers who turned out for dawn mass pickets, suffered police brutality, risked victimisation by management and by union officials by taking supporting action and donated thousands of pounds to sustain the strikers to victory.

It will raise an immediate question in the minds of workers like those at Garners Steak Houses who are fighting even now for union recognition: if Grunwick workers were defeated, won't the TUC do the same to us?

The Grunwick strikers themselves, however, confused and demoralised, appear to see no alternative to swallowing the poison served up for them, and virtually appealed to Roy Grantham to put them out of their misery by calling the strike

off.

It was little wonder that they could see no way forward.

The solid array of fake lefts and CP members offered not one single way forward for the dispute.

They delivered the knock-out punch to complete a carefully prepared campaign to weaken the



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Grantham

The Workers Socialist League was recognised as the only major obstacle to the final betrayal.

Even before the conference began Dromey was pacing the plush carpeting of the Wembley conference centre, complaining to anyone who would listen that he was being attacked by the WSL.

It was clear that he feared that opposition could emerge in the 250 delegate conference once a



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

The platform at the 'funeral conference' last Sunday: Kamlesh Ghandi speaking

clear and principled challenge was put up to the coming sell-out.

The chairman, Jack Dunn, NUM Stalinist from Kent, made it clear from the start that motions calling for the resumption of mass picketing or renewed efforts to secure blacking would not be taken.

There were to be no votes on whether the patient was alive or dead. Dunn was already preparing to throw the first sod on the coffin.

Kamlesh Ghandi, once one of the clearest and most determined of the strike committee, had been convinced the strike was already defeated—a line Dromey and his henchmen had been drip feeding into the committee for weeks.

He repeated many of Dromey's positions. The court of inquiry—which offered Ward a 'respectable' path to victory had "loopholes", he said.

APEX had to be thanked for the good things they had done. ACAS was hopeless and should be scrapped—but the MPs' private bills to dress it up in new clothes were to be welcomed!

All these positions had already been presented in a pamphlet, *Grunwick—Bravery and Betrayal*,

written by Tom Durkin, president of Great Britain Council, which proclaimed that:

"Such battles are never lost. Our history is full of victories and defeats. Grunwick may be a defeat but it will be a glorious one nevertheless..."

But frustration at what was happening could be sensed in an angry contribution from Archie Sinclair, a Cricklewood postman.

He followed the Dromey line but refused to pretend that Ward and NAFF could be ridiculed out of existence.

"The only people who have gained something out of this is George Ward and NAFF and they have gained it with the full support of the trade union leadership".

Durkin himself, arms waving in the air, proclaimed that it was not a disaster or a defeat but an "imperishable page in our trade union and working class history". The villains were "right wing thinking and politics in our trade union and labour movement".

Of course the right wing played a treacherous role. But the question is how they were allowed to carry that through and whether they were seriously fought by those claiming to lead the strike?

An IMG member who opposed the platform managed to raise the point early when he criticised the Brent Trades Council leadership—not for their political sabotage but for not setting up enough support committees!

He did, however, ask how Grantham and his cronies regained control of the dispute after last year's mass picketing.

Alan Thornett (TGWU 5/293) centred his contribution on the means necessary to expose and fight the right wing and fake 'left'.

The strike could be won today, in exactly the same way as on its first day, if the plant could be shut down by blacking action.

This could never be achieved by generalised calls, but by specific demands:

"The question is whether you make generalised calls or whether you actually tread on the toes of the bureaucrats who stand against winning the strike".

Thornett also criticised the strike committee's decision last year to call for the implementation of the Scarman report.

The impact of what Thornett was saying was considerable. A large number in the hall were calling for him to be allowed more time to speak.



Durkin

But not only was his contribution brought to a halt, but a succession of carefully selected speakers was then brought to the platform to attack all those who had dared to criticise Brent Trades Council.

Dromey himself attacked the WSL as "a group that lump me and Roy Grantham together".

This is not true. The WSL and Socialist Press have never said that Dromey and Grantham are the same—just that they work as a team.

Grantham and his TUC allies are the assassins of the Grunwick strike, Dromey, Durkin and Co. are the undertakers.

Doubtless Dromey will, as he promised, walk out of the dispute with his head high. The strikers meanwhile, will be jobless.

But Grunwick can still be won. It can be won with a new turn towards blacking, by applying the pressure of the mass pickets.

It can be won by a new and sharp turn back into fighting the trade union bureaucracy.

But first the domination of Dromey, Durkin and the other fakers over the strike committee must be broken and laid to rest in the graves prepared for the Grunwick strikers.

Set the date—resume mass pickets.

Challenge the courts—Black supplies and services.

Defy APEX and TUC threats, organise financial support.

*As we go to press, we have received a letter from the Grunwick strike committee questioning the line Socialist Press has pursued on the leadership Jack Dromey has given to the strike committee throughout the strike. We will be printing this in our next edition with editorial comment.

Butcher Shah faces 40-day deadline

The cycle of anti-government agitation which began in Iran in the autumn of 1977 last week reached a new height.

In all the main cities there were large demonstrations against the Shah's dictatorship, put down with the usual brutality but with increasing hesitancy and panic by the security police and armed forces.

Last week the demonstrations began in the religious city of Qom, spread to other provincial cities and eventually to the capital Teheran.

The government sent in armoured cars, tanks, armed police and troops.

Reports say that over 20 demonstrators were killed and dozens injured.

These new events come 40 days (the traditional Muslim



The Shah

period of mourning) after the March massacre in Yazd, which themselves came 40 days after similar events in Tabriz, and (40 days before that) in Qom

when hundreds were murdered.

The regime seems unable to control this mounting cycle of opposition.

Each round seems to be more widespread and to involve more militant actions by the demonstrators.

Last week cinemas and banks were set on fire, buses and cars burned in the streets and barricades were built against the Shah's attacks.

Conservative

The demonstrators included students, workers and religious supporters of the exiled Shiite Muslim leader Ayatollah Khomeini whose son was murdered by supporters of the Shah last October.

Khomeini, a conservative religious nationalist now in Iraq, is still the major figure in the anti-

government agitation.

He wants to overthrow the autocratic regime and establish an Islamic theocracy, an Islamic state.

He is as virulently anti-communist as the Shah. In a recent interview he said:

"There has never been an alliance between the Muslim population struggling against the Shah and the communist elements, extremist or not."

"I have always emphasised in my statements that the Muslim people must remain homogeneous in the struggle and forbid all organised collaboration with communist elements."

"We will not collaborate with Marxists even to overthrow the Shah. I have ordered my faithful not to do so... if the communists came to power, they would establish a dictatorial regime contrary to the spirit of Islam".

But the active opposition is by no means confined to this reactionary religious group.

New social and political forces seem to be drawn in with each new wave of demonstrations.

The regime is alarmed. Last week the Shah cancelled all public engagements and put off a state visit to the Stalinist regime in Bulgaria.

Crumbling

He now has another 40 days at the most to think of some way of building up his crumbling political defences.

It is certainly not armaments the Shah is short of.

His is one of the most heavily armed regimes in the world.

And for that he must largely thank his cynical friends in the British "Labour" government who have been responsible for

selling this dictator the weapons with which he oppresses the Iranian people.

Soviet aid

He has also received military and other help from both the USA and the Soviet Union.

But British arms salesmen above all seem to regard the Shah as their favourite customer. The British government chose this week of butchery to sign a new long-term deal for the supply to the Iranian defence ministry.

The labour movement must implement an immediate ban on all further arms sales and gifts and other forms of material support to the Shah's dictatorship.



INTERNATIONAL

ITALY: no tears for Moro: no solution in terrorism

The Aldo Moro affair encapsulates the political crisis of bourgeois democracy.

As the leading force of the Christian Democrats, certain to be elected President of Italy, Moro was the country's foremost bourgeois politician.

In a bizarre fashion, the Red Brigades highlighted the weakness of the ruling class by the spectacular kidnapping and then holding Moro prisoner for 55 days despite the massive search by police and military forces.

The bourgeoisie seemed powerless to rescue its own leader from a small group of self-proclaimed enemies to the state.

But while the incident revealed, in an almost farcical way, the inadequacy of the tools at the immediate disposal of the ruling class, it also showed precisely what methods the bourgeoisie would employ to preserve its class rule.

The emergency measures to increase state repression have already been used with great effect in the arrest of many left-wingers and countless raids and searches of the homes of others.

This legislation is now to be given permanent status by parliament.

As undeclared martial law was introduced, the state's police, secret police, paramilitary and military forces received aid from the governing coalitions of Britain and West Germany.

Thugs

The social democrats who dominate in these popular front formations sent their professional thugs to assist in the operation of urban warfare.

Despite their short-term failure, these initiatives have been used by the bourgeoisie to strengthen its position in preparation for the struggles to come.

It is above all the Italian Communist Party which has been crucial to the success of this wider 'security' operation.

Moro was himself the principal architect of the scheme which enabled the CP

leadership to achieve its aim of the 'historic compromise'.

To drive home their point, the Red Brigades seized Moro as he was on his way to the parliamentary consecration of the deal whereby the CP has renewed the life of the Christian Democrat govern-

ment by pledging its support in return for *nothing*, not even promises and honeyed words.

By this massive exercise in class collaboration, the Stalinists confirmed their determination to betray the working class in the defence

Brigades acted to expose the betrayals of the labour bureaucracy, they themselves in another way exemplify that same historic crisis of working class leadership.

The People's Court which tried Moro, interrogated him "to clarify the imperialist and

ambitions and a concrete denial of their revolutionary perspectives, radical elements in those struggles were forced to make a re-assessment of their positions.

But some of these forces drew from their experience only negative and partial lessons as to the historic role of the working class and the necessity for a revolutionary party.

One-sided

Basing themselves on a fierce hatred of the treacherous labour bureaucracy and a one-sided analysis of its significance, they moved to a belief that the proletariat could not be roused to fulfil its historic tasks by the work of revolutionaries in the mass movement.

For them, the grip of reformist ideology and bureaucracy could be broken only by the most drastic methods.

It was necessary to launch a campaign of terrorism, which would force the state to reveal itself more clearly as the instrument of bourgeois dictatorship.

The inevitable collaboration of the labour bureaucracy in introducing new repression would be the final catalyst for the revolutionary explosion of the proletariat in the overthrow of capitalism and its own betraying leaders.

Proof

The first stage in this schema of provocation has certainly been achieved by the seizure and killing of Moro.

But the completely wrong orientation of the Red Brigades has been proved by the 'failure' of the Italian workers to respond to this challenge with spontaneous heroism and revolution.

The methods of the Red Brigades can deepen the political crisis of the bourgeois democratic state, but they offer no way to overcome that crisis, except abstract maximalist demands for total revolution.

They fight in the belief that this will hasten the dictatorship of the proletariat, and for this reason we defend the Red Brigades *without reserve* against every form of witch-hunt and attack from the bourgeoisie and its agents.

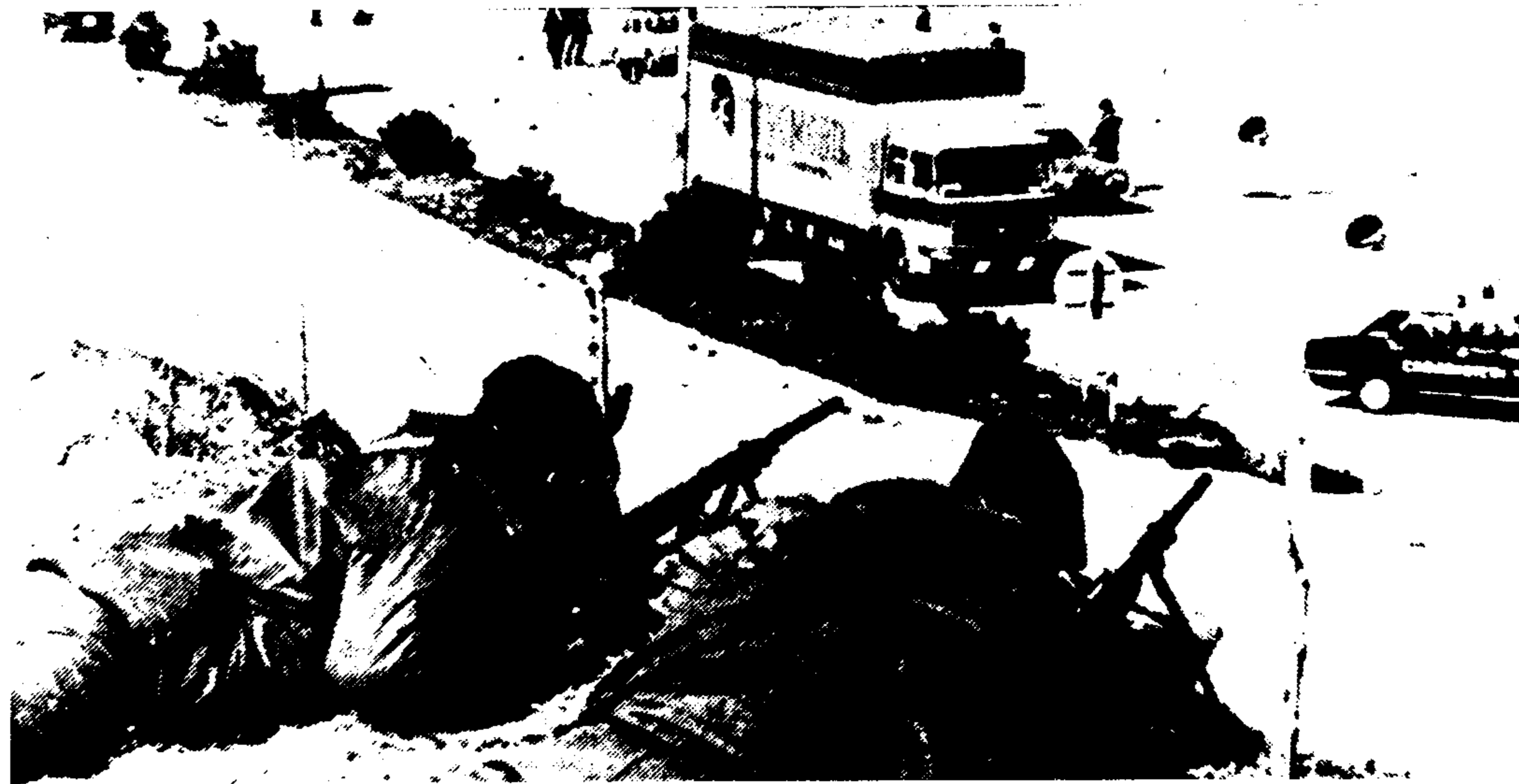
At the same time there can be no political criticism too sharp of actions which have objectively increased the oppression of Italian workers by capitalism, and yet given no alternative leadership for revolutionary struggle.

There is no principled objection to the tactic of assassination at certain stages of the class struggle.

Programme

But terrorism can never substitute for the careful and consistent work of a revolutionary party fighting in the mass organisations of the labour movement in conflict with Stalinism and reformism for the Transitional Programme for socialist revolution.

What is needed in Italy is not more knee-cappings, kidnappings, and shootings, but the building of a section of a reconstructed Fourth International to lead workers in independent struggle against the threat of fascism and forward to the overthrow of capitalism and bourgeois democracy.



Italian police mount a roadblock

Muzorewa creates a stink

Billed as a political cliff-hanger, the decision of Abel Muzorewa's United African National Council not to quit the 'transitional government' was about as unpredictable as the next episode of 'Crossroads'.

But the bishop described Sunday's 8-hour meeting as 'rough', and it was clear that forceful opposition has developed within the UANC in protest at the dismissal of Byron Hove, black 'Co-minister for Justice'.

A rich shyster from London, with not even a flimsy record of struggle in Zimbabwe, Hove made the statements which led to his sacking out of a misassessment of the balance of forces, not from any tattered shreds of political principle.

Even so, the response to these criticisms from the white settler regime was swift and unequivocal.

The bishop's party justifies its decision to continue collaboration with Smith and his racist colleagues as being 'in the interests of the nation and of the people'.

But Hilary Squires, the white Minister for Justice, made it clear just what nation and what people the interim settlement protects. He argued that the interim agreement:

"... provides quite explicitly that there will be no political interference with the disciplined forces of the state, including the British South Africa Police, and that their high state of efficiency will be maintained.

I wish to make it as unmistakably plain as possible

that any new governmental structure will be implemented in terms of that agreement or not at all".

This is the reality of the deal made with Smith by the 'internal' leaders in Zimbabwe.

Muzorewa may talk now of a 'nasty political smell' left by Hove's dismissal.

But such bold understatement cannot conceal the unmistakable fact that the 'internal settlement' remains—as it has been from the start—stinking to the rotten core.

of capitalism and the bourgeois state.

Their treachery has been compounded by the trade union bureaucrats who have devoted their energies to implementing the 'austerity measures' and every other attack on workers required by capitalism.

The depth of these betrayals was indicated by the obscene action of the labour leaders in calling general strikes in protest at Moro's seizure and his assassination.

Corrupt

Italian workers have no cause to mourn the death of this corrupt champion of their continued oppression. Yet they also have little reason to rejoice at his killing under such conditions.

For, although the Red

anti-proletarian policies of the Christian Democrat party", and sentenced him to death as "obviously guilty" of crimes against the proletariat.

Sectarian

But, contrary to their subjective intentions, the action of the Red Brigades has done nothing to advance proletarian revolution in Italy.

Like other similar groupings of urban guerrillas in the developed capitalist nations, the Red Brigades represent an extreme form of sectarianism.

Their political origin lies in the disillusionment and confusion which grew from the apparent ebbing of the revolutionary tide in western Europe and north America after 1968.

Faced with the immediate failure of their political

INDIA: JANATA RATS GRAB LIFE BELTS

Disaffection and mutiny are now rife among the ruling crew of opportunists, timeservers and crooks, known as the Janata.

These political vermin are haunted at every twist and turn of their devious careers by the looming spectre of Indira Gandhi.

Confidence

The Lok Sabha (one of the two chambers of parliament) may still be voting its confidence in the Janata coalition government, against the challenge of the former dictator's Congress Party.

But that majority reflects the elections of last March, when the workers and peasants rejected the Gandhi dictatorship, and it has already been greatly reduced by desertions.

Recent elections have also shown how little that majority reflects the present dwindling support for Desai's administration.

The spectacular advances made by the Congress (Indira) in the February state elections have now been confirmed by results from Andhra Pradesh in the north.

Confusion and panic have



Desai

increased within the Janata, riven as it is by internal struggles for power.

George Fernandes—leader of the Socialist Party, and Minister for Industries—has attempted to rally the coalition into unity.

In a statement circulated to the Executive, he declares that:

failed miserably in communicating with the people. We must be ruthless with ourselves and examine the causes of this loss of credibility, and then provide the remedies".

These 'causes' are obvious enough: the total failure of the Janata to solve any of the pressing problems which bear down on the Indian masses.

It is this situation which is driving large sections of the masses back, in frustration, to the politics of the former dictator. There are no possible 'remedies' for this crisis within the terms of the Janata popular front.

Politically dominated by the bourgeoisie, the Janata is by its essence incapable of meeting the demands and aspirations of the workers and peasants—it can, and will, act only to repress them further.

Voyage

By joining the Janata, Fernandes embarked on a voyage of class collaboration with shipmates who are avowed enemies to the working class and its allies.

He has no power to alter the course of this ship of war, now that it is leaking at every seam and sinking lower at every moment.



Thousands demonstrated in London last weekend against thirty

Pablo still rules USFI leaders

In the early 1950s Michel Pablo as leader of the Fourth International undertook a revision of the Trotskyist programme.

He devised the conception that under pressure of 'objective' events—an impending 'Third World War' and the pressure of the working class—the Stalinist Communist Parties of Europe could 'project a revolutionary orientation' and lead the overthrow of capitalism.

This view ran directly opposite to the Trotskyist analysis that the CPs have been definitively and irreversibly transformed into instruments of the counter-revolutionary foreign policy of the parasitic Kremlin bureaucracy.

Though initially there was little opposition to this fundamentally false position—which effectively denied the need for the construction of Trotskyist parties—a fight against it eventually took place in 1953 and led to a split in the ranks of the International.

Ancient history

The followers of Pablo, grouped around the International Secretariat, were politically rejoined in 1963 by the US Socialist Workers Party—though reactionary US legislation forbade its affiliation—and the so-called "United" Secretariat (USFI) was formed, on the basis of letting bygones be bygones.

When reminded of their Pabloite heritage nowadays, it is fashionable for members of USFI national sections—which include the British International Marxist Group—to brush the issue aside and regard it all as a matter of ancient history.

But now a "star" section of the USFI has given further clear proof that the revisionist conceptions of Pablo still live on happily within the topmost ranks of the USFI leadership.

In the last month the USFI's recognised section in Spain the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League) has shown the extremes of political compromise to which these Pabloite positions lead.

Persecution

The LCR was invited to attend the recent Ninth Congress of the Stalinist Spanish Communist Party, a party whose history involves participation in the persecution and murder of Trotskyists, centrists of the POUM, and anarchists during the Civil War and whose present role

'Trotskyists' grovel to Spanish CP

is characterised by its leaders' slavish support for the anti-working class francoist government of Adolfo Suarez.

Instead of sharply attacking and exposing the infamous counter-revolutionary past and present of the CP, the LCR chose to approach the CP as guests on their best and most respectful behaviour.

In its weekly newspaper *Combate*, the LCR unctuously declares its "gratitude" to the CP in their words:

"We want to express our gratitude to the Spanish Communist Party for the attitude it has taken towards the LCR at this 9th Congress.

The national leadership of our party, the Madrid leadership and *Combate* (as well as *Rouge* the newspaper of the French LCR) have all been invited to the Congress.

Moreover, we have been allowed to address all the delegates publicly, saying to them from the platform what we thought necessary.

And we must add that the warmth with which the delegates received our presence is a fine and emotive expression of the fraternal links which—in spite of the political differences—exist between both parties".

Discarded

There, in a few words, all the lessons of Trotsky's long struggle to rebuild the revolutionary party in bitter conflict with Stalinism—a conflict that cost Trotsky and countless more revolutionaries their lives at the hands of Stalin's murder squads—are discarded.

In its intervention in the Congress itself the LCR showed that it did not think that the CP was an obstacle on the road to the building of revolutionary leadership.

The party was asked for its collaboration in rehabilitating the Bolshevik old guard—Trotsky, Bukharin and Zinoviev, along with the leader of the Spanish POUM Andres Nin in the USSR

and all eastern countries.

That request was made to a party which for all its conversion to "human rights" still has as one of its members (still in exile in the USSR) Trotsky's assassin Ramon Mercader.

"Open debate"

The LCR's other theme was that the differences between its "Trotskyism" and the Spanish CP (which the LCR never describes as Stalinist) could be settled by "open debate".

"Between the PCE and the LCR there are deep political differences. To be honest, these are deeper than with other currents of the workers' movement [!] But they can be and should be openly discussed. So we have recently had debates in Barcelona and Madrid between your comrades Jordi Barja and Juan Francisco Pla and our comrade Ernest Mandel.

We want to pick up the proposal that you yourselves made on that occasion that these debates are taken into the factories, the universities, towns and villages where your comrades and ours come together in joint struggle against exploitation and oppression.

The public opening of debate for our next Congress and the publication of the resolutions of

the 9th Congress of yours will serve to take forward the discussions which have already begun.

We are bitter enemies of sectarianism, we are defenders of rescuing the old and often abandoned proletarian tradition of debate in the workers' movement which is open and fraternal, however hard it may be politically.

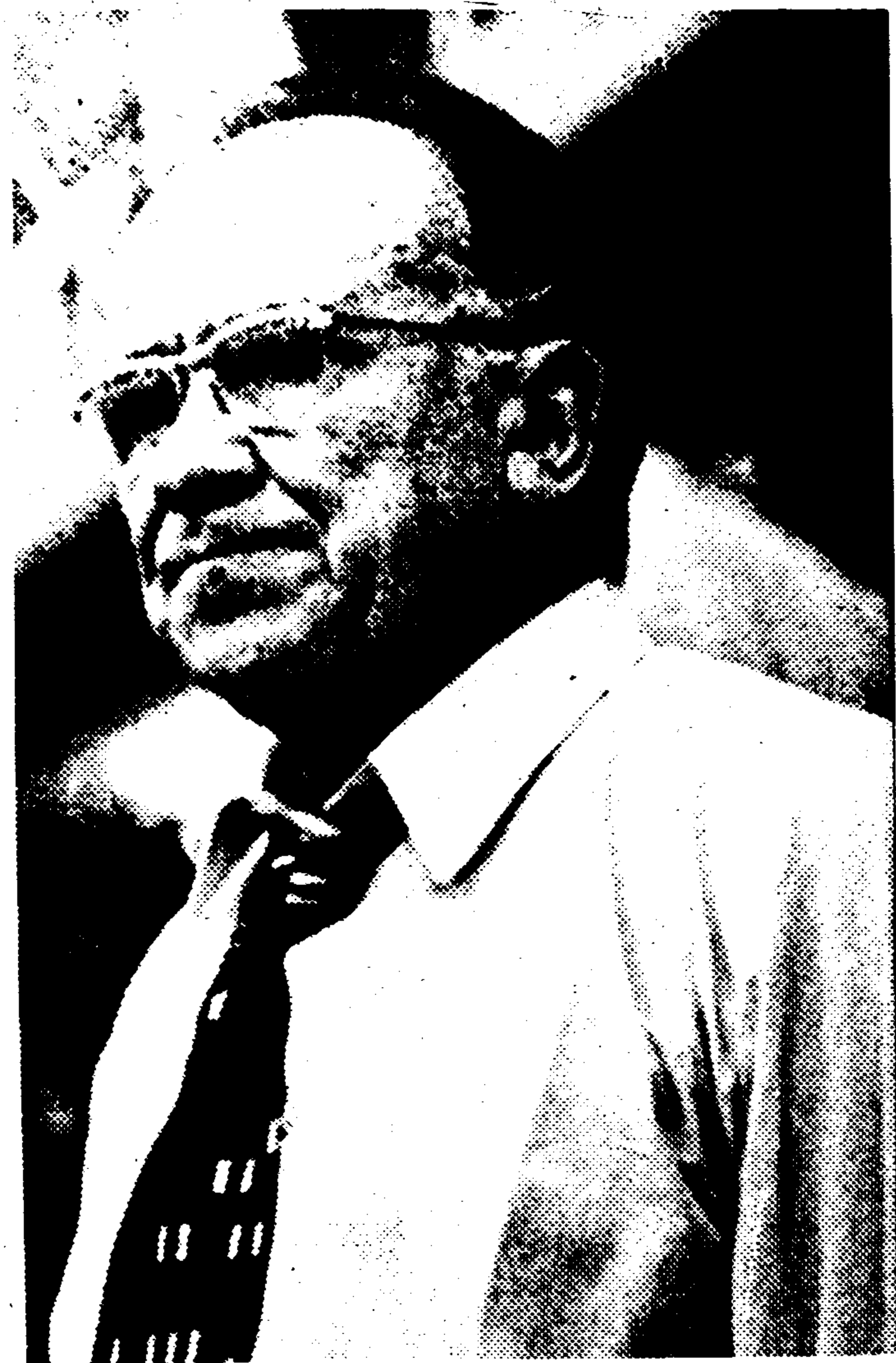
No distinction was made in this intervention between the leadership of the CP and its mass base.

In fact, in an article on the Congress in *Combate* (May 14) by Mariano Fernandez, it appears to be the mass base of the CP which poses problems for the LCR.

Contempt

Fernandez' "analysis" of the Spanish CP is worth quoting at some length since it expresses at the same time a contempt for the rank and file of the CP (who are blamed for the leadership's bureaucratic control) and an implicit expectation that if only there was more internal democracy the CP would return to the "revolutionary" fold.

Once again it is a position which throws out all the gains made and principles fought for in Trotsky's long struggle against



Stalinism.

Fernandez writes: "The PCE is taking major steps in the direction [of the social democratic parties].

The first is spontaneous: years and years of sacrificing the revolutionary programme, including the distorted notion of it which the traditional communist parties have held, to the reformist political platform of the movement, on the basis of this or that "alliance" or "tactical manoeuvre", mean that the rank and file of the organisation gets filled with new members whose only political horizon is this reduced platform and not the permanently postponed general programme.

The second is deliberate. Under the slogan of the "mass party" the criteria for membership are reduced to nothing.

Joining is converted for many into the mere act of buying a party card. So the political level the level of discussion, the demand for training and information all fall.

So, joined to the old and new militant layers of the party appears a fundamentally new layer which becomes a dead weight for the internal life of the party and the development of a revolutionary policy.

This new, tremendously depoliticised base has a natural tendency towards moderation and voting with the bureaucracy which converts it into a rubber mattress which allows them to cushion any radical impulse which might originate from the truly militant layer of the party, the layer most closely linked to the

masses and most sensitive to its needs.

Finally, internal democracy is also a question of the political education of the membership, especially of the cadres and in that respect the PCE leaves much to be desired.

Its tradition is not exactly democratic but Stalinist and bureaucratic. Nor is its daily practice in the mass organisations which it dominates an example of democracy".

Now is certainly a decisive moment for Trotskyists in Spain to intervene politically with the mass rank and file of the CP's members.

The party shows itself in a major crisis at a time when the expectations and political involvement of Spanish workers are growing fast.

But a Trotskyist intervention would be the reverse of that of the LCR.

Instead of beginning a search for a means of reforming the CP into a "revolutionary party", Trotskyists would start from the position that the CP was an incurably counter-revolutionary party, large sections of whose base nonetheless could and must be won to revolutionary politics.

Fernandez (apparently endorsed by the LCR) implies that if the CP threw out some of its politically weak members it would have more chance of adopting a revolutionary policy.

This can only mean that the LCR sees Stalinism not as a conscious counter-revolutionary political force but as simply lacking formal internal democracy (especially in view of the Stalinist ban on tendency rights within the Party).

It is, in other words, the same as the bourgeois liberal definition of Stalinism.

In spite of some remaining strictures on the CP's democracy, the LCR sees the debate before and during the Congress not as the signs of a crisis for the authority of the leadership but as an indication of change.

"Without any doubt", begins the lead article in *Combate*, (27 April), "this Congress has been the most democratic of those which have happened in any CP since Stalin liquidated internal democracy".

The LCR, therefore, comes close to giving its "Trotskyist" seal of approval to the CP's own claim that "We have overcome Stalinism".

The LCR's position can lead nowhere except to political self-liquidation.

Its reaction to the CP's Congress shows it to be incapable of building on independent revolutionary leadership.

It has buried the political weapons with which Trotsky's struggle has provided the revolutionary movement, and it now has the capacity to be nothing more than a left pressure group on the Spanish CP.

The so-called "myth" of Pabloism has shown itself to be much more substantial than the self-proclaimed "Trotskyism" of the LCR.

Strikes challenge Moncloa Pact

The hotel and restaurant workers' 48-hour strike which took place last week along southern Spain's Costa del Sol has major national importance.

In the first place, the claim represents a wage increase in excess of the Francoist government's pay norm of 22% (inflation is about 30%).

The workers are demanding a rise in the minimum wage in the industry from about £32 a week to about £49.

Unreliable bonus

The claim is not as great as it looks since at present workers receive an unreliable bonus based on a "share of the turnover" and they want this abolished and replaced by a higher stable basic rate.

A victory for these workers where trade unionisation has until recently been very poorly developed would have a tremendous impact on demands and struggles in other sectors.

Unanimity

Already the near unanimity of the strike action shows how rapidly organisation has developed since last year when many hotel strikes took place but were sporadic in their impact.

Hotel owners on the Costa del Sol responded to the action with a lock-out which within three days they were forced to lift.

There has now been a partial return to work while negotiations proceed.

New strike action has already been planned if the wage demand is not

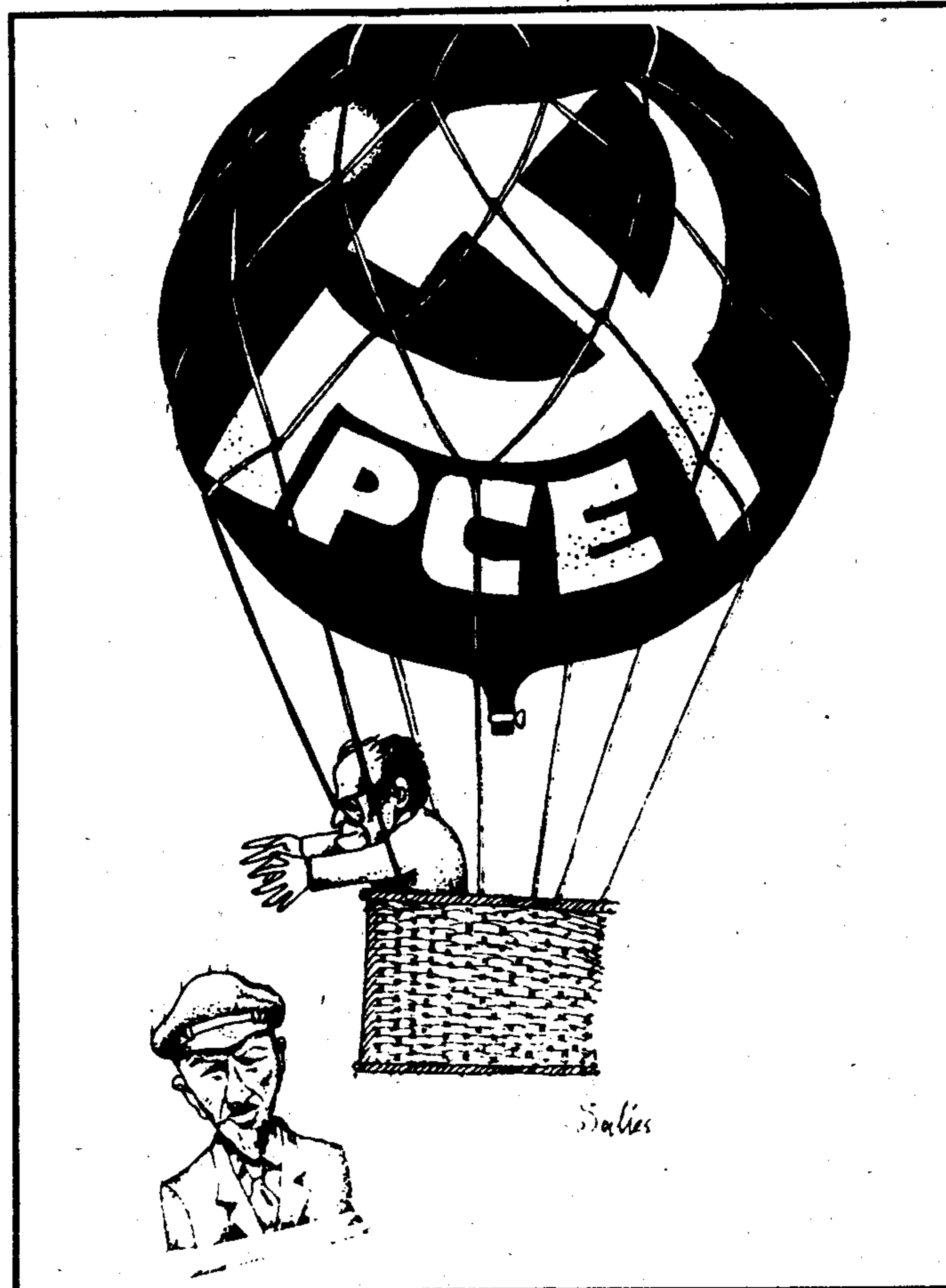
conceded.

During the same week the breakdown of wage negotiations in the engineering industries led to a 24-hour strike by 90% of engineering workers in Barcelona, Spain's major industrial city.

More such strikes are planned in the coming month.

Developments elsewhere in Spain also suggest that the reactionary Moncloa Pact signed by workers' leaders last year is now in for a growing attack from workers who have been feeling its consequences.

NEXT WEEK
Why the Spanish PSOE now admits it is not a Marxist party.



Nursery keeps officials on hook

A Socialist Press special feature

The refusal of the Oxford City Nursery campaign to bleed to death has become a considerable embarrassment to sections of the local trade union bureaucracies, anxious to avoid being exposed over their refusal to fight the cuts.

In particular the promise by leaders of the Oxford county branch of the National Union of Public Employees to call a district committee to discuss industrial action is high on the list of things that they wish they had never said.

Eric Millar, secretary of the county branch, left for the annual NUPE conference saying that the closure of the nursery was not strictly a union matter, and he would have considerable difficulty in convening the meeting.

Originally he had proposed that the matter go to the district committee, when he was confronted by a militant section meeting determined to vote on strike action then and there.

No opposition

Millar is now claiming that the county council has assured him there will be no more cuts involving NUPE members—and that this removes the necessity for action against the cuts.

The axe happy Tory Council know that they have encountered no opposition to cuts from NUPE leaders, so long as they don't involve compulsory redundancies. They learned also, during last year's teachers' strike, that trade union officials are ready to dissipate their members' militancy. The council is therefore just waiting for the nursery campaign to go away.

The trouble for them is that it shows no signs of doing so. Since the class was evicted from the council building at the end of last month it has continued in a nearby building.

Ironed out

Some of the practical problems have now been ironed out and the campaign is continuing its intervention directly into the trade union movement.

The trades council is committed to sending a delegation to see the local council and to campaign for the reinstatement of the class, and jobs.

But the trades council also asked its officers to hold an early meeting with the nursery committee—even if the Tory council continued to refuse such a meeting.

This move, which would find out exactly what the trades council officers intend doing to carry out their mandate, is naturally being stalled off.

The officers argue instead that the pace of events should be dictated by the Tory chairman of the county education committee, Brigadier Roger Streetfield.

Enraged

At the same time, the right wing stranglehold over the local National Union of Teachers took another knock when the Oxford City Association voted to send its own delegation to the council to



demand more nursery places. The annual meeting of Oxfordshire County Council, normally a friendly gathering of Tory and Labour councillors to have lunch together and look back over the past year with mutual satisfaction, was sharply affected by a lobby of nursery campaigners outside county hall. Tory councillors were enraged to see banners from two TGWU branches outside the building, those of the TGWU 5/293 and the 5/60 and demanded to know what was the connection between trade unions and nursery places!

'Moderation'

They could have addressed their question to the Rev. Tony Williamson, one of the few Labour councillors left on Oxfordshire County Council, who is chairman of the 5/60 branch as well as being one of the Labour voices of 'moderation' which have done nothing about the Tory cuts.

The campaign has reached a stage where determined, patient and unyielding pressure has to be brought to bear on all those in nominal support of the campaign to force them to call action or stand down.

But the frustrations some supporters have felt in the lack of quick results and the surface let down in the campaign following the breaking up of the occupation have left both the IMG and SWP in disarray.

At a supporters meeting last week they proposed taking different routes to oblivion.

'Broad based'

The IMG asked supporters to recognise that the county council "probably isn't going to change its mind" and urged that the forthcoming conference, Action Against the Cuts, should belie its name by liquidating itself into one of those 'broad based' committees which can fight the cuts in general while playing down the particular.

The proposal was so badly received, with even IMG members squirming in their seats, that the proposer spent the rest of the meeting saying that they were not suggesting ending the nursery class, although to everyone listening that seemed exactly what they had said.

The SWP said the moves being made through the unions were doomed to failure because there



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

Now that the occupation is over the fight must continue for the lost jobs and places.

was no sign that the membership was willing to fight or that the leadership would lead.

Their cynicism and pessimism about the working class and their refusal to fight the trade union leadership did not however lead them to propose ending the campaign.

'Direct action'

So they pushed for a policy of what they call "direct action" which boiled down to a proposal to storm the next council meeting and occupy it.

Both these routes were thrown out by the supporters' meeting and plans are now being laid for the Action Against the Cuts Conference.

Conference call

The Nursery Campaign has organised a one day conference, Action Against the Cuts Rally, for Saturday May 27 in Oxford from 11am to 5pm.

Besides speakers from the campaign there will also be speakers from the London hospital occupations, including Hounslow, and speakers involved in fighting local social services cutbacks.

Films will be shown from the EGA and from the nursery occupation itself and several exhibitions of occupations will be on show.

Delegations are already

coming in from trade union branches as well as the unemployed and single parents.

Anne-Marie Sweeney said: "We don't just want a conference where everyone talks about their occupations and we all pat each other on the back.

We want to attract people who have not yet taken action against the cuts, and show them the kind of action that can be taken and how to fight.

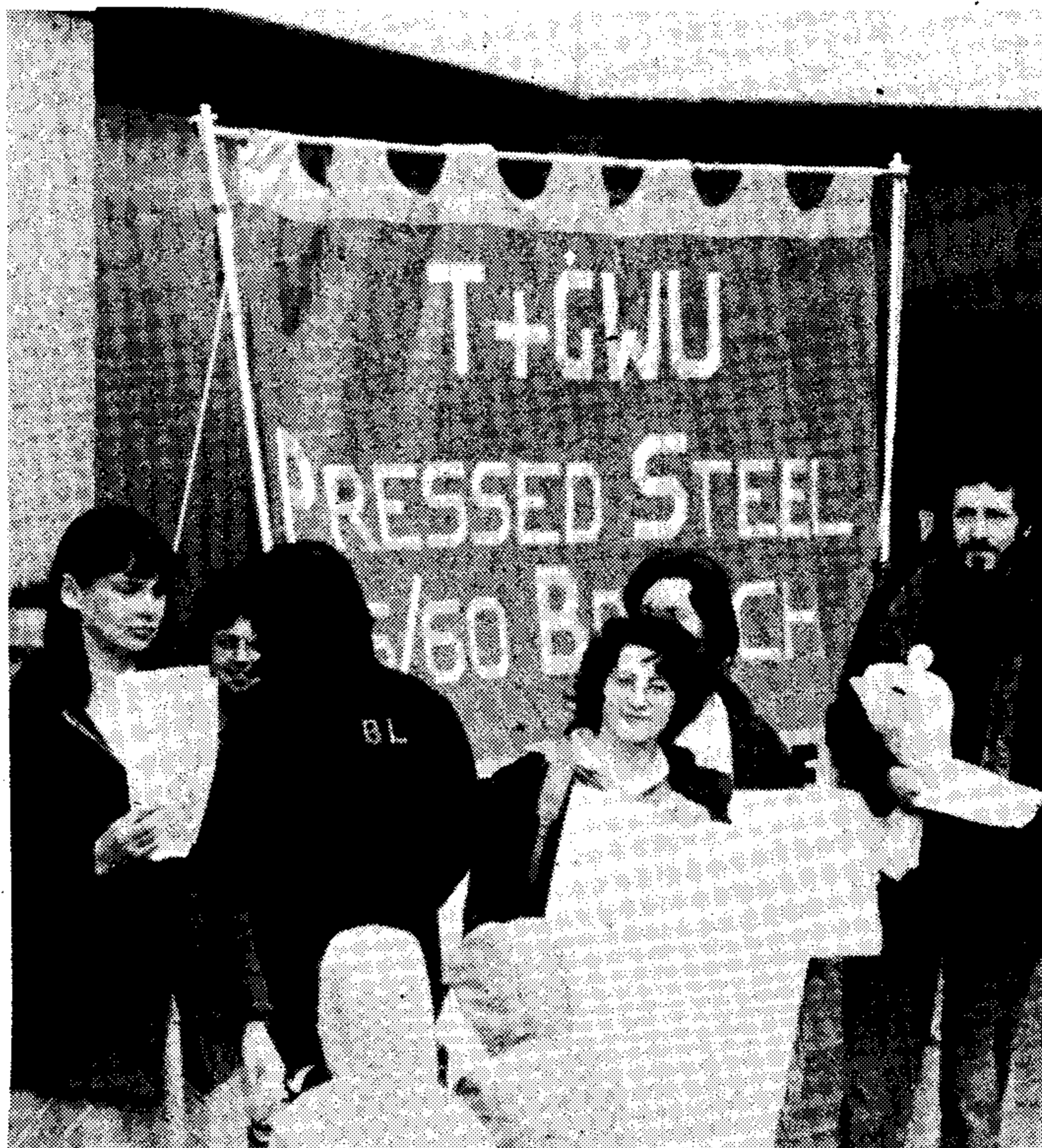
It is up to local areas to launch the local fights on this national issue".

To that end action is being taken to alert local health workers to the possibilities of massive cuts in the health service.

It is vital that everyone in the area—and from other areas—who wants to take action against the attacks on social services and all cuts attends this conference at the East Oxford Community Centre.

Credentials—for delegates or individuals—can be obtained from Ted Eames, 7, East Street, Osney, Oxford.

Directing campaign back into the labour movement



Campaign members lobbying the County Council AGM

In the following interview, *Socialist Press* asked three leading members of the campaign to outline its problems and plans. They are Ted Eames (NUT), Anne-Marie Sweeney (NUPE) and Ann McKinley (UPW).

SP: How successful was last week's lobby of the county council?

McKinley: Some councillors crept in the back

way to avoid us. One councillor asked us why the trade unions were involved.

Sweeney: It seemed such a crazy question some people seemed completely floored! I was saying that the trade unions were the only ones to defend our rights. We didn't see anything of the Labour councillors. Everyone seemed really shaken by the trade union banners that were there.

McKinley: One councillor shouted 'Get back to work'. Someone shouted back, 'We can't work, because we can't

leave our children'.

SP: The Oxford and District Trades Union Council has pledged to send a delegation and to meet the nursery committee. What was the reaction to the eviction at the Trades Council?

McKinley: When the letter (from Brig. Streetfield, refusing to meet the delegation) was read out people were incensed by it. People realised that it did constitute an attack on the trade unions.

Eames: It was also notable that they were not prepared to fix the delegation meeting then and there. The officers have just written back to Streetfield saying that we want to meet him before July.

Any other business

SP: Moves are continuing within NUPE for industrial action over the closure. What are the officials doing?

Sweeney: Millar said he wasn't going to convene the district committee before May 31. He was going to the NUPE conference and I tried to get him to raise the nursery campaign there. He said he might under any other business, but one of the things NUPE is discussing is

nursery education.

He said none of his members had lost jobs through the closure because they had retired voluntarily. He didn't seem to see early retirement and cuts in hours as union business at all.

SP: What has been the response of UPW members who are not directly involved?

McKinley: Because I was involved it got other people interested and they ask how it is going. They might not get involved actively but many of them really care about nursery education.

Labour movement

SP: What now is the next major initiative?

Eames: There remains a need to broaden out the campaign to bring in people from other parts of the city, through leafleting. But the general orientation towards the labour movement is still there.

That is the correct orientation and we must avoid any suggestion of stunt politics or liquidating the nursery campaign into an amorphous front.

Socialist Youth League launched

Youth from London, Yorkshire, the Midlands and the North West met in Birmingham on Sunday May 7 to found the Socialist Youth League, a youth movement in support of the policies and programme of the Workers Socialist League.

Moving the main resolution, Phil Moore from Aylesbury, a member of the NUSS National Committee, spoke of the growing crisis of capitalism and the betrayals of the trade union leadership in the face of

worsening slump.

Pointing to the treacherous role of the right wing Labour leaders in forming an undeclared coalition with the Liberals, Phil Moore said that it was the economic and social conditions created by this anti-working class coalition that formed the material basis for the increased influence of racists and fascists in the middle class and sections of the working class.

The main thrust of the fight against racism and fascism had to be the struggle to break the coalition and remove the right wing Labour leaders and their supporters

in the trade union bureaucracy.

The Socialist Youth League had the policies to meet the crisis and the task was to build a new leadership in opposition to the present reformists who were more interested in defending capitalism than the jobs and living standards of their members.

Chris Forrest, seconding the resolution, spoke of the events the previous day at the British Leyland plant at Speke in Liverpool.

Here, the refusal of the stewards to advance a fighting programme for the defence of jobs had resulted in the workers accepting the closure

of the plant.

Comrade Forrest placed the blame for this squarely on the shoulders of the leadership and in particular BL combine chairman Derek Robinson who in addressing the workers twice in three weeks, never once raised the question of occupation.

Speakers from the floor stressed the enormous potential amongst youth for building an alternative leadership. Examples of courageous struggle by youth in Palestine, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Europe were brought into the meeting while other speakers explained in detail the policies that the SYL

should be fighting for within the working class.

Young comrades from NALGO and the AUEW described the work they were carrying out among young workers in their unions.

The conference voted unanimously in support of the founding resolution and constitution and proceeded to elect a National Committee.

Andrew MacDonald moved a resolution on proposed activities. This included plans for campaigns on youth unemployment and the fight against racism and fascism; the publication of pamphlets for these

campaigns and the launching of a monthly news sheet, as well as proposals for social activities for youth in each area.

Critical point

Although modest in size, this meeting to launch the Socialist Youth League comes at a critical point when youth up and down the country are becoming increasingly radicalised as a result of the deepening economic crisis, reflected in the increasing activities of the racists and fascists.

It is this radicalisation which will provide the backcloth to the fight to build the SYL in coming months.

Careerists gloat at election reprieve

Reformist politicians up and down the country could be heard slapping each other on the back last week, congratulating themselves on "only" having handed over three London boroughs and one metropolitan council to the Tory axe-men.

While they gloat at the fact that even four years of absolute treachery under successive Labour and Lib-Lab governments has not completely liquidated the Labour vote, the lesson for workers is a very different

one.

The continuing class vote for Labour against the prospects of a Tory win demonstrates the necessity for a struggle to expose the reactionary politics of the Labour leaders 'left' and right, and the necessity for a revolutionary programme and a conscious leadership if workers are to resolve problems of falling living standards, mass unemployment and savaged social services.

Opportunist

Despite winning substan-

tial votes in some areas, the opportunist "Socialist Unity" platform devised by the International Marxist Group is quite devoid of any serious demands whatever.

It offers its supporters nothing more than the words "socialism" and "unity"—which, under conditions where the official Labour leaders offer neither, have a certain appeal to sections of workers and petty bourgeois.

In Newham, however, where a socialist programme including the call for workers' defence squads against racist violence, opposition to all public sector cuts and a

demand for the breaking of the Lib-Lab coalition, was put forward by Labour candidates John Plant and Ray Massey, the Labour vote in the ward rose by 11%, and this election takes the struggle against the right wing in Newham NE Constituency Labour Party to a new level.

In the meantime electoral support for the National Front has plummeted in every area.

NF slumped

With the Tories vying for the straight racist vote and with an increasing volume of propaganda exposing the fascist nature of the Front now appearing in the press, throughout the labour movement and in the publications of the Anti Nazi League, NF votes outside London slumped from last year's

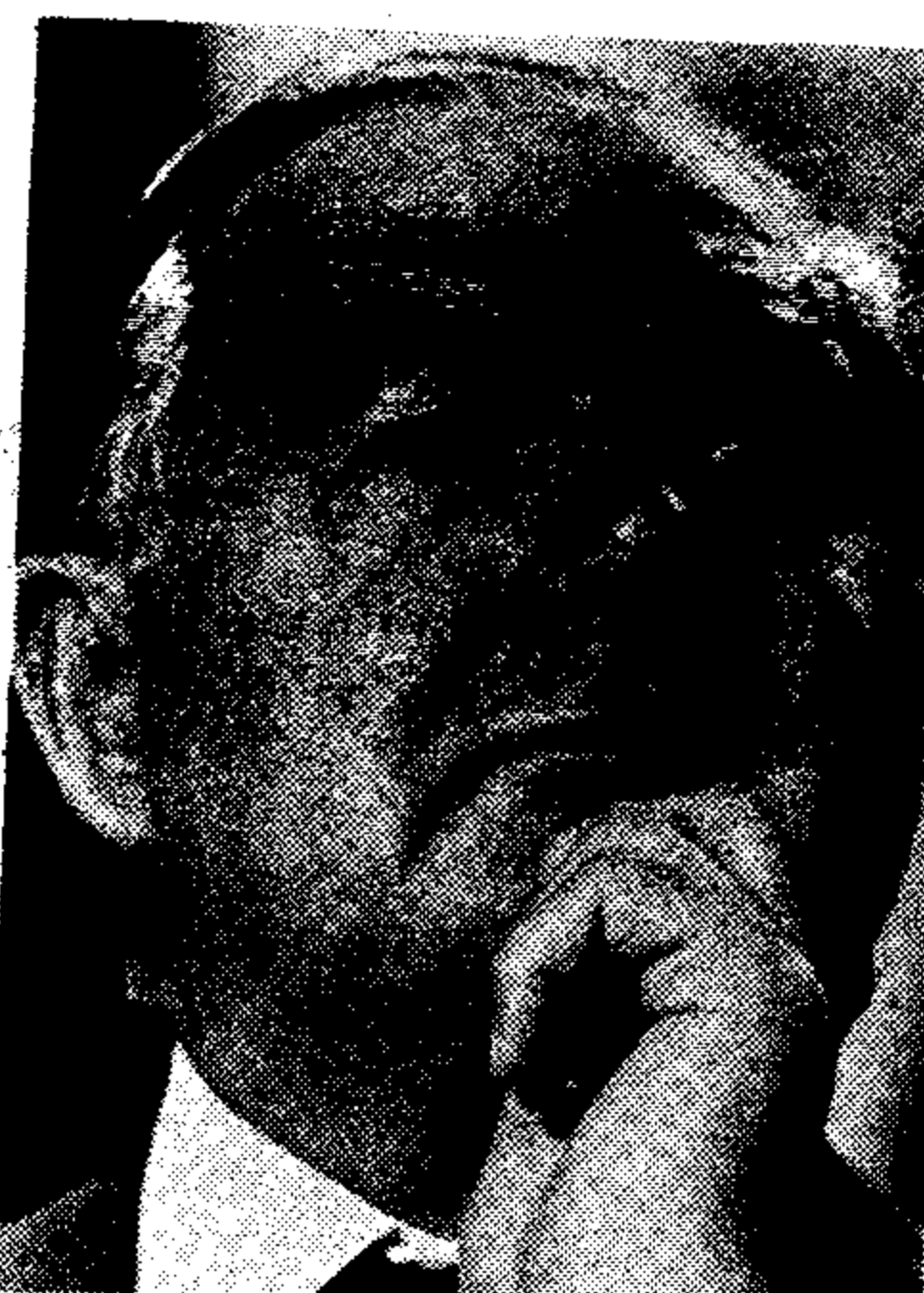


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Callaghan

60,000 to 25,000 this year.

Former Front strongholds in West Yorkshire and the West Midlands saw the NF vote cut to an average 2.6% and 4.5% respectively.

But with Labour leaders continuing with the anti-working class policies that created the base for the NF in the first place, the council elections point to the necessity to step up the fight to construct a leadership in the labour movement that will fight on a clear programme to defend the independent interests of the working class.

PRESS GANG

GMWU's rat stew

Now that the strike at Claridge's is over and the threat to the employer has been removed the press has been able to treat Richard Elvidge's sacking as a nice, safe, human interest story.

Immediately after the strike ended the *Daily Mail* set up an extravagant three course meal for the sacked cook to prepare and issued its own judgement—that he could get a job in virtually any restaurant in London.

But the press has really gone to town on the industrial tribunal which started last week and has now been adjourned.

The *Daily Telegraph* looked through its files and pulled out a picture of Mahatma Gandhi—with his goat—both of whom stayed at Claridge's.

This was quoted by managing director Sir Hugh Wontner, as evidence of the unique nature of the hotel.

Kruschev stayed there. Half the monarchy in Europe stayed there. If you sat down to lunch in the restaurant, ten to one the Queen or Tito would be sitting down to a

nice family lunch at the next table.

And in this world of princes, kings and Stalinist leaders, the ambiance itself is enough to make trade unionism a contradiction in terms. How can you settle down to enjoy yourself if you suspect that the staff might not actually be servile?

Or as Sir Hugh put it: "We have Claridge's to run. We must have people who don't try and trip us up all the time".

Celibate

But it was obviously Ghandi who got the goat of the *Telegraph*. Their correspondent Amit Roy, interrupted his account of the tribunal to bring us this useful piece of knowledge.

"A spokesman for an Indian religious group in London commented last night: 'The fact that the goat went to Claridge's does not signify it has a discerning palate. Gandhi got hooked on goat's milk after he became celibate.'

"He gave up sex early in his married life. And cow's milk makes you feel more

sensual. In any case Gandhi considered the cow to be holy".

So the 'ratatouille case' was all fun and games?

Not quite. Beneath the froth, the recipes and the upstairs, downstairs account of hotel hierarchy a picture emerged familiar to any militant.

Richard Elvidge was not sacked for his herring tails, his buckets full of curdled mayonnaise or his ratatouille.

Managers at the hotel followed staff to a recruiting meeting of the GMWU, had to be thrown out of the meeting and then hung about outside the tube station noting down who had gone in.

It came out in the arrogant defence of life for the super rich given by Sir Hugh Wontner.

The other familiar trait that all those who have attempted to unionise their workplaces will recognise is that the tribunal itself is a symbol of the GMWU's failure to fight for Elvidge's reinstatement.

A big splash in the papers will not make up for that recipe for disaster.

Hayward gives a course in reformism

In the middle of what was supposed to be a knock-about attack on Tory leader Margaret Thatcher, Labour's General Secretary Ron Hayward managed to convey a defence of permanent wage controls.

"We have to work for a return to orderly collective bargaining", he told an audience at Ruskin College, Oxford, which runs courses in class collaboration for would-be union officials and personnel managers.

For the benefit of those who find it hard to penetrate the jargon of Labour and union leaders, "orderly collective bargaining" is the term—possibly coined by Jack Jones—now used as a



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

synonym for permanent and rigid wage control.

Hayward's most vigorous attack was centred on Thatcher's attempt to create the impression that the Tories would end wage restraint, and allow free collective bargaining.

"She seems attracted to this idea because if the government stops its so-called interfering in the free enterprise system, then Mrs Thatcher thinks, so will the 'wicked robber barons', the Trade Union leaders".

Almost without realising it, Hayward has put his finger on one reason why TUC leaders have been so anxious to collaborate with the Lib-Lab government in imposing three years of rigid wage control.

They fear the prospect of workers once again pursuing their own claims with their own employers.

They prefer that all wage "negotiation" should be concentrated in the secret and futuristic discussions

between top TUC bureaucrats and the government—and then forced from above upon hostile union members.

Hayward makes the point even clearer as he sketches an imaginary horror picture involving the end of wage and price control, spiralling inflation and soaring wage demands.

"Faced with that, what chance would any union negotiator have of resisting rank and file demands for pay increases to match price increases?"

In other words, in the topsy-turvy world of Lib-Lab class collaborating politics, the job of a negotiator is to resist the demands of his members: the job of the "socialist" Labour government is to restore the health of capitalism: and an ideal wage increase is one that leaves workers poorer than they were a year before!

With 'friends' like this in the leadership of the Labour movement, who needs enemies?

THE ENGLISH REVOLUTION

The violent events that paved the way for

'parliamentary traditions'

PART TWO by Mark Hyde



Religion and Revolution

The historian Christopher Hill highlights the feelings of the rising seventeenth century middle class by quoting one of its members on the eve of civil war: "The merchants in no part of the world so loved and wrung as in England".

Despite the exaggeration in his statement, it provides excellent insight into the basis of the English revolution of the seventeenth century.

This class content has, however, often been obscured by the fact that it took on a religious form.

A study of the English revolution by Marxists therefore demands some attention to the problem of the relation between the development of the capitalist class and the Puritan religion.

Driving force

Less sophisticated bourgeois explanations of the events of the 1640s have often presented the whole affair as some kind of religious war, with thousands of peasants and peasants risking their lives for points of theology.

But on the other hand, Marxists, while pointing out

that religious disputes had a material origin in the conflict between classes, do not relegate religion into background insignificance.

The religious ideas which have been commonly called 'Puritanism' did become a driving force in the English revolution.

"No Bishop, No King"

Hatred of 'Popery'—an epithet attached to Archbishop Laud and the extravagant ceremony, symbols, pomp and cost of the established state church—united the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes in a common crusade.

The same feeling was reflected directly even in attitudes to foreign policy, where loathing of Catholic Spain was the hallmark of the House of Commons, and Charles I's marriage to French Catholic princess Henrietta Maria caused extreme distrust from the outset.

The desire of revolutionary forces in the early seventeenth century for a Presbyterian clerical system was hated by James I and the ruling class.

The cause was not mere interpretations of the Bible. The official Anglican church was a vital part of the state

apparatus.

In 1604 James I gave voice to his fears of the political consequences of the possible overthrow of the church system.

"Then Jack and Tom and Will and Dick shall meet, and at their pleasures censure me and my council and all our proceedings."

He summarised his opinions on these matters with his famous statement, "No Bishop, no King."

For the forces of reaction in seventeenth century England then, defence of the established church was essential to defence of the state.

For the forces of progress, hatred of the backward, feudal, Catholic regimes of France and Spain was obligatory.

Ideological challenge

The religious hierarchy of Archbishop Laud—whose doctrine of 'Arminianism' involved Catholic practices and ceremonies, as well as the Catholic notion that the congregation, the 'flock', had only to learn to obey the priesthood—was seen as not much better than the sinister agency of a foreign power.

Puritanism, then, was much more than a religion—it represented an ideological challenge to the old order.

Unlike the official creed it set out to make men think. This in itself had revolutionary implications in a society based on blind acceptance of feudal authority.

Like the first Protestant, Martin Luther, the Puritan thinkers of early seventeenth century England sought after "the priesthood of all believers."

Healthy alternative

Religion was seen as not simply the privilege of a few Latin-speaking worthies, able to understand and then hand down messages to the passive masses.

All men, equal as they were before God, could raise themselves to the task of interpreting the Gospel.

Great emphasis was laid in this revolutionary creed upon organisation and discipline as qualities of the highest order.

Under the Stuart regime the Laudian church was shot through with corruption, especially at its highest levels.

Puritanism stood in a marked contrast as a living, healthy alternative. Poorer

members of the clergy were often drawn to Presbyterian Puritan religious thinking.

They had a special interest in reorganising the church along Presbyterian lines as in Scotland, which would do away with the authority and privileges of the bloated caste of bishops.

'Lecturers'

The Presbyterians allowed congregations to choose their own ministers and appointed 'lecturers' to preach the sermons that they could not hear in the official church.

The revolutionary threat posed by these practices to a church so closely bound up with the whole state machine was huge.

The Church of England today, whilst still a state church, is a pitiful shadow of its former self.

In the seventeenth century it is no great exaggeration to say that political life in society revolved around the church.

In the absence of mass media, widespread literacy, a developed police force and other modern trappings, the church had countless functions to fulfil.

Under conditions where other religions were not tolerated by the state, the Anglican church held a monopoly.

Politically reliable

A priesthood, selected by the ruling class from politically reliable candidates, had the unrestricted right to preach loyalty to the King, obedience to the state, and every manner of feudal notion to audiences of yeomen and townsmen for whom church attendance was obligatory.

The bible, which could only be read by the educated minority, was the natural source of wisdom, through which all sought to find justification for their ideas on society and politics.

In the late 1620s, for example, the bible was used by priests in a national campaign of attacks on Parliament for its refusal to grant customs rights to King Charles I.

Religious form

It was quite natural that political opposition should take on religious form.

Further, while accepting that no mechanical relation-



John Pym

ship exists between political and religious ideas, and economics, 'Puritanism' fitted in admirably with the needs of the capitalist class—so well that some historians have seen it as capitalism's cause.

The outlook of the Separatists, Brownists and other groupings which have long been lumped together under the general heading of Puritans, did much more than merely challenge the old church regime.

Equality before God

The emphasis on the equality of men before god, and the ability and need for ordinary men to read and understand the scriptures, reflected the need of the rising middle class to assert itself against its old social 'superiors'.

Even at the level of the religious service itself, the political implications of Puritanism were clear.

The bare hall replaced the church of images, candles and stained glass.

Topical sermons in simple language, and discussion, replaced recital of the ten commandments and unintelligible Latin litanies.

The aim was to stimulate ideas and raise confidence—not to mystify, confuse and overwhelm with grandeur.

No revolutionary class can tolerate being kept in blind subjection in the way the Arminian system was designed to ensure.

On the level of basic economics, East Anglia, London and other centres of trade and industry were the Puritan strongholds.

A religion which extolled the virtues of diligence, organisation and hard work was inevitably popular with the middle classes, the merchants and their kind.

Handy formula

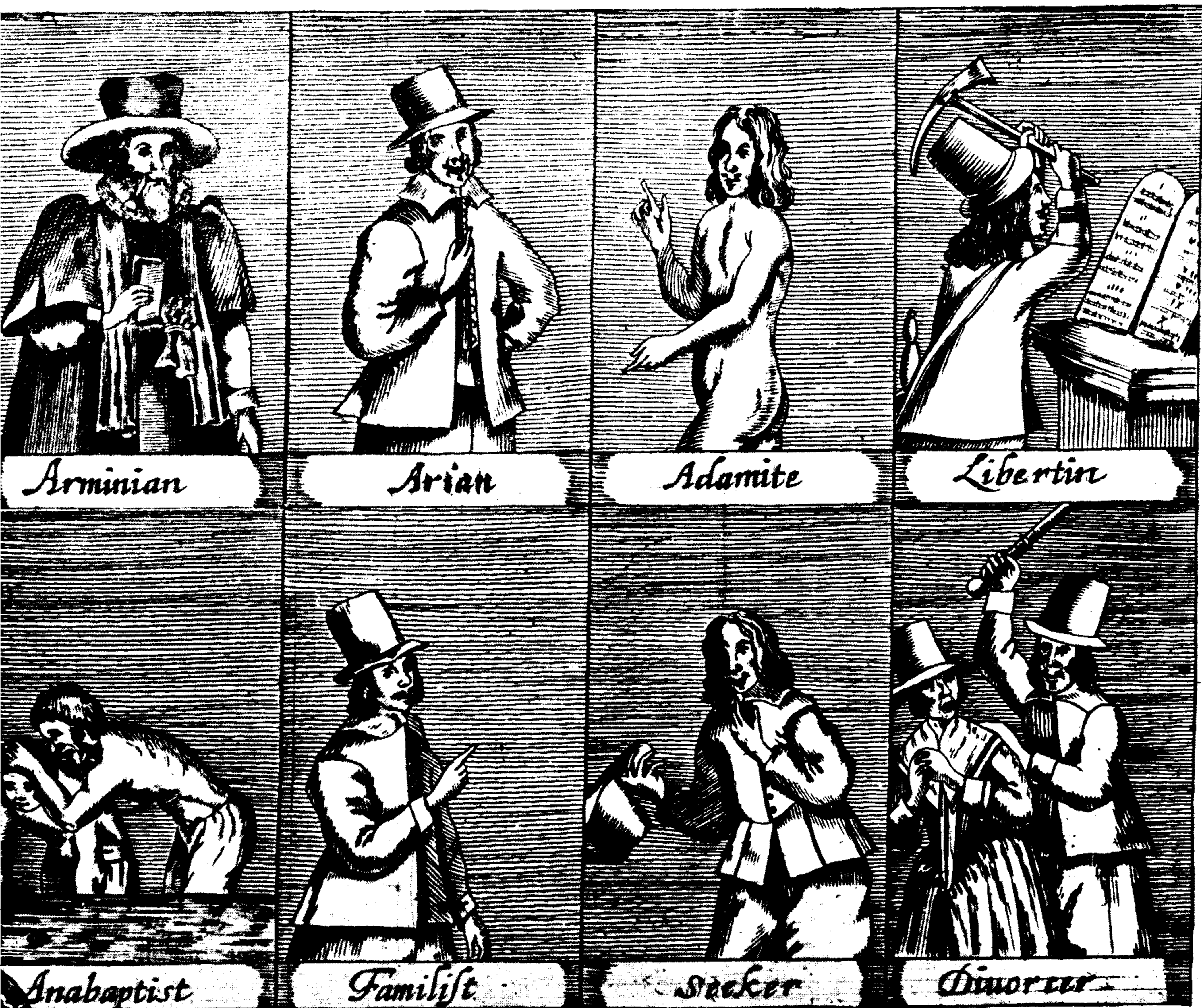
Puritanism seemed strongest in those counties where the bourgeois class was most strongly entrenched.

The other side of Puritan 'Sabbatarianism' (strict observance of Sunday as the lord's day) was opposition to the countless saints' days—holidays which cut across all efforts to establish the modern regular working week.

Prosecution still faced those who disregarded the



Oliver Cromwell



"A Catalogue of the Several Sects"—a contemporary list of the various brands of religion current in the 17th century

call to down tools on over a hundred occasions a year to regenerate some obscure saint. Even on this level the Popish customs of the Anglican church were an obstacle to the smooth functioning of capitalism.

The Puritan merchants had their religious beliefs a handy formula for the reorganisation of society along efficient capitalist lines.

Attempts by the monarchy to limit preachers to reciting the creed and the ten commandments were an attempt to suppress these revolutionary ideas.

Conflicts over statues and altar rails in churches represented a struggle against obscurantism and superstition.

Revelry

Strict Sunday observance—the Puritans were appalled by government advocacy of sports and other revelry on the Sabbath—would provide the basis for the regular enforcement of discipline, and most importantly ideological training upon a population they thought lazy and corrupted by the slow, indifferent rhythms of a stagnating feudal society.

While the bourgeoisie in other countries in later years could find many other ideologies in which to dress up its aims as a class, it is indeed surprising how well, for an early attempt, the Puritan religion fitted the bill.

English merchants made considerable efforts to see that the word was spread.

Lectureships—through which corporations hired lecturers to preach a fixed number of sermons each year—were an effective counterweight to the official priesthood.

Laud's ruthless suppression of lecturers needed no religious motive—it was a political necessity in its own right.

More penetrating observers at the time saw the relationship between the role of the lecturers and the ultimate downfall of the old regime.

Preparation

The lecturers were the material organ of ideological preparation for revolution.

Archbishop Sheldon, again quoted by Hill, noted, "Nothing had spoiled the late King's affairs so much as the credit that the factious lecturers had in all corporations."

On this level, Puritanism can be compared to the task of Marxist theory in the preparation of the proletarian revolution that will destroy capitalism.

Planned basis

But here comparison ends. The proletarian revolution is the first in history in which the vanguard of the revolutionary class is conscious of the historic role which it is playing.

The working class has the task of reconstructing the economy and society on a planned scientific basis.

Such work cannot be accomplished with the religious, semi-religious and idealist delusions that gave justification and moral courage to the bourgeois revolutionaries of the past.

The proletarian revolution and the building of communism requires the scientific Marxist method of dialectical materialism—there can be no substitute.

This is because the proletariat is a propertyless, exploited class which possesses nothing but its labour power.

All spheres of life in capitalist society are completely dominated by the bourgeoisie. The working class, driven by its social position into conflict with capital, comes forward, unlike the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the seventeenth century, with no means of production, no system of social organisation, no ideology, no culture of its own. Capitalism controls all.

Rationale

The new social order—the proletarian dictatorship, the planned economy—cannot spring spontaneously out of the everyday conditions of proletarian life in bourgeois society.

The working class moves in this direction only in so far as this step has been prepared in advance in the theory, scientific programme, perspective and orientation of the revolutionary party.

The young bourgeoisie on the other hand, built up the capitalist mode of production and exchange within the framework of feudal society.

Far from being a propertyless class, the bourgeoisie was already the most wealthy and powerful group in society.

It only remained for it to

brush aside the parasitic political and legal vestiges of feudalism that strangled free economic activity.

The bourgeoisie was thus able to develop its own norms of social behaviour, its culture and basic social organisation in an 'organic' way—truly scientific theory was not a necessary tool.

Indeed the very fact that the bourgeoisie grows up in this way within feudalism, feeding from it for an entire epoch, means that it is incapable of establishing the scientific basis of its own existence.

Like its feudal overlords, the English bourgeoisie sought a rationale for their actions in the bible—the first means of defence to hand.

Empiricism

Whether it cloaks itself in the language of the old testament, or hides behind the infinitely more progressive formulae of the eighteenth century French philosophers, the natural outlook of the rising bourgeoisie is one of empiricism and pragmatism—crossing bridges as it comes to them, testing out methods of action, junking them and passing on to new uncharted experiences quite unsure of where the path leads.

The bourgeoisie, then, including its leading elements, came up to the point of revolution not really understanding what was happening.

Civil War and Regicide

Independently of the control of anyone, the revolutionary crisis had reached a critical point by 1640.

Charles I's attempts to rule without the Parliament of the bourgeoisie had broken down.

Every avenue had been explored to avoid making concessions. Bullion had been seized for government finance to name but one example; yet the regime was hopelessly bankrupt, and of course no aid was forthcoming from the great centres of financial wealth—all of which were controlled by the merchant class.

The resistance to the government was taking on an increasingly rebellious character.

The opposition was encouraged by Scottish defiance of

the King's efforts to impose the Anglican church system upon their country.

Parliament was not slow in finding an ally—and the Scots showed readiness to go to war on the issue.

Charles' return to calling Parliaments was to no avail. The gulf had widened so much that it only resulted in the arrest of leading members of the Commons.

Not viable

But repression in turn was not viable as a policy. The opposition was militant, confident wealthy and undefeated.

The fact that the army sent to hold back the Scots

the country as John Pym gave the first genuinely revolutionary lead to the bourgeoisie.

The Commons used their ancient rights to impeach the mighty and powerful. In November 1640, the Earl of Strafford, Charles' most hated minister, was arrested by order of the House.

Before Christmas, Archbishop Laud had joined him in the Tower of London.

Their master dare do no more than stand by and watch. By Spring of 1641, matters had gone even further. With the crowds of London demanding execution Charles found himself signing the death warrant of Strafford—his most able adviser, an act Charles was to recall with some bitterness when he himself mounted the steps to the scaffold eight years afterwards.

"Dual power"

Parliament now moved to assert its supremacy. The Triennial Act ensured the regular calling of Parliament.

The King's right to collect tannage and poundage without consent was definitively declared illegal.

Prerogative courts such as the Star Chamber, which had been used to enforce royal authority, were abolished.

The question of control of the state power itself was posed starkly by the rebellion which broke out in Ireland in 1641.

The Commons—this time by a narrow margin of votes—refused to give backing to any attempt to reconquer Ireland that it did not directly control.

Condemnation

Instead of giving support to the King it passed the Grand Remonstrance—a manifesto of condemnation against Royal policy in general.

John Pym, who introduced the document, probably hoped that the King would take issue with it. He did not do so.

Matters had now reached the point of no return—the policy of the monarchy and the demands of the Commons were diametrically counter-

Coupled with Parliament's attempt to remove the army from the King's control, it could be seen that the royal authority was hanging by a thread.

Two state powers were now confronting each other—a situation which could only be resolved one way or the other.

Westminster 5

It was fitting that the old regime should make the first desperate move. On January 4, 1642, Charles marched into Westminster Hall at the head of a troop of 'cavaliers'.

He had come to arrest Pym and four other MPs, including Hampden of 'ship money' fame.

But the plan had been leaked. Charles could only observe that the 'birds had flown', and left in "a more discontented and angry passion than he came in".

From now on, the King had lost the initiative.

The attempt to trample on the rights of the Commons even alienated some of Charles' own allies.

The anger of London's masses, who now hoped for Parliament to find a way of putting their grievances to rights, was without parallel.

Cannon

For the first time matters went beyond the point of mere rioting.

The Trained Bands—a kind of city militia for preserving order—declared support for Parliament. Seamen hauled cannon from their ships in the Thames and positioned them around Parliament for purposes of defence.

The illegal drilling of men in the streets became a common sight. On January 10, Charles and his wife recognised the gravity of the situation by fleeing London.

It was not till August 22, that the King, in drizzling rain, raised the royal standard at Nottingham.

Battle lines

But there was no serious effort at negotiation in the eight months in between. Time was needed to organise



Cartoon depicts Roundhead and Cavalier forces

invading England became almost mutinous was eloquent testimony to the chronic weakness of the old regime.

Despite the failure of his first attempt (appropriately called the Short Parliament) Charles was forced to summon the Commons once more.

Arrested

This time there could be no thought of an ultimatum from the monarchy. The first sittings of the 'Long Parliament', as it would come to be known, must have seemed sweet to those who had even been deprived of the right to serious protest during the eleven years' tyranny.

Government ministers fled

posed.

The time for debate and argument was drawing to a close. Charles was grouping his boldest young officers—nicknamed 'cavaliers' (Cavaliers) after the Catholic Spanish soldiers.

The basis of an army was being laid. As tension mounted, daily street battles plagued London.

The militant London populace, spear-headed by the crocheted (Roundhead) apprentices, grew more audacious day by day.

Hanging by thread

By the end of 1641 the most popular slogan was for the removal of Charles' 'Papist Queen' herself.

on both sides—it was civil war.

The French conservative historian, Guisot, in a passage quoted by Trotsky, summarised the situation as follows.

"Negotiations were still continued, but neither party expected any result from them, or even had any intention to treat."

It was no longer to one another that they addressed their declarations and messages; both appealed to the whole nation, to public opinion; to this new power both seemed to look for strength and success".

The battle lines were being drawn.

Continued next week.

IN REVIEW

An 'informed' distortion of Trotsky's life and work

'Trotsky' by Irving Howe. Fontana

Johnny Nichols

Leon Trotsky has always been the subject of slander and distortion by ruling class ideologists and the Trotskyist movement is well-versed in exposing the lies and the deceit.

But the attack on Trotsky and the movement he founded takes many forms. The most insidious is often the 'critiques' of sophisticated 'lefts' who set out to sympathise with Trotsky's 'moral idealism' while emasculating the revolutionary core of his work.

An example of this method is to be found in the newly-published 'Trotsky' by Mr. Irving Howe.

To take up every error and misconception in this book would be to give it more attention than it deserves.

"Authority"

Howe informs his reader that he once had a "youthful experience" with the Trotskyist movement.

Today editor of the American radical magazine *Dissent*, he produces the fact that he has 'done Trotskyism' as proof of authority to write on the subject.

He has already edited an anthology of Trotsky's basic writings.

When such an 'informed' author omits central periods of Trotsky's work from his account, the reader must beware of accepting the small size of the book as an 'explanation'.



Lenin

In fact Howe's separation of the important from the unimportant flows entirely from his subjectivist and sceptical approach to the great political questions of our epoch.

Struck down

Howe, for example, gives some attention to Trotsky's personality and finds a conflict between authoritarianism (which he does not like) and romantic idealism (of which he approves).

He crudely distorts the theory of the party found in Lenin's *What is to be Done*—describing it as a "monastic secular order" of intellectuals—and expresses sympathy for the young Trotsky's polemics against the 'authoritarian' Lenin (which of course Trotsky later rejected as completely wrong).

Yet at the same time Howe says nothing of Trotsky's battle to rebuild the international revolutionary movement in the 1930s.

It was for this that Trotsky was hated by all his political opponents and finally struck down by a Stalinist assassin in 1940.

As Howe expounds his own 'theories' the cause of this unbalanced selection is not too hard to discern.

Madness

In the 1920s and 1930s the Trotskyist movement distinguished itself by its insistence that the working class was the only revolutionary class, and that this class could take power and build socialism only under the leadership of parties based on the scientific perspective of Marxism.

But for a middle class critic like Howe this is nothing short of madness; (Howe has better manners than to say this and so litters his book with mealy-mouthed phrases about Trotsky's political ideas—"increasingly questionable", "at least doubtful", etc., etc).

In the working class, Howe can only see backwardness, weakness and 'problems'.

For Howe, the masses simply accept "both the advantages and 'rules' of the welfare state".

He proceeds to churn out all the old rubbish that has



Stalin

long been the stock-in-trade of reformists and bourgeois 'social scientists':

"Workers with homes, cars, television sets are not likely to yield to insurrectionary visions".

Fantastic notion

To see the working class as an exploited class driven into conflict with their exploiters in a system of crisis—this is merely a fantastic notion in the heads of the revolutionary fighters whom Howe contemptuously calls the "Trotskyist faithful".

What makes Howe's book tedious is the utter lack of originality in his sniping attacks on Marxism.

Typical is his regurgitation of the stupidity that the decisive role played by an individual—Lenin—in the Russian Revolution, invalidates the Marxist view of class struggle:

"What then happens to historical materialism, to say nothing of the elaborate analysis offered by Trotsky in his various works intended to show the outcome of the Bolshevik revolution as a necessary outcome of Russian development?"

Concentrated

Howe knows that Trotsky long ago answered this question in a passage he is at pains to omit from his account.

"For this new age Russian history needed a new leader

All that was best in the old revolutionary intellectuals of earlier times: their spirit of denial, their audacity, their hatred of oppression—all this was concentrated in the figure of this man . . . Supported by Russia's young revolutionary proletariat, utilising the rich experience of the international workers' movement . . . he has risen to this full stature on the political horizon.

" . . . the fate of the working class does not depend on individual personalities: but this does not mean that individual personality is of no importance in the development of the working class".

Howe is at his most vulgar (and that is very vulgar indeed) in dealing with the 1917 revolution itself.

Like all democratic reformists he clearly wishes that the great events of the epoch—war and revolution—could be settled in accordance with the principle 'one man, one vote'.

Dragged in

Howe is not choosy about his allies when he attacks those who dared to take the power.

Kautsky, Kollontai, Kronstadt—Bertrand Russell—are dragged in. And Howe has a good word for them all.

During the brutal civil war to defend the first proletarian revolution against imperialist intervention, Trotsky, commanding the Red Army wrote *Terrorism and Communism*.

In this work he castigated those social-patriots and centrists—Kautsky in particular—who had tolerated the slaughter of the working class in the First World War and now attacked the Bolsheviks for their "undemocratic", "terrorist" and "Jacobin" treatment of their class enemies.

Of this work we read astonishingly that it

"supports those who believe Leninism and Stalinism to be closely linked or to form a line of continuous descent".

For Howe—the radical intellectual, the 'freethinker'—there is no difference in quality between the violence of revolution and that of reaction.

He feels more at home in his treatment of Trotsky's fight against Stalinism.

Basic question

Here he can easily afford to be 'sympathetic'. The bosses' publishing houses are open to all those who wish to use Stalinism, its labour camps, murders and mock-trials as a means for discrediting the October Revolution.

But as Howe admits, things were very different when Trotsky stood firm against Stalinism.

Then all varieties of liberals, reformists, pacifists and centrists were willing to close their eyes and ears to preserve their standing as 'friends of the Soviet Union'.

Howe tells of Trotsky's appeals to "a world which did not want to believe" and of his attacks on those Fabians like the Webbs

"who had begun to praise the Soviet Union only after it had sunk into totalitarianism".

But Howe cannot ask the basic question. Why was only the Trotskyist movement able to fight Stalinism? Why were his own political forebears the capitulators?

The whole method sees only surface impressions in which Trotsky is just a brilliant individual, sometimes good, sometimes bad, depending upon Howe's subjective requirements.

Skipped over

That is why the international defeats of the working class in the 1920s—Germany, 1923, Britain 1926, China 1927—which were partly caused by, and partly contributed to the rise of Stalinism are omitted.

That is why Trotsky's struggle for a Fourth International is skipped over.

The fight against Stalinism confronted not only its open agencies but also those, like the revisionist Burnham-Shachtman group in the USA who under the cover of 'anti-Stalinism' abdicated the class duty to defend the Soviet Union against imperialist attack.

Such people ultimately deserted the workers' movement and finished their careers as rabid spokesmen

for imperialism.

Like Burnham and Shachtman, Howe seeks refuge from the world in a 'third camp' in which he can hold forth as a 'critic' of capitalism without damaging his acceptability in democratic circles by defending the conquests of the working class.

Repelled

His opposition to Trotsky flows precisely from the latter's refusal to bow to 'public opinion' and to identify Stalinism with the October revolution, the counter-revolutionary bureaucracy with the socialised property relations.

Howe writes "In his writings of the late 1930s he did begin to use the term 'totalitarian' as a crucial descriptive, but this seems to have referred more to the outer character of Nazi or Stalinist politics than to a new historical problem of major significance.

He can hardly be blamed for not having worked out a theory about something which few other analysts had even begun to grapple with, and which still has not found its Marx or Weber".

This passage sums up Howe's view. Repelled by the outer features of Stalinism and Nazism, he throws them into the same pot and thereby excuses himself of responsibility.

Despite his claims to be a socialist thinker he clearly feels no obligation to the working class movement.

If a new social system exists, neither capitalist nor socialist but 'totalitarian', does not the working class have the right to ask about its material basis, its line of development, its implications for humanity?

Learn

But we have only the reply that this theory has not found a suitable theoretician!

The reader will learn little about Trotsky from Howe's book.

But if one picks up any of Trotsky's polemics against idealists, vacillators, liberals and centrists in the 1930s one can still learn a lot about Mr. Howe.



Trotsky—middle class critics never tire of old distortions



OFFICIALS MOVE TO CRUSH GARNERS STRIKERS

During the last two weeks there has been a sudden development in the union recognition strike at Garners Steak Houses with a decision taken at the highest level by the TGWU bureaucracy to regain complete control of a struggle that continues to cause them problems.

Brian Nicholson, TGWU EC member, will, it now appears, attend all the crucial strike meetings and effectively control all communications with the wider labour movement.

He has appointed his own strike supervisor whose job it is to keep a watchful eye on the activities of the strike committee.

Furthermore, George Abrahams (full time catering officer) who for many weeks now has lost all credibility with the strikers, has threatened to bureaucratically censor any material issued from the strike committee by restricting the use of facilities in his offices.

Big guns

By these actions the bureaucracy are aiming to reassert their grip on the strike.

The fact that this involves such big guns in the TGWU as Nicholson reflects the impact of the fight carried out by a section of the strikers to mobilise the TGWU around policies of mass picketing, secondary blacking of supplies and support for their demand of a £36 a week strike pay, if necessary by means of a levy.

These policies, seen by the majority of strikers as the only way this strike can be won, involves a mobilisation within the TGWU which goes beyond the political limitations acceptable to the bureaucracy.

Trotskyists starting from a Marxist scientific analysis of the role of the bureaucracy, stand that in the current capitalist recession this bureaucracy is incapable of winning and defending even the most basic democratic right—the right to join a trade union.

The capitalist class in time of economic crisis is forced to defend profit by a wholesale attack on the conditions of the working class, which remains, however, undefeated and prepared to fight back to defend its conditions.

Emasculated

In the traditionally unorganised hotel and catering industry, this attack on already barbaric working conditions has resulted in a rapid growth in unionisation.

But the vicious and often prolonged strikes for union recognition taking place over the past year have again and again seen the courage and determination of the working class emasculated and finally crushed by the betrayals of the trade union leadership.

In the strike at Garners, these betrayals (which restrict 'action' to appeals to ACAS, sterile solidarity conferences, and one day solidarity marches) threaten to effectively paralyse the strike and

disarm the strikers.

In the week in which the latest initiative of the bureaucracy, a 'day of solidarity' is to take place, it is crucial that strikers demand solidarity for the policies that will develop and win the strike and not for policies of betrayal.

To choose such a road will involve fighting against their own leadership, as can be seen from just a brief look at developments so far within the strike.

Legacy

From the start the strikers were burdened with the legacy of Abrahams' attempts to tie the recognition issue to ACAS.

While the employer was preparing for a long and bitter battle, the union had made no preparations for the immediate picketing and blacking necessary for such a fight.

In fact, in a recent article by Garners' former General Manager John Owen, in *The Caterer*, Abrahams is commended for his co-operation and support for management in the handling of staff grievances.

Nevertheless the workers who came out on strike on January 26 did so armed with assurances made over several meetings that 'the two million strong' TGWU would crush Garners' owner Margolis.

One member of the Regional Committee even talked of switching off supplies of gas and electricity.

With the rank and file leadership falling to those who had been involved with Abrahams in the negotiations over the previous months, the conduct of the strike was initially left entirely under the control of Abrahams.

Throughout the first eight weeks of the strike this leadership did nothing to mobilise the rank and file of the TGWU in support of the policies that could win the strike.

By the sixth week of the strike

many of the strikers, disillusioned with the support from within the union were openly hostile to Abrahams' continual assurances that the "machinery of the union took time".

An interview published in the *Daily Telegraph* on March 9, quoted Abrahams saying that he was prepared to call off the strike immediately provided that Margolis would guarantee no victimisation and would abide by an ACAS recognition enquiry.

This finally convinced numbers of strikers that alternative policies were necessary if the strike was to be won.

It was here that the crucial development occurred.

The call for secondary blacking, mass picketing and a regional levy to provide a living wage for the strikers, (policies long argued for by the Workers Socialist League) were taken up.

With the election of a new seven man strike committee on 19 March, Abrahams' control of the strike, which had acted as a complete block on reaching the wider membership of the TGWU, began to be challenged.

Pressure

The first meeting of the newly formed strike committee unanimously adopted the policies mentioned above.

At the next meeting of the 1/647 International Workers Branch, though Abrahams successfully blocked the demand for a regional levy, the rest of the strike committee's policy was adopted as branch policy.

Despite further attempts to stifle these policies, pressure from the section of the strikers believing in them and determined to fight every bureaucratic manoeuvre, finally bore fruit with the strike bulletin issued on April 4, which for the first time stated that it was official policy to call for mass picketing and mentioned the need for increased blacking.

from the strike committee.

In the week following the conference, Abrahams (increasingly losing his usefulness to the higher echelons of the bureaucracy) began to scramble desperately to retrieve his position of authority in the strike.

He issued a series of communications; an abortive stewards' conference was called for 23 April and a letter asking for support from the miners was circulated.

However, by the meeting on April 19 of the Food, Drink and Tobacco Trades Group Sub-committee it must have been clear to the bureaucracy that some steps had to be taken to regain control.

It was significant for the bureaucracy that they had been leafleted by strikers calling for secondary blacking, mass picketing and the levy.

The result of this meeting was the letter issued on Friday 21 April calling for blacking of suppliers to Garners.

By now the strikers, who had been on £6 a week strike pay were suffering severe financial hardship.

Crucial issue

The demand for a levy (which had been successfully blocked on March 20 by Abrahams), was now becoming a crucial issue for the strikers.

It was popularised around the £36 a week demand which the much smaller union, APEX, had paid to the Grunwick strikers, and successfully moved on April 24 at the 1/647 Branch.

By the regional committee meeting held on May 2, the

bureaucracy, having taken a battering, and been constantly leafleted and picketed by the strike committee took the unprecedented step of allowing speakers from the strike committee to address the meeting.

With pressure from the strikers forcing a division between the Trades Group and the rest of the committee, they adopted as Regional policy the secondary blacking of Garners and gave assurances that they would mobilise for the mass pickets.

Clearly the issue over which the Regional Committee will not concede without a major fight is that of the levy.

Setting the precedent of sustaining a strike indefinitely has massive political implications for a union with members in strategic industries.

They have to undermine the strike committee's ability to conduct such a fight.

Hence Nicholson's intervention over the past week.

Pressed

In a mass meeting of the strikers on May 7 when Nicholson was pressed on the result of the F&GP meeting with the TGWU EC he skillfully evaded giving an answer, saying he could only speak in a personal capacity and that the Region's policy would be decided at the Regional F&GP meeting on May 18.

The bureaucracy's tactic is now to destroy any independence that the developing opposition has won over the past three months.

On the basis of this reasserted control the bureaucracy will hope they will then be able to refuse the levy and avoid pressure to take action on blacking and mass picketing.

We have gone into developments within the strike in some detail.

Although a scientific analysis of the bureaucracy's role in general provides a foundation for our intervention in the class struggle, we have to be able to point out how these betrayals work in practice for workers involved in a particular struggle such as that at Garners. It is not enough just to assert the treachery of the bureaucracy.

The crucial development within the strike was that of an alternative leadership in a section of the strikers determined to strengthen the strike by fighting to mobilise the membership of the TGWU around policies that would signal all-out confrontation with Margolis.

This challenge to the control of the bureaucracy was met by seven weeks of sabotage, pervariation and evasion by Abrahams and his associates within the rank and file.

At each stage the fight against the stranglehold of the bureaucracy and for the independent interest of the working class is reflected in the apparently minor day to day struggles of the strike—the fight to get a strike committee elected and then keep it functioning, the fight for policies in the strike committee, the fight to get policies published in bulletins and internal letters, the fight to win other members' support for the policies.

It is important that those leading this fight realise the significance of their achievements so far.

But while the concessions wrenched from the union leadership on blacking and mass picketing represent absolute gains, the bureaucracy have no intention of being forced to concede more.

Complete independence

The immediate form that the fight will take over the next few weeks will be around the question of circulating the 1600 TGWU branches in London with a letter asking for support on the picket line and pressure from the branches demanding the region organise effective blacking and concede the £36 a week strike pay.

The success of such demands will depend on the strike committee holding regular meetings and maintaining complete independence from Nicholson and his representatives.

The day of solidarity which the bureaucracy is using as an evasion of the main issues of the strike has to be transformed into the launching pad for the recall conference sponsored by SE Region TUC, GLATC, Region 1 TGWU, where these policies can be taken to wider layers of workers, and where the bureaucracy can be made to account for their failure during the past six weeks.

By Graham Shurety



Garners float on the London May Day march

Workers Socialist League



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

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

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SELL-OUT BY STAND-IN

OFFICIAL

The 350 Oxford car transporter drivers who have been on strike for the past three weeks supporting sacked convenor Brian Preston voted last Friday to return to work on Monday.

Brian Preston was sacked 11 months ago for alleged fraud. The strike began after he had been cleared by a police inquiry and Cartransport Ltd still refused to reinstate him.

The same management who sacked Preston and are refusing to reinstate him are themselves the subject of a fraud squad investigation involving £2 million.

Sold out

The strikers were sold out after the TGWU had enlisted the support of Bill Lapworth, Coventry District Secretary, who is also acting as Regional Secretary for Region 5 while Regional Secretary Mathers is out of the country.

At an earlier mass meeting on Tuesday of last week it

had become apparent that so much hostility had built up against Oxford District Secretary David Buckle that his chances of obtaining a return to work were slight.

At that meeting Buckle, as usual, dragged up every argument he could muster to back his call for an immediate return to work.

Slight change

He was met with foot stamping and slow hand-clapping, and faced a 5-1 majority to continue the strike.

But at a further meeting with management which went on late into the evening prior to the mass meeting Lapworth obtained a slight change in the current management offer.

Previously management had said they would conduct a fresh internal inquiry into the allegations.

If this failed to recommend reinstatement and Brian Preston took the matter to an Industrial Tribunal they would accept the outcome of the Tribunal.

Meanwhile they would put

him back on the payroll at the basic rate.

Now, management declared they would accept the outcome of arbitration if there was a return to work meantime.

At the mass meeting, Lapworth gained the confidence of the drivers and stressed that reinstatement would be a near certainty from arbitration.

The meeting voted 2-1 to accept this advice.

This sell-out came at the point where outright victory was only days away.

Leyland, who had initially shut their Oxford plants and then restarted them had accumulated a stock of



Buckle

30,000 cars in fields around Oxfordshire, which could not be moved to the showrooms.

They had announced that they would have to close the plants at Cowley indefinitely from Tuesday of this week while current agreements would oblige them to maintain full pay to the whole labour force—as much as £500,000 a day for 15 days!

Although it is not excluded that Preston could be reinstated from the arbitration hearing, it is criminal to gamble with the job of a sacked convenor under these circumstances.

Preston has a particularly strong case, but arbitration is set up specifically to defuse strikes when all else has failed and once workers are back to work the pressure for reinstatement is off.



Luxury at the TUC—a Ford Granada Ghia

Blame it on the atmosphere...

The CPSA conference carried a vote of censure on its officers for throwing a party costing £500 held at the TUC conference.

The defence against this move by union president Leonard Lever gives some idea of the kind of world these bureaucrats have created for themselves from

our subscriptions. The CPSA delegation to the TUC was probably the only delegation that, because of a previous £500 party, had specifically had its spending power limited.

This, according to the Lever, was an embarrassment in the atmosphere of the TUC.

So when union general secretary Kenneth Thomas was elected to the TUC General Council they defied union policy and held a further £500 party, which meant free drinks, etc for any trade union official. Lever said:

"After the General Council election we found ourselves under a fair amount of pressure from other unions". "Where is the party to celebrate then?" "It is the custom of the TUC to give a party when you get somebody on the General Council".

'Secret plan'

The TUC Congress concerned was the same Congress that passed a resolution on Grunwicks that was supposed to contain a 'secret plan' to win, at the same time as specifically deciding not to cut off services.

The pressure to lay on free drinks is clearly far greater than any pressure for trade union action.

Bus strike bites

Separate management and union discussions with the sell-out special-ists in ACAS are continuing in a desperate bid to end the 6-week long official Leeds bus strike.

The strike, over management's breach of a written mutuality agreement, is having a marked effect on local business.

Pubs in Leeds are closing early, shop trade has been cut by 20% to 40%, and local employers are faced with costs of up to £5,000 a week to ferry in their workers.

The bus workers clearly recognise their strong position, and on Sunday 7 May voted by 1,200 to 2 to continue the action.

Management however are standing firm and relying on union officials to crumble.

Passenger Transport Executive spokesman Ian Smith told the *Yorkshire Evening Post*:

"... it is coming down to the fact that the union simply wants to win this strike—there is no room for compromise on their part.

We are talking about management's right to manage. I cannot possibly risk going to arbitration on that point".

Any "arbitration" would therefore be under conditions of a retreat by union officials on the basic issue of the strike—the attempt by management to impose new schedules without union

agreement. The weakness of the action is that it is aimed at combatting only one aspect of the strategy of the Tory-run council, which involves sweeping cuts throughout the public sector in Leeds.

The bus workers, who have now endured six weeks on £6.50 strike pay, must insist that the TGWU Regional Committee increases strike pay to sustain this crucial strike.

And the call must go out to other public sector unions in the area to rally to the aid of this struggle. Already one-day strikes by bus workers in Caldersdale, Bradford and Kirklees have indicated the widespread support for the Leeds strikers.

Doing what comes naturally ...

Hugh Scanlon argued at the AUEW conference in Worthing that British Airways should buy US Boeings containing Rolls Royce engines.

Ken Gill, a leading Communist Party member, opposed this by saying that they should buy British planes from British Aerospace.

That two union leaders can argue in such a way under conditions where most component suppliers to the aircraft industry are privately owned, where the banks are in private hands and where

the workers in the industry have no control shows how much the Stalinists and reformists have been drawn into thinking first of the interests of British capitalism.

The conference passed unanimously a resolution containing Gill's nationalism as opposed to Scanlon's nationalism.

Salesman

It remains to be seen whether Scanlon will pursue this sideline as Boeing's aircraft salesman after his retirement as AUEW president.

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Witch-hunts staged as cover for ASTMS betrayals

Seated in front of the divisive slogan "Career Security—Our Top Priority", the Executive at ASTMS's 10th Annual Conference in Brighton was forced by events to reveal the anti-working class nature of its so-called 'alternative economic strategy'.

Delegates defeated proposals for a subs increase and voted next business on the Executive's anti-democratic proposals for rule changes on union elections.

Four sections of the NEC report were referred back (rejected); for the second year running on inadequate organisation of the engineering section conference, and on the NEC's breach of instructions to ensure a majority of lay members on the TUC delegation.

No debate

But despite delegates' awareness of the inadequacies of union policies and democracy, the conference was unable to debate the policies required for an independent defence of the working class.

General Secretary Clive Jenkins set the tone with a passing reference to the prospect of five million unemployed in Britain and his defence of import controls.

"I put defending my members first and if that's chauvinism, then I'm a chauvinist".

Dead now

Answering a demoralised delegate from Leyland's Liverpool branch, the platform speaker called on conference to accept that "Speke is dead now", ignoring the calls from branches to take up the policies of occupation and opening the books, work sharing on full pay and a programme of useful public works as the means to fight closures.

Pious resolutions on wages, unemployment and economic policies were passed almost on the nod while the standing orders committee blocked useful debate by erasing from the programme resolutions calling for catching-up claims and a sliding scale of wages.

From the chair "left" Labour MP Doug Hoyle ruled out of order the request to inject some reality into the debate by having delegates



PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

Jenkins

from GEC Coventry address conference on their 11-week pay strike.

The unprincipled opportunism of ASTMS's leader-

ship was clearly demonstrated in the treatment of two different groups of delegates.

The General Secretary's "attack" on Tories in the

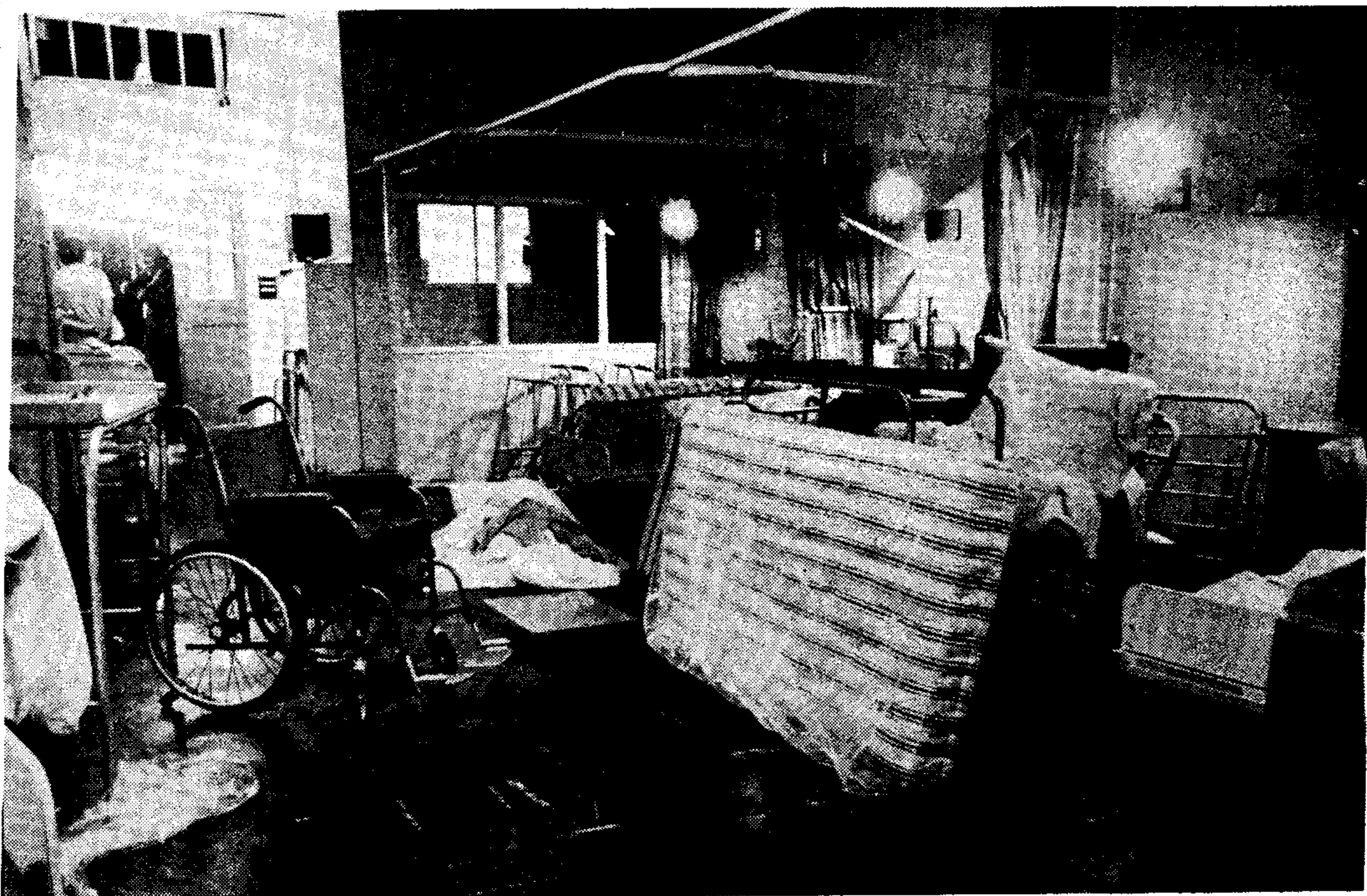


PHOTO: Andrew Wiard, Report

For resisting attacks on the health service CLASH was accused of "Trotskyist nonsense".

union (welcomed into membership along with members of the armed forces) resulted in a lone Tory champion being called on to repudiate Thatcher's statements on racism.

Support every word

This, the delegate, (a consultant to Tory Central Office), refused to do, while at the same time exposing the feeble nature of the resolution on racism by saying she 'supported every word of it'.

On the other hand Colin Kenny, a delegate from the London Health Service and convenor of the Committee of London Area Stewards in the Health Service responsible for the NHS, CP member Reg Bird.

Bird read out a personal letter from the ex-Secretary

of the London Health Advisory Committee which represented views shared by none of that committee's members apart from himself.

For the third year there was no resolution on the health service.

The effective defence measures proposed by members—calling for national strike action and an inflation-linked increase in public expenditure—had been cut from the agenda.

Last but one

Women's rights were given increased priority this year, appearing as last but one rather than last item.

But these questions, together with moves to reject attempts to muzzle discussion on the health service advisory (CLASH), was again witch-hunted by the General Secre-

tary (who referred to "this Trotskyist nonsense") and by the national officer committees fell through lack of time.

This year's conference has shown up more clearly than ever the crisis of leadership within ASTMS.

There is no solution in turning away from confronting the bureaucracy, the road "Red Collar" (the "rank and file" SWP front in ASTMS offers).

Their complete refusal to fight for a principled programme highlights their political attitude, which blames the working class for the lack of fight against pay controls.

ASTMS members are ready to hear real alternative policies. The task is to build a leadership that can fight for such policies and to gain a hearing at the next conference.



Dangers in climb-down

A serious blow has been dealt at the trade union organisation within British Leyland.

John Power, AUEW convenor of the Spare Parts Division in Cowley has resigned all trade union positions in the plant after being suspended for five weeks following allegations that he overdraw expenses for meetings of the National Joint Negotiating Committee.

Power's resignation opens the door to wholesale attacks on wages and working conditions in the Service Division which are in most respects in advance of conditions in other BL plants.

Leyland are currently conducting a massive attack under the guise of "equalisation" of rates and conditions

as they force in the corporate bargaining scheme set up by a fraudulent ballot last November.

Power's base of support within the Spares Division was based not on his present role as a witch-hunting right winger but on his earlier role as architect of the superior conditions in the plant during his days as a left wing militant.

This was why even while Power has been centrally involved in assisting the TGWU bureaucracy to victimise the Cowley 9 shop stewards and remove them from office, he has felt obliged on the National Joint Negotiating Council to obstruct Leyland's offensive against conditions in his own plant.

Despite his invaluable

assistance to the TGWU right wing he thus became a target for management attack.

His resignation betrayed the widespread support he enjoyed amongst the one thousand workers in the plant—who would certainly have taken strike action to secure his reinstatement if he had called on them to do so.

Such was the support that disputes continued in the plant last week even after Power's resignation, with workers challenging the terms of the settlement as it had appeared in the local press.

The Oxford Mail's version of the agreement was that he was being reinstated, following a week's suspension without pay and he would not be recognised in any trade union capacity "for some time to come".

Workers claimed that they had been given the impression when they returned to work that it was for six months only.

Power's public statement was that he had resigned "in order to avoid a dispute in which his members would lose money".

In fact he capitulated to the AUEW officials who instructed him to resign.

This attitude of the AUEW coupled with the election to the Presidency of Duffy—who dealt with the case and was praised by Power for the way he did it—should confirm the worst fears of workers and increase their resolve to insist that a date is fixed on which John Power will be recognised again by BL management.

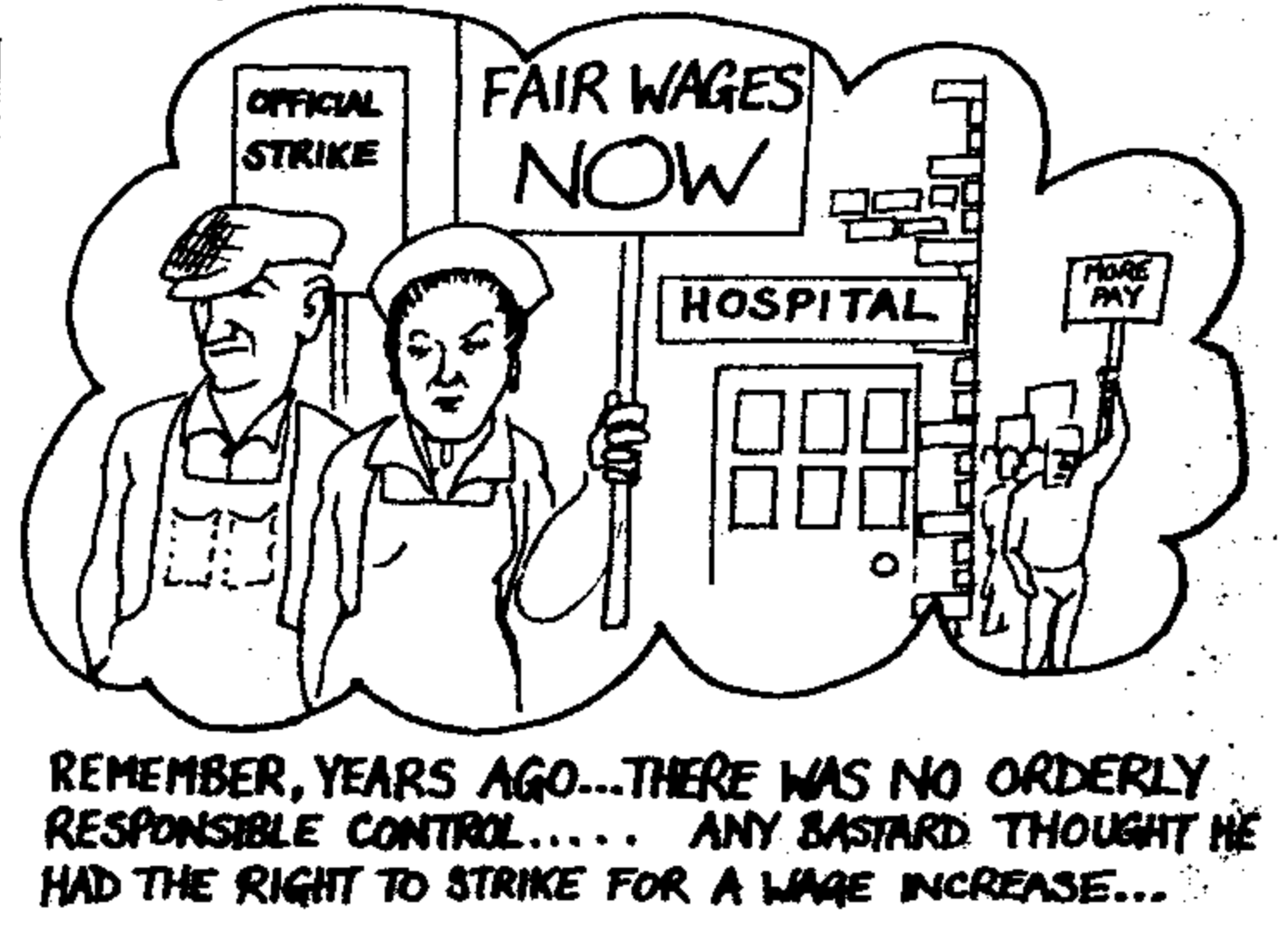


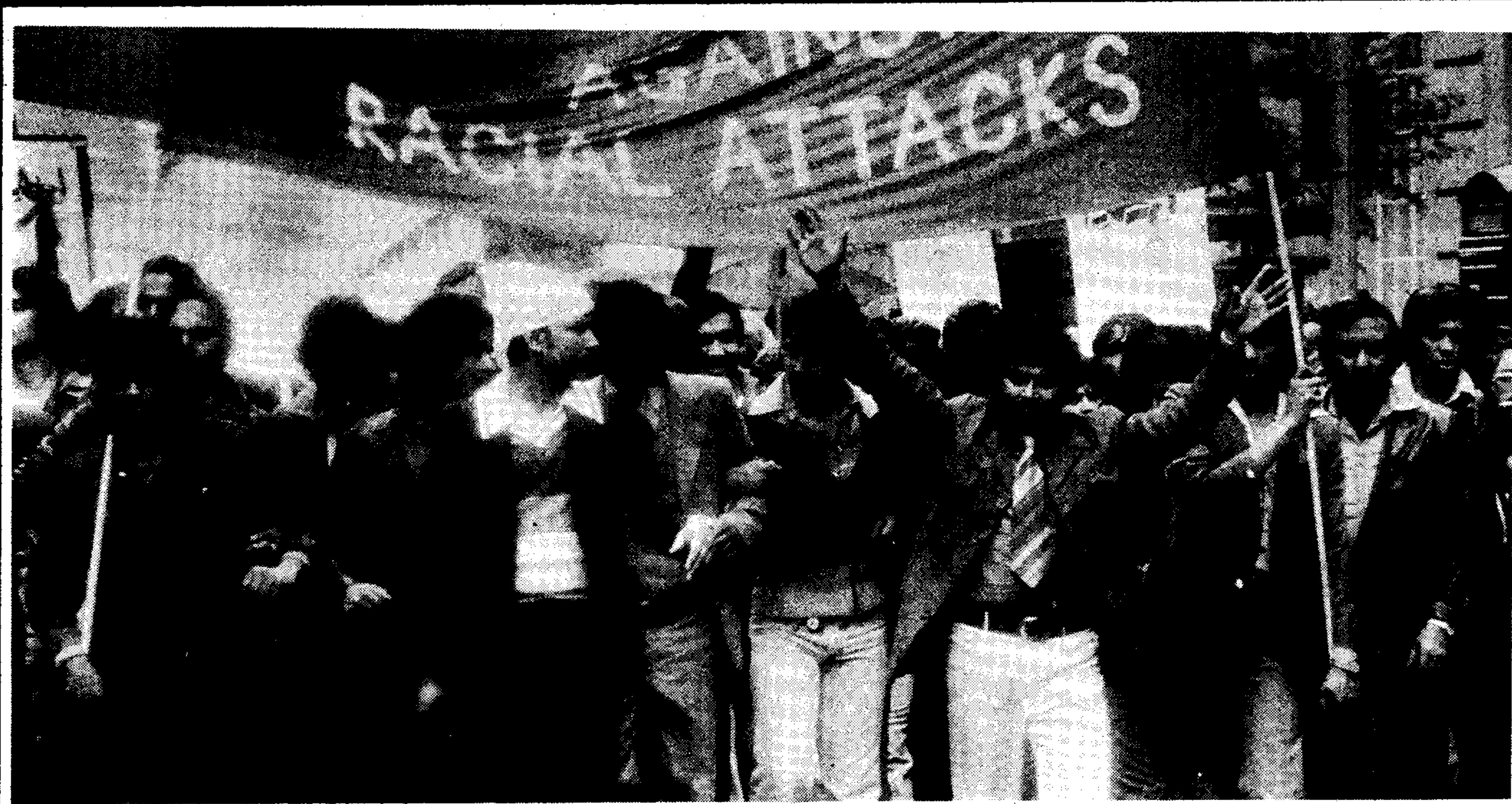
Power

fishall's Diary

...YOUR MAN AT THE TOP'S
FIGHT TO STAY ON YOUR BACK

TIM





Sunday's march shows basis for fight to set up defence squads

Workers defence only answer to Nazi murders

Within days of the gigantic 80,000-strong Carnival held by the Anti Nazi League, two murders and a shotgun attack by fascist thugs provided tragic testimony to the ANL's complete political inadequacy.

A ten year old Asian boy and a 25-year old Asian man were brutally stabbed and beaten to death in East London. And in Wolverhampton, two West Indian youth suffered shotgun wounds in a vicious Ku Klux Klan-style attack as they walked down the street.

Such victims cannot be saved by bombardments of leaflets and posters; they cannot be defended by courting the favours of bishops and academics.

The only answer to such attacks is the very policy shunned by the Anti Nazi League—the formation of workers' defence squads to unite black and white workers in the common struggle to stamp out fascist violence.

There is no doubt that a clear call for such a policy would find a massive response. Last Sunday 5,000 workers and youth marched through pouring rain from Whitechapel to Hyde Park in protest against the racist murders.

This huge turn-out came in spite of the short notice given for the demonstration and the failure of trade union and Labour leaders to mobilise their members.

But having clearly shown their willingness to take action to defend workers and youth against fascist attacks, the demonstrators were met by platform speakers—including self-styled 'Trotskyist' Tariq Ali—not one of whom offered a call to organise workers' defence.

Years of bitter experience has shown the immigrant community that they receive no protection, merely harassment, at the hands of the police.

The increasing use of the police for picket-busting duties wherever strikes erupt and as bodyguards to protect puny fascist marches and meetings from the legitimate anger of masses of trade unionists and youth has intensified police sympathy for the fascists, and their reluctance to act against them.

As the armed, licensed thugs used by the capitalist state in its efforts to contain

and weaken the organised working class, the police instinctively recognise knife-toting, anti-union racist heavies of the National Front as allies to be protected.

Any labour or trade union leader who peddles the illusion that the police can be 'pressured' into protecting the immigrant communities or the workers' movement from the fascists is paving the way for further brutal attacks.

Independent action by the whole working class movement in each area where attacks take place or are threatened is the only way to protect against attacks.

There is no doubt that in the wake of the National Front's sharp slump in electoral support, the frustration of its remaining layers of lumpen toughs will seek an outlet in Martin Webster's vaunted strategy of "kicking our way into the headlines".

Now is the time for trade union and Labour Party branches, immigrant organisations, tenants associations and trades councils to take urgent joint action for the formation of workers defence

squads, with the aim of driving the fascists off the streets.

But the Anti Nazi League—whose programme is tailored to coexistence with Liberals and trade union bureaucrats dedicated to preventing independent action by the workers' movement—is incapable of putting forward such a demand.

Nor does it carry forward the other vital aspect of the struggle against the National Front fascists—a fight for a clear socialist programme designed to stamp out the material conditions of declining living standards and mass unemployment on which fascist propaganda feeds.

Those conditions have been created consciously by the Lib-Lab coalition government in the interests of boosting capitalist profitability.

The fight for a socialist programme demands a fight to break that coalition and class collaboration at all levels in the labour and trade union movement, and the construction of a principled leadership to defend workers' independent interests.

The Workers Socialist League stands unreservedly in favour of the broadest possible united action against the fascists on every occasion.

If any of the ANL leaders were prepared to use their publicity machine to put out a call for the building of defence squads, we would fight alongside them on this issue.

But we are completely opposed to any attempt to peddle the illusion that the fascists can be 'peacefully' defeated through propaganda without the mobilisation of the working class.

So-called 'revolutionaries' in the Socialist Workers Party and the International Marxist Group will have to think seriously in weeks to come whether they should continue to boost reformist illusions through the medium of the ANL or whether they should be calling for practical action to defend against fascist thugs.

The Workers Socialist League's position is clear:

- *Build workers' defence squads!
- *Break the Lib-Lab coalition!

There will be no moves by union officials to improve redundancy payments for 3,000 British Leyland car workers at the doomed Triumph plant at Speke.

This final act of treachery last week by the Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions puts the cap on one of the most despicable betrayals yet carried out in a redundancy fight.

Speke workers who at a mass meeting last month had rallied enthusiastically to the call to resist closure of the plant were consciously headed off from adopting a policy of plant occupation, opening Leyland's books, and fighting for work-sharing on full pay.

They were persuaded, chiefly by Stalinist Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson, to endorse a vague resolution refusing to accept the closure and defending the right to work.

While this decision left the shop floor struggle in limbo, Confed officials met and decided not to fight the closure but merely to seek better pay-off terms to compensate workers for the prospect of decades on the Merseyside dole queue.

Under these conditions a recall mass meeting, blackmailed by Leyland management and offered no alternative policy by Speke or Leyland combine stewards, voted 3-2 not to resist the closure—but to seek improved redundancy pay.

Seizing on this weakness they themselves had created Confed leaders last week wound up the fight completely, arguing that the negotiators had obtained "the best possible deal" for the Speke workers.

And they called on all 19 affiliated unions not to obstruct Leyland management's plans to shift TR7 production from Speke to Coventry.

NUJ SELL-OUT

THOMSON journalists at several provincial centres returned to work bitter and angry last week after a two week pay strike.

Arbitration and a promise of talks was all that they achieved. The negotiating team headed by NUJ General Secretary, Ken Ashton, recommended the sell out and a vote on the Thomson Group Chapel had pitted non-striking chapels against those on strike and laid off.

The dispute started when Hemel Hempstead journalists were sacked for imposing sanctions in pursuit of a house agreement. Journalists at Cardiff, Reading and Middlesbrough struck in support.

This cynical betrayal is a stark warning to the entire Leyland workforce of the urgency of constructing a new leadership equipped with a clear programme and a recognition of the need to break the class collaborationist 'worker participation' set-up and defeat the Edwardes' plan for rationalisation and speed-up throughout Leyland.

*Fair weather 'friends' of the Speke struggle promptly abandoned it last week in the wake of the mass meeting betrayal by Speke stewards.

Most conspicuous in this was the about-face by the 'rank and file' opportunists of the Socialist Worker. They had headlined the Speke vote to fight closure in their April 22 edition as "A Match to Fire the Mersey". (They also uncritically reported Robinson's diversionary speech to that meeting).

But when Robinson completed his task two weeks later they failed even to mention the sell-out at the subsequent mass meeting.

As foremost opponents of the clear programme of occupation and opening Leyland's books, fought for throughout by the WSL, the SWP had done nothing to offer any perspective to the Speke workforce—and could draw no lessons from the sell-out.

And the SWP's opportunist stable-mates, the International Marxist Group, reacted to the Speke sell-out by relegating the issue from front-page news to a small, confused note at the foot of page six!

Fund

We have done better this week—£67 arrived over the last seven days—but we still need to raise over £100 a week if we are to reach the target on time. Our total so far is £849.27.

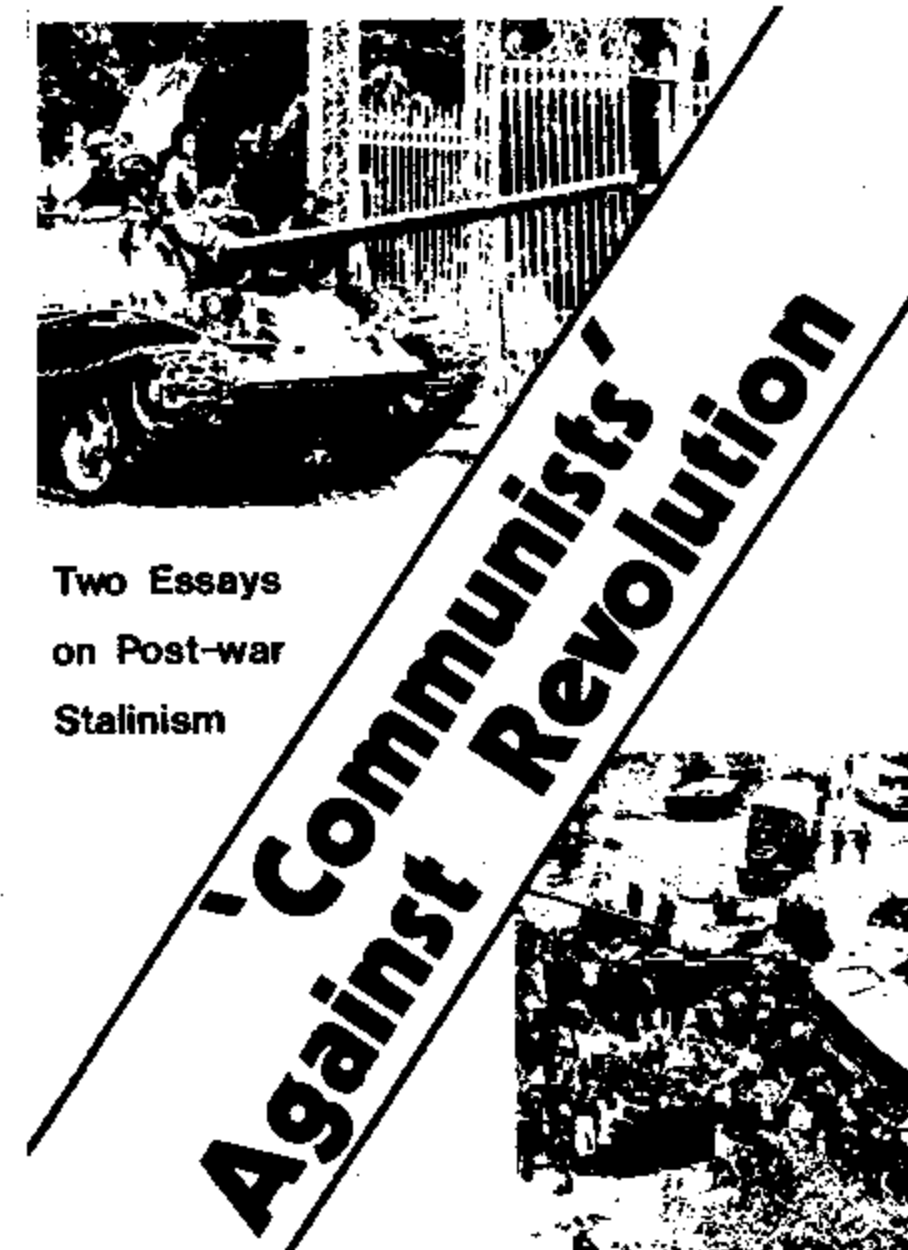
With over £1700 of the £2,000 target now pledged we remain confident that we will go well over the top by the time the fund closes at the end of July.

But, as we frequently point out, it is important that this money arrives regularly in this office to finance the publishing projects we have undertaken.

All contributions should be sent to:

WSL Special Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill
London NW5 1HR

OUT NEXT MONTH



Two Essays on Post-war Stalinism

'Communists' Against Revolution addresses itself to the most important aspects of the development of Stalinism since 1945. How have the post-war workers' states been formed in Eastern Europe, China, Indo-China and Cuba? What is the political and social character of the modern Communist Parties? What lies behind the break-up of the Stalinist monolith?

This 166-page book will sell at £1.75 from its publication date in mid-June. But readers are offered a special pre-publication, cash-with-order offer of copies at £1.25 plus 20p p&p. This offer applies only to orders received prior to June 3.

Orders should be sent to:
Folrose Books, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR



Mass turn-out at the ANL carnival—deprived of key policy