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Force 'lefts' to act in Labour crisis

CAMPAIGN NOW TO SACK CALLAGHAN!

The hopes of thousands of workers and Labour Party activists no doubt rose substantially last week as what appeared to be a major struggle against Callaghan broke out on Labour's National Executive Committee.

Resolutions were carried proposing that the drafting of the election manifesto be taken out of the hands of the Party leader and given to the NEC, and depriving Callaghan of personal control over the spending of £165,000 a year of state subsidies.

The extreme right wing went berserk. As pressmen and the media dreamed up stories of a 'Red Revolution' at Transport House, 90 reactionary Labour MPs signed a Manifesto Group letter explicitly attacking any attempt to make them answerable to the Labour Party that secured their election to Parliament.

Lapdogs

Defending to the last their 'right' to act as the servile lapdogs of the International Monetary Fund and British capitalism, these social democratic MPs complained that the NEC's proposals would 'reduce' the PLP to 'the role of poodle of the party conference.'

These budding Reg Prentices went on to warn darkly that:

'There is a real danger that men and women of principle [!] would no longer be prepared to serve the party and Parliament if Labour MPs are to be mere cyphers given no say in policy making . . .'

The frenzied hostility of the PLP to implementing decisions of the Party conference is matched by that of trade union leaders.

Led by GMWU General Secretary Basnett, they value the ambiguity of the present set-

up, whereby union block votes can be used to prop up Labour's right wing leaders on crucial questions while at the same time not directly accepting responsibility for the reactionary policies adopted by Labour in Parliament or in Government.

Manoeuvre

This gives maximum room for manoeuvre and for occasional token gestures of militancy to let off steam at the Labour conference.

It is with a view to strengthening this combined grip of the Labour and trade union bureaucracy on the Party machine and stamping out any emerging socialist opposition within the

rank and file that Basnett and other TUC chiefs have been pressing for a full-scale inquiry into the finance and administration of the party.

Certainly the heated exchanges on the NEC in recent weeks are an indication that acute pressures are now building up within the Labour Party as workers seek an answer to the devastating attacks launched by the Tories.

But rather than offer any political alternatives to Callaghan's reactionary package of anti-working class policies—wage controls, spending cuts and speed-up—NEC 'lefts' like Benn and Heffer put forward only half-baked constitutional reforms and vague talk of the

1945 election manifesto.

And as Callaghan throws down the gauntlet and makes it plain that he will manoeuvre with TUC bureaucrats to squash any hint of party democracy or socialist policies, Benn has made it clear he is launching *no* campaign for Callaghan's removal.

Indeed Benn has even declared his opposition to the election of the Party leader by the Labour conference.

No policies

He has denied that any real split is on the cards. And to ensure that this remains the case Benn has put forward no policies whatever for a struggle against the Tories' wild attacks

on the working class.

Callaghan of course has made *his* stance absolutely clear. He is *opposed* to any struggles at all that would prevent the Tories carrying out their policies for the next five years.

Inflation

But there is little sign that the working class, threatened with indefinite mass unemployment, runaway inflation, vicious speed-up and the total devastation of education and social services, will pay much attention to Callaghan's advice.

There will be massive struggles in defence of jobs, wages and public services—struggles in which the fight must be taken up for concerted action to *bring down* the Thatcher government.

This is why the fight against both the open right wing Labour leadership *and* the fake 'lefts' who refuse to campaign for their removal takes on a new urgency in this period.

Open fight

Rather than running for cover from the Tory press, the Manifesto Group and the TUC bureaucracy, workers must demand that the 'left'-talking opponents of Callaghan struggle openly to kick him out of the Party leadership and for a programme of socialist policies capable of defending jobs, wages and working conditions.

The Tory victory in the May election showed beyond doubt the electoral fruits of Labour's 'party unity' around Callaghan's policies: only a clear socialist programme that rejects all forms of collaboration with the interests of the employers can offer a rallying point against the Tories.

Aiding Thatcher

Those Labourites—whether right wingers or 'left' fakers—who *oppose* such a programme are in practice assisting Thatcher in her attacks.

But the reality of the

situation is that no amount of Parliamentary 'reforms' can offer a socialist solution to the crisis: the road to socialism requires the construction of a revolutionary party in the workers' movement that will fight to:

***Defend living standards! Protect pay agreements against inflation through cost-of-living clauses linked to a workers' price index.**

***Defend all jobs! Share the available work between the whole workforce without loss of pay! Occupy to prevent closures!**

***Stop the cuts! For all out strike action and occupations to defend health, education and social services!**

Open the books of industry! Reveal the profiteering! Prove the case for nationalisation of industry and banks without compensation under workers' management.

The Workers Socialist League fights for precisely such a programme.



Callaghan

PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Setback for Mengistu

The Ethiopian Derg has met with a new and crushing defeat in its war against the struggle of the Eritrean people for self-determination and independence.

In last year's offensive, the armies of the Ethiopian military dictatorship suffered huge losses and serious setbacks in battles with the Eritrean Popular Liberation Front.

But the EPLF was forced to retreat from the towns which it had captured by the increasing involvement of the armed forces of the Moscow and Havana Stalinists on the side of the Derg.

Last autumn the EPLF regrouped its forces in the Sahel—the Northern area of Eritrea, which is their traditional base.

Now Ethiopian dictator Mengistu has launched another major offensive in a bid to crush the liberation movement altogether.

Three fronts have been opened up, with some 40,000

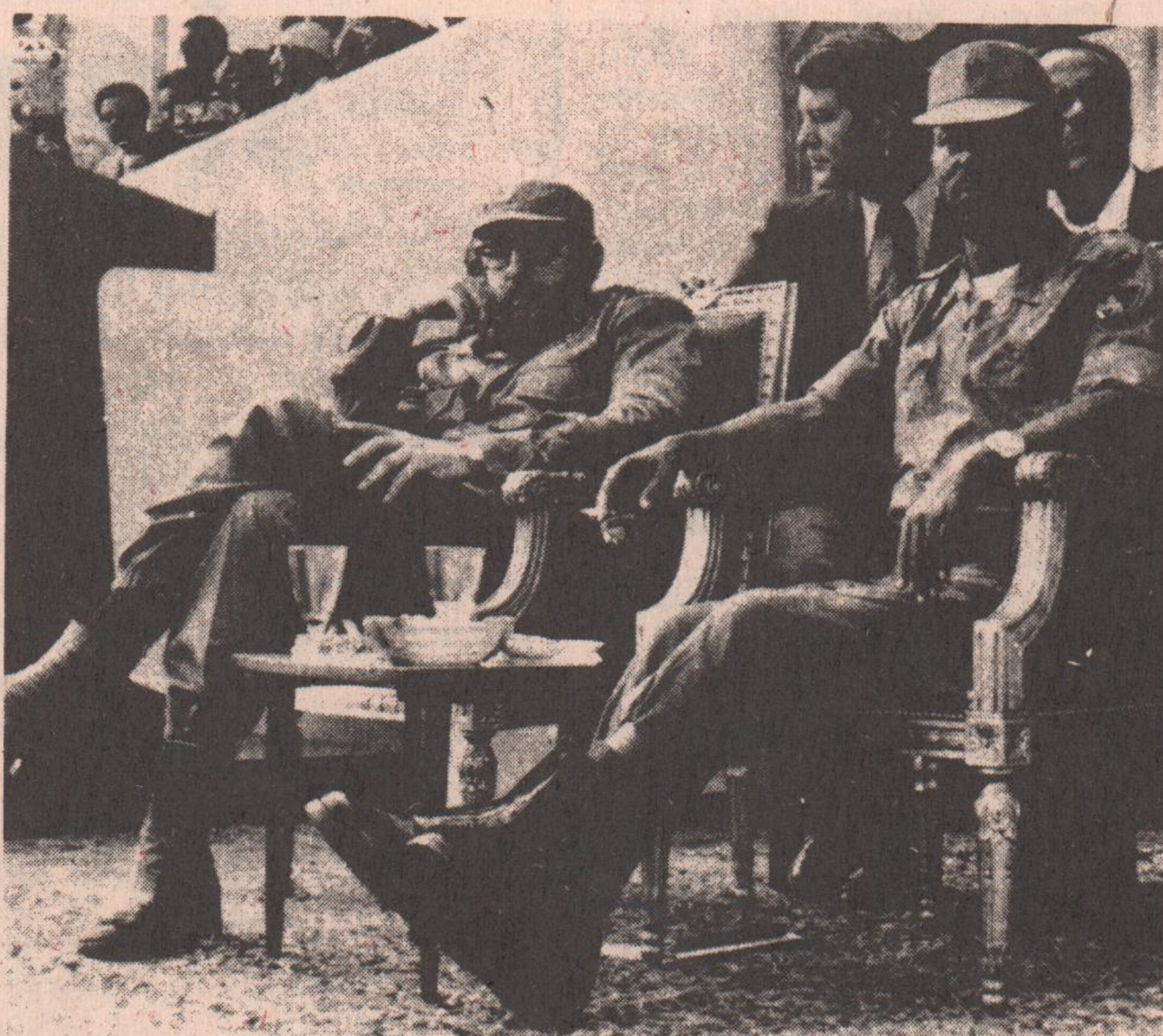
Ethiopian troops.

Although provided with highly sophisticated equipment including MiG fighter-bombers, these forces are poorly trained—mostly the latest victims of the Derg's violent conscription of peasants.

The EPLF has been able to consolidate its forces, and has claimed a decisive victory on one front, in an ambush on an Ethiopian column, with some 1,500 of the Derg's soldiers put out of action.

The international workers' movement must register in the strongest terms its condemnation of the Stalinists' energetic supporting role in the Derg's genocidal war of attrition against the Eritrean people, whose demand for self-determination is entirely legitimate.

In assisting the Derg's vicious attempts to repress the Eritrean masses, Castro and Brezhnev also line up in support of Mengistu's bloody repression of the working class and peasantry in Ethiopia itself.



Mengistu in Addis Ababa with sponsor Castro

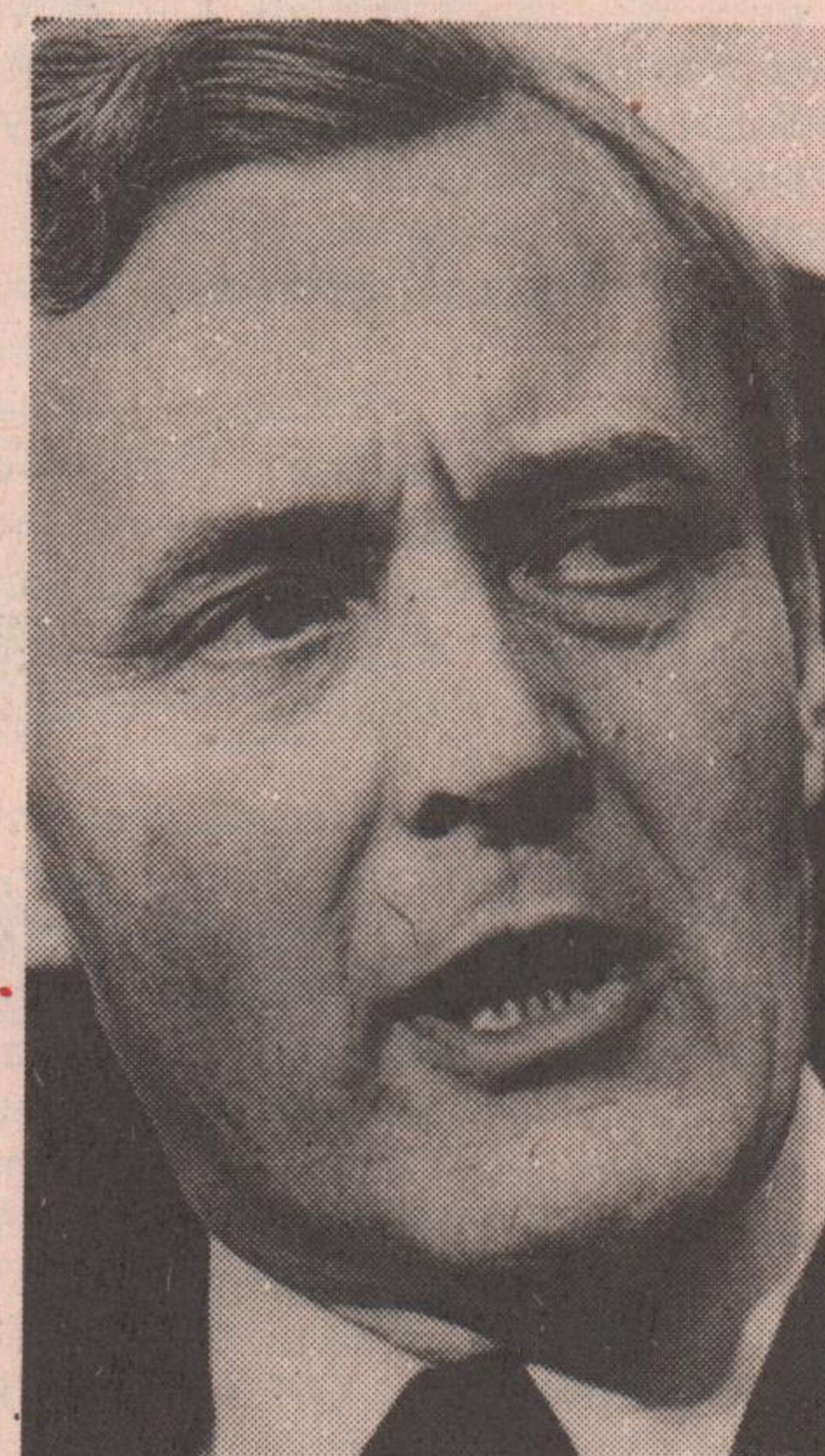


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Benn

INTERNATIONAL



Turkey must not become another Chile!

On June 15 1970 100,000 workers stormed onto the streets of Istanbul. There were clashes between workers and police.

On June 16 the army was sent in with tanks and barricades.

Workers jumped over the tanks and passed the barricades. Soldiers refused to fire. There was loss of life on both sides.

The reason for this uprising was the anti-union laws proposal

in parliament to ban the left wing union confederation DISK.

Following the June events the government was forced to withdraw the proposal.

Six years later, a similar proposal was brought before parliament.

350,000 workers immediately struck for six days; once again the government was forced to retreat.

In both events the DISK leadership played a reactionary role, trying to prevent workers taking the control of industrial areas and refusing to draw larger sections of workers into action.

The positions of the Turkish Communist Party, Turkish Labour Party and other working class organisations and parties were no different from the positions of the DISK leadership.

Treacherous

The treacherous policies of Stalinist and reformist leaders throughout the period since 1970 is the main reason for the present reactionary political situation in Turkey.

On the one hand these leaderships hold workers back from taking revolutionary measures in their struggles; on the other hand they force workers to turn towards an increasingly fragile bourgeois democracy as a solution to their

problems while the 'democrats' themselves resort to increasingly dictatorial measures.

The fact is that the bourgeoisie under the conditions of sharp economic crisis caused by the world crisis of capitalism can no longer tolerate even its own facade of democracy.

Credits

The crisis is constantly deepening. All the efforts of Prime Minister Ecevit and his ministers to obtain credits from the IMF and other imperialist organisations have been in vain; they have failed to get even one dollar.

All the vague promises from the IMF and other imperialists were to gain time.

The interests of imperialism in the middle-east are threatened especially by the Iranian revolution.

What the imperialists plan to do is to create in Turkey a counterweight against the Iranian revolution.

And for this a right wing military take-over is the only way.

It was because of this that the bourgeoisie has moved towards smashing all working class organisations as the only way of making the workers pay for the crisis.

Unable to deceive and stop the masses by military police

attacks the bourgeoisie has pushed forward the fascist gangs.

There have been bitter fights between workers and youth on the one hand and the fascists on the other.

But finding itself completely disarmed by its own leadership, the working class has not been able so far to wage a sufficient political and physical fight against the armed detachments of fascism.

The fascist attacks turned into uprisings in 1978.

The bloodiest one of these uprisings took place in the city of Karaman Maras in December.

According to official figures 130 were killed and thousands wounded.

Yet there was no reaction to this fascist massacre by the Stalinist and reformist leaders other than verbal protests.

The bourgeoisie took this event as the active test of the situation.

Martial law

And, receiving no reaction from the working class, they proceeded to introduce martial law in the main industrial and Kurdish cities.

The reasons which lay behind this political turn are mainly twofold. On the one hand the working class remains betrayed by its leaderships and

denied any political programme for action in its own defence.

This means that struggles have taken the form of isolated and local physical fights against organised and armed fascists.

Peasantry

On the other hand the leadership crisis in the working class leaves it also unable to put forward and fight for a programme to win the support of the peasantry and petty-bourgeoisie, at a time when these classes also reeling under the blows of the capitalist crisis, have come to the edge of bankruptcy.

So large layers of the peasantry seeing no alternative in the working class have turned towards the fascists and generals as saviours.

This change in the political stance of the millions of peasants has been the key factor in the turn of the political situation in Turkey.

On May Day of this year military chiefs outlawed demonstrations and arrested thousands of workers and left wingers including the leaders of the TLP, TSLP and DISK.

But despite this these leaders still called on Ecevit to lift the generals' ban on marches.

What comes clearly out of these events is that bourgeois democracy has effectively ended

in Turkey.

Bonapartism, which is the new form of rule relying on the present unstable balance of class forces must give way to either revolution or counter-revolution—a fascist military dictatorship.

The main force which prevented moves to carry out a reactionary military takeover since the beginning of this year was the Iranian revolution and the impulse that this revolution gave to the Kurdish masses in Eastern Anatolia.

Fearing an armed struggle for national independence, the bourgeoisie declared martial law in six more cities of Turkish Kurdistan.

The Iranian revolution has created a very sensitive balance of forces.

But this balance now seems to be changing once again in favour of a military takeover.

The danger is immediate. It is a question of weeks, even days.

Therefore to fight against this danger is of utmost importance.

And it is important not only from the viewpoint of the Turkish working class but from the viewpoint of the proletariat throughout the Middle East and the world as a whole.

The forming of a united front of all workers' organisations on the basis of a programme of action against fascism is central to the fight.

This programme of action must include demands for building workers' militias to combat fascist and military interventions.

Factory committees must be formed to take control of production in order to paralyse counter-revolutionary forces.

The needs of the peasantry must also find a revolutionary expression in order to draw as much as possible the peasant masses towards supporting workers.

Central to this is the demand for a workers and farmers government which through the expropriation of the banks, transport and major industries could offer the peasantry cheap credit and easy access to the market for their produce.

Break from Ecevit and bourgeois democracy!

Build the united front!
Build workers' militias—arm the workers.

For self-determination for the Kurdish masses.

For a workers and farmers government.

GERMANY IN CRISIS

A sharper class struggle seems inevitable from recent political and economic developments in West Germany.

For as the economic crisis tightens its grip, political forces in government have taken a sharp shift to the right.

This month has seen the selection by the opposition CDU-CSU coalition of Franz-Joseph Strauss, right wing Bavarian CSU leader, as candidate for the Chancellorship in 1980.

He has immediately announced his determination to remove the SPD Chancellor Schmidt from office.

This marks a solidification of the right wing coalition in Germany which long seemed on the point of disintegration.

There can be no doubt that the German bourgeoisie sees looming ahead the need for a strong right wing government of the Thatcher type.

Economic reports this week forecast that by 1980 the German current account will show a deficit of £2 billion for the first time in 15 years, as oil prices rise and imports continue to exceed exports.



Ecevit

Leadership crisis faces Indian capital

The changes in government personnel in India, with Charan Singh now cobbling together an administration, reflects the worldwide crisis of leadership in capitalist countries.

While the ruling classes of Italy, Portugal and America scramble about for a leader, the Indian example deserves particular attention since it heralds the abandonment by the Indian bourgeoisie and landed interests of the parliamentary form of rule.

Certainly, imperialism no longer sees the need to pay lip-service to their 'largest democracy in the world'.

The pleading invitations Indira Gandhi made to foreign capital at the time of her 'Emergency' rule, were accepted only on condition of a massive destruction of democratic rights and an achievement of 'stability' in the country.

Sterilisation

It is now common knowledge, for instance, that the forced sterilization programme arose from the specific directives of the World Bank as a condition for their dollar-aid to the rural sector.

While the Janata government continued with the same economic policies of the Emergency period—turning the Indian economy into a sub-exporter of consumer durables produced by multi-nationals—the conditions of their coming to power, on a massive anti-Emergency anti-authoritarian resistance, made them incapable of an all-out attack on the working class and peasantry.

A huge bureaucracy, poor state services, a chronically weak rural supply sector and above all, the undefeated militancy of the working classes



Singh

remain the hysterical objections of the indigenous and international capitalist investors.

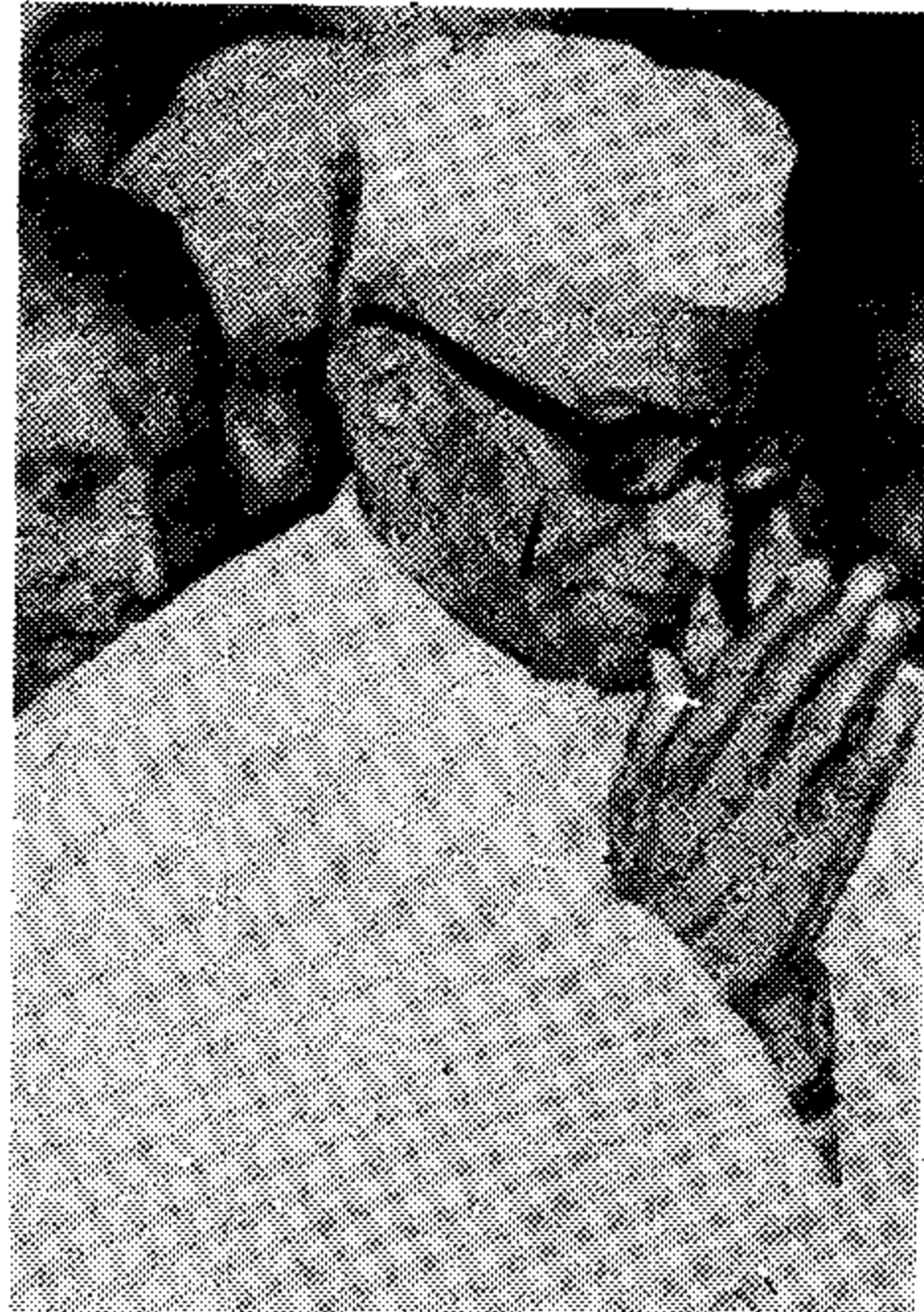
But if the Janata did nothing to resolve their troubles, private capital, likewise, did nothing to resolve those of the Janata government.

Declining standards of living brought two million peasants marching on the capital last December and this year alone has seen massive strikes of bank employees, power and textile workers, and most recently, of course, the police forces.

The police uprising—quelled temporarily only through armed conflict with the army—was obviously the signal that changes had to be made.

One national bourgeois paper lamented it as 'denoting the wreckage of a political and social system that had begun to devour its own institutions'.

The make-shift alliances now reached by the politicians demonstrate the great weakness of the ruling classes and the impasse they have reached in ruling through the parliamentary form.



Desai

Charan Singh, leader of a rich peasant party (the BKU) and for personal reasons virulently anti-Indira Gandhi in the past, has now made a deal with her, exchanging bloc support in Parliament for the dropping of all 'special court' charges being processed against her for crimes committed during the emergency.

This deal means the separation from power not only of Desai's forces, but also those of the Hindu-fascist party the Jan Sangh, with the prospect, therefore, of their 'combat'-wing, the RSS increasing their activities of killing Muslim families and militant workers.

Spineless

Tailing behind all these developments are the spineless leaders of the workers' parties.

The socialist-bloc in parliament have agreed to support her Charan-Indira alliance on the former's 'assurance' that he will continue to fight 'authoritarianism'.

The Moscow-controlled

Communist Party, (CPI) remains consistent to its policy, and where Indira Gandhi goes it slavishly follows.

Meanwhile the 'radical' Stalinists, the CPI (Marxist), in state government in West Bengal and Tripura, continue as their 'revolutionary' strategy, the building of popular frontist alliances and unity with other 'left and democratic' forces.

Temporary

While undoubtedly the present collusion of forces is temporary, no-one can predict the exact form in which bourgeois rule in India will attempt to break from parliamentary rule and proceed to mount a massive attack on the democratic rights and living standards of workers.

Stop OCRFI slanders!

The Workers Socialist League, supporting the fight to reconstruct the Fourth International on a principled basis, has always opposed any attempt to poison discussion between organisations claiming to adhere to the Fourth International through accusations of a police, provocateur or agent character.

In this context we condemn the form of accusations used in the recent period by the French OCI and other organisations belonging to the Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International against the Argentinian group Política Obrera and the Liaison Committee of Chilean Trotskyists.

These groups, which were

Certainly, whichever leader of the Congress, Indira Gandhi or Deruaj Urs, gains control of the Congress Party machinery, they will have the support of the Indian big bourgeoisie and imperialists.

This is because the interests and rich peasant power base of Charan Singh are antagonistic to the dominant interest of industrial capital.

However while capitalists seek for an answer to their problems the ruling classes remain weak when confronted with the militancy of the workers and peasants.

What is needed is a workers party, which can free the masses from electoral politics, reformist demands and counter-revolutionary 'democrats' and offer an independent programme of democratic and transitional demands.

expelled by the OCRFI in January of this year have been characterised by the OCI as "giving support to the Videla dictatorship". Other Latin American sections of the OCRFI have accused them of "open and direct defence of the bloody dictatorship of Pinochet", of being "agents of the military-fascist Chilean junta" and "guard dogs of fascism".

The WSL regards these allegations as slanders for which the OCRFI and its sections offer no evidence and which they are using as a substitute for taking up their differences politically.

The WSL calls on the OCRFI, unless it has evidence to offer of these grave charges, to withdraw them at once and to cease poisoning and aborting the possibilities of political clarity in the struggle to rebuild the Fourth International.



INTERNATIONAL

No choice in Nigerian elections

Within the decaying capitalism of Nigeria is assuming increasing importance for imperialism.

The depression of world trade means an ever more urgent search for new markets, and Nigeria with its large population and its revenue from oil exports is a prime candidate.

And through its dominating position in the Economic Organization of West African States (ECOWAS) Nigeria can act on behalf of imperialism in opening up and developing new markets for Western commodities and technology at the same time as building the power of the local bourgeoisie.

Grievances

Furthermore, as workers and peasants in the semi-colonial countries move into deeper struggles in which grievances over national oppression have combined with resistance to economic attacks by imperialism and its agents, imperialism attempts to further bolster agents in those states whose economic and military strength can be used in an attempt to impose neo-colonial solutions to oppressed peoples' struggles.

Here, imperialism has used Nigeria's influence over the petty-bourgeois nationalist movements.

Behind Obasanjo's "radical" public stance over the liberation struggles in Zimbabwe and Namibia he has been foremost with the leaders of the "front-line" states—in acting as imperialism's broker in attempting to persuade the nationalist leadership—the Patriotic Front and SWAPO—to accept an imperialist-manoeuvred neo-colonial settlement.

No doubt Obasanjo—or his civilian successor—would also be more than willing to lend some of his huge army to supervise the consolidation of a stable bourgeois nationalist government in Zimbabwe; to help ensure, that is, that no independent revolutionary mobilisations of the workers and peasants occurs.

Attractive

The relative economic strength and the military power commanded by the Nigerian financial-military nexus has made it particularly attractive as an agent to imperialism at a time when it faces a growing crisis of political stability of agents.

But the Nigerian ruling class has also to face the challenge of its own exploited masses. The present series of elections, to provide a 'democratic' successor when the military dictators return to barracks in October, are designed, as we argued in the last article, as a bid to stabilise capitalist rule in the state.

The army will be closely watching, ready to impose martial order, while the civilian bourgeois government seeks to make the workers and poor farmers pay for capitalist crises.

Crisis

Nigeria has suffered with the rest of the underdeveloped states the strongest effects of the present acute phase of capitalist crisis, despite the oil production which counts for up to 90% of its exports.

The development of capitalism as a world system means that in Nigeria, as in the larger part of the world, the small industrial sector is condemned to submit to the



Nigerian peasant farmer

demands and the limits made by the 'foreign' capital which subordinates and controls the economy.

Meanwhile the agricultural sector is in a state of near-chaos. This has reached the point where food imports are continually increasing and Nigeria is now a net importer of a number of products in which it used to be self-sufficient or of which it was even an exporter.

The approximately 65% of the population directly dependent on the land—mostly poor subsistence farmers—bear the heaviest burden of the failures of an unplanned underdeveloped agriculture.

The projected solution of the Nigerian ruling class to the agrarian crisis seems to be to rob the peasants of their land and attempt to introduce mechanized, large-scale, capitalist farming. Some legislation to this end has already been introduced.

Revolutionaries must convince the peasants and rural workers that the only real solution in their interests to the consequences of agricultural underdevelopment is the nationalisation of the land and voluntary collectivisation within a planned socialist economy.

Exploitation

The capitalist development of agriculture to the extent that it is feasible, holds for the poor farmer only increased exploitation and misery.

An unfortunate consequence for the ruling class of their agrarian plan would be to increase the flight of hungry peasants to the towns, where there is already large unemployment.

The urban working class, like the peasantry, is indeed being made to pay crisis-ridden imperialism's running costs through unemployment, reductions in government spending and the military dictatorship's anti-working class measures and austerity programme—including a rigid pay policy which is cutting back the proletariat's already low standard of living. Nigeria now runs a negative

trade balance, and an annual inflation rate of at least 30%.

The 1975-1980 five year plan, envisaging rapid industrial development, based on unfulfilled hopes of greatly increased oil production, failed to take into account the facts of capitalist crisis, the subordination of the Nigerian economy to those of the imperialist exploiters, and the requirements of foreign capitalists who do not always see things in quite the same way as their very junior bourgeois nationalist partners.

Supportive cogs

The military government's loudly announced legislation to 'indigenise' capital was intended to create a strong independent national bourgeoisie.

However it has done little to change the essential situation whereby most local capitalists are allowed little more than the chance to act as small supportive cogs in the enormous imperialist machinery which squeezes profits from workers of all countries and deposits them in the ample laps of the imperialist exploiters.

Nigeria remains for these beneficiaries, as the *Financial Times* succinctly indicates, a 'business opportunity' (one, we may add, with the military and economic influence to maintain and improve 'opportunities' in other parts of Africa too).

"What makes it attractive as a business opportunity is a large population which forms a huge potential market; equally important it has foreign exchange with which to pay for goods and services from overseas."

(*Financial Times*, 30/8/78)

Largest market

Nigeria's importance in this role is revealed in its position as the largest market, outside the USA and the EEC, for British imperialism's exports of commodities and technology.

Publicly the Nigerian government has used this fact as a major feature in its rhetoric aimed at dissuading Thatcher and her Tories from recognizing

the Muzorewa-Smith regime, threatening to cancel contracts with Britain.

The basis of this is not, however, solidarity with the Zimbabwean masses but rather the economic crisis which has led Obasanjo since 1977 to impose stringent import controls and drastically cut down on contracts.

As they reduce spending and jobs, the Nigerian government, military or civilian, will now cynically try to present their austerity programmes to the working class as "economic sanctions" against the imperialists.

The Elections.

As we argued in the last article, victory in the present series of elections (for state and federal legislatures, state governors, a President and a Senate, in a governmental structure modelled on that of the USA) will certainly lead to a government of the ruling class to take over from the military the task of stabilising bourgeois dictatorship in Nigeria.

There is very little superficial difference, even on a superficial level, between the five contesting parties.

Their propaganda only stresses different aspects of the mystical economic-political amalgam of "Neither East nor West, neither capitalist nor socialist", as one of the presidential candidates puts it.

Disqualified

Behind this absurd formulation lies a common strategy for maintaining Nigeria as a source of imperialism's left-barking guard dogs (a bark far more 'left' than its bite!)

Those whose habit it is to attempt to find a 'left-wing' party in such situations and thought they had done so in Aminu Kano's People's Redemption Party will be disappointed that the 'left' Kano has been disqualified from running for the Presidency—because of his tax-dodging.

Waziri Ibrahim, leader of the Great Nigerian People's Party had no such problems—he could afford over £3 million in taxes last year.

These two parties have not fared very well in the elections thus far. Nor has the Nigerian People's Party of Nnamdi Azikiwe, a pre-independence



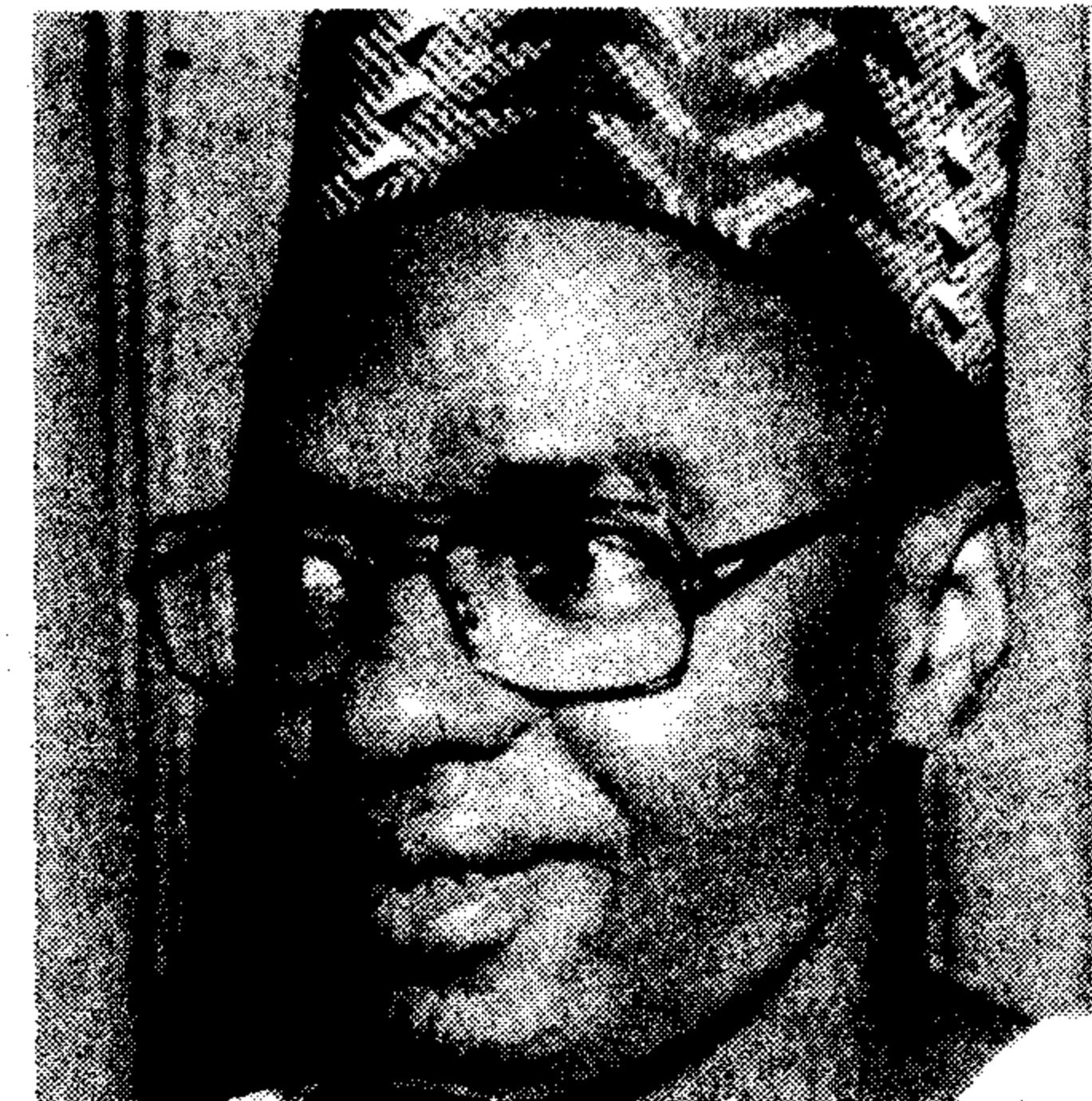
Nnamdi Azikiwe



Obafemi Awolowo



Waziri Ibrahim



Shehu Shagari

radical nationalist who showed his true reactionary face as the First Republic's President.

Obafemi Awolowo, another old nationalist, has led his Unity Party of Nigeria to do somewhat better, though its strength is largely tied to areas in which the Yoruba are the dominant tribe.

At present it looks likely that Shehu Shagari's National Party of Nigeria will emerge as the leading governmental force.

The peasants who starve in the countryside or come to hunger, unemployment and overcrowded conditions in the cities, will no doubt share with the proletariat warm appreciation of Shagari's explanation of the value of professional qualifications:

"I am a farmer and a teacher. My running mate is an accomplished architect. This emphasises the commitment of the NPN to food and shelter—our emblem."

We can be quite confident that Shagari and the NPN bureaucracy will lack neither.

And Shagari shows a clear understanding of the role of the army once the generals in government have been replaced by him and his friends.

"We shall build", he says, "a strong, well-equipped and well-trained armed forces capable of deterring and forcing aggression from without and of discouraging insurrection from within."

Again we can be sure that the 'external aggression' to which he refers is not that of imperialist bankers and capitalists, and that 'aggression from within' means the struggles of the workers and peasants against exploitation.

However, after the handover in October, the civilian bourgeois government will no doubt meet resistance to its continuation of the repressive policies of the military bourgeois dictatorship with threats of a return to government by the generals.

In this strategy of attempting to tighten the bourgeois-democratic noose it will certainly be ably assisted by the Stalinist and reformist labour bureaucracies.

Bankruptcy

It is the task of revolutionaries to expose to the masses who participated in the election the bankruptcy of 'democratic' bourgeois nationalism.

This must be done through the fight for independent working class interests, for an independent workers party.

Only in this way can the ruling class's anti-working class and anti-peasant policies be combated.

Nigerian students not long ago took to the streets in bloody fights against the regime and they, too, like the workers and peasants will face continued repression.

But, as Trotsky states in *The Permanent Revolution*:

"To lead the masses of the people to victory over the bloc of the imperialists, the feudalists and the national bourgeoisie—this can only be done under the revolutionary hegemony of the proletariat, which transforms itself after the seizure of power into the dictatorship of the proletariat."

WRP junks the old Trotskyism



The only serious examination yet produced of the opportunist political line of Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party in relation to the petty bourgeois nationalist regimes of the Middle East. 45p plus 15p p&p, from: WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

HOW LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS FINANCED

-strikes needed to stop the cuts

In order to involve wide layers of workers in fights against cuts in Local Authority programmes and services, militants need to understand something of the way the system operates.

If you intend to fight the cuts you must first be able to identify them.

This article is intended to assist in that work.

There are basically two categories of Local Authority Expenditure—Capital and Current.

In simple terms current expenditure is money spent on immediate activities—wages, working materials, petrol, maintenance, etc., whereas capital expenditure is money spent on fixed assets—housebuilding, road building, new schools, town halls, etc.

Major repairs are usually included in capital programmes, minor repairs and maintenance in current programmes.

Capital works are usually paid for with money borrowed by the Authority. (In rare cases it will have money in reserve from sale of assets or from surpluses in previous years).

Two systems

Repayments of principal and interest on these loans—called 'debt charges', are an annual cost to the Authority until the total loan is repaid.

Debt charges and current expenditure are added together to make up the total Revenue Expenditure.

There are two quite different systems for deciding on Capital and Revenue expenditure programmes.

Revenue expenditure is paid for with money from three sources: rates (local property taxes); grants from government and other income.

The largest part of an Authority's other income is usually the rent received from its tenants.

Other income can also be derived from services for which the Authority makes a charge—swimming baths, lettings of public halls for meetings or dances, etc.

Within the general category of revenue expenditure there are several special areas where government controls can be applied against the interests of the residents in the Authority's area.

The most important of these areas is housing.

The largest and most important of the grants towards revenue expenditure is the Rate Support Grant.

Important

The operation of RSG and the way it is settled is fairly complex but important to understand if cuts are to be identified and combatted.

The government states its intentions in relation to RSG as equalising the cost of providing a standard level of services, taking into account the different conditions in different areas.

It also wishes to share costs 'fairly' between local ratepayers



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham, IFL

and national taxpayers.

In order to meet these differing objectives the present RSG system was developed. It consists of three components.

The first of these is the domestic element. This is a direct subsidy from taxation to the ratepayer at a rate in the pound fixed each year.

Thus it gives most benefit to the occupiers of the dwellings with the highest rateable value.

The second component is the resources element. This is a subsidy from taxation to those authorities with very small rate bases—for example those with no industrial or office premises.

Each year a standard level of resources is set, in terms of rateable values per head of population, and resources element is paid to any authorities falling below this level.

Over the years this standard

has steadily increased, to the point where the overwhelming majority of authorities now receive resources element.

The third, and most controversial, component is the 'needs' element.

The intention of the 'needs' element is to distribute money according to the different needs of different areas—a worthy objective which runs into difficulties almost immediately.

The first problem of course is to decide on the needs of an area. This is done in each year by drawing up a list of factors believed to contribute to 'need'.

The composition of this list changes from year to year, but usually contains over 20 items, such as numbers of elderly, numbers of school meals, numbers of households overcrowded, and so on.

The second problem is to attach a financial value to each of these aspects of need.

This is done by looking at expenditure in previous years and producing a formula which relates proportions of past expenditure to each of the need factors.

These proportions are then applied to the total amount available for distribution in needs element.

In outline, that is rate support grant. The procedures for fixing the sums of money involved are, unfortunately, as complex as the principles.

There is a series of discussions between the local authorities and government spread over the year leading up to the RSG announcement in November or December.

Because of its political importance, the way these dis-



Thatcher

cussions proceed changes from year to year.

In a 'typical' year there are two parallel streams of discussions, one dealing with producing forecasts of future expenditure, the other with the question of distribution.

The method of distribution is usually agreed first.

The forecasts of future expenditure are less easy to arrive at.

Certain factors can be forecast reliably—including population changes, and the cost of interest charges.

Improvements in services however are 'forecast' in terms of a balance between what can be achieved (given, for example, the present capacity of the building industry) and the government's likely provision of funds.

Thus the real decision about total expenditure is blurred over a period of three months discussions.

Increasingly, the forecasting groups have drawn up a range of options, ranging from growth to cuts, and permit the choice to be made by the Secretary of State for the Environment, based on the cash total allocated to him by the Treasury.

'Needs' element

In dividing up his cash total, the Secretary of State first deals with specific grants for services over which government chooses to exert control—the police, coastal protection, transportation.

Next in sequence, and political importance is the domestic element, the subsidy to the ratepayer, followed by the resources element.

The 'needs' element is the remainder after all these payments.

When the grants are announced, a local authority has to draw up its budget. Essentially it has to make up the difference between its receipts in grants and rents and the expenditure needed to provide its services.

The two most important decisions in an authority's year are usually the level of rates to be called for and the level of rents to be charged.

Once grants are fixed there is no other significant source of income.

Occasionally an authority will have to increase rates or rents because of changes in the RSG formula.

This can, and does, happen even when the total RSG money increases.

When the grant is announced by government there is no constitutional method of appeal or objection.

Straightforward

So long as it is determined to act constitutionally an authority must meet the difference between grant and budgeted current expenditure out of rates and rents, or by reductions in planned current expenditure.

Compared to current expenditure, capital expenditure control is straightforward.

The biggest spending services—education, housing, social services—fall into what the government calls the 'key

sector'.

This means that the government must approve each project individually.

When approval has been obtained the authority may borrow the money to carry out the project. Most of this borrowing must be done on the open market, with a government agency, the Public Works Loan Board making loans when the market fails to deliver.

A minor part of capital expenditure falls into the 'locally determined sector'.

Here the government gives the authority a total borrowing limit, within which it can select schemes without specific approval.

This applies mainly to environmental works, but includes small sections of other programmes.

Over recent years an additional stage of control has been developed in the housing and transportation fields.

This entails the preparation by the authorities of five year plans, within which the spending plans must be justified.

Clearly this is an important development in that it extends government controls further over local authorities' policies.

How then should workers proceed in seeking to understand the cuts to come?

In purely technical respects it is difficult to assemble the necessary information.

Trades Councils, Constituency Labour Parties, tenants associations, etc., should elect committees to collect information from Council reports, from central government documents and other sources.

The union branches representing local authority employees will have a particularly valuable role to play in these committees, as will Labour councillors (or indeed Communist councillors in some areas).

The work of monitoring the local authority's programmes must lead to regular reports back into Labour Party and trade union branches.

It will only be on the basis of detailed information and an intensive campaign of education that a struggle against cuts can be developed.

Resistance can be mounted by Labour councillors, especially when they are in a majority.

However, their resistance can be easily overcome by the removal of their powers by the government.

A determined political struggle by the local labour movement will be needed if services and programmes, as well as council employees jobs are to be saved.

This will take the form of industrial action against government officials appointed to implement cuts, leading to occupations to keep open schools, day centres, etc., etc.

One thing is certain. The right of the Tories to govern will have to be challenged directly at a very early stage in the fight against the new wave of cuts.

This will require a new leadership in the labour movement.

Labour reformists and trade union bureaucrats will be unable to lead such a fight.

Force Labour leaders into three-line whip on abortion rights



Evans puts on a left face for NAC lobbyists to the amusement of fellow bureaucrats

About 30 people—including a Workers Socialist League lobbying—supported a lobby of the TUC General Council called by the National Abortion Campaign on July 25.

The lobby was aimed at encouraging the TUC to go beyond its verbal denunciation of the anti-abortion Private Members Bill sponsored by Tory MP John Corrie, which received its second reading in Parliament two weeks ago by a majority of

140. NAC supporters, taking as good coin the TUC's vague talk of calling a demonstration in October against the Corrie Bill, stood silently outside Congress House last week handing out leaflets which pleaded 'TUC Name the Day: TUC Lead the Way', and stated: 'We appeal to you, our representatives on the General Council, to take the first necessary steps to channel this anger and indignation into public protest.' WSL members in contrast

shouted slogans pointing to the TUC leaders' inaction on the abortion issue, only to be attacked by NAC feminists as 'just a bunch of men'. It is certain, however, that any attempt by NAC and other forces fighting against the Corrie Bill that relies for its impact on TUC willingness to mobilise support is doomed to impotent failure before it begins. The WSL leaflet distributed on the lobby correctly stressed the necessity for all trade unionists to put resolutions through their branches to union

National Executives instructing the TUC to carry out the policy of the Women's TUC.

Withdraw backing

And it underlined the need for also for the withdrawal of sponsorship for those trade union-backed Labour MPs like Harold Wilson (ASTMS-sponsored) who scandalously voted for the reactionary Corrie Bill and refuse to defend women's rights. Within the Labour Party, too, the leaflet declared, there

must be a fight to call to account the droves of Labour MPs who absented themselves from the crucial vote on the Second Reading of the Bill or voted for Corrie's mediaeval attack on women's rights. Union and constituency delegations must be pressed to ensure that the Labour Party conference votes for the imposition of a 3-line whip to compel Labour MPs to vote against the Corrie Bill at its Third Reading in the autumn. Meanwhile a filibuster move led by Labourite William

Hamilton blocked the first day of committee discussion of the Corrie Bill, effectively postponing its progress until October 24.

But such delaying tactics offer only a short extension of the time available for the mounting of a full scale campaign by the labour movement. And other Labourites are firmly nailing their colours to the Tories' reactionary anti-abortion mast.

Bigots

James Dunn, Labour MP for Liverpool Kirkdale has helped the bigots of the so-called 'Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child' (SPUC) to launch a new network of hospital chaplains to gather 'evidence' about abortions from religious fanatics in the nursing and medical profession.

Trade unionists and Labour Party activists in the North West area must immediately take up the fight for the removal of Dunn as a Labour MP and the selection of a candidate who respects the fundamental right of a woman to control her own body and protect her own health.

Newham Council holds off cuts

Newham Council on 17 July received a report from its Chief Executive and its Director of Finance on the question of cuts in this year's Rate Support Grant.

The latest Department of Employment Circular (no. 21/79) in four short paragraphs fires the first salvo against local authorities. It repeats the Chancellor's budget threat to hack £300 million off this year's RSG and calls for local authorities to cut their own current expenditure by 3%. It also asks local authorities to freeze recruitment and look for possibilities of cutting staff further.

The report to Newham councillors recommended that the freeze be put into effect and that no new projects be approved. To their credit the councillors declined to accept these recommendations, but did not agree to reject them finally.

They also shelved discussion on a resolution submitted by Councillors Ken Palmer and John Plant which reads as follows:

- "This Council resolves:
- to reject any government instruction designed to prevent the recruitment of new staff or the filling of vacancies, and to declare its intention to maintain its workforce at a level appropriate to its programmes.
 - to state publicly its refusal to implement government imposed cuts in services, programmes or manpower levels.
 - to call an open conference to prepare a Borough campaign against the cuts.
 - to state its view that reductions in finance imposed by government should be met by reductions in interest payments by the Borough."

It is intended that this resolution should appear at the next Council meeting, in October. Socialist Press readers should propose resolutions on these general lines in the Labour Party ward meetings, and in trade union branches for reference to GMCs and trades councils. Individual councillors should also present resolutions at the earliest opportunity.

New court attack on NUJ spells out Tory message

Even as the Tories draft their anti-union legislation, the capitalist class—acting directly through the courts—have launched a new series of major attacks.

Two Court rulings have hit at the right of unions to strike, picket and carry out their own discipline against scabs.

The Appeal Court—under the guidance of Lord Denning—on July 19 declared the seven week pay strike by the National Union of Journalists *unconstitutional*, and ordered the union to cease action against members who scabbed on the strike and to reinstate those members who had been expelled.

The strike had been called after an exhaustive series of chapel representatives and of mandatory chapel meetings.

Majority

NUJ rules say a ballot for a strike has to be called where the decision affects a majority of the membership.

The provincial strike called out fewer than 9,000 out of the 29,000 members.

But because all members had been instructed not to scab on the strike by supplying copy to provincial papers the Court declared the clear meaning of the rule null and void.

Lord Denning said: "My colleagues say—and we all



NUJ pickets outside Press Association during strike

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

agree—alter your rule book and make your rules clear". This monstrous attack on the union must be resisted.

A clear message to the 1979 annual conference told the executive to accept no limitations on the right

to strike, picket, or take blocking action.

That notion was accepted timidly by the executive.

They must now be forced to act on it.

The union conference must be recalled in emergency session to reject this ruling.

Likewise in Wandsworth, building workers have been barred by a court ruling from picketing a site in protest against cuts in the direct labour force.

Since last year UCATT members have been picketing two sites of Turriffs and Goudace contracting firms—one of which has been shut down.

Pickets banned

The High Court issued a temporary injunction banning picketing until a full court hearing.

The council claimed that in defending the direct labour department the UCATT regional organiser, Stalinist Lou Lewis, was acting politically, and not in furtherance of a trade dispute.

The battle over direct labour departments is of course political—but so are all industrial disputes.

In neither cases have the unions stood up to the court's blatant attempts to smash their action.

The judge, Mr. Justice Park told the union they should settle, even though he admitted "it was not his function to even contemplate such a possibility."

UCATT immediately ordered Lewis to call off the pickets pending the full



NUJ leader Ashton

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

hearing.

The NUJ meanwhile has said it would suspend all disciplinary decisions, though it would continue with the hearings, and would appeal to the Lords.

Legal costs for the union over the past year have been over £100,000.

If the Tories are to be forced to back down then there must not be one inch conceded on either issue.

These court rulings are in line with a number of NAFF-type decisions made by the courts over the past 18 months.

More and more the courts are interfering in the heart of workers' ability to defend their conditions and rights.

Defy courts

Union members in both unions must demand recall conferences to take a firm stand to defy the courts.

Any move against members must be countered with an all-out strike in the unions—demanding a recall TUC to prepare a general strike to defend them.

Defy the courts! Recall UCATT and NUJ conferences!



SWAPO supporters in Windhoek December 1978

At a time when imperialism is facing the challenge of rising working class struggle in the advanced capitalist countries, workers and peasants in colonial and semi-colonial countries are being driven into sharper and politically developing levels of opposition.

Struggles against national oppression and for democratic rights are combined with resistance to economic attacks by imperialism and its agents. Worse still for imperialism, it also faces the crisis posed by the political instability of crucial imperialist agents and puppets—epitomised by the overthrow of the Shah.

The level of mass struggle has on more than one occasion forced imperialism to sacrifice its reactionary agent of yesterday—as in Nicaragua—in a frantic effort to promote the conditions for the development of a stable reactionary agent of tomorrow.

This has meant above all else the search for ways of stemming the forward movement of the oppressed masses, whether through defeat or diversion of mass struggle.

In some situations,—as in Portugal in the wake of the 1974 events—imperialism has been forced to sacrifice its direct political control, relying temporarily on the collaboration politics of Stalinism, petty bourgeois nationalism and reformism as a way of securing indirect political control.

At the same time, imperialism has shown its willingness to resort to any form of barbarism to maintain its decaying system of exploitation and oppression.

Even as the Shah was being sacrificed, imperialist aid was being rushed in to prop up the equally murderous Bokassa in Black Africa.

Repressive strength

And even as imperialism manoeuvres to secure a pro-capitalist compromise in Nicaragua at the expense of the dictator Somoza, Mobutu, relies on imperialist aid to prop up his tottering dictatorship in Zaire.

In Southern Africa, the crises facing imperialism have meant that even as it connives with the Stalinists and nationalists to secure neo-colonial solutions which head off mass struggles, it is forced to rely increasingly heavily on the repressive strength of the most powerful promoter of imperialist interests in the

region—the South African state.

This book contains a mass of empirical information.

This is particularly useful given the lack of official government statistics and the distortion of the bourgeois media.

Completely dominated

It enables readers to begin to understand what precisely the maintenance of capitalist relations means to the Namibian worker.

Namibia's economy is completely dominated by South African, British and American capital—to the extent that up to half the gross national product is plundered in the form of 'repatriated' profits.

Capitalist development has been markedly uneven, reflecting the imperialist robbery of mineral wealth, and the maintenance of Namibia as a captive market for the South African manufacturing industry.

Undeveloped

About 90% of Namibia's imports come from South Africa. The manufacturing and industrial sectors thus remained weak and undeveloped.

Mining—in particular diamonds, uranium and copper—makes up around one

third of the GDP, while manufacturing—mainly food processing and construction accounts for less than one sixth.

Over half of the exports from Namibia go to South Africa, thereby saving valuable foreign exchange for the South African capitalists at the same time as furnishing South Africa with a source of vital raw materials.

The South African government also receives an important contribution to its revenue in the form of taxes and royalties paid by overseas firms operating in Namibia, particularly the mining companies.

Best wages

For the multinational investors, Namibia has served as an extremely lucrative source of profits.

From 1970 to 1973 for example the net profits of the Consolidated Diamond Mines almost tripled.

The same company has, according to the authors, acquired a reputation over the years as paying the best wages available to black workers.

Yet in 1976, CDM spent only about 10% of its net profits on wages for its black miners.

Wages paid to black workers in Namibia are even lower than those in South Africa, where 30 to 40% of the total product of the mining industry is paid in remuneration—the comparable figure for Namibia is 15%-20%.

The highest wages available to black workers are in mining—for an unskilled miner working a 60 hour week, the highest weekly wage in 1977 was £15.

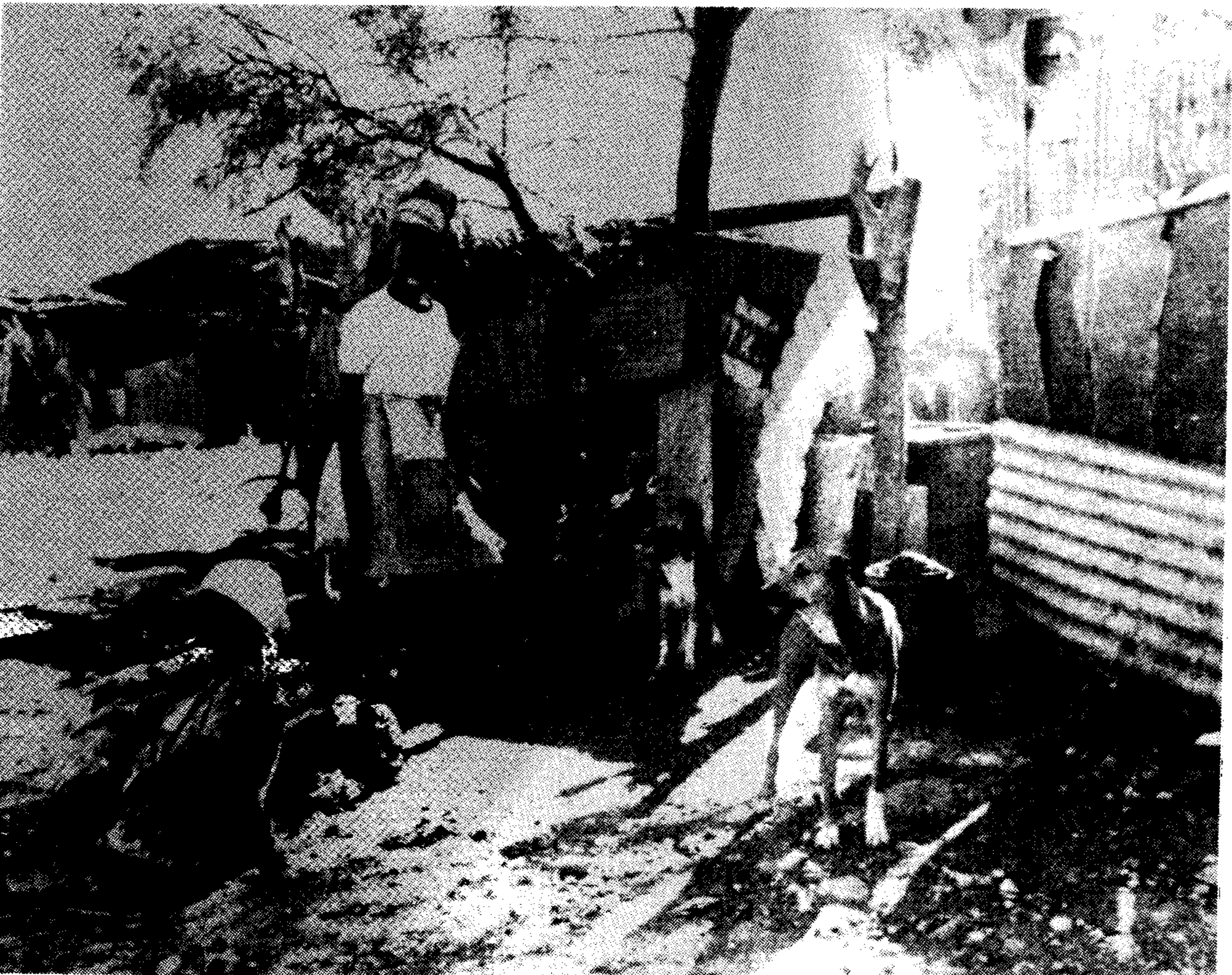
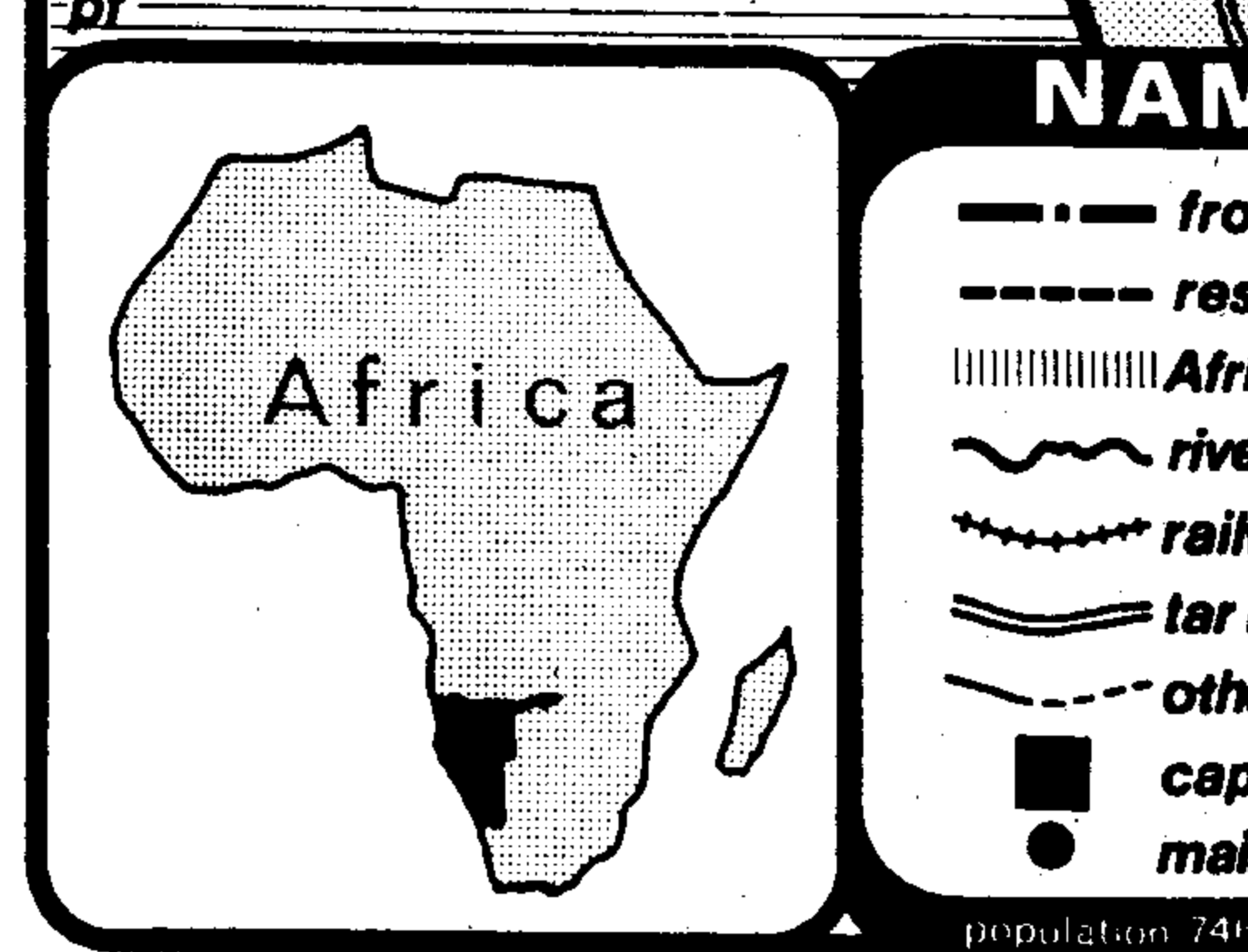
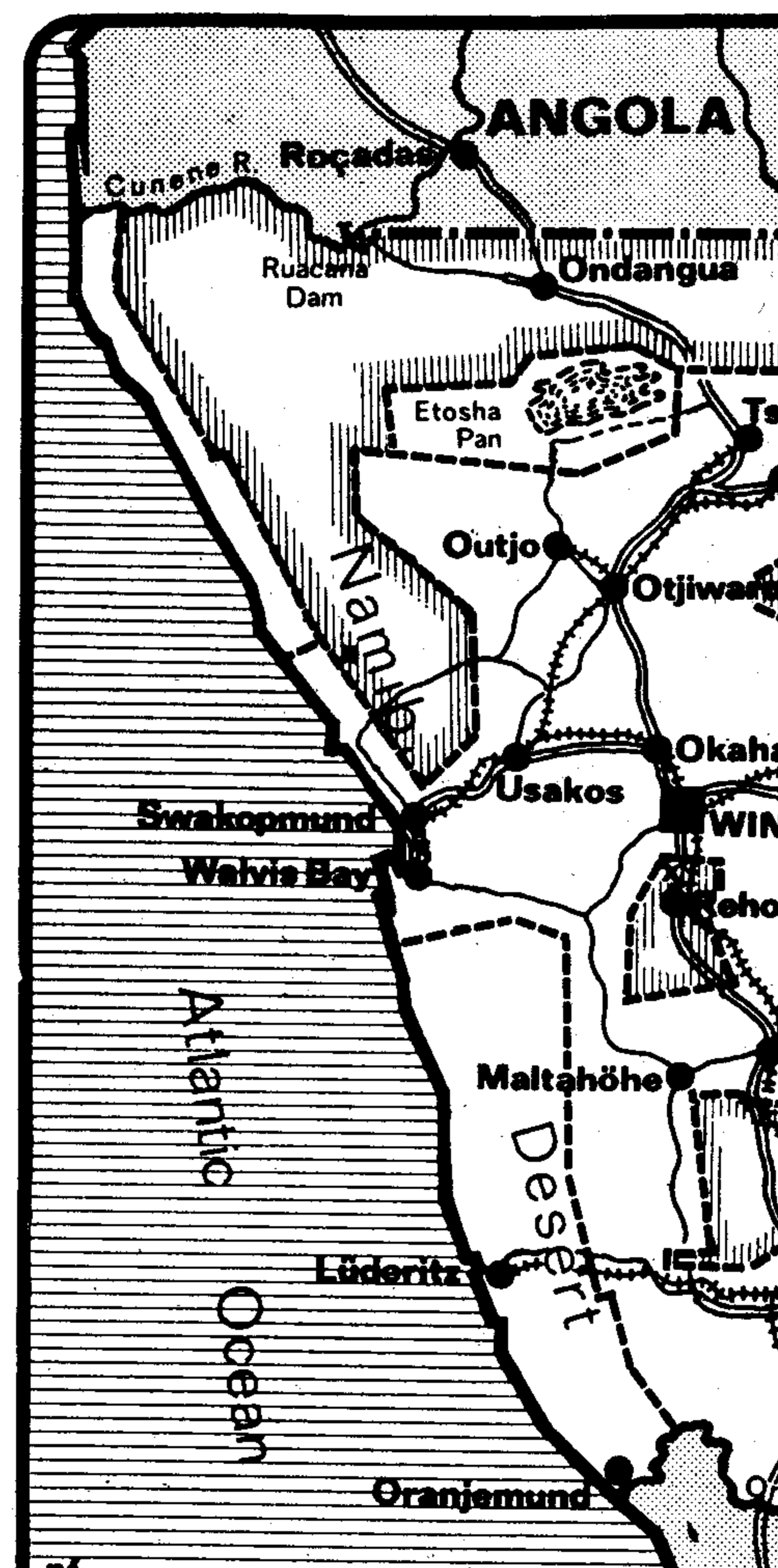
The average wage for the white workers is some 24 times as great as that of the black—these facts point to the existence of a super exploited black working class whose living standards are appreciably lower than even the appalling standards of their fellow workers in South Africa.

Repressive laws

As is to be expected, this super exploitation is maintained through a mass of repressive laws, an extensive police force and a South African army of occupation.

After the first imperialist world war, Namibia was transferred from German to South African rule.

Building on the genocidal wars of dispossession waged by German imperialism, the South African state laid the foundations for the penetration of British capital.



Farm workers' living conditions

THE WORKERS OF NAMIBIA

Jim Farnham reviews *The Workers of Namibia* by Gillian and S... national Defence and Aid Fund for South Africa, 104 Newgate £1.50 in paperback.

With the rise of the economic power of the South African bourgeoisie after the Second World War, the oppressed masses of Namibia were increasingly subjected to the ruthless system of migrant labour—the method of labour control developed inside South Africa by the apartheid-capitalist state.

Namibia was balkanised into ten Bantustans (labour reserves) and a White Police Zone (which, as in South Africa, included all the best land, the mines and the factories).

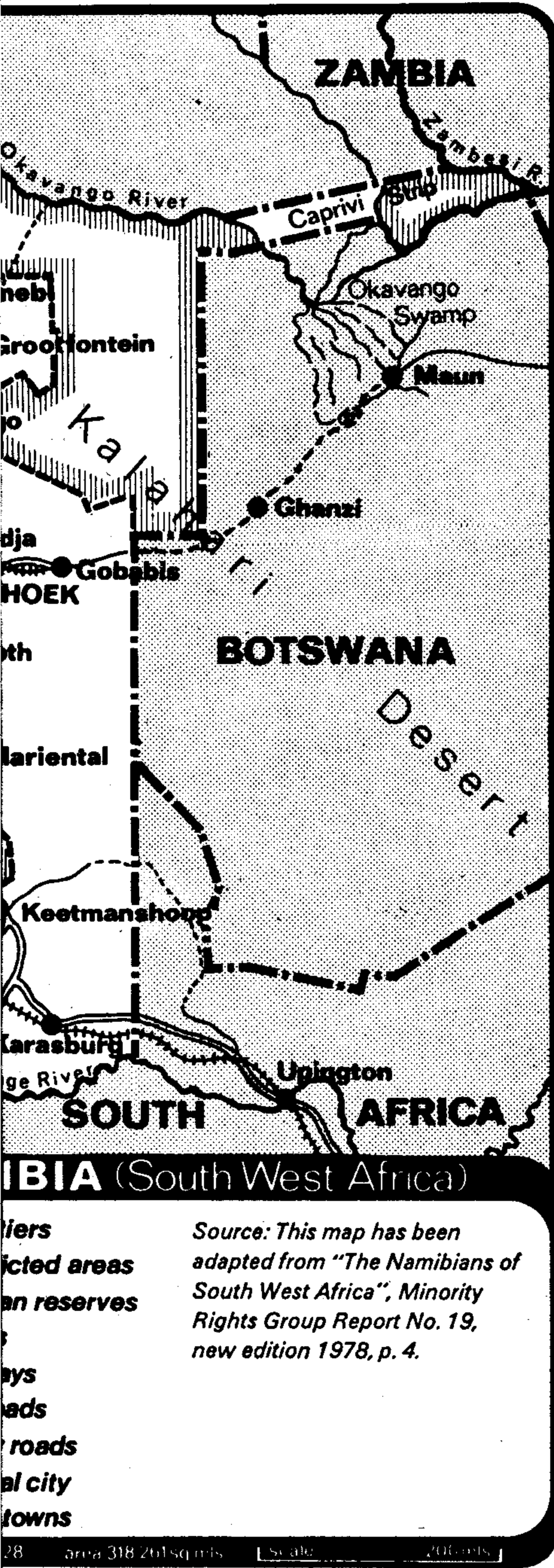
These Bantustans or 'homelands' have, through the reactionary tribal authorities (which are granted a level of power within them by the state), come to serve as crucial instruments in the control over supply to the mines and factories.

Male workers are forced to leave their families in Bantustans, where they are subjected to contracts of starvation wages for months or years in mining towns or military bases.

Unemployed workers face 'deportation' to Bantustans, where they can in no way meet their needs and

WORKERS NAMIBIA

zanne Cronje, published by Inter-
street, London EC1A 7AP, price

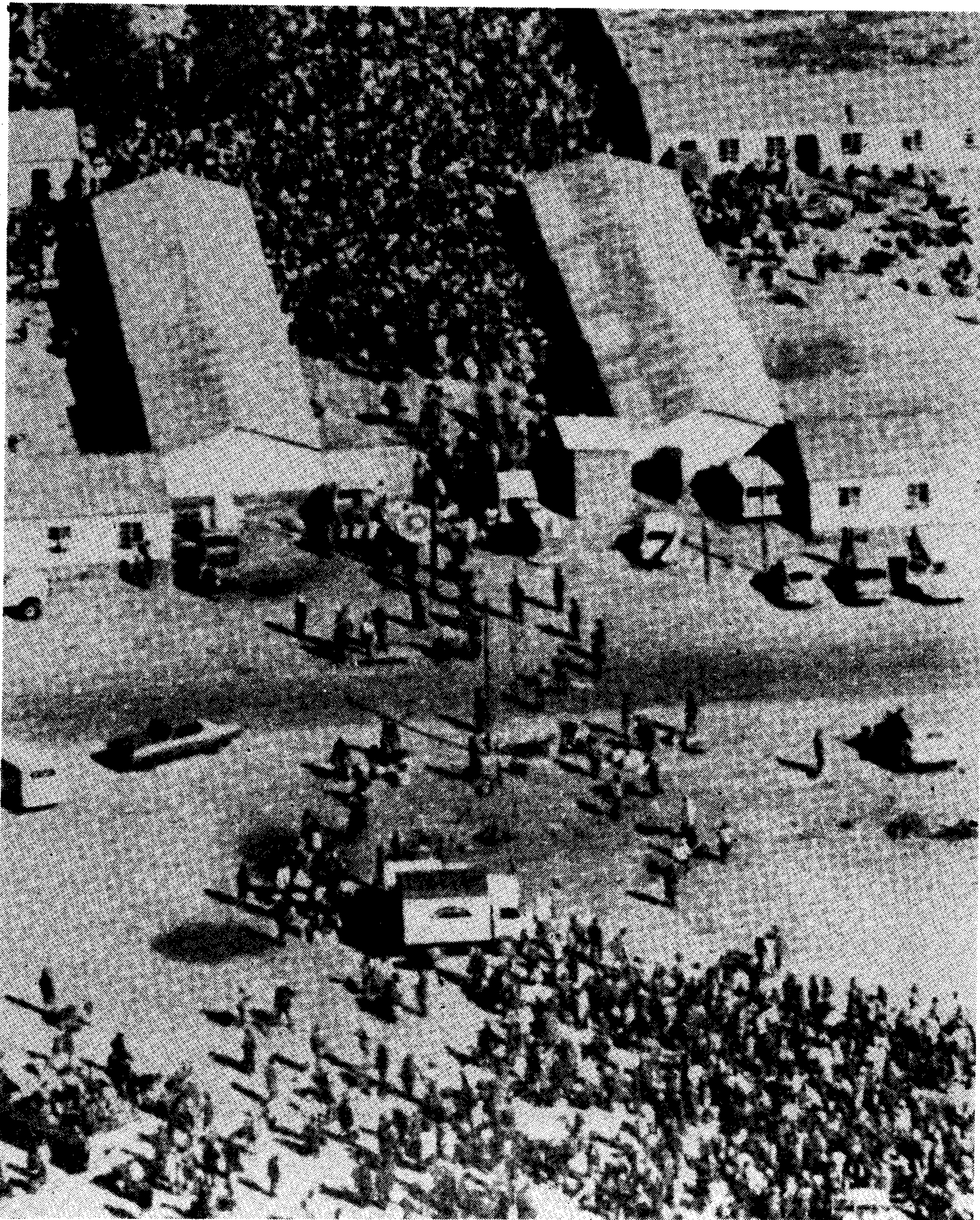


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opportunities are almost nil.
1977 figures estimate a
total labour force of
approximately 480,000 of
which approximately 50% are
wage earners inside the Police
Zone.
About 30% are employed
in domestic service for
whites, 20% are agricultural
workers on capitalist farms,
9% are employed in
manufacturing and
construction and 8% in
mining.
Estimates put the
number of unemployed
workers in the Police Zone
at more than 7%, but this
should be seen in the context
of some 50% of the work-
force being forced to remain
in the Bantustans—unable
either to meet their
subsistence needs from



Black workers on strike in the Katatura compound 1971

farming, or to get jobs.

About half of the 240,000 workers legally in the Police Zone are there as migrants under the contract system.

Since 1972, the allocation of all jobs under the contract system has been organised by labour bureaux.

These are operated by the tribal authorities in the Bantustans and are all headed by white employment officers in the Police Zone.

Bureaux

A would be migrant worker must go through these bureaux and is obliged to accept the job, if any, which they offer him—refusal can mean simply that he is forced to remain in the Bantustan with no possibilities of employment at all. Under the contract system, the worker has no say in choosing an employer, or in negotiating his wages and conditions.

All unemployed adult men under the age of 65 who are without physical or mental defects, and who can not satisfy the tribal labour officer that they are self-employed are obliged to register as 'work-seekers' at the tribal labour bureau.

Tribal labour officers thus wield enormous control over those under their jurisdiction.

Important role

Themselves employees of the state, and usually tied to the patronage of a tribal chief who is also an employee of the state, there can be no doubt that tribal labour officers and the compulsory registration of all workers through them play an enormously important role in the political control of workers.

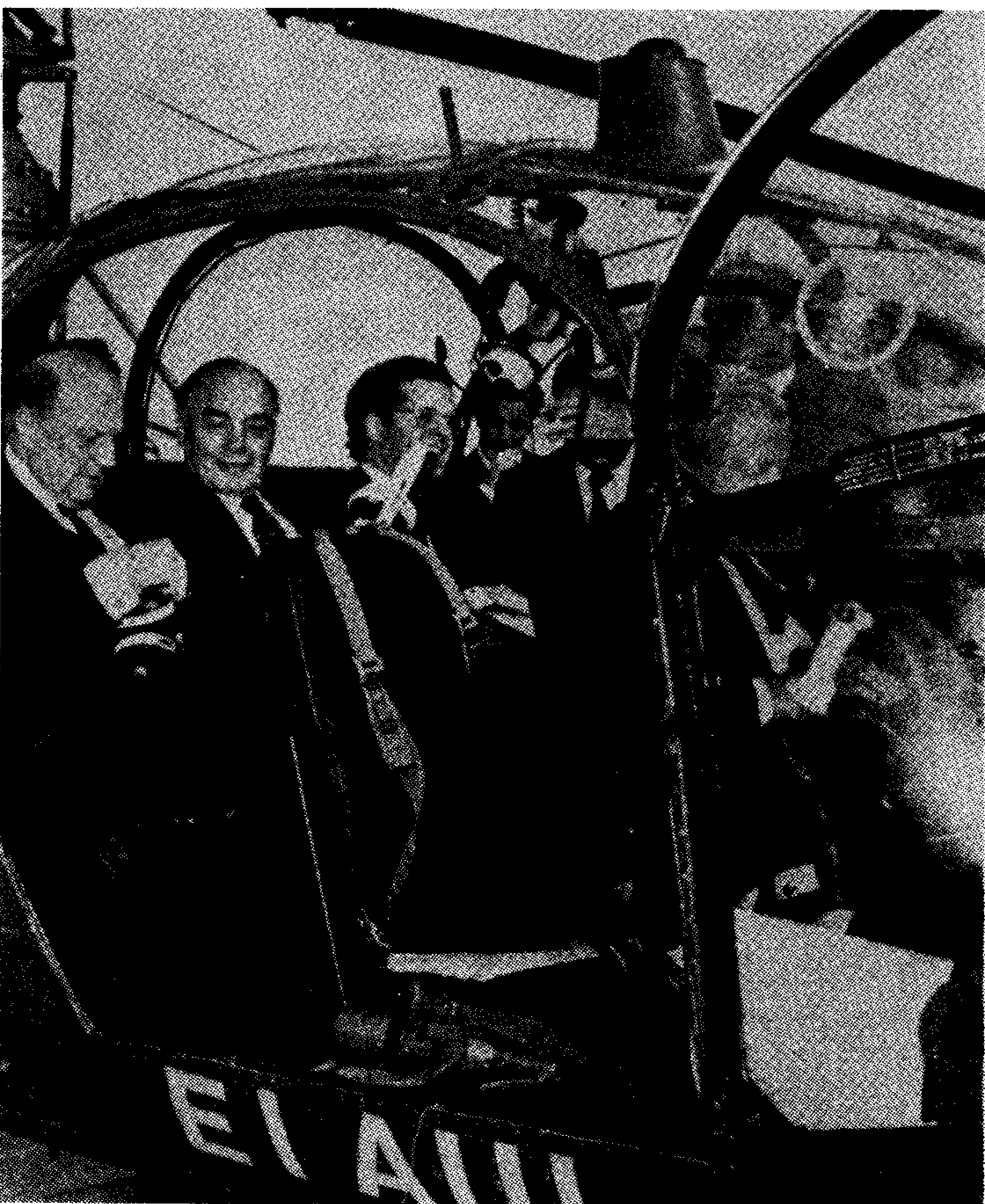
In the central labour bureau, the labour officer (in this case a white South African Civil Servant) keeps a

secret black list of migrant workers regarded by police or employers as militants—the ability of the state to remove the access of such workers to employment is a crucial weapon in the struggle to smash or control any workers' organised opposition.

This should be seen against the context of near martial law conditions which exist through almost the whole country.

By providing such essential background information, the book can play a useful role for those in the labour movement seeking to develop a concrete programme of solidarity with Namibian workers.

It can in no way however play a similar role in the development of the principled political basis of such a programme.



'Liberal' capitalist Harry Oppenheimer in his private helicopter

It would seem (fortunately) that the constraints of academic research propriety have stopped the authors from making explicit the uncritical idealisation of the politics of SWAPO which is implicit throughout the book.

Popular frontist

As *Socialist Press* has pointed out, however, it is above all else the popular frontist politics, and mixture of guerrillaism and secret diplomacy of the SWAPO leadership which have allowed the South African state and its reactionary agents inside Namibia to consolidate their rule and inflict blow after blow on workers and SWAPO militants.

The book for example points to the way in which

Democratic Turnhalle Alliance supporters repeatedly attacked and murdered SWAPO supporters in the Katatura (Windhoek) street battles of early 1978.

The response of the internal SWAPO leadership to this onslaught, which drew contract workers from the massive Katatura hostel out on strike, was to join the DTA, the police and the churches in a joint committee to 'prevent further violence'.

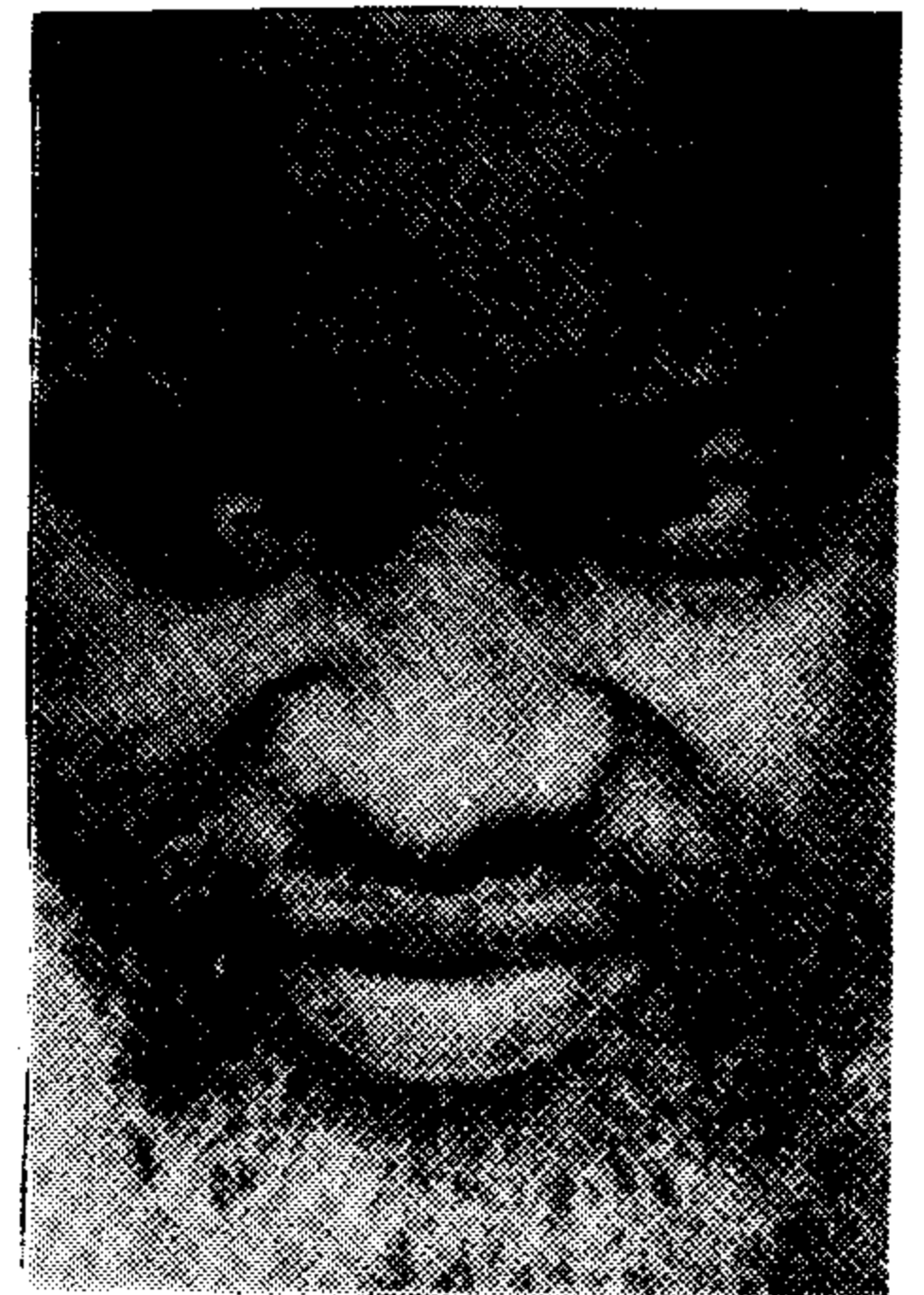
Despite years of armed struggle, SWAPO supporters inside Namibia had been left totally defenceless.

Restricted

Indeed, SWAPO collaboration with the imperialist UN plan provided South Africa with near optimum conditions to strengthen the repressive powers of its own forces and agents, while SWAPO militants were being restricted to their undefended bases by the SWAPO leaders, in response to imperialist pressure.

Nor can the uncritical approach of the authors allow them to point to the class collaboration which led the external SWAPO leadership to respond to the murderous attacks not by any concrete programme able to defend workers and militants, but by resolutions and press releases at the United Nations.

Workers and militants inside and outside of SWAPO have repeatedly shown their desire to move beyond the reformist collaboration of the SWAPO leaders.



SWAPO leader Nujoma

What this demands above all else is not simply a break from negotiation and diplomacy, but a break from the reformist politics of collaboration with imperialism which underlies reliance on such diplomacy.

This requires the development of a party and programme based unshakably on the independent class interests of the workers of Namibia, able to provide a way forward in the defence against state and right wing terror attacks for the development of the day to day struggles of workers and leading unalterably to the defeat of South African colonialism and the workers' seizure of power.

Destruction

For the real interests of Namibian workers can be secured not by the reform of capitalist relations, but by their destruction.

Their real ally in that struggle is not the popular front of moralists, clerics, Stalinists, bureaucrats and 'progressive sections of capital' who seek to replace illegal colonial exploitation with legal neo-colonial exploitation, but their working class brothers and sisters through the world.

And it is only by promoting a programme of solidarity on that same political basis—political independence of the working class—that workers in Britain will be able to meet the responsibilities which proletarian internationalism demands of them.



PIG EARTH

TERRY EAGLETON reviews *Pig Earth* by John Berger, published by the Writers and Readers Cooperative, price £4.95.

'There are many people in this world', remarked Leon Trotsky in *Literature and Revolution*, 'who think as revolutionists and feel as philistines.'

So much so, in fact, that when reading most Marxists on art the old back-handed compliment about the dog walking on hind legs leaps instantly to mind: it isn't done well, but it's surprising it's done at all.

Peasants

John Berger, untypically, has been writing excellently on art as a Marxist for many years; and *Pig Earth*, a collection of poems, short stories and essays about the French peasants among whom he has lived for two years, is the latest product of that long exploration.

Not that *Pig Earth* is about art: it is art; and this points to another of Berger's untypicalities.

In a class society where the division of intellectual labour between 'artist' and 'critic' has been rigidly enforced, Berger is notable for his contempt of that frontier.

One of his earliest, and best, books was a study of Picasso—itself a remarkable achievement, for a Marxist criticism which has always been deeply contaminated by the Stalinist suspicion of *avant-garde* art as mere decadent death-throes.

Defy categories

But he has also published novels (*G*, for example), and a whole range of works which defy set academic categories.

A Fortunate Man, for instance, is a kind of part-

textual, part-visual account of the daily life of an unknown country doctor; but whether it's fiction, biography, psychoanalysis or documentary is hard to say.

A Seventh Man records the plight of immigrant workers in Europe, and some of it seems 'fictional'; but as you turn the page you stumble, unannounced, on passages from Marx or Walter Benjamin, slid unobtrusively into the text.

Ways of Seeing is a Marxist analysis of painting, but it cuts up its text with photographs in unpredictable ways, and a whole section of the 'analysis' consists just of a linked set of photographs of paintings, with no written word to 'guide' the reader.

What Berger is doing, in fact, is nothing less than challenging the whole orthodox bourgeois notion of 'book'.

It isn't just that he writes Marxist 'content'; it's also that he is out to question the whole *form* of bourgeois intellectual production.

Transform

And in this he takes his cue from the great German Marxist critic Walter Benjamin, who insisted that revolutionary culture couldn't consist just of pumping new kinds of material down the same old channels.

The whole point of revolutionary culture is to transform the *means of cultural production themselves*—and so to transform the social relations between writers, audiences, distributors, readers and critics.

It's logical, in this light, that *Ways of Seeing* isn't really written by John

Berger: it's produced by a whole collaborative group of critics, of whom Berger is merely one.

One thinks back to the great theatrical experiments of Bolshevik Russia and Bertolt Brecht's Germany, where plays were written by whole teams of contributors and the bourgeois nation of the 'individual author' dramatically overturned.

Analytical essay

Pig Earth follows this pattern in its attempt to challenge the smugly watertight distinctions between 'fact' and 'fiction'.

Most of it consists of poems and stories, but it ends with a long analytical essay on the plight of the world peasantry.

The stories themselves are for the most part trenchantly 'realist', and this represents both Berger's strength and weakness.

Berger has what one might describe as a finely *materialist* imagination: he is superb at rendering in words the feel, rhythm and texture of routine material processes.

But this means that the stories are a good deal better at portraying, say, the slaughter of a cow than they are at dramatising the complex *political* situation of the peasantry.

Experimental

To do this successfully, Berger would need to break radically with his realist forms—to stop placing himself within the daily consciousness of the peasantry, and find instead some more experimental method by which he could project an 'overview' of the situation.

As the book stands, that 'overview' has to be banished from the art and relegated to the final analytical essay.

It is a good example of how artists committed to historical materialism often feel, instinctively, that realism is its appropriate literary form.

But why should it be? Whatever the Stalinist critics may believe, there's no necessary virtue in artistic realism, as against, say, abstract or Cubist art-forms.

Indeed, in so far as such art-forms strive to break up the surface 'realist' appearances of social life, to expose the governing patterns and mechanisms beneath it, they may be considerably more 'revolutionary' in their effect than those kinds of dismal 'socialist realism' which stay locked within the world 'as it is'.

Berger's closing essay on the peasantry is indeed an 'overview' of sorts; but what it lacks is as glaring as what it says.

The economic and social conditions of the peasantry are emphasised at the expense of a genuinely *political* analysis, which would raise questions of the revolutionary party, and the nature of petty-bourgeois nationalist struggle in its contrast with proletarian leadership.

Instead of a truly *dialectical* study, which would grasp the peasantry not just in its present conditions but in its historical role and relations, Berger offers us a *sociological* survey: the world peasantry as an 'object' to be studied.

It is not accidental, then, that Berger's political formation was Stalinist.

Though he has broken with that history to some extent, it remains an active impediment within his writing.

For a genuinely revolutionary account of the peasantry, we would need a different kind of art, and a different kind of politics.

Basque truce offers no peace to Francoists

The bourgeois nationalists of Euskadi (the Basque country)—the Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) and the right wing of ETA—returned from Madrid in triumph two weeks ago.

They were clutching an agreement on a new Statute of Autonomy obtained from the ruling Democratic Centre Union in the Madrid parliament.

Local control

The new Statute—quite close to that demanded by the PNV—gives the Basque country local control of the police force (with agreed exceptions under which Madrid can send in the national police and army); of education; and, in the future, possible limited control of social security, taxation and the right to set up Basque radio and TV stations.

The Statute which grants rights from the Spanish State in no way amounts to the concession of self-determination to the Basque people.

They will be able to vote in a referendum to accept or reject the concessions which Francoist Suarez and the Madrid government (supported by the Stalinists and reformists) are willing to grant.

Nonetheless Suarez has conceded far more than seemed possible a few months ago.

The reasons are not hard to find. Suarez has been forced to react to the growing signs of militant mass hostility to his regime from the working class and petty-bourgeoisie of Euskadi.

Support

This has shown up in the mass strikes against the violent actions of the state repressive forces.

It has also been reflected in the spread of support for the campaign of terrorism carried out so successfully by ETA (militar) in the last few years against officers of the police and army, and

Francoist judges and politicians.

Herri Batasuna (Popular Unity)—the political front which includes ETA (militar) made dramatic gains in the parliamentary and municipal elections earlier this year.

The new Statute is an attempt by the UCD to reverse the radicalisation of Basque nationalism.

It is also a bid to restore some of the lost authority of the right wing PNV, as well as to get PNV parliamentary support for Suarez's government on a permanent basis.

The PNV and its allies in ETA (political-military), may regain some credibility from the accord—but only briefly.

They will rapidly be forced to relinquish the mantle of the opposition to Madrid and take on that of the government in Euskadi.

As direct representatives of the Basque capitalist class their role will be to police the working class and impose on it the sacrifices demanded by capital.

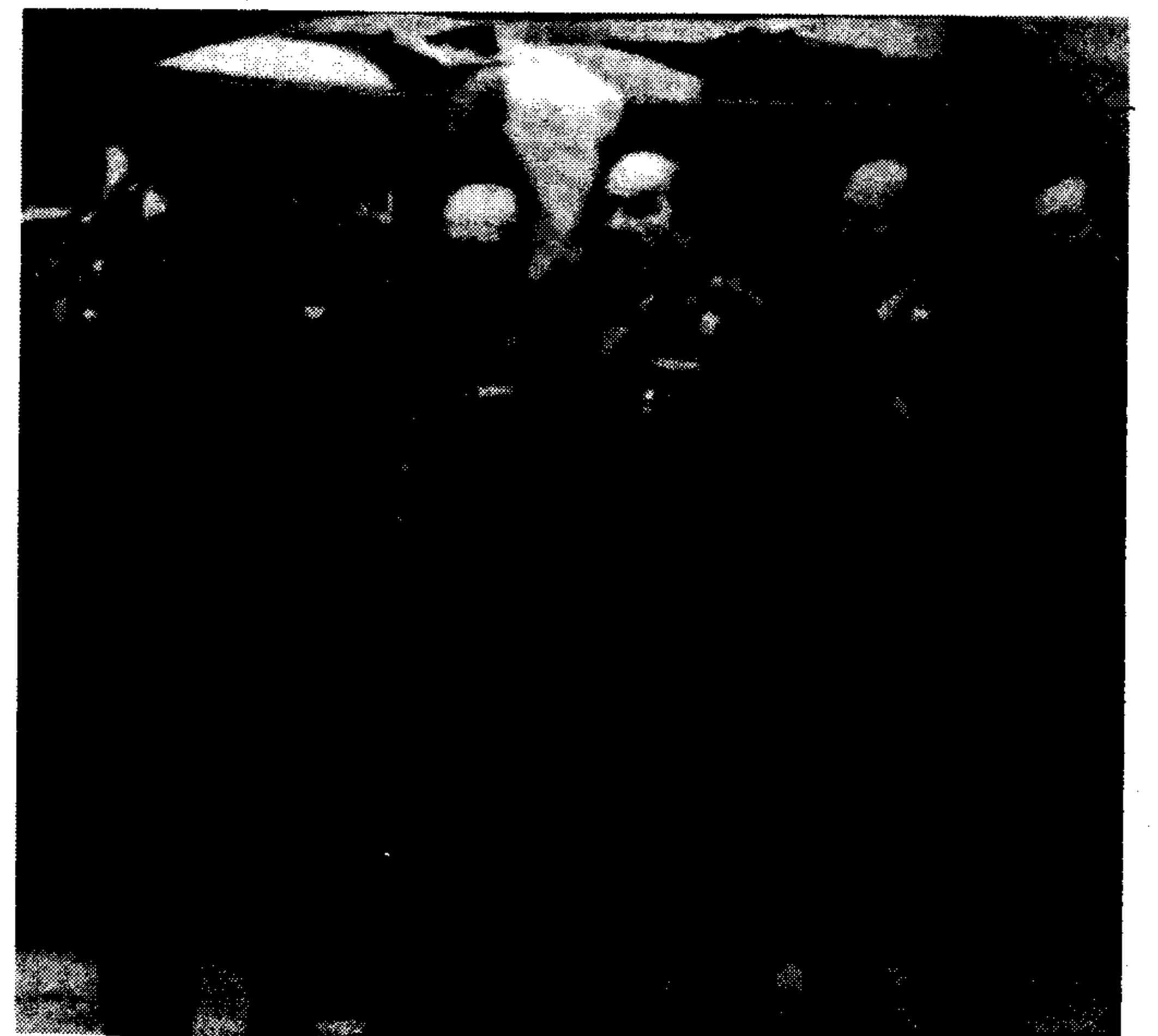
The fact that the police wear Basque uniforms and the Basque language is taught in the schools will do nothing to disguise that role.

Source of tension

ETA (militar) therefore, will almost certainly not be without mass support for its decision to continue the terrorist attacks on agents of the Madrid government and to oppose the Statute in the forthcoming referendum.

The campaign in advance of the referendum promises to be, therefore, a new source of tension in Euskadi, especially in the province of Navarra, where the right wing has always hotly contested its being considered part of the Basque country.

The question of national self-determination for Euskadi, therefore, remains one of the most explosive questions in Spain and one which the granting of the new statute will not resolve.



Burying military victims of Basque liberation forces

SPORT UNDER CAPITALISM: A DIET OF ESCAPISM

Johnny Byrne reviews *Blood and Guts, Violence in Sports*, by Don Atyeo, published by Paddington Press, price £6.95 in hardback.



As a social phenomenon that occupies a large proportion of the 'free' time of all social classes, organised sport has received remarkably little attention from Marxists.

Atyéo's book is certainly not written from anything remotely resembling a class perspective, yet it does challenge many of the prevailing bourgeois ideas and assumptions that condition our attitude to sport.

In addition, by focusing on the question of violence in sport, he inadvertently demonstrates many of the complex links between capitalist exploitation of sport and imperialism, racism and sexism.

Key role

By concentrating on 'contact' sports like hunting, boxing, wrestling, rugby, soccer, American football, ice hockey and animal-baiting, Atyéo shows the key role played by violent games in every class-based social system as far back as records exist. There is little to suggest that sport is either more or less violent under capitalism than in pre-capitalist society.

What is clear is that capitalism has led to a shift of emphasis from the participant to the spectator. Profit from the ticket-buying fans and from the media is now the prime motive factor.

In particular the working class provides an ideal market for a steady diet of escapism from deteriorating social conditions.

For the price of a ticket or a TV licence millions of people can be ushered into a world whose heroes and villains compete against each other with direct physical violence of the kind that would earn instant arrest if used outside the neat pitch markings or roped squares.

Fobbed off

Workers who are alienated every day at the point of production can be easily fobbed off with the pressures to identify with their local team, with their national team and with individuals of the same class background who have 'made it' to the status of media celebrity.

At the same time, the relentless social forces that seek to maintain the existence of a whole exploited class have ensured that sport became a focal point of tension. This is especially true for working class youth. The 'problem' of soccer hooliganism is the most naked example of capitalism's promotion of the spectator at the expense of the participant.

The rise of football crowd violence over the last fifteen years also shows how capital uses sport-centred barbarism to



Governments pay brainwashed workers in uniform to go through ritual Saturday battles



Boxing: TV reduces bone-crunching blows to the level of fake cinema fights

direct social discontent along relatively safe channels.

Sport therefore plays an essential role in preventing thousands of youth mobilising to directly attack the bourgeois state which keeps them underpaid, unemployed and underprivileged.

All governments then need to do is pay the most backward and brainwashed workers sufficiently well to make them put on blue uniforms and go through ritual battles every Saturday afternoon to keep the violence within 'acceptable' limits.

Exactly the same process

took place at the start of the capitalist stage when the bourgeoisie fostered bare-knuckle boxing to help redirect the smouldering discontent of the new urban proletariat. Much safer to allow thousands of people an orgy of crowd violence whilst two men bludgeoned and gouged each other for a few hours than to allow them to mobilise against their exploiters!

This, however, is not to accept the popular idea of sport as "emotional catharsis" (i.e. the notion that violent sport acts as a safety-valve for

society).

Atyéo clearly demonstrates that these theories, which derive from Freud's view of men as having *inherent* aggressive tendencies, are almost totally discredited.

Most recent research by psychologists and anthropologists, and studies of sport in the deformed workers' states, indicate that aggression is *learned* and is closely linked with training to be competitive.

There is no evidence to suggest that individuals or groups are made any less inclined to violence by watching violent sport. On the contrary,

the most aggressively imperialist societies have monopolised the most violent contact sports (Rome, Britain, the USA, etc.)

Moreover, sport doesn't just 'reflect' society like a single mirror image, any more than the media 'reflects' society. Sport is governed and ruled by capitalism in order to *determine* bourgeois ideology as well as reflect it.

The use of sport for its commercial possibilities under capitalism has completely changed many games which had existed in one form or another for centuries.

Boxing, the most blatant contact sport, is the best example of this. Modern boxing grew out of an amalgamation of duelling and wrestling and spread rapidly from the end of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth.

It was fostered by lavish aristocratic patronage and fed by the tensions of the urban poor.

From the beginning it was recognised that 'the hungry fighter is the best fighter'. The first social layer to achieve success in the ring was that comprising the most exploited manual labourers, often men so brutalised by their conditions that they could absorb and mete out unbelievable extremes of physical punishment.

Death was not at all uncommon, either during or weeks after bouts that sometimes went on for five or six hours.

Racial oppression

Gradually distinct patterns of racial oppression began to be reflected in the social composition of the best known boxers. Irish-Americans and Jews from the urban ghettos of the US displaced British workers at the top of the slugging order.

By the first decade of this century blacks were also beginning to fight their way to the notice of the businessmen who controlled the sport. In 1908 Jack Johnson won the world heavyweight title, the most lucrative enterprise in sport, and the phase "White Hope" was born as he thrashed his way past a series of white challengers.

Full scale race riots with many dead and injured erupted after Johnson hammered Jim Jeffries, a former champion dragged out of retirement to deal with the "uppity nigger".

After Johnson's eventual demise blacks were consciously excluded from competing at the highest level. But in the 1930s the most exploited layer burst through irrevocably with champions like Joe Louis ("the Brown Bomber") and Henry "Homicide" Armstrong. Even then the racial tensions could be used to highly profitable effect.

The publicity for fights between black or Jewish boxers and Max Schmeling of Germany and Primo Carnera (Mussolini's protege) was all centred around the rise of fascism.

Since the war boxing has been almost totally dominated by blacks and most recently there has been a perceptible shift to the most oppressed sections of the Far East and Latin America.

Professional boxing also illustrates another essential feature of the manipulation of contact sport, that is in the role of the

media. The TV screen reduces the humanity of the participants and places bone-crunching blows on the same level as fake cinema fights. The media boom has also transformed sport from a profitable enterprise to one of the most thriving sectors of the capitalist economy.

Atyéo also shows the centrality of sexism to contact sport.

'Machismo' may be an increasingly absurd social pose in some respects, but in contact sport it still reigns supreme. The exaggerated armour of the American footballer, the beer-swilling hearties of a rugby team and the cultivated sex symbol of top sportsmen are just the more blatant examples.

Omission

It is worth recalling that when Emile Griffith pulverised Benny Paret into an early grave in a world championship boxing match in 1963 Griffith's ferocity was excused by boxing writers on the grounds that Paret had called him a homosexual in the pre-fight build-up.

One of the biggest omissions from Atyéo's book is any evaluation of the effect of the nationalisation of property relations in Russia, China, Eastern Europe and Cuba. Despite the bureaucratic degeneration of the 1917 Revolution under Stalinism it is true to say that many social and cultural patterns accepted as inevitable under capitalism have been substantially broken down in the workers' states. Violent contact sport does still exist, but the absence of profit motivation has ensured that the kind of calculated viciousness encouraged in professional sport is almost unknown.

It still rears its head in international encounters however—Russian ice hockey matches with Czechoslovakia for example are amongst the most brutal in sport.

Moralistic

The Olympic Games has also become a kind of international prestige battle between capitalism and Stalinism.

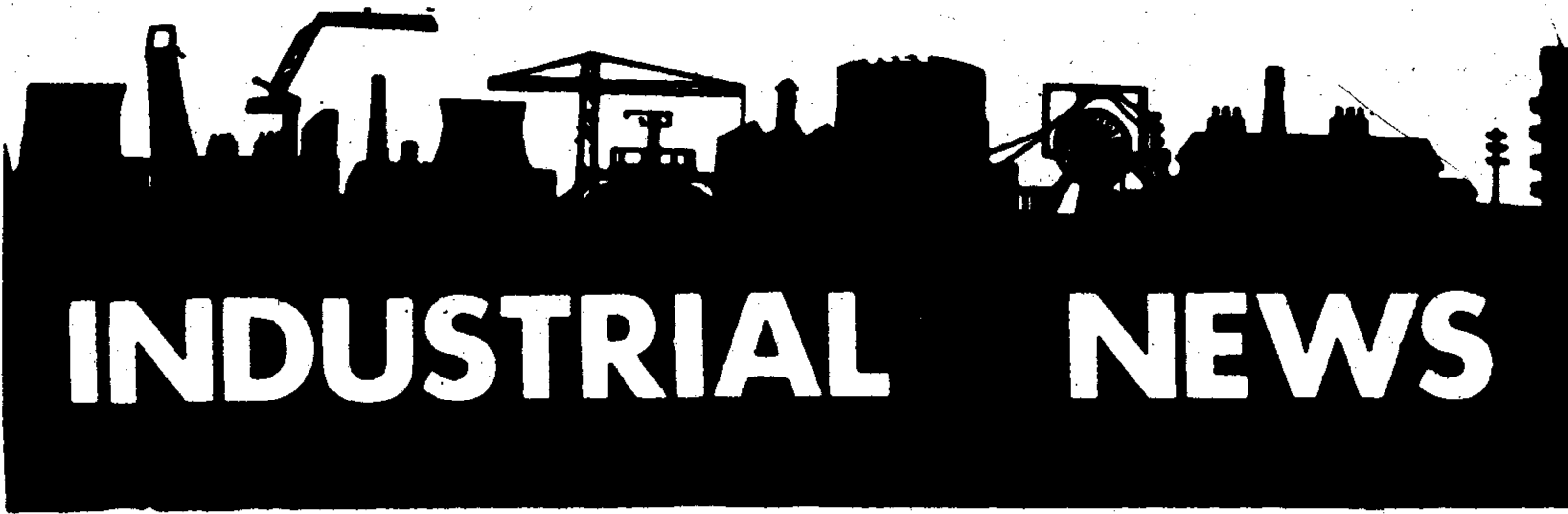
The Stalinists are way ahead at the moment, though the bourgeois press gets an occasional titbit to gloat over, like the incident of the "cheat" Red Army officer in the fencing at the last Olympics.

Another flaw in an otherwise challenging and carefully researched book is Atyéo's moralistic stance on the whole question. He writes basically from the point of view that too much violence is *morally* bad.

He pays lip service to the effects of socio-economic forces but pulls back from a thorough analysis of his own conclusions.

The killing, maiming and brutalising of people that is carried on in the name of professional contact sport is intricately bound up with the development of class society.

It will continue for as long as capitalism, the most advanced form of class society, lurches from crisis to crisis. And only internationalism can undermine the disgusting patriotism and chauvinism that passes for 'the sporting ideal'.



St Mary's in forefront of closure fight

In what is likely to be one of the first major battles against the Tory cuts in public spending, hospital workers and trade unionists in the Westminster area of London are preparing for action against cuts in the local health service.

Drastic

The drastic scale of health cuts proposed in this area was made clear at a special meeting of the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster Area Health Authority on Thursday 26 July, which was lobbied by over 200 workers from hospitals in the

area. This AHA, which has adopted a policy of working within the government's imposed cash limits, is now desperate to reduce health spending in the area as quickly as possible.

Huge

Every package of proposals they have put forward over the past year has met with solid resistance from organised hospital trades unionists.

Because of the huge opposition both in the hospital and the community, they have so far been unable to close St. Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, and the same pressure has prevented them from going ahead with

the closure of Hereford Lodge recovery unit and St. Columba's terminal hospital, all located in the north-west district of the area.

The battle over St. Mary's, Harrow Road, reached a high point during the last two weeks when the District Management Team announced a package which would involve the closure of the casualty and several other departments at the hospital.

Immediate

The response within the hospital was immediate.

At an emergency mass meeting, the staff voted unanimously to fight the closure by continuing to work at the hospital, and not accepting jobs elsewhere.

The District Joint Shop Stewards Committee continued to give a principled lead against the cuts by calling for occupation of all threatened wards and facilities in the district and demanding that the London trade union leadership call an all-London conference and prepare a course of industrial action by health and public sector workers in defence of St. Mary's.

Ignore

As well as this, the local ambulance drivers' branch of NUPE which covers Camden station and St. John's Wood accident station voted to continue carrying patients to

and the gradual closure of wards.

Whilst backing down for the moment on St. Mary's—hoping to whittle down resistance there more gradually—they have turned their attention to hospitals where they feel the opposition is less well organised.

First on the list in the new package is Athlone House recovery unit on Hampstead Heath, which is to be closed down completely by September 1.

This will be accompanied by the rapid run-down and closure of Paddington Green children's hospital and St. Columba's—possibly within the next two months.

Every hospital

Also, ward closures and staff reductions were decided on in virtually every hospital in the district, including the closure of six wards at St. Stephen's hospital in Chelsea.

The tactics of the AHA are now obvious.

They are attempting to avoid direct confrontation with the strongest unionised hospitals and are picking off the weaker hospitals one by one.

But if it comes to a confrontation, they will not hesitate to meet this head on, backed up fully by the Tory government, the powers of the state, and the capitalist press.

It is urgent that the resistance to these proposals is organised.

Workers at Athlone House, St. Columba's and Paddington Green must make preparations for occupying the hospitals and continuing to run them independently of the AHA.

Other hospitals must follow the example of St. Mary's,

Harrow Road, and St. Mary's Praed Street, and form Hospital Defence Committees, in order to organise the resistance against ward closures and staff run-down.

Reverse cuts

Whilst these steps are vitally important, it is essential that they are linked to building for a massive mobilisation of health and public sector workers throughout London to reverse the cuts in this area once and for all.

The Tory cuts can only be reversed by mass action, and the trade union leadership—who have so far refused even to take the initial step of organising a London conference to discuss action on the cuts—must be forced to give a clear lead against the Tories.

The "fight" to reverse the policy of the AHA by discussion and consultation is now lost, and the labour movement 'representatives' who sit on the Authority should be made to resign and begin to organise strike action against the cuts amongst local trade unionists.

Debating

This applies especially to Westminster Trades Council bureaucrat David Triesman, who has up to now spent all his time debating with the Tories on the AHA, and has done nothing to mobilise workers through Westminster Trades Council of which he is secretary!

It is only a programme of all-out, indefinite strike action by health and public sector workers, linked to occupation of threatened hospitals, which will defeat the cuts in the Westminster area.



St. Mary's workers: solid resistance to the cuts

the casualty and to ignore all instructions from the AHA and their own management concerning the closure of the hospital.

Also, they have adopted a policy of diverting as many patients as possible for admission to St. Mary's to prevent the wards from being closed.

Scurry back

This wave of resistance forced the District Management Team to scurry back to their calculating machines and come up with a new scheme.

The item on cuts was removed from the agenda at the AHA meeting on 11 July, and, following a frantic series of meetings with the region and the DHSS, the new proposals were announced for last Thursday's special meeting.

The AHA are now in desperate straits. Resistance to the cuts coupled with the Tories' decision not to exempt the NHS from increased VAT charges have led to a situation where the Area has overspent their allocated budget by £2 million—an amount which they have pledged to reimburse within the next two months.

Savage

They intend to do this by making savage cuts, and Thursday's meeting—which was guarded by a large contingent of police—demonstrated that they are prepared to take any measures necessary to force these cuts through.

The decisions of the meeting showed an attempt to divert the opposition by putting back the planned closure of the casualty at Harrow Road, and replacing this with proposals for reduction of staff, overtime hours,

JOIN OUR FIGHT AGAINST TORIES!

Returned to office after five years of Labour betrayals, the Tory government has immediately begun wielding a sharpened axe on jobs, conditions and social services. Trade Union rights face imminent legal attack. Prices are already beginning to rocket upwards.

Plum sectors of state industry will be handed to the Tories profiteering big business backers; and the pay rises to police and armed forces mark only the prelude to increased state violence against pickets and anti-fascists, and an intensified army crack-down in the occupied North of Ireland.

The Callaghan-Healey leadership has made it clear that it will oppose any perspective other than settling down and meekly accepting five years of Tory devastation.

And, though they have once more dusted off their near-forgotten "socialist" speeches, Labour's "left-wing" MPs have continued to duck away from any fight to remove Callaghan.

TUC leaders, too, have set out to establish a basis for collaboration with Thatcher and the Tory cabinet, paralleling their anti-working class alliance with Wilson and then Callaghan.

But the working class has experienced and overcome such betrayals before—to topple Heath's union-bashing government in 1974, and smash through Callaghan's reactionary Phase 4 of wage controls in a series of monumental pay battles last winter.

These experiences are not dead. They point to the way that jobs, social services and hard-won union rights can be defended against renewed Tory attacks.

But a principled, revolutionary leadership is needed if the Labour traitors, the TUC collaborators and their hangers-on in the Communist Party are to be exposed and pushed aside, and the mass struggles mobilised that can defeat and remove the Tory government.

Such a leadership must fight day in and day out for a programme of *transitional demands* which, starting from today's conditions and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers to grasp the necessity for socialist revolution.

And in taking up democratic demands—such as an end to racial and sexual discrimination, it must show the crucial role that must be played by the working class as the only consistently revolutionary class capable of leading the struggle for the emancipation of mankind.

And it must fight on an *international* basis—mobilising solidarity for anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist struggles—whether in Ireland, in Southern Africa or elsewhere throughout the world, and drawing strength and political lessons from revolutionary upheavals such as that which ousted the hated Shah in Iran.

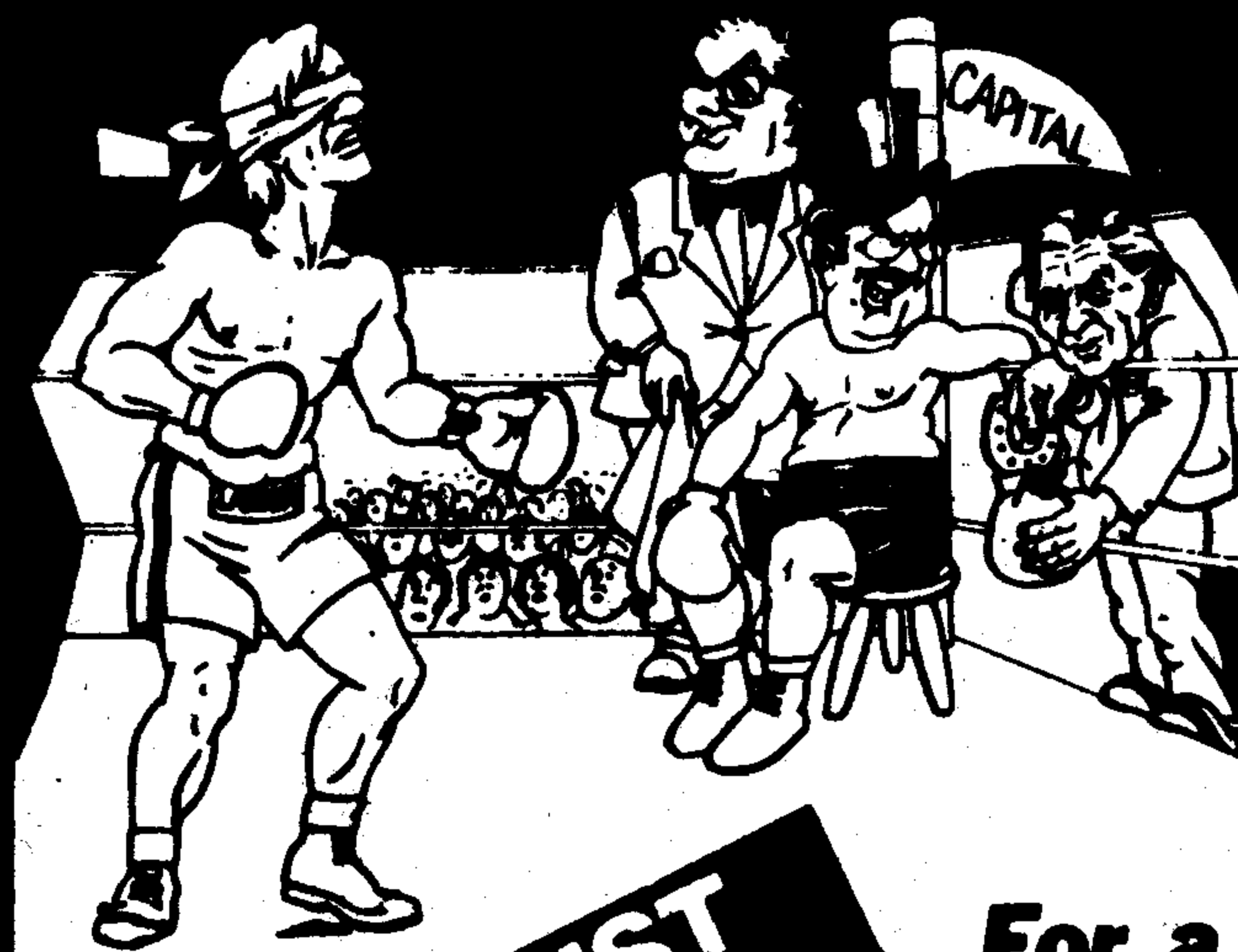
This means fighting for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International.

This method of approach, rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, or concessions to any wing of the labour bureaucracy, is the method fought for by the Workers Socialist League.

The next period will see major class struggles in Britain. A principled, Marxist leadership is essential. Our movement though strong in programme remains small in numbers.

JOIN US and take forward the struggle for socialism!

DON'T GO INTO THE FIGHT BLINDFOLD!



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Tories to watch over BSC closures

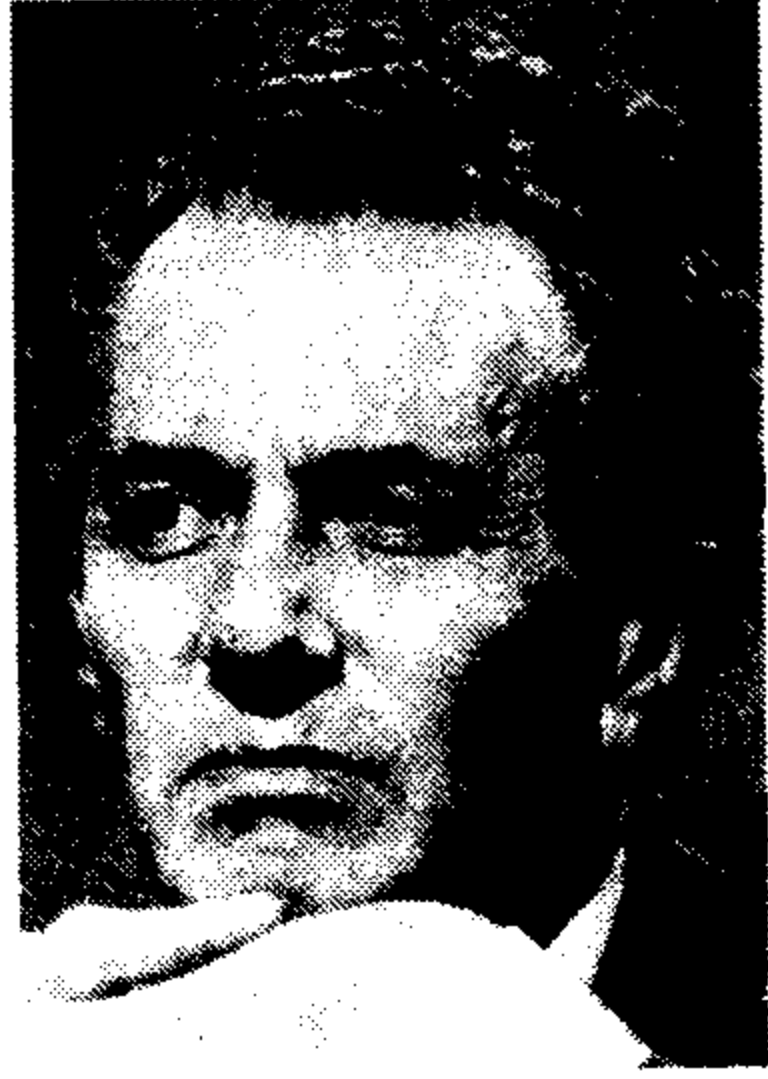
The Tory government announced last week that it will only provide funds for the British Steel Corporation on a month-by-month basis.

This unprecedented step is designed to provide Tory axemen with blow-by-blow control over the imposition of plant closures and manning cuts.

Profitable

The plan laid down by Sir Keith Joseph calls for the corporation to be made profitable by next year.

It presently loses money to the tune of £309 million per year—in common with the steel industry in virtually every other capitalist country.

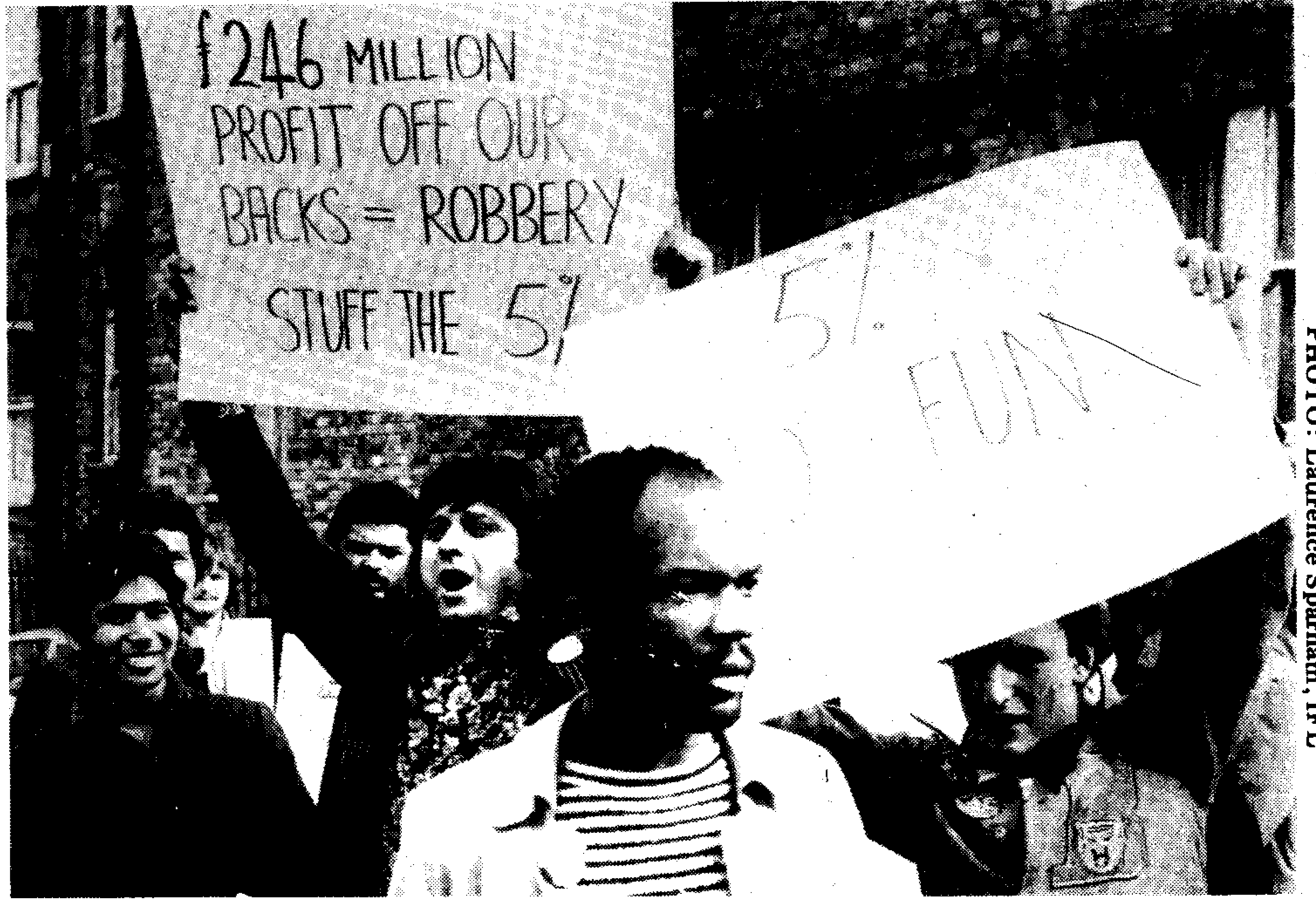


Joseph
The BSC board has accepted this plan and confirmed that it

will press forward with a crash programme of closures which it claims will save £108 million in the current financial year.

Meanwhile there has been no sign that the steel unions have any intention of acting upon a call for national strike action raised from a mass meeting at the threatened Corby steelworks—the only course of action that offers any hopes of preventing a jobs massacre in the industry.

Such a strike must be fought for alongside the preparation for occupation of the threatened plants at Corby and Shotton.



Ford strikers—crashed through 5% limit last year

PHOTO: Laurence Spatham, IFL

FIGHT NOW FOR COST OF LIVING CLAUSES

Power workers rebuff leaders

Power workers leaders are on the spot following a second ballot rejection of a pay offer unanimously recommended by union officials.

This show of militancy by the 95,000 manual workers has percolated even through the defusing apparatus of a postal ballot.

They have clearly been driven on to defy their officials by the recent three stage 20% settlement agreed by the Electrical Power Engineers Association for 28,000 white collar and managerial staff.

Mandate

Yet despite the clear mandate for strike action and windy threats from negotiator Jack Biggin that "all hell will let loose", the immediate response to the vote from EETPU leader Frank Chapple was to deny that there was any likelihood of industrial action.

Power workers have shown their willingness to fight: and Chapple has once again indicated the determination of the EETPU bureaucracy to hold them back.

An initial indication of workers' response to the Tories' flood tide of inflation has been given by the pay claims drawn up by Vauxhall and Ford workers in the last two weeks.

The Vauxhall unions are demanding a 25% increase and a 38 hour week—having suffered a sell-out deal last year in which a 4.3-6.7% basic increase was linked to an 'incentive' scheme.

But the claim includes no provision for protection against inflation, which by the end of the year will be rocketing towards the 20% mark.

"Substantial"

The Ford claim however goes in the opposite direction, seeking only a vague "substantial" increase—but protected against inflation through an index-linking agreement.

TGWU negotiator Ron Todd evaded the issue of a money increase and declared that the unions would not "nail statements about percentages to the wall".

While militancy and frustration is clearly building up within the working class on the question of inflation and falling living standards the Ford and Vauxhall negotiators, dominated by full time national officials, reflect this only in a partial, distorted and inadequate form.

What is necessary in the

coming situation is to spell out that pay claims must:

1) make good the losses in real earnings caused by inflation since the last pay review.

2) provide for an improvement in living standards in real terms.

3) protect this settlement against future inflation through the inclusion of a cost-of-living clause providing automatic increases in line with a cost-of-living index worked out by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

Such a policy challenges not only the Tory plans to inflict the whole burden of the oil price increases and the world inflationary crisis onto the working class but also those union leaders who argue that pay claims should relate not to workers' needs and the defence of living standards



Todd

but to the ability of the employers to pay and his 'right' to a profit.

Indeed the Tories are reportedly planning an autumn campaign aimed at persuading workers that they should moderate pay demands and not look for extra money if they have not conceded extra effort on the shop floor.

The Tories will argue that workers should not necessarily expect an increase in pay every year!

Far from abandoning annual reviews, workers should be pressing for these to be linked to the *continual* updating of real wages in relation to prices, as provided by the operation of cost-of-living clauses.

Only such a policy offers workers an answer to the Tories' conscious price hikes, rent increases and VAT rises.

The fight for cost-of-living clauses must be pressed ahead now both in the car industry and throughout the labour movement, as part of the struggle to defeat the Tory offensive and bring down the Thatcher government.

Feeling grows on pay

The Boilermakers union has lodged a 37% pay claim for shipyard workers—pointing to the probability of a steep rise in inflation later this year.

The claim is due for settlement on January 1. But Boilermakers' leader, extreme right winger John Chalmers made it clear that this apparent militancy on pay is not connected to any willingness to defend jobs and conditions against the Tory onslaught.

He told the *Financial Times* that the union recognised that in return for government subsidies to shipbuilding:

"our members will be expected to lift their levels of productivity and, in addition, perhaps be much more flexible in the patterns of their present working practices."

With 8,000 jobs immediately threatened in the shipbuilding industry the 37% pay claim once again underlines the gulf between the objective needs of shipyard workers and the political treachery of their existing leaders—a gulf that can only be bridged in the struggle for a revolutionary leadership.



Chalmers

The strike action which has held up telephone bills for over three months looks certain to continue following an overwhelming vote by computer operators to reject an 18% pay offer.

A meeting of nearly 700

CPSA members also voted 625 to 67 to censure their union leaders for recommending the offer which would leave them still behind the pay of Post Office engineers and the 24% increases obtained by government computer staff.

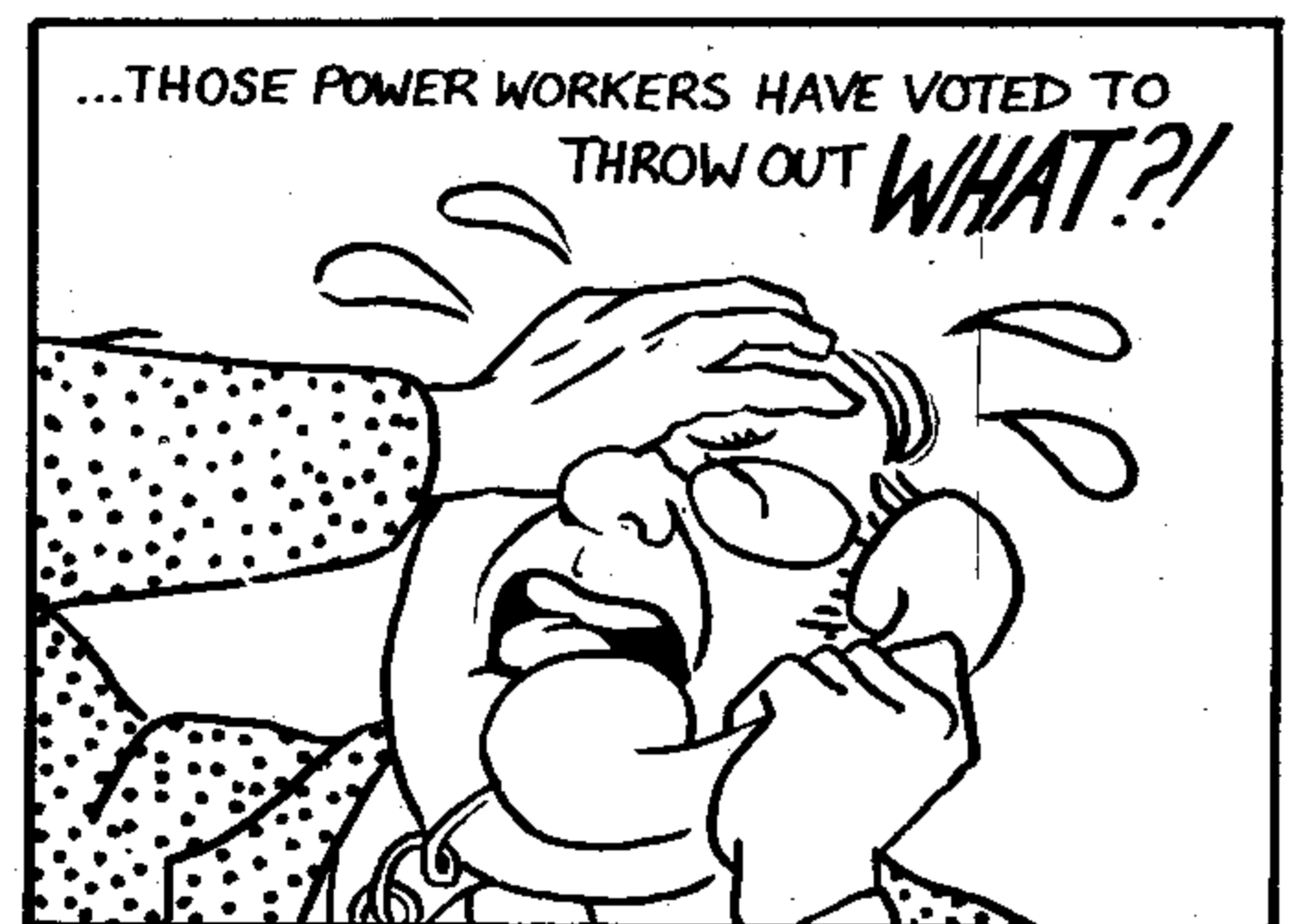
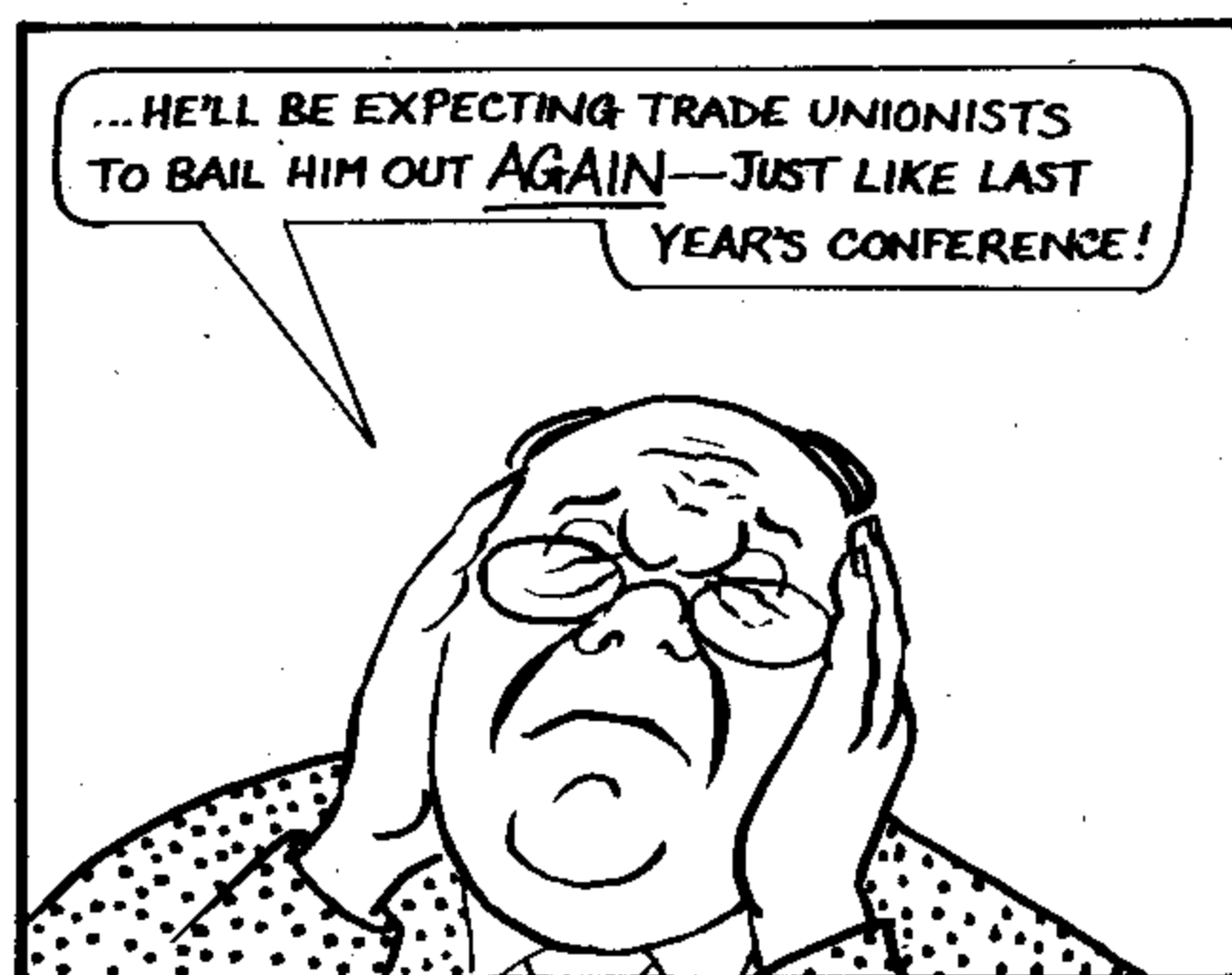
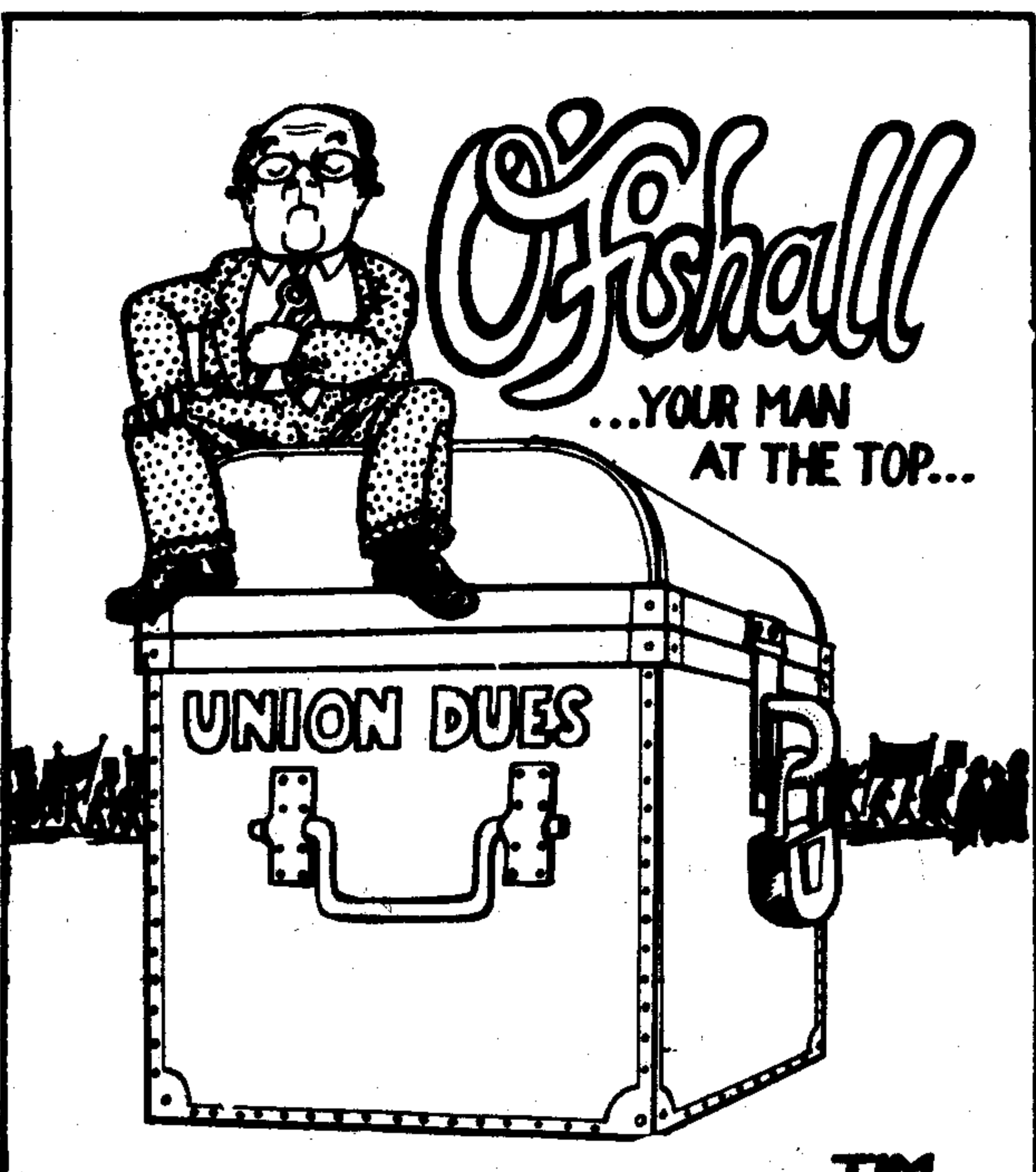
A further 45,000 members of the CPSA are being balloted on the offer. The SCPS data processing branch is campaigning for rejection.

Bureaucrats had an easier task in piloting through acceptance of a 9.6% pay deal at a Special Conference of NALGO local government delegates.

But despite assurances from chief negotiator Mike Blick that "we see no alternative to acceptance", and a warning that the only action that would achieve any improvement was all-out action, the offer was grudgingly accepted only by 260,000 to 179,000—a margin of 3-2.

An amendment had unsuccessfully called for action to secure the union's original 15% pay claim.

PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report



SOCIALIST PRESS

£4000 m more cuts planned

Ireland: troops out now

SOMOZA OUSTED: NOW FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

Ten years ago British troops were sent into Bogside and Derry to put their heel on the growing anger and resistance in the Catholic ghettos to attacks by Orange gangs and B Specials.

The British government, *Socialist Worker* and the civil liberty marchers all claimed that their role was to prevent violence.

The vicious face of imperialist troops was not long in making itself clear to the most abject impressionists.

Today those same 'revolutionaries' of the SWP sign a platform statement of the Young Liberals which complains of the cost to the British taxpayer, and seeks to bring the Unionists 'to the negotiating table'.

They have been joined in their support for the pro-imperialist position by the IMG, Big Flame and several left MPs as well as by Brendan Gallagher, whose treatment at the hands of the British state might well have given him pause for thought.

The WSL will be campaigning for the biggest possible mobilisation for the march to intervene with a clear anti-imperialist position.

We will be demanding the immediate withdrawal of troops, political status for republican prisoners and self-determination for the Irish people as a whole.

We call for the campaign against British troops and imperialist oppression to be taken up in the labour movement in Ireland North and South and in Britain.

In particular the British labour movement has, as one of its most important tasks, the removal of British troops by a mass campaign including blacking of supplies to the army, and mass mobilisations against the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The crushing defeat suffered by the Somoza dictatorship which brutally dominated Nicaragua for 45 years is a major setback for US imperialism.

The victory of the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the civil war will inevitably spur on the mass struggles against dictatorships in the rest of Central America and alter the balance of power in this critically important region.

The war has been long and bloody. We salute the heroism of the masses and honour the thousands of dead.

At the same time, *Socialist Press* has consistently argued and will continue to argue that the dominant 'Tercerista' wing of the FSLN and the provisional junta it has established are *bourgeois* forces, which are palpably incapable of and now explicitly *opposed* to the overthrow of imperialist capital in Nicaragua.

Composition

If there has been any doubt over this during the course of the war it must now be dispelled. The facts are supremely clear.

The first obvious factor is the composition of the Junta itself. This body contains only one member of the FSLN itself (a 'tercerista'), the other members being an ex-member of the national chamber of commerce, a large landowner, a former employee of the World Bank and a millionaire sugar plantation owner.

Secondly, the Junta openly reflects the increasing 'entente' between the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and US imperialism, not only through the inclusion of



Sandinista guerrillas on the rooftops of Matagalpa

the opposition capitalist groups in the new government but also through its policy of withholding from the total destruction of Somoza's repressive apparatus.

This is most apparent in the concession of 'guarantees' for Somocista butchers and the integration of sectors of the National Guard within the 'new' army.

Minister

This process has already advanced to the extent that a former leading commander of the Guard, Colonel Bernardino Larios, has been appointed Minister of Defence.

Most important of all, of course, is the political practice of the Junta.

It was clearly necessary to expropriate Somoza's property—not least because the masses had already begun to take over his extensive lands.

But existing property relations in general have been steadfastly *defended*, and the Commander of the FSLN southern front has recently announced that land reform will only be of a "limited" character.

It is not sufficient to say, as does *Socialist Challenge* that "the pedigree" of the Junta "indicates that socialist measures are not very likely."

In a country like Nicaragua there is no basis for the establishment of a 'national' bourgeoisie independent of imperialism, capable of wide redistribution of wealth and the introduction of full democratic rights for the masses.

Deflect

The bourgeoisie entered the struggle against Somoza to alter the rules of competition and to deflect the enormous spontaneous force of a mass uprising.

Hitherto it has been largely successful in this endeavour.

We do not look to the junta

for socialist policies; we expect of it populist gestures, constant manoeuvre and a 'stream' of ideological motifs designed to confuse and disorientate the masses.

Yet Nicaragua is still in turmoil and, as in all uprisings and revolutions, the balance of class forces is in a considerable state of flux.

The working class and the peasantry, despite having suffered enormous losses, have been awakened and mobilised in a movement which, albeit directed specifically against Somoza and the 'Yankees', openly poses the questions of collectivization, workers' militias and soviet power.

These issues are most clearly evident in the liberated areas of northern Nicaragua where the 'Marxist' factions of the FSLN have adopted a roughshod radicalism in their administrative measures.

However, the isolated replacement of money by centrally organised provision does not in itself constitute an

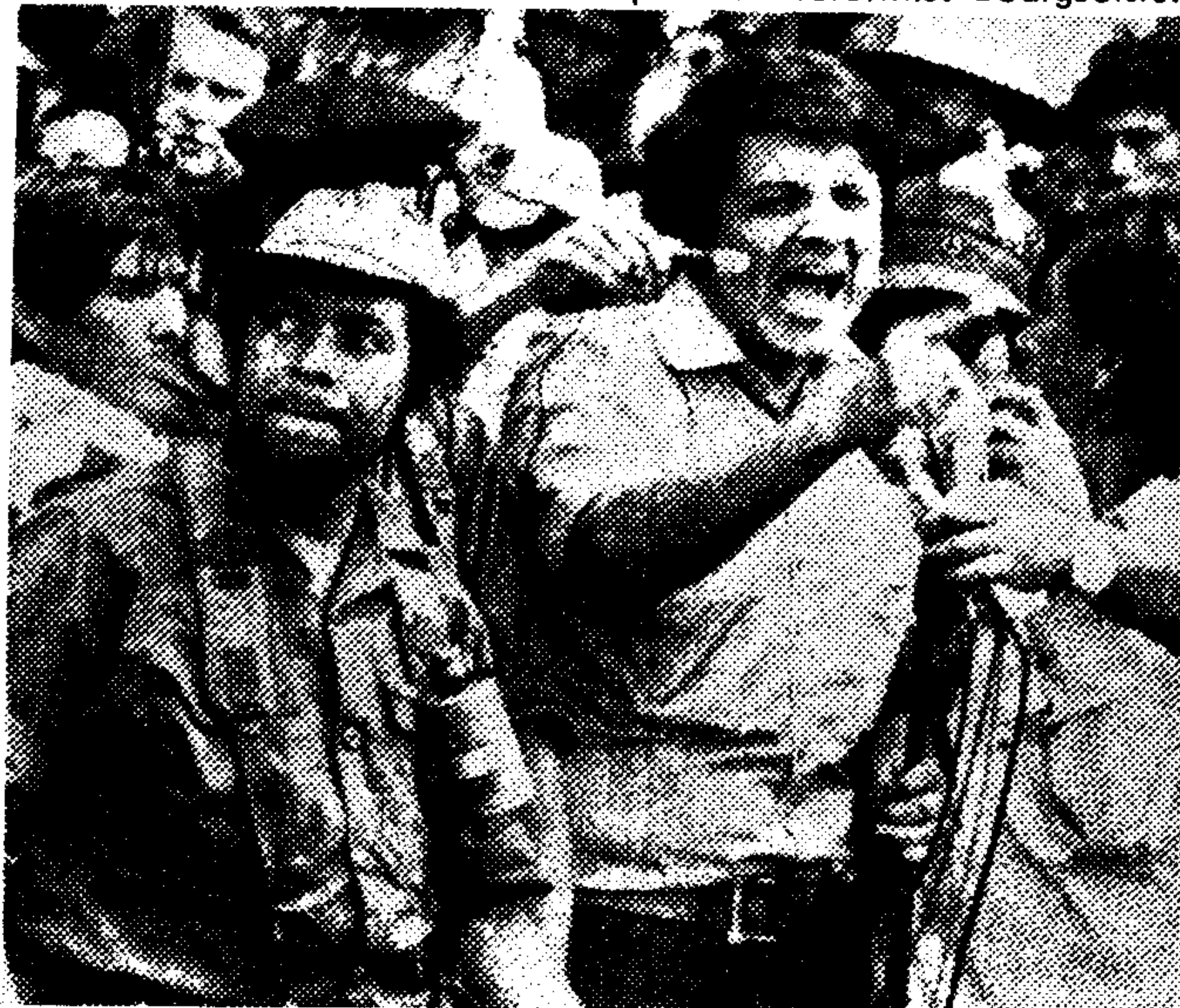
all-out offensive on the capitalist market.

Moreover, this measure has not been the result of action by independent organs of the workers and peasants.

We reiterate our call for the 'intransigent' sections of the FSLN to break with the popular frontism of the Terceristas and with the bourgeois parties.

These parties promise not only the suppression of the mass movement but also the reconstruction of the full imperialist mandate in Nicaragua.

Hence, besides launching a campaign for full democratic rights, agrarian reform, expropriation without compensation of property held by all Somocistas, a total break with US imperialism and the establishment of a constituent assembly revolutionary socialists must struggle incessantly to develop workers' militias and soviets to defend and deepen the conquests of the civil war against the manoeuvres of the parasitic 'reformist' bourgeoisie.



Junta leader Ramires Mercado

As the Tory government last week set its sights on slashing a further staggering £4,000 million from public spending, British capitalism was already lurching out of control down the road to recession, roaring inflation and 2 million unemployed.

Latest forecasts of trends over the next year vary, but all predict a sharp upward leap in unemployment, while OECD reports an actual *fall* in Gross National Product.

On every front the Tories' frantic efforts to raise the profitability of private industry—now at an all-time low—means rising prices, coupled with a war on jobs and hard-won working conditions.

Month to month

In the steel industry the government is to take the unprecedented step of providing finance only on a month-to-month basis in order to ram through a savage programme of cuts, closures and speed-up designed to reverse BSC's current £350 million losses within nine months.

But in the public services, a wholesale massacre of both jobs and basic rights is inevitable at a time when VAT increases and massive inflation are combined with Labour and now Tory spending cuts.

Already the London Health Service faces decimation in frantic moves to cut "overspending" (see page 10); other Area Health Authorities are also seeking immediate cutbacks in staff and services.

And education too is falling under the Tory sledgehammer, with plans for wholesale redundancies and "natural wastage" for domestic and teaching staff.

Overseas students, too, face crippling penalties as a result of the £200 million cut in education subsidies, which will raise annual fees for foreign students to over £3,000.

But it is not only jobs and services that are hit by Tory policies.

The profitable public services—the Post Office, Gas and Electricity—in which the exploitation of a low paid workforce has created a massive surplus—are to impose huge new price increases.

Managers

The cash accruing from these inflationary price hikes will be used by the Tories to finance their tax handouts to employers, managers and foremen.

But while workers face plunging living standards and growing dole queues, there are some people who are well pleased with the Tories first two months in office.

The National Westminster bank has increased profits by a staggering 102%; and shareholders in major firms will cream off a £400 million dividends bonanza in the next few weeks as the Tories lift controls.

On the carcass of whole areas of the public services and of ruined weaker sections of private industry driven to the wall by the Tories' recessionary policies, the top bankers and big monopolies know they can feed like vultures, and grow fat at the expense of the entire working class.

Only the most tenacious struggle by workers for strikes and occupations in defence of *all* jobs, and for a policy of opening the books of the capitalist and public sector employers to reveal the wholesale plunder planned by the Tories can show workers the alternative to years of recession and unemployment—the struggle for mass action to *bring down* the Tory government and fight for a socialist, planned economy.

FUND

A determined effort by our members and supporters together with a magnificent collection of £320 at the end of the WSL International Summer School means that we are able to announce that the £2,500 target in our Special Fund has been reached on time.

The total now stands at £2573.60 with a further £200 in pledges still to be paid in. This means that we shall now proceed with the first of our scheduled publications in the next few weeks—a second edition of *The Battle for Trotskyism* which contains the opposition documents that the founding members of the WSL fought for within the WRP prior to their expulsion in 1974.

Other publications scheduled for later this year include an account of the fight for Trotskyist leadership in the Leyland factories in Cowley and a new edition of the Transitional Programme.

Meanwhile, readers and supporters are reminded that our monthly fund of £600 which has been raised throughout the period of the Special Fund is now open for contributions to the August fund.

Contributions should be sent to:

Socialist Press Monthly Fund
31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR

Oxford tote winners for the last four weeks were
3, 19—ticket 108; 7, 29—ticket 330; 1, 13—ticket 073
and 12, 11—ticket 065.