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WOMAN WORKER

SUPPLEMENT

Cuts struggles

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The lurch towards militarism and international aggression by Ronald Reagan's American administration—with eager support from Britain's Margaret Thatcher—has chilled the blood of workers throughout the world.

His plan to raise the USA's war budget by a thumping \$32 billion next year—buying up additional bombers, fighters, battleships, and the transport facilities to ship a Rapid Deployment Force to wage war anywhere in the world—might appear to flow from a position of strength.

Shameless

And his shameless political, military and economic support for the bloody military dictatorship in El Salvador is on a scale which he hopes is sufficiently huge to intimidate the left wing liberation forces in Salvador and throughout Latin America into submission.

\$50 million worth of US guns, helicopters, military trans-

REAGAN'S WAR-CRY

port and ammunition are now being ferried to El Salvador, together with additional US military "advisors", ground staff and technicians to back up the

rickety armed forces of the reactionary junta and its right wing paramilitary murder squads.

And Reagan has called for an extra \$225 million to be given to the junta in economic aid—much of which could in turn be diverted to military use.

Yet all this enormous flow of cash and arms is being focussed on a tiny country no bigger than Wales, with a population of no more than 5 million people!

High point

Reagan's war moves stem not from strength and confidence, but from an acute awareness that, in the wake of the defeats inflicted on imperialism in Vietnam, Angola, Iran and Nicaragua, the left wing guerrilla war in El Salvador is simply the high point of a growing world-wide tide of rebellion.

And El Salvador has also been picked as a battleground by Reagan because he has assessed that the guerrilla forces will obtain little or no military

assistance from the Soviet bureaucracy.

Despite the propaganda peddled by US envoys, Reagan knows full well that little or no military equipment is being supplied to the FMLN by the Kremlin or by the Castro bureaucracy in Cuba.

The fact that Brezhnev signally failed even to mention the war in Central America in his lengthy report to last week's CPSU Congress in Moscow was not lost on the imperialist leaders.

Nor was the fact that while fringe meetings were held in Moscow for all manner of insignificant figures, the delegation from Nicaragua's Sandinista regime was offered no chance to speak.

"Coexistence"

The Kremlin leaders have made it quite clear that they are not prepared to assist the revolutionary struggle in El Salvador or back the Nicaraguan government. Instead Brezhnev's

speech confirmed that world Stalinist leaders are possibly more anxious than the imperialists to arrange a further meeting to redraw the lines of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

Battling

Yet the working masses in the neo-colonial countries have shown that they accept no such limitations on their struggle.

Faced with attacks on their already poverty-line living standards, and briding under the brutal repression of military dictatorships and right wing regimes, they continue to seek means of battling for their rights.

In 1979 the Nicaraguan FSLN logged up the first major victory in Central America when they ousted the bloody regime of General Somoza.

Since then the struggle in El Salvador has gathered strength—though dogged by acute problems of political leadership.

Attempts in late 1979 to incorporate social democrat and

Stalinist leaders into Salvador's new ruling junta were smashed by strike action and armed resistance.

But as the civil war has grown in scope, the left wing political groupings have fallen into the trap of seeking a cross-class alliance with sections of capitalists and politicians—who are committed to preserving capitalist rule in El Salvador.

They have set up the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR). And, with support from the capitalist governments in Mexico and West Germany, and from the social democratic "Second International", they have appealed to the US imperialists to negotiate a political settlement which would install a "democratic" capitalist government to continue exploitation in a more 'respectable' form in El Salvador.

Full brunt

As FDR statesmen tour European capitals the guerrilla forces, unified in the FMLN, face the full brunt of the bloody American-backed onslaught.

And they face attempts (through US economic and military blackmail aimed particularly at Nicaragua and Cuba) to cut off the already inadequate supplies of arms and ammunition.

The guerrilla forces remain militarily strong—some 10,000 organised in full or part-time units. But they remain politically weak—particularly in the towns. And they need international support. In solidarity with their struggle we must find every way possible to:

*Mobilise to halt the Thatcher/Reagan war drive!
*Black all arms and aid to the Salvador junta!

*Demand Soviet and Cuban arms and aid to the FMLN!

*Break from the FDR—for socialist revolution in Salvador!
*Build Trotskyist parties in El Salvador and Central America.

Demo: see Woman Worker



Warmongers wave: Reagan and Thatcher.

SILENCE ON SOVIET CRISIS

Soviet President Brezhnev's report to the 26th Congress of the CPSU revealed the crisis that now wracks the economy of the USSR.

It showed that far from being an isolated example, the Polish economy is simply at a more acute stage of crisis than the bureaucratically-run economies of the other deformed workers' states.

Brezhnev confessed to difficulties in "supplying the population with food". This problem he said included supplies of meat, fruit and vegetables. And delays in distribution meant that stocks often went rotten before they could be consumed.

He attacked the quality and quantity of consumer goods especially "textiles, knitwear, leather footwear, furniture and television sets."

He spoke of married couples waiting years for a house, and

attacked the workings of the health service.

He even criticised the interference by government and Party officials in the running of collective farms.

His sweeping attacks seem to cover almost every aspect of production and distribution. But the report was passed unanimously by the placemen at the Congress. And the criticisms will bring no changes.

No correction

Indeed the whole affair exposes one of the major factors in the Soviet economic crisis. Because without freedom of criticism and the involvement of the working class in discussion and decisions on the economy, there can be no correction of errors; every plan for the economy must therefore remain a bureaucratic plan imposed from above.

While the basis for a properly planned economy has existed in the Soviet Union since October 1917 in the form of nationalised industries, banks and state control of foreign trade, the political dictatorship of the Kremlin bureaucracy has since the mid-1970s excluded the development of such a plan.

Brezhnev's report showed that, far from being discussed by the toiling masses in the USSR, the deficiencies of the economy are not even discussed by the 5,000 privileged bureaucrats who attended the show-piece Congress.

Even Sam Russell—veteran Stalinist reporter for the *Morning Star* felt obliged to point out the failure of delegates to discuss the shortcomings listed by Brezhnev:

"It was to be expected that when Mr Brezhnev's report was discussed, delegates would deal with them and put forward ideas on how they were to be

overcome.

However the contrivances so far of leading party officials from various republics and regions have consisted of a series of self congratulatory speeches quite startling in their smug self-satisfaction.

While praising Mr Brezhnev to the skies for his good work, leadership and foresight, not one of the delegates who has spoken so far has taken up a single one of his criticisms."

Russell lists in this category the first secretaries of the Parties of Moscow, Leningrad, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Bashkiria and Rostov and the Prime Minister of Russia.

He says that the first secretary of Byelorussia made a passing reference to the food programme:

"while the rest was silence and while declarations of undying loyalty to Mr Brezhnev came thick and fast."

Russell should not be surprised at the lack of critical discussion. British CP leader Gordon MacLennan himself made no criticism of the Congress—referring simply to the British CP's "well known" disagreement with Moscow over Afghanistan.

The suppression of criticism



is indeed the very heart and soul of the Stalinist tradition which has spawned both Brezhnev on the one hand and Russell on the other.

Indeed the *Morning Star* on March 3 showed that it is Russell who is out of step, when it proudly claimed that the Congress proved that "socialism does work".

Growing threat to Kaunda

Recent events in Zambia have shown the development of the struggle to levels that are posing a direct and growing threat to Kaunda's bosses' government.

The most decisive challenge to the government's authority and control was mounted by the massive mineworkers' strike in January.

In the Copper Belt area, the political and economic nerve centre of the country, there are over 55,000 mineworkers, who form the strongest section of the Zambian working class, and make up about one-sixth of all employed workers.

Their recent strike action was the most powerful demonstration of the developing forward movement of the working masses.

On January 23, the whole workforce on the copper mines took strike action in protest against Kaunda's threat to expel 17 top trade union officials from their positions in ZCTU.

The officials were disciplined by head bureaucrat Kaunda for opposing his moves to curb the powers of the trade union bureaucracy which in turn is a part of the state bureaucracy under the one party UNIP regime.

The trade union bureaucracy provides a base for opportunists and reformists seeking to use the strength of the working class as a bargaining counter in their opposition to Kaunda.

But the growing militancy of workers, and their determination to fight for their interests, poses a growing challenge to the grip of the class collaborationist bureaucracy over the unions.

Dissident union bureaucrats are acutely aware of the dangers to their own privileged positions involved in any attempt to draw on the support of the organised working class or to give a lead to workers' demands in order to maintain some credibility.

Their unstable opposition is intolerable to Kaunda's government, which is facing a deepening crisis of political control.

The root of this crisis is the massive economic crisis hitting the already weak and backward economy. This forces Kaunda—as an agent of imperialist capital—to oversee even harsher attacks on the working masses in order to protect and boost profits.

Determination

But the working class is refusing simply to accept these attacks and is showing a fighting determination to win improvements in its living and working conditions.

This is the conflict that lies behind Kaunda's moves against the union bureaucracy.

But Kaunda did not reckon with the quick and powerful response of the mineworkers, whose action threw the government into severe crisis.

And there can be no doubt that union leaders, despite the

growing tension between some of them and Kaunda, were equally terrified by this mobilisation of the mineworkers which threatened to pass rapidly beyond their restraining efforts.

Failing to crush the fighting determination of the miners by police/army repression, and fearing that the miners would spearhead an escalating mobilisation through wider layers of the working masses and around a broadening range of demands Kaunda was forced to back down.

Already the country's commercial workers, drawing confidence from the miners' action, had come out on strike alongside the miners in protest at the beating up of one of their union officials by UNIP thugs.

Kaunda reinstated the 17 officials and the workers called off their action a week after it had begun.

In the cabinet reshuffle that followed this forced compromise, Kaunda demoted his right-hand man Mainza Chona, who had led the government attack on the strike and had opposed a compromise.

He also sacked the prime minister Daniel Lisulo, replacing him by Nalumino Mundia, who has a record of opposition to Kaunda.

These drastic measures were forced on Kaunda in his frantic efforts to placate the mineworkers and to stop the erosion of his already narrow base of support.

This support has by now largely shrunk to sections of the army and the state bureaucracy, but even there it is shot through with tensions and divisions produced by the deepening economic recession and the growing crisis of political control over the masses.

Shake-ups

Kaunda's attempts to clamp down on opposition within his own power base have already produced a series of shake-ups in the officer caste of the army and the top ranks of the government bureaucracy.

Last October, Kaunda claimed that an attempted coup had been uncovered. This was used as a cover for a wave of purges and arrests, and for the imposition of a state of emergency—including a curfew in the urban areas, where 40% of the country's six million people are concentrated.

The inability of these actions to contain mass opposition was sharply shown in November, when ZCTU leader Fred Chiluba was forced by the anger of organised workers to threaten a general strike.

Zambia's backward economy is totally geared to the production of profits for international monopoly capital.

The state ownership of major sections of the economy serves only to conceal this reality, while at the same time allowing the weak Zambian bourgeoisie and a privileged

layer of the petty bourgeoisie a share in the crumbs from the imperialist table.

While the nationalisations undertaken since independence were measures forced on Kaunda to head off the demands of the masses, they were not turned to the advantage of the masses by a struggle to smash imperialist control.

The catastrophic impact of the world recession is most sharply reflected in the collapse of the price for copper exports, which account for over 80% of foreign exchange earnings.

Coupled with the rising costs of vital imports like oil and food, this has driven Kaunda's regime into even tighter dependence on imperialist banks and trusts, which demand increasingly harsh measures against the masses in return for vital loans and investment.

Conditions

As part of the conditions laid down by the IMF for its latest loan, Kaunda has slashed subsidies on food and other basics and launched further attacks on wages, jobs and working conditions.

As the daily struggle for the basic necessities of life sharpens, the impoverished masses have shown a clear willingness to resist these attacks and take forward their demands.

The mineworkers' victory against Kaunda's offensive on the organised working class has strengthened the class confidence and militancy of workers, and pointed to a decisive way forward for the oppressed urban and rural poor.

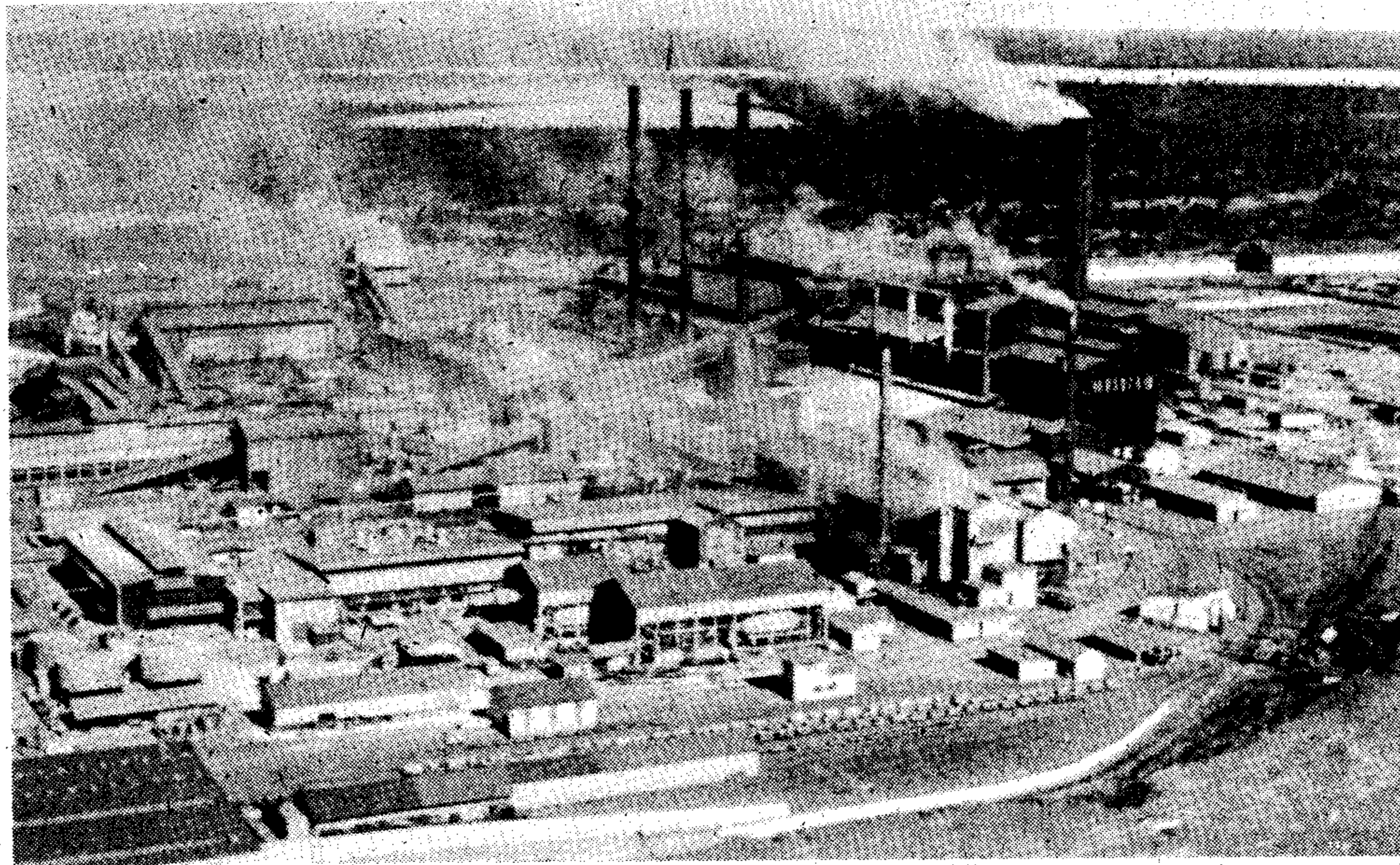
The Zambian working class cannot afford to hold back while imperialism and its agents are driven towards an escalating counter-attack.

Workers must turn to the task of mobilising their own class strength behind demands and actions that start from the needs of the working masses, defend the class interests of the workers, and give a decisive revolutionary answer to the crushing problems facing the masses of urban and rural poor.

In the communities and workplaces, independent organisations must be built to take up the struggle for workers' demands and workers' self-defence against state and right wing attacks.

In the trade unions, rank and file workers' committees fighting for workers' demands can spearhead the struggle against the bureaucracy and for the independence of the unions.

Against the class collaborationist opposition currents to Kaunda within the petty bourgeoisie, the bureaucracy and the army who are posing as alternatives to Kaunda's regime, the fight must be taken up for a programme of demands and action that can show an independent way forward in struggle for a fighting alliance of the oppressed masses under working class leadership.



Zambian copper plant

Bolivia—country without university

The dictatorship of General Garcia in Bolivia is stepping up its attack on culture and education.

In addition to the closure of the universities immediately following the coup of 17 July 1980, the regime has now begun a series of meetings for 'educators' and 'restructuring commissions', the proposals of which are nothing less than the reflection of the will of the junta.

Nobody can fail to recognise that the closure of the universities has been undertaken precisely to stop them being an active centre of resistance to the fascist dictatorship.

Thousands of students have been forced into employment in marginal sectors or into the growing mass of Bolivia's unemployed.

Moreover, some 4,300 employees in higher education have been suspended.

There is widespread apprehension at the fact that in Bolivia today the only professional training institution that continues to function is the army's Colegio Militar.

The recent announcement that the first year of the teacher training course is to be suspended and that in future the intake will be drastically cut (in a country where illiteracy runs at 60%) means that overall some 30,000 students will lose the chance to enter higher education.

and receive a professional training.

The hundreds of students who were forced into exile following the coup have been impeded from entering universities in other countries because the junta has periodically announced that it will be 'shortly reopening' the system 'with full guarantees'.

So far this has proved to be a lie and there is little sign that it intends to undertake such a measure in the short term.

Indeed, it will not do so until it has fully ensured that its 'restructuring commission', which received a budget of some seven million dollars between September and December 1980, has finalised arrangements to eradicate university autonomy and the traditional student-professional equal co-government.

Repression

The commission has announced its intention to 'eliminate all ideology' from the curriculum and totally depoliticise education. This means nothing less than repression of free thought and the suppression of all scientific endeavour. The regime is seeking to establish a university that functions as another arm of the dictatorship as existed under the Banzer government.

Garcia has announced that

in future students that fail their exams will be put on trial and jailed—there can be no more obvious indication of the barbarism that characterises this regime, which having sought to repress the slightest vestige of working class resistance now moves to expel independent thought from Bolivia.

Those students struggling alongside the working class—the only class capable of defeating the dictatorship and ensuring basic liberties—have an obligation to fight for the reopening of the universities, the restitution of their autonomy and of equal co-government with the academic staff.

The universities must once again be made into an active centre of resistance to the military government.

*Down with the dictatorship!

*Reopen all educational institutions!

*Restore university autonomy!

*Restore student-professional co-government!

*Convert the universities into active centres of resistance!

This statement was issued at the end of February by the Grupo Revolucionario Anti-imperialista Boliviano in London which can be contacted through Socialist Press.

WHY THE GENERALS ATTACK

TURKEY'S 'LEFT' UNION

*The Turkey Solidarity Campaign has just produced its latest Information Bulletin which includes material on DISK trials. Available from TSC, 178 Oxford Road, Manchester M14 9QQ.

By Jack Johnson

The preparations by Turkey's September 12 military junta to put on trial several hundred leaders of the country's Confederation of Revolutionary Workers Unions (DISK) marks a critical point in the regime's anti-working class strategy.

At the same time a martial law court is examining ways of stepping up legal attacks on DISK, already declared illegal by the generals' coup.

For the Turkish working class, the struggle to build and defend DISK has in many ways typified its own economic and political evolution over the last 20 years.

The charges faced by the union leaders of 'subversion' and 'attempting to establish a working class dictatorship' mirror the way in which DISK's formation and activities have repeatedly taken an openly political form and reflected the growing consciousness and its striving for independence by the working class.

That this process has just as often been frustrated and betrayed can only be explained in political terms; the monopolising of DISK's leadership by the reformist and petty bourgeois policies of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), the Turkish Workers Party and the Republican Peoples Party.

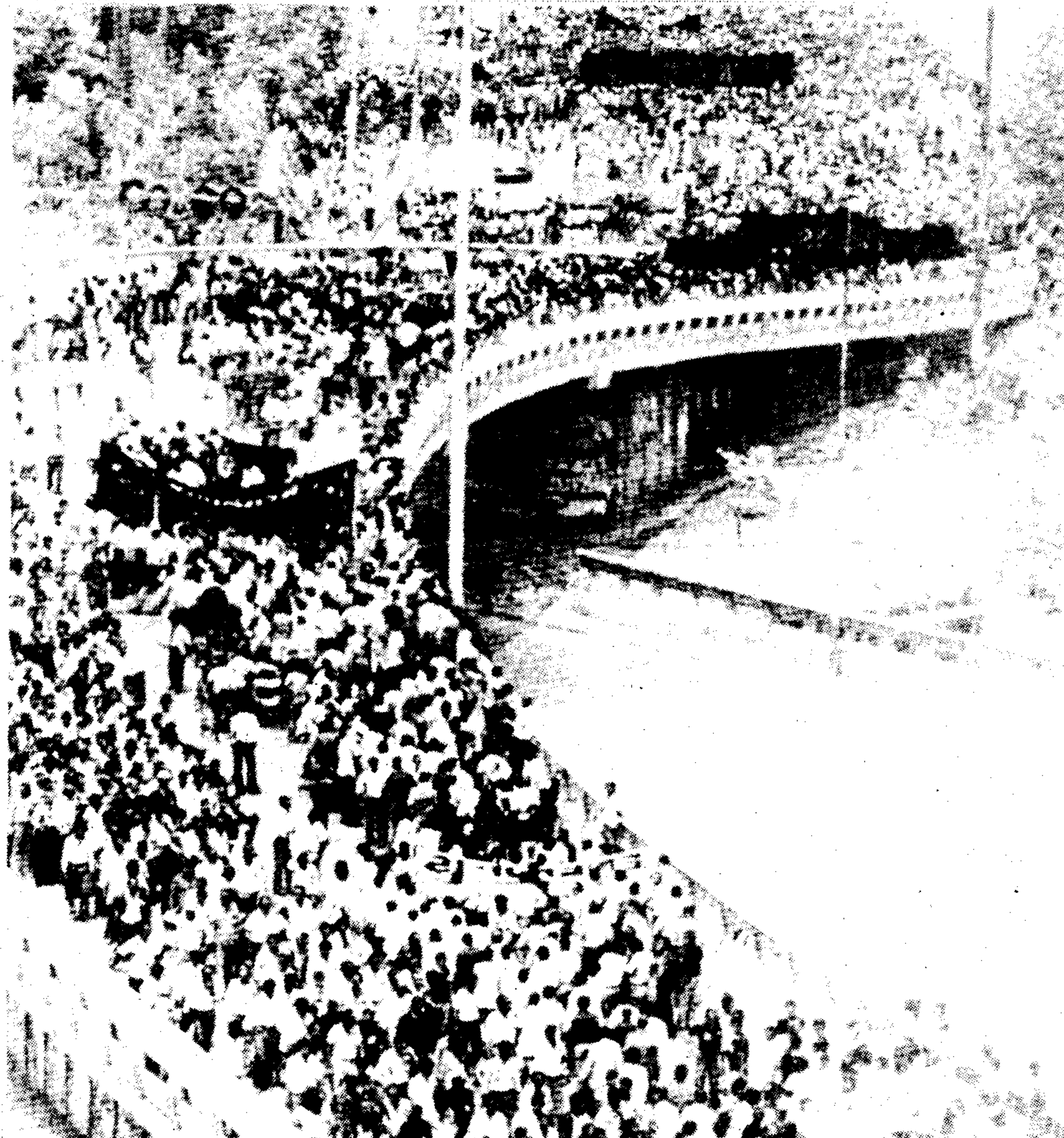
Despite these forces, who have continuously compromised and diverted the union's rank and file's revolutionary potential, time and again it has been DISK which has been in the forefront of the fight against the Turkish ruling class and the state.

To bring out DISK's central importance to the Turkish working class and, not least, help clarify the obvious confusion which exists at the present time about the real state of the workers' movement under the Evren dictatorship, calls for a brief outline of its history.

Generally speaking the development of trade unionism in Turkey has been extremely contradictory, bound up as it inevitably has been with the changing and uneven economic and political conditions which have marked Turkey's growth as a republic.

As with democratic rights overall, the possibility of establishing independent working class organisations emerged only comparatively recently, following the demise of the former one-party rule of Kemal Ataturk's RPP in the immediate post-war years.

Though Ataturk had not been above mobilising working class support in the anti-imperialist national liberation war, consolidation of bourgeois rule



Mass turnout at funeral of Kemal Turkler

led to the effective repression of all union activity to a state similar to that under the former Young Turk regime.

Under conditions of a backward, largely agricultural economy, Ataturk's 'Renewal of Tranquillity' Law of 1925 outlawed trade unionism.

The Labour Code of 1936 went further, banning all strikes and giving the state virtually complete control over the working class.

These measures, with their systematic denial of basic rights, Ataturk borrowed straight from Mussolini's corporate state model in fascist Italy though they were also consistent with the Kemalist 'above classes' stance characteristic of such bonapartist forms of rule.

General Evren significantly dresses in the same clothes today. Further evidence of the Turkish bosses' fear of the working class was the passing of the Societies Law in 1938 which prohibited 'all organisations based on class'.

The ending of World War II brought enormous changes.

Externally, the Marshall Plan's western European reconstruction was complimented by

the cold war Truman Doctrine directed against the USSR.

And internally Turkey was opened up to a dollar-led influx of finance capital, bringing in its wake pressure for political reform.

Sections of the ruling class were forced into recognising the necessity to adapt.

The repeal of the Societies Act in 1946 allowed for the formation of some opposition parties, and meanwhile, especially in Istanbul and Ismir, the working class began forming trade unions.

Yet the Unions Law passed in 1947 had nothing in common with freeing labour from the state; strikes were still banned, there was no collective bargaining and arbitration through the courts remained compulsory.

In addition, no politics were allowed into the unions, a phobia which has figured prominently in subsequent years.

The fifties and sixties changed the Turkish workers' movement irrevocably. The new situation created by rapid industrialisation, demanding wage labour be put on a new footing, led to the formation of the

Turkish Labour Union's Confederation (TURK-IS) in 1952.

That this was also the year in which Turkey entered NATO is no coincidence, since a new relationship with imperialism, especially the USA, was to be a prominent feature in the development of TURK-IS.

A combination of Turkey's big business interests and the USA's Central Intelligence Agency ensured the newly formed unions were loyal to the needs of domestic and foreign capital.

Bureaucrats

On hand, providing finance and advice, were the gangster bureaucrats of America's AFL/CIO who played a key role in tutoring their fledgling counterparts in the arts of 'free' trade unionism.

Continuing political upheavals led to the overthrow and hanging of Prime Minister Menderes in the coup of 1961.

Its aftermath brought limited and still heavily qualified reforms, most notably the right to strike.

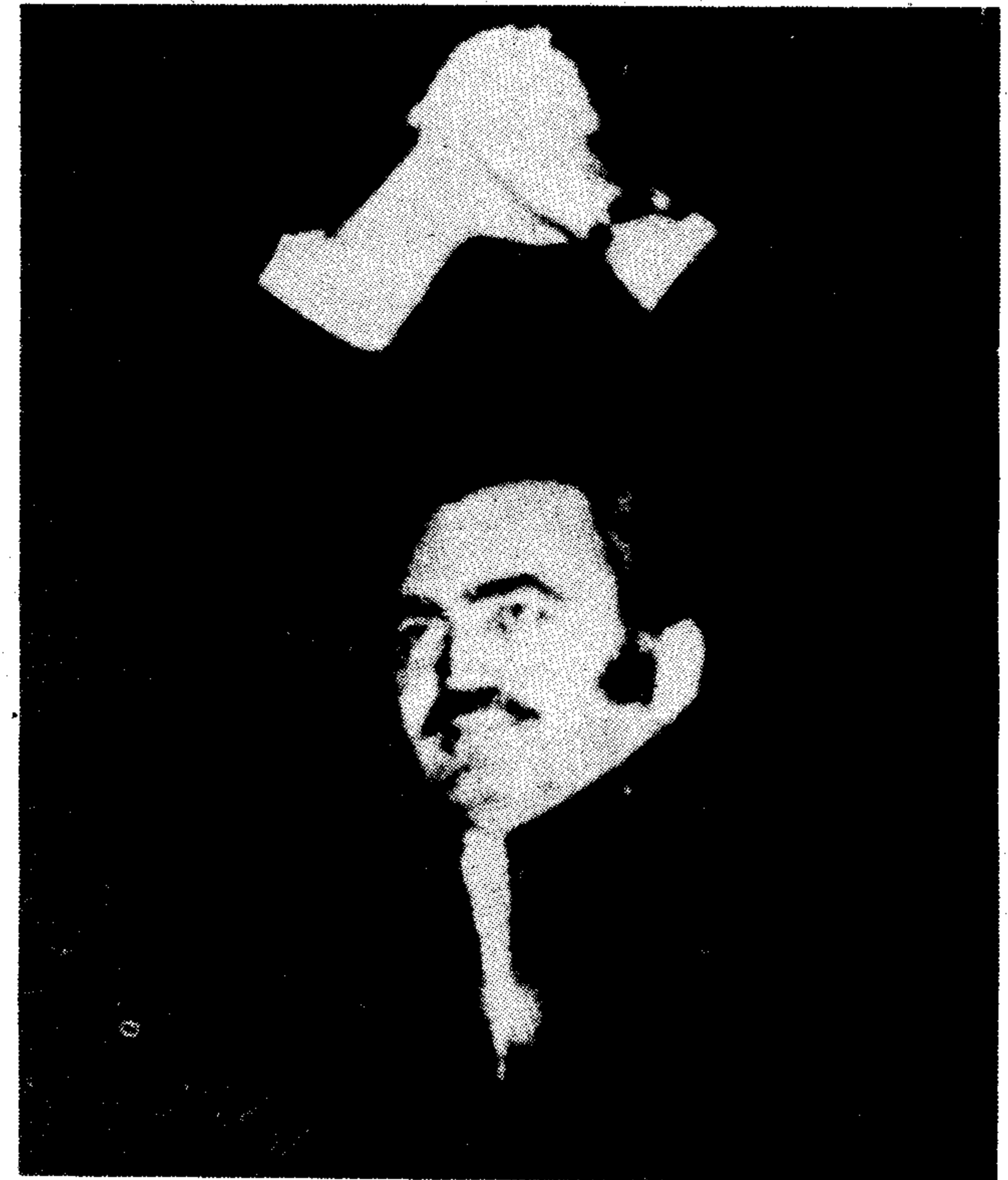
Implementation was another matter and only after TURK-IS was forced into mass demonstrations (100,000 in Istanbul alone) was it realised in practice.

This was the opening of a sustained period of intense economic and political struggle within which the industrial working class was to emerge as a qualitatively new force.

Union membership massively grew and mounted a challenge to the national industry-wide limits placed on collective bargaining, with demands for the right to negotiate at local plant level.

Since this struck at the highly centralised bureaucratic way in which the TURK-IS exercised control over the membership it was resisted as bitterly by them as by the capitalists.

Out of this ferment of newly awakened class consciousness came the formation of the Turkish Workers Party in 1962. Leaders of two of the most powerful TURK-IS affiliates—



Kemal Turkler

Kemal Turkler of the metal workers union Maden-Is and Riza Kahnuws of the rubber workers union Lastik-Is—joined with a group of intellectuals to establish the Party.

Though limited to a classically reformist Parliamentary perspective, this move was potentially of enormous significance as it broke with the historic alliance between labour and the bourgeois and petty bourgeois parties and politicians.

This political turmoil continued and intensified, reaching a peak in the mid-60s. Big strikes broke out and increasingly led to sharp clashes with the state forces.

The turning point came in 1966 in events which were to lead directly to DISK's formation.

A 5 month strike in an Istanbul glass factory, ostensibly over the right to separate factory negotiations, posed all the questions which had been coming to a head within TURK-IS over its independence from the bosses.

Relations inside TURK-IS, already polarised by previous struggles, were forced to bursting point by confederation President Halil Tunc openly siding with the Justice Party government against strikers.

The most extreme class collaboration holding TURK-IS together was now being broken up by the blows of working class action.

Many of its affiliated unions declared for solidarity with the striking workers and were thrown out. From this came the setting up of DISK as a separate confederation.

Presenting itself as an accomplished fact to a panic-stricken ruling class and pledged formally to oppose class collaboration, it marked a new maturity and confidence in the development of the Turkish working class.

Class nature

Examining the emergence of DISK throws light on the class nature of TURK-IS, whose membership of well over one million was to remain considerably bigger than its rival.

As its origins confirm, TURK-IS came about as a response to the demands of Turkish capitalism at a particular stage of its development.

Its cravenly yellow character was consistent with an organisation which had been created from above and run with not even a nominal independence from the native and imperialist ruling class (between 1960 and 1970 it was reputed

to have received as much cash in direct financial support from the USA as from the whole of its membership subscriptions).

But plumbing the depths of class collaboration is still not synonymous with being part of a corporate state—a view held by some to explain its continued legality under the present military regime and in particular the appointment of TURK-IS President Sadik Side to a post in the civilian cabinet.

To make such an elementary mistake requires an analysis based at best merely on superficial appearances, ignoring the contradictions contained in its development.

Clearly, such tame imitations of genuine trade unions are of no use to the working class, but they are not the same thing as labour organisations which have been incorporated into the state as the result of an historic atomisation of the proletariat.

However partial, there have been many illustrations of these contradictions.

TURK-IS leader Halil Tunc, a dyed-in-the-wool spokesman of the big bourgeoisie during the '70s from time to time gave half-hearted support to the petty bourgeois 'liberal' leader Ecevit, disturbing the lengthy traditional relationship between TURK-IS and the big bourgeoisie's Justice Party.

More obviously, as recently as 1979, delegations from TURK-IS unions turned out in support of the DISK-organised May Day demonstration in Izmir.

Turkey's ruling class do have a 'trade union' organisation which stands for a corporate state—the now closed down MISK, run by the fascist Nationalist Action Party.

Though never strong enough to impose itself on large numbers of workers, it was even on occasions used against TURK-IS as well as DISK.

We should also remind ourselves of how the fascists solve the 'problem' of militant trade union leaders—not by torture and the feigned neutrality of General Evren's show trials but by bloody murder, such as that of Maden-Is leader Kemal Turkler, shot dead in Istanbul a month before the coup.

Despite its perfidious leaders, DISK symbolises the major gains made by the Turkish workers after years of struggle and sacrifice.

It is the duty of the international trade union and labour movement to condemn unreservedly the attempts to destroy these achievements which if successful will set back the Turkish working class a generation.



Please send me more details about the Workers Socialist League.

Name

Address

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



Labour demonstration against the cuts, November 1979

LAMBETH AND THE FIGHT TO DEFEAT THE TORIES

As Labour councils up and down the country decide on rate levels for the coming financial year the question of how to respond to Tory attacks on local government finance is sharply posed. *Socialist Press* has consistently argued for a policy of mobilising the working class behind Labour councils in a confrontation with the Tories. But some of Labour councils have argued for raising rates in order to 'buy time' to prepare a movement against the Tories. Lambeth council leader TED KNIGHT is recognised as expressing this view most consistently. *Socialist Press* supporters KEITH WHITE and IAN SWINDALE recently interviewed him. The second part of that interview is printed below. The final part will be published, together with a comment, next week.

KW: This rates backlash in Lambeth, could you say something about that and how significant you think it is? What steps are you taking to fight it?

TK: Inevitably, because we were forced to raise a supplementary rate—we were forced, in that instance, the District Auditor was able to force that situation—there has been an adverse reaction to it. People, of course, don't want to pay more money.

They don't always identify the services of the council with the need to pay money for them. And what has become obvious in meetings other than those orchestrated by Tory Party Central Office, is that people tend to identify the services of the council with their own immediate experiences. We've had situations where people have said—oh, the council, look at them, they sent down some workers and they hung a door upside down. Alternatively there was a scaffold up for twelve months, why was that?

In other words they identify the obvious and inevitable stupid things that happen in a major organisation as their experience of it, unless they personally have experience of the social services or other factors.

And so there was a reaction, but I think that reaction can be combatted. What we are trying to do at a local level is we are trying to use the council's machinery to the maximum for the maximum propaganda that we can put out countering charges made against us and that at local Labour Party level, certainly this constituency (Norwood), is engaged in a fight with leaflets and other propaganda, other methods of organising opposition to the Tories and the whole defence of the services of the council.

I think it can be done—I don't think it is necessarily going to be a speedy process because I think the media has equated local government with waste. I think we have lost that battle nationally at the moment, or we are in danger of losing that battle, because neither the Labour Party has fought nor the trade unions have fought publicly for an equation of public expenditure related to services needed by people.

In fact, the Labour government previously, in its cut-back on public expenditure, frankly only fuelled that situation where public expenditure was identified as wasteful.

So I think there is a danger of that backlash being there for some period, but I think we can combat it and there is not a need for great pessimism.

Of course the problem that we have with the right is that they are now pointing to the fact that while we may be having some difficulties in elections at a local level, certainly say the GLC election, that they won't have any difficulties in their areas. This is certainly true. In local authorities that we can point to in London—Southwark, Islington, where they've been cutting and cutting and cutting and virtually destroyed the basis of some of their services—Labour is in no difficulties in the elections. There is a strong anti-Tory feeling dominating.

Whereas the fight we have put forward has tended obviously, to provoke a situation where it isn't so easily understood.

The demands we are getting from meetings is not that we should stop services but that we should make cuts, that the government is too powerful, we can't defeat them. Well I think we've got to fight it back, which I think we are trying to do.

IS: I get the impression from reading the local press that on the one hand, one of the most vocal elements in the borough on the question of rates seems to be the shopkeepers—they suggest that it is going to become impossible to continue trading if the rates continue to rise. That would, if true, seem to contain dangers as that layer can quickly become quite extreme in a right wing way. At the same time are you not running the risk of also alienating Labour support within the borough?

TK: On the question of the shopkeepers that is inevitable. It is an easily identifiable levy, the rates. There is no evidence of bankruptcy amongst shopkeepers in Lambeth. In fact we have a waiting list for small businesses coming into the borough. So there's no real issue, but it's an identifiable one. I mean they are not complaining about the commer-

cial rents that are going up, or their electricity bills or their gas bills or anything else. So it's an identifiable political argument against us.

Yes, I think the Labour vote is going to be affected—in the sense that they are going to start questioning. The interesting thing about Lambeth is that you can't walk anywhere in Lambeth without some people aren't talking about Heseltine, the rates, Ted Knight or whatever it may be. In other words there's a great deal of political—not necessarily overtly political comment going on but a lot of it is big discussions going on all over the place.

In every shop, on every estate, in every area, major discussions are going on, at different levels, obviously, so that in itself is not a bad thing.

Is there a danger of right wing reaction? Yes, of course there is. The middle class, the small shopkeepers can be driven to the right very easily. Of course what one has to be careful about is what is the answer to that. If we had made the cuts we wouldn't have driven them to the right. If we'd cut our services and therefore not had rate increases there would be no such dangers. Well I don't think one can follow that line of argument.

IS: Yes, I was outside the meeting you did in the Town Hall listening to the relay and it was quite clear that the majority of the audience weren't at all interested in most of the services provided to the people who need them in the borough. I'm not suggesting that you can avoid that right-wing backlash, but what worries me more is whether it is possible to mobilise the necessary support to counter that amongst the working class in the borough when they too have to find the money to pay mounting rate bills?

TK: Well I think it is. I think it does require people to go out and organise it. Our problem at the moment is that we've got people—basically Labour Party members—spending all their time debating what their best tactics are without actually going out to test any of their tactics. That's our problem in the Labour Party here locally. They can spend hours debating whether the Labour council is right or wrong but they get

frightened to death when they go out and actually test anything outside.

The trade unions have actually stepped much further than the Labour Party locally.

The trade unions went out and campaigned in the streets. That's more than some of our more vocal comrades in the Labour Party have done, whatever faction they are associated with.

KW: You talked at the very beginning about the fact that you thought it had to be recognised that the Tories would not be persuaded, and therefore the point of building this movement would be to bring them down. Now we've just had a situation which lasted about two days with the miners' strike where there was a lot of enthusiasm for that struggle and the possibility of them doing the job for the working class of bringing the Tories down. How do you conceive of this movement actually taking the form of a confrontation with the Tory government in order to bring it down? Is that going to flow out of the problems of local councils and what would be necessary to spark off a confrontation which would bring the government down?

TK: Throughout the building of our fight against the government we have argued for a change of policy from the government. Certainly the miners argued for a change of policy; they didn't ask for the government to fall. They told them to change their policy. We have done exactly the same and that has been the basis of our campaign.

What I have said is that I think there has to be a recognition that they are not necessarily going to take that position and that basically in the end we are going to have to think in terms of the working class bringing them down.

I don't see local government—in fact we have always argued—that the local government arena itself is not capable of mobilising sufficient opposition to the government that would bring its downfall.

We've said it was very necessary for us to link continuously with wider areas of the trade union movement and we have used the argument that local authorities are in the front line

of the defence of the social wage, which they are. Local services provided by the council are the social wage for the majority of workers—wherever their point of work is.

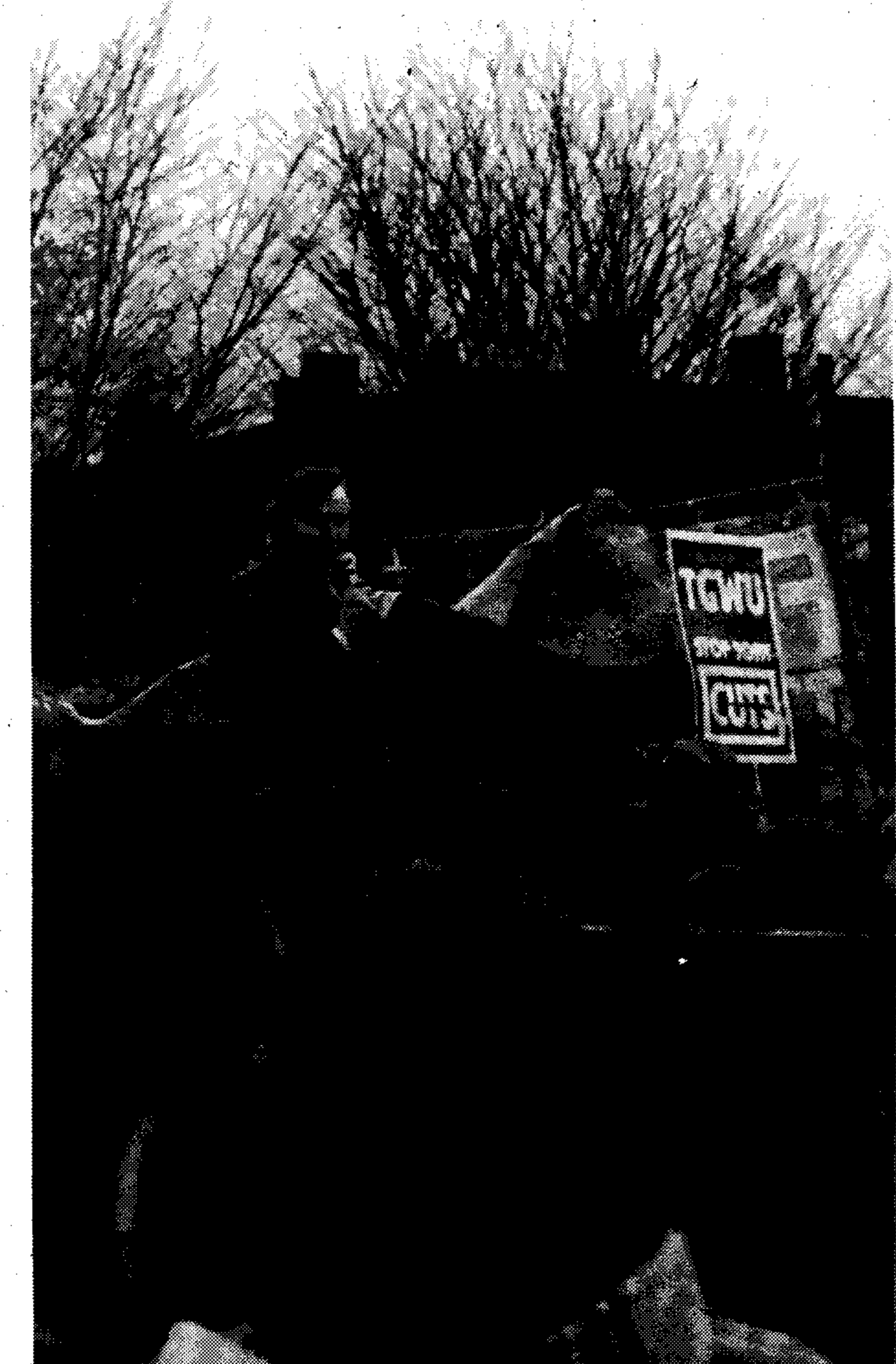
And we have argued that it is possible on the basis of the defence of the social wage to bring other sections of workers into that struggle in defence.

Now I think that what you will have in the building of a movement is not just a straightforward march of one section of workers. It will be a combination of struggles that take place over a period of time.

They may speed up when, for instance, the miners move into a situation of possible confrontation and you can have jumps in that development. It's not really for us to speculate

how in practice it will work out. But I think the need is to be flexible in that situation. In other words a movement is building against the attacks of the government, by the employers on the living standards of the working class generally, whether it's the loss of jobs, whether it's the loss of services, or whatever it may be. And the various strands of that may well come together in a movement which I think will bring a change of government.

So I don't see us just marching up the hill at the head of anybody in that sense. But I do see the local authorities and the actual confrontation and the fact that they are very much in the forefront of the struggle making a major contribution to raising that consciousness.



Knight speaking at Lambeth Day of Action, February 4

1931: LABOUR'S FIRST 'GANG OF THREE'

Part Two

By Colin Morrow

The 1929 Labour government could hardly have been elected in less suitable circumstances for a party which saw socialism as coming through gradual social reform.

In that year the Wall Street Crash ushered in the collapse of international capitalist finance.

Mass bankruptcies ensued on a world-wide scale. The slow growth of unemployment throughout the 1920s became a torrent.

Protectionism

Protectionism in the US walled off whole markets and in Britain the Labour government found itself—as the managers of British capitalism—confronted by a crisis which could permit no reforms or social improvements for the working class—so long as they continued their vision to the continuation of the bankrupt capitalist system.

For socialists of this period there were two choices. Prop up the tottering capitalist system in order to 'reform' it at a later date; or mobilise the working class to destroy it and create a socialist workers' state.

The choice was between reform and revolution. Here lay the clear dividing line between reformist social democracy and revolutionary socialism.

MacDonald and the Labour government chose to cling to their reformism, and therefore to capitalism.

From there on the logic of their decision, however unpleasant they might personally find it, was inescapable.

MacDonald summed up the situation which his government faced in August 1931.

"States get into a condition for which an immediate remedy is required . . . when leadership is required—not merely to follow what is easy but to face what is difficult."

But MacDonald's remedy was rooted in his own cross class politics. For MacDonald, Labour MPs and governments represented not just the workers who supported them but the whole cross class electorate.

Major crisis

They were, therefore, accountable *not* to the labour movement, but to the framework of capitalist society.

Thus, in the interest of maintaining the traditions of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, MacDonald, Thomas and Snowden were obliged to attack the working class.

During the parliamentary recess of summer 1931 a major gold crisis developed. Millions of pounds worth of gold was withdrawn from London banks by foreign investors.

The government's budget was already massively in deficit, and this new crisis of confidence in British capital threatened to send the whole ship aground, leading to major social convulsions and class confrontation.

Government attempts to stave off the crisis by loans were hampered by the insistence of US banks on major cuts in public spending to restore the value of British currency and stabilise British capitalism.

For world imperialism there could be no half measures: defence of capital and profits meant an all-out attack on workers' living standards and rights.

In late July 1931 Snowden had already concluded that unemployment was not only a problem for workers—it was also a problem for capitalism.

Unemployment benefits cost money, money had to be saved.

The arithmetic was simple.

By August 14 he and MacDonald had decided on a major package of cuts necessary to preserve the sacred gold standard by which the pound was convertible into gold.

Snowden went so far as to claim that if Britain were to go off the gold standard then the living standards of the working class would be slashed by half at a stroke.

On 14 July MacDonald met the Tory and Liberal leaders to explain the situation. They agreed to support the government's anti-working class package of cuts. The question was whether the Labour Party as a whole would accept it.

The impression has been given since 1931 that MacDonald favoured cuts to which the majority of the Labour cabinet were opposed.

The truth is somewhat different. Henderson, Lansbury, Dalton and Co. accepted £52 million in cuts—they simply were not prepared to match

Thus, the 1929-31 Labour government came to an end. But MacDonald did at least recognise at the time the *class content* of his actions.

As he said to Snowden: "Tomorrow every Duchess in London will be wanting to kiss me."

For all his rhetoric to electors, MacDonald had, as reformists must, made a decision on class lines. The cross class electorate dissolved into its real constituent parts—the bankers, businessmen, brokers and barons. For bourgeois democracy is no more than the *form of their class rule*.

Altogether, 12 others joined Prime Minister MacDonald and his colleagues in their alliance with the Tories.

On September 11 Snowden presented his Emergency Economy Bill which reduced the dole by 10%, cut teachers' wages by 15% and slashed many other social benefit payments.

In all, £70 million was to be saved, at the expense mainly of



MacDonald in court regalia, January 1924

MacDonald's [and the Tories'] target of £78 million. They literally swallowed the camel then strained at the gnat.

Turning point

Nowhere did they show a clear, principled opposition to the *whole* of MacDonald's pro-capitalist line!

The turning point was the August 21 joint meeting with the Labour NEC and the TUC. The assembled bureaucrats refused to go the whole hog and swallow the massive 10% reduction in unemployment benefits.

Two days later MacDonald made his cabinet resign. On the morning of 24 August he informed the King of their decision. At 9.30 pm. that same evening the formation of a National Government was announced.

The behind-the-scenes wheeling and dealing had obviously been well done.

As the King's private secretary put it in his memoirs:

"It was quite by chance that Mr Baldwin did not come to see the King before Sir Herbert Samuel."

the poorest, most exploited layers of the electorate.

In addition, taxes were increased to raise another £81m. And on September 21 Britain quietly abandoned Snowden's 'Gold Standard'.

Faced with such open treachery it is worthwhile examining the response of the remaining Labour leaders to the exit of the 15. They can hardly be accused of acting with undue haste.

It was not until October 2, some six weeks after MacDonald had decided to dissolve the Labour government he led to join the Tory National Government, that he and his cronies were expelled.

Harassed

Yet, in contrast, the members of the ILP had been harassed throughout the whole of 1931. As early as the ILP Conference of April there had been complaints that "ILP candidates are being refused endorsement throughout the country." And on June 2, MacDonald [in the guise of defender of 'socialism, no less!]

EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE?



From 'PLESS,' (Organ of the N.O.L.C.)

VOTE LABOUR

Labour election poster 1931

had informed the Labour Women's Conference that he would not tolerate criticism of the government. "We must have discipline" he had informed the audience.

In fact the expulsion of MacDonald came only just in time for by October 11 MacDonald had already launched his own party, National Labour. The NLP posters bore the caption: 'The Captain who did not desert his ship'.

For workers all over Britain, however, his obituary was to be—traitor of the century.

Booed

At Shotton, Co. Durham, he was booed from the platform by angry miners during the election campaign.

The NLP only won 18 seats at the November 1931 election. Surrounded on the National Government benches by battalions of Tories, it was clear to almost all that the new government was in all but name a Tory government.

When, four years later, MacDonald was defeated at Seaham by Emmanuel Shinwell this 'truth' was declared public. MacDonald was replaced as Prime Minister by Chamberlain. The Tories could rule in their own name again.

As for MacDonald and his crew of fellow turncoats, they disappeared, totally obliterated from the political scene. There never had been a 'middle of

the road" politics above classes. Their bourgeois political masters wept no tears for their 'saviours' of yesteryear.

Meanwhile, in the Labour Party, reformism still ruled supreme. In 1945 Labour was returned with its biggest-ever majority.

Again the challenge loomed: reform or revolution.

Again the Labour leaders chose the capitalist road. By 1950-51 they were contemplating the use of anti-strike laws against dockers, cuts in the level of health spending and the use of the courts against communists.

As MacDonald had told them, "You still have a job to do."

Crippled by the self same reformism which drove MacDonald into the hands of the Tories, they too remained the servants of capital, not its master.

Today, the impending departure of the openly pro-capitalist clique of the Council for Social Democracy from Labour opens up all these old questions.

Stark warning

Of course, Williams and Co. cannot in one blow reduce Labour to a tiny rump in Parliament as MacDonald did. But their presence within the ranks of Labour, and Foot's pleas for them to remain there, should be a stark warning to workers everywhere.

The departure of the 'Gang

of 3' solves nothing.

Yes. Undoubtedly they should be driven out of the party. But this time we should be absolutely clear. *They leave behind a fifth column far larger than they themselves.*

For they leave behind Callaghan and Healey, the architects of the last Labour government's wage cutting, job slashing policies. They also leave behind Mason, Labour's torture chief in Ireland. And behind them stand the ranks of the PLP who, under the leadership of Foot, are determined *never* to be accountable to the organised working class.

Confidence

When Harold Wilson described Labour during the 1960s as 'the new, natural governing party' he was expressing no more than the confidence of the bourgeoisie in reformism's ability to staunchly defend the exploiters' jealously guarded 'right' to exploit.

The lesson of 1931 is stark and clear. Only a party absolutely committed to the defence of the independent interests of the working class can genuinely represent and respond to the needs of that class. But for that a very different kind of party will be required from the Labour Party—whether that of 1931 or that we see in 1981.

Defeat TUC bid to gag Ireland debate

A large meeting of Oxford Trades Council last week voted to "condemn the bureaucratic attempts of the TUC General Council to gag and censor discussion on Ireland within the labour movement."

Delegates supported an emergency resolution tabled by Oxford NUJ Branch demanding that the TUC withdraw its threat to disaffiliate any trades council which supports the conference convened in Coventry on March 14 by the Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Campaign.

Six trades councils have already decided to support the conference, and face disaffiliation along the lines of the TUC moves against Tameside Trades Council last year.

In each case the TUC has been moved to its frenzied, anti-democratic action by the fact that trade unionists wished

to discuss the question of the war in Ireland—a war in which TUC and Labour leaders have shamelessly thrown in their lot with the Tories in their efforts to preserve imperialist rule in the six counties.

TUC bureaucrats have made it clear that they regard it as an expellable offence to do so much as attend a conference designed to question and oppose existing TUC policy on Ireland.

What is this policy? The laughably misnamed "Better Life for All Campaign" upholds the military subjugation of the people of the six counties of Ireland, and exists as a "campaign" only insofar as its name is involved as a barrier to discussing Ireland in the British labour movement.

In practice it means that top union bureaucrats provide block votes to back up the reactionary "bipartisan" line of the Labour leaders on Ireland—thus lending political support to the brutal policies of successive Labour

and Tory governments in using military terror, torture, beatings, no-jury courts and a battery of repressive legislation to crush the anti-imperialist struggle.

At last year's Labour Party conference an estimated 70-80% of constituency delegates voted for a 'troops out' policy on Ireland: the support to the Callaghan/Mason leadership came from the union delegations.

Witch-hunts

To take up the campaign in the unions to break such collaboration is to invoke witch-hunts from the TUC itself, sections of individual union bureaucracies and from the Communist Party, who oppose the 'troops out' policy.

But as feeling on the question of Ireland has grown within both the unions and the Labour Party the bureaucrats have been forced to greater and greater

Bradford call for Irish solidarity

Dear Comrades,

There will be a demonstration: 'Victory to the Hunger Strikers!' 'Political Status Now!' Assemble 12.30 Saturday 4 April, Infirmary Fields (junction of Westgate and Lumb Lane) Bradford.

Now is the time to get on the streets to speed the victory of the hunger strikers!

We urge all your branches, members, supporters and readers in the north of England to mobilise for this demonstration.

The demonstration is called by the Bradford Irish Prisoners Hunger Strike Committee, which has convened the April 4

Organising Committee.

Affiliated organisations include Sinn Féin, Asian Youth Movement—Bradford, Bradford SWP, Bradford WSL, Leeds RCG, Manchester RCG, Manchester RCT. The committee invites affiliations from socialist and anti-imperialist groups who will mobilise for the march.

Publicity and further details from the address below.

Yours fraternally,

Mick Wilson

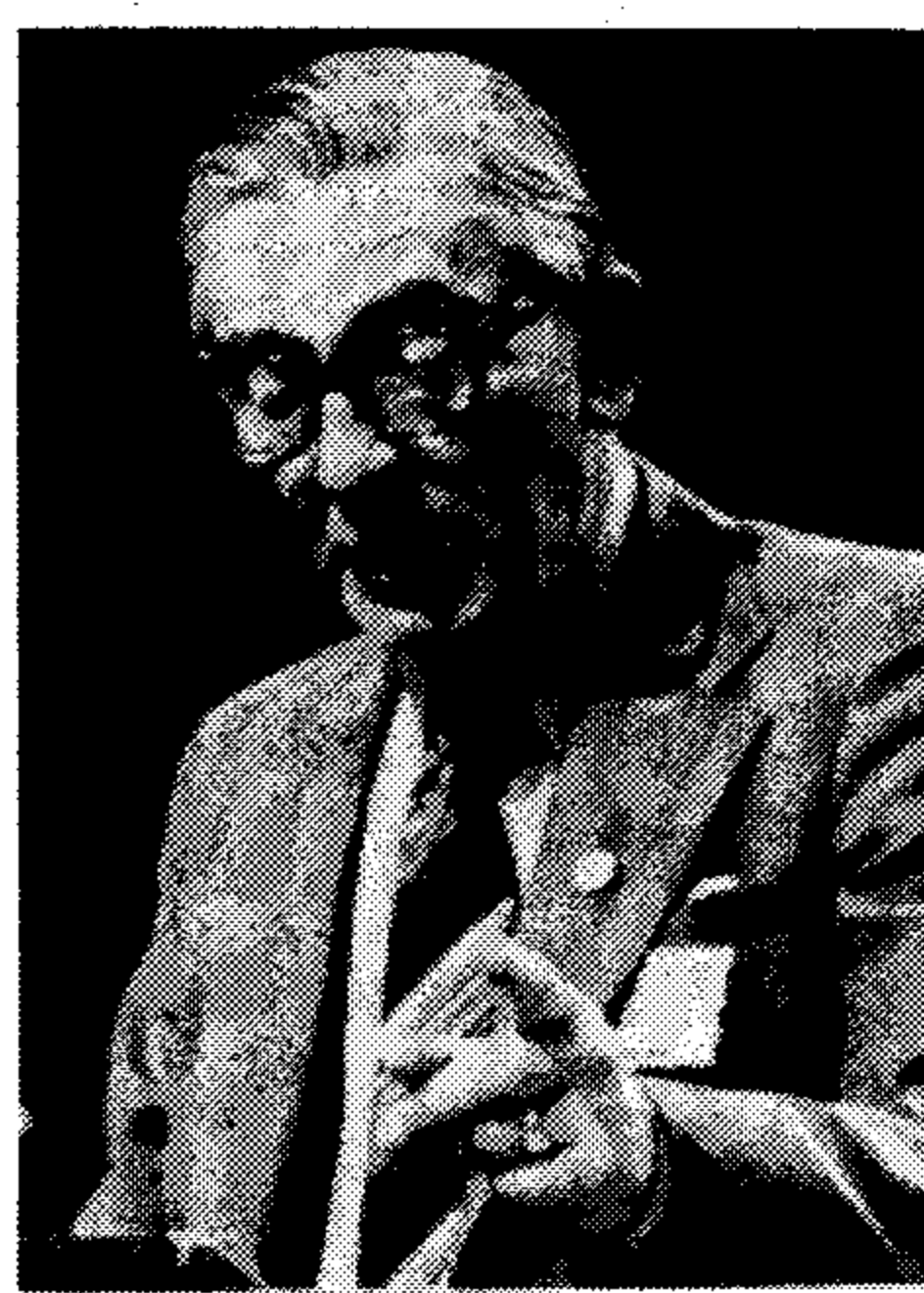
April 4 Organising Committee

c/o 4th Idea Bookshop

14 Southgate,

Bradford,

West Yorkshire



TUC General Secretary Murray

lengths to suppress debate and criticism of their policies.

The TUC ruling on the SPTAC conference has wide implications—debaring trades councils from "associating" with any "organisation... whose policies or activities are contrary to those of Congress."

This would effectively prevent trades councils from involvement in any left wing campaign.

This gagging action must be actively fought by all trade unionists. Last year the NUJ nationally opposed the disaffiliation of Tameside—a move sabotaged by the NUJ delegation at Congress.

This year, let's ensure that a wide spectrum of union delegations are mandated to fight this TUC censorship—and take up the fight throughout the labour movement for an end to the bipartisan policy and for a policy of immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland.



IRELAND

Irish fighters: an example to us all

Bobby Sands, the 27-year old former Commanding Officer of the republican prisoners at the Long Kesh concentration camp, has now been one week on hunger strike in the latest stage in the fight to secure political status.

Unlike the previous 53-day hunger strike by seven Long Kesh men—supported by women hunger strikers in Armagh Jail—Sands is demanding not five specific concessions but outright recognition as a political prisoner of war.

To focus attention on his fight, the 400 other 'H' Block republicans have ended their 'dirty' protest while maintaining their refusal to wear prison clothing or do prison work.

Lagging behind

But once again solidarity action in Britain to back up Sands' hunger strike is lagging sadly behind the level necessary.

The last hunger strike demonstrated the serious level of political backwardness on the Irish question within the British labour movement—not least of all among sections of the "revolutionary" left who failed to

mobilise even a fraction of their resources in support of the struggle.

Consistent fight

Only a bold and consistent fight to raise the issue and mobilise around it within the broader labour movement—union branches, Labour Parties, Trades Councils, etc.—can mobilise the kind of solidarity that is necessary to force the Tory government into conceding political status.

It is little use British left groups huddling together in 'support committees' if they do not proceed from there into the tough fight within the unions for resolutions and demonstrations of support for the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland.

The last hunger strike showed the glaring contradiction between widespread mobilisation and supporting strike action across the 32 counties of Ireland and the pitiful size of solidarity demonstrations in Britain.

British socialists who shrink from the political fight on these questions should draw a leaf from the book of Bernadette McAliskey.

Still recovering from the savage assassination attempt

which hospitalised her and her husband Michael, she has come straight back into political life, supporting the International Women's Day demonstration outside Armagh Jail and pledging support for the renewed hunger strike campaign.

Her courage and tenacity—like that of Bobby Sands (who has spent nearly 8 out of 27 years in jail for fighting imperialism) and the hunger strikers and blanket protesters of 'H' Block and Armagh—offer an example to the British working class.

Solidarity

Follow that example! Put down a motion in your union branch or Labour Party supporting the hunger strike! Show your solidarity! Mobilise pickets and demonstrations!

*Political status now for republican POWs!

*British troops out of Ireland!

*End Labour's bi-partisan policy!

*Self determination for the Irish people!

New international body formed

By Terry Smith

A meeting of 65 people assembled in Caxton Hall, London on February 28 to hear Nahuel Moreno, leader of the Argentine PST, Paddy Healy of the Irish LWR and speakers from the British SLG proclaim the launching of the Fourth International (International Committee).

The FI(IC) was formed at a conference held in Paris at Christmas organised by the Parity Committee, which had for a year previously brought together Pierre Lambert's Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International, Moreno's Bolshevik Faction, and the Leninist Trotskyist Tendency. The Christmas conference adopted a series of 41 general theses on world politics and established an international committee claiming to represent groups in 40 countries.

The February 28 rally/forum however offered those present little conception of the work being done in 39 of those sections—though Paddy Healy's contribution focussed on the LWR's fight for supporting strikes and general strike action in Ireland to back the republican 'H' Block hunger strikes.

Moreno in contrast stuck almost exclusively to the realm of history in his contribution, portraying the FI(IC) as the

continuity of orthodox Trotskyism.

He gave little clue as to the tangible form taken by such orthodoxy in Latin America or elsewhere in the world.

Speakers had been invited from the IMG, Workers Power, ICL and Workers Socialist League to take part in the forum. But the IMG, clinging to their position of ignoring the very existence of the FI(IC) refused to participate, and no speaker from the ICL arrived.

Diatribes

Workers Power representative Stuart King presented a Spartacist-style diatribe against Moreno and Lambert which demonstrated above all the sectarian degeneration of his organisation which has nothing concrete to offer in the task of reconstructing the Fourth International.

From the WSL, John Lister welcomed the opportunity to argue the political positions of the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, which fights for the political reconstruction of the Fourth International.

Pointing to the growing working class challenge both to imperialist rule and to the Stalinist bureaucracies, he underlined some of the political and programmatic questions to be confronted by Trotskyists—none of which have been resolved by the FI(IC) Theses.

He underlined political differences between the TILC and both Moreno and Lambert, and, while attacking the IMG's failure to participate in the forum, sharply criticised the sectarian stance of the FI(IC)'s British section who rejected a similar invitation from the TILC last summer.

There is a need for a thorough, open and objective discussion on the political tasks for the Trotskyist movement, argued Comrade Lister—insisting that such discussion could only be impeded by sectarian proclamations that any particular international current must be regarded as "the" Fourth International.

He pointed to the TILC's document 'The Transitional Programme in Today's Class Struggle' as a contribution to such a discussion. It is to be hoped that the SLG and FI(IC) will continue the dialogue begun at the rally as part of the fight for the reconstruction of the Fourth International.



Lambert

A mistake?

In the January issue of *Correspondence Internationale* (No. 4, page 17) there is an item of considerable importance with respect to the method of the FI(IC).

In a sustained polemic against the Bolivian POR, Luis Favre reproduces several quotes from an interview with Guillermo Lora, leader of the POR, to 'prove' that Lora expected the military coup of last year to be 'populist'.

What is particularly interesting about the central quote in Favre's argument is that by translating the third person ('he') in Spanish to the first ('I') in French, Lora's presen-

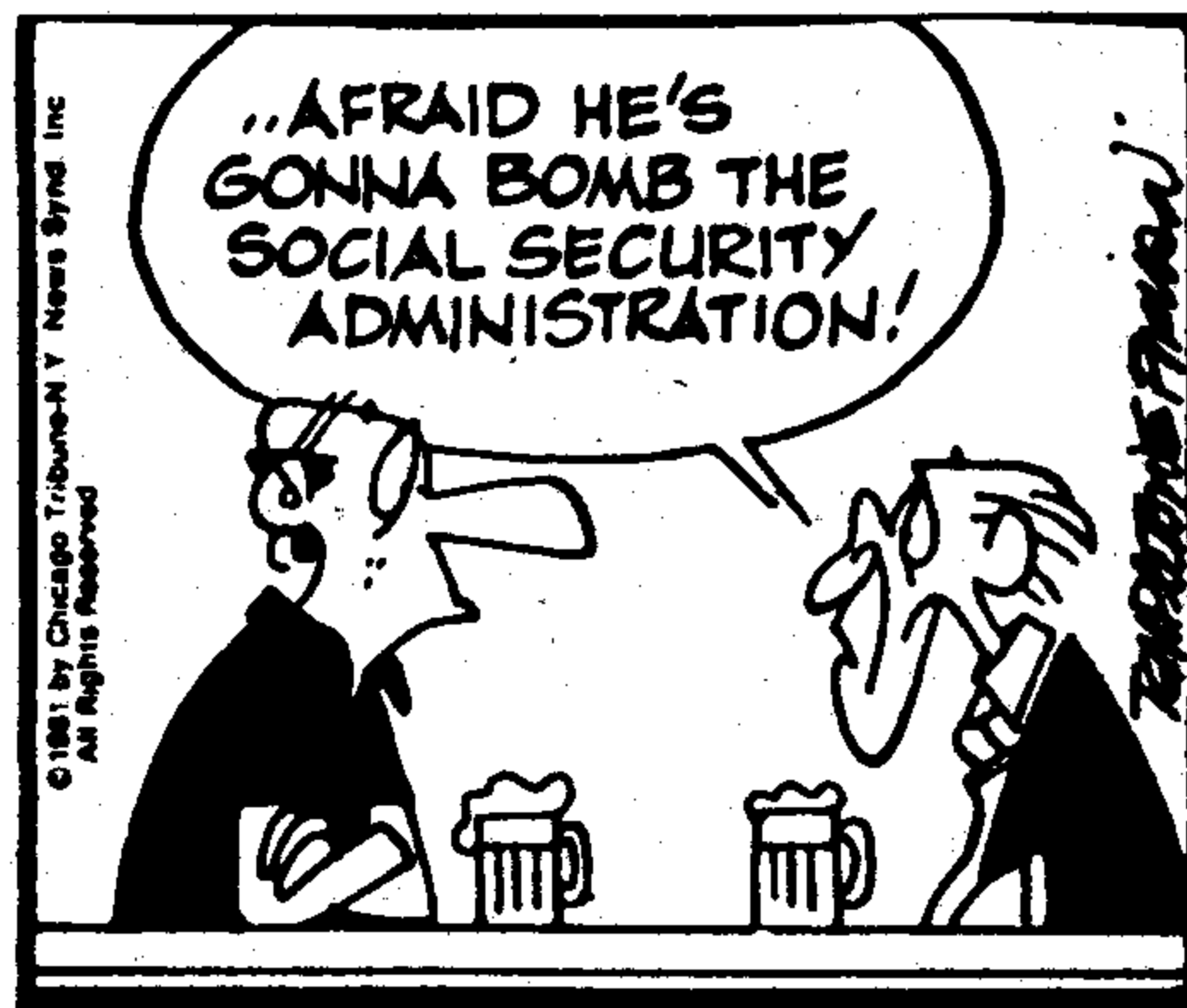
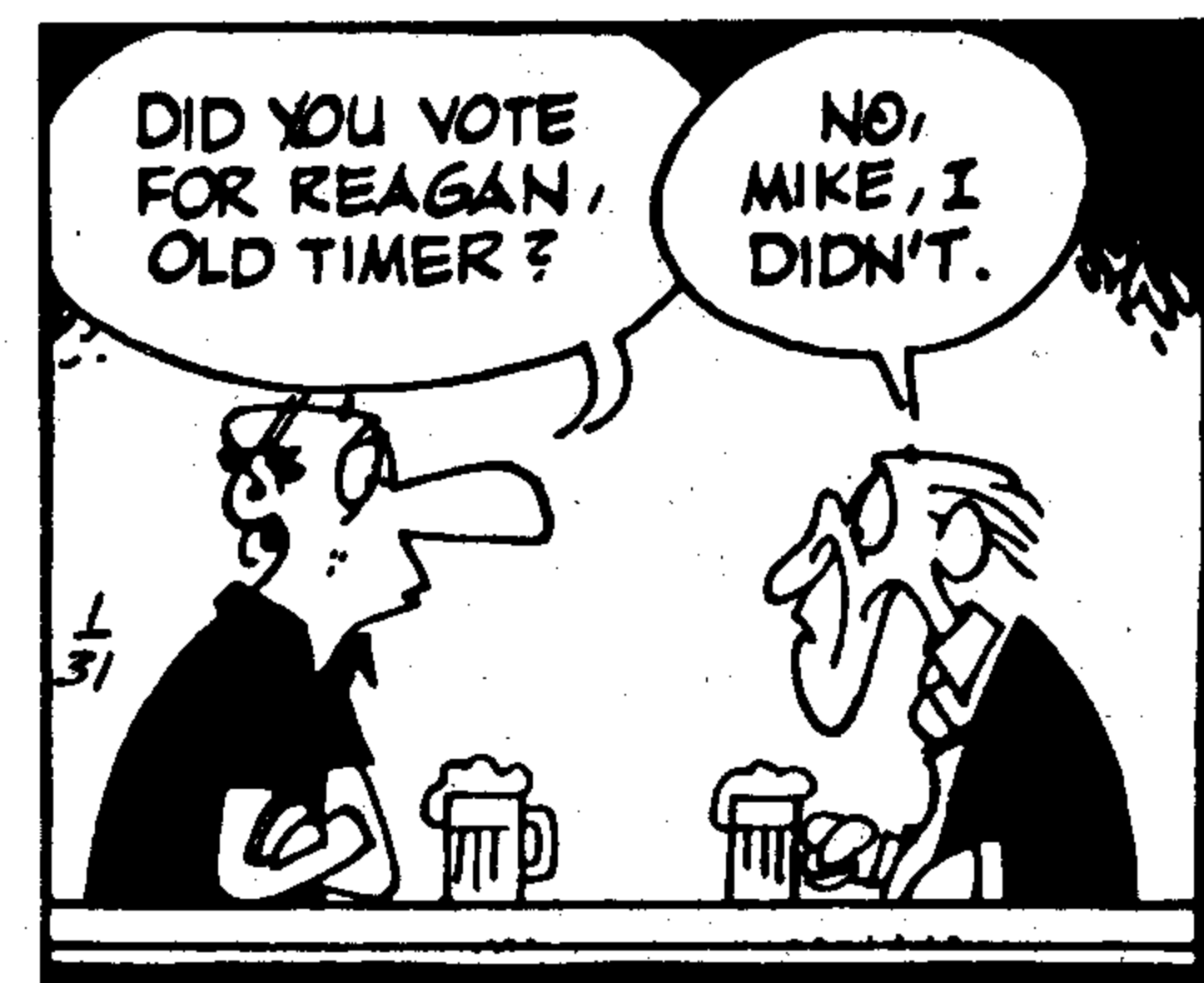
tation of dictator Garcia's position is translated into his own!

Thus, the original Spanish (Agence Latinoamericane d'Information, Quebec 13/6/80, p.266) reads "He has already said that the coup d'etat will be to defend democracy."

The FI(IC) on the other hand render this in French as: "I have already said that..." No other part of the quote is changed.

If this is a 'mistake' it is an unusually precise one; if it is not it heralds a tendency towards criminal misrepresentation that outstrips even Gerry Healy.

The FI(IC) must publish an immediate clarification and withdrawal.



Camden Day of Action: fight starts here!

Camden Labour Council plunged deeper into crisis last week as their budget proposals for 1981-2 were thrown out last Wednesday.

At the special rate fixing meeting called on 4 March, ten left councillors abstained in protest at the reactionary package of cuts in jobs and wages, rent and rate increases which are being proposed by the majority in the Labour Group.

The Tories, seeing the possibility of forcing even more cuts out of the Labour leadership, voted against the budget.

This stalemate leaves Camden Council in an unprecedented position. What happens if Camden fails to set a rate by April 1 is not clear. There is a strong possibility that the Council will be unable to borrow money to cover its expenditure if there is no guarantee of income from rates coming in.

Even if they do manage to raise loans the high interest paid on those loans would be a further addition to council expenditure.

Of course it is doubtful whether the Labour leadership will allow the Council to go bankrupt, with receivers handing over control to central government.

There will be desperate attempts to cobble together a deal with either the ten left wingers or the Tories in order to remain in office.

In fact the majority of the Labour Group have already attempted to buy the Tories' vote by introducing cuts in services of £2.2 million.

This wasn't enough to satisfy the Tories who it is rumoured are demanding £1 million more cuts and a 4% drop in the rate (equal to a further £4 million in cuts) to buy their vote.

To ally with the Tories on these demands would be disastrous for the right wing. They would face further isolation from the Labour Parties in the borough in a situation where two GMCs have already passed resolutions condemning their actions.

Despite the weakness of the union's response to the call for a one-day protest strike on 4 March (see interview with John Seymour) the Camden labour movement has not been defeated. It is only just beginning to mount a campaign.

If the left councillors are to play any role in that campaign they must not be a party to the Council's betrayal, but must hold out against any pressure from the majority on the Labour Group to accept minor concessions on the budget in order to allow the rate fixing to proceed.

Camden Labour Left member Graham Shurety interviews John Seymour, NUPE shop steward at Camden's Cressy Road refuse depot about the March 4 Day of Action.

What actually happened on the March 4 Day of Action?

Our union secretary estimated that 50% went into work and 50% stayed out—with certain sections such as the gardens, meals on wheels, boilers, remaining absolutely solid.

The decision to go on strike

was taken at a NUPE mass meeting. The day's strike was in direct opposition to the council's policies in dealing with Heseltine's decision to cut the rate support grant.

The idea of the strike was to combine NUPE, NALGO and UCATT together in a mass protest against the Council's

intention to inflict cuts in wages and jobs on the working class.

The day after the mass meeting on 17 February, the NALGO membership rejected their executive's call for solidarity strike action on March 4.

This gave opponents of the strike within NUPE some leverage to argue against the strike.

But the most damaging blow to solidarity on March 4 was the UCATT leadership's reluctance to persuade their membership to join the campaign outlined by the Joint Shop Stewards Steering Committee.

This was despite the fact that UCATT members are number one target for the Council, with 600 jobs going out of 1300.

What form did that reluctance take?

The building workers shop stewards committee had done very little up to 4 March in resisting the cuts.

A mass meeting was called on March 3 with a recommendation for all-out indefinite strike action.

Having played a very small part in the joint unions' campaign, it is not surprising that when the leadership (under Communist Party member Vic Heath) put the vote for indefinite strike action it was heavily defeated.

No fall back position was put to those workers. The resolution was presented as an ultimatum which seems almost intentionally designed to fail.

It was essential that a resolution was carried in support of the campaign of selective action, outlined by NUPE, starting with support for the March 4 strike.

The fact that this wasn't passed further undermined the NUPE strike.

At my depot most of the men went into work. They were largely influenced by UCATT's decision—it tipped the balance for the waverers.

How do you see the role of those councillors who have fought the right wing?

Up to now their record has been principled. They have fought the right wing openly—for example Councillors Neil Fletcher and Anna Bowman pledged their support to NUPE workers at the mass meeting on February 17, they came onto the picket lines, and they have fought to swing the Labour Party against the right wing.

They have had the support of NUPE in voting against the Labour majority's reactionary package of cuts in the Council Chamber.

Despite the appearances of weaknesses among public sector unions on the one-day strike it seems to me that the campaign is just beginning.

It would be a mistake to see March 4 as the end of the fight. I would call on the Labour councillors who so far have defended the working class to continue their stand.

Cuts Conference

POLICIES TO STOP THE CUTS

Called jointly by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement and Socialist Organiser

Saturday March 21 from 10.30 am. to 5.00 pm.

Islington Central Library, Holloway Road, London N7

Details and credentials from: SO/CDLM Cuts Conference, c/o 66 Brookesley Street, London E3.

Glasgow cuts fight

In Glasgow, Springburn Committee Against the Cuts is organising a public meeting on Monday 23 March in Barmulloch Community Centre at 7.30 pm. to highlight the impact of cuts on the local area, especially as they affect education.

The Committee has released a campaign leaflet along with a petition calling upon Strathclyde Regional Council to "immediately state their willingness to negotiate smaller class sizes at this time of falling school rolls".

The Scottish Education

Department want to put class sizes up from 33 to 35 and to get rid of 15,000 teachers in Scotland in the 1980s. The sole purpose of these actions is to cut the money going to education—whatever the deterioration in standards this will mean.

Already dozens of teachers in Glasgow, including many in the Springburn area, have been told they are "surplus to requirements" and will be shifted elsewhere.

Education is not the only social service under attack by the Tory government. Council house rents in Springburn will increase by 31% in March of this year. Bus services are being

cut and fares increased.

Speakers at the 23 March meeting will include representatives of the Regional Council, the teachers' union and the Scottish Tenants Organisation.

A mass meeting of 400 tenants in Walsall last week voted to withhold the £3.25 per week rent increase imposed by the Labour council. The meeting was curiously supported by council leader Brian Powell, who said that the councillors were behind the action, despite having voted for the increase.

Courtauld fiasco

The first mass meeting at the Courtaulds nylon plant at Aintree to discuss the closure of the plant involving 1600 jobs was a fiasco.

In addition to the poor organisation of the meeting in a room too small and with no public address system, the "leadership"—in the form of TGWU official Lamb—presented no perspective for action.

Instead the membership were presented with an abstract resolution to "fight" the closure—as at Tate and Lyle and all other closures in Merseyside to date.

Poor chairmanship, which allowed a minority of backward and cynical elements in the meeting to ridicule and heckle the speakers, further contributed to the chaos.

A WSL leaflet put into the factory argued strongly for the following:

"1) Occupy the threatened plant to prevent management selling off equipment and machinery.

2) Insist that Lamb, the TGWU district official, organise blacking of all Courtaulds transport and plant.

3) Demand the opening of

the company's books and those of their international bankers to an elected committee of workers to see where the profits are being hived off, and as a necessary prelude to workers' management.

4) No to redundancies. For work-sharing on full pay.

5) Link up the struggle with all plants in the textile industry threatened with closure and also the Tate and Lyle refinery at Love Lane to form a Council of Action."

The leaflet also attacked the reactionary policy of import controls advocated by Lamb.

An SWP leaflet, while making certain valid references to the miners' victory and mentioning the occupation of other factories at Gardners and Lee Jeans in passing, failed to spell out unambiguously the necessity for the immediate occupation of the factory, or place any demands on the union bureaucracy.

Instead they called lamely for the members to "back the stewards' call today and get ready to fight".

But the stewards supported the official's line of not occupying. So what does all this add up to? When do the SWP think we are to fight—and how?

Teachers banned

THE NUT leadership has willingly grasped at a miserable 7.5% pay offer, ducking any fight against the Tories.

They are reserving their venom and aggression for militants who fight for action against the cuts.

Last week six NUT members were suspended from the union and barred from office for 18 months for supporting strike action on the Lambeth Day of Action on February 4.

Among them was NEC member Dick North, and Lambeth Trades Council secretary Vanessa Wiseman.

This brazen victimisation must be fought by every NUT association.

Pergamon: strike back at Maxwell

On Wednesday 4 March the NUJ Chapel at Robert Maxwell's Pergamon Press (Oxford) were called out on official strike by the NUJ National Executive after a meeting between Maxwell and NUJ negotiators the previous day failed to produce any real progress on a house agreement claim, some aspects of which have been outstanding since the Autumn of 1979, as well as the issue of 1981 wages.

Pergamon rates of pay and general conditions of employment are poor compared with

other houses the NUJ organises.

Amongst other things the Chapel was seeking agreement from the company to a consultation procedure covering new technology. Maxwell declared emphatically that he was not going to tie his company to any written agreement to consult.

The company's response to the strike was first to threaten sackings and then, last Friday, to carry the threat out.

This style of conducting disputes is reminiscent of viciously anti-union employers and hardly becoming in a

Labour Party and ASTMS member which Maxwell is.

The Chapel has declared its intention to fight until its members are reinstated. Support from the Irish Graphical Society has already been forthcoming and support from the NGA is also being sought.

Oxford Trades Council has set up a support committee and Ruskin trade union college has been supporting picket lines and has supplied the strikers with a headquarters.

Messages of support and donations should be sent to: Pergamon Chapel Strike Fund, c/o 5 Union Street, Oxford.

Conscripting jobless youth

Defence Secretary John Nott heads off to Washington this week to discuss details of how British troops could join in a US 'Rapid Deployment Force'.

And the government has now admitted that it intends to press-gang unemployed youth into six-month military training

programmes as part of their cosmetic Youth Opportunities drive.

Only the defeat of the Thatcher government and the fight for socialist policies against the existing Labour leadership can lay the basis for the elimination of unemployment through a planned socialist economy rather than the elimination of

the human race through poverty, starvation and nuclear holocaust.

Trades Councils and union branches must at once take up the campaign to prevent unemployed youth signing up for Thatcher's armed forces Programme.

With army recruitment already booming as a result of

Thatcher's destruction of job opportunities for long-term unemployed youth, there could scarcely be a clearer example of the inability of capitalism to utilise the productive forces or manpower available.

Instead "unprofitable" factories are closed down, and vital resources and energy channelled into the Thatcher/Reagan war

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THE EIGHT!



Strike now to stop Edwardes!

SOCIALIST PRESS



Historic strike by civil servants

Police ban on London marches

William Whitelaw's decision to ban all marches in the London area until the end of March is a heavy blow at the labour movement and the black community.

The ban—notionally introduced in order to prevent the fascists of the National Front staging a provocative demonstration outside the house in New Cross where 13 black youth died in a racist attack—followed hard on the heels of a huge, angry demonstration by over 10,000 black people through the streets of London.

Whitelaw knew full well that these and other anti-fascist forces would have turned out to drive the NF scum off the streets of New Cross.



Whitelaw

The explosion of pent-up anger among the black youth—bitter at years of police harassment, job discrimination and racist abuse—on last Monday's march made it clear that the police would find it virtually impossible to provide the usual protection for the fascists.

And Whitelaw is eager to defuse the mass movement that has erupted in the wake of the New Cross massacre.

It is for this reason that he banned not only the NF march, but all marches in the Metropolitan police area for the whole of this month.

This means that Martin Webster and his gang of thugs have effectively succeeded in blocking over a dozen demonstrations by trade unionists, feminists, peace campaigners and anti-cuts groups.

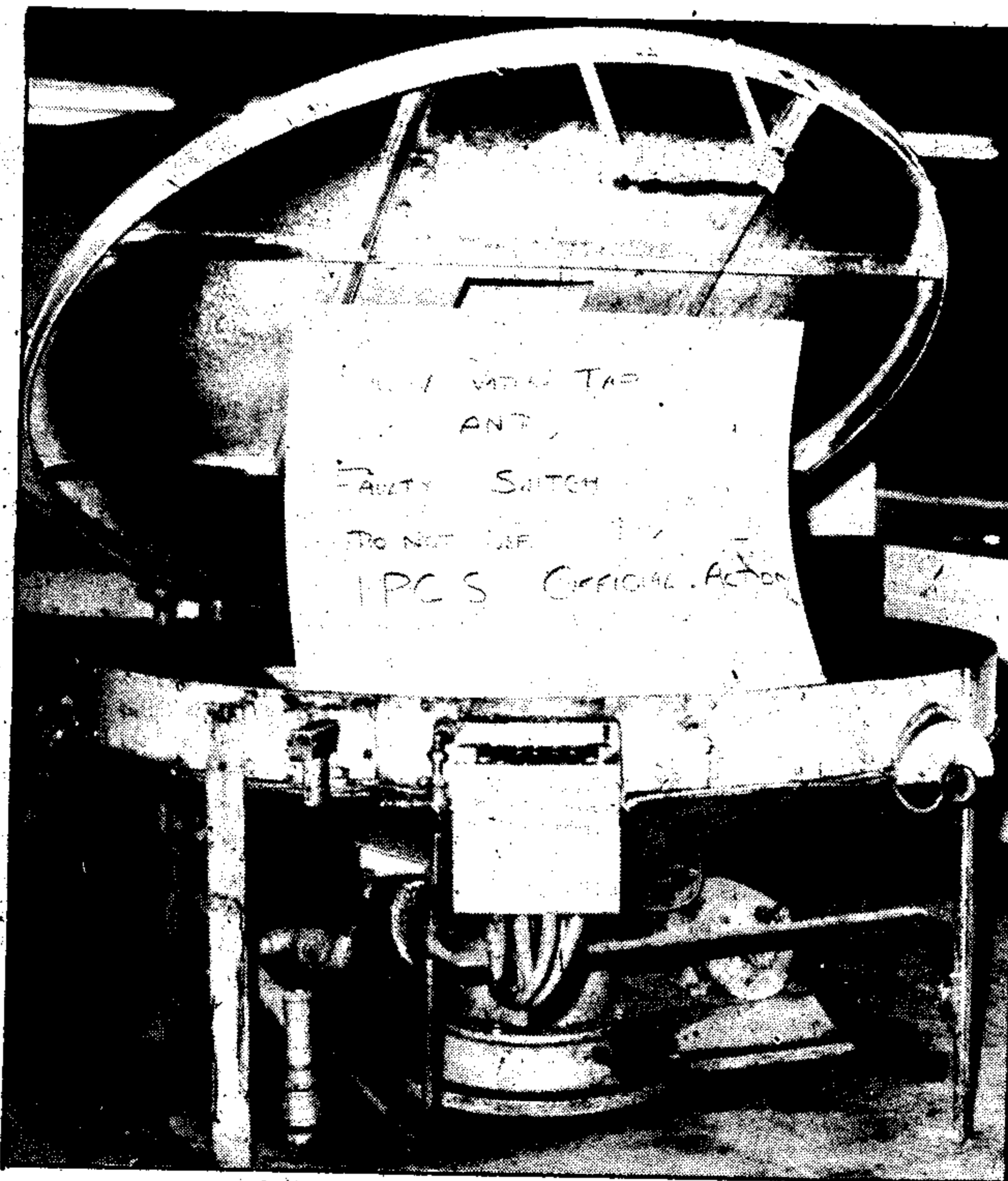
Leading liberals and Communist Party members have of course baulked at this blanket use of the law by the Tories.

But they continue to mislead black and white workers by directing them towards seeking more selective police bans and proscriptions as the means to prevent fascist demonstrations.

Instead we must fight to mobilise the power of the labour movement to drive the fascists off the streets.

And that same power must be developed to bring down the Tory racists and carry through socialist policies that can eliminate the poverty and unemployment which provide the grist to the racist mill.

THE GREAT WHITE-COLLAR WALKOUT



Main airports closed, computers shut down, spy stations switched off and NATO war games disrupted. These were among the high points of a historic day of strike action by 500,000 civil servants on Monday.

It was the day of days to smuggle booze through deserted dock customs posts. And the forthcoming selective action brings the prospect of windfall overpayments to thousands of social security claimants.

Power

It brought an 85% response from members of the nine civil service unions—many of whom have never taken strike action before.

And it underlined the untapped power of these unions to disrupt the very fabric of government. Gone for ever is

the image of the civil servant as the impotent pen-pusher.

But how far will this power be mobilised by union leaders in the next phase of the struggle? They have talked of selective action to hit crucial economic and also defence and secret service targets.

Piecemeal

The danger is that piecemeal action by individual groups of civil servants will be left to drag on while others become demoralised—whereas a determined mobilisation could quickly force the government to concede the 15% claim.

Civil service union activists must work to extend the strike and to focus power in the local joint committees. Much is at stake in this pay campaign—a defeat for the government on the 6% cash limit in the belly of its own apparatus would be a major boost to the drive to overthrow Thatcher.

Kania carpeted

More strikes are still brewing in Poland as we go to press, as local branches of Solidarity threaten to take action to defend victimised militants.

The stoppages, called in Lodz, are scheduled to begin on Tuesday, with the aim of forcing the reinstatement of five sacked union members.

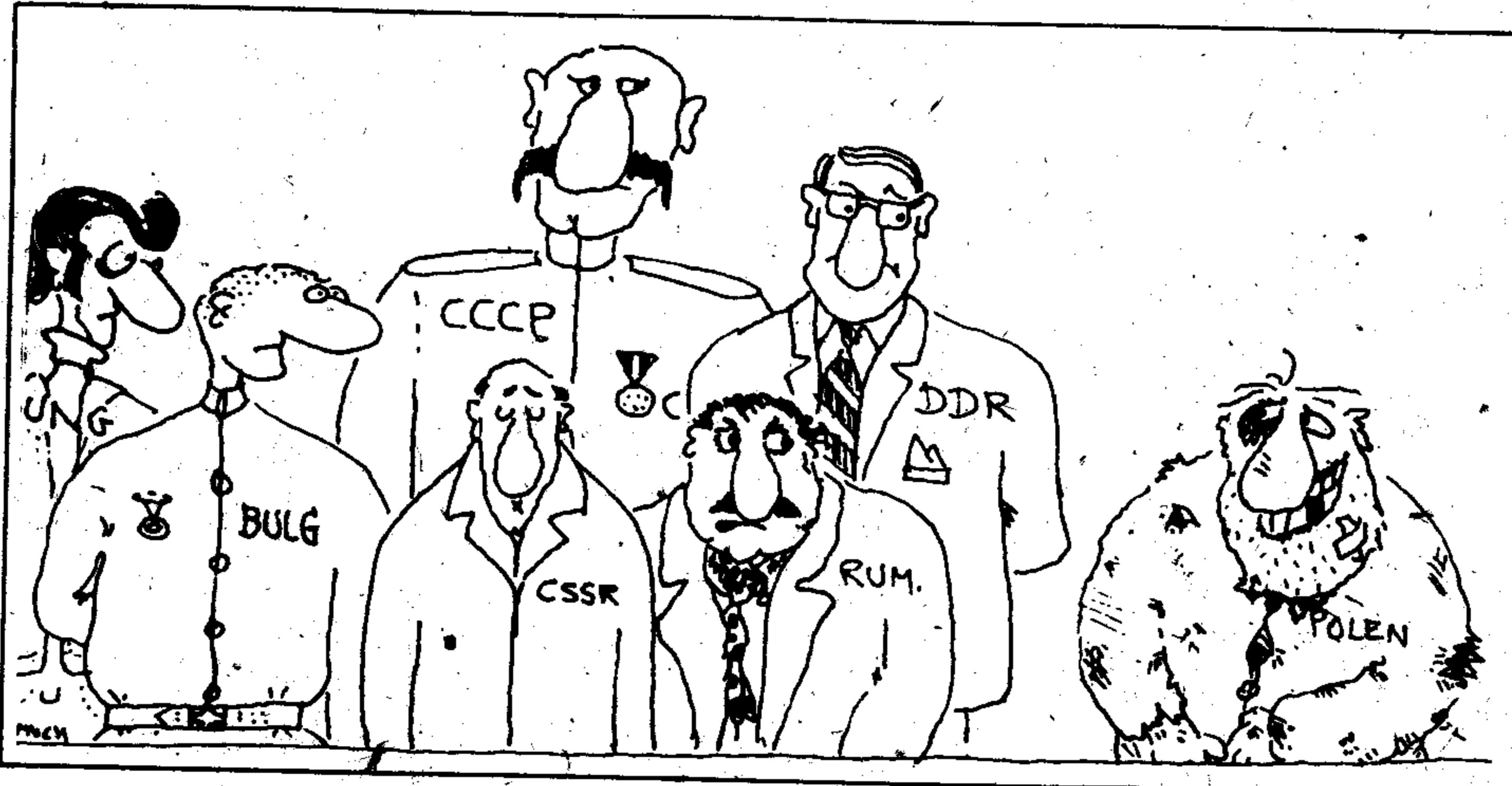
This is additionally significant in the light of the renewed warnings dished out by the Soviet bureaucracy to Polish leader Stanislaw Kania in the aftermath of the CPSU Congress in Moscow.

Kania was told to put his house in order. And immediately afterwards police arrested left wing dissident Jacek Kuron, a prominent advisor to the Solidarity leadership. He was charged with defaming the government.

But the uneasy balance of forces between the battered Polish police state apparatus and the powerful trade union movement that has emerged from last summer's strike wave was underlined by another development.

Ahead rumours that Kuron's close associate Adam Michnik might also be arrested, Solidarity placed Michnik under the protection of a workers' guard.

This frontal challenge to the authority of the political police



Danish cartoon on Polish situation

and the state bureaucracy points the way forward for Polish workers in the next period.

They must seek the ways and means to defend themselves against the attacks of the Stalinist regime in Warsaw or a military offensive ordered by the Kremlin leaders.

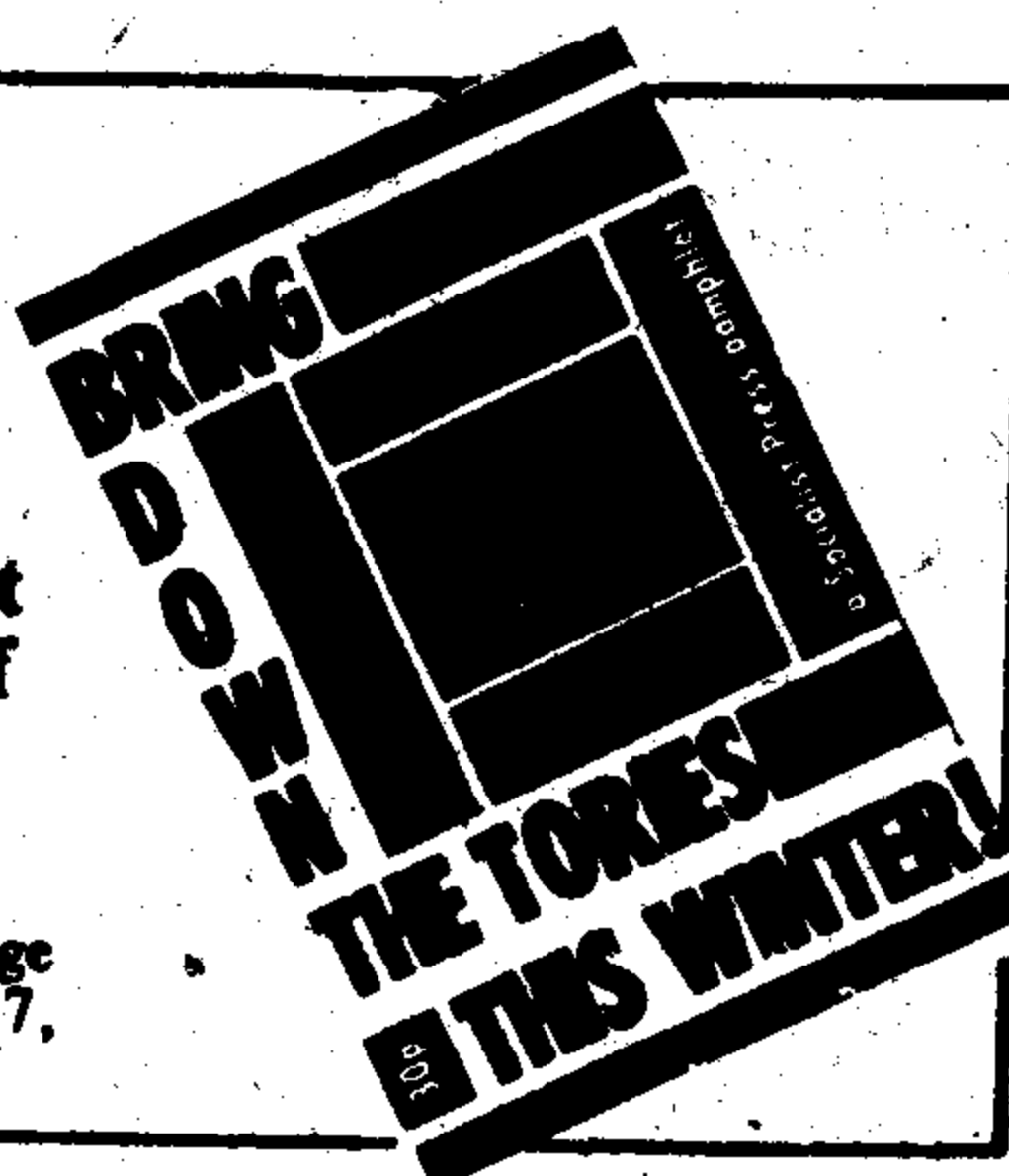
But it appears that the Solidarity leadership is still attempting to minimise conflict with the government.

A 14-hour meeting supported the Lodz call for reinstatement; but remained silent on the strike action, and sought renewed talks with the government.

Our policies

Socialist Press pamphlet outlining programme of action against the Tory offensive.

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



Students fight Tories

Angry students joined in the struggle against the Tory offensive last week.

In Birmingham students at Bournville College are staging a sit-in in protest against plans to axe either 500 students or 200 'O' level and 90 'A' level courses. NATFHE members have refused to cooperate with the cuts.

In Scotland over 5,000

students joined local demonstrations in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh in protest against Tory plans to replace grants with loans.

And in London students at University College, Queen Mary College and the London School of Economics continue sit-in action protesting against the discriminatory fees increases for overseas students.

FUND

Nine days into March we are more or less on target for our monthly fund with a total so far of £232.80 made up as follows: Oxford £120.15; Brighton £5; London £33; West Midlands £18.40; East Midlands £2; North West £10; Yorkshire £44.25.

But if we are to complete our target of £850 on time we must maintain this momentum. A Coventry supporter recently made a special donation of £100 to our fund. Whether other supporters and readers can afford that amount or not, any donation to our monthly fund will be very welcome.

Send your donation to:

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