



Mortgage rise swallows 5 per cent

The ABC of Labour betrayal

The Official Secrets Act, and those Labour leaders that insist on preserving it, must be removed as an obstacle to the democratic rights of the workers' movement.

This is the obvious lesson of six week Aubrey-Berry-Campbell "secrets" trial which is in its concluding stages as we go to press.

John Berry, the former Signals Intelligence corporal who spoke to journalists Duncan Campbell and Crispin Aubrey, has already been pronounced guilty by Mr Justice Mars-Jones.

And his summing up has laid stress on the importance of the Official Secrets Act for "national security".

In reality the Act defends only the secrecy of the military and state apparatus that maintain capitalist rule.

Manifesto

But the Labour leadership has openly declared its refusal to implement their own Manifesto pledge to repeal it.

And while NUJ leaders have made strident verbal protests about the trial, there has been no serious attempt to mobilise action in defence of the ABC victims of this reactionary law.

The bitter lesson of the deportation of former CIA agent Phillip Agee still has not been learnt.

The labour movement must act to defend John Berry and the other defendants should they be convicted.

And workers must drive out those "leaders" who collaborate with the state machine against the interests of the labour movement.

Any group of workers who may have been intending to settle peacefully for Chancellor Healey's 5% pay limit will have to think again.

The thumping 2% increase in mortgage interest rates has just wiped out the whole of this year's wage increase in one go—and there are plenty more price increases and attacks on living standards to come.

Most affected are young workers with families, whose wage packets only barely stretched to pay the bills before the latest price hike.

But every section of workers will be hit by the package of measures introduced last week by Healey, when he raised the banks' Minimum Lending Rate to a record 12½% and triggered the mortgage increase.

By tightening up the money supply, Healey has ensured that the average business loan now costs 7% more than the present rate of inflation; in other words he has taken a further step towards a new round of closures, redundancies and growing dole queues.



Healey

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report



Dagenham mass meeting votes to continue Ford strike

STRIKE NOW TO PROTECT LIVING STANDARDS!

These measures do not come as a result of widespread breaches of the 5% pay limit. No substantial section of workers is yet receiving more than a 5% increase.

Recession

Rather they emerge from the international crisis of capitalism, which has produced the present world recession and the recent chaotic plunge of the dollar in the money markets.

President Carter's panic moves to "save" the dollar entailed borrowings of \$30 000 million and a sharp rise in interest rates within the USA itself.

This was designed to attract investment from other capitalist countries.

But while a transfer of foreign investment out of Britain would strengthen the dollar, it would weaken the pound, particularly at a time of increasing class struggle.

So in order to placate the international bankers, and in particular the Common Market financiers, Healey

was forced to raise interest rates in Britain.

The whole episode exposes the myth of wage controls ending inflation.

In reality the value of the pound internationally, which determines a vast range of prices in the shops, is completely out of the control of the actions of the working class or of the government—and can fluctuate wildly due to completely unforeseen factors.

Workers have no interest in sacrificing wage increases under conditions of the capitalist crisis; rather it is essential to seek full protection against increases in the cost of living through a sliding scale of wages.

Automatic

Under the sliding scale, wages would rise automatically in line with a workers' cost of living index, worked out in each case by elected trade union/housewives' committees, and taking taxation and mortgage charges into account.

The employers will of

course complain that they cannot afford to pay a sliding scale of wages. This is no more than an admission that workers living standards can only be protected through the nationalisation of major industry and the establishment of a planned socialist economy.

Ditched

A whole series of wage claims already submitted—including the Ford claim—actually contain the call for cost of living clauses.

But such demands are being quietly ditched by union leaders' anxious merely to head off the militancy of their members.

But Chancellor Healey is already threatening further monetary policies to strip us of increases over 5%: only the sliding scale of wages offers an answer to such treachery!

The answer is clear: public sector and private sector workers alike must follow the example of Ford, Leyland and bakery workers



Carter

now on strike if their living standards are not to be further savaged by the international bankers.

And in fighting for their full claims, workers must also take up the struggle to remove the IMF's British representatives—the Callaghan-Healey leadership—from the Labour Party, and establish leadership responsive to the interests of the working class.

Spread and coordinate the strikes!

For a sliding scale of wages!

Build councils of action!
Kick out Callaghan and Healey!



German union chiefs face crisis

The leaders of the world's largest trade union are once again caught on a large (and very sharp) hook.

This time Eugen Loderer and the other bureaucrats of the West German metal workers union IG-Metall are being forced towards calling strike action by workers in the steel industry.

As the German capitalists have moved to 'rationalise' their share of the imperialist crisis by seeking to impose mass redundancies, militancy has increased dramatically on the shop floor in the steel plants.

Already under fire from a steady barrage of hostile criticism and even outright rejection from its members, the IG-Metall leadership is in no position to crush these latest developments.

Employees have flatly refused even to discuss the national wage claim, which has been centred round the popular call for a 35 hour week.

The union executive is now certain to allow a ballot on strike action to go ahead next week in the largest steel-producing area, North Rhine-Westphalia.

The ballot is sure to reveal an overwhelming majority in favour of strike action.

For both the West German steel magnates and Loderer and his colleagues, such a result will black out the last dwindling prospect of a cosy, trouble-free winter by the fireside.



Demonstration in Tehran

BLACK ARMS TO IRAN!

The workers who have crippled oil-production in Iran, remain solid in their strike despite the threats of the new military government.

Although General Azhari's cabinet has now offered a 22% wage rise, the strikers are refusing to return to work until their political demands have been met.

These demands include a call for the removal of the Shah and the release of all political prisoners, together with a series of measures designed to end imperialist domination of the Iranian economy.

As the scab troops sent in to work the oil fields and refineries have made little advance in their ability to maintain production, the strike is still causing massive economic disruption, not only within Iran but for the whole of imperialism.

The imperialists are now busy trying to convince themselves that the generals have been successful in their efforts to stabilise the Shah's dictatorship. But reports from the opposition within Iran agree that the strike wave is continuing in full flood.

The militancy of these strikes is revealed in a report circulating Tehran of developments six weeks ago in the northern city of Tabriz.

Workers on strike there occupied the match-making and textiles factories owned by a prominent Iranian capitalist, Tavakoli. The employer was ordered by the occupiers to keep away from the factories. When Tavakoli challenged this authority he was attacked by the strikers and had to be removed to a hospital, where he shortly died of a heart attack.

Violent

Alongside these strikes, the huge and violent demonstrations are continuing throughout Iran despite the orders of the generals. These mobilisations are expected to reach a climax on 9 December when Shi'ite Moslems will commemorate the martyrdom of one of their early leaders on what is probably the major date in their religious calendar.

Far from proving itself capable of controlling these developments, the military government has shown itself confused and divided. First Azhari arrested the head of

SAVAK—then he moved to arrest Karim Sanjabi, leader of the bourgeois National Front and potentially one of his most valuable allies.

While the generals cannot decide whether to seek to impose a full scale military dictatorship, or try and install a 'civilian' regime, the bourgeois nationalists and the religious leaders have been driven into a new alliance.

The force propelling the ayatollah Khomeini and Sanjabi together has been the independent mobilisation of the organised strength of the Iranian proletariat.

This movement has presented a daunting challenge to religious and bourgeois democrats alike. From their different positions, each has reached out to the other in hopes of exploiting for their own ends the crisis of the dictatorship and the equally critical weakness of working class leadership.

Their new found unity has been calculated to attract support from sections of the officer caste who share their perspective on the way to control and suppress the movement of workers and peasants that is daily undermining their political strength.

IN BRITAIN, where Foreign Secretary David Owen has time and again declared himself unambiguously in support of the Shah, the protests of Labour 'lefts' have, up to now, been restricted to empty speeches and Parliamentary arm-waving.

The urgent question for the British working class is to take up throughout the trade union movement the fight for full-scale blacking of supplies needed to bolster repression in Iran.

This means calling on the TGWU and other unions in transport and the docks to organise the identification and blacking of cargoes—especially arms and ammunition bound for Iran.

This must be combined with the struggle within the Labour Party for the removal of Owen and the pro-imperialist Callaghan leadership who so tenaciously fight against the interests of the world's working class.

Those Labour 'lefts' such as Sheffield MP Martin Flannery who have spoken out against support for the Shah must be called upon to play a leading role in such a fight or stand exposed as empty wind bags.

Strikes cripple Ghana

'National consensus' was the cant spouting from the lips of Ghana's military dictators seven months ago.

They spelt out the meaning of this patriotic phrase more fully last week by declaring a state of emergency to crush more than 80 militant strikes in the public sector.

In March, the generals rigged referendum votes to produce a majority in favour of their proposed 'Union Government'. Now they have suspended even the petty democratic rights conceded by the dictatorship.

General Akuffo explained how 'disappointed' he was that 70,000 workers had taken strike action, and went on to announce that strikes and damage to property had now become criminal acts against the security of the state.

The strikes had already paralysed crucial sections of the Ghanaian economy, including the docks, when the government sacked over 20,000 of the strikers.

As the generals began to recruit scab replacements from the huge reserve army of unemployed and impoverished workers, the trade union bureaucracy slammed into reverse gear.

On Friday, they issued a grovelling plea that they had not 'meant to undermine authority' by failing to order an immediate return to work.

But now that the dictatorship had agreed to set up a permanent arbitration board with the Civil Servants' Association, they could call the strike off.

The real 'consensus' which Akuffo represents is between the generals and world imperialism on how best to continue exploiting the proletariat and other oppressed masses of Ghana.

In their fight to blow that gentleman's agreement apart, Ghanaian workers will have to begin by replacing the labour bureaucrats of today with a leadership prepared to fight and lead their revolutionary struggles.

Junta with no visible support

Of all the countries of Latin America today Peru is the one where capitalism has fewest visible means of support.

More positively it is Peru where the workers and peasants are closest to taking power into their own hands.

This critical situation has arisen first of all from the virtual political collapse of the military dictatorship headed by President Morales Bermudez.

Morales' predecessor General Velasco had managed to rule for eight years based on a mixture of "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, one or two much-exaggerated social reforms, the building of "mass organisations" which he had run by opportunist "revolutionary" intellectuals, the cringing political support of Fidel Castro and the Peruvian Communist Party and a good deal of repression.

Morales—a more candid right winger from the start—lacked all these assets except the repression.

As the economic crisis of the regime over the last three years has grown more



Bermudez

and more catastrophic, the remedies more and more directed against the jobs and wages of the workers and the counter-reactions more and more militant, so Morales has had to depend increasingly on repression alone.

Tolerance

This has lost his regime every vestige of popular tolerance on which its predecessor partially survived.

But in spite of the repression throughout this year the working class through a series of daring strikes and

demonstrations showed that it could no longer be held down.

Morales was forced to call (blatantly undemocratic) elections to a "Constituent Assembly" in an attempt to stave off his moment of reckoning and perhaps even reverse the crisis.

The result was not what he bargained for. Every participating party at least verbally opposed the military regime.

And a remarkably high share of the very loaded poll went to parties of the working class, in particular the FOCEP Front of parties calling themselves Trotskyist, who gave every impression of meaning what they said and showed that up to a point they were capable of mobilising the masses.

But the party with most votes in the June elections (35%) and so the immediate arbiters of the fate of the regime was the old bourgeois nationalist movement APRA, now once again in one of its verbally radical phases.

But as in the past there is no substance in APRA's words—as it proves every day by using its dominant position in the Constituent

Assembly to block with the far-right Christian Popular Party against the demands of the left (especially of FOCEP) and in defence of the military dictatorship.

APRA is led by the more than 80 year old Haya de la Torre who if there were an Olympiad for opportunists would certainly be among the finalists.

Haya de la Torre, as President of the Assembly, is rapidly losing all credibility as an opponent of the regime.

Attacked

This was demonstrated when three weeks ago, after the last IMF-placating round of price rises, a demonstration attacked not only government buildings but also APRA offices as well.

APRA turned down the FOCEP resolution demanding the complete reversal of the price increases; but at the same time its leaders felt obliged to present their own resolution asking the government to reconsider the increases.

They still hope that such puny gestures will let them win the presidential and congressional elections which are due next year

after the Assembly has approved the new constitution.

Discontent

Out in the streets and mines and factories where it really matters there is very little that APRA can do now to protect the regime from the discontent of the masses.

Even the Moscow-backed Communist Party (Unidad) is not in a position to help very much since it can now only hang on to control of the decreasingly important Peruvian General Confederation of Labour (CGTP) through blatant ballot-rigging against the breakaway (equally Stalinist) CP (Majority).

Workers in any case have been turning increasingly to union organisations other than the CGTP.

Terror

For months Morales has shown that though terror is his only weapon in relation to strikes and other militant mass actions, he does not dare to use it to its fullest extent. He has thus been forced into a series of

humiliating concessions.

The latest is an undertaking to grant some local autonomy and (in violation of the IMF's spending cuts) a massive increase in public works in the jungle town of Tucallpa which was paralysed by what seems to have been little short of an insurrectional general strike.

But the regime's ability to temporarily buy off such struggles is extremely limited.

Last week's agreements with Peru's main international creditors to reschedule repayments of debt for two years are based on the creditors' insistence that the Peruvian government implements all the IMF's measures.

And that implies taking even harsher action against the increasingly combative working class.

UNITED STATES
There will be a centre page feature on the political situation in the United States in the next issue.



Somoza's troops move in on guerrilla fighters

Nicaraguan youth defiantly tear up Somoza's portrait

Courage and confusion in the fight against Somoza

The vicious dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza and his nepotistic clique in Nicaragua appears to be lurching towards a final crisis.

US imperialism now finds itself no longer able to give full-blooded support to the continuation of the Somoza dynasty.

Last week, "human rights" crusader Jimmy Carter ensured that the IMF once again blocked a loan of \$ 20 million to Nicaragua.

Carter of course made noises about insufficient liberalisation measures, but the real reason is that he knows full well that the longer Somoza lasts, then the stronger will be working-class opposition both to Somoza and to the group of businessmen and church leaders which Carter will back as the new government.

The key bourgeois forces involved in the anti-Somoza movement are united in 'The Group of Twelve' (Los Doce).

This grouping is vital to Carter's intervention since it has the support of the Tercerista wing of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

The Terceristas, whilst claiming to be 'revolutionary Marxists' and leading a series of daring and effective guerrillaist blows at Somoza, have consistently cuddled up to the broad opposition front against the dictator, forging unprincipled links with the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie.

Leadership

In fact the Sandinistas have authorised Los Doce to form a provisional government if a Sandinista military operation should permanently liberate any part of Nicaraguan territory.

Needless to say, both the Nicaraguan Stalinists and the social democrats have joined in the broad opposition front.

The leadership of the largest of three general trade unions has established links with the MDN, a "businessmen's organisation" led by Alfonso Robelo (organiser of February's businessmen's strike).

In this situation, the question of leadership in the working-class movement is posed most starkly.

The strength of support for the Sandinistas comes from the urban and rural working-class (nearly 50% of the Nicaraguan labour force is in agriculture or fishing).

But the bourgeois allies of the Tercerista wing of the Sandinistas can in no way represent the interests of these workers and peasants.

The Sandinistas have, for the last three years, moved ever further down the path of class collaboration in their efforts to cut corners in order to end the bloody dictatorship of Somoza.

The full implications of such a strategy can be seen in the historic defeat inflicted on the Chilean working-class after just such a Popular Front formation was overthrown.

Below we print an interview with Angel Barrajon, an official

representative of the Sandinistas, currently visiting Britain.

Clearly the WSL has fundamental political differences of programme and perspective with the FSLN, but we feel it is vital

to publicise the struggles of the Nicaraguan working-class and to raise the issues of proletarian internationalism within the labour movement in Britain.

Could you describe the political composition of the FSLN?

The FSLN is a body comprising three main groups, the Prolonged Popular War Tendency, the Proletarian Tendency, and the Insurrectional Tendency or Terceristas ("Thirdists").

The Prolonged Popular War Tendency is Marxist and has a strategy of a long-term war of attrition based among the peasant communities.

Its leaders were killed in combat with the National Guard in 1976, but it was prominent in the uprising of September this

year in the towns of Leon, Chinandega, and Estoli.

The Proletarian Tendency is Marxist-Leninist and has a strategy of political organisation in the towns; it is the smallest of the three groups.

The Insurrectional Tendency or Tercerista wing is now the largest group. It seeks tactical alliances with progressive elements in the middle classes, notably Los Doce, and has international support from Venezuela and Panama.

The Terceristas have been responsible for most of the armed actions against Somoza



Interview with Sandinista spokesman



Somoza

society, but we must first pass through a series of stages.

Can you comment on the timing of the September uprising?

Some elements in the FSLN did not think the time was ripe for mass support for armed struggle, the majority felt that the forces available were ready for open conflict.

With hindsight we can see that the movement did not have enough strength to carry out an insurrection. We are trying now to plan a new offensive with new tactics.

What steps is the FSLN taking to set up councils of action and soviets as a basis for a workers and peasants government?

We have two basic objectives in the present stage. Firstly the expropriation of the Somoza clan and their associates who own 30% of the economy and 40% of the cultivable land and secondly the political and ideological struggle to build for socialism.

When Somoza's land becomes social property, we can begin real agrarian reform and gain control over production.

We do organisational work both in the urban and rural working-class, but it is very hard given the extent of the repression.

As Trotskyists we in the WSL stand for the reconstruction of the Fourth International based solidly on the Transitional Programme. Do you have any contact with groups claiming to be Trotskyist either within Nicaragua or from outside?

We have had discussions with Trotskyists both inside and outside Nicaragua. We feel that they are too concerned with matters of theory.

The Trotskyists in Nicaragua have no base in the working-class. We do not reject the Trotskyist position as such, but dislike the inquisitorial process Trotskyists use.



Wounded youth carried off under a hail of fire

since October 1977, including the taking of the Palacio Nacional in August this year.

Where does the FSLN get its arms from?

From the black market or from the defeated sections of the National Guard.

Do you receive any aid from Cuba?

The "geo-political" situation in the Caribbean has prevented Cuba from helping. Effectively we are alone. We have a very good relationship with Cuba, but there is no way they can give material help. Cuba accepts Nicaraguan refugees and FSLN members requiring medical treatment.

What links do you have with other liberation movements?

We are in touch with groups in El Salvador and in Guatemala.

Could you give an outline of the latest developments in the struggle to overthrow Somoza?

The broad opposition front clearly contains many ambiguities and new splits are emerging. Certain forces want to establish a kind of Somozaism without Somoza.

In the last few days however a United Peoples Movement has been set up by 22 proletarian organisations. The aim of this is to avoid the revolutionary process being trapped inside bourgeois democracy.

It is very definitely a popular movement, there are no

bourgeois elements involved.

What about the orientation of the Terceristas to Los Doce and other conservatives?

Within the FSLN itself there are no class contradictions. There are certain strategic differences on forming alliances with the bourgeoisie but we act in unison.

We do not as an organisation participate in either the broad opposition front or the United Peoples Movement, but we do maintain relationships with them.

The bourgeois anti-Somoza forces are simply using a popular base to attack Somoza because he is restricting their profitability.

But they are at best reformists—particularly with reference to the National Guard, which we regard as an army of occupation.

What you have to understand is that we are also fighting U.S. imperialism which is intervening at all levels, militarily, economically and politically.

U.S. mercenaries and anti-Castroites are also involved. We want the European left to pressurise the U.S. to end this intervention. We also need arms and money.

We see our struggle as one for the conquest of basic freedoms and popular democratic rights.

Our ultimate aim is the establishment of a socialist



Cuts fight goes forward in Sheffield

An important step was taken last week when the organising committee for the conference on cuts in the NHS to be held in Sheffield passed the resolution printed below.

The resolution represents the culmination of a fight waged over about a year led by members of the Workers Socialist League.

"This conference maintains that the problems facing the NHS and other public services arise out of policies being deliberately pursued by the Labour government.

"Faced with the acute economic crisis of the capitalist system the government is attempting to find a solution within that very system by the use of such measures as wage control and cuts in public expenditure. In an attempt to offset a crisis of profitability and satisfy the demands of the IMF and private industrialists the government is clawing back money from the public sector so as to provide private industry with subsidies, grants and tax concessions.

"Conference is opposed to all the cuts in public expenditure and resolves to fight against them in the labour movement on the basis of the following programme.

"1) Opposition to all cuts in government spending and for a reversal of all previous cuts. We oppose cuts in other services as a means of maintaining the NHS. Opposition must be both at national level, where the decisions are taken and at local level, where the effects are actually felt, in the form of closures and reductions in staffing levels. There must be no sacrifice of services or living standards, simply to maintain in office a Labour government.

Unionisation

"2) For full unionisation of the NHS and a campaign for large increases in pay to overcome the low levels in the NHS. This can only be achieved by fighting to break government wage control and by linking wage increases to inflation by means of a sliding scale of

wages.

"3) At present the plans of the Area Health Authorities for cut-backs are shrouded in secrecy. This secrecy must be abolished—all plans, discussions and information should be opened for inspection by trade union committees and to users of the NHS to aid the struggle against the cuts.

"4) For regular increases in the health service budget to keep pace with inflation and additional financing to meet the needs of patients.

"5) At present the NHS is pillaged by the drug and supplier companies, which make enormous profits out of it. The supply to the NHS must be taken out of the hands of the monopolies by means of their nationalisation. We must support an investigation into the finances of these companies by trade unionists working in them and in the NHS as part of the campaign for their nationalisation. They must then be fully integrated into the NHS and managed by committees of

workers and NHS users.

"6) These policies can only be fought for within the general fight for a planned socialist economy based on the nationalised banks, finance companies and monopolies. The health service will remain a second-class service, designed to cure sickness rather than promote and ensure a healthy population, as long as it is subject to the policies of a government which places the interests of the capitalist economy above those of the working class. Only as part of a fight for a government which serves and is responsible to the working class can the interests of the workers in the NHS and its users be defended.

"To fight for this programme, conference resolves to:

- a) support all occupations, strikes and other actions against closures and cut-backs.
- b) fight for supporting strike action by other sections of workers.
- c) challenge all those trade



union and Labour Party leaders who refuse to fight against the cuts and campaign to remove them from their positions

on nominations from the conference and delegates from participating organisations, to co-ordinate the campaign and lead the fight for the

programme." The resolution was eventually supported unanimously on the organising committee, which is composed of members of the WSL, Workers Power and the IMG, plus delegates from the Labour Party, NUPE and ASTMS.

Preparations for the conference are well under way. All union branches and labour organisations have been circulated with details of the conference and there has been a response from several directions.

The conference provides the basis for turning the fight against the cuts, which has been mainly defensive, into a political offensive.

In Sheffield, the tendency so far, has been to respond to cuts as they occur, sometimes successfully (as was recently the case with Thornbury Annexe, part of the Children's Hospital).

But this doesn't stop the cuts coming. In order to prevent the cuts a political offensive needs to be waged.

This is the reason for the conference—to discuss the situation in Sheffield within the context of the general political situation.

The resolution is central to this task.

If the conference adopts the resolution it will pave the way forward for an important development, both in Sheffield and nationally.

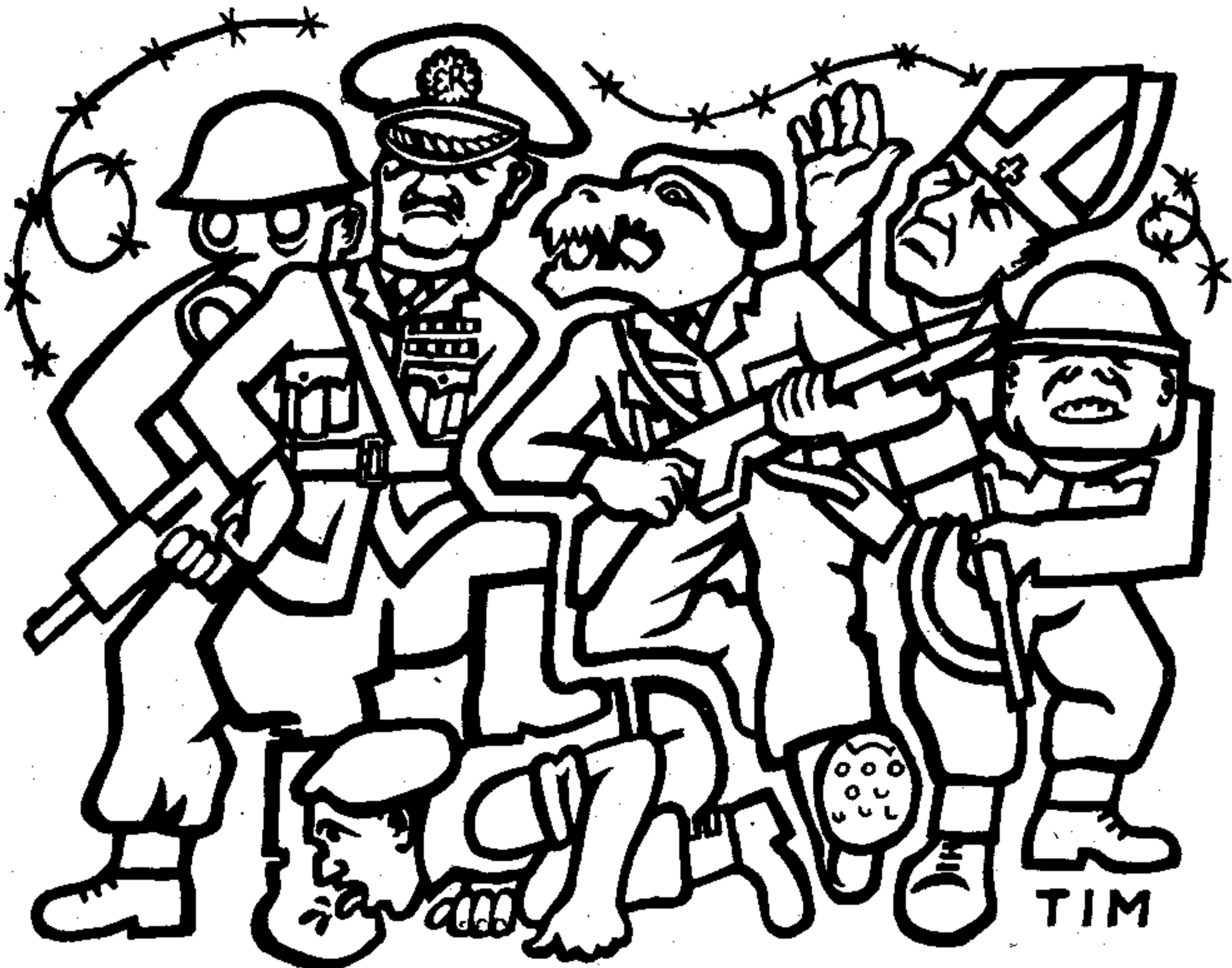
The points raised in the programme can only be realistically fought for in the context of a national campaign against the bureaucracy of the trade unions and Labour Party.

As such, the WSL would urge support for the initiatives taken in Sheffield, both by organising similar conferences based solidly on the labour movement and by sending delegates to the conference to be held in Sheffield.

The conference will take place on Saturday December 2 at the Mount Pleasant Centre Sharrow Lane, Sheffield, from 10.00am till 5.00pm.

Speakers include delegates from Hounslow Occupation Committee, the South Oxford Nursery Campaign and the Socialist Medical Association.

Lawyers slam Mason



Opponents of the British military occupation of the North of Ireland have for a long time pointed out the way in which prolonged remand of unconvicted republican prisoners has become an unofficial system of internment.

It has become commonplace for anti-imperialists to remain anything up to 2 years in jail before being brought to trial.

But last week Labour's Northern Ireland torture chief Roy Mason went one step further—and stripped prisoners of their legal right to appear in court prior to remand.

The occasion for this new attack was the industrial action by prison screws—but the speed of Mason's action demonstrated how thin is the veneer of

"legality" behind which British imperialism masks its military repression.

The sheer arrogance with which Mason proceeded to defend his actions outraged even the legal profession in Northern Ireland. Last Tuesday a group of 23 junior barristers met to demand Mason's resignation.

Contemptuous

They drew attention to his contemptuous remarks in Parliament, in which he declared:

"I am aware that those defence counsel who regularly defend Provisional IRA terrorists are seething with anger."

Mason had gone on to talk of unconvicted remand prisoners as:

"people who have committed murder, conspired to murder and terrorist offences."

The barristers pointed out that Mason's actions and words amounted to

"the latest excess from a man who has consistently shown nothing but contempt for the due process of law in this jurisdiction".

Eventually, though deaf to these protests, Mason lifted the emergency legislation as the screws voted to resume normal working. His hypocritical remarks summed up the reactionary role of the whole Labour leadership on the Irish question.

"The due process of law in Northern Ireland must remain sacrosanct (!) but the security of our province is equally important."

The scandal is that Mason is not a Tory minister. He is an NUM-sponsored minister in a Labour administration.

Hostility

The British Labour movement must act to remove these reactionary "leaders" whose open collaboration with British imperialism against the Irish people is a clear indication of their hostility to the working class in Britain too.

In mobilising to drive out the Callaghan/Mason clique and force a withdrawal of British troops from Ireland, maximum trade union and Labour Party contingents should be mobilised on the Prisoners Aid Committee national Day of Solidarity with Irish Prisoners of War on Sunday November 26.

"G" for sell-out

November 24th has been dubbed "G-day" by the leaders of the National Union of Students.

Their idea of a campaign for adequate grants for their million-strong membership is to send groups of students around London for a day performing "stunts".

Catering students are urged to turn up in their overalls, theological students will participate in a "pray-in" at Westminster Cathedral.

Penny Cooper, long-standing Stalinist treasurer of NUS, claims that students are 'bored' with the usual parliamentary lobby and want a 'more active' form of protest.

These remarks are an insult to the membership of NUS. Of course students have not turned up in large numbers on Broad Left-organised lobbies—since the Broad Left have continually turned these away from

mass demonstrations and into individual discussions with "sympathetic", "left" MPs.

The NUS Executive members responsible for this farcical "G-day" proposal must be censured at the coming NUS conference, and must be forced to organise a genuine campaign which the government and trade union bureaucracy will not simply be able to laugh off.

Such a campaign should be based on demands for mandatory grants for all students—concentrating on the needs of students in the further education sector who are at present discriminated against.

The grant should be increased to make up for the inflation that has cut it away since it reached its highest level in 1962/3.

However, with the rising cost of living, once-a-year increases are not enough: all students should fight for grants to be increased to

keep up with inflation, so that they are not eroded further.

Students should unite with trade unionists in price committees to assess how inflation is hitting their pockets, and by what rate grants and wages should increase.

Trevor Phillips (NUS President) and his Broad Left friends will never be

interested in organising their membership to fight around these demands.

Instead they are doing their best to dissipate student militancy into such pointless activities as "pray-ins".

The WSL urges its student supporters to join the fight for building a leadership in NUS which is capable and willing to fight on the above demands.



Delegates at the last NUS conference

PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Prisoners Aid Committee
DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH IRISH POWs
November 26
Assemble Hyde Park 2.30pm
March to Clerkenwell Green
***Solidarity with Irish POWs!**
***POW status & amnesty for all Irish Political Prisoners!**
***Brits Out of Ireland!**

DELL LAUGHS ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK

After years of service to the Labour movement, scraping by on a mere £14,500 ministerial salary, Callaghan's Trade Secretary Edmund Dell has decided to look after himself for a change—and return to his old trade—merchant banking.

He has in his period of office helped Callaghan and Healey pile up improved returns not only for his old firm of Guinness Peat but also for every other section of British capitalism.

Comfortable

As MP for Birkenhead, Dell has calmly watched the moves to close the Western Ship-repairers firm, and countless other closures on Merseyside, knowing that his own future was not only secure but extremely comfortable.

His resignation from the government accompanied by an enthusiastic endorsement of Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies, raises once again the question of how such rabid reactionaries come to inhabit leading positions in the Labour movement.

From John Stonehouse to Lord George-Brown; from Reg Prentice to Lord Chalfont; from Christopher Mayhew to Sir Richard Marsh; the parade of former Labour cabinet ministers that have openly declared their dedication to capitalism against the working class is never-ending.

How many more remain for the time being in the Labour leadership, awaiting only the offer of the right company directorship or quango position before making their move up the social ladder?

Demands

Dell's defection spells out the futility of those people—such as the 'Militant' group—who continue to address demands to the Callaghan cabinet in the expectation that these people can be 'pressurised' into changing their policies by the trade union movement or by the Labour

Party itself. Dell in particular was the subject of repeated appeals from 'Militant' to 'act' on the closure of Western Ship-repairers.

His departure from the Labour leadership—and preferably the Party as well—is in fact the best action he could have taken.



PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Prentice

Only anti-communists need apply

The vicious anti-communism of the Labour government and the class collaboration of the Communist Party were both highlighted last week.

Industry Secretary Eric Varley is reported to be hesitating before appointing Post Office Engineering Union NEC member Len Willett to the board of the Post Office.

Stooge

Willett, a member of the Communist Party was elected to the 19-strong board by a vote at the POEU conference in September.

His willingness to become one of the stooge trade union "representatives" on this management body which oversees the implementation of speed-up in the hugely profitable post and telecommunications service, should come as no surprise.

Communist Party

members have argued in favour of 'workers participation' schemes in British Leyland, in the ship building industry and elsewhere.

Nowhere have they shrunk from performing management 'duties' such as assisting the closure of plants, the 'rationalisation' of production and the trimming of the labour force.

But for Varley, and Prime Minister Callaghan, even the word 'Communist' smacks uncomfortably of militancy and resistance.

According to the Department of Industry, anyone liable to prove a "security risk" could be excluded from the Post Office board.

But the reality is that, under the guise of "industrial democracy", the Post Office board consciously excludes anyone remotely likely to defend the interests of the working class.

Only the political illiteracy of Varley and Callaghan has led to them placing Communist Party members in that category!



One 'Communist' not snubbed by Varley, Chinese bureaucrat Mr Wang in Britain to buy Harrier jets and other military hardware

Sedgemore's smokescreen



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Sedgemore

There is seldom a retreat by Labour's 'left' without a covering smokescreen. Last week was no exception.

Callaghan and Healey carried a vote on the anti-socialist proposals of the Queen's Speech with the aid of the 'lefts' who voted alongside Ulster Loyalists including Enoch Powell.

This vote has ensured that the right wing Labour cabinet will continue to uphold the 5% pay limit in the face of bitter strikes by

Ford workers, bakers and others, and the open hostility of the entire trade union movement.

But rather than take a stand on this issue and refuse to vote for the continuation of such policies, the so-called 'left' Labour MPs found a new, hitherto untapped source of diversion.

Tribunite Brian Sedgemore—until now notable only for his nationalist call for import controls to protect British capitalist industry—went

into battle against the proposed European Monetary System—EMS.

He quoted a confidential Treasury document which spells out the disastrous consequences if this, the latest fiendish invention of the EEC bureaucracy, were introduced, on top of the existing mountains of wasteful and expensive legislation from that source.

Embarrassed

In doing so he annoyed and embarrassed Denis Healey, who was being questioned by the Commons Select Expenditure Committee.

For this 'crime' Sedgemore was summarily sacked by Callaghan from his post as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Energy Secretary Tony Benn.

Benn himself is chairman of Labour's Home Policy Committee which has just produced a paper condemning the EMS out of hand.

But did he defend Sedgemore against Callaghan?

Not on your life! He has a cabinet post to protect!

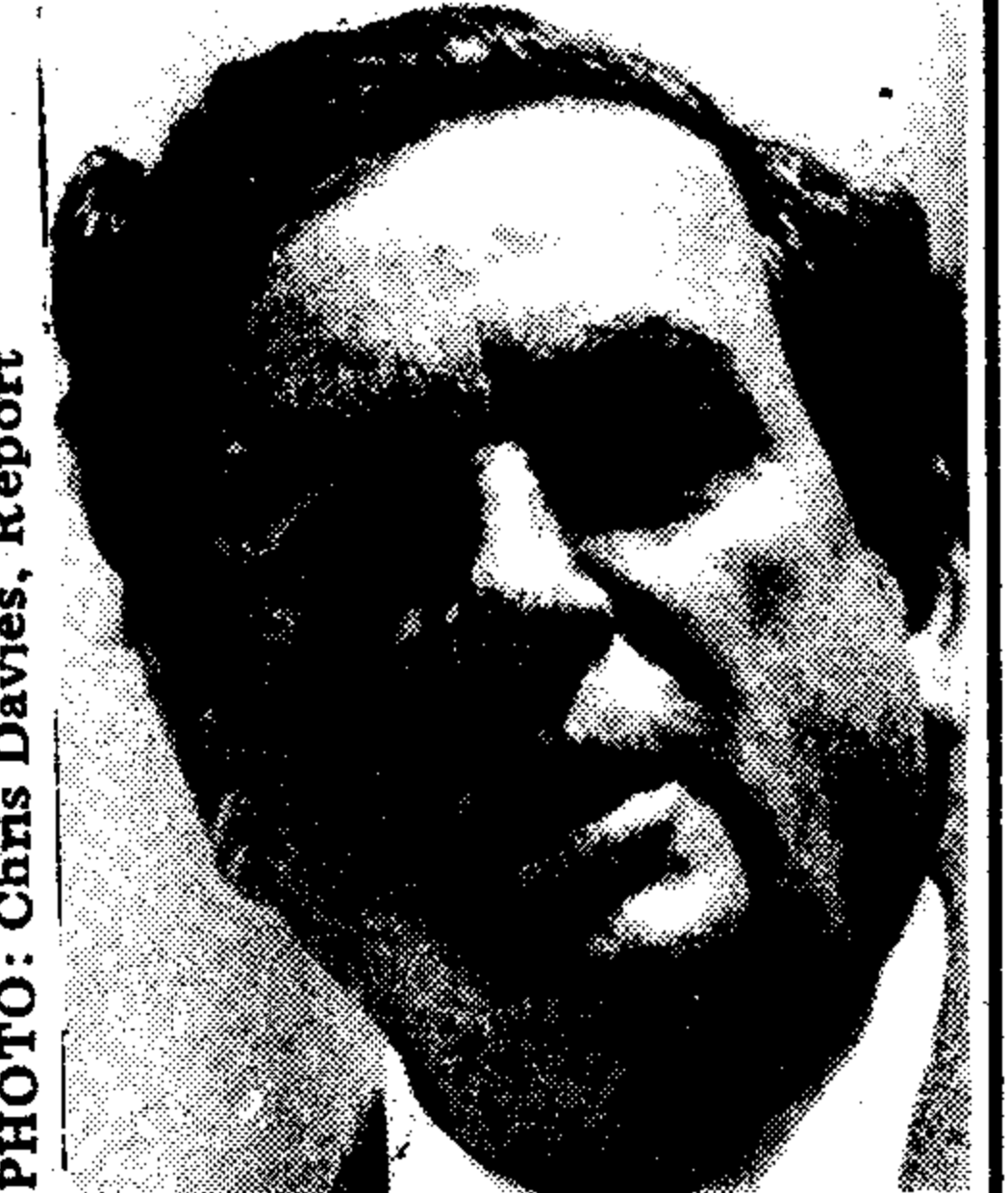


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Healey

In a touching display of opportunism and backstabbing, he wrote a personal letter to "Brian" laying the blame for the sacking at Callaghan's door and wishing him all the best.

It took Labour's new boy on the NEC Dennis Skinner to voice an empty defence of the doomed Sedgemore; he pointed out that if Sedgemore had been a shop floor worker sacked for such a "misdemeanour" then there would have been a walk out.

No walk out

But of course there was no walk-out. On the contrary, while the press played up this "rebellion" by Sedgemore every single 'left' including Skinner himself walked loyally into the government lobby in the vote on the Queen's Speech.

It is "opposition" like this within the Labour Party that enables Callaghan to proceed with his vicious anti-working class measures.

In demanding that 'left' MPs take up a fight for the removal of Callaghan and promising them support should they do so, trade unionists and Labour activists can force such positions out into the open, and see in practice the utter spinelessness of their present supposedly "socialist" leaders.

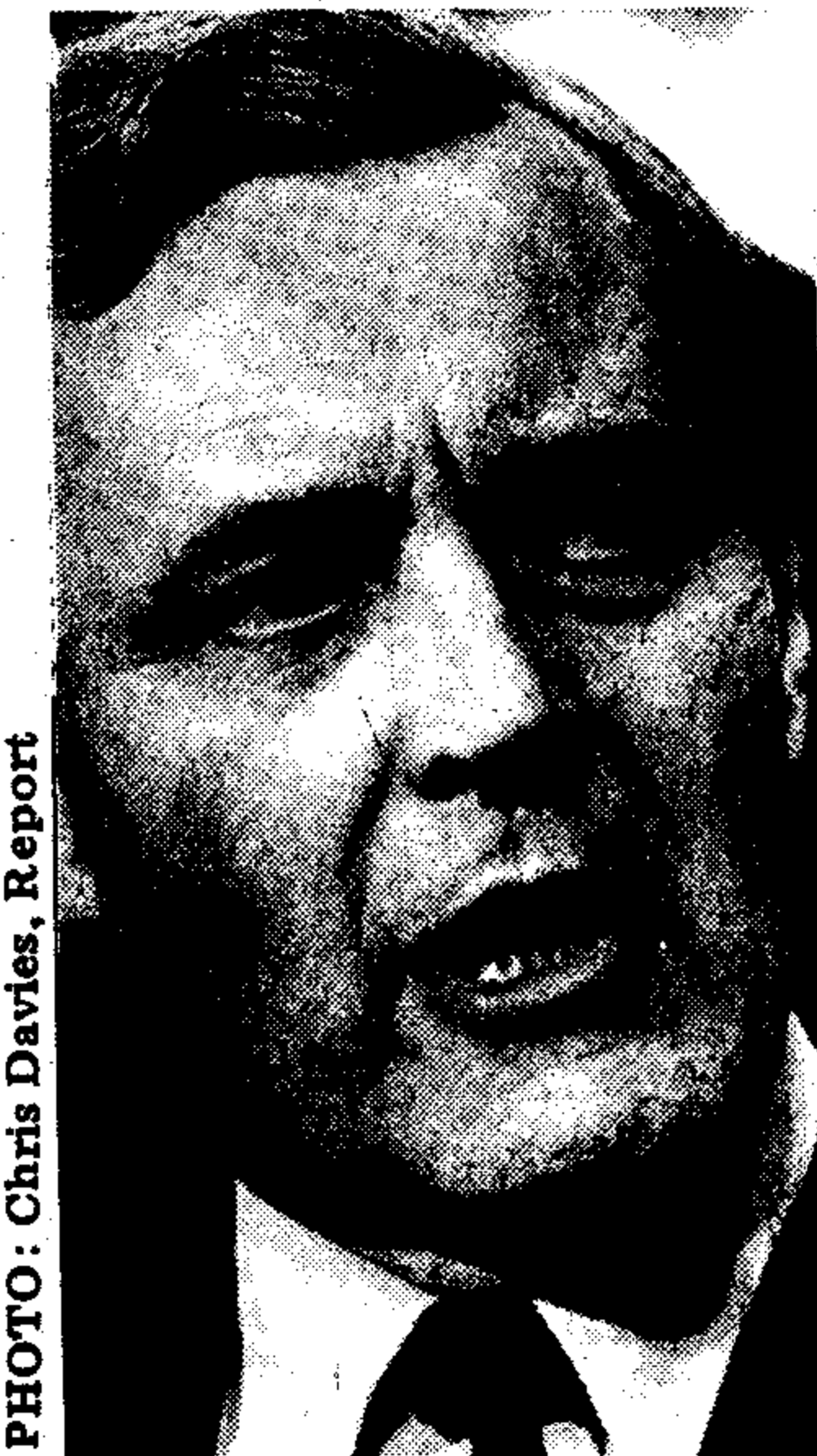


PHOTO: Chris Davies, Report

Benn

PRESS GANG Family favourites

Margaret Jenkins was a passenger in her husband's car when a Land Rover coming the other way shed its trailer which smashed into the car and killed her outright.

Her husband, Denis Jenkins, was awarded £1,200 for the shock of seeing her killed and £18,000 for the loss of his wife as "housekeeper, companion and major breadwinner".

Mrs Jenkins' housework was valued at £1 an hour.

When the defenders of family life have finally run through their emotional appeals for stability and security the courts reveal in everyday tragedies that pass through their hands that 'women's work'—housework

is worth £1 an hour dead.

That is a worthwhile statistic to have in mind when reading in the press or watching on television, campaigns to sap the morale of strikers through an affected concern for their families.

Women themselves are often in the forefront of strikes. They are subject to the same laws of capitalism as men.

But in the fantasy world of the 'family newspaper' their role is exclusively passive—unwilling victim, tragic heroine.

The campaign over the 'Ford wives' has nothing to do with concern for working class women and everything to do with trying to force Ford workers to give up their struggle for higher wages.

The Telegraph reports:

"Normally Friday is a bonanza for shopping in Dagenham, but yesterday many of the wives of the 57,000 Ford workers look taut faced and pale as they shopped for bargains".

It would be of some interest to learn how reporter Ann Morrow distinguished between the taut faces of the wives of Ford workers and the taut faces of other workers who were trying to make an ordinary week's pay packet match up to the prices in the shops.

"For the men the strike has meant depression, inactivity and boredom. But for the women, many of them young, it has been a frightening worry with a build-up of debts and each week a greater inability to pay mortgages and hire-purchase instalments."

No evidence is presented

for this division of labour between boredom and worry.

Even in their descriptions of the financial hardship the women interviewed give the lie to Ann Morrow's fiction of a life of plenty disrupted by the strike. One says "We don't have holidays much anyway".

Another "We don't go out, we never have done because we cannot afford it". Another "We don't ask for a lot and we only very occasionally go out to play Bingo."

Far from enjoying a usual Friday bonanza before the strike, the wives of Ford workers know what all working class men and women know.

The standard of living of the working class can only be defended by strike action over wages.

Butchery and arson by Owen's friend



The remains of the Rex cinema

As the regime of the Shah totters the Labour government is in the forefront of international efforts to prop it up.

As the Iranian masses demand with one voice the removal of his murderous regime, the Shah takes his cue from David Owen and announces 'concessions'. An inquiry into this or that puppet. Another promise of elections in the distant future. A reference to 'mistakes'.

Meanwhile he turns to a government of generals, the 'persuasion' of tanks and

the 'order' of murderous troops on the streets.

The biggest threat to his regime comes from the working class with a political strike of the oil fields as drastic for the capitalist customers as for the regime itself.

Sympathetic as ever, the Shah calls in the troops. David Owen and Jimmy Carter the two exponents of 'human rights' talk of the need for order; for stability; for oil.

To support them the Shah releases some political prisoners and then sends his soldiers onto the streets to refill the jails and the

The facts behind the cinema fire

"Our report is drawn from the observations of people in Abadan—people who were at the Rex Cinema, people who gathered as the full horror of the death trap unfolded, people whose sons and daughters, sisters and brothers were burned alive, people who led the front ranks of demonstrations less than 24 hours later.

The biggest oil refinery in the world is in Abadan. That's what it is known for. Also, it's so hot and oppressively humid in the summer that construction and oil workers are on their jobs by 5 a.m. and cannot work later than 10 a.m.; they resume work around 3 p.m. and continue until 8 o'clock.

Equipment

Because of the vast stretches of oil refineries and petrochemical plants, the most advanced fire-fighting equipment exists in Abadan and it is regarded as the most sophisticated in the whole Middle East. Oil workers in Abadan are militant strikers. Throughout 50 years, the duration of Pahlavi rule in Iran, Abadan has been a centre of anti-regime and anti-imperialist demonstrations often rallying tens of thousands and even several hundred thousand from the entire region.

The Rex Cinema, located in one of the working class neighbourhoods, was a centre of anti-Shah activity.

On the evening of Saturday August 19 there were to be two showings of a movie called "Reindeer". It is a generally progressive film which apparently conveys a simple theme, symbolically depicting the injustice of tyranny and oppression and the heroism of struggle against it.

Sold out

A progressive film. All tickets had been sold out. The theatre holds 830.

The second showing began around 9 p.m. The audience was mostly working class, many entire families, old and young people, men, women and children, a number of students. 830 people packed the theatre. The lights went out. The movie began.

Outside the Rex Cinema a few dozen people who were passing by noticed smoke seeping out from the roof. It was between 9.30 and 9.45 as people stared curiously at the building. In silence, they saw heavier and heavier smoke. Within minutes, people were heard commenting that "it must be empty".

Not unusual

Many movie theatres have been targeted during 10 months of demonstrations. It is thus not unusual that there might be a fire. But people automatically assumed that any theatre

fire meant that *no one* would be inside. There never had been a single injury; all theatres had been empty before being hit by demonstrators.

Not empty

Within minutes, people realized that maybe the Rex was *not* empty. A group of 30 had swelled to 500 or 600 within minutes as the smoke also had swelled around the building. It was only seconds before this crowd moved towards the doors.

Suddenly, seeming to come from nowhere, police vans and army trucks filled the entire area. Soldiers and police poured out of the vans and surged in front of the crowd, swiftly blocking the entire front of the building.

Police plunged into the crowd and shoved people backwards. Suddenly this

wall of troops and police barricading the door were attacking. Clubs went up in the air, cracking down on hands, heads, backs and arms as people shoved to reach the doorways.

Flames were all around the building. In a roaring blaze, the entire theatre was walled with fire.

"People are burning! Please help them!" screamed someone from the roof, jumping two stories to the ground.

As the crowd stared in horror, police swarmed over him, clubs and bayonettes aimed to the ground where he had fallen. Within seconds, police killed him.

Shots rang out. People screamed from the roof. They were being shot! Two, three, then another two were breaking through the roof, scrambling to the edge ready to jump to the ground. They were being shot before they reached

the ground.

Anyone who struggled out of the fire was being shot and clubbed. To one side, people noticed a section of the wall about to crumble. It was being broken through from inside and two or three people were frantically trying to get out to safety. The crowd rushed to rescue them.

Before they reached the edge of the building and the people desperately trying to get them out, police surrounded them, shoving with rifle butts and clubs, pushing them back. Struggling frantically against the police, people watched in agony as only two or three were able to escape, leaving behind scores of others trapped by falling timbers and totally drowned in flames.

Pitched battle

The scene in front of the theatre was now a pitched battle between crowds desperately trying to get to the doors and scores of police and troops fighting back all attempts at rescue. People could see that a struggle had broken out from behind the doors, coming from inside the theatre. And they could see a solid wall of soldiers behind the police pushing against the doors to keep them shut.

Troops shoved, kicked and smashed rifle butts into the crowds. Police closed in tighter and tighter blocking all access to the building. Behind them, another solid wall of troops, shoving against the doors.

The front of the building was now a raging inferno. It

was 11.30. At 11 o'clock a truck carrying one water tank had pulled up several hundred feet from the theatre. People ran in vain to bring it close to the blazing theatre. It was a drinking water truck and was empty and couldn't use the oil company's hydrants they were told.

Inside, the lights had gone out. The movie had started. Smoke curled into the theatre. Within minutes flames were all around them.

People had rushed the doors. They found them chained from the outside.

Heaving themselves against the main door, they had finally succeeded in breaking one door. As they tried to push through the door, they saw that they were shoving against a solid wall of troops, armed with machine guns, pushing them back inside the deadly fire.

"Anyone comes out—we'll shoot!" shouted the troops.

As the soldiers hurled themselves against the door shoving people back into the flames, one or two fought their way through. As they staggered forward police plunged on top of them with clubs.

Chained

The doors had been re-chained. The death over was sealed.

For four hours, the fire raged. Crowds battled and fought against the police heaving desperately against the armed troops. By 2 a.m. they knew that everyone must be dead inside. And most of the people who had jumped from the roof had been shot leaving only about a dozen people alive.



Iranian troops



The Shah

that they will exchange the despotism of the Shah for the religious repression of the official opposition.

Yet the emergence to the vanguard of the struggle of the working class is a progressive and important development of the Iranian revolution.

Already the working class provides the power-horse of the opposition.

Atrocities

The necessity is for the working class—and its most advanced elements—to take the leadership politically of the revolutionary upsurge.

In Britain and America the Shah's friends still attempt to discredit the will of the masses. Atrocities are presented as 'communist-inspired' or the work of 'infiltrators'.

No greater manipulation of the news from Iran has yet been seen than the cinema fire in Abadan on August 19 this year when 750 people were killed in a horrifying blaze in a cinema.

The regime declared this to be the work of "terrorists" and the press in Britain and America obediently presented this 'evidence' of the character of the opposition.

mortuaries. Demonstrations are fired on, opposition is met with firearms.

Yet for David Owen and the Labour government the main concern is "British and western interests" and the biggest danger 'communism'.

The struggles of the masses are not yet linked to demands for communism. There does not exist in Iran a party capable of leading the masses to the socialist revolution.

Such a leadership is the most urgent and main need of the Iranian working class and the greatest danger facing the Iranian masses is

Later there were cautious admissions that the masses in Iran did not accept the explanation they were given.

Socialist Press has decided to reprint extracts from *Resistance*, the newspaper of the Iranian Students Association in the US.

The ISAUS in its publications certainly does not fight for the socialist revolution but does stand against the Shah and against imperialism.

We have no independent means of collecting eye witness accounts to the cinema fire but believe that this account taken from *Resistance* is an honest attempt to build up an accurate picture of what happened and who was responsible.

Culprit

In fact, as this extract shows, the culprit was the Shah. The police were used to baton panic stricken people back into the cinema and fire fighting equipment was deliberately held back.

Crowds trying to free people from the inferno were fired on by troops.

This is the regime that David Owen and the Labour government supports . . .

Abadan

At 2 o'clock in the morning, one fire truck arrived. It pulled up several hundred feet from the blaze, so far away that the water couldn't even reach the ground floor.

Everyone inside was dead.

Fire trucks

Then: the army fire truck arrived. The navy fire truck arrived. The National Iranian Oil Company fire truck arrived. And a petrochemical company fire truck arrived.

After everyone was dead, the fire trucks began to put out the fire.

Police kept up the barricade. Troops backed up the police. The crowd was pushed farther and farther back from the ruins of the theatre and the charred remains of families, friends and comrades.

From 2 a.m. until 5,

troops could be seen pulling bodies out of the wreckage and piling them onto army trucks. No one was ever allowed near the building or the bodies.

As dawn broke in Abadan on Sunday August 20, police and troop reinforcements arrived and by early morning a swarm of several hundred troops barricaded the entire area against crowds of shocked, horrified, grief stricken witnesses to one of the most desperate crimes of Pahlavi tyranny. It was not the first crime; it will not be the last. But as the burning sun rose over this scene of savage murder, the grief and shock and horror was already transforming into a raging, fearless revolutionary storm. Within hours, Abadan erupted with thundering calls of Death to the Pahlavi Tyranny! Death to the Shah! Burn him!

By the next day, the Rex

theatre was surrounded by thousands of troops. No one was permitted near the scene.

By night, army trucks pulled up and loaded up with bodies and stole them away to mass graves in fear of people's furious and powerful rage.

At the cemetery, not one body was recognizable.

Bulldozers

Two bulldozers, noticed by residents two days earlier near the cemetery, suddenly disappeared by Monday night. The drivers have not been seen since.

Five days before the fire, a Navy captain is reported to have told his officers 'don't go to any movies this week'.



Victims of the Shah's murderous attacks

LIBELLED—BUT NOT DAMAGED!

Expensive lessons of WRP law suit

A license has been issued to the Tory press to witch-hunt and libel revolutionaries and militant socialists.

That is the only possible interpretation of the High Court verdict at the end of the libel suit brought against the *Observer* newspaper by six members of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

The jury found that the *Observer's* absurd allegations of arms caches, and mistreatment of actress Irene Gorst at the WRP's residential school were not substantially true, and did libel the complainants.

In this limited sense, they have "cleared the names" of the plaintiffs and the WRP.

But they also declared that the plaintiffs—including WRP Central Committee members Vanessa and Corin Redgrave, Roy Battersby and Roger Smith and former General Secretary Gerry Healy—"had not been materially injured".

Yet the trial had revealed conclusive proof of a joint effort by both the Special Branch and the *Observer* to frame up the WRP through a coordination of the witch-hunting article and a police raid on the WRP school.

Blacklist

And it had exposed the operation of a political blacklist in the entertainment industry through which several of the plaintiffs had suffered a drastic curtailment of work since the article was published.

Also highlighted was the scandalous role in this of Equity leader Peter Plouviez who, rather than defend Equity members from political blacklisting, actively encouraged it, pressing Gorst into taking the story to the *Observer*.

To declare, in spite of all this, that the plaintiffs "had not been materially injured" is bad enough. But, to add outrage to injury, the £70,000 costs of the hearing were awarded against the injured party, to the libellous *Observer*!

This is little more than an open invitation to the servile hacks of Fleet Street to fabricate even more extravagant lies about the revolutionary movement.

It is certainly hard to imagine the scale of damages and costs that would have been willingly handed out to six bourgeois politicians who were found to have been libelled by a workers' paper.

Tactics

The decision in this case is a further class expression—if any were needed—of the class nature of British justice.

There is of course no principled objection to taking legal action against libels in the Tory press. It is entirely a question of tactics in an particular case.

But the outcome of the WRP's lawsuit should be scarcely a surprise to Marxists who have consistently stressed that the system of "justice" under capitalism means in reality the systematic protection of the interests and wealth of the capitalist class against the organised workers' movement.

The libel laws are as much a part of the capitalists' legal system as the laws restricting picketing the racist immigration laws, and the Criminal Trespass Law. They are designed for use by the property-owning minority against its opponents and not vice versa.

Fresh lesson

But it appears that the WRP leaders required a further expensive lesson in this basic fact of life under capitalism, and actually expected that the strength of their case against the *Observer* would produce a just verdict.

In fact the real cost of the

action to the WRP must be counted in excess of the huge sum of money paid over to the *Observer*.

A full reckoning must also take account of the compromising and outright reformist statement made by these supposed "revolutionaries" in testimony in a legal hearing brought about on their own initiative.

Central Committee member Corin Redgrave went into the witness box to declare that not only did the WRP reject armed struggle but that at the moment the Party adopted a policy of armed struggle he would resign!

Clearly he has ambitions to serve as a latter-day Kamenev or Zinoviev—reneging on the very eve of the Socialist revolution!

Vanessa Redgrave also declared that she hoped that the socialist transformation would come "through legal, constitutional and peaceful struggle" (*Newsline*).



Redgrave: talked of "legal, constitutional and peaceful struggle" for socialism.

Reading these statements it is hard to recall that the WRP is the Party which for the last six years has incessantly, and with a monotony relieved only slightly by its hysterical language, warned the British working class of the imminence of a counter-revolutionary military coup!

If such dire predictions were being taken seriously, it would be reasonable to assume that, far from opposing the arming of the working class, and seeking recompense for 3-year-old libels through the bourgeois courts, the WRP leaders would be devoting their energies to campaigning for and organising the formation of armed workers' militia, and mobilising the working class on a programme of transitional demands.

But of course the WRP Central Committee does not seriously believe its own "analysis". And it reserves its special venom for the Workers Socialist League which is the only political tendency that does fight consistently for transitional demands to mobilise the working class.

And while falsely accusing us of reformism, WRP leaders find themselves in the dock preaching what amounts to a peaceful road to socialism.

Vanessa Redgrave in particular declared, according to

Newsline that the programmatic call for an armed uprising of the working class referred only to specific conditions—where a socialist government elected on a socialist programme was attacked by right-wing minority groups.

Parliamentary road

Aside from the way in which this conception spells out an entirely parliamentary road, Redgrave rounded off the reformist perspective by quoting as an example of such a socialist government Allende's Popular Front government in Chile in 1973!

Redgrave will be best remembered by many WRP members, sympathisers and contacts for her grotesquely embarrassing display in which in an agonising sequence in the WRP film *The Palestinian* she performs a dance waving a machine gun above her head.

Yet she declared in court that: "My whole life I have struggled politically against violence, war and terror" (*Newsline*).

She was not lying to the court. Rather, her testimony revealed that she has not in any way broken from the liberalism, pacifism and protest politics that for years before her sudden "recruitment" made her an obstacle to the political struggles of the Socialist Labour League and the WRP.

Protest politics

Rather than winning over Redgrave to Trotskyist politics, the WRP has been shown to have fallen victim to her particular brand of middle-class protest.

It is the WRP's posturing alongside Palestinian liberation fighters, its cynical warnings of immediate military coups and its ultra-left rhetoric which are the facade for its real positions.

Behind this thin veneer of "revolutionary" phrasology and play-acting, lurks the real wretched face of the WRP—its opportunist evasion of any serious struggle for the Trotskyist programme in the international workers movement; its cowardly compromises with the petty bourgeois leaders of the PLC, and with the Iraqi and Libyan dictatorships; and its abstention from or adaptation to almost every one of the daily struggles of the British working class.

Slandered

When, late in 1974 the founder members of the Workers Socialist League, then members of the WRP, first challenged the Healy leadership's abandonment of the method and demands of the Trotskyist programme, we were slandered, abused, vilified and bureaucratically expelled.

Every one of our criticisms has since been amply borne out in practice.

Though six of its members have now—at great labour and expense—cleared their names in the bourgeois courts of the ludicrous and libellous charges laid against them in the *Observer* article, WRP members should now address themselves to the far more serious political charges that remain to be answered by their leaders.

By John Lister

'Participating' in the Speke closure cover up



By Chris Erswell

A review of *What Happened at Speke?* by Huw Beynon, published by 6/612 Branch TGWU, Liverpool.

This pamphlet is an unashamed whitewash of the role of the combine committee chairman and leading Communist Party member Derek Robinson along with the convenors at British Leyland's Triumph Speke plant.

It was produced by the TGWU branch that covered the now closed plant and written by "disinterested" armchair liberal and sometime observer-of-the-class struggle-from-the-side-lines, Huw Beynon.

It contains no serious analysis of the participation set-up in Leyland, of which Robinson is 100% in favour and which with his aid, first fingered Speke as a 'low productivity plant' and then helped organise the closure of the plant.

The pamphlet is written as a "nasty employer"-bashing essay, but at no point comes to grips with the problem of the traitors within the midst of the working class itself.

The theme is very much the same as Beynon's earlier publication *Working for Ford*—in other words 'spare a moment for the plight of the poor carworker on the assembly line'.

Workers are put up on a pedestal and "significant" quotations are grovellingly received from them.

The attempts of the left to fight the reformist leaders in the plants are scoffed at and belittled.

Any other position would imply a criticism of the same opportunist leaders with whom Beynon

has such a cosy relationship.

A vivid example is Eddie Roberts, the 'Militant' whizz-kid ex-convenor at Ford Halewood who figures prominently in *Working for Ford*.

He is now a full-time official for the TGWU and he demonstrated his right wing credentials during the recent struggle against redundancies at the Birds Eye factory in Kirkby, when he ordered the workforce back after a company threat to close the whole plant.

Subservience

The same unprincipled, grovelling subservience to the right wing is evident in the Speke pamphlet.

Eddie Roberts is quoted 'hypocritically clicking his tongue at the Speke closure:

"Five years ago if you'd said Standards would be closed down without a fight no one would have believed you. It would have been unbelievable.

"But it's gone. Two years time people will be saying "Speke? There used to be a car factory out there once didn't there?" It's gone".

The same method of quoting the hypocritical, hand-wringing right wingers making banal obituaries for the closure is also evident in another part of the pamphlet where Beynon quotes local 'left' MP Eddie Loyden, talking about the period after the first announcement of the closure:

"In a situation like that, what working class people want to know is 'when did we last win one?' 'What are our trade union leaders doing?' They look around



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

and they see that there's nothing down for them."

His own questions might well be asked of himself.

Apart from verbal support and futile meetings with hatchet-man Edwardes, Loyden along with fellow local 'left' MP Eric Heffer, failed to argue for occupation and played a key supporting role in delaying and diverting any potential struggle.

Reputation

Their 'left' reputation aided them in this task and did not in any way compel them to fight within the Labour Party for the removal of Callaghan and the rest of the Labour politicians who were in favour of the closure.

Nowhere is there any mention of the role of the convenors in the closure.

For TGWU convenor Mick Everett this was not the first closure that he had presided over.

Before Triumph he was convenor at the nearby (now closed) Garston Bottle Works.

Nor is there any mention of the Speke mass meeting where Stalinist AUEW convenor Dave Thomas's hollow bluster about "fight-

ing the closure" was shouted down by the meeting after his appalling record of sabotage and betrayal.

A prime example of this was his refusal to lift a finger to fight the victimisation in 1975 of the (then) SWP member Tommy Healey, AUEW deputy convenor.

Neither of these Speke convenors at any time made a call for occupation.

They completely abdicated from any attempt to lead a struggle against the closure.

They stood by and made no move to end the attempts of Loyden, Heffer and combine committee chairman Derek Robinson to delay and divert the struggle with futile 'talks' and lobbies of Edwardes and Callaghan.

They helped serve up buckets of blood-curdling bluster about what they were going to do on behalf of the members.

The most glaring omission, however, is on the role of 'participation' in Leyland and in particular of the role of Derek Robinson, Stalinist chairman of the combine committee and fervent advocate of 'partici-

pation'.

Beynon's equivocal position on the role of 'participation' in the closure is revealed in the following amazing statement on page 35:

"Nationally, the Cars Council was not informed of—much less participated in—decisions relating to the closure of Speke".

Beynon apparently views 'participation' as some genuine body for consulting the views of the workforce which the employers have benevolently set up.

This, of course, is how the Leyland management have 'sold' the participation set-up to the stewards and they have obviously managed to 'con' even Beynon.

His criticism of it is merely that they failed to 'consult' the workforce at Speke over the closure!

Gullible

His gullibility is further evidenced in a passage relating to Robinson.

"At both the mass meetings Derek Robinson, the convenor of Longbridge and chairman of the British Leyland shop stewards combine committee spoke and promised the workers the support of their workmates in other plants.

"This support was never tested (you have to fight before you really find out); and partly this was because workers at Speke didn't believe it existed".

The fact that Robinson had a record of betrayal as long as your arm (see *Socialist Press* 118) is not mentioned and there is a thinly-veiled attempt to yet again imply that it is the membership's fault.

In fact Robinson, who sits on the Cars Council, was present at a joint meeting of Leyland convenors and managers at Kenilworth when Edwardes first took over.

Standing ovation

He "participated" in a standing ovation for the Edwardes plan involving 12,000 redundancies.

That plan virtually gave its seal of approval for the closure of Speke whose alleged 'low productivity' was singled out in a participation committee report.

It is, therefore, rubbish to say that the Cars Council was not informed about the Speke closure.

The fact of the matter is

The Triumph Speke plant

that the convenors who voted for the Edwardes plan were and are in league with management.

Robinson in particular, for all his demagoguery, was quite prepared to see Speke closed for the sake of the overall 'viability' of Leyland.

His presence at the mass meeting was to ensure that no moves were made towards plant occupation to prevent closure. In this task he succeeded.

It is the failure to put the blame fairly and squarely on the shoulders of the convenors and in particular Robinson that makes this pamphlet such a miserable whitewash.

The Socialist Workers Party, which devoted a front page to Robinson's speech at the first mass meeting without a word of criticism of the failure to decide for occupation, subsequently dropped the issue as the sell-out took shape.



PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report

Heffer

This booklet, does not say what really happened at Speke—it offers only a bureaucrats-eye view of one of the most miserable sell-outs to have taken place in the struggle on jobs over the last few years.

If further Leyland workers are not to follow their Speke brothers and sisters to the growing dole queues, a leadership must be constructed that will draw out these harsh lessons and struggle consciously against the existing combine committee leadership for an end to participation and a fight for wages and working conditions.



PHOTO: Laurence Sparham (IFL)

Pickets at Birds Eye, Kirkby—betrayed by TGWU official Eddie Roberts

'Disinvestment' no way to fight apartheid

A review of the Anti-Apartheid Movement's booklet *Changing Patterns of International Investment in South Africa and the Disinvestment Campaign* by Simon Clarke. Price 50p

of the imperialist governments! It would seem that he is convinced of the fundamental decency of imperialism. He certainly fosters the illusion that imperialism's denunciations of apartheid are more than mere cynical cover-ups for the imperialists' only interest in South Africa—the pursuit of profit.

"Embargo"

A clear example of what is to be expected from the Labour 'lefts' and their ilk is the arms "embargo" on Southern Africa—an attempt to replace the independent mobilisation and actions of the working class by action from the capitalist state, which, having been subjected to "pressure" was then expected to reform itself and take action in support of the interests of the South African working class!

But of course the imperialists had first ensured that the South African state was sufficiently strong, through arms stockpiling and through its own productive capabilities.

Only then did they announce support for an embargo. They of course made sure at the same time that arms continued to be supplied through secret deals, phony third agents, etc.

Open the books

For this reason the Workers Socialist League calls for the opening of the books and action to force the nationalisation under workers' management of all firms and banks trading with South Africa—not only to ensure effective embargoes in the interests of black workers, but also to ensure supplies of goods essential to the struggle of those workers.

It is not surprising that such action is not part of the blueprint drawn up by the Anti Apartheid Movement.

Nor, of course, does it stress the vital necessity of the building of an independent working class party in South Africa which could take full advantage of the independent action of the proletariat in the imperialist states.

Left talkers

Such prospects are outside the vision of left talkers who cannot see beyond their statistics and blueprints, who foster the illusion that capital can assist the struggling proletariat.

Revolutionaries though, fight in the real world of the class struggle; they do not provide schemas for the self-reform of imperialism or for the geographical redistribution of capital.

Our struggle is for the development of a programme and an organisation capable of expropriating and smashing imperialism.

Impracticable

The 'disinvestment' campaign as pursued by the AAM is merely an impracticable petty-bourgeois blueprint, in the face of imperialism's large stake in South Africa—one which it will not willingly surrender, however much it squeals hypocritically against apartheid.

Simon Clarke's pamphlet is prefixed by AAM's announcement that its views are not necessarily their own.

This is an unnecessary precaution—nothing in the pamphlet is likely to cause any offence to the lords, ladies, churchmen etc., to the cultivation of whose support the AAM devotes so much of its effort.

This is another paper published by the Anti Apartheid Movement as a contribution, they fondly imagine, to the overthrow, or at least the liberalisation of the repressive apartheid system of the South African state.

The means of international solidarity with the oppressed masses in South Africa which Simon Clarke envisages is the growth and partial redirection of the "disinvestment" campaign.

"Disinvestment" means in reality action by the imperialist states to force change upon a country which is, in fact, one of the most reliable imperialist

agents and the source of much profit to international capitalists.

Clarke declares that the disinvestment campaign must not remain a "moral crusade", but must be a fighting "political campaign".

However, he shows little awareness of the realities of imperialism, of class relations, or of the means whereby the South African state can be overthrown.

Empiricist

The pamphlet is packed with the statistics, tables and empiricist analysis that are the realities of the world to such left-wing voyeurs.

Backed up with this informa-

tion, Clarke can correctly point out that the imperialist banks are increasingly important in the running of South African capitalism.

He goes on to argue from this that the 'disinvestment' campaign should concentrate on them even more than on the multi-nationals which participate directly in the oppression of the South African working masses.

Because he is necessarily aware that the banks and multi-nationals are right behind the increasingly repressive measures of the apartheid state, Clarke is rather vague about how they are to be persuaded to 'disinvest'.

So he falls back on the hope of legislative action on the part

PHOTO: Mark Ruster (IFL)



Anti Apartheid demonstrators

Falling leaflets

PETER MCINTYRE reviews *The Falling Leaf*, an exhibition of aerial dropped propaganda 1914-68. The exhibition has just completed its stay at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, and is to transfer to London.

During the siege of Paris in 1870 citizens fleeing the Prussian forces by balloon dropped pamphlets and leaflets on the encircling soldiers.

The idea was taken up in 1871 by the Paris Commune and the baskets of balloons were packed with propaganda to drop outside the city.

This first known example of appealing directly to enemy soldiers stressing a common cause and the injustice of the attackers became one of the most sophisticated weapons of war, used with staggering cynicism by all sides in both World Wars and in all imperialist invasions.

World War I

During World War I British and French forces dropped 24 million pamphlets and leaflets into Germany.

In 1939 the RAF dropped six million leaflets in one night

on German towns before war was declared.

The total tonnage dropped by all sides during the war has never been accurately estimated but the Monroe bomb, developed by the US specifically for propaganda drops spread 480 million pieces of propaganda on Europe between D Day and the end of the war there.

The US in Vietnam were as extravagant in their paper weapons as in their bombing.

The US airforce dropped an estimated 48 million billion pieces of paper on the Vietnamese.

In figures that is 48,000,000,000,000,000.

Villages of 100 people would receive 100,000 leaflets. They used them for everything from blocking holes in the roof to toilet paper.

An exhibition of a tiny proportion of air-dropped propaganda from 1914-1968—The Falling Leaf—has transferred to London from the Museum of Modern Art,

Oxford.

The exhibition is macabre, horrifying and fascinating. Themes recur again and again—anti-imperialism, anti-communism, racism, sexism.

The exhibition takes its name from a leaflet dropped on France by Germany.

A paper leaf was inscribed with a helmeted skull and the words:

"Autumn: The leaves are falling. We will fall like them. The leaves die because God wills it. But us, we fall because the English wish it. Next Spring nobody will remember either the dead leaves or the dead soldiers. Life will pass over our graves."

Few leaflets were that subtle. One of the most bestial on display was dropped by the RAF on Germany in 1941.

It showed a young girl with her head split in half and is captioned simply 'Not your child'. Nazi Germany dropped one on London showing the victims of Dresden.

The potency of anti-imperialism was not even shunned by Goebbels.

A leaflet addressed to African troops in France showed the looting of their houses by French soldiers, with the message 'Coloured soldiers, lay down your arms'.

(Later the Vietcong left messages for black US soldiers with a rhyme: "I wish I were an Alabama trooper, this is what I would truly love to be; I wish I were an Alabama trooper, 'cause then I could kill the niggers legally.")

While the Nazis exhorted French black soldiers to lay down their arms, they also dropped leaflets on Italy portraying black US troops raping women and desecrating churches.

Most imperialist armies found it necessary to persuade the enemy soldier that his mother/wife/girlfriend was being raped or seduced or simply pining away. (Some of the coverage of the Ford strike in the British press would not be out of place here.)

There is only one example of Bolshevik propaganda dropped by air—a leaflet dropped on British and American invading forces in 1919 around Murmansk.

It is sad to have to report that this, too, begins with an appeal to the soldiers to remember 'sweet home... wives and children, your sisters and sweethearts waiting for you'.

It goes on:

"Your mother is asking newcomers from the front: 'Where is my boy?—Don't know, somewhere in the Steppes of war'.

Later, however, the leaflet takes a sharply political turn.

"They have been telling you that this was a war against German autocracy, against German imperialism, against Kaiserism. But now there is no more Kaiserism, no more autocracy.

"The German workers have arisen in revolt—and they have themselves destroyed Kaiserism. Themselves! Without the help of British and American troops.

"There is no more imperialism in Germany. The Kaiser and the German warlords have fled.

"Germany, like Russia, is now the land of Revolution. Germany, like Russia, will be governed, not by a block of cruel masters, but by the people, revolutionary workers...

"Do you realise that in this great battle of Labour against Capital, of freedom against exploitation, of real democracy against fake democracy of Rockefeller and Morgan, you are to fight on the side of your

cruel masters against your brethren and your fellow workers? Are you not working against yourselves? ...

"Demand to go home. Hold meetings in your regiments, form soldiers' councils, and force your demands on your governments and your officers.

"If you are convinced in the justice of the cause of Labour then come over to our side and we will give you a hearty welcome into the ranks of those who are fighting for the emancipation of Labour."

That single example of a genuine proletarian appeal has to suffice for this exhibition.

Of anti-communism there is plenty.

The exhibition notes are frustrating since they do not translate fully many of the leaflets and they are also highly biased.

Effective Japanese propaganda against British imperialism is 'balanced' by a long passage 'explaining' the problems of the British in India.

The exhibition itself, however, should not be missed.



British soldiers attach leaflets to propaganda balloon in 1918



German leaflet dropped on British troops in 1945

INDUSTRIAL NEWS

'Low pay' delay



In a series of statements over the past week, the NUPE leadership have made increasingly clear their intention of selling out the fight in the public sector around the claim for a £60 minimum wage and a 35 hour week.

Their latest tactic has been to 'prolong negotiations' in the manual workers sections—whose settlement date of 4 November has already passed—and they are also hinting at the impossibility of calling out workers before Christmas.

Also last Christmas Fisher was quite happy to sit back and watch the Firemen fight alone against Phase III when he—more than any other union boss—was in a position to end

their isolation and greatly increase their chances of victory.

Willing to strike

Fisher and the public sector union leadership must not be allowed to repeat the betrayals of last year. Public sector workers have already shown by countless resolutions passed through union branches that they are willing to take strike action in support of the claim—without any mention of waiting until after Christmas.

The leadership must now be forced to give a clear call for such action, rather than blaming their own spinelessness on the 'weakness' of the membership. A conference has been called in London on 9 December, sponsored by NUPE branches at Westminster Hospital and

Hammersmith hospital. The conference will be open to delegates from all union branches affected by the claim—although only branch officers and lay officials will have voting rights—and could play an important part in coordinating the fight and demanding that the leadership give a clear lead.

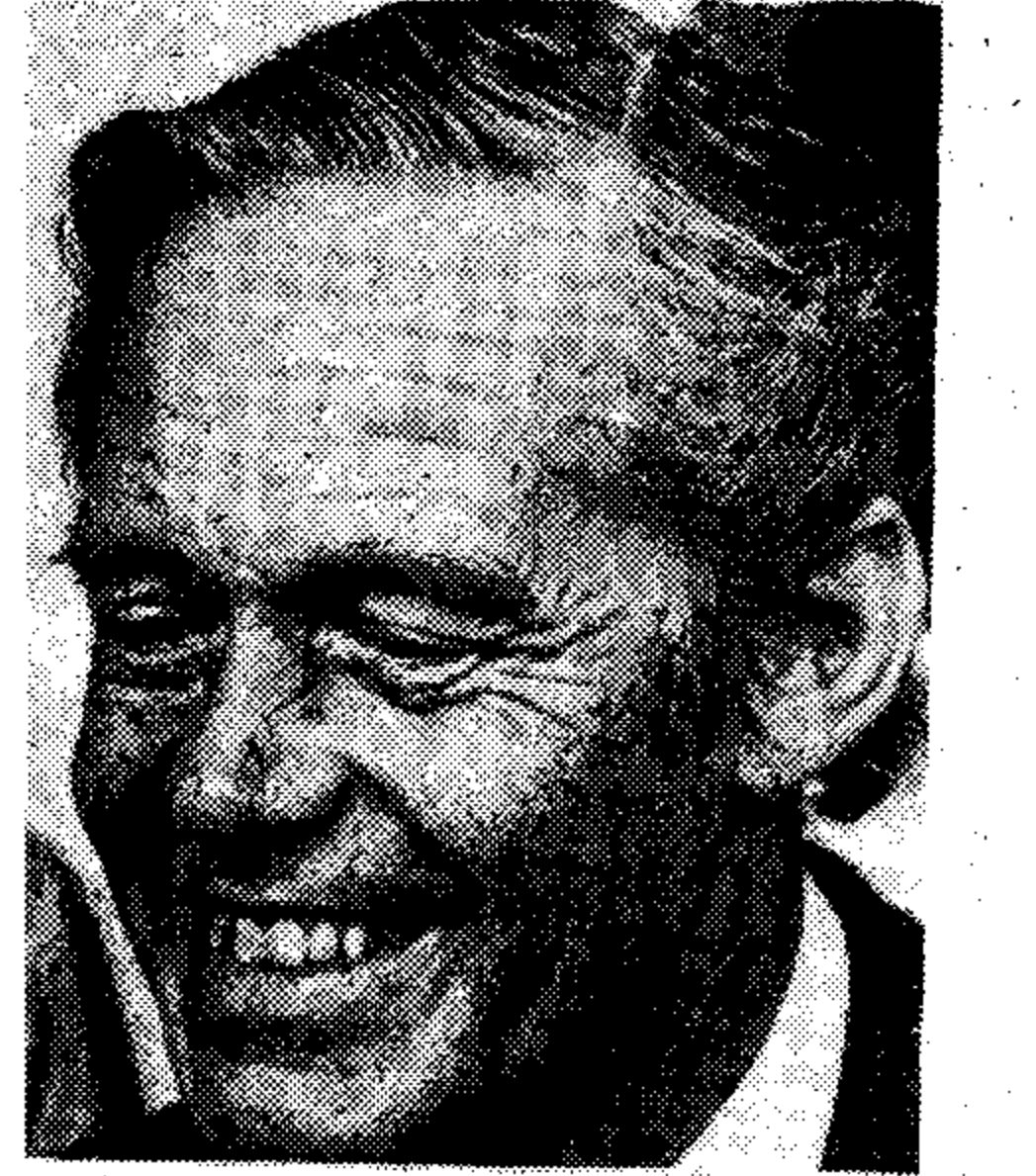
Not so serious

This conference should be supported as a serious attempt to coordinate action around the low pay claim.

Not so serious, however, is the Campaign for Action in NUPE (CAN), which is influenced by the SWP and the IMG and seems to be suffering from all the political shortcomings of these groups.

The extent of CAN's programme so far seems to be to organise demonstrations on low pay and to print 'Low Pay' badges and even 'Low Pay' T shirts in the vain hope that this will be sufficient to defeat the 5% pay policy and the Callaghan government.

CAN's campaign so far seems to be indistinguishable from the official NUPE campaign



NUPE leader Fisher

Campaign fights to save hospital

In the last month, important developments have been unfolding in the fight against Health Service cuts in Oxford.

The NUPE and NALGO leadership, after the final decision of the Area Health Authority to close Oxford's main geriatric hospital in Cowley Road called the first union meeting of workers in the hospital.

They intended to win support for their own position that, given the consultants' support for closure, occupation by staff would be impossible. Besides, they argued, the Community Health Council's opposition to the closure had forced the AHA to set up a Working Party to examine the possibility of re-siting the hospital as a complete unit—a great victory.

In 10 days flat, this working party prepared its report—with completely conflicting recommendations.

The AHA adopted those identical with its own proposals and referred back the others.

This left the NUPE leaders without a leg to stand on—so they changed to telling other unions that they were personally in favour of occupation—but just let anyone try persuading their 'unpolitical' members!

This treacherous 'leadership from the rear' is in complete contrast to the fight taken up locally in COHSE against the closure of Longworth geriatric hospital.

The decision of the unionised workers to stop the proposed closure by occupation and the physical presence of workers at lobbies of AHA meetings forced the Authority

to change from holding their discussion in secret to holding it in public session.

Eventually they withdrew their secret recommendation for closure, substituting an open document posing various options.

Before making any decision, said Lady McCarthy, AHA member (and a Labour Party GC member) full consultation would take place with the public and the staff.

Unprecedented as this new found 'democracy' is, she also made it clear that the AHA were still operating within the same budget, necessitating cuts.

With this in mind the Longworth Support Committee was formed, with representatives from local residents, the staff, the League of Friends, and trade unions inside and

outside the Health Service.

They decided to build an independent campaign based on the following policies:

- 1) Oppose any cutbacks and closures at Longworth, Burford or Cowley Road Hospitals.
- 2) Demand the opening of Witney Community Hospital.
- 3) Declare support for all actions of the Longworth workers against closure, including occupation and offer the same support for any action taken by workers in other hospitals threatened by closure.
- 4) Call on all trade union branches in the Health Service to take supporting strike action.
- 5) Demand the AHA open its books to elected committees of trade unionists and users of the Health Service.
- 6) Determine to set up a trade union inquiry into the provision of geriatric services in Oxfordshire.

The committee also started organising for public meetings in the various towns affected in defence of the health service.

Exploded angrily

This strong stand was shown to be necessary when Lady McCarthy exploded angrily at the next meeting with the trade unions about the setting up of 'action committees'.

"Let me make it clear that the AHA will hold public meetings which I personally will chair. These meetings will represent the views of the public—the staff will have separate channels of consultation", she declared.

She may well be afraid of the voice of the working class members of the public and staff declaring and preparing for independent action to stop the cuts.

What's so great about the WSL?

Quite frankly, we're unique!

We're the only movement that fights patiently and relentlessly for the building of a Trotskyist party capable of mobilising the working class in the struggle for state power and the establishment of a socialist society.

In doing so, the WSL alone does not shrink from head-on battles with the existing leaders of the working class—whether these be 'left' talking Labourites union bureaucrats, or Stalinists of the Communist Party.

In these battles we set out to prove to workers both in theory and in practice the necessity for a new leadership and for a programme of transitional demands which, starting from today's problems and today's consciousness within the working class, lead workers in

struggle to grasp the need for socialist revolution.

For this reason, though we are smaller than some self-styled 'revolutionary' groups, the WSL has featured in the forefront of pay struggles in British Leyland, in the fight against the sale of jobs by TUC leaders, in the struggle against the cuts, in unionisation struggles, and in the fight against bureaucratic dictatorship within the unions.

This method of approach—rejecting any descent to simple trade union militancy, and any form of concession to the counter-revolutionary reformist or Stalinist bureaucracy—is of course essential for the working class not only in Britain but internationally.

In taking up international issues the WSL points out not only the obligation of British workers to support the Irish liberation struggle and revol-

utionary struggles such as those in Iran and Southern Africa, but also the necessity for the reconstruction of the Trotskyist Fourth International as the organising centre of the world party of socialist revolution.

The WSL is not the biggest movement on the left in Britain nor is it the easiest to be a member of. But in its approach to both theory and practice it is the only really serious revolutionary movement.

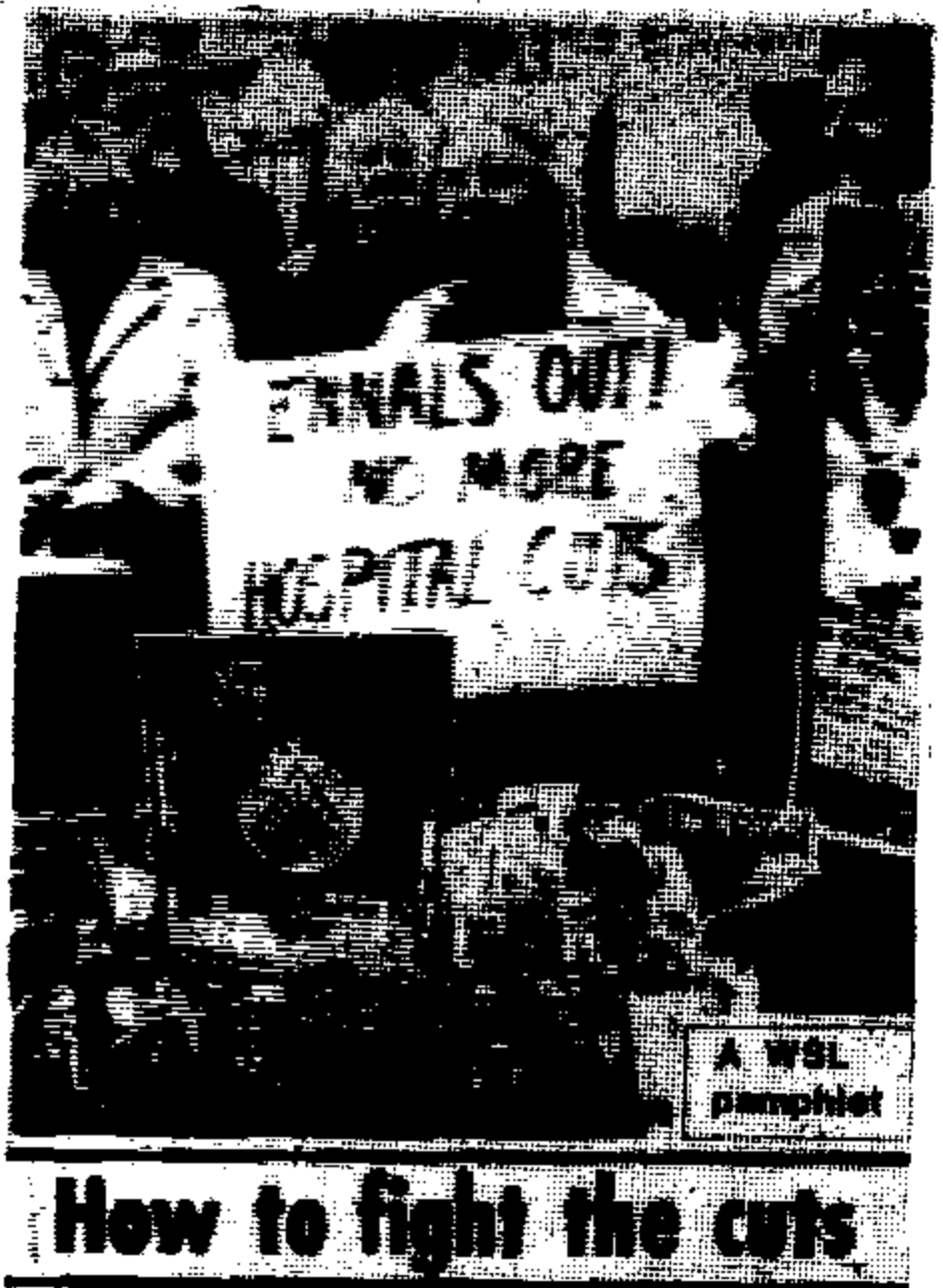
When you look at the struggles now under way and the problems faced by the working class, the necessity for a principled leadership is unmistakable.

WHY NOT JOIN US? Fill in the form below for more details, or approach your local branch, who will gladly supply more information about our programme, policies, and perspectives.



PHOTO: Lawrence Spatham (ITL)

THE KEY TO THE CUTS FIGHT!



The booklet which spells out the policies necessary for all-out struggle against the cuts, drawing on practical experience at the EGA and the Oxford Nursery Occupation.

30p plus 10p p&p from the WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill London NW5 1HR.

MORE DETAILS

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Trotskyism Today

Theoretical Journal of the Workers Socialist League

Number 3 includes:
 * WSL British Perspectives
 * The Poisoned Well (document for submission to XIth World Congress of USFI).
 * The Spartacist School of Invention.
 Price 60p plus 20p p&p from WSL, 31, Dartmouth Park Hill, London NW5 1HR.

Disaster course in NUJ pay fight

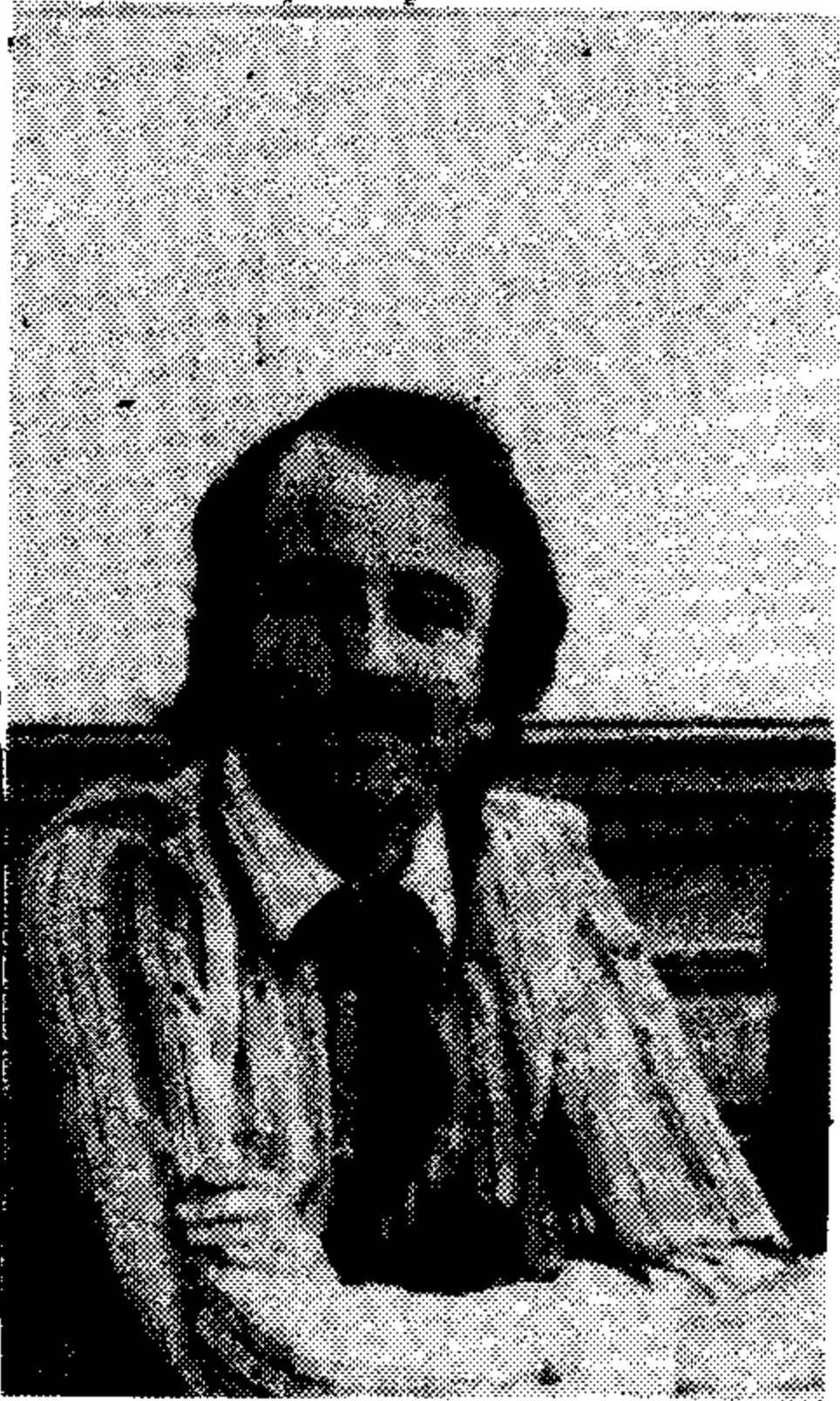
The strongest wave of militancy ever experienced in provincial newspapers has been headed off by the body responsible for handling wage claims—the Provincial Newspapers Industrial Council.

Packed with people elected on the basis of militant sounding manifestos, the PNIC last weekend voted by 6-2 against recommending strike action to the members in support of their £20 claim.

Delegates sent to a meeting in Birmingham reported support for strike action from even the least militant chapels.

But the PNIC had prepared a mealy mouthed resolution which called for sanctions from November 20 with a strike to follow at some unspecified date in the future.

Delegates were also told that there would be immed-



MacShane

iate strike action nationally if members were victimised for imposing sanctions such as refusing to use telephones or do night work.

For the third year running, the leadership of the NUJ is heading for a dispute, not over wages, but over a side issue of the

wages struggle which the employers are free to create at any time, say one week before Christmas.

An amendment calling for strike action from 20 November was witch-hunted and defeated by 102 votes to 49. The PNIC resolution, being the only one left, was then carried by an even larger majority.

Amongst those arguing wholeheartedly against strike action was union President, Denis MacShane, one of the plethora of fake lefts elected into office with the support of Journalists' Charter, who later became the most skilful advocates of reactionary and spineless policies.

MacShane, in a late intervention, even tried to have all reference to strike action removed from the PNIC motion, although he had earlier told delegates that during last year's dispute he had not been able to tell the difference between papers where sanctions had been applied and those where no action was taking place.

Such was the dishonesty of the final resolution that those delegates who had openly said from the rostrum that they would never obey a call to strike on whatever grounds, nevertheless voted for a resolution containing that policy. They understood that it was there for decoration only.

Unions pull out of BL 'participation'

The BL Cars ad-hoc committee, the body which shaped and introduced so-called 'worker participation' into BL, has voted unanimously to abandon the scheme.

At its meeting last week the Committee accepted a motion moved by Bob Fryer, convenor of the Cowley Assembly Plant that six months notice of withdrawal from 'participation' be served on the Company.

The motion called for withdrawal from the scheme unless management agree to what amounted to a trade union veto over all company decisions—mutual agreement on all decisions at all levels.

The ad-hoc committee, which had not met for a long time, had been reconvened to try to revamp 'participation' and coax those plants such as Cowley Assembly who had previously withdrawn from the scheme to re-enter it.

Absent from last week's fateful meeting were the two Longbridge convenors Derek Robinson (AUEW) and Jack Adams (TGWU).

Robinson had been perhaps the foremost advocate of the now doomed scheme.

Vauxhall offer accepted

A mass meeting at Vauxhall's Ellesmere Port factory brought an endorsement of the stewards' recommendation to "reluctantly accept" the company's £5.95 with strings pay offer.

Right wing convenor John Farrell had resorted to a full stewards' meeting only after the stewards 'factory committee' had split on the question.

In the event the full stewards committee accepted the deal with only a handful against.

At the mass meeting Farrell, who has successively passed the buck on pay to

union officials, and convenors at Luton and Dunstable, wound up predictably blaming the members for being unwilling to fight.

One speaker from the floor, however, pointed to the way in which prolonged talks had spun out the review until six weeks before Christmas—strike action should have been called earlier.

He went on to declare full support for the craftsmen, then beginning their pay strike.

His contribution was, witch-hunted by chairman Peter Titherington and by Farrell, and the vote for acceptance of the deal was eventually carried with about 150 voting against.

Vote to back Cowley 9

The Birmingham District Committee of the TGWU has called on Regional officials to drop all charges against nine members at the Cowley Assembly Plant—the 'Cowley 9'.

The Committee made the call after hearing a report from its Regional Committee delegate, who had revealed that no discussion on the nine had been taken at the Regional Committee's October meeting.

Among the Cowley 9 are the convenor and three deputy convenors at Leyland's Cowley Assembly Plant. They have faced penalties including possible expulsion from the union and a life ban on union office since kangaroo-court "inquiries" into trumped-up disciplinary charges began a year ago.

A campaign in defence of the 9 has attracted sponsorship and support from over 200 leading stewards, branch officers and prominent committee members of the union.

The Birmingham District's decision represents a major blow to the witch-hunters in the TGWU bureaucracy.

TGWU Branches and committees must continue to press for the dropping of the charges.

Pay strikers victimised

A bitter six week pay strike by 100 TGWU members at a Birmingham factory has turned into an all-out fight for union rights.

Management of Smith-Wallis Engineering in Highgate have now refused to discuss with the union or allow elected TGWU shop stewards back into the plant.

The strike began when workers received a £2.50-£4.00 pay offer in response to their £15 claim—aimed at reaching the TGWU's target £60 minimum wage.

Since then strikers have dug in for a long battle, and management has stepped up violent attacks on the picket line.

One management scab was discovered carrying an axe in his car—which he claimed to be taking for "sharpening".

Last week this same scab drove wildly at the picket line, hospitalising three pickets with injuries and shock.

The full strength of the TGWU's Birmingham organisation must be thrown behind this strike—with blacking, mass pickets to cover the factory's 15 gates and financial support.

GARNERS: ACTION NEEDED

Garners strikers have been forced to witness another week of token gestures at a time where their ten month struggle could so clearly be won.

Token gesture number one came from the powerful TGWU Region 1 committee, which Regional Organiser Les Shorter reported, will make some money available before Christmas and get Catering Officer Abrahams to seek out help on the picket line.

But since no striker will be involved in Abrahams' approaches to trade groups, there is no reason to believe that even one extra picket will be produced by a man who once declared that one picket outside a restaurant was enough.

And the Regional Committee seems determined to block

the strike committee's call for a TGWU delegate conference on the Garners strike.

Token gesture number two was displayed in Wednesday's *Morning Star*, in the form of a photograph of Communist Party leader Gordon McLennan picketing Garners.

The CP have been sending delegations from their King Street and *Morning Star* offices every Monday and Wednesday lunchtime to picket in Trafalgar Square.

But while this cosmetic job may fool some of the CP's members into believing the Party has a principled record in the strike, the appearance is not even skin deep.

Six or seven top bureaucrats twice a week is no substitute for a serious attempt by the CP to mobilise their thousands of claimed London members who have never been seen near the

Garners picket.

But the tokenism of CP "support" is exposed most clearly when we examine the role of the network of Stalinists in top positions in the London labour movement, who have done next to nothing to aid the strike.

TGWU Regional Secretary Sid Staden is a CP member and aided with the police to restrict picket lines to six strong.

Other CP members are delegates to the Region 1 Committee which has scarcely lifted a finger in 10 months.

The S.E. Region TUC is headed by Stalinist chairman Jack Dunn, with the secretary being *Morning Star* darling Jack Dromey.

These people have not even mobilised themselves in support of the strike!

The Greater London Assoc-

iation of Trades Councils is headed by Stalinist Frank Stiller—backed up on the GLATC Garners sub-committee by fellow CP member Tom Durkin. Both men failed to attend the last sub-committee meeting.

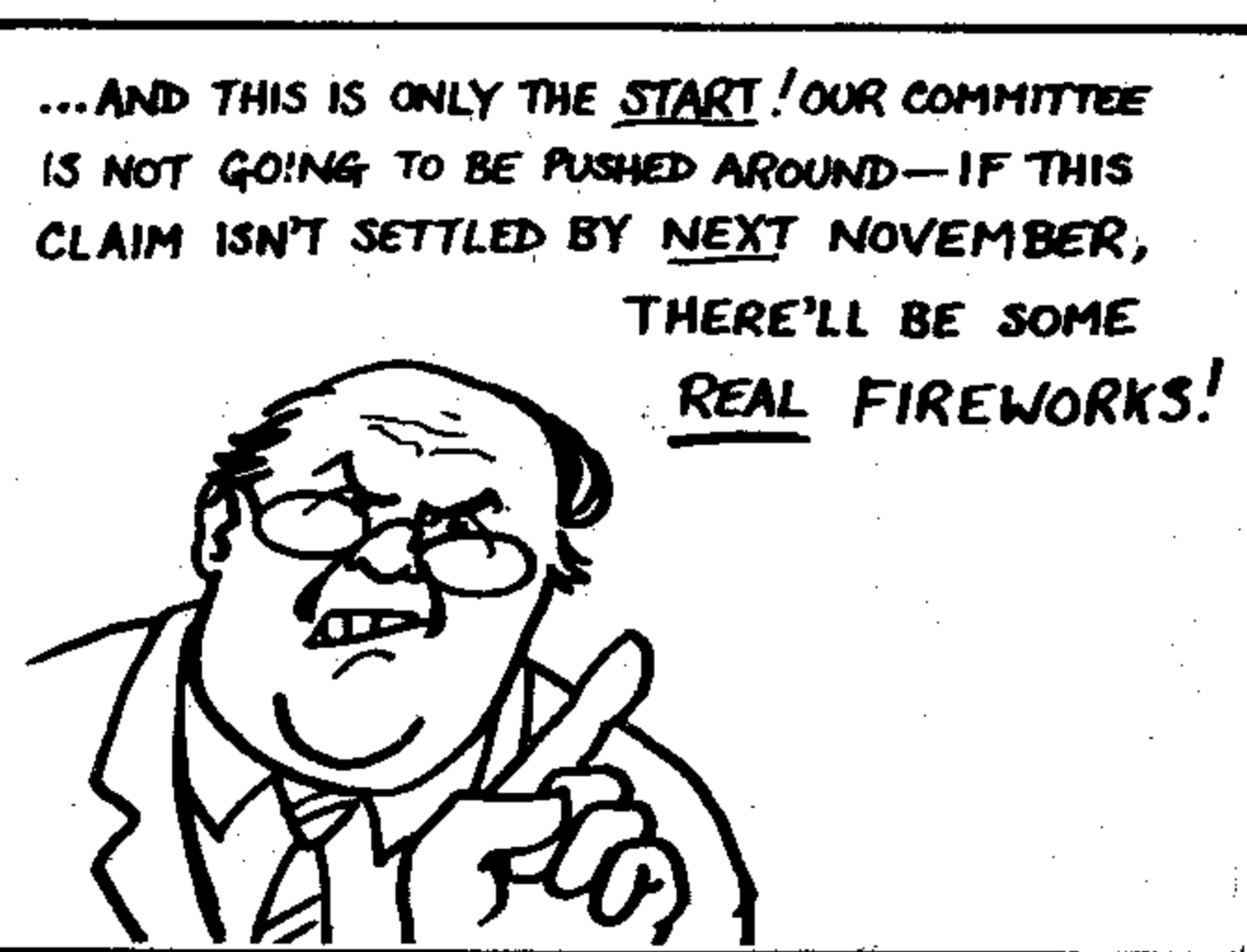
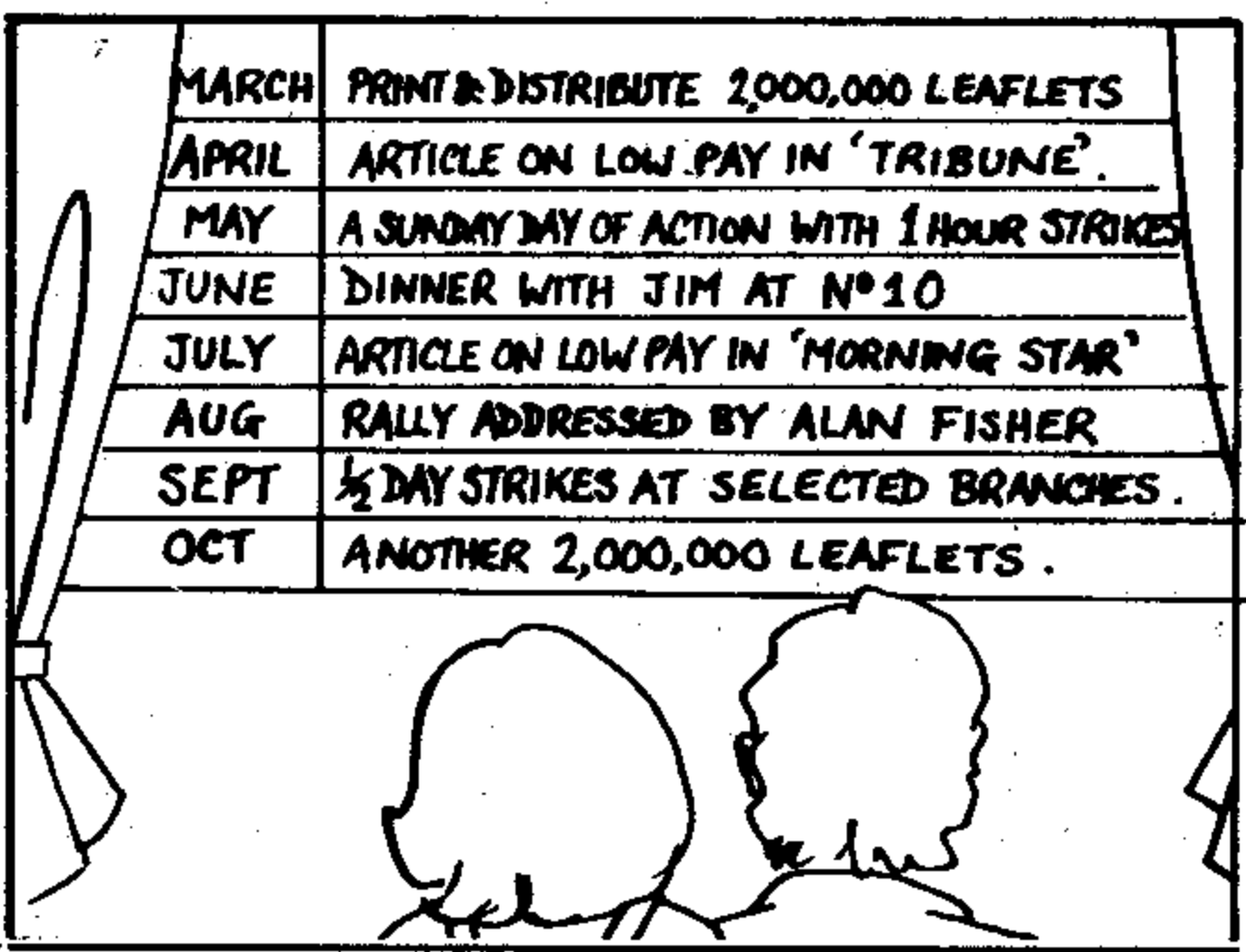
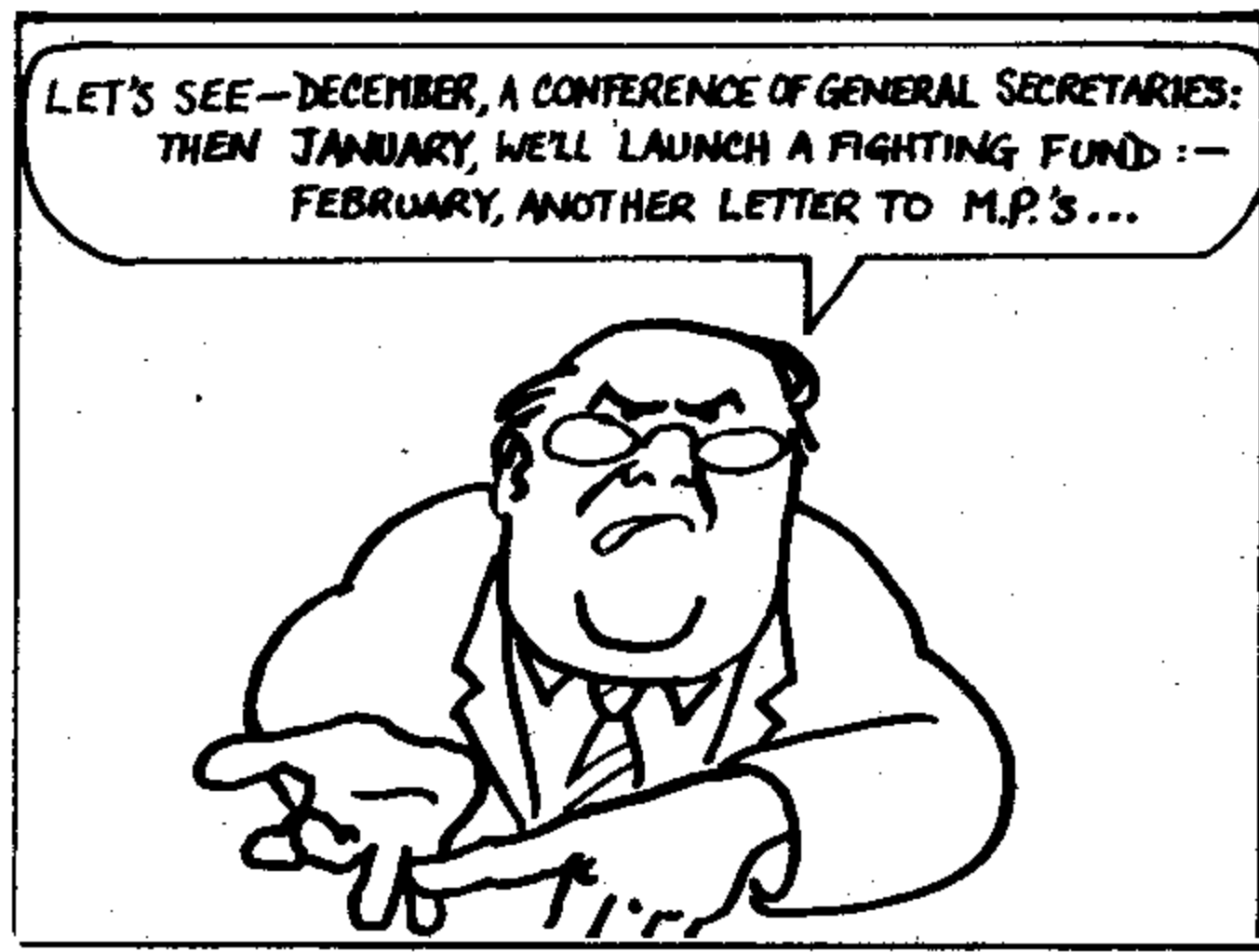
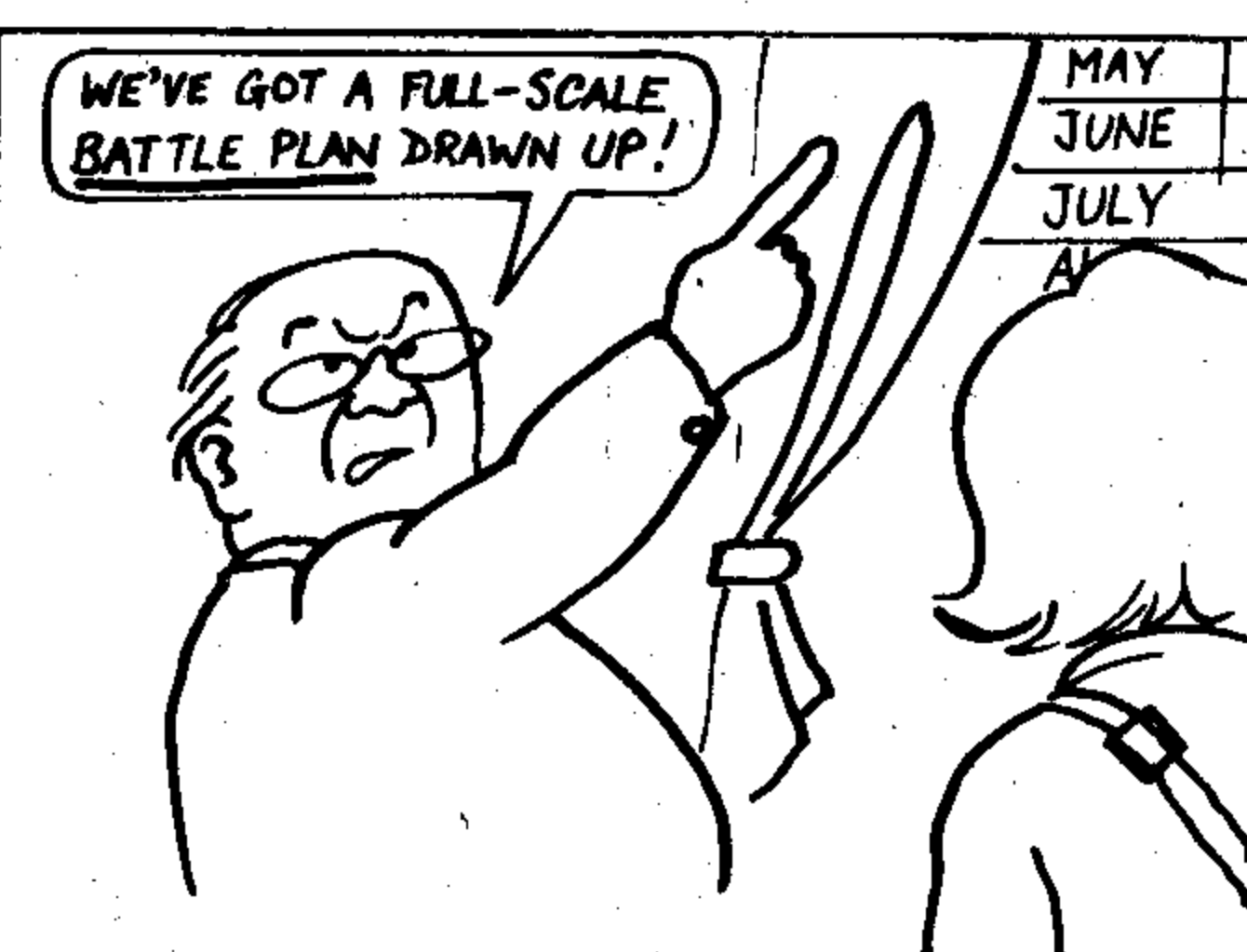
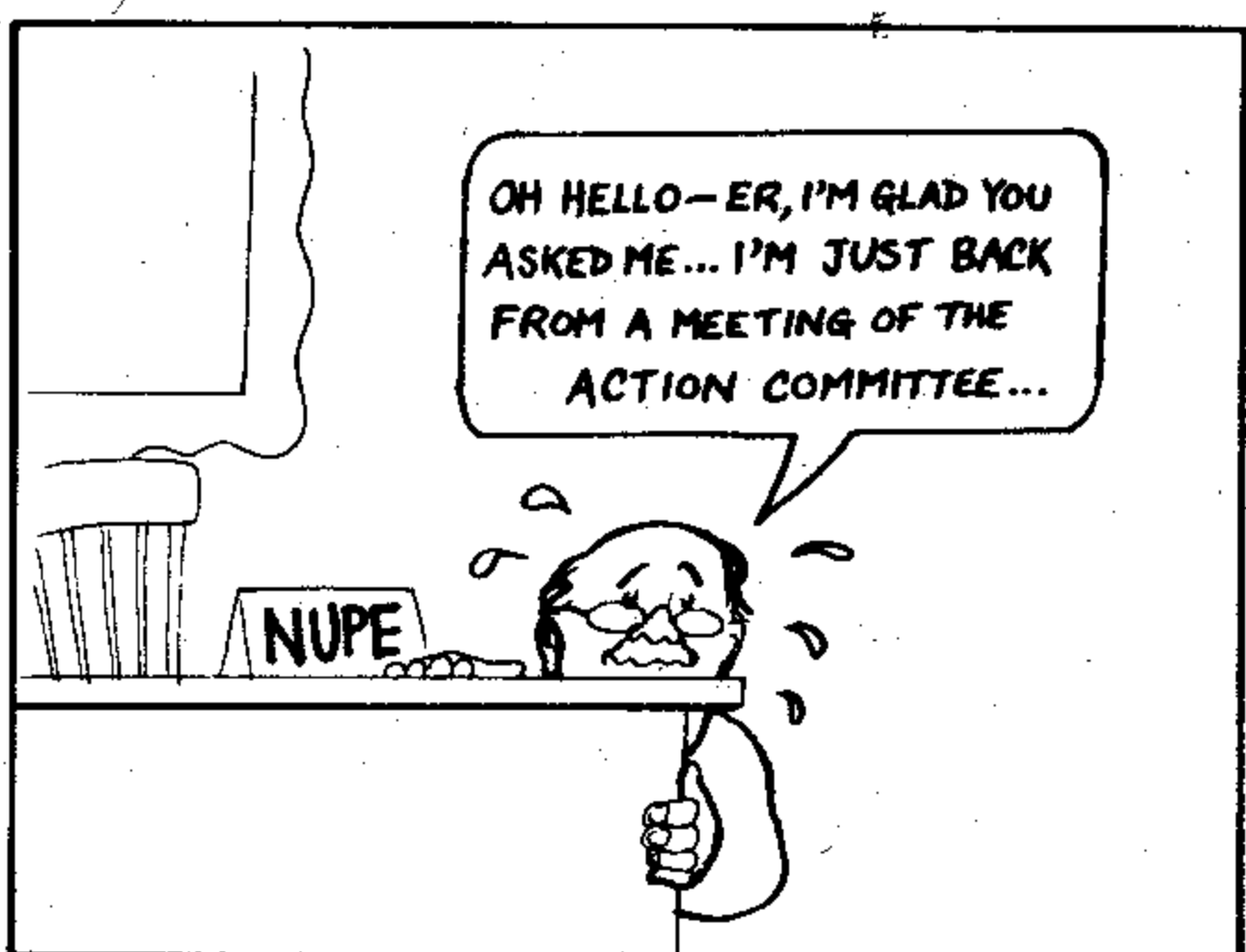
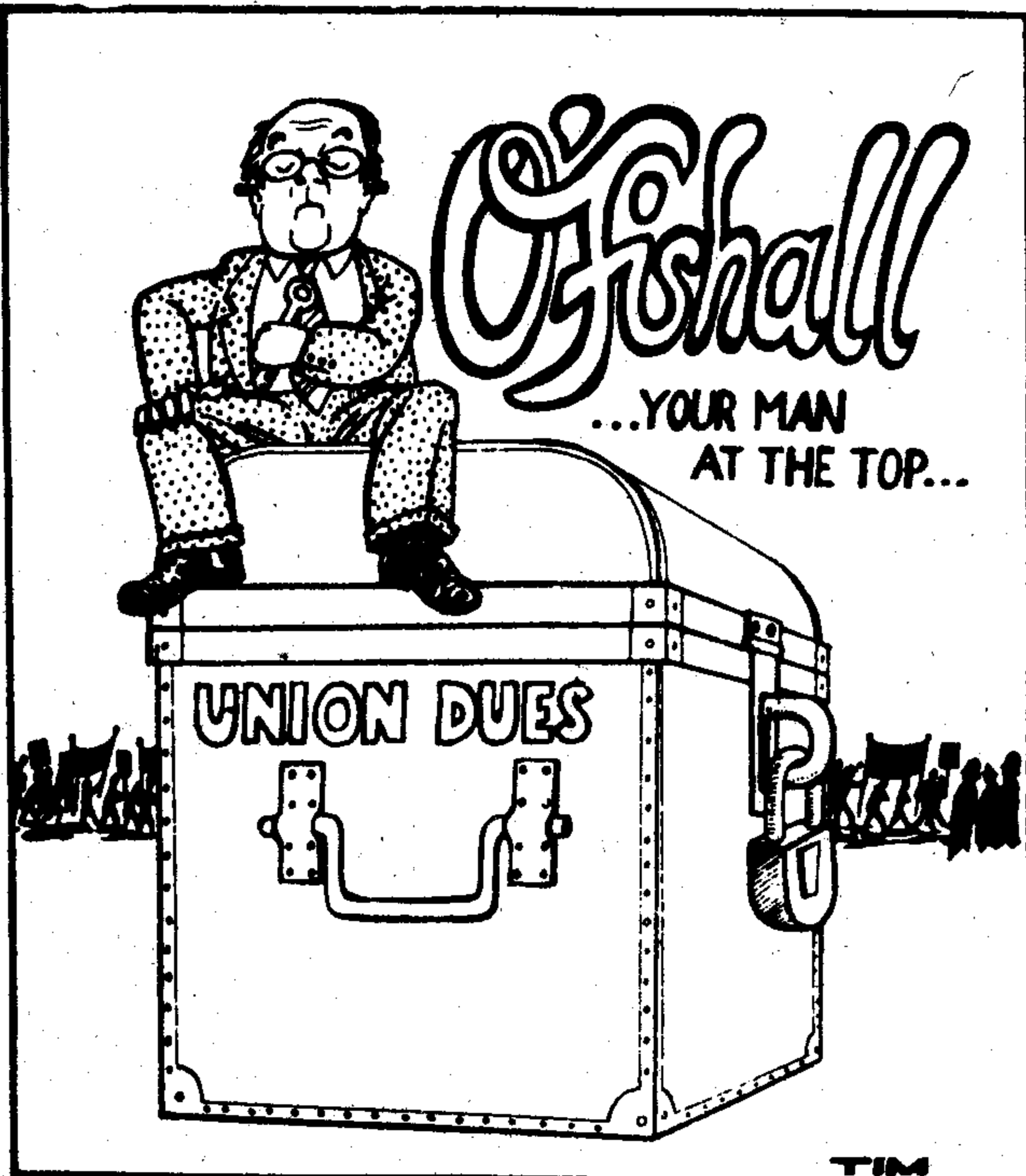
And on Westminster Trades Council, Stalinist secretary David Treisman has distinguished himself by blocking moves to elect a Garners strike committee member onto the sub-committee raising funds for arrested Garners pickets!

This strike could be won if only a few of these bodies were to seriously mobilise their membership behind the policies of mass picketing and secondary blacking.

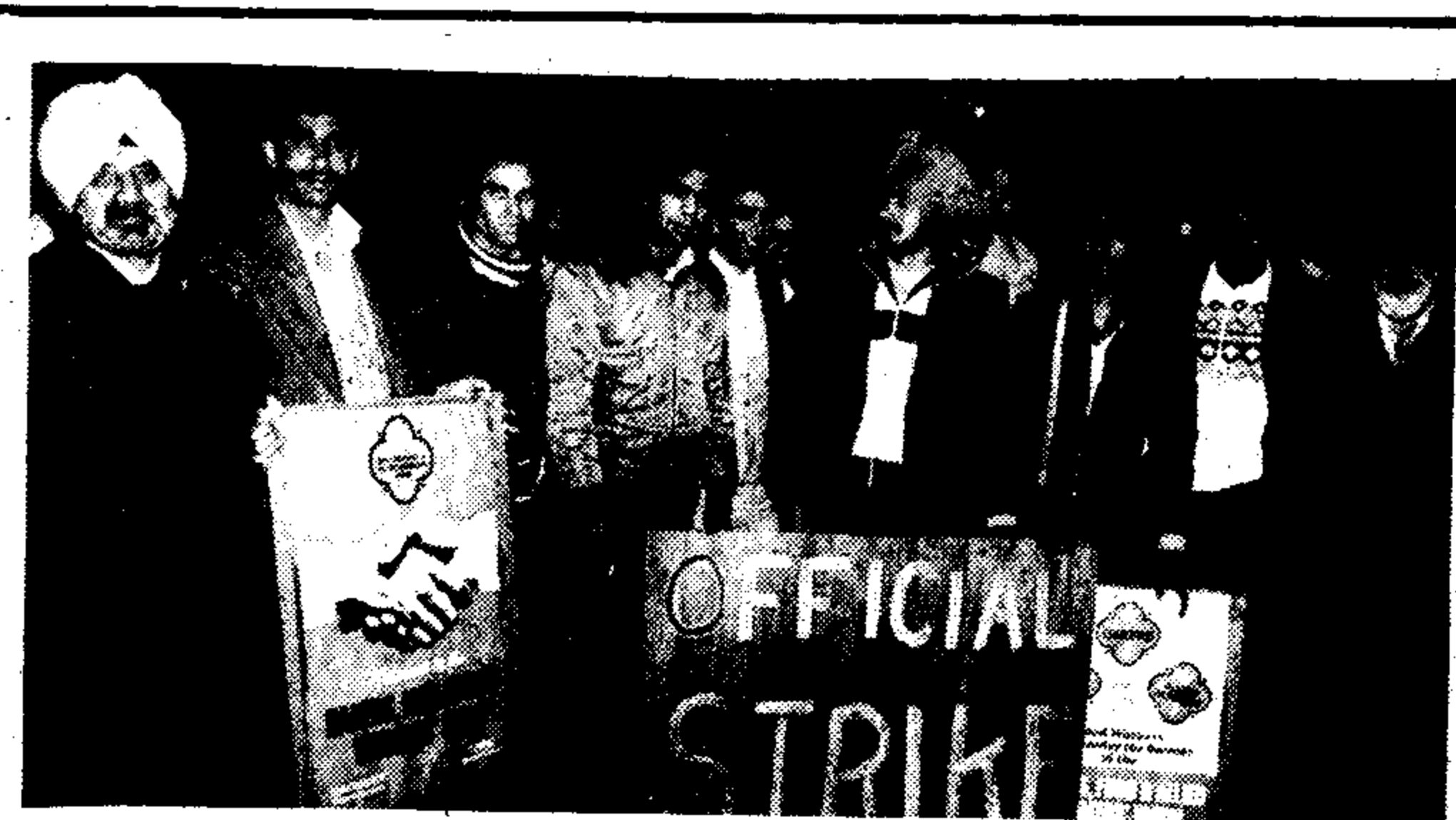
Token gestures are no use with an employer like Garners boss Margolis. The Stalinists and right wingers that block all-out action must be exposed at every opportunity.



Midlands Regional Secretary Brian Mathers arriving for the opening of the Regional Inquiry into the Cowley 9



SOCIALIST PRESS



Bakers' picket



The platform at the Cowley mass meeting

Northern bakers win full claim

The Bakers Union strike stands poised, as we go to press, between disaster and major victory.

The campaign by the Bakers Federation, aided and abetted by the industrial reporters of Fleet Street, to prove that support for the strike has been crumbling is a gross lie.

And the capitulation by some of the smaller bakers in the Bakers Federation to the demands of the Bakers Union

has put new heart back into the workers.

The big two of the Bakers Federation—Rank 1 Hovis McDougall and Allied Bakeries—are prepared to up the stakes to include breaking the closed shop agreements with the Bakers Union. Should the strike fail then the union could be broken in many bakeries up and down the country.

Should they win, the strength of the union will be dramatically increased and the

bakery workers will have blazed a trail against the 5% limit for other workers to follow.

Sam Maddox, the maverick general secretary of the Bakers Union is a bureaucrat bent on making a left reputation.

The employers' offer this year, billed in the national press as 11%, included a major attack on bakery workers' gains.

It included demands for permanent night shifts and complete mobility of labour, and that the gains made last year over bank holiday working should be handed back.

Maddox did not call mass meetings or communicate with the membership in any way. He called a national strike on no strike pay and then sat back to wait for the employers to crumble.

In many areas there were no pickets on the bakeries and no mass meetings of the workers.

It was not until the middle of the week that it became clear that Rank Hovis and Allied Bakeries had laid plans to continue production.

They agreed plans with the stewards to bake bread for local hospitals and then simply carried on baking, completing up to 50% of their orders with staff and management shifts.

There has been nothing like the level of scabbing by union members that the Federation has claimed.

Had the strike been crumbling as the Federation claimed then everything would have been over by the end of the week. As it was, three smaller bakery firms in the Federation, unable to hold out any longer, capitulated on Friday.

Warburton's in Preston, Knightsbridge Cake in Manchester and Jackson's from Yorkshire agreed to the £10 pay demand in full. That means that 6,000 of the 26,000 in the dispute have already won.

This boost to the remainder has been backed up by a union statement that only 1,018 of the 26,000 members on strike were working.

Even the employers only claim 2,000 back at work despite their confident statements.

Bakery workers have shown in some areas their willingness to set up picket lines and stop supplies getting through. The arrests made in many parts of the country bear testimony to their determination.

The national executive of the union has now called for a delegate special conference on Saturday.

Bakery workers must ensure that the opportunity is now taken to strengthen the strike. Pickets on the bakeries must be strengthened. Blacking should be demanded from the TGWU. Pickets should be set up at mills supplying strike bound plants.

The Bakers Federation handed letters to strikers as they picked up their pay packets last week telling them that their jobs will be protected if they agree to scab—in other words the closed shop will be broken. This is a dispute the bakery workers cannot afford to lose.

A fund must be opened to provide hardship support for workers whose pay is too low to save and who are receiving no strike pay.

Maddox must be compelled to become responsible directly to the strikers who should set up their own strike committees.

Cowley rejects 'parity' plan

All of BL cars volume car production is now at a standstill with Maxi, Marina, Princess, Mini, Allegro and Rover 3.5 production lines halted and 27,000 workers laid off.

Land Rover production will be halted by the end of this week.

The lay-offs result from the walk-out at the Drew's Lane Transmissions Plant in Birmingham where 3,500 workers have struck against management's offer for the 1978 wage review.

Management have offered a package which lumps together 5% on the rate with their so-called "parity" scheme and the new minimum earnings rates negotiated at national level. The offer is made only as a package and is conditioned on the attainment of productivity criteria to pay for it.

Mockery

Even if accepted by individual plants the offer will not be implemented until all of BL Cars 33 plants have accepted it—making a mockery of plant bargaining.

A mass meeting of workers at the Cowley Assembly Plant last Thursday voted overwhelmingly to reject the offer.

Meeting under conditions where the plant had been shut down since Monday as a result of the Drew's Lane strike the meeting passed a motion saying that:

"When the plant reopens for all models, an immediate mass meeting will be called by the convenors, from which action will be taken if a satisfactory offer has not been made by that time."

Speaking to the mass meeting, TGWU Convenor Bob Fryer congratulated Drew's Lane workers for the stand they had taken and said he would be sending a message of support to them.

After urging total rejection of the offer he explained how the Company would actually make a profit out of their cuts.

They want an 869 cut in the Cowley Assembly Plant workforce against existing production schedules—450 by November 20 and the rest by the end of the year.

This the Company want to achieve by a voluntary redundancy programme.

Fryer told the meeting that there would be no cooperation with the voluntary redundancy scheme—but that any section which defended its manning agreements against the cuts would be backed to the full.

The Cowley joint shop stewards spelled out their case for rejection in a leaflet handed out to all members last week. It pointed out that:

"The Company have not offered anything, payable now on this year's review. What they

have offered is a package which must be accepted in total and cannot be broken down. (Aptly described by the company themselves in their opening remarks as offering us "a bad duck egg in six inches of ice").

The package includes 5% which will only be paid "on acceptance of the parity programme in principle". This means that the 5% would not be paid now but back-dated once "parity" was accepted.

In order to sell their package they are quoting a figure of £83.75 [an increase of £10 on present production workers' pay at Cowley] as achievable for direct workers by November 1,

1979. For this we must accept "parity" and all that goes with it.

What are the "parity" proposals?

They propose that the "parity" money be paid in three stages.

Stage 1: Final parity rates, plus 5%, minus £4 payable on November 1, 1978.

Stage 2: £2.00 May 1979

Stage 3: £2.00 November 1979.

These amounts will only be paid if the following conditions are met:

If the five grade structure is accepted and everyone accepts where they are slotted into it.

If this highly contentious grading structure is accepted in full in everyone of Leyland Cars 33 plants.

If the cash to pay for "parity" is raised through productivity. This means 869 people out of this plant with the rest pulling the work on existing programmes.

If you accept a £19 differential between top and bottom grades.

If this whole, highly contentious parity scheme ever gets off the ground, since it is bitterly disputed by various grades in virtually every plant.

Remember last November's broken promises!"



Hands go up to reject Leyland's 'offer'

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