

SOCIALIST PRESS



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Sunday December 7 at 1.00 pm.
Assemble Speakers Corner

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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

February 2 start for strike

CUTS: LAMBETH CALL TO ACTION



Once again Lambeth has emerged in the forefront of the fight to bring a halt to the Thatcher offensive on our public services.

A steering committee set up from a 700-strong delegate conference held in November has issued a call for massive strike action in February.

Already direct labour and AUEW members in Lambeth have pledged to support the call for "a minimum two weeks' strike from February 2". The call has been backed by Lambeth TGWU stewards.

Their stand marks a refreshing contrast with that of union leaders like Alan Fisher, and that of Labour MPs and most Labour councillors, who have done *nothing whatever* to resist the Tory cuts.

The present Lambeth initiative began when the Labour council took the lead in convening a conference to discuss the way forward in the fight to defend local government services against the cuts.

700 delegates from trade unions, Labour councils and constituency Labour Parties attended and voted overwhelmingly to campaign for:

- *No cuts in jobs or services.
- *No rate or rent rises to compensate for cuts.
- *Reversal of decisions to sell council houses or housing land.
- *Removal of Labour councillors who carry out Tory cuts.
- *All-out strike action and occupations as soon as any

Labour council faces receivers or commissioners or is surcharged for refusing to implement cuts. Occupation and supporting strikes to defend facilities threatened by the cuts.

Debt charges

*A call for support to public sector unions from industrial and private sector trade unionists.

*Cancellation of council debt charges, the opening of the books of local councils to expose the profiteering of banks and private contractors, and the nationalisation of supply industries without compensation under workers' control.

*The TUC to "prepare a plan for a general strike in protection of working class interests and living standards".

The steering committee elected from the conference has now met. It has fixed a recall conference for January 17—and urged maximum labour movement support.

And it has called on trade unionists and Labour councillors across the country to support the call for a 2-week strike from February 2.

This is the most developed call yet for action to stop the cuts. It must be fully supported by socialists throughout the labour movement. Union leaders must be forced to give it active support.

- *All out February 2!
- *Stop the cuts; bring down the Tories!
- *Defend all jobs and services!

100,000 MARCH AGAINST THATCHER

The police and the mass media may have created some confusion as to the precise number who joined the Labour Party's mammoth Liverpool march against unemployment last Saturday.

No worker who was there could have counted accurately. There may have been as many as 150,000 in the vast tide that streamed from Sefton Park to the Pier Head.

But what was unmistakable was the mass hostility that has developed to this Tory government.

In a week in which the Chancellor Sir Geoffrey Howe had snatched £1 per week from most workers' pay packets, announced new local government cuts, robbed the old age pensioners, and sentenced at least another 100,000 workers to prolonged unemployment, militancy was running high.

Labour's new leader Michael Foot was clever enough to play along with the mood.

His call was in fact the same as Callaghan's—wait until the next election.

Flamboyant

But he wrapped it up in a long, flamboyant sentence that almost suggested Foot favours action to bring the Tories down!

Not so Alan Fisher, the NUPE leader who has done more than most to allow Thatcher to destroy health and social services.

He called openly for a "General Election"—only to be met by loud calls from the crowd for a General Strike!

Labour Party Young Socialists speaker Tony Saunio, however, drew applause when he called for the unions to use their "full industrial clout to force this government out".

This is the key issue now facing the working class.



Youth march against Tories

Thatcher's gang may be irritated by protest marches—but they will not change course because of a few windy speeches by labour bureaucrats.

The only way to stop this Tory government is to *bring it down*. The Liverpool march confirms that 100,000 workers are ready to fight: but that their

leaders are far from ready to lead.

Now is the time to build a new, revolutionary leadership in the workers' movement to defend hard-won rights and living standards and carry through a real struggle for socialism.

Join us in this task!

BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER!



INTERNATIONAL

Reagan victory spurs offensive SLAUGHTER OF SALVADOR LEFT WINGERS

By Don Flint

The Reagan victory has had an immediate and far-reaching impact in Central America where the forces of capital and reaction have initiated a major counter-offensive.

The first indication of the long-awaited backlash came in Nicaragua when ex-Junta member Alfonso Robelo took his bourgeois MDN party out of the Sandinista-dominated Council of State.

Robelo and his fellow capitalists protested against the "growing threat of communism". The initial factor in their break from tenuous cooperation with the Sandinistas was the government's refusal to call elections.

However, the crisis deepened with the shooting of the leader of the private enterprise federation—COSEP in a clash with FSLN security personnel.

The liberal press claims that this was nothing less than an execution in cold blood and was quick to invoke the memory of Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, the editor of the liberal bourgeois daily La Prensa, whose killing marked a critical stage in the



April rally in Nicaragua against Alfonso Robelo when he resigned from ruling junta

escalation of the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship. The facts of the killing are by no means clear but it is

evident that in recent weeks the Sandinista regime has come under increasing pressure, much of it far from 'legal'.

The regroupment of Somocistas in Honduras has continued despite the death of their nominal leader. There have

been an increasing number of armed incursions, with literacy brigade members being killed and several abortive attempts at insurrection in the east of the country where the population is sparse, politically distanced from the FSLN and largely of different ethnic stock to the most densely populated west.

At the same time pressure from Honduras, in terms of "border incidents", reflects the very great build up of the Honduran military by the US since the early summer.

The State Department has encouraged local dictator General Policarpo Paz to set aside in practice this year's elections which saw a supposed victory to the bourgeois opposition and the return to "constitutional government".

Paz remains president and has made sure that he retains tight control over his territory which has now become a vital strategic enclave for the imperialists, since it borders on both Nicaragua and El Salvador.

It is no coincidence that the Hondurans and the Salvadorean junta have rapidly patched up their eleven-year diplomatic quarrel and border dispute in the last month.

With the border area free of neutral troops and direct control re-established, the Salvadorean guerrillas will be deprived of a critical refuge.

We can now expect to see even tighter cooperation between the armies in the frontier region to wipe out insurrectionaries.

It is, of course, in El Salvador itself that the Reagan victory has had the greatest impact and is likely to impose the most far-reaching consequences.

Last week's abduction and assassination of the leadership of the main opposition grouping, the FDR, by a right wing terror squad of over 200 men marks a major stage in the struggle.

Condoned

There can be no doubt whatsoever that the junta knew of, condoned and, in all probability, participated in this action.

Among those killed were Juan Chacon of the Bloque Revolucionario Popular, Enrique Alvarez Cordoba (leader of the FDR), Manuel Franco of the Communist Party, Enrique Barrera of the Social Democratic MNR and Doroteo Hernandez, leader of the slum dwellers' union, affiliated to the LP-28.

These assassinations have removed the central figures in the opposition at a time when it was believed that it might be possible to avert an all-out insurrection.

This, at least, was the view of the imperialist press which, yet again, will have to come up with another set of glib explanations as to why in their view El Salvador is not really in the depths of a civil war, why 9,000 dead this year is only the sorry by-product of a 'reformist' regime and why respectable bourgeois lawyers are now being gunned down and dismembered alongside peasants and workers.

It is worth noting that Alvarez served as a minister of the Junta until this January!

The signs are only too clear—the Salvadorean right is escalating its campaign for the annihilation of the left by whatever means necessary.

At the same time there is evidence that the Reagan administration will countenance rapid and direct intervention should the left respond to its setbacks with an uprising.

Repercussions

Reagan's Latin American advisor Roger Fontaine has made it abundantly clear that "this is an option", although Guatemalan, Honduran and "other" troops (presumably Argentinian, Chilean and Bolivian) would probably be sent in before the US Rapid Deployment Force so as to avoid unnecessary diplomatic repercussions for US imperialism.

The Salvadorean left is in a strategic impasse. Following the general strike of August the strategy of 'Prolonged People's War' has failed to escalate popular and military strength to the point where the guerrillas can move with confidence to an all-out assault for state power.

While they have inflicted heavy losses on the army and police in the outlying provinces, many populous sectors remain vulnerable to repression and right wing terror—the killing of opposition leaders makes this only too clear.

The Salvadorean revolution is at a cross-roads: and with it the future of all Central America stands in the balance as the imperialists muster their forces for a major counter-revolutionary offensive.

Polish strikers challenge police state powers

Small wonder the Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow, East Berlin and Prague are growing increasingly agitated by events in Poland.

Last week's threatened general strike in the Warsaw region centred not on the largely economic demands of previous mass struggles in Poland; nor was it focussed simply on the demand for independent trade unions.

Rather it focussed on curbing the repressive police state apparatus—on which the lavish privileges enjoyed by bureaucrats in Poland and in all of the deformed workers' states depend.

The strike was called to secure the release of two supporters of Solidarity, the new mass trade union formed after this summer's strikes.

They had been accused of leaking and duplicating an embarrassing document on the dissident movement which had been produced by the Prosecutor-General's office.

Investigation

The strikers were demanding not only the release of the two militants arrested by state security police, but a full-scale investigation of the whole apparatus of internal repression.

Faced with the threat of another round of runaway strike action, the Polish bureaucrats agreed to special consultations with Solidarity leaders to discuss union demands for:

*A cut in the budget of the Internal Affairs Ministry.

*A joint Parliamentary inquiry into the legality of the methods used by the police, the

public prosecutor and the internal security service.

*The bringing to trial of those responsible for the deaths of workers in the 1970 strikes and for the ill-treatment of workers arrested in the 1976 struggles.

*The release of the two arrested militants.

The final point was agreed and implemented last Thursday. This in itself is a huge retreat by the state. Already Solidarity leaders have said that they will now publish any and every state document they obtain.

Weakening

But to concede the other demands in full would be to open the way to an even more dramatic weakening of the police state apparatus in Poland.

The third point, for instance, would call into question the very survival of Communist Party leader Stanislaw Kania, who, as head of Internal Security in 1976, was the man principally responsible for the repression!

The fact that such politically charged demands are now at the centre of mass struggle in Poland is a dire warning to Stalinist bureaucrats throughout Eastern Europe.

At first the issue appeared only as 12th in a list of 21 demands raised by the Gdansk strikers. They demanded an end to the privileges enjoyed by the security police and Communist Party bureaucrats.

Such privileges include high pay, access to scarce goods, and special holidays in State Security rest homes at select resorts.

These material privileges of the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy,

unlike the profits reaped by the capitalist class in the West, are not the natural outcome of a system based on private ownership of banks, factories and means of production.

They are the result of bureaucratic manipulation of an economy that rests upon nationalised industries and centralised planning.

The Stalinist chiefs' only guarantee that they can retain the wealth they have creamed off for themselves is their ability through police and military repression, to contain the anger and militancy of the working class and thus preserve their own political power.

If the enormously costly and extensive police and spy network were to be weakened, and the privileges of such parasites stripped away, the prospect of Polish workers organising to take state power into their own hands becomes increasingly real.

And if workers were to oust their bureaucratic rulers in Poland, their example would swiftly be followed elsewhere.

This is why, even as the weakened Polish bureaucrats seek once again through concessions to hold off the moment of confrontation with the working class, their fellow bureaucrats in the USSR and Eastern Europe are preparing the ground for firm military action to beat back the Polish workers.

The Soviet newspaper Pravda has lent its backing to a hardline article by the Czech Stalinist leaders likening the situation in Poland today to that in Czechoslovakia prior to the Russian invasion in 1968.

And East German bureaucrats, even more pugnacious in their stand than their Czech colleagues, have published attacks on Solidarity leader

Lech Walesa accusing him of having links with Italian fascists.

Walesa, claims the East German daily *Neues Deutschland*, is an anti-communist who feels closer to West Germany than the Polish government.

Yet in the present escalation of struggle Walesa and West Germany may both turn out to be very useful allies for the Stalinists in their struggle for control.

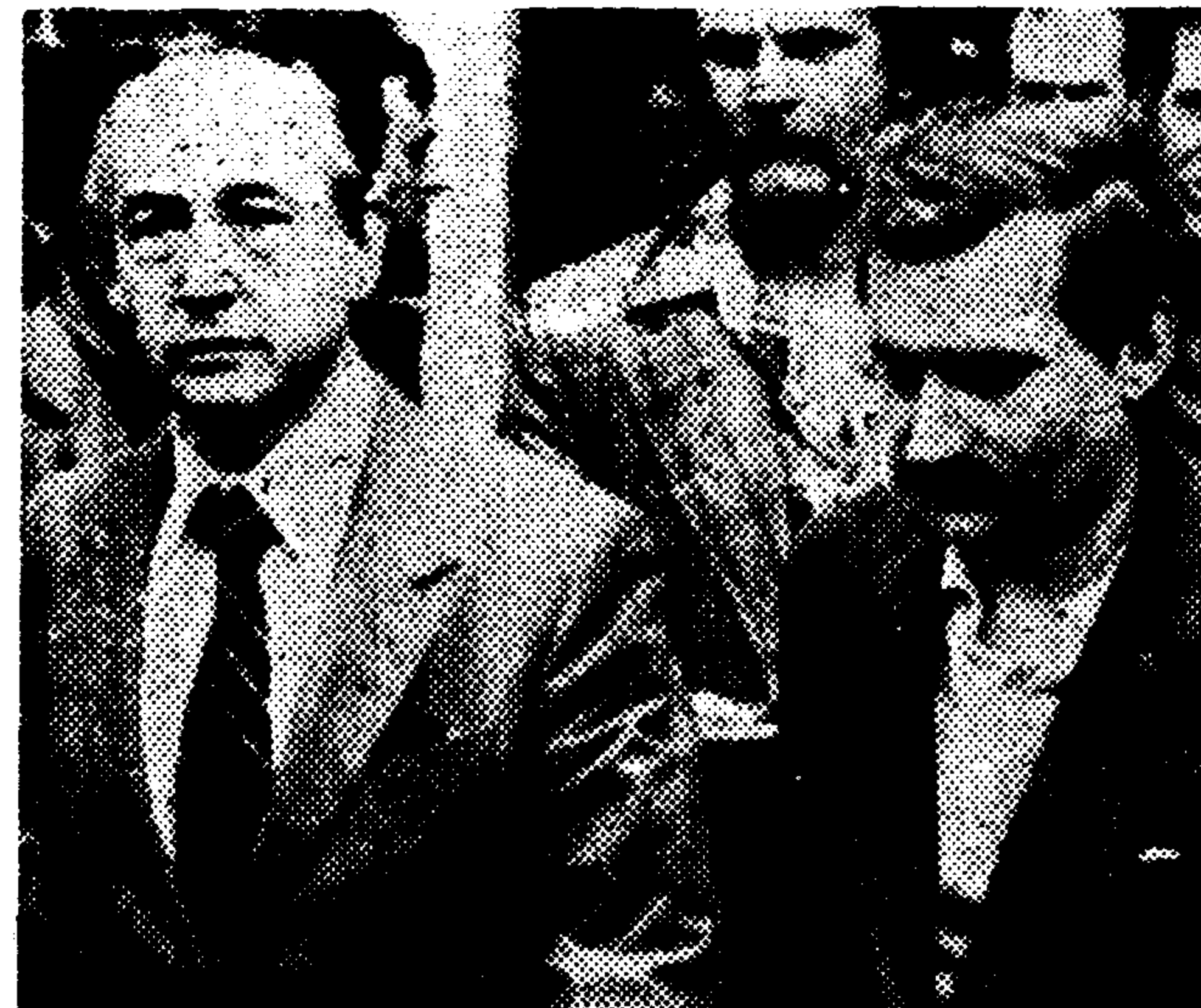
Walesa was at the forefront of efforts to contain the struggle for the release of the jailed Solidarity militants, and pressed for an immediate return to work, warning of army intervention. His links with the Catholic Church have brought him to play the role of "moderate" within the Solidarity movement.

Meanwhile West Germany

along with other Common Market countries, seems likely to offer cut-price food supplies from the massive EEC butter and grain mountains in an effort to stabilise Kania's tottering Stalinist regime.

A meeting of EEC heads of state seems likely to offer butter, cereals and beef to the Polish bureaucrats to ease the chronic food shortages—and to offer them on cheap long term credit that will minimise the burden on the chaotic Polish economy.

The last thing Europe's capitalist rulers wish to see is the working class carry through the political overthrow of the Polish bureaucracy; nor are they keen to allow a situation in which Soviet and East German troops intervene in an attempt to crush the Polish workers' movement.



Walesa with deputy prime minister Jagielski

INTERNATIONAL



UNSTABLE POLITICS BORN OF CHRONIC POVERTY

Enrico Alvares looks at the recent developments in West Africa

The extreme political instability of West Africa was highlighted in the last two weeks by major developments in the chronic and bloody civil war in Chad (including the arrival of large numbers of Libyan troops) and by two coups—one in the former French colony of Upper Volta and the other in the tiny ex-Portuguese state of Guinea-Bissau.

The political instability of the area is to a great extent the effect of its extreme poverty. Chad, Upper Volta and Guinea-Bissau are all estimated to have a level of national income per head little more than \$100 a year.

As in a number of other countries in West Africa, this has been going down and not up in recent years, partly as a result of a sustained drought and resulting harvest failures.

Famine

Countries, whose economy remains overwhelmingly agricultural have been suffering widespread famine and have been forced to import a large proportion even of their most basic foods.

It was the imminent social crisis caused by a rice shortage which according to most reports played a large role in the timing of the November 14 coup in Guinea Bissau, a country in which for years armed soldiers have as a matter of course been placed outside bakeries and rice distribution centres.

The overthrown President was Luis Cabral, brother of the renowned leader of the long and bitter fight against Portuguese colonialism, Amilcar Cabral.

Amilcar Cabral was one of the most radical of Africa's anti-colonial leaders and during the long war against the Portuguese army his party the African Party for the Independence of



Vieira

Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands (PAIGC) conducted a number of important experiments in social reform in the liberated areas.

Amilcar Cabral was murdered before independence was won and after the liberation in 1974 his brother Luis became leader of Guinea-Bissau and Aristides Pereira president of the Cape Verde Islands and secretary general of the PAIGC.

Two countries were therefore nominally ruled by a single political party; and it was the PAIGC's policy to unite the two countries.

In fact, however, very few moves towards unification were ever taken and instead the party in both countries declined as a mass political organisation, became increasingly separated from the masses, and developed growing rivalries between the



PAIGC Congress 1977

two national party bureaucracies.

In Guinea-Bissau, however, there was one particular feature of the separation of the party leadership from the masses—the fact that many of the leaders were racially not Africans but 'Mestizos' (people of mixed black and white racial origin), some of them originally Cape Verde Islanders like the Cabral brothers.

Not that this racial difference explained the growth of the separation, since during the independence struggle the same leaders gained general mass support.

Rather the racial difference may have come to be linked by many of the black African working masses with the privileges which the leadership of the PAIGC has come to grant itself.

While workers had to stand hopelessly in food queues, their leaders would pass them in chauffeur-driven saloon cars.

The cars, like much else in Guinea-Bissau in recent years, came from Sweden—gifts from a Swedish government which in Guinea-Bissau perhaps found its first neo-colony.

While other African countries are ruled by that famous ethnic grouping the Wabenzi (those with Mercedes cars), Guinea-Bissau became a

'Volvocracy'

The scant reports from a country which most of the world's press ignores, suggest that the new rulers, led by the black African former military leader of the anti-colonial war Major Joao Bernardo Vieira, have made use both of the racial background and the privileges of their predecessors.

The new junta seized power in the name of opposing the union between Bissau and Cape Verde (surely a euphemistic way of exploiting racial feeling); and they speak of the need to remedy the corruption of the previous regime.

Most aspects of that corruption still remain very little known because of the state monopoly of the press and the prevention by the PAIGC of any serious mass political involvement after independence.

But the new government says that, in addition to the economic privileges of the rulers, Luis Cabral's regime had massacred up to 500 of its opponents who have been found in mass graves.

But, however much the new government tries to isolate itself from its predecessor, it will be hard for it to escape joint responsibility.

Of the new government of twelve members no less than

eleven retain the same ministerial responsibility which they had in the previous one!

They have enjoyed the same privileges as the deposed leaders. And if there were massacres, how is it they, too, were not aware of them?

It is hard therefore to credit the reforming intentions of the new regime which remains except for its top two or three figures the same as the old regime. And Vieira has certainly said nothing about any plans for any real democratisation of the country.

But if the regime changes nothing internally it looks as though it may mark a significant shift in the international alignment of Bissau.

Immediately after independence, Guinea-Bissau was expected to follow a cautious pro-Soviet line in foreign policy.

In fact its dependence on aid from the western imperialists, and the energetic offers of aid and technical assistance from Sweden, meant that the Cabral regime was surprisingly pro-Western.

Sweden

The deposed leaders were very closely connected with Sweden—one of them, Planning Minister Vasco Cabral (no relation) has in fact been granted political asylum by Sweden and is now in the Swedish embassy in Bissau.

Also the coup coincided with the arrival in Bissau of a large contingent of advisors from the Soviet Union.

Significantly, the first country to recognise the new regime was neighbouring Guinea (Conakry) led by the still relatively pro-Soviet Sekou Toure.

Several of Toure's political opponents had been given asylum in Bissau by Luis Cabral.

The coup may therefore mark a realignment in West Africa as well as more internationally with a renewal of the old cooperation between Conakry and the PAIGC which ended after the war of independence.

But it looks doubtful in the extreme that it will represent any realignment for the inhabitants of the country who continue, after their heroic struggle against the barbarities of Portuguese colonialism, to be the victims of repression, misery and hunger.

There are only about one million people living in Guinea Bissau. In the years leading to the Portuguese revolution of April 1974 their actions played a major progressive role in world history as their brave fight progressively demoralised Salazar's army.

The coup highlights how far they still are from winning what they were fighting for in that struggle, and how they now need to take up a new fight against new forms of oppression and privilege.

Tories' 'H' Block lie-sheet

Along with the holiday brochures plopping through the letter boxes advertising the benefits of a winter holiday in Bermuda may well come one from a less well-liked resort.

The British Army—through the Northern Ireland Office—has made a determined bid to put the H Blocks on the tourist map with a brochure grotesquely entitled 'H-Blocks: The Reality'.

Complete with colour pictures, diagrams and quotes from the Tory press, it is the Northern Ireland Office's propaganda answer to the republican blanket protest.

It was rushed out as the hunger strikes began, to persuade bourgeois liberal opinion in Europe and America that the army and the H Block jailers are just nice misunderstood people.

An introductory article—complete with an uninspired picture of 'a corridor on a wing of an H Block'—sets the tone for the 'balanced' view of the H Blocks.

"The fact is that the prisoners have imposed the conditions upon themselves. It is they who have chosen to create squalor. They who have chosen

to deny the use of extensive facilities and privileges which the majority of the Maze prisoners have been enjoying."

And why have the prisoners "chosen" to live in this way? Why it is as "part and parcel of the overall terrorist activities of the Provisional IRA"!

Nevertheless, despite this provocation, the humane officials of the prison service patiently continue to provide their own version of tender loving care.

"Independent observers (who? Roy Mason?) have accepted that it is administered in humanitarian fashion. This will continue despite efforts by the protestors to frustrate and disrupt the smooth running of the prison."

(So that's what it is all about!) Even those prisoners not on the protest are grist for the mill. We are told that these are the rules "with which the overwhelming majority of prisoners in Northern Ireland's prisons comply."

Other headings speak for themselves: "The facts and the fantasy" . . . "The European Court of Human Rights" . . . "H Blocks, what they offer" . . . and "Humane policy". There is a picture of men in

baggy shorts playing football. The text cunningly points out that the prisoners are generously allowed to wear sports clothes during sport—suggesting no doubt that here at least there should be no complaints about prison uniform.

But of course such concessions by these humane men are wasted on these prisoners. After all, do we not learn, in a penetrating fifty word analysis of what the dirty protest is, that the beasts have "DEFACED religious magazines and bibles"?

Quotes

The booklet closes with quotes from the press reflecting a "wide range" of opinion (The Sun, the Newsletter, the Belfast Telegraph and the Sunday Times).

Given that the clergy have been flocking to echo the sentiments of this slim pamphlet, there will no doubt be a second edition out soon.

In the meantime it is a good thing that there is no cover price on the first edition.

Somehow it misses the elements of a best seller, although it would stand more chance on the fiction list than as a documentary.

BRING DOWN THE TORIES THIS WINTER!

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TORY round-up

FIXING THE NEXT ELECTION...

Perhaps you've been waiting patiently, like the Labour and trade union leaders, for the 1984 General Election as your chance to settle accounts with Thatcher?

Not so fast! The Tories are all set to rush through new gerrymandering legislation that would redraw electoral boundaries and give Thatcher an estimated 30 extra safe Tory seats in Parliament at the next election!

At that rate we would never see the back of this bosses' government! A Bill has already been published that would allow the Tories to proceed with this fiddle as quickly as possible. After all, it's the only way they could hope to win again.

So much for democracy! But it underlines the point *Socialist Press* has stressed time and again: the only way to bring about a government to defend the working class is through mass working class action to bring down Thatcher, drive out Labour's right wing, and press through the fight for socialist policies.

DEPRESSION '80

"Unless there is a change of course, there could be a depression that would make the great crash of 1929 look like a 'technical correction of the market'."

So said Tory MP Geoffrey Rippon in Parliament a few days ago. But he was already behind the times. The depression unleashed by Thatcher in 1980 is already greater than that of 1929-31!

The latest CBI survey, published in last Monday's *Financial Times* shows that output is expected to fall this year by no less than 9.3%, followed by a further catastrophic 4.7% next year.

This gives a total fall in output of 14% in two years well above the drop of only 11% in 1929-31, and far greater in real terms, given the overall increases in industrial output that have taken place since the 1930s.

This parade of closures and cutbacks takes place at a time of growing poverty not only in Britain but even more so in the underdeveloped economies of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Capitalism is now shutting up shop because its own exploitation has left a majority of the world's population too poor to buy even the bare necessities of life at a price which will offer the employers a profit.

But the fall in sales, the growth of unemployment and the policies of the Thatcher government, are themselves now acting as a further powerful squeeze on industrial profits.

Competition between rival firms for a share of a dwindling market means that there is a pressure on every manufacturer to hold down or even cut prices.

While Thatcher has rushed to hail this situation as the beginning of a fall in inflation, few big employers see the situation through the same blue-tinted blinkers.

The CBI report shows that 15% of the 1,800 companies surveyed are planning to cut their prices in the next four months.

Only 26% of firms expected to increase their prices in the next period. At a time when inflation is still at 15% such measures are a sign of desperation.

They mean that more and more firms are being driven to the very edge of bankruptcy in the cut-throat struggle for sales. This struggle is the inevitable outcome of an unplanned, anarchic capitalist economy.

As the *Financial Times* points out to its business



Minister for Closures: Joseph Prior, in manufacturing industry—particularly metal manufacturing:

"profit margins are being squeezed, and, in a growing number of cases, eliminated."

But as long as the capitalist system remains intact, profit will remain the only motive for production. When profit dries up, factories close and workers are thrown onto the dole queues. It is happening all around us.

Only a fight to defend the independent interests of the

working class—and thus to challenge the continued existence of capitalism, and point to the need for a planned, socialist economy—can stop the runaway Tory steamroller crushing still more jobs and whole industries—increasing mass poverty in Britain and on a world scale in defence of the riches of a handful of employers.

Mass action

That is why mass action is vital now to resist each and every redundancy and closure, by occupying threatened factories, and fighting tooth and nail for supporting strike and blacking action.

The demands must be:
*No redundancies "voluntary" or compulsory!
*For work sharing for the whole workforce without loss of pay!

*Open the books of the employers—expose the profits made by suppliers, "subsidiaries", distributors and banks!

*Bring down the Tories! Demand a workers' government that will nationalise industry and banks without compensation under workers management as the basis of a planned, socialist economy!



Thatcher

'Work'—but no jobs!

There is to be 'work' made available to tens of thousands more young people in James Prior's extended farcical 'Youth Opportunities Programme' and his other schemes to disguise the level of unemployment.

But there are still no real jobs for the young workers who are eventually spewed out at the end of these "work experience" and other plans.

Indeed there is not even any pay for many of them. The Tories have replaced the Special Temporary Employment

Programme (a 'STEP' onto the dole queues) with the Community Enterprise Programme. This will recruit a few staff whose job will be to enlist unemployed workers into unpaid, "voluntary" part-time work!

But considerate Tories are at least proposing to the Social Security Advisory Committee that they kindly allow unemployed workers to do such "voluntary" work without docking their benefits!

Meanwhile, Prior has announced a rejigging of the scheme which is currently keeping several thousand workers off the unemployment statistics.

The Temporary Short Time Working Compensation Scheme is to be maintained—despite its spiralling costs. The idea is to pay employers to keep workers on short time rather than sack them. Now firms can apply for such subsidies for nine months rather than the previous six.

But Prior is cutting the level of the subsidy from 75% of daily earnings to 50%. This means either more sackings—or anything up to a 25% wage cut for the workers now covered by the scheme at the end of their first six months—followed by redundancy three months later.

Every Tory "silver lining" comes with its own wrap-around cloud!

Heseltine-hated on all sides

If there is one particular Tory who has succeeded in getting up everyone's nose it is Michael (Millionaire) Heseltine.

As Environment Secretary, this walking Blytheem advert has presided over draconian cuts in local government—bringing council housing to a complete standstill, flogging off existing council houses, raising home help charges, closing down social services and raising rent and rates. His latest scheme is a £3 per week rent increase for council tenants.

But as a would-be whizz-kid, bringing in complicated

bundles of new legislation on housing and local government, Heseltine has proved a miserable and embarrassing failure.

Intervene

Even the Tory-dominated House of Lords has been forced to intervene to prevent some of his proposed attacks on school transport in rural areas—and there are ungainly chunks of left-over Heseltine legislation still outstanding on a range of issues.

Now he has even managed to enrage the tweedy "shire Tories" who run the 333-strong Association of District Councils.

Heseltine had promised that his "new broom" would not bring big changes in the amount of government grant which the district councils will receive next year.

But the blonde bungler has failed to find a scheme to protect the rural councils while at the same time implementing his hugely complex new block grant system of rate support.

Not amused

As a result, Mr Ian McCallum, leader of the ADC (which covers more than 30 million people) has loudly com-

plained to the government, demanding Heseltine's new scheme be deferred.

Maggie is reportedly not amused. And Heseltine's Cabinet colleagues are sick and tired of his half-baked efforts at legislation. They have refused him any time for more laws in this parliamentary session.

But there is little comfort in this for workers. If Heseltine is hated by fellow Tories it is because he is clumsy and inefficient at carrying through the cuts.

We need not to swap one Tory for another, but to drive the whole gang out of office!



Moneybags Heseltine (right)

The vanishing women workers

In just three months—July-September 1980, 350,000 jobs disappeared in the UK.

This was a marked increase in the speed of redundancies. No more than 400,000 jobs had been lost in the preceding 12 months. Thus nearly a year's total job loss took place in only three months. And more sackings are still being announced every day.

In the last recession in the mid 1970s, only 250 000 jobs disappeared in two years. So far Thatcher has disposed of three times that figure!

But hardest hit in this decline in employment are women workers. They are heavily dependent upon industries where the biggest cutbacks have taken place; they are generally the first to be made redundant; and they are often in unorganised, insecure part-time jobs.

Nor are married women eligible for unemployment benefits. Once out of work many women therefore do not bother to sign on as unemployed, and conveniently "vanish" from statistics.

'Disappeared'

This can be seen by comparing the employment and unemployment figures. While 350,000 jobs ceased to exist, the official unemployment figure went up by only 250,000—leaving 100,000 unaccounted for.

In the last twelve months this figure of 'disappeared' workers has reached 225 000.

It is true that in some cases older male workers have taken early retirement, having been made redundant.

In other cases workers may have found 'cash-in-hand' jobs in the so-called "black" economy.

But the majority are likely to be married women who have been excluded from the workforce—driven back to an existence as 'housewife' in the isolation of the home.

Small wonder so few working class women can hear the name 'Thatcher' without becoming angry.

Labour bureaucrats bid to reverse Blackpool gains

By John Lister

The doors of the Labour Party leadership have been swinging back and forth in the last two weeks.

A few gunslingers have emerged, seeking a shoot-out with the party's rank and file: while in has gone one shoe-shiner seeking to polish Michael Foot's plaster cast.

First out was 'Gang of Three' reactionary David Owen. He declared that he is standing down from the Shadow Cabinet so as to give himself greater freedom to attack the party policies adopted at this year's conference.

He was, he said, "very fond" of Mr Foot.

And he had a few kind words for Tony Benn, who, he admitted, had helped "invigorate British politics".

But as Owen opened fire in the street outside the Shadow Cabinet saloon, Dennis Healey, elected unopposed as Deputy Leader, produced a Derringer inside.

He announced that Labour had only two years to undo the democratic reforms carried at Blackpool this year.

Taking aim

And he called for a postal ballot system for electing the party leader.

Meanwhile, from a penthouse in an adjacent office block, Sir Harold Wilson was taking aim with a Winchester rifle.

Wilson, with unusual

honesty praised Tory Minister James Prior, whose anti-union legislation he, as a Labour MP, is supposedly committed to fight.

And Wilson went on to make it clear that he had voted for Healey in the leadership elections. Support for Tony policies and support for Healey go hand in hand.

Late on the scene of the shoot-out has been Shirley Williams, whose welcome refusal to seek reelection as a Labour MP drew forth no less than four articles in the next day's *Guardian*.

Not alone

Her statement amounts to an open declaration that she remains on the Labour NEC purely for the purposes of assisting Healey and the crypto-Tories to subvert the Blackpool conference decisions.

But they are not alone in this fight. Healey for instance has been able to count on Foot's support in his campaign for leadership elections to be based on a formula for leadership elections to be based on a formula drawn up by the right wing rump of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

This would involve each constituency in holding a secret ballot of all members, and unions formulating new arrangements to seek a mandate from political fund-paying members.

Meanwhile, according to this scheme, the PLP—representing only themselves—would continue to hold a large per-

centage of the votes in the resulting "electoral college".

Such an extension of "democracy" would be simply a hollow charade to disguise the continued monopoly control exercised by the PLP over the election of the party leader.

But some trade union leaders have emerged arguing a position even more right wing than Foot and Healey.

The AUEW and GMWU are arguing for an "electoral college" in which at least 50% of the votes go to the PLP—thus requiring the right wing to swing only one major union to guarantee victory!

The EETPU is calling for a postal ballot of all Labour Party members—thus disenfranchising the six million workers affiliated to the Party through their unions.

Meanwhile NUPE, TGWU, ASTMS and (surprisingly) USDAW are pressing for an electoral college in which the PLP gets 40% or less of the vote.

Of the 12 major unions, 2.5 million block votes seem set to go in favour of a 50% PLP vote, and only 2.2 million in favour of 40% or less.

But what of Tony Benn, who for many socialists has come to personify the fight for democracy in the Party?

Made peace

As the gunslingers take up position for a major onslaught on the Blackpool reforms, Benn has picked up his shoe-shine outfit and made peace with Foot.

Whatever the outcome of January's special conference, he has said, he will not challenge Foot for the Party leadership.

And he has sought reelection to the Shadow Cabinet—thus declaring himself willing publicly to defend the line put forward by Foot.

Whether or not he succeeds in this—and Benn is plainly still regarded as excessively left wing by the Tribune Group who placed him only eighth on their "slate" for the Shadow Cabinet—Benn has plainly and consciously moved to defuse the struggle within the Party at a key point in the fight for democracy.

Union leaders, Tribunites and Tony Benn have been able to rally behind the one-time 'left' winger Michael Foot in a way that would have been impossible had Healey been elected Party leader.

The outcome is a growing obstacle to democracy and to socialist policies.



Benn: shoe-shine boy

Balloons won't stop BM nazis

Red balloons were the order of the day on the enormous anti-fascist demonstration called at short notice through Westbourne Park a week ago.

We can only assume that these were a cunning ploy to disarm the Nazis of the British Movement into thinking the carnival atmosphere posed them no threat. They would not have been far wrong!

The police-led march went the opposite way to the BM and got hemmed in at the end after safely protesting to the strains of "We all hate the Nazis—dada da da, dada da da".

Not even the obvious manoeuvre by the police at the end to box everyone in and stop them even catching sight of the fascist scum had been anticipated by the organisers.

The ANL lollipopers at the front walked happily into the jaws of the law and the 'Militant' LPYS were entreating people to keep walking and keep together right to the end.

You had to look carefully to check that the police had not taken over the megaphone.

The biggest group on the march who did show their

determination not to get sucked into protest politics was the East London Workers Against Racism.

The police were obviously aware of this as 13 of its members were picked off at pre-arranged points during the march.

Workers Socialist League members and supporters had forseen the obvious police tactics and did not walk into the blockade.

They were therefore able to get to where the BM was actually marching.

Serious

The hundreds of people we saw from then on consisted largely of groups of black youth and socialists who had not been on the ANL march, and were serious about trying to stop the British Movement march rather than simply airing an empty protest.

The police, as usual, were out in force to protect the small group of fascists and allow them to march at any cost.

Only a few flags and banners were visible inside the four-deep lines of police.

Estimates of 400 Nazis were exaggerated.

Some of the fascists did get the beating they deserved but the ANL demonstration played no part in providing the means to do that.

3,000 people were marched up the hill by the ANL Dukes of York and not even down again!

Such pacifist protests will not stop the British Movement which—to a greater extent even than the National Front—is built on the basis of attracting unorganised and backward youth to a campaign of street violence against black communities and the labour movement.

The BM is not dependent upon electoral success. It is an openly Nazi-style gang of lumpen thugs that can be halted not by protest and propaganda but by the organisation of workers' defence squads with the specific task of driving them off the streets.

The politics of the ANL were inadequate to counter the NF in the period prior to the last election: but in the struggle against the present campaign by fascist groups it is criminally wrong.

Socialists must take up the fight for active preparation by the workers' movement to crush the BM and its fellow fascists wherever they show their faces.

PRESS GANG



The thieves have begun to fall out in earnest.

Divisions within the ranks of the Conservative Party had to find their echo amongst the camp followers in the press. The result has been to turn the front pages of Fleet Street into a battleground where editors strive to prove their allegiance to true Tory philosophy.

It is a battle without real division—the kind of debate that could have taken place around Stalin. "Is Comrade Stalin being let down by his friends... or is he so great that he can rise above them?"

Only in this case, instead of Stalin it is Thatcher.

The *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* began it—the *Mail* as usual with more punch.

MAGGIE MUST DO A U-TURN was its astounding lead headline for November 26. To its readers it must have sounded like the beginning of the end.

Had the editor lost his marbles? Had the printers taken over? Is the *Daily Mail* a red plot in disguise? The first paragraph supported such dramatic possibilities.

"The *Daily Mail* never believed it would have to say it. But now it must. Mrs Thatcher must make a U-turn and make it immediately."

But the U-turn 'turns' out to be (surprise, surprise) more butchery, not less. The *Mail* wants more cuts, more unemployment, more attacks on the unions!

In the opinion of the *Daily Mail*:

"Through lack of support as well as the cowardice and incompetence of the people around her, Mrs Thatcher has begun to drift. So the U-turn she must make is essential to

get back on course and to the things she was elected to do."

The *Mail* goes on to castigate the government:

"It seems that Britain is governed by mirrors. Mrs Thatcher and Sir Geoffrey Howe repeat and repeat that they will not be deflected from their harsh but necessary course of controlling the money supply."

The Opposition shriek and shout that she, cruel and heartless woman, must be forced to relax her grip on the money supply before the country collapses.

Are the British people expected to fall for this lunatic charade?"

Now when the *Daily Mail* starts talking about what the British people will and will not stand or fall for then it is time to run for cover.

But the *Daily Express* believes it has a monopoly on such instant opinion polls.

The next day's front page of the *Express* was given over to an attack on its rivals under the headline "The Lady's Not for Burning".

This started:

"Tory, Tory, Hallelujah. The biggest political U-turn Britain has seen this year has come from Mrs Thatcher's fairweather friends—the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun*."

Their political credibility has disappeared down their own claspnet."

The rest of the page is a mixture of abuse and hopeful explanation which seems to suggest that Thatcher is nicely on course thank-you.

If this government is the Titanic, the *Daily Express* is determined to be the orchestra which played as the ship sank!

There are some embarrassing claims such as:

"The *Daily Express* does not believe in the infallibility of Tory rule."

But later the paper declares: "For our part we want nobody to be in any doubt where the *Daily Express* stands."

We stand boldly behind Mrs Thatcher. If she fails it will not just be a disaster for the Conservative Party, it will be a disaster for Britain."

If the press cannot agree on where Thatcher stands it is a good deal clearer about just how much it owes to some of the leading figures in the labour movement.

The *Daily Mail*, which calls for a new stiffening of Thatcher's sinews, just wants business as usual from Terry Duffy.

Assessment

Less than a week before its attack on the weak-kneed Thatcher government it ran an editorial on BL and Duffy which many Tory politicians would love to have said about them.

How is this for an assessment of a trade union leader from the biggest opponent of those unions?

"Mr Duffy is nobody's idea of a trade union Titan. He is no great speaker. Often he is flustered for a phrase. He is as flat vowelled and unlikely a hero as you could find. And yet there is something about him..."

Often enough we have had cause to lambast the inert and lack-lustre figures who now personify the TUC. But it is not all drizzle, Murray and Moss Evans. While there's Duffy there's hope."



Out of the stinking corpse of capitalism...

VIOLENCE against women

Events in Leeds within one week this month have sent shockwaves through the country and have forced many to look at the question of violence against women.

On the Friday in Leeds Crown Court a man who killed his wife by smashing her skull with a hammer was given a two year suspended sentence.

Mr Douglas Coles pleaded guilty to manslaughter—as he was provoked by Mrs Ethel Coles who was neurotic and nagging.

He was not found guilty of murder.

On the Monday, Annette and Charlene Maw, convicted of manslaughter were sentenced in the same court to three years imprisonment for stabbing their violent father who had beaten and terrorised both them and their mother for most of their lives.

Not isolated

And on the Thursday it was discovered that Leeds student Jacqueline Hill had become the thirteenth victim of the so-called Yorkshire Ripper.

Three horrific incidents of violence against women coincidentally came to light in just one week.

They are, however, not isolated, one off, sensationally rare occurrences. They are part of a whole pattern of violent abuse to which women are subject because of the fact they are

women. Over 25% of all violent crime takes the form of sexual or domestic attack upon women in the home.

This is apart from the violence endured by women who are weaned on dreams of romance, marriage and children, the ideal home, full of love and trust, discovering these dreams are illusions, as they wind up trapped within the home, isolated, enduring the seeming futility of pressures of raising and servicing families.

They have no possible way out; getting a job is impossible, or perhaps they've got elderly dependants who can't get into a home or just children who have no nursery place.

The only way for many women to cope with this oppression is with "mother's little helpers".

Seven million anti-depressants are taken every day. 70% of users are women and when they fail a complete breakdown occurs or suicide is attempted.

And this leaves out of account the women in Britain and internationally who die or suffer agonies each year after being forced into seeking illegal abortion.

This is the kind of violence that women endure in addition to all the other violence and exploitation suffered by the whole of the working class through the capitalist system.

Trotskyists regard it as a major responsibility to understand the specific oppression of women and to find means of

independent working class action to defend them day to day from violent attack—whatever form it takes within capitalism.

But that is not easy and it is not enough: we must also have a revolutionary perspective that makes the fight to halt violence against women part of the struggle to overthrow capitalism and to take steps to ensure that such violence can not exist in a socialist society.

Strategy

It is our responsibility as on all other issues to declare how we propose tackling the fight against sexist attacks.

We have to present a strategy and a proposal of tactics to counteract the violence that daily deforms the lives of women.

In doing so, it is inevitable that we understand that defensive measures alone—though vital—will never rid women of the threat of sexual attack, the acute depression from a marginal, unfulfilled existence, from the constant discrimination and degradation that women experience daily under capitalism.

Only the removal of capitalism itself will do that.

Nor can we simply state naively that socialist revolution will automatically penetrate the concealed pockets of the psyche that have been nurtured by bourgeois ideology.

The *Morning Star* in an editorial on Jacqueline Hill's murder called for: "concerted social action

against male violence and for the relationships between the sexes to be put on a proper footing."

Women, it said, should have the right to work and the right to walk the streets.

Just as it is incapable of putting forward the necessary action to defend women's jobs, and fight for full employment, so the *Morning Star* is incapable of posing anything other than rhetoric on the fight against sexual attack.

The Leeds chief constable after the murder advised women to "stay at home" for their own protection.

The media have mercilessly played on the fear of women after this horrendous attack.

While the Tories are economically forcing women back into the home with mass redundancies and cut social services the media are helping psychologically to bind women in, and deprive them of any independence as they are terrorised out of even venturing out alone.

Patrols

Fortunately the students of Leeds University have examined methods by which—through their own actions—they can defend women from attack without relying on the police.

They have organised an escort system from bus stops, accompanying women to halls of residence, cinemas and friends' houses.

They are also organising patrols of the university grounds.

Socialists throughout the labour movement should be examining more extensive means of workers' self-defence against sexual attack as well as against racist and fascist attack.

One tactic could be adopted from groups of feminists.

Where a number of assaults have taken place in any one area, they organise a system of patrols which have effectively reduced the threat of attack.

Where attacks occur we should raise this proposal on trades councils and organise groups of workers in such defence squads on a full rota basis.

Self defence

Another point that has emerged from the Leeds campus is the demand for classes in self defence for women.

We should be insisting through the teaching unions—in particular the NUT—that a complete training in self-defence be taught in school to all girls.

There is no denying that women are in most cases physically weaker than men—this can be overcome through basic training which will help bring physical equality.

We should also be demanding that a full system of cheap state transport be provided after dark.

That implies a state taxi door to door service as part of a programme of necessary public works, including clearance of all waste grounds, adequate street lighting, even as is possible, a portable alarm system.

There is no doubt that the danger is growing.

In the USA it is estimated that about half a million women every year are raped. 85% of these rapes are attacks involving physical violence and force.

We must therefore demand that rape crisis centres be established in every locality. These must be under workers' control.

These are vital as an alternative to the harassment, humiliation and degradation that women experience in reporting rape in a police station.

There, the police are major advocates of the line that the woman "asked for it" or "come on he was only having a bit of fun".

Their first suggestion is that she is lying. In order for the police to accept that she is justified in saying she has been raped, a woman in a distraught state, physically and emotionally battered has to endure a police cross examination full of innuendo and accusation and an immediate medical examination.

Principal myths

The police are foremost exponents of the principal myths that have been perpetrated around the question of rape.

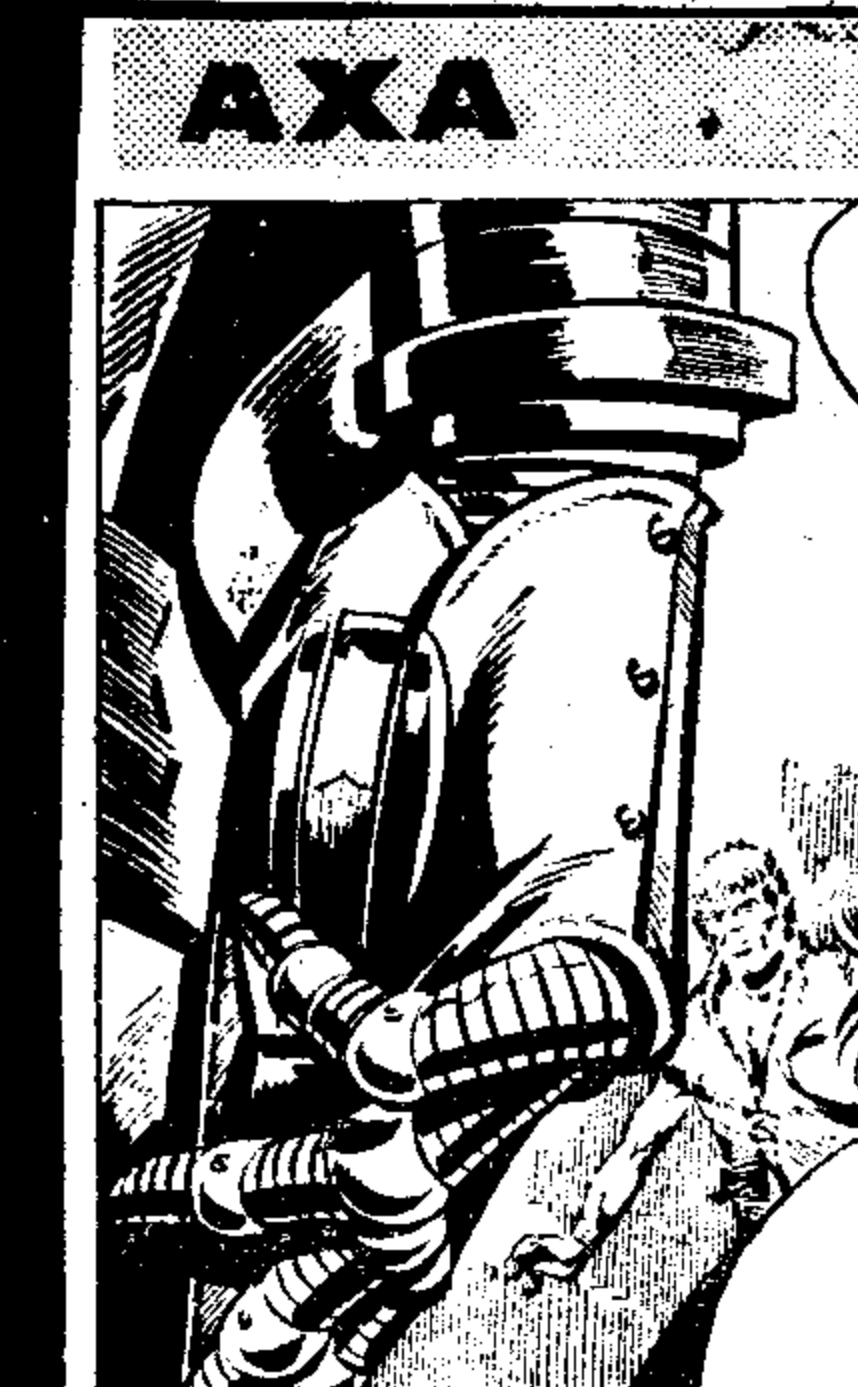
They are the first to insinuate that it is the woman herself who in some way incited or "invited" sexual assault—by wearing a short skirt, by being alone in a night club, pub or so-called "red light" district, or by being alone in empty streets, hitch-hiking or visiting a man at his home or office.

Under such conditions the claim is that the rapist simply "responds" to provocation by women who should be demurely clothed, escorted by a man, or safely confined to the home.

Police at once assume that women who have had sex out-

The night before a wedding there's time to kill

HE KNOW YOUR ALON



side marriage are likely to have agreed to sex with any man and therefore cannot have been raped. Only women over 60 girls under 16 and proven faithful wives are safe from such presumptions.

The police invariably interrogate the rape victim to determine whether any grounds exist to claim that they "led the man on".

And while most police "experts" publicly advise women not to resist a potential violent rapist, rape victims who obey such advice and appear calm and unbruised to lay a complaint at the police station are regarded with immediate suspicion—as are those who delay reporting the attack while they collect their thoughts.

Such prejudice among police officers itself acts as an obstacle to many rape cases even being investigated. The victims are too distressed and alienated to proceed—or their protestations are brushed aside by policemen as simply the lies or fantasies of malicious, confused "immoral" women.

Thus the rapist's legal defence begins long before any case reaches the courts.

Crisis centres

The whole attitude of the police reflects the ideologies of the state for which they are the guard-dogs.

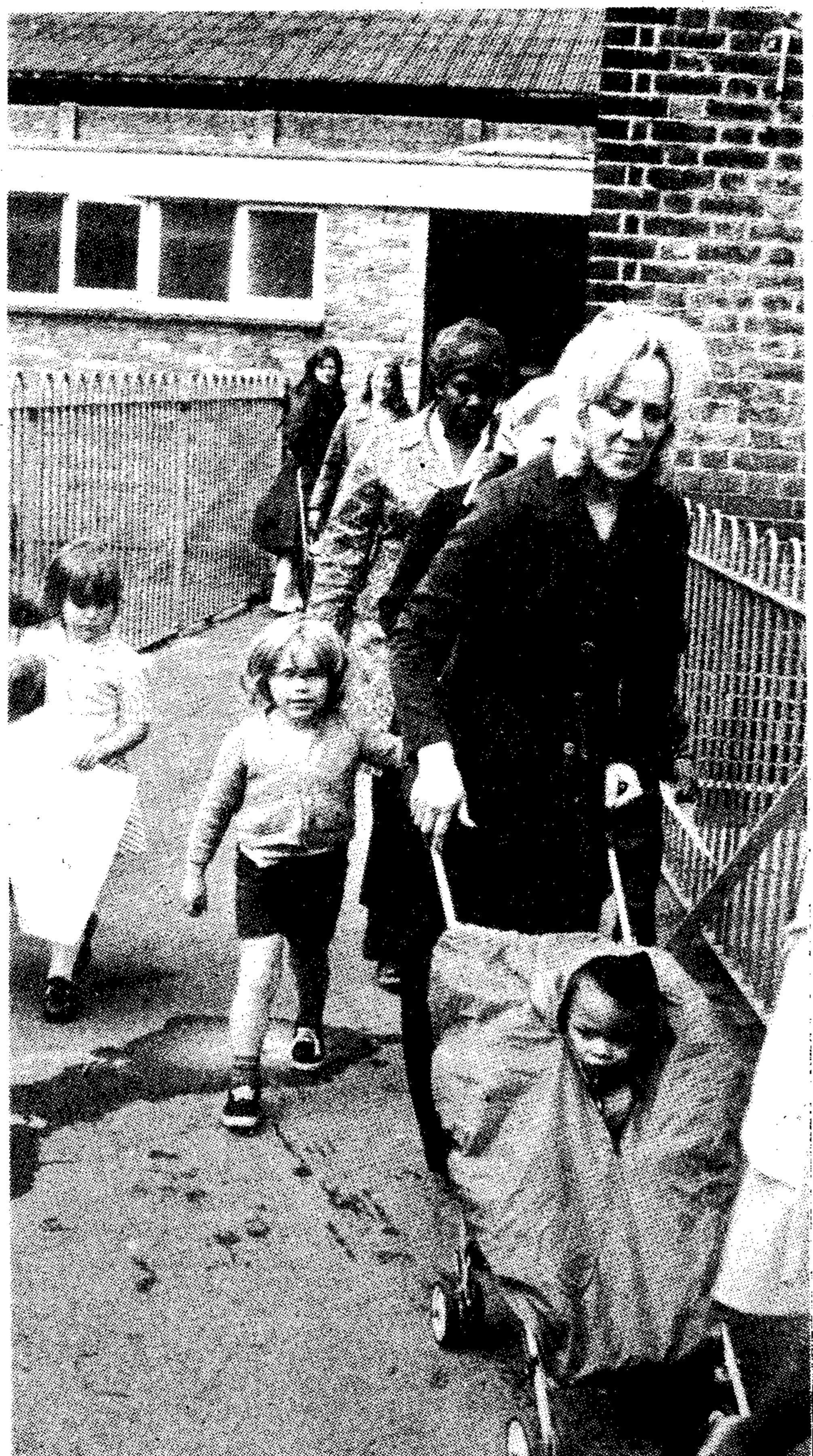
They are the most profoundly racist, sexist and anti-working class body.

We cannot and must not turn to them for support or sympathy, that is why rape crisis centres are so important.

We must insist within the labour movement that such centres be set up, fully equipped and staffed, by the socialist services, to provide counselling, accurate medical and legal advice, a 24 hour phone service and support for women who choose to go through the legal process.

Some of the rape crisis centres that have been established also hope:

"to liaise with local education authorities, with a view to introducing the subject of rape into sex-education programmes to de-mythologise and demystify it."



The reality (above) and the media fantasy (right)

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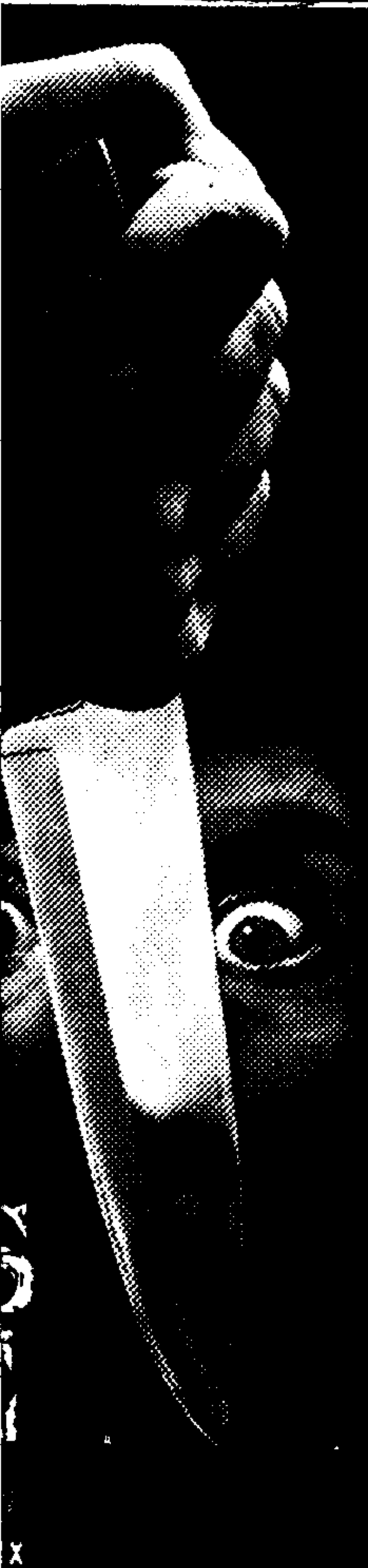
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Exclusive this week in your No 1 Sun... Life today in the new China

Acting Up! J.R. Keeps a royal secret

By Denis Budge Actor Larry Madison was keeping two secrets when his picture was taken...

Episodes Madison said the picture should not be shown until after the election...

PLEA BY POPE The Pope has said that the picture should not be shown until after the election...

WHAT MONSTER DID THIS TO MY LITTLE GIRL?



A MOTHER went bitterly last night as she talked of her 17-year-old daughter's savage murder by a sex fiend.

Terrible A woman, walking past the scene of the crime, said she was shocked to see the girl's body lying on the ground...

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Nude Kim is so tasteful says contest boss Julie

I'll sue Benno says Mrs World

MISS WORLD organizer Julia Benno says she will sue Benno for libel over her comments on the contest...

Vowed She is a very nice girl and she is a very nice girl and she is a very nice girl...

MISS UK AS YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE

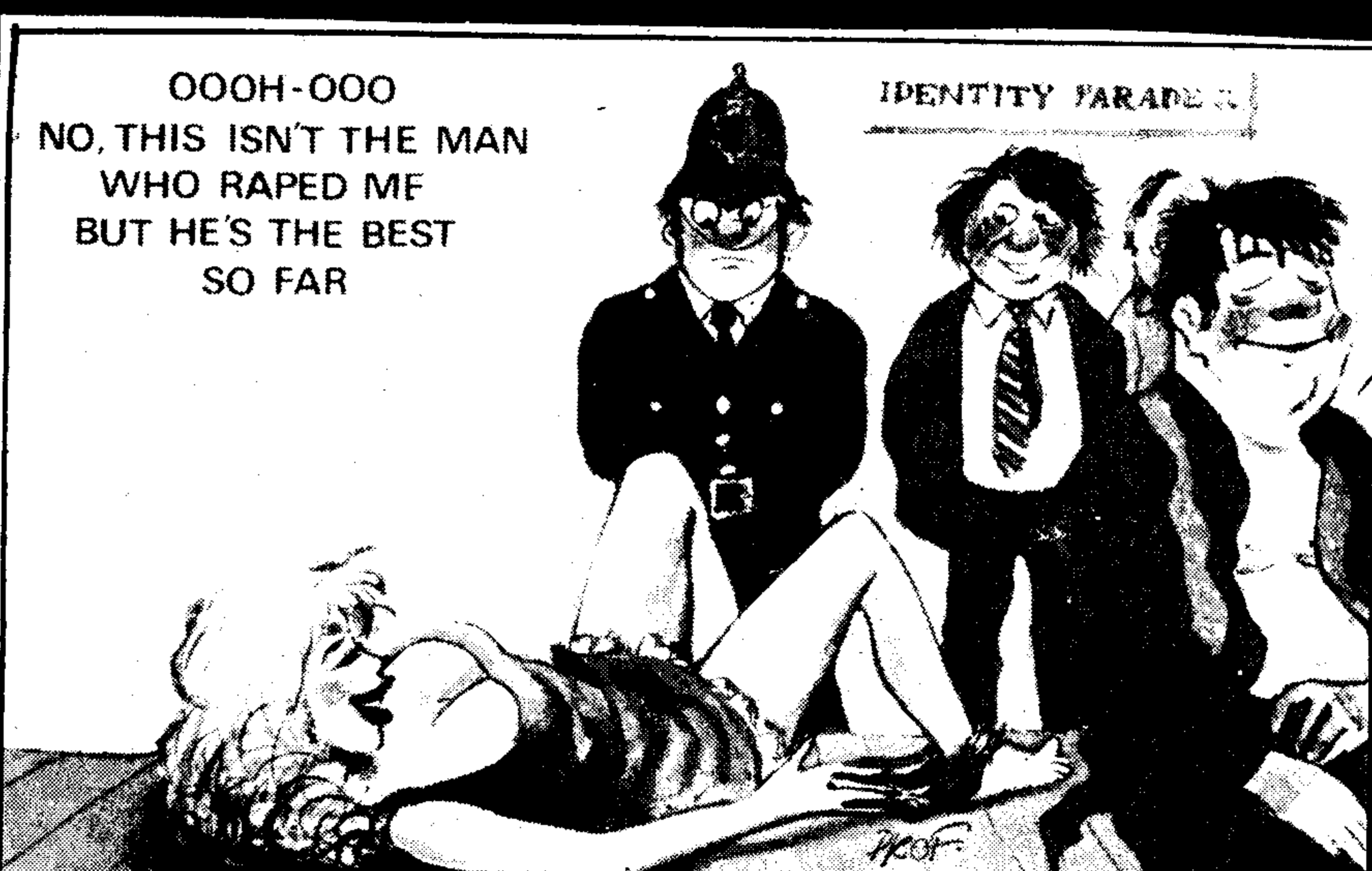


THIS is the naked truth about Miss United Kingdom that the millions who watched the Miss World contest on TV never knew.

(left) Promotional advert for one of the films capitalising on violence against women; (above) hypocritical "concern" and blatant titillation from two pages of one issue of The Sun, (November 17); (below) woman as object and as victim in Sun strip cartoon; (below, right) possibly the most obscene 'dirty postcard' ever produced?



Comic strip by AVENELL and ROMERO. Panel 1: 'S RIGHT, MARK! U DON'T NEED TO PROTECT ME FROM HIM! HE LOVES ME!' Panel 2: 'PLEASE, MARK... I KNOW YOU LOVE ME TOO... IN YOUR WAY...' Panel 3: 'BUT YOU'RE JUST A ROBOT WITH A KINK IN YOUR CIRCUITS! AND AXA NEEDS FLESH AND BLOOD!'



We would turn this process towards the labour movement, raising the questions in the teaching unions.

This brings us to the central task of Trotskyists in tackling the question of violence against women.

Like the battering of women in the home, rape is primarily a social problem, rooted in centuries of male dominance and in the links capitalist society has fostered between property, sex and violence.

Social conditions The problem of rape cannot be tackled effectively unless we change the social conditions that encourage violence towards women and keep them in an inferior position.

Rape and the battering of women are not—contrary to popular belief—carried out by men who are sick or deranged. This quote from Dr Judy Willey shows:

Object Inherent in all extreme forms of the way men are encouraged to relate to women is the way the female is turned into an object—a man's object in man's world.

exploitation of the woman as a sexual object and the objectification of the female as a piece of property to be owned and ruled by men.

Reflected in the pin-up is the ideal that is continuously perpetuated of woman as passive—an object to be pinned up—and masochistic—existing for men's pleasure, whatever form it might take.

The image of woman as a sexual object emphasises the physical attractiveness of the female body and denigrates other qualities of women such as intelligence, courage, creativity, inventiveness.

Rape is an act that subdues the female by crushing her will, violating her person.

Women do not as a rule have fantasies of dominating men or humiliating them.

There is no comparable ideological barrage perpetuating fantasies of women dominating or humiliating men.

Fantasy If women participate in masochistic behaviour with men it is in many cases because the men have been conditioned to demand it and women have been conditioned to want to please the men.

Underlying much literature and openly expressed in many other forms including psychoanalytic theory, is the male fantasy that women desire to be dominated (raped) by men.

The idea of being seized and borne off by a ruthless male who will wreak his sexual will upon his helpless victim has a universal appeal to the female sex.

Raymond Durnant states in a chapter entitled 'I love you so much I could kill you' that: "erotic violence is the kingly of the horror film... the full moon lifts the tides of instinct, the man becomes a werewolfslaving, ripping, ravishing the fair sex, which constitutes his rightful prey."

Every time it is the female's role to be the victim from King Kong through Dracula to virtually every horror film you can name.

The most disturbing, blatant examples of this are a current series of mass murder films—The Beast, Prom Night, Don't Answer the Phone and He Knows You're Alone.

These are obviously being produced to coincide with mass murder cases in the United States and the 'Ripper' case here.

Mass murderers, e.g. Bluebeard, 10 Rillington Place and Jack the Ripper—are greeted at one level with a certain scandalised, possibly hypocritical indignation but on another are used to induce a mass response of titillation.

In view of the sadistic character of such public fantasy the mass publicity (advertises several times every night on TV), the producers are obviously encouraging a certain element of identification in the general response.

They give a free rein to man in the perpetration of a variety of cruelties, barbarity and humiliation to women.

For women, they whip up a paranoia designed to ensure she never feels safe and confident and should never be alone or independent.

Back-up job They are thus doing a back-up job to the press coverage of the 'Ripper' case—terrorising women to stay in family safety in the home.

tion and possession on the part of a would-be conqueror designed to intimidate and inspire fear.

We must look at those elements in our culture that promote and propagandise these attitudes and which provide the ideological and psychological encouragement to commit these acts of aggression.

The theory of aggressive male domination over women as some kind of "natural right" is so deeply embedded in our culture that recent attempts to expose the way it operates—in songs, films, television, adverts, children's textbooks ("I'm scared"), says Janet. "Girls are always afraid", says John" have barely managed to scratch the surface.

Challenge It is very important for socialists not only to be part of the fight to expose that conditioning, as deeply and as widely as we can but also to take action to actively challenge fight and ultimately transform those ideologies that uphold the specific oppression of women.

In fighting a factory closure, or school meal redundancies we are challenging the concept that "a woman's place is in the home", in fighting for full free state childcare provision, we are challenging that it is "a mother's job to bring up children"; in defending geriatric hospitals we are challenging the concept that it is "a daughter's job" to stay at home and look after her elderly dependants.

The fight for workers and consumers control of the media is necessary to make a concrete start to challenging the perpetuation of sexist attitudes.

We should fight to establish committees of workers in, for example, the entertainment industry, including Equity, camera/technical staff and committees of consumers.

These should examine films and consider whether they consider them to be an active threat to women—and if so, what is the necessary course of action to take.

This would, of course, not take the form of demanding

state bans but a call to action by the working class movement.

If it was felt that a film should not be released we would demand it be blacked by workers at the point of distribution; that projectionists refuse to show it together with a full supporting picket of consumers, trade unionists from local trades councils, etc.

Totally wrong There will of course be cries of protest at what appears to be a form of censorship. People will say that they don't want to be seen "siding up with Mary Whitehouse".

But it would be totally wrong to equate the reactionary rantings of Mary Whitehouse with the decisions demanded by a committee of trade unionists based on the need to defend women, gays, blacks and other oppressed against denigration and violent attack.

Mary Whitehouse is completely against the interests of the working class.

She features in Thatcher's honours list, she is a vicious anti-abortionist. She seeks to censor not the obscenities of sadistic murder of Prom Night but any aspect of the media which she considers threatens the existing 'morality' and religious ideals of the bourgeois state of which she is such an advocate.

Attacked She therefore has used the state to attack Gay News, precisely because they challenged the repressive conventional relationships through their anti-state, anti-church defence of homosexuality.

It is why she has come out so strongly against the National Theatre production of Howard Brenton's play 'Romans' because it portrays the British army in the six counties as SAS thugs and rapists.

British imperialist domination is symbolised through sexual domination and the play is attacked—but Paul Raymond's Topless Revue Bar has survived years without a murmur. It is an integrated part

of capitalism. Trotsky writes in 'Problems of Everyday Life' ('Vodka, the Church and the Cinema'):

"The working class state is neither a spiritual order nor a monastery. We take people as they have been made by nature and as they have been in part educated and in part distorted by the old order.

We seek a point of support in this vital human material for the application of our party and revolutionary state lever. The longing for amusement, distraction, sightseeing and laughter is the most legitimate desire of human nature. We are able and indeed obliged to give the satisfaction of this desire a higher artistic quality at the same time making amusement a weapon of collective education, freed from the guardianship of the pedagogue and the tiresome habit of moralising."

Some may argue that Trotsky was speaking there only after the 1917 revolution.

They may argue that the important task for us is to concentrate on those struggles that will directly bring about the fall of capitalism like mass occupations, and national strike action and that we should not think about picketing "Prom Night" when there is so much else to do in the class struggle.

Trotsky also said however in the Transitional Programme: "The Bolshevik-Leninist stands in the front-line trenches of all kinds of struggles, even when they involve only the most modest material interests or democratic rights of the working class."

If we do not take up the fight against sexist ideology now, we leave the fight completely up to the feminist movement, many of whom see it as solely a case of men (patriarchy) attacking women and not as the capitalist system dominating and oppressing the working class.

By Mary-Ann Todd Next week: A further feature article on battered women.

COMMUNIST PARTY KEEPS THATCHER IN OFFICE

Margaret Thatcher's crisis ridden and reactionary regime has been kept in power by the conscious and deliberate intervention of the Communist Party.

This startling statement is the only serious conclusion which can be drawn from a close examination of the recent sell-out of the wages struggle inside BL.

With Tory policy in disarray and Thatcher facing divisions within the Tory Party itself, BL workers were poised to spearhead an emerging struggle which could have brought the Tories down.

Yet under these conditions Jack Adams, a leading member of the Communist Party, mounted the rostrum at the decisive mass meeting at the Longbridge plant and put the recommendation for acceptance of the 6.8% offer.

There is no doubt that Adams was putting official Communist Party policy. Despite massive cover by the media of the Longbridge meeting the *Morning Star* the following day failed to even mention that it had taken place.

Once again the Tories have been protected by the trade union bureaucrats, just as they were during the steel strike.

Now because of the actions of the Communist Party, BL workers, far from spearheading a fight against the Tories, have been used as the lever to bring in Thatcher's 6% incomes policy.

Interesting

The importance of this betrayal, linked as it is to the staggering determination of the trade union leadership as a whole not to confront Thatcher, makes a detailed examination of the course of events both interesting and necessary.

BL workers were sold-out last year as well. Then they voted for strike action by a 2-1 majority in a postal ballot jointly conducted by the trade unions.

Then Duffy put the boot in. This lover of postal ballots suddenly decided not to accept the result. He conducted his own "straw poll" within the AUEW, and then instructed his members to keep working.

This year it was different. The national officers and General Secretaries played their inevitable role; but it was the convenors who played the decisive part and hence the crucial importance of the Communist Party.

The question of *democracy* is very central indeed within BL and can never for a moment be separated from the struggle for wages or the struggle to defend jobs or conditions.

Participation

Hanging over leadership problems in BL is the three-years of "worker participation" under the Ryder plan at the time of the Labour government.

This was class collaboration to perfection and the Communist Party from the outset was its most consistent supporter, describing it as "a step towards workers' control".

When BL moved towards the corporate bargaining system (strongly opposed by *Socialist Press* and the Workers Socialist League) the same *collaborators* became the *negotiators*; and even after participation formally ended, early in 1978, it continued to flourish in the heads of the convenors and in particular in the ranks of the Communist Party.

Bill Peters examines the sell-out at British Leyland



Longbridge workers on the march against the Social Contract: now their Stalinist leaders are selling out to the Tories

This meant that they all supported the Confed when it set up a completely unrepresentative corporate negotiating structure over which BL workers could have no control whatsoever.

The JNC has 27 members. Seven of them are national officials, and the majority of the 20 convenors represent small numbers of workers, mostly with craft interests.

The vast majority of BL workers are represented by a small minority on the committee.

The JNC reports to (but is not accountable to) a conference of nearly 200 convenors which is even less democratic.

They each have one vote—despite the fact that a tiny handful of mostly TGWU convenors represent the vast majority of workers and the rest speak only for tiny minority interests.

This system was accepted by the Communist Party and others because they were on it, and because they knew it would be an effective block to strike action.

The 1980 claim of £17.21/20% across the board) was in fact originated not by the JNC but by the Combine Committee at one of the sparsely attended meetings it has held on rare occasions since it was destroyed by participation.

"Single item"

There, Jack Adams proposed that a "single item" claim of 20% be adopted which would be "clear to the members".

In moving it, Adams stressed that the important thing was to

reject any attempt by the management to "turn the negotiations towards bonus payment"—as had been the case last year.

Everyone, he said, must be very firm on this point.

The JNC later endorsed the Combine Committee policy and presented it to BL management who responded with an offer of 6.2%.

Even at that stage the seeds of the sell-out were there.

The JNC decided *against* rejecting the offer and adjourned for three weeks to consider it!

Confed claim

Most BL workers would have considered three minutes as too long to consider it, but the JNC had a motive.

They reported back to the shop stewards in the various plants that the decision was "tactical". Within three weeks they said, the Confed would have an offer from the employers for the engineering industry which they anticipated would be more than 6.2%. They could then press for the same.

In the Cowley Assembly Plant the shop stewards decided that the mass of the members must be involved at every stage if the claim was to be seriously proposed.

A mass meeting was called which unanimously voted for rejection of the 6.2% offer and to pursue the full claim.

In mid-October Duffy settled for 8.2% on the minimum rates for the Confed claim.

Promptly the BL JNC met management, expecting a similar

offer. Then their problems began. Edwardes only offered 6.8%. This, he said, was the final offer.

Caught by Edwardes decision, the JNC called a convenors conference on 20 October "to sound out their views".

The meeting decided to go back and consult the shop stewards in the plants.

When the stewards met in the Cowley Assembly Plant they already had a mass meeting decision behind them.

The stewards mandated the convenor Bob Fryer to press at the JNC for a simultaneous series of mass meetings throughout BL, to be held on the same day and at the same time, to vote on a recommendation for strike action.

This policy was put onto a leaflet and circulated in the factory.

It was also circulated to the JNC and the convenors when they reassembled on October 27.

On that day the JNC met an hour before the convenors meeting. It adopted the policy advocated by Fryer. The convenors met and took a similar decision.

This was a very crucial tactical decision, because the key to mobilising BL workers was *unity*.

Sold out

BL workers had been sold-out three times over the past year when plants had been isolated by the officials and were seeing unity as the key factor in fighting Edwardes.

When the mass meetings were held on Thursday 30

October, the convenors, the officials and Edwardes got a shock.

Despite previous betrayals and vacillation since the claim started, there were massive votes for strike action.

All directions

In Cowley and Longbridge the majorities were overwhelming and in BL cars as a whole only 21,000 voted against strike action compared to 42,000 in favour.

When the JNC met on the following Monday to assess the support of the members they ran in all directions.

A motion to call an all-out strike moved by Bob Fryer and Arthur Harper was defeated by a majority of one.

A motion from Grenville Hawley to call a two-day token strike was defeated by a majority of one, and a motion by the EETPU to accept the 6.8% was also defeated.

The JNC, the "leadership", had no policy. Once again they were miles behind the membership.

They went into the convenors conference an hour later with three motions but no policy.

After a battle, the motion to call an all-out strike on the basis of the mandate of the members was carried by 99 votes to 74 with 14 abstentions.

Seven days' notice of an all-out strike was given to Edwardes.

Workers became stronger after the decision. In some plants that had voted against the strike, such as Rover, where the effects of last April's sell-out

were still strong, it became clear that workers would be out once the strike started.

Management acted quickly. They knew where to go and what to play on—bonus.

Top managers in each plant called in convenors to tell them that the 6.8% would not be improved, but money could be earned through bonus payments.

Intimidation was thrown in for good measure. Bob Fryer was told that management knew what he had said inside the JNC meeting and they took a serious view of it. They told him his "card would be marked" if he continued to support strike action.

The pressures were effective. On Wednesday an emergency JNC meeting was called and they promptly agreed to talk about bonus. They had no mandate to talk about bonus from the members or the stewards and they were in complete violation of the original combine committee decision.

But it was even worse. They then decided to put forward their own proposals for a bonus scheme sell-out!

Bonus

They proposed that five bonus points (£1.25) be guaranteed on top of the 6.8% offer. (A proposal which if conceded would amount to (surprise, surprise!) 8.2%—equal to the Confed settlement).

Unfortunately for them, management was prepared to agree, but only for an eight week period.

14 hours of negotiations succeeded in "improving" this miserable deal to 12 weeks—



General Secretaries with no members involved in claim: Jenkins and Grantham



Duffy (right) chats with NUM leader Gormley: Gormley did not attend talks with Edwardes!

providing the whole claim was settled there and then. This was impossible and the talks broke down.

On Thursday a further meeting took place at the request of Terry Duffy, this time with Edwardes and the General Secretaries of various unions.

This included not only people like Duffy but leaders of the staff unions, who have nothing to do with the claim! Roy Grantham of APEX was there. Clive Jenkins was there—whose foremen members had been intimidating manual workers into accepting the 6.8%.

David Basnett was there from the GMWU: this union had a total of 25 members in BL—all of whom are at MGs Abingdon and shortly to get the sack as the plant closes.

Alex Kitson attended for the TGWU in the absence of Moss Evans who was on holiday.

He arrived late and announced he had been at a meeting of the TGWU Executive who had decided to make the impending strike official.

This cut very little ice with the General Secretaries who quickly decided after a meeting with Edwardes to call for the strike call to be dropped on no other basis than their "commitment" to BL and a few more fruitless negotiations on bonus which would take place on Monday and Tuesday of the following week.

This was agreed unanimously, including Kitson—despite his "official support".

They then approached the JNC who had been assembled in a basement waiting for the call.

They agreed unanimously to back the sell-out.

The following day an emergency meeting of convenors was called which also backed the sell-out with a 2-1 majority. Instructions were sent out calling off the strike.

On Monday morning there was a joint meeting of shop stewards in the Cowley Assembly Plant.

The convenors reported the events of the previous week and it became clear that Bob Fryer had not fought the sell-out and had been a party to the negotiations on bonus.

There was a very sharp reaction from the meeting. The 200 plant stewards voted unanimously to condemn the JNC and the convenors' conference.

They called for a new, democratic structure based on a delegate conference, which they had been fighting for since the summer.

The bonus negotiations predictably produced nothing.

Fryer fought for a new strike decision on the basis of his mandate from the plant. The JNC however voted 14-12 in favour of recommending the "final" offer of 6.8% plus £1.25 per week bonus for twelve weeks to the convenors the next day.

Silenced

At the convenors conference Fryer was silenced. Hawley ruled that no JNC member be allowed to speak!

The vote by convenors that the offer be accepted was overwhelming—but they argued that it would be recommended to a further series of mass meetings—this time over the span of a few days.

Again they got a shock. Although some of the right wing—who could guarantee anti-strike votes—held meetings quickly in order to influence the decisions, when Cowley met the vote for a strike was even stronger.

At the Assembly Plant the stewards had recommended both a strike vote and the call for a new democratic negotiating structure. They got massive backing.

Even at the right wing-led Cowley Body Plant where convenor Bill Roche struggled to demoralise the workforce into acceptance, the vote was a solid 10-1 for strike action.

As mass meetings took place many plants followed their previous pattern of voting with something of a swing against strike action.

Longbridge vote

By Friday it was clear that everything hung on the Longbridge vote, which had been held back until Tuesday morning.

If Longbridge repeated its previous big majority for strike action—then the vote throughout BL would go that way.

Everything therefore hung on convenor Adams and the Communist Party.

The sell-out came when the CP-led Longbridge works committee decided to accept the 6.8%.

This was taken to a full stewards meeting. There Adams' sell-out proposal was decisively lost.

The stewards voted 180-140 for strike action.

But this was not allowed to stand in the way of Adams' determined moves to knife a

strike.

At the mass meeting Adams refused to put the decision of the stewards and instead pushed the convenors conference recommendation for acceptance.

Even after he had done his best to secure a no-strike decision the vote at the meeting has been hotly disputed. Many workers who watched TV film of the meeting were convinced that the vote went in favour of strike action—with thousands of workers brushing aside Adams' pleas that they would be "isolated" and defeated if they went on strike.

Adams' treachery tipped the scales in BL as a whole—producing a result claimed to be 2-1 against strike action.

This was a majority big enough to make action by an individual plant extremely difficult.

In the Cowley Assembly Plant a final mass meeting was held at which workers voted to step up the struggle for democracy in BL and to meet again if their proposals for reform of the bargaining procedures are not accepted.

Humiliating

Once again Edwardes has used the apparatus of the trade union bureaucracy to railroad through a humiliating sell-out on wages.

But this year, more openly than ever before, the union officials have had to lean for support upon the involvement of convenors—and, key to their whole success, upon "Communist" Jack Adams.

Thousands of Longbridge workers saw and voted against Adams' treacherous line at the final mass meeting: millions witnessed his betrayal on their TV screens.

The fight for new leadership in BL—so crucial if further sell-outs are to be avoided—means a fight not only against General Secretaries, national officials and the right wing: it means a fight against the Communist Party and its conscious opposition to mass struggle to bring down Thatcher.

The CP's "peaceful road" to socialism means in BL full-scale collaboration with Edwardes and his Tory paymasters.

Only a revolutionary road, based on defence of workers' independent interests, can offer a way forward for BL workers.

Building such a leadership is the task undertaken by the Workers Socialist League.

Capitalist dinosaurs see red

All those who argue that change is a slow process of gradual, peaceful transition should keep well away from the Natural History Museum in Kensington in future.

For the new exhibition entitled 'Man's place in evolution' carefully stamps on the most cherished beliefs of all those reformists who saw the theory of evolution as proof in nature of what they preached about politics and society.

Instead of a nice gradual process of slow changes as the years pass by, the exhibition challenges us to accept what all the recent evidence indicated. That changes in nature—as in society—are sudden and sharp involving major breaks with the past and massive leaps into the future.

Man did not, for example, the exhibition suggests, evolve in a nice, simple straight line from the apes.

As the handbook puts it: "It is axiomatic, therefore, that no species in the fossil record can be considered as ancestral to any other, nor can any one species evolve directly into another."

Instead, what happened was that at certain points there were sudden breaks, major qualitative changes leading to a new stage.

This is reflected in the revised 'tree of evolution' on display which has branches breaking off at sharp angles representing these sudden violent breaks into new direc-

Colin Morrow reviews the new exhibition 'Man's Place in Evolution' at the Natural History Museum in Kensington.

tions, the emergence of new stages.

Evolution is thus seen in practice as a process of revolutionary changes.

None of this is, of course, new to Marxists who have argued, since the publication of Engels' 'Dialectics of Nature' for such a materialist understanding of nature as a process.

What is interesting is the response of the bourgeois academic world to this assault on their treasured picture of the world.

In the 1950s when 'heretics' like Immanuel Velikovsky in America attempted to argue that the history of man and the very earth itself was one of cataclysmic change not gradual evolution, the response was simply dismissive.

When Velikovsky argued that the processes of nature "are certainly not inert and are marked by spontaneity and conflict" and went on to point out in his book *Earth in Upheaval* that:

"facts have presented themselves that do not square with the picture of a peaceful world

moulded in a slow and uneventful process", he was ridiculed as a crank and an ignoramus.

But now that such ideas have gained an audience and are publicly counterposed to the prevailing bourgeois "truth", the politics behind the objections comes out.

Thus, in a letter to *Nature* magazine, Dr. Vivien Halstead has argued that if the view of evolution and natural history now on display at the museum becomes accepted it will encourage the revolutionary view of how societies change!

Bourgeois "knowledge" is, therefore, reduced to what Marxists always claimed it to be—the official ideas of the ruling class.

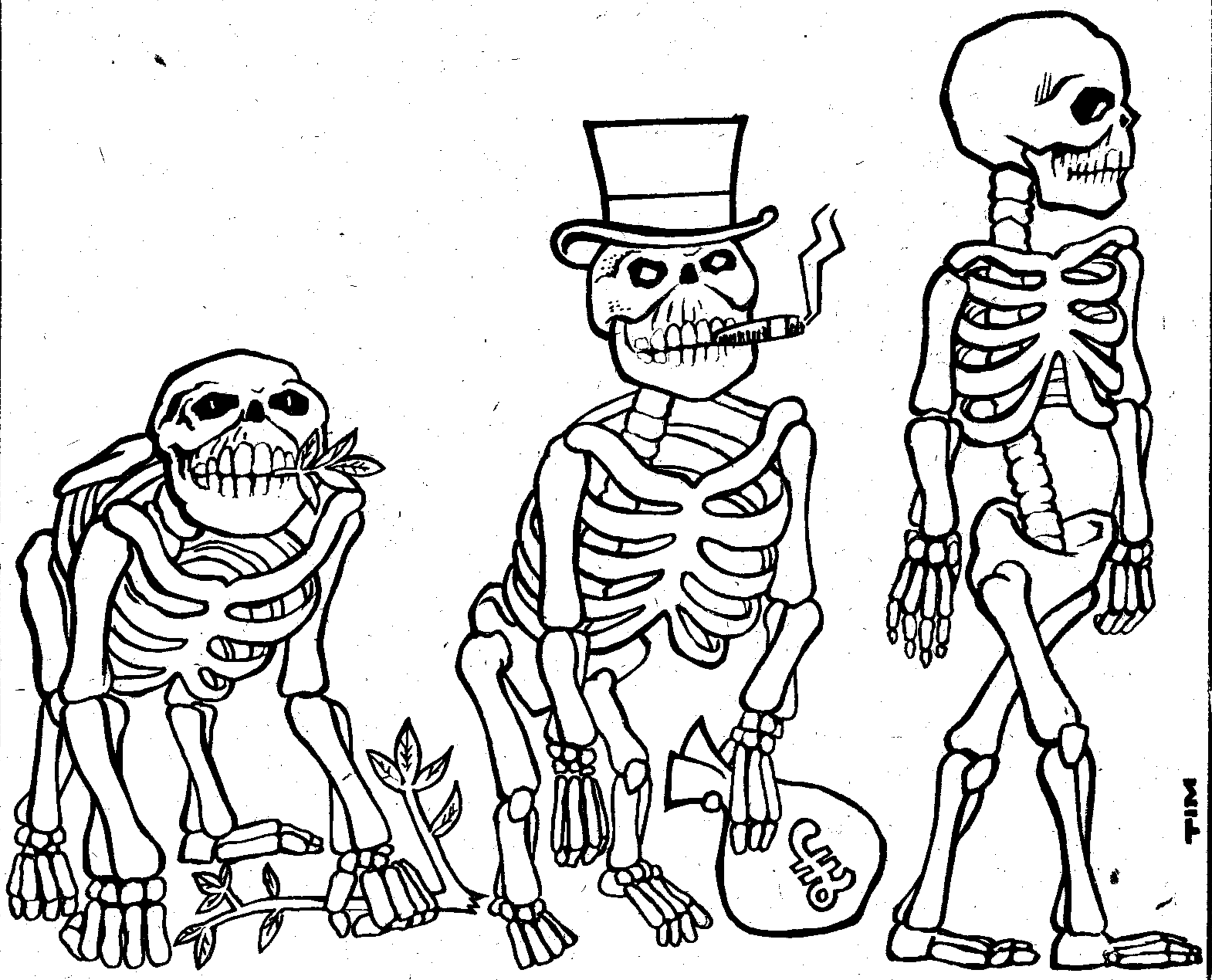
For Halstead and his ilk what matters is not historical fact but political continuity!

Unfortunately, as information has accumulated on evolution, on the ice ages, on geological change, on the reversals of the earth's polarity, and on the history of man's own struggle against nature, what has become abundantly clear is the contradictory nature of our world and its revolutionary past.

As Velikovsky has commented:

"The past of mankind, and of the animal and plant kingdoms, too, must now be viewed in the light of the experience of Hiroshima and no longer from the portholes of the Beagle."

Perhaps the capitalist dinosaur, alarmed enough at what was seen by Darwin from the portholes of the Beagle, now scents its own extinction.



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OUR PROBLEM LEADERS WHO WON'T LEAD... and blame us!



Scots tenants angry

Scottish Office Minister Malcolm Rifkind had to run the gauntlet of angry pickets the other week as he made his way to a major housing forum.

The pickets representing city tenants' associations, called for

radical changes in the government's housing policy—and more money for Glasgow.

In an angry exchange with Scottish Tenants Organisation secretary Frances Hamilton, Rifkind said council houses were being sold because people wanted to buy them—and not because of government policy.

Hamilton had urged the Minister to consider the housing cuts and try to channel more money to resolve the problems of Glasgow's housing.

One picket called for a cure for damp houses and urged Mr Rifkind to 'live in one for a week and see what it's like'. Glasgow District Councillor Dave Wiseman then challenged Rifkind to an open debate in his ward on the condition of houses. But he declined this request.

On hearing this some of the people who had been standing in freezing weather had to be held back from expressing their views more forcibly.

Rifkind made his way into the housing forum being held in the Mitchell Centre, Glasgow.

Ms Hamilton said later: "We aim to protect tenants throughout Scotland, and it is only with action like this that we can make ourselves heard".

Castlemilk Tenants Association secretary Iris McDonald echoed the protestors' feelings when she said:

"This whole thing is just a talking shop—it will achieve nothing for the people who really need help."

She added: "It will cost £140 million to cure Glasgow's housing dampness problems. So far, only £1.2 million has been allocated for housing—and we have forums like this".

Tenants' anger, like that of Scotland's growing army of unemployed, must be directed towards mass action alongside the firemen and other sections of the trade unions to bring down the Tory government.

EIS yes to alliance

The EIS, Scotland's biggest teachers' union, meeting in Glasgow last weekend took a significant step forward with its decision to commit itself to a public sector alliance to break the government's 6% pay limit.

The conference marked a serious blow to the right wing in the EIS executive, with the defeat of their proposals for a permanent pay review body, formal links with the British NUT and the retention of compulsory arbitration.

Fragmented

Unfortunately, left opposition remains fragmented with as many as three rank-and-file candidates in some regions. In fact only on the principle of open campaigning has agreement been reached (excluding the CP who confined themselves to the rules).

The SWP constitute the strongest challenge within the EETPU although they see the candidate as the property of the rank and file movement—presumably the political programme is not as important as 'unity at all costs'!

Nevertheless it is essential that all rank and file members vote against Chapple's nominees.

Kick out the right wing!

Officials

All 120 full-time officers from National to Branch are appointed to function as directed by the Executive.

They are not accountable to the 450,000-strong rank and file.

National conference resolutions are contemptuously flouted as insignificant.

Militant branches such as Cardiff and Birmingham have experienced bureaucratic closure with elected members banned from holding office.

Candidates for this year's executive election have not escaped obstruction. An executive circular claims to re-interpret the rules.

It states that: "No branch can invite a candidate; no candidate can visit plants, sites or industrial committees to electioneer; no member or member's supporters can send circulars, leaflets or letters on his behalf. No candidate can give interviews to the press."

To ignore this dictate runs the risk of the candidate being

A chance to vote against Chapple's men

160,000 members of the electricians' union EETPU are entitled to vote in the important Executive Council elections currently under way.

Electrical and Plumbing are the sections involved with five out of 15 council seats falling vacant together so this vote actually covers one-third of the membership.

With just one executive vote every five years an even greater urgency exists for the rank and file to kick Chapple and his 'gang of 13' out of office.

Chapple nominees are as follows:

Merseyside: T. Breakell, (President EETPU); East Anglia and London: E. Clayton; South London and South East: E. Hammond (executive member who organised scabbing against the Isle of Grain picket); South

England Plumbers: W. Gannon; Scottish Plumbers: H. Barlow.

All the above named must be opposed. EETPU members must grasp this opportunity and decisively reject Frank Chapple and his right wing clique on the executive.

Today workers seeking to safeguard their independent political and economic interests face an unprecedented dual assault.

Not just from Thatcher's government of the rich, ruthlessly fueling inflation and unemployment but from union autocrats like Chapple who have junked any pretence to representing organised labour by the sheer magnitude of their betrayals.

That's why he: *Branded striking hospital workers as "terrorists" during their low pay strikes of 1978.

*Effectively broke the

Confed engineering strike in 1979 by a threatened ballot of EETPU members at the very point the employer was caving in.

*Initiated elitist private health-care for some higher grades—adding further to the demise of the NHS.

*Encouraged scabbing at the Isle of Grain so smashing the GMWU strike that promised to defeat the employer.

*During the marathon steel strike vetoed the right of 10,000 electricians to £1.8 million in strike pay.

Chapple has also declared his commitment to five years of Thatcherism even to the extent of circularising union members not to support the TUC's May 14 'Day of Action' while under Callaghan's Labour government he signed the Concordat as a 'dry run' for Prior's notorious

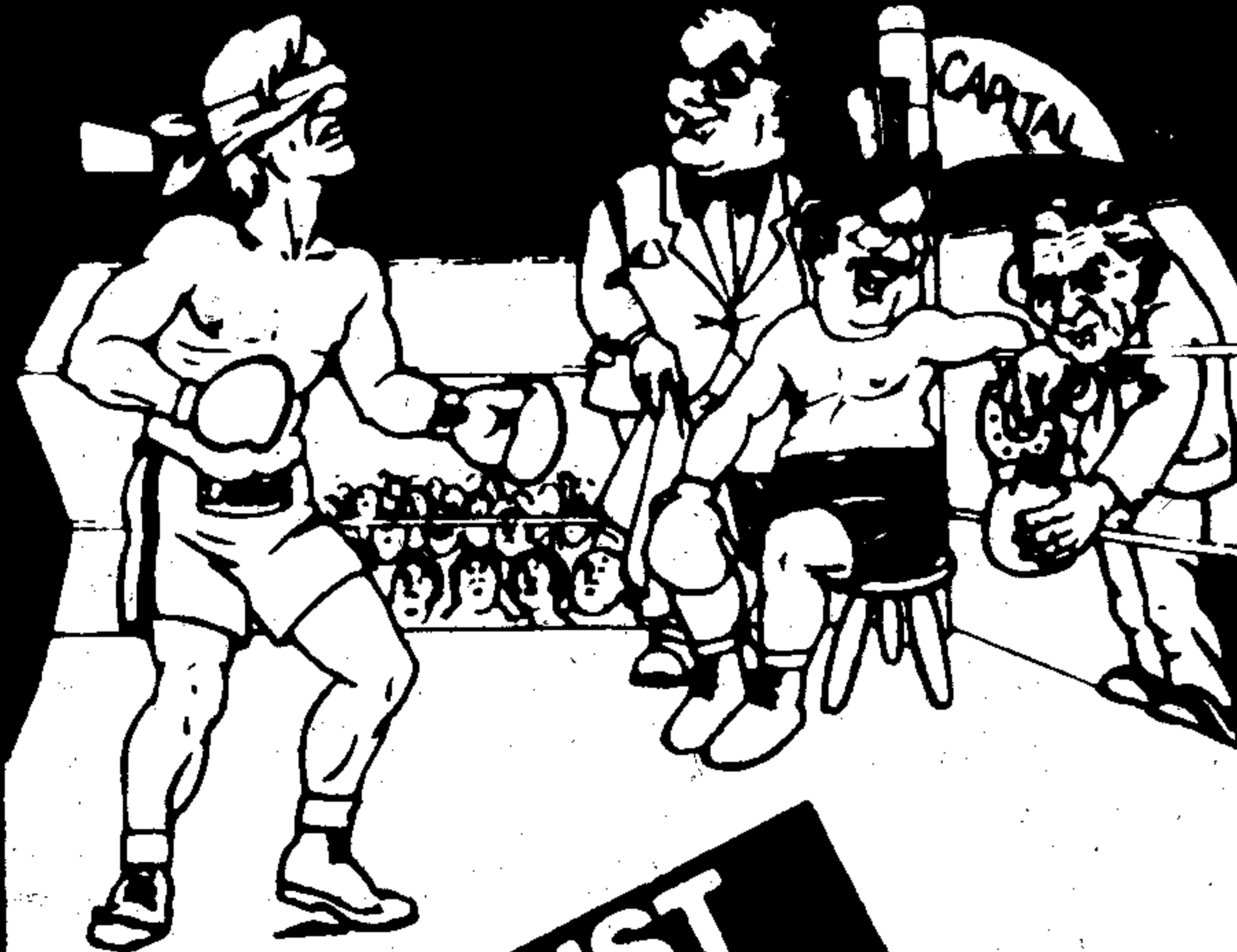
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With workers by the thousand taking to the streets to oppose Tory policies there is plainly no lack of militancy in the organised working class.

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

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

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

economy on a world scale offers a way forward.

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

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

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

degenerated workers' states.

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

Please send me more details of the Workers Socialist League.

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Ford workers' 3-way fight

Workers at Fords principal plants—Dagenham, Halewood and Swansea—have all voted heavily for rejection of the company's miserable 9.5% pay offer.

But as in the recent BL pay fight they may find that the biggest hurdle to strike action is still in front of them.

Firstly, the negotiators have been deliberately seeking a vote simply on the offer and not on the question of a strike.

This leaves them maximum room for manoeuvre once the vote has gone for rejection.

Secondly, Terry Duffy is only one of the union leaders involved who has attempted to head further negotiations away from the issue of wages onto the question of hours.

The wage offer, he has said, is satisfactory, since Fords have already offered more than BL: workers are voting not for more money but for shorter hours.

Duffy and others plainly hope to squeeze a small concession from Fords—possibly the offer of a one-hour reduction in the working week next year, in line with the Confed national

settlement—in order to present a "victory" to the members and conclude a squalid deal on pay.

Union negotiators have already offered to trade concessions on productivity and moves to crush unofficial strikes in exchange for discussions on shorter hours and pensions.

In other words they are offering to sell the jobs and conditions of their members for a few extra odds and ends to disguise their own refusal to fight for a claim to match the 16% rise in the cost of living.

While the bureaucrats wheel and deal, the refusal of Ford shop floor workers to brook any attacks on their conditions has been underlined by last week's struggles at Halewood which flow from the firm's new disciplinary code.

Ford workers face a fight on all fronts: against a government snatching pay from their wage packets while prices rip; against a management determined to screw more effort from them to increase Fords profits; and against union leaders more sympathetic to the plight of the company than the plight of their members.

GARDNERS WIN PARTIAL VICTORY

2,400 workers who had been occupying the Gardners' diesel engine factory in Manchester for the past seven weeks voted last week to return to work on terms which they regard as a major victory in the fight against unemployment.

As a result of the militancy and determination of the occupation, management has withdrawn the 590 redundancy notices it had issued to workers—including those issued to convenor Tom Macafee and several shop stewards.

But in return for this concession, the unions have agreed to the loss of 300 jobs through voluntary redundancies and early retirement over the next three months.

And there is the likelihood of short-time working subsequently, under the Tories' short-time working subsidies scheme.

The whole position will be reviewed next September.

It is not clear at this stage whether any concessions have been made on the wage claim which sparked off the

company's initial threats to sack 700 workers and the notices to 590 workers.

But militancy and confidence among Gardners workers plainly remains high: there has already been a protest stoppage over bonus payments since the return to work.

However the fact remains that while the sackings have been minimised by the struggle and 275 workers have thereby won a reprieve, 300 jobs have still been lost at Gardners.

Even spokesmen for the occupation were heard to call for early retirement and voluntary redundancies as a solution to the dispute as they toured seeking support for the struggle. Such talk is dangerous and diversionary.

Fight redundancies

The Gardners experience has shown that it is possible to fight redundancies by factory occupation: but it has also emphasised the need for a political fight

within each occupation to develop the awareness of workers that every job must be defended.

Every job "sold" through voluntary redundancy or early retirement is a job lost to the whole working class.

The overwhelming support from the labour movement—over £40,000 was raised in 7 weeks—is an indication that tens of thousands of workers are looking for precisely such a lead in the fight to defend jobs.

Backing for "no cuts" policy

In Lambeth, the Labour council has adopted a policy of refusing to make any cuts in spending.

Speaking at a public meeting in Leicester, Lambeth council leader Ted Knight said:

"We intend to prepare our budget on the basis of financing all existing services.

We will make clear the position that the Tory government has put us in. But we will want support."

Lambeth council clearly has considerable support. At the last meeting of the Lambeth Steering Committee it was announced that the Direct Labour force is calling strike action for two weeks from February 2 in opposition to Tory spending cuts.

Backing

This call won immediate backing from Lambeth GMWU members, AUEW local authority employees and TGWU stewards. Now a mass meeting of NALGO workers has voted overwhelmingly to back the strike from February 2.

Knight pointed out that the councillors, too, would be part of the fight:

"We will shut down Lambeth council. As far as I'm concerned, all doors will be locked."

The Lambeth Steering Committee passed a resolution sup-

porting this important step and urging other sections of workers throughout the country to take similar initiatives, particularly by calling supporting strikes in February.

Already there are moves by the direct labour workforce in Camden to follow the Lambeth lead, and moves towards similar action in Lewisham.

The fight for a full-scale public sector stoppage on February 2 will clearly be a central theme of the recalled Lambeth conference, scheduled for January 17 in London.

Resolution

In the meantime Knight will move a resolution at the Special Labour Party Conference calling on the Party's National Executive to lead a fight against the Tories, to back Labour councils that refuse to carry out the cuts, and to give its support to the January 17 conference.

We urge all Socialist Press readers to campaign for maximum support to the Lambeth conference and the February 2 strike.

Further details of the Lambeth campaign and the recall conference, and requests for speakers from the Steering Committee to attend local meetings should be addressed to: Local Government in Crisis Steering Group, c/o Room 103, Lambeth Town Hall, Brixton Hill, London SW2 1RW. Tel. 01-274 7722 Ext. 2066.

Jobs won back

700 workers at the Manchester Housing department have defeated management victimisation of ten members sacked for implementing their unions' "no cover" policy.

The ten workers have been reinstated. But union officials have accepted management's right to ride roughshod over the no-cover action jointly implemented by NUPE, NALGO and MATSA.

The three week dispute—which mobilised a 3,000-strong march through Manchester on a working day—has thus ended with nothing resolved.

The fight against the cuts must be pressed home in Manchester as in every other area by an alliance of public sector workers in all-out action to defend jobs and services.

Defend anti-fascists

On August 17 150 fascists marched in Nuneaton, protected by the police. The fascists were heavily outnumbered by local trade unionists and anti-fascists.

As a result of the march, eight anti-fascists were arrested for various offences. Their main 'offence' of course was anti-fascism.

Two have already been tried and fined by the courts. There are, however, still six trials outstanding.

The defendants are being tried between November 27 and December 6. There are likely to be heavy fines imposed on them—one has been charged with biting a policeman's thumb.

It is vitally important that the trade union movement rallies to the defence of these people.

The present climate of growing unemployment and mass frustration amongst youth is a fertile breeding ground for fascism—as witness the recent British Movement march.

As the recession deepens, these fascists will come out of the woodwork and try to reach disillusioned youth and workers with their racist and nationalist ideology.

What is needed is a consistent and vigorous workers movement to drive the fascist scum off the streets.

This fight against fascism is inseparably linked to the fight against the Tories and capitalism and the traitors in the Labour and trade union movement who do nothing to lead the working class forward.

Socialist Press readers are urged to fight for donations, and sent money and messages of support to NCARF, 26 Westmorland Avenue, Nuneaton.

Civil servants fight 6%

Tens of thousands of civil servants in towns across the country walked out to stage rallies in working time last week in a protest at the Tory 6% pay limit.

In London, Central Hall, Westminster was unable to accommodate the numbers that arrived. 5,000 packed into the rally—while 1,500 more were diverted to an overflow meeting.

In Cardiff, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Edinburgh and other towns there were similar rallies.

Bill Kendall of the Council of Civil Service Unions declared in Central Hall that "these meetings are the first shots of a protest campaign"—but gave little clue as to what ammunition if any was to be used in the next salvo against the Tories.

He did however offer the damp squib of the civil service unions' High Court case to obtain the findings of the 'independent' Pay Research Unit which would show how far civil servants' pay has fallen behind.

It will also need a bit more than the wrangling of legal eagles to bring a halt to the Tory attacks.

And thousands of angry civil servants appear more than ready to take the necessary action.

Seamen ballot

Seamen will be balloting between December 1-12 on the employers 10.5% offer.

The executive of the NUS has recommended rejection.

But the executive discussed whether industrial action would be part of the ballot and decided against it.

By thus hedging their bets they were plainly doing their best to create conditions for acceptance of an offer which amounts to a savage wage cut for NUS members.

Miners 'yes' to 9.8%

In a pit-head ballot 56% of NUM members have voted for acceptance of the Coal Board's pay offer of 9.8% and improved bonus payments.

Militant areas such as Scotland, Yorkshire and South Wales were unable to swing votes on a broader basis against the NUM Executive's recommendation for acceptance.

Strike averted

But the deal has been widely described in the Tory press as being in excess of 13%. While Thatcher will be delighted that Gormley has helped avert a miners' strike she will be less pleased that these powerful public sector workers have so publicly crashed through the government's 6% pay limit—and will be back again in 10 months time for more!

NEWSLINE BACKS HESELTINE

Although Lambeth Council and its leader Ted Knight are at present in the forefront of the movement to mount a fight against the Tory cuts, the Council has at the same time complied with Heseltine's instruction to sell-off council houses.

Knight and others argue that this was because they knew that the sales would be blocked by the local NALGO branch. Indeed Lambeth NALGO is correctly blocking any work on the sale of council houses—as are NALGO members in other cities.

But they now do so at the risk of their jobs. Socialist Press has argued that Lambeth Council is wrong to decide to sell: and that they should give a lead to other Labour councils by rejecting Heseltine's ultimatum.

A very different stand has

been taken by the Workers, Revolutionary Party and its opportunist daily *Newsline*.

A *Newsline* editorial actually attacks the Socialist Workers Party for fighting to prevent Lambeth Council selling council houses!

SWP members and supporters have played a key role in mobilising resistance in NALGO—which resulted in a mass meeting vote by 1,750 NALGO members to oppose all cuts and maintain the blocking.

And *Socialist Worker* has correctly called on the Lambeth Council to reverse its decision to sell. For the WRP this smacks too strongly of a real fight against the Tories. *Newsline* rushes in to attack the SWP:

"They want the Lambeth Councillors to 'do a Clay Cross' and oppose Heseltine's Act to permit (sic!) the sale of municipal housing. This would land them right into the High Court and thence to more

drastic penalties, even jail. Yet in a letter advocating this suicidal course, the SWP says: 'What is much less clear is whether there is any possibility of fighting back and winning' (!).

In other words, the SWP is barracking from the side lines, trying to force the Lambeth Councillors into a confrontation with the government and the courts which they admit in advance will fail!

This is the height of political irresponsibility. It reflects the minds of middle class political desperados.

In building the mass movement there will be tactical retreats since Labour Councils such as Lambeth are not always able to choose the ground upon which to wage a fight."

In taking this stand the WRP emerge far to the right of Ted Knight and the Lambeth councillors themselves—and

produce an argument custom-built for any and every Labour traitor wishing to excuse his or herself for carrying out cuts!

We should remember that the Clay Cross struggle—strongly and correctly supported by the WRP at the time—focussed on defiance of the Heath government's massive rent increases.

£3 rent increase

So where will the WRP now stand on the imposition by Labour councils of Heseltine's latest £3 rent increase? Will they recommend yet another "tactical retreat"?

We say that the demand should be for Labour councillors to refuse to implement any Tory cuts.

Every worker faces the sack or imprisonment if they fight the Tories. Why is *Newsline* so anxious to let Labour councillors off the hook?

SOCIALIST PRESS



The strikers no union leader will support



Firemen on the march 1977

BOSSSES SEEK WAY OUT OF FBU STRIKE

As we go to press, firemen are preparing for the first of the planned one-day stoppages in support of their pay agreement.

Unlike their previous struggle, they have this time been assured of full backing from the TUC and from the fire officers' union.

The FBU Executive is mandated to call a series of one-day strikes as part of the fight to force the employers to honour the pay deal which ended the bitter 9-week pay strike of 1977-78.

Under that deal firefighters' pay is annually adjusted to keep in line with the "upper quartile" average male industrial earnings.

The resulting increase this year would be 18.8%. But Tory cash limits mean that councils have offered the firemen no more than a miserable 6% increase—in clear breach of that agreement.

But some of the employers are plainly reluctant to engage in a protracted and potentially expensive struggle with the FBU

—using antique Green Goddesses on standby at a cost of £1 million per day.

They are still debating how best to defuse the situation as we go to press, while the FBU Executive waits at the Cora Hotel for a phone call to summon them to further talks.

Not negotiable

FBU members have made it clear that in their view the 18.8% figure, embodied in a hard-won agreement, is not negotiable.

Yet the *Financial Times* is speculating that a body of employers may be ready to pay the full amount—provided the FBU leaders agree to loss of jobs through manning cuts.

There are other reports carefully "leaked" that suggest a compromise offer of around 15%.

In either case such offers should be rejected out of hand.

On the one hand a lesser pay settlement would signify the end of the 1978 agreement.

On the other hand, the FBU has consistently refused to discuss the issue of manning levels and the other issues of 'productivity' covered in the government's new Green Paper, as part of the pay negotiations.

The Green Paper proposes cuts in manning at fire stations and reduced attendance at fires and road traffic accidents.

In itself this is a whole new attack on firemen. But in any case such matters are discussed

at national level with the Home Secretary and the Central Fire Brigades Advisory Council, not with local management. And the FBU EC is already committed to a campaign against the proposals.

The Green Paper stands as a threat to firemen over and above the present dispute on pay.

The one-day strikes must be seen as a preparation to all-out action in defence of the pay agreement.

With the issue of pay settled the fight to defend jobs and existing levels of service must be carried through.

Meanwhile the scandalous moves by local authority union negotiators to hold up their own pay talks until after the FBU claim is settled must be vocally exposed and fought.

The maximum possible united action is necessary to defeat the Thatcher offensive on public sector workers.

Like any other strikers, they are insulted and reviled each day in the pages of the *Tory press*.

Like any other strikers, their grievances and demands are distorted or ignored by the media.

Like any other strikers, they face vicious attacks not only from the *Tory government* but also from reactionary Labour MPs and other bureaucrats within the workers' movement.

But unlike other strikers the struggle of the Irish republican hunger strikers is literally one involving life and death. Either they succeed in their demand for the restoration of privileges attached to recognition of their status as political prisoners, or they will be dead within weeks.

And unlike many other strikers, the hunger strikers can feel no confidence that their struggle will receive broad solidarity from the rank and file of the British working class.

The seven Long Kesh hunger strikers—John Nixon, Tom Feeley, Brendan Hughes, Tommy McKearney, Sean McKenna, Raymond McCartney and Leo Green—are now in their fifth week of refusal to take anything but salt and water.

They are growing rapidly weaker, and will soon be on the critical list.

Women prisoners

On December 1 they were joined in their hunger strike by three courageous republican women prisoners from Armagh Gaol, where the 'dirty' protest by women in support of political status has taken place alongside the more publicised 'blanket' protest by the men of Long Kesh.

At the same time Pauline McLaughlin, a young prisoner from Armagh, remains critically ill, her weight down to just over four stone. She is not in hospital but in a prison cell, denied

DEMONSTRATION
Political status now!
Troops out of Ireland!
Sunday 7 December
Assemble 1.00 p.m.
Speakers Corner

medical treatment.

Yet the British labour movement—misled by the mass media and by its own bureaucratic leaders—has been agonisingly slow to respond to the demands of the Irish prisoners for solidarity and support.

The prisoners are the victims of British military repression in the six counties of Northern Ireland. Their "crime" is to struggle to drive out a foreign army of occupation from their homeland and fight for the democratic right of the Irish people to determine their own political future.

Political courts

They have been seized by political police, subjected to political torture and interrogation; tried by political, no-jury courts; and sentenced to confinement in the Long Kesh concentration camp for political prisoners.

Yet *Tory* torture chief Atkins, like his savage Labour predecessor Mason, claims that they are no more than common criminals. And in this way they have tried to crush their resistance.

The prisoners have fought for four years for the restoration of PoW status. They have refused to wear prison clothing or do prison work. In return they have been subjected to untold violence, intimidation and deprivation. They have had enough.

The hunger strikes have now become a focus for resistance to British imperialism in Ireland. Mass demonstrations have been held throughout the six counties and in the South. Token strikes have been held. The oppressed Catholic minority is taking to the streets in their support.

Yet in Britain only 2,000 turned out on the November 15 demonstration for a British withdrawal from Ireland. Trade union and Labour leaders were conspicuous by their absence.

This Sunday a further demonstration has been called in London, specifically in support of the hunger strikers. It must be supported.

Be there! Bring your banners! Bring your union leaders! Bring your Labour MP!

And if they're not there, demand to know why they support Thatcher's war against the Irish people.

*Support the hunger strikers!

*PoW status now!

*Troops out of Ireland now!

*Self determination for the Irish people!

FUND

£10 from an 89-year old Surrey pensioner; £5 from a Worcester reader and £325 from the Oxford WSL Bazaar (with thanks due to all those involved in this splendid effort) has pushed our total to £1157.65 out of our target of £1500. This leaves us £342.35 to raise by the WSL 6th Anniversary Rally next Sunday 6 December.

So if we are to be able to announce by the end of the collection at that rally that we have gone well over the top in our fund drive we still need our readers and supporters to send us some money in the next few days.

We'll all be spending lots of money on ourselves in the next few weeks as the Christmas Holiday approaches so let's make sure we don't forget to send a little something to the Socialist Press Special Fund first.

Our address is:

Socialist Press Special Fund
BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX

Advance notice

SOCIALIST YOUTH LEAGUE

BIRMINGHAM

Rally and dance

Four live bands

Saturday December 20
Digbeth Civic Hall

More details next week

See the new film on H Block

at the
Workers Socialist League



plus the film on Bolivia, 'The Courage of the People'.

RALLY

Speakers from Woman Worker, Red Youth, Trotskyist International Liaison Committee and Workers Socialist League.

Saturday December 6 at 2.30 p.m.
New Ambassadors Hotel, Upper Woburn Place, London WC1
Tickets at door £1.50