

# SOCIALIST PRESS



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Affiliated to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee

## Tenants organise

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## BL stewards sold out

The rigged "inquiry" into the victimisation of 8 Metro line workers at BL's Longbridge plant has produced the predicted "guilty" verdict against all four shop stewards involved.

As a token show of "justice" the joint management/union team, headed by an ACAS chairman, found that in one case there was "reasonable doubt" as to whether management evidence was valid, and in one other there was a basis for "further investigation".

Neither of these two is a shop steward—and one is the only AUEW member involved.

The inquiry itself was a travesty. AUEW representative Ron Povey was expected to echo Terry Duffy's position of branding the victims guilty and opposing action in their defence.

But in the event Povey was more sympathetic than TGWU official Doug Fairburn, whose questions to his own victimised members were described as "worse than management".

In the end the "joint team" was unanimous in declaring that "their review of the evidence did not enable them to find any reasonable doubt" as to the validity of the management case.

Fairburn, indeed, failed even to fulfil his mandate to press the ACAS chairman to declare his position on the evidence.

His conduct is censured in a resolution sent by the Longbridge Works Committee to the TGWU Executive.

The Works Committee has also called a Joint Shop Stewards meeting for tomorrow morning to adopt a recommended policy that will be put to a meeting of all 1500 Metro workers later in the week.

Meanwhile a national labour movement conference to discuss the lessons of the Longbridge victimisation and campaign for defence of shop stewards has been called.

As one victimised steward, Roy Orchard, a member of the TGWU Automotive National Committee, told *Socialist Press*: "We must tell our movement that trade unions should never again allow themselves to fall into the trap of that kind of inquiry."

The only place where real justice can be found and protection of trade union principles can take place is on the shop floor."

Join the fight for these principles. Support the Longbridge conference!

**Longbridge 8  
CONFERENCE**  
Saturday 14 February  
2.00 p.m. to 5.00 p.m.  
Dr. Johnson House,  
Colmore Circus, Queensway  
Birmingham  
Open to all trade unionists  
and Labour Party members

# WEMBLEY NOT FINAL!

Last week's defeat for the right wing in the Labour Party was not so much the final whistle as the signal for the start of injury time.

Even as Labour's rank and file celebrated the extension of the franchise for the election of the Party leader, right wing union leaders and MPs were plotting to overturn the decision of the historic Wembley conference.

150 MPs—including members of the "left wing" Tribune Group—signed a statement opposing the electoral college established at Wembley.

The 260-strong Parliamentary Labour Party was allocated a generous 30% say in the election of the leader of a party with 600,000 card carrying members and seven million affiliated trade unionists.

## Not enough!

But MPs claim this is not enough! Spearheading their resistance is Deputy Leader Dennis Healey. Behind him have come Party leader Michael Foot and the entire Shadow Cabinet—which includes Tribune Neil Kinnock.

The MPs have been supported by declarations from union leaders like Duffy, Basnett and Weighell that they will use their block votes at the October conference to prevent block votes being used to elect the party leader!

Of course not even Shirley Williams has ever bothered to complain that she has been reelected to the NEC each year by union block votes, or that block votes are cast time and again to defeat socialist policies and obstruct democratic reforms.

It is only now, when the Party rank and file is seeking ways and means to bring its political leaders under control, make them accountable to the movement that gets them elected, and spell out policies for them to adopt, that the right wing bleats about the block vote.

## Contempt

There is no doubt that many TUC leaders and most Labour MPs are determined to fight for a reversal of the Wembley decisions.

In doing so they declare their complete contempt for the membership of the Party at a time when anger at the Tory government has combined with

fury at the betrayals of the Callaghan-Wilson governments to produce a growing left wing within the whole British labour movement, and in particular the Labour Party.

This is why only the most fanatical TUC right wingers and MPs can now even hope to eradicate the electoral college altogether.

They are forced to seek no more than to revert to the 50-25-25 formula which was defeated at Wembley.

It is these same unfavourable conditions which are accelerating the split by the "Gang of 3" and their Parliamentary hangers-

on. Owen, Rodgers and Williams have insisted they would accept no formula for an electoral college: that it is for them a principle that MPs and the Party leader should be accountable to nobody but themselves. There is now no way that their political co-thinkers can deliver this within the Labour Party.

Angered and embarrassed by the humiliating defeat for their "one man one vote" policy at Wembley, cheered on by the Tory press and by a few thousand middle class letter writers, and perhaps even conned by some of the mutually

contradictory opinion poll estimates of their support, the Gang have lurched further down the road to a split.

Owen has joined Williams in refusing to stand again on a Labour platform; Rodgers has pulled out of the Shadow Cabinet; and Williams, having weathered the attack from Tony Benn at last week's NEC meeting, seems teetering on the edge of resignation.

## Motley crew

And it is a very motley crew indeed that they find gathering



PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

David Basnett

around them in support. Former Labour Foreign Secretary Lord George Brown has been appointed President of the Council for Social Democracy while Dick Taverne, who won and then lost his seat in Lincoln as an "independent" Labour candidate has also declared his support.

Predictably Liberal MPs are calling for an alliance with the Social Democrats and urging them to leave the Labour Party immediately.

And even Tory MP Robert Hicks has suggested that he and up to 20 other Tory MPs might come out in support of the Social Democrats.

## Socialist policies

Whatever they do next, wherever and whenever they go, it is certain that the Labour Party will never be the same again.

Already workers up and down the country are being forced to consider whether they support a fight for socialist policies or the Gang of 3's reactionary "social democratic" platform.

The confusion is heightened at present by the use of the misleading term "Centre"—in much the same way as "moderate" has been used—as a euphemism for "right wing".

The debate will continue—and the fight for genuine alternative policies within the Labour Party must be stepped up.

The removal of some of the most vocal opponents of socialist policies from the Labour Parties will of course leave many right wingers behind.

This is why socialists within the Party must fight not only to defend the gains made at Wembley but also to set in process the fight to remove right wing MPs under the reselection procedure, and spell out the kind of socialist policies necessary for a returned Labour government.

The fight up to the Wembley conference found a useful focus in the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, which formed a united front for the struggle against the right wing.

There is much more mobilising of the rank and file to be done in the next period and work for the Rank and File Mobilising Committee to do.

*Socialist Press* supporters will play both a practical and a political role in developing that fight, as part of the struggle for a principled revolutionary leadership in the working class.





# POLISH DEAL A BLOW AT BUREAUCRATS



Kremlin leader Brezhnev with Poland's Kania

The basis on which the Polish trade union Solidarity called off its threatened one-hour general strike at the weekend represents a further retreat by the ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

The deal falls short of Solidarity's initial demands.

But it does concede that Saturday working be reduced to one Saturday per month instead of the two wanted by the government.

And it does concede to the union the right to publish a weekly newspaper and present a weekly television programme.

The concession on Saturday

working will cause economic problems for the bureaucrats.

But the political threat represented by the free publication of an opposition newspaper and access of critics of the regime to the mass media is far greater.

## Control

The bureaucracy clings to power in Poland not on the basis of ownership of the means of production but simply on its privileged position of control of the nationalised economy and of the apparatus of the police state.

The continued weakening of its police powers and repeated challenges to its control

threaten the regime with the prospect of a direct challenge by the working class for state power.

It is for this reason that concessions which may buy a temporary period of "peace" for the Polish bureaucracy do not necessarily lessen the chances of a Soviet military intervention.

And with the issue of recognition of Rural Solidarity—the peasants and farmworkers' union—still unresolved the period of "peace" may be very temporary indeed.

## Overthrow

Solidarity has secured a partial victory. But only the



Walesa

political overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy by workers in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe can prevent the danger that such partial victories serve as the prelude to a crushing invasion.

## Fight for free press in S. Africa

The 'liberal' press bosses in South Africa have recently closed down two of their 'black' newspapers in the face of government threats to ban them. And in the past month five black journalists—all leading members of the newly-formed Media Workers Association of South Africa (MWASA)—have been banned.

These developments arise in the context of the continuing powerful forward movement of the black working class in general and the militant and united struggles of black newspaper workers and journalists in particular.

### National struggle

The two newspapers closed down—the *Post* and the *Sunday Post*—have been the focus of the national struggle of newspaper workers and journalists for improvements in their conditions of work and recognition of the union MWASA in recent months.

Last August workers and journalists on the two newspapers went on strike for eight days and won improvements in pay and working conditions.

Then at the end of October workers and journalists on the *Post* and several other newspapers organised in MWASA came out on strike in solidarity with striking workmates at the 'coloured' *Cape Herald* newspaper in Cape Town.

The strike lasted eight weeks, affected ten newspapers and completely stopped the production of four others, including the *Post* and *Sunday Post*.

The demands for the immediate improvement of salaries, wages and conditions and for recognition of MWASA were eventually won by the strikers who received widespread support, not only from the black community but from sections of the white journalists as well.

### "Freedom of press"

While the liberal newspaper bosses of the *Argus* and *SAAN* groups spend their lives pontificating about 'freedom of the press' in South Africa, they didn't lift a finger to try and defend their papers against the government's threatened banning.

For now it was their own workers uniting with their journalists in struggles which not only dented their profit rates but also began to threaten their very control of the newspapers themselves.

MWASA, which had been in the forefront of the struggle against the newspaper bosses, embraces both black workers and black professional writers.

The union was instigated by black journalists under the political banner of black consciousness.

### Middle class

The strength of the workers' struggle in South Africa is beginning to make itself felt in the ranks of the black middle class, and accordingly some sections like the journalists, are turning to the working class as the only force for revolutionary change.

If this turn is going to be politically reflected in MWASA, then it must be built as an independent fighting organisation which puts workers interests first and which puts class consciousness before black consciousness.

The closure of the *Post* and *Sunday Post* is first and foremost a threat to the jobs of printworkers and journalists. MWASA must take up the struggle throughout the *Argus* and *SAAN* groups for work-sharing with no loss of pay to defend the threatened jobs.

### Solidarity

And workers and journalists must fight for the continued production of *Post* and *Sunday Post* as well as the lifting of the banning orders on their leaders, through the mobilisation of solidarity strikes and blacking actions throughout the newspaper industry.

It is only on the basis of independent working class mobilisation that the 'freedom' of even the bourgeois press can be defended.

And it is only through the extension of that independent mobilisation, on the basis of a transitional programme of democratic and revolutionary demands, that the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat can be achieved and genuine freedom of the press guaranteed for the masses of South Africa.

**Labour Movement Conference**  
**Media Censorship and Ireland**  
convened by National Union of Journalists  
Saturday February 28  
Birmingham  
Details from Ron Knowles,  
NUJ, 314 Grays Inn Road,  
London WC1.

# ELECTION NO RESPITE FOR ZIONISTS

The final months of the Begin government in Israel will be brought to an end, probably on July 7.

Elections will be held against a background of world record inflation, ministerial corruption, disillusionment with the government at home and abroad, coupled with continued oppression engendering strong resistance from the Palestinians under occupation.

The recent report issued from the World Jewish Congress has rejected the once sacred Zionist premise that Jews abroad should refuse to publicly criticise Israel.

It has repudiated the necessity of Jews emigrating to Israel and condemned the West Bank settlement policy.

This schism between Israel and world Jewry is extremely damaging to the Zionist myth that anti-Jewish racism can only be combated by retreating to Israel and that one can directly equate being Jewish with being Zionist.

The election will almost certainly return a Labour government which may be prepared to withdraw from some parts of the West Bank in order to divide the Arabs.

Such a deal would attempt a cheap economic, pro-imperialist 'solution' to the Palestinian problem and the Israeli defence budget.

Such deals, without regard to the Palestinians' just claim for national self-determination, are a hallmark of the Zionist 'flexibility' of the Israeli Labour Party. Apart from the past responsibility for oppression in Israel and the West Bank, British socialists should recognise a further rightward thrust in the December 1980 Israeli Labour Party manifesto.

Their programme for a Palestinian autonomous zone in the West Bank is built around the 'Allon Plan' involving Israeli withdrawal from the heavily populated Arab areas of the West Bank whilst retaining the security settlements along the Jordan Valley, east Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Latrun salient.

The Palestinian zone would be demilitarized and completely surrounded by Zionist forces linked only by road to Jordan.

All settlements in the areas to be annexed by Israel will be protected as the manifesto clearly states that: "They are essential for Israel's security. Like all other Zionist settlements they constitute educational, social and pioneering achievements and valuable assets in the political struggle for the achievement of peaceful borders. Israel's Labour government will consolidate and develop them."

At a time when the main issue for the bankrupt Begin block is to force through more settlements, prior to July, to prevent any West Bank auton-

omy the full reactionary force of this manifesto is evident.

In line with its policy the Labour Party voted last week in favour of the establishment of two new Israeli settlements—CeKoa Beth and Mitzpali Govrin in the interests of 'security'.

There is no hint in the manifesto of the much boasted legitimate rights of the Palestinians allowed for in the Begin-Sadat agreements under Carter's administration.

It refuses to recognise the Palestinians as a nation... a whole represents a further shift to the right.

Begin's ruling block look set for a smear election campaign ridiculously suggesting that the Labour Party manifesto represents a sell out to the PLO.

Linked to this, the Settlement Minister Sharon has claimed that any attempt to settle by giving up West Bank territory will be resisted and will bring 200,000 Israelis on to the streets.

Whilst it is difficult to assess the seriousness of this claim, the militant Zionist Gush Emunim and Kach settler movements have previously mounted massive 30,000 strong pro-settlement demonstrations.

The Likud government of Begin, as part of its expansionist vision of a 'greater Israel' has constantly funded, supported and armed these movements.

The army also may well side against any attempt to remove settlers. Soldiers who last week surrounded 100 Zionist settlers who had seized a hilltop north

of Jerusalem, issued a statement to the settlers that they would protect them, not eject them.

The latest storm in the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, is over a report that the government has been negotiating a deal with three private building companies involving the exchange of state land in Jerusalem in return for the construction of permanent new houses in the settlements free of charge. Sharon has made similar offers in South Africa provided firms build before the July elections.

Right wing Zionists recognise the dangers that even such a powerless autonomy plan presents, recognising as it does, the nationhood of the Palestinians.

After all, if Hebron and Nablus are recognised as Palestinian, then why not Jaffa or Haifa or Nazareth?

The often quoted Jordanian Option really amounts to a series of versions of the Allon Plan which would be designed to attract King Hussein of Jordan into the 'peace' process and suppress the Palestinian struggle under his pro-imperialist monarchy allied to the reactionary upper class Palestinian 'notables'.

### Recognition

Divisions are evident within the PLO from their base in Lebanon. Although Al Fateh still officially call for a secular democratic state in the whole of Palestine they are prepared to make a deal with the US and Israel for an independent statelet in return for their recognition of the Zionist state. To this end they hope for talks and US recognition.

The popular front politics of the Stalinised PLO have resulted in their close collusion with Fateh. The PFLP, the group behind many of the 1970s hijackings and one which rejects deals with the US and Israel is incapable of recognising the necessity for a class struggle perspective based on the Arab and Israeli working class.

The Israeli CP, Rakah, openly recognise the Zionist state of Israel and see an independent Palestinian statelet as the solution.

These weaknesses highlight the desperate crisis of leadership within the Middle East, a need which can only be met by the growth of Trotskyist influence and programme within the Palestinian and Israeli masses.



Zionist soldier with PLO prisoners



# ITALIAN STALINIST LEADERS BACK STATE REPRESSION

"If you are looking for a mole in the Ministry of Justice we'll give you one with a name and surname: Giovanni D'Urso."

The Red Brigades, who uttered these defiantly mocking and provocative words, on 15 January left their dishevelled "mole", their prisoner of 33 days, tied to the back seat of a stolen Fiat 127 only a stone's throw away from the Ministry of Justice and the headquarters of the Christian Democratic and the Communist Parties.

Giovanni D'Urso, in response to a threat to his life, told the Red Brigades everything he knew about the organisation of Italy's repressive forces.

And this is a lot, since Giovanni D'Urso was one of the heads of the section of the Ministry of Justice responsible for the administration of the special high security prisons in which leaders of the Red Brigades, Prima Linea and other of Italy's guerrilla groups are held.

Two of D'Urso's close colleagues in this work have been assassinated in the last two years.

It is widely believed to have been information provided by D'Urso which led to the assassination on December 31 of General Galvaligi a Carabinieri (para-military police) officer recently given responsibility for the special prisons.

One of the reasons the Red



An assassinated Galvaligi and a captive d'Urso

Brigades gave for releasing D'Urso was his "cooperation with proletarian justice".

The other reasons given were that the Brigades' demands had been met.

In the first place the most detested of the special prisons, Asina, was closed down during the kidnapping.

Second, after a major riot led by Red Brigade prisoners in Trani—one of the other jails—on December 28 had been put down by force, the prisoners committees in Trani and Palmi jails were allowed to pronounce on the fate of D'Urso.

D'Urso's captors had said that he was the prisoner also of

the "terrorist" political prisoners, and after the sentence of death was passed, it was to be the prisoners who decided whether it should be carried out.

The prisoners in Palmi and Trani jails pronounced for leniency in recognition of D'Urso's provision of useful

information.

At the same time the prisoners, through contacts with MPs of the libertarian Radical Party demanded the release from jail of Gianfranco Faina, leader of the Revolutionary Action group who was suffering from lung cancer.

And at the same time they released two communiques for the press justifying the sentence of death on D'Urso and explaining their decision to commute it.

The demand for these communiques to be published by the bourgeois press then became the condition established by D'Urso's captors for his final release.

For a few days in the middle of January the whole of Italy argued about whether the communiques should be published.

## Divided

Italian capitalist society divided at every level. Its main political party the Christian Democrats held out publicly for "firmness" but were internally deeply divided.

The governing coalition was more publicly split between the "doves" of the Socialist Party who published all the Red Brigades' statements in their paper *Avanti* and the Republican Party whose hawkishness towards the Red Brigades was equalled only by the Commun-

ist Party.

The CP even railed against the Christian Democrats for being "soft" on terrorism and particularly denounced the closure of Asina jail.

The Red Brigades also divided the press owners and the journalists.

The statements were published at once by the left dailies *Manifesto* and *Lotta Continua* (which has subsequently ceased publication for lack of funds) as well as *Avanti*.

And in the end several major bourgeois papers also succumbed to the pressure to publish or be responsible for D'Urso's death.

## Grotesque

These included *Il Messaggero* (Rome) and *Il Secolo* (Genoa) but not *La Stampa* (Turin) which is partly owned by Colonel Gaddafi, through his holdings in Fiat, nor the CP papers *L'Unita* and *Paese Sera*.

The journalists' trade unions came out against the refusal to publish but remain divided about what line to take on the case of Mario Scialoja, the journalist on the weekly *L'Espresso*, who was arrested for abetting terrorism after publishing a long interview with the Red Brigades.

Perhaps the most grotesque public divisions provoked by the Red Brigades tactics were those between widows of the victims of Red Brigade assassinations who seemed in widely publicised statements to divide roughly 50-50 between hawks and doves.

In the debate in parliament after D'Urso's release tempers were so frayed that at one point a Communist deputy threw a beer glass at a Radical accusing him of being an agent of the Red Brigades!

Prime Minister Forlani tried to minimise the disorder of the bourgeoisie by saying that the division between hawks and doves was "only natural" and everyone was basically right.

But he knows he can't go on pleasing everyone for long.

And he knows too that despite his panegyric of the government's "firmness" it in fact looked on helplessly in the last six weeks as authority in Italy seemed almost to pass to a group of political prisoners and elusive "terrorists".

It is little wonder that once again major sections of the bourgeoisie continue to lose faith in Italy's parliamentary democracy.

## Serious danger

During the kidnapping, leading generals of the army and the Carabinieri gave addresses to a military college in which they foreshadowed independent action by the armed forces to combat the dangers of "liberalism".

If a military coup is not imminent in Italy it is nonetheless a serious danger facing the working class.

The actions of the Red Brigades expose the pitiful weakness and disunity of the bourgeoisie but they do nothing to prepare the working class and oppressed masses for an alternative solution to that of Christian Democracy or military dictatorship.

The Red Brigades should be defended against the state but politically opposed for this disastrous policy.

But they are not responsible for the fact that the main workers' parties themselves—not only provide no alternative—but in the case of the dominant CP actually vie with the bourgeoisie to see who can be most repressive.

## Catalan CP breaks from 'Eurocommunism'

By 424 votes to 359 the delegates to the Congress of the semi-autonomous Catalan Communist Party (the PSUC—United Socialist Party of Catalonia) have produced a new crisis in Western European Stalinism.

By that margin they abandoned on January 6 the "Euro-communist" line developed in the party by the allies of Santiago Carrillo (Secretary General of the Spanish CP).

### Resigned

They have substituted a hard line pro-Soviet position which was immediately condemned by a special meeting of the executive of the Spanish CP.

But by then the old Euro-communist leaders—Lopez Raimundo, Antoni Gutierrez and Sole Tura—had resigned from the leadership and been replaced by pro-Soviet leaders who have begun a purge of the party.

This bitter blow to the Carrillo group has been to a great extent of their own doing.

They have engaged in the most abject collaboration with the monarchy and the anti-working class policies of the Suarez government.

Many of the rank and file PSUC delegates were voting not so much for a pro-Soviet orientation as against Carrillo's cringing class collaboration and to some extent also against the monarchy.

One resolution called for an autonomous Catalonia in a Spanish republic.

The Eurocommunists' successors do not offer, any more than Moscow does, an alternative pro-working class programme.

But for the time being they have been able to capitalise on rank and file disillusion.

This disillusion is expressed in the declining party membership (reported nearly halved from its peak of 200,000 three years ago); in the financial collapse last year of the CP's daily newspaper *Mundo Obrero*; and in another struggle within the leadership against Carrillo.

The party's economist Ramon Tamames is leading a faction demanding less power concentrated in the hands of the Secretary-General.

Carrillo played a crucial role in exercising control over the working class and holding back its revolutionary impulse in the crucial years after Franco's death.

His colleagues now obviously feel that he has become a less effective counter-revolutionary.

Although he has been badly hurt by these events, it would be premature to pronounce the political death of such an experienced and wily manoeu-

vrer. The decline of the influence of the CP nationally was confirmed last week by the results of the second nationwide trade union elections since the death of Franco.

The elections are held under the official direction of the State.

And the official Ministry of Labour results (contested by the CP-dominated Workers Commissions) show the Workers Commissions getting 30% of the elected delegates compared with 34% in 1978.

The Socialist Party's union the UGT (General Workers Union) got 29% as against 21% last time.

The Catholic USO raised its share from 3% to 9% largely thanks to support from the Suarez government.

But unfortunately for them this vote is still below the 10% needed for USO to participate in state-wide collective bargaining.



Carrillo

## Spanish PM resigns

The resignation of Adolfo Suarez as Prime Minister of Spain has uncovered a seething crisis within the Spanish ruling class.

The departure of Suarez—formerly Secretary of Franco's national "Movement" and later architect of Spain's "opening to democracy"—is still shrouded in mystery.

Suarez has been increasingly criticised from within his party, the Democratic Centre Union (CDU) for ineffective leadership.

As unemployment mounts, the slump deepens, the political crisis in relation to Basque nationalism continues, Suarez has seemed paralysed and incapable of offering any way forward.

His recent initiative in visiting Euskadi (the Basque country) turned out to be a fiasco which provoked widespread strikes and demonstrations and solved nothing.

There is every sign that the sudden cancellation of the Second UCD Congress ten days ago was the result less of the official excuse (transport strikes) than of the leadership's fear that it would degenerate into a Suarez-bashing session.

### Coup

But Suarez himself in his resignation broadcast gave several hints of what may be the real reason for his departure.

He said he did not want, by staying in office, to threaten democracy in Spain and return to the past again.

This has been widely interpreted as a broad hint that senior officers in the armed forces threatened to launch

some kind of coup against Suarez if he didn't resign.

This is consistent with numerous threats made by sections of top military officers in the last four years to seize power and end a situation in which Basque nationalists of ETA have killed over 100 members of the security forces in the last 12 months.

This suggests that the new premier whoever he is will be allowed to take office only on condition that an even more repressive position is taken towards ETA and almost certainly also to the workers' movement and other sections of the mass movement.

The top candidate for the role of replacement premier is Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo—a descendant of the monarchist semi-fascist leader of the Spanish far right in the 1930s who was assassinated four days before the outbreak of the Civil War.

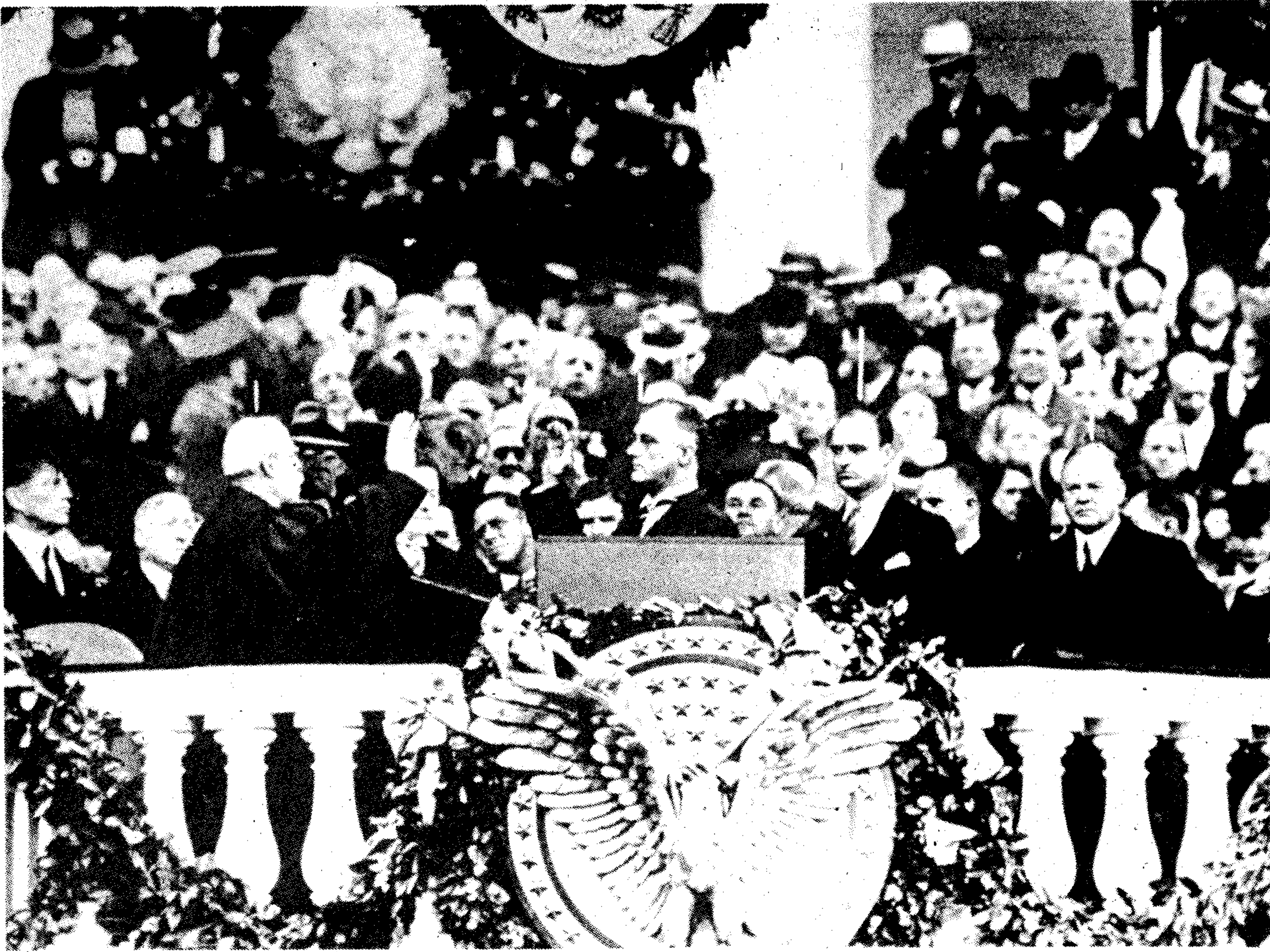
Leopoldo Calvo Sotelo was chief executive of Rio Tinto explosives and is closely allied to the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

But there are few signs that Calvo Sotelo will possess the authority which Suarez has lost and little likelihood that he can reverse the drift of the bourgeoisie.

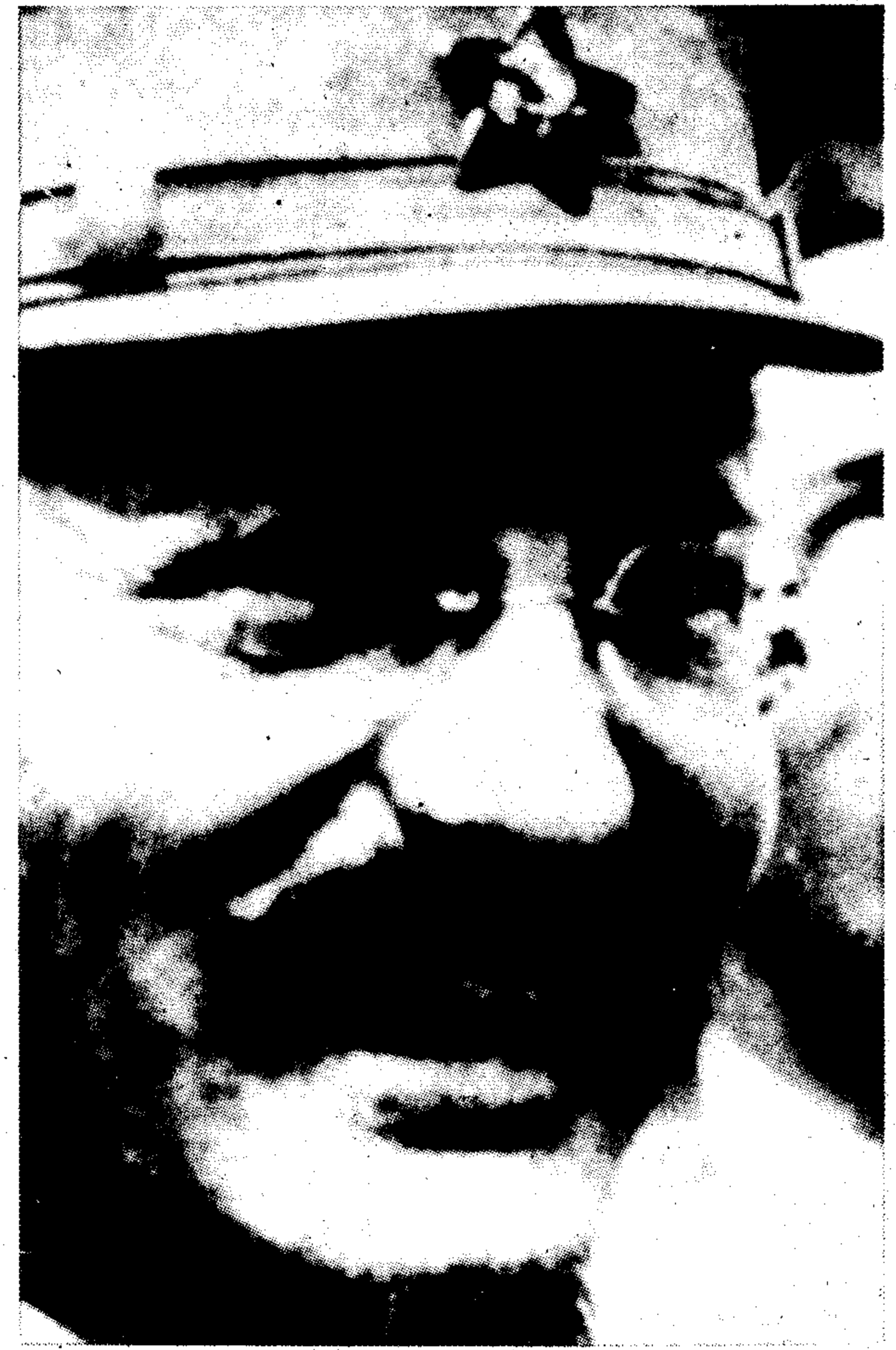
It is even possible he will fail to win a parliamentary vote of confidence in which case the political crisis would rapidly intensify and Spain would be plunged into a general election with no authoritative government.

Given the possibility of a Socialist Party victory the danger of a military coup by the Francoist army would grow rapidly.





Roosevelt takes office in 1933: Stalinists described his New Deal as 'fascist'



Trotsky: fought Third Period sectarianism

# Confusion on nature of new Turkish junta

JACK JOHNSON takes up an important discussion on the character of the military junta which rode to power in Turkey last September.

Part Two

Unlike Spain, which went through a protracted civil war, Mussolini and Hitler built mass civilian fascist movements to achieve the atomisation of the workers' movement.

Drawn from mainly petty bourgeois layers, their use to the bosses was as a force in the factories and on the streets complementing the violence of the state apparatus against the working class.

Like the Grey Wolves of the fascist National Action Party today in Turkey they strove to convince the capitalists at home and abroad that they had the solution to their problems and the capacity to take control of the state.

## "Action"

Their frenzied, ultra-nationalist ideology emphasised 'action' as an alternative to theorising, summed up in Mussolini's phrase "our doctrine is the deed".

His equally clear declaration of preferring 50,000 rifles to twelve million votes testifies to fascism's extra-parliamentary terroristic character—"a species of civil service for the manufacture of obedience."

That does not mean sharp divisions did not exist between fascism and other bourgeois forces or among the fascists themselves.

Hitler's SA militia squads were actually banned by Brüning and the army generals in 1932, and their ultimate integration into the existing state machine led to repeated clashes between 1933 and 1936.

Similarly, the Nazis' anti-capitalist demagoguery and 'socialist' rhetoric was forced to

give way to the realities of state power, purges against fascism's 'left' wing resulted in the liquidation of these forces.

## "One wing"

The method of İscinî Sesi has no time for these objective historical comparisons. To explain the Turkish junta's classically bonapartist 'above classes' stance, bolstered by their arrest, trial and hanging of fascists along with left militants, İscinî Sesi says baldly that Evren is merely "one wing" of fascism and Turkey's NAP is another!

Such disagreements with Trotskyism are not new. They have their roots in the Comintern's ultra-left lurch in the late 1920s.

It meant that the rise of Hitler was actually facilitated by the chronic inability to define accurately either the bourgeoisie or the workers' movement.

Social Democrats were branded as 'social fascist' and the Brüning, Von Papen, Scheider regimes were all regarded as 'fascist'.

It is this same poisoned well of Stalinism from which İscinî Sesi drinks. Let them examine, as victims themselves of Stalinism's contemporary crisis, the ideological debris on which it is built.

After the Comintern's Fifth Congress, all attempts to scientifically define quite diverse political phenomena were abandoned. Under the umbrella of 'fascist' sheltered the Chinese Kuomintang, Peronism, Piłsudski in Poland and a host of others.

At the 13th Plenum in 1933, leading British Stalinist Palme Dutt declared that Roosevelt's 'New Deal' government in the USA was:

"the most advanced example of the classical type of fascist development to be found among the imperialist countries."

İscinî Sesi find themselves in bad company!

Against this can be counterposed Trotsky's struggle to present a revolutionary analysis of fascism:

"At the moment that the 'normal' police and military resources of the bourgeoisie's dictatorship together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie and bands of the declassed and demoralised lumpenproletariat, all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy.

From fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war it insists on having peace for a period of years.

And the fascist agency, by utilising the petty bourgeoisie as a battering ram, by overwhelming all obstacles in its path, does a thorough job. After fascism is victorious finance capital gathers in its hands, as in a vice of steel, directly and immediately, all the organs and institutions of sovereignty.

The executive, administrative and educational power of the state; the entire state apparatus together with the army, the municipalities, the universities, the schools, the press, the trade unions and the cooperatives.

When a state turns fascist it does not mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the pattern set by Mussolini—the

changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role—but it means primarily and above all, that the workers' organisations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallisation of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism." (Our emphasis). (*Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, p.155, Pathfinder edition).

And again in the same article Trotsky insists:

"... in order to find a way out the bourgeoisie must absolutely rid itself of the pressure exerted by the workers' organisations; these must be eliminated, destroyed and utterly crushed.

At this juncture the historic role of fascism begins. It raises to their feet those classes that are immediately above the proletariat and that are even in dread of being forced down into its ranks; it organises and militarises them at the expense of finance capital, under the cover of the official government and directs them to the extirpation of proletarian organisations from the most revolutionary to the most conservative.

Fascism is not merely a system of reprisals, of brutal force and of police terror. Fascism is a particular governmental system based on the uprooting of all elements of proletarian democracy within bourgeois society.

The task of fascism lies not only in destroying the communist vanguard but in holding the entire class in a state of forced disunity. To this end the physical annihilation of the most revolutionary section of

the workers does not suffice.

It is also necessary to smash all independent and voluntary organisations; to demolish all the defensive bulwarks of the proletariat and to uproot whatever has been achieved during three-quarters of a century by the Social Democracy and the trade unions."

*Ibid*, p.114.

Trotsky goes on to show how this analysis was the dominant position within the Comintern before the 'third period':

"The Italian communists, who have had to study the problem of fascism for a long time have protested time and again against the widespread abuse of these concepts.

Formerly, at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, Ercoli (Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Italian CP) was still formulating views on the question of fascism which are now credited as 'Trotskyist'.

Ercoli at that time defined fascism as being the most thorough and uncompromising system of reaction and he explained: "This administration supports itself not by the cruelty of its terroristic acts, not by murdering large numbers of workers and peasants, not by applying on a large scale varied methods of brutal torture, not by the severity of its law courts but its dependence on the systematic annihilation of each and every form of the independent organisation of the masses."

In this Ercoli is absolutely correct. The gist of fascism and its tasks consist in a complete suppression of all workers' organisations and in the prevention of their revival. In a developed capitalist society this goal cannot be achieved by police alone.

There is only one method for it and that is directly opposing the pressure of the proletariat—the moment it weakens—by the pressure of the desperate masses of the petty bourgeoisie. It is this particular system of capitalist reaction that has entered history under the name of fascism."

(*Ibid*, p.150)

This is exactly what makes fascism a distinct type of rule. In order to be able to carry out this 'atomisation' of the working class, fascism must have a mass base, organised and armed.

In Turkey this goal is not accomplished simply by closing the doors of DISK, the independent trade union confederation but by the kind of attacks seen in Izmir early last year. There the DISK organised workers in the TARIS factories were faced with fascist gangs, under the direction of Demirel's Justice Party government, attempting unsuccessfully to physically install the fascist MISK trade union.

Evren's repression is imposed directly through the police/military apparatus not by civilian armed thugs. This does not make it in some way better, any more than to say it is not fascist is to give it anti-fascist credentials.

The point is to accurately draw out the form of rule resorted to by the ruling class, the better to prepare the proletariat to defeat it.

What can be achieved by a fascist dictatorship cannot be accomplished by the military alone. Trotsky makes this point in *Whither France?*:

"The discontent of the workers and peasants however cannot be brought to an end by the police alone. Moreover it is often impossible to make the army march against the people.

It begins by disintegrating and ends with the passage of a large section of the soldiers over to the people's side.

That is why finance capital is obliged to create special armed bands trained to fight the workers just as a certain breed of dog is trained to hunt game."

The common name for fascists in Turkey is also 'dogs' and the last four or five years have seen thousands of workers and revolutionaries slaughtered by the fascists in collaboration with the state.

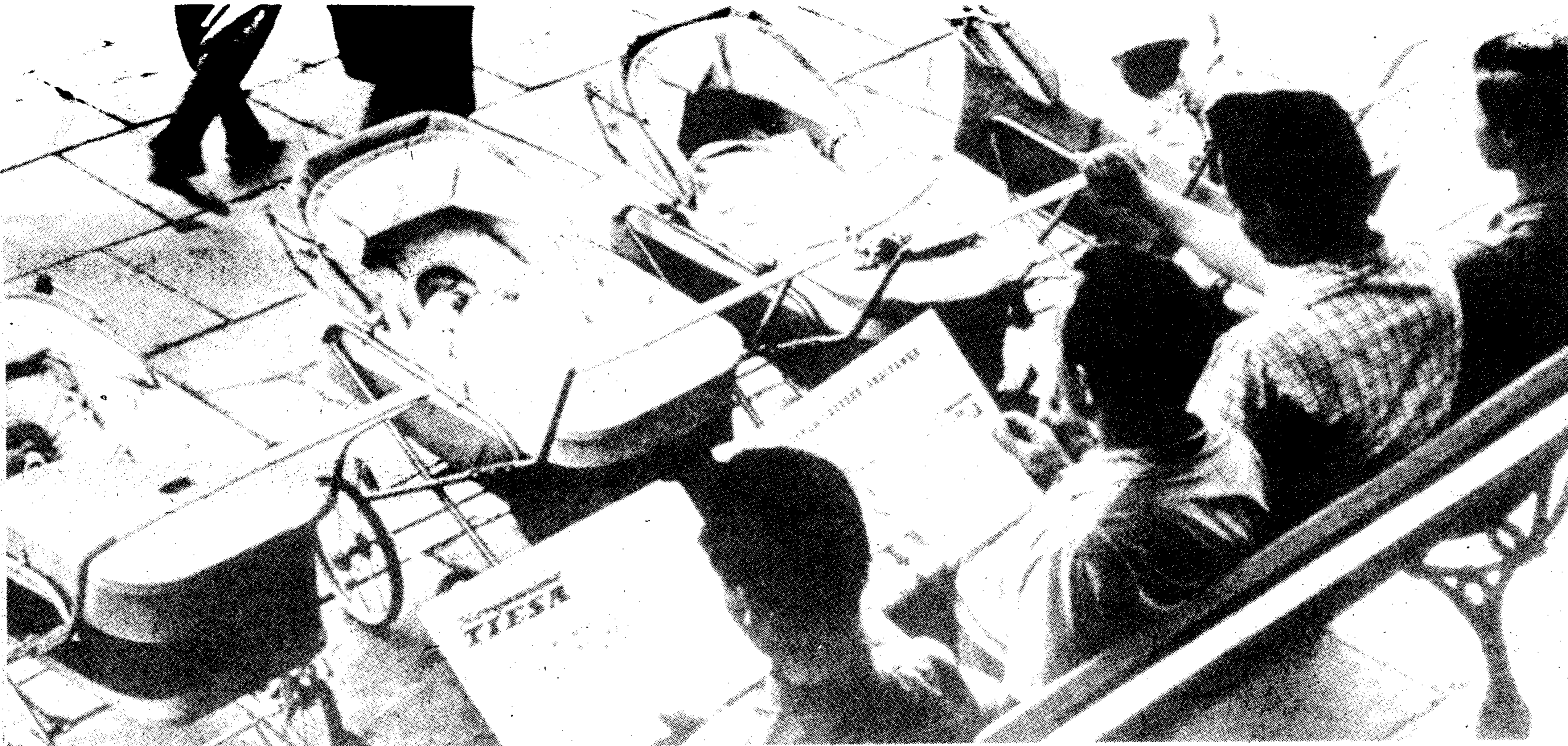
Factories, schools and colleges, villages and whole towns have been taken over by the fascists and 'no go' areas established against the left and even liberals and the RPP.

All this has been central to the growing extension of martial law and the eventual military takeover.

Marxists do not begin from some abstract 'degrees of reaction' of authoritarian regimes, nor is it possible to substitute sociological definitions or moral outrage for class analysis.

Our task is to arm the working class with a precise understanding of its enemies—and İscinî Sesi's failure to do this can only lead to disorientation.





Unconvincing Soviet propaganda photograph: in USSR and in Britain burden of childcare falls mainly on women

# The politics of childcare

Part three of series of articles by Ann McKinley looking at the history and political background to the fight for childcare facilities.

Statistics show that only 5% of all economically active people in this country are married men with two children and a wife not working.

On the other hand the 1971 census revealed that there were 515,000 single parent households, in which there are four times as many women single parents than there are men.

In a 'rational' society where one third of the female labour force are responsible for children the need for provision of child care would be taken for granted.

## Necessity

In 1971, over 3,000,000 working women in Britain were responsible for the care of children under 16; of these, 588,600 women had children under five.

These working mothers—of whom nearly a third work full time—have 821,000 children under five.

The rate of increase in employment for mothers of under-fives has been greater than for all married women under 60. This is because of economic necessity.

The dilemma women found themselves in was expressed in many ways—organising in the trade unions and labour movement and the women's liberation movement, and, for others, suicide, depression, children taken into care.

The movement emerged in the late sixties with small women's groups starting in different parts of the country. The Women's Liberation Workshop was established in 1969 as a co-ordinating centre for these groups.

The local groups began meeting to read, talk and share their experiences as women.

In February 1970 the first and only women's liberation conference was held and attended by 600 women. At the conference it was agreed that the WLM should press for four minimum demands.

- 1) Equal pay for equal work.
- 2) Equal job and educational opportunities.
- 3) Free contraception and abortion on demand.
- 4) Free 24 hour child care facilities.

A year later and the Labour government rushed through the



Women workers at Ford Dagenham vote to accept equal pay settlement

Equal Pay Act in which they settled for a position midway between the demands of the employers and the demands of the TUC.

The demands of the TUC have to be seen in the context that it had been nominally campaigning for equal pay for equal work since 1888!

A month later in June 1970 Labour lost the general election and women were accused of being the contributing factor in electing Heath and the Tories.

In 1972 the Tories seemed aware of women's demands for more nursery provision and presented their White Paper, 'Education, a Framework for Expansion'.

This proposed to provide part time (again!) provision for 75% of four year olds and 35% of three year olds by the early 1980s.

A £30 million building programme was allocated to local authorities in the year 1974-75.

This would have meant 700,000 full time places compared with 300,000 in 1972. But this plan—the first

expansion in 25 years was immediately superceded by the Tory cuts of 1973!

The Finer Report of 1974—produced when the attack was on again—revealed that nearly two-thirds of a million parents were looking after one million children single handed by reasons of death, divorce, separation or birth outside of marriage.

## 'Normal' family

One-parent families were seen as a mutilated form of the 'normal' family. The Finer Report in its recommendations aimed to remove the economic disabilities of one parent families within the structure of present family relationships.

The determination of the bourgeois state to support and retain the family unit is also connected with developing attitudes to child care.

The Labour Government was re-elected in 1974 and the election manifesto promised a massive expansion of nursery provision—including day care

ingredient: an expansion of nursery facilities. In reality what was happening was a continuance of the attacks started by the Tories.

Wilson had added to the problems by recommending that councils should accept children into primary schools in the term after they became five. This was carried out eagerly by both Tory and Labour controlled councils and had the effect of increasing the pressure on already inadequate nursery provision.

The Labour government also continued to cut back on nursery building from £39 million in 1975-6 to a mere £5 million for 1979-81, a cut of 87%!

## Not opened

So huge were the cuts that many local authorities were not even taking up building grants to finance new nurseries since they then faced the expenses of staffing and maintaining them.

In some areas, including Birmingham and Gloucestershire newly built nursery facilities were not being opened because councils would not pay the wages of the staff.

Gloucestershire eventually opened their centres with one trained staff in each one, and relying on voluntary help (the fundraising is mandatory!) from mothers.

Meanwhile, what were the other defenders of the working class—the trade unions and the TUC—doing while this attack was being carried out?

A working party was set up on The Under Fives which produced a 127 page report, published in 1978.

## Recommendations

Its terms of reference were to conduct such an investigation and recommend means of extending provision for the under fives.

But in drawing up its recommendations, the working party concentrated on what *should be*, rather than what was likely to be achieved under the existing Labour leadership:

"We are well aware that a service such as we shall be recommending and indeed any worthwhile improvement in existent provision will require

the allocation of greatly increased resources for this state service."

The working party therefore steered well clear of any practical proposals as to how their schemes should be fought for by the working class.

Despite this criticism the Report (now conveniently out of print) offers a sharp insight into the plight of working mothers under the present lack of nursery facilities when it was written.

Without child care provision the mother is forced to remain in the role of wife/mother, denied financial independence, social status, and contact with the organisations of the working class.

Many women find themselves forced to take on work in the home—childminding being the largest single category.

Such work is non-unionised, uninsured, leaving the individual deprived of sickness and holiday pay, and faced with the costs of using her own home as a business premises. The largely female home-working labour force is known to exceed 250,000.

Surveys in the Report show that many more women would go out to work if child care facilities were available, and that as a result of the present patterns of child care women were increasingly forced to slot into three types of shifts—double day shift, night shift and Sunday work.

## Childminders

The TUC Report also shows that from a mere 500 playgroups in 1965 the figure had mushroomed to 10,000 in 1976, not including those organised by charities such as Save the Children Fund and the NSPCC.

In 1975 there were nearly 30,000 registered childminders, with a further 500,000 children estimated to be in the care of unregistered minders.

The cheapness of this system for employers and the state—childminders are paid by the individual parents—means that the government has encouraged it.

The Report states: "The inadequacies of childminding are glaring and deplorable, and therefore it is highly irresponsible to base child care programmes on an expansion of this facility."

NUPE's views on childminders, whom they are *meant* to organise but never have, is that they should be paid a £30 wage provided by the local education authority and a 40 hour week and that minders will provide a *bank of labour* for a future(?) nursery system.

The Lambeth child minding scheme like others of its kind provided by 'progressive' councils was to pay child minders £6.75 per child minded per week which the council *recouped* from each parent of a minded child as a means-tested fee. Minders and clients suffer from the same exploitation—low pay.

## "Consultative"

The TUC Report in the light of all the evidence makes a long series of "major" and other recommendations, though it is stressed that the document is only a "consultative" document.

The introduction to the Report states that:

"They (the TUC) will give consideration to action on the Report's recommendations after it has been considered and discussed throughout the movement..."

The reality is that it hasn't received the discussion warranted (not from want of trying by many in the trade unions). One of the difficulties is now that the Report is out of print. The consideration for action on the recommendations therefore remains in the bureaucrats' files. Meanwhile the attack continues but not without some response from those it affects most—the women and parents who need the provision, the workers employed in child care about to lose their jobs.

Continued next week



# WOMAN AND RUSSIA

The dissident movements in the USSR communicate with each other and propagate their ideas through the samizdat—documents and magazines circulated in manuscript form.

All sections of the dissidents publish samizdat—from left-wing opponents of Stalinist bureaucracy to extreme right-wing religious nationalists.

Yet it wasn't until December 1979 that an explicitly feminist samizdat journal was produced, under the title "Woman and Russia".

## Banned

There is, of course, no women's movement in the Soviet Union. All political activity not directly controlled by the party is banned, while the party women's sections, the zhenotdel, were abolished by Stalin in 1930 on the grounds that since women's equality was now achieved, they were no longer necessary.

Official women's magazines are published, but "Woman and Russia" is the first publication which addressed itself to the oppression that women experience in their everyday lives, that lies behind the regime's complacent claims.

Like most samizdat, "Woman and Russia" is not exclusively or even primarily, a polemical or 'theoretical' publication.

It is a mixture of personal accounts, short stories and poetry, together with broader statements about femininity and women's place in Soviet society.

The result is a powerful and emotional account of the every day suffering of Soviet women in a society where the means of production remain nationalised, but political power is in the hands of a reactionary, parasitic bureaucracy.

The labour shortage in the Soviet Union, and the bureaucracy's reliance on the family as a stable social unit has led to a glorification of motherhood in Soviet ideology.

The hollowness of this ideology is relentlessly exposed throughout this journal.



Stalinist propaganda boosts ideal of motherhood

For one thing, the editors point out that far from there being a general respect for women and mothers, the worst obscenities in the Russian language all revolve around the

word for 'mother'.

R. Batalova's "Human birth" describes the appalling conditions faced by women in maternity clinics—where women in labour are put on trestle tables

ten to a room and their agonies ignored, until the time comes, for them to be moved, dripping blood over the floor, to the delivery room.

V. Golubeva's account in

Ann Evans reviews the samizdat publication "Woman and Russia" published by the Women in Eastern Europe Group, price £1.30

"The Other Side of the Medal" (a reference to the Soviet practice of giving medals to productive mothers) of abortion clinics is even more gruesome.

## See everything

Abortion is the only reliable means of birth control available in the Soviet Union, and abortions are now performed in assembly-line fashion, as Golubeva explains:

"Each ward contains ten to fifteen curtained-off beds, piled with flannelite blankets. There are never enough sheets and a woman has to make do with one . . .

Abortions are carried out on two, even on six women simultaneously in the same theatre. The tables are placed so that a woman can see everything that goes on opposite her: the face distorted in pain, the bloody mass extracted from the womb . . .

Anaesthetics are skimped or dispensed with altogether and the woman discharged the following day whatever her condition.

More horrendous accounts follow of Soviet kindergartens, where the staff are so overworked and under-paid that they steal the children's food and women are afraid to leave their children in their care.

As the authors bitterly comment, these conditions arise because the regime is not orientated towards the needs of women and children and is more interested in buying new weaponry than building hospitals and clinics.

Like the reactionary and broader dissident movement, "Woman and Russia" contains reactionary and religious influences. Religion plays a prominent role in the dissident move-

ment, perhaps because it seems to provide an alternative to the barren philistinism of bureaucracy.

An extreme example of this is Tatyana Goricheva's article in this collection "Rejoice, redemption from the tears of Eve".

Her conclusion is that Christianity and following the chaste example of the Virgin Mary is the highest expression of womanhood!

Such influences can only hold back the dissident movement and the working class from creating an effective challenge to the bureaucracy.

A detailed critique of the editorial statement of "Woman and Russia" could easily be written.

## No analysis

The editors, for instance, consider the increasing numbers of women in positions of importance in the West (e.g. Margaret Thatcher) to be evidence that the woman question "is close to being resolved".

They have no analysis of Stalinism or why women's oppression exists in Soviet Russia, other than a vague anti-feminist feeling.

However, the magazine does not set out to resolve great theoretical issues, but to draw together experiences. In doing this it paints a picture of Soviet life that is immensely valuable because it is so rare.

The introduction by the Women and Eastern Europe group points out that KGB harassment has made the editors decide not to produce a second issue, so this publication may well remain unique.

# SPY NOVEL WITH A

John Lister reviews "American Surrender" by Michael Brady, published by Sphere, £1.25

# DIFFERENCE

Is the election of President Reagan really part of an elaborate Kremlin plot to conquer the USA?

Has the KGB been secretly feeding Reagan's wild Cold War campaign and seeking to boost his credibility?

Did Nancy Reagan go to finishing school in Europe?

Are the CIA really such a hopeless bunch of amiable bumbling and narrow minded careerists? And do the Stalinists run the only serious intelligence agency in the world?

These are just some of the questions that might spring to mind if you finished reading *American Surrender* by Michael Brady, a book deceptively des-

cribed as "wildly entertaining" by an unnamed *Guardian* correspondent.

The most wild aspect of the book is its total and almost unrelieved implausibility.

The characterisations are pathetic. There is Anna, the inevitably beautiful Russian spy; there are the predictable steely-eyed, poker faced bureaucrats and spy chiefs; there is a hard-bitten US newsman, a young Commie-baiting US Senator, an

innocent young bourgeois woman entrapped by the KGB while at finishing school . . . all as tedious as they are unoriginal.

## Imperialists lose!

The dialogue is stilted, the sex scenes routine and the action is all but imperceptible until half way through the book.

So why review it? Well *American Surrender* has one saving grace over its rivals in the sphere of spy fiction: at the end, the imperialists lose!

The KGB is depicted as continuously one step ahead in a grand master plan to capture control of Western Europe and the USA.

Their plot involves engineering the election of a leading anti-Soviet Senator as President.

Meanwhile the imperialist spy system is shown to be hopelessly outmatched.

The Russians have agent Anna Zazoravna loyally climbing in and out of beds and eventually working her way into the office of the President; and

they have Colonel Sakhov, the cold (but quietly sexy!) spy master.

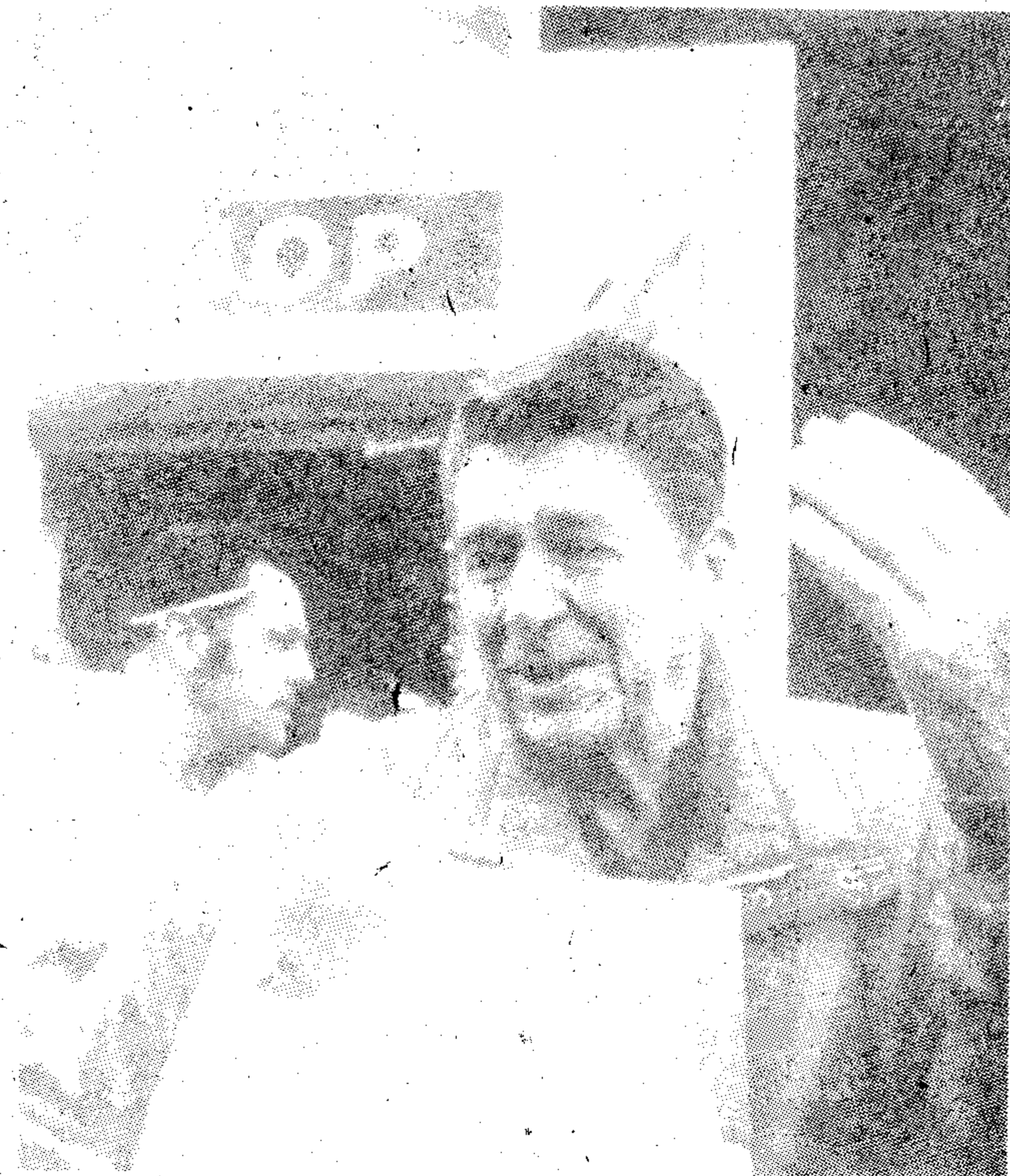
But the Americans find no James Bond or superhero to spring to their rescue. The Russian plan goes with stopwatch precision.

And one other factor is also worthy of note: the novel takes account of the fact that if given a choice—the majority of American (or any other) people would plump without hesitation for being "red" rather than dead. It is by exploiting this that the Russian plan succeeds.

## Attractive spy

We cannot really hope of course for the counter-revolutionary Kremlin leaders to resolve our fears of a Reagan-launched nuclear holocaust by unleashing any bold aggressive "check-mate" initiative like the one imagined in this book.

Nor must we imagine that the wild men in the US military establishment would allow an "American Surrender" in the terms envisaged.



Reagan: is he a Russian plot?

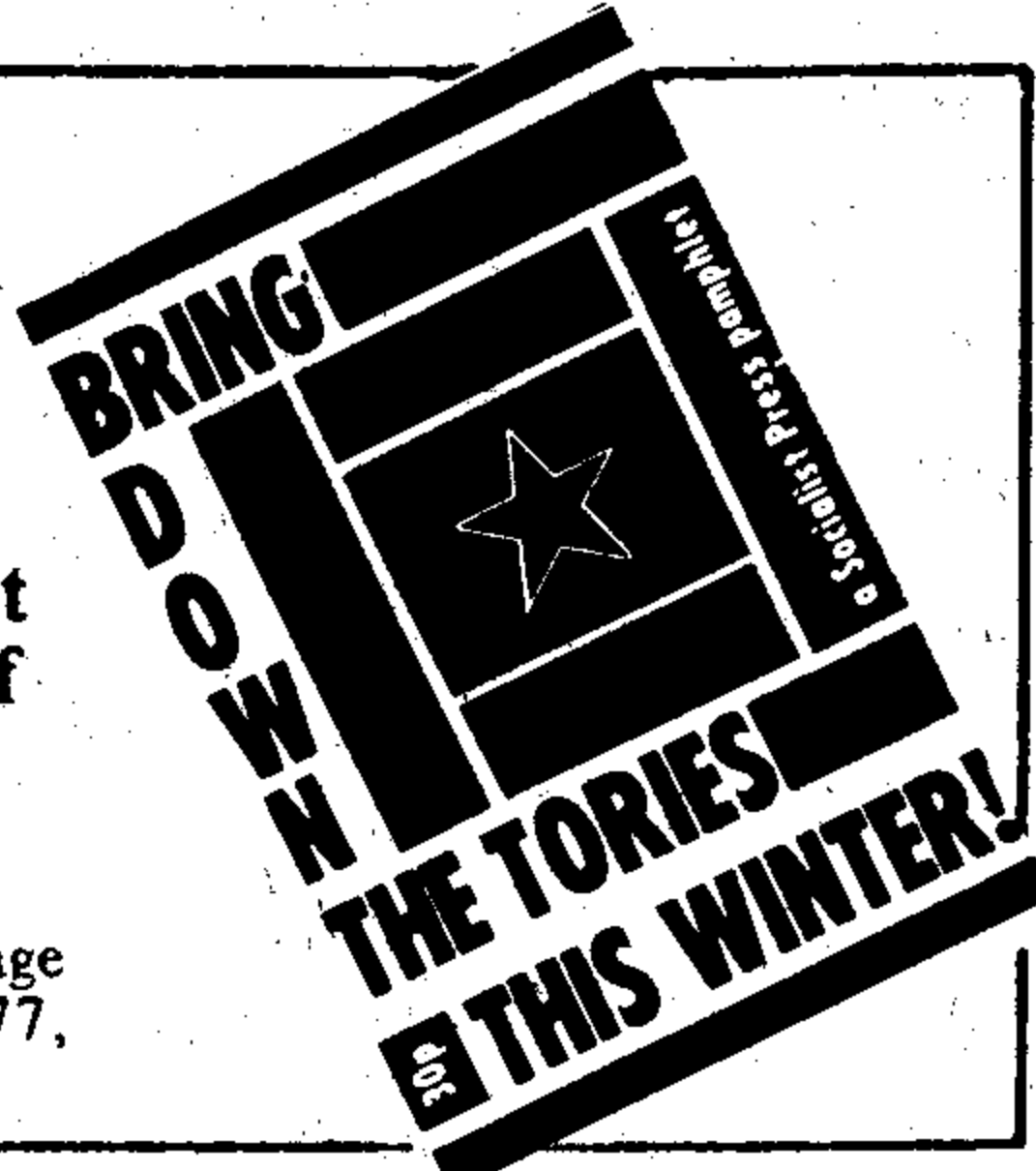
But as we battle each day to weaken British, American and world imperialism from within, it is perhaps pleasant to dream of the simple master-plan that could neutralise the US nuclear

stockpile without a missile fired. It is her success in implementing such a plan rather than her prowess in bed that makes Anna Zazoravna by far the most attractive spy in pulp fiction!

## Our policies

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

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





# Anger grows at New Cross massacre

By Ian Swindale

There has been a swift reaction by the black community to the murder of twelve young people in the fire-bombing of a house in New Cross, South East London in the early hours of Sunday January 18.

The very same day a meeting was held to discuss the massacre and a committee was set up to raise money for the burial of the dead and for the woman whose home was gutted in the blaze.

The following Sunday a meeting of 1500 people from the black community in London, Derby, Birmingham and other cities took place in New Cross, followed by a march to the house where the massacre took place.

The size of this meeting indicates clearly enough the feeling of outrage that has swept through the black community in response to the massacre.

## School students

The police and the mass media have each in their way tried to suggest that the deaths were caused by members of the black community. So what is known about the incident?

First of all, the party, for Yvonne Ruddock, a school girl (and the 11th person to die days after the fire) was the first ever held by her mother. About 60 to 100 young people, aged 14 to 19, attended, most of them school students.

Although some young people tried to gatecrash the party they were turned away without any problems. There

were one or two complaints about noise and the police paid a couple of visits to the house but again no particular problems arose from this.

In the early hours of the morning the party began to die down as the partygoers began to leave.

## Gatecrashers

Carl Wright, one of those who had been at the party, told the police that he saw someone throw an object into the house and then drive away in a white Austin Princess. He told the police and the press that he did not know if that person was black or white.

However, immediately the police suggested that the fire might have been caused by frustrated black gatecrashers who had failed to gain admittance to the party and even suggested subsequently that the fire had been started inside the building using paint thinners.

The press have also played their role, suggesting that there were fights at the party and that there were 200 in the house causing excessive noise. They extensively reported the suggestion that the fire was started by blacks.

## Fund set up

Since the massacre some of the bereaved families have received poisoned pen letters and racist phone calls. One letter read:

"What a great day it was last Sunday when I heard about

the fire and all those niggers going up in flames. I hope the black bastard who mugged me was there."

Police now admit that it is possible that the author of this letter may have caused the fire—in other words that it was what the black community knew all along—a racist massacre.

The *West Indian World* has offered a reward of £5,000 for information leading to the arrest of the mass murderer and along with the Lewisham Community Relations Council has set up telephone lines that people with information can phone if they don't wish to go directly to the police.

A fund has also been set up to raise money for Mrs Ruddock and for the families who have lost sons and daughters, many of whom are unable to afford the cost of the burial.

Meanwhile the New Cross Massacre Action Committee is organising a demonstration along Fleet Street to Scotland Yard in order to keep the issue in the public eye.

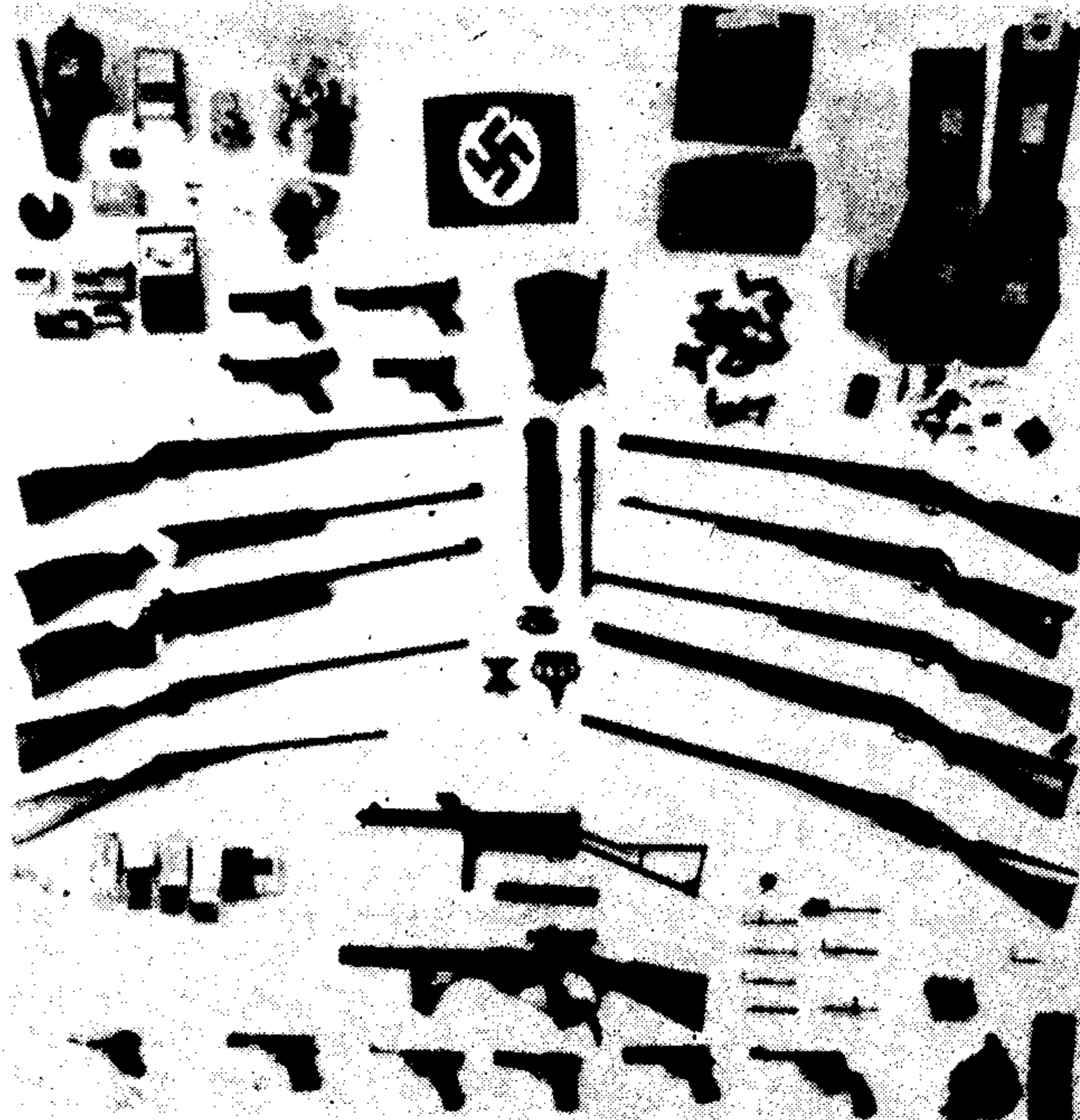
A representative of the committee said that even if the murderer was not caught and the police were able to secure a verdict such as death by misadventure at a coroner's court it was necessary to alert the black community to the need to organise against racist attacks.

Young people, he argued, would have to be prepared to defend their parties against similar attacks. And while anti-white feeling was not surprising amongst young blacks who had, for example, wanted to exclude

white people from the New Cross meeting, it was necessary to fight for a united struggle against racism and involve black and white youth in that struggle.

Donations to assist the families involved should be sent

(in the form of cheques or postal orders) to the New Cross Fire Fund, Bank Account No. 91340565, Barclays Bank, 5A Marylebone High Street, London W1.



Fascists of the British Movement have recently been convicted on charges of murder, arson, and illegal possession of arms. BM member Michael Clifford was given a life sentence in Leeds for the murder of a 17-year old youth. And in the Midlands Roderick Roberts was given 7 years for an arson attack on a Jobcentre and, together with two other BM members was also sentenced for possessing the above cache of arms.

# 100 at Turkey rally

With a concerted media whitewashing to contend with, mobilising opposition to the military dictatorship in Turkey is not easy.

Nevertheless, a useful step towards exposing the regime's reactionary nature was taken at last week's Rally in central London organised by the Turkey Solidarity Campaign.

Speakers from the National Union of Journalists Executive, the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad and the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey were able to address a meeting of over one hundred about the systematic attacks on basic rights which have typified the Generals' rule since they took power last September.

Particularly stressed were the unprecedented moves by the junta to put on trial 2,000 leaders and organisers of DISK, the outlawed independent trade union confederation.

An indication of the collaboration that exists between the state security forces in Turkey and this country was brought out by a CDDRT speaker.

He referred to a report in the Turkish newspaper 'Son Havadis'. It quotes a British police report on a march the CDDRT are organising next month which is to be kept under surveillance for alleged 'terrorists'.

Trades unionists and Labour Party members should protest at this attack on civil liberties. Moves are being made to raise the question in Parliament and demand information on the links between police in the two countries.

Messages of support were received from the Chile Solidarity Campaign, Troops Out Movement, Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity and Turkey Solidarity Campaign groups in Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Liverpool and Edinburgh.

The CDDRT are organising a "Rally against the trial of DISK trade unionists" on Tuesday 10 February at 7.00 p.m. at the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Readers are urged to support.

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign has produced its first 'Information Bulletin on Turkey for the Labour and Trade Union Movement', available free from BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

# 'H' Block fight goes on

The Thatcher government's refusal to implement the agreement which ended the 53-day hunger strike by Irish republican prisoners has been met by stubborn resistance from prisoners at Long Kesh.

They have been angered by the fact that a mutually agreed programme to de-escalate the 'blanket' protests which have continued in the 'H' Blocks since 1976 has been breached by prison screws.

And 96 prisoners who had agreed to be moved to clean furnished cells as the first stage in an agreed settlement have smashed the furniture, fouled their cells, and rejoined their

300 comrades on the blanket.

There is now talk of a renewed hunger strike as the furious prisoners seek a means of forcing the implementation of the hard-won agreement which they believed had secured them their five demands and implicit recognition as political prisoners.

But the Tory about-turn has left the republican movement in a poor position to mount a renewed mass campaign.

Sections of the Provisionals have turned their backs on the broad support mobilised North and South of the border in the course of the hunger strikes, and reverted to a campaign of futile guerrilla attacks that will do nothing to drive British imperialism out of Ireland.

While it is correct and necessary for the Catholic minority to defend itself, arms in hand, against Loyalist violence and the intimidation of the British army, isolated armed actions by republican fighters—no matter how well-intentioned—offer no way forward.

## Troops out

The fight must go on to mobilise the working class of both Britain and Ireland behind not only the struggle of the Long Kesh prisoners for political status but also behind the struggle to drive British troops out of the six counties, and open the way for the self-determination of the Irish people as a whole.



# PIE trial bolsters bigotry

The end of the show trial of four leading members of the Paedophile Information Exchange on charges of "conspiracy to corrupt public morals" has proved inconclusive.

One of the four accused PIE Executive Committee members has been acquitted. But the other three face a retrial on virtually identical charges after the jury failed to agree on a verdict.

These trials are important first and foremost because they are an attack on democratic rights and an attempt to use the power of the state to buttress reactionary prejudice and ideology.

They must be totally condemned by the labour, socialist and sexual liberation movements, both on grounds of defending democratic rights of

paedophiles as such and as examples of oppressed minorities generally.

The specific nature of the charge also involves another threat to democratic rights generally.

The defendants were originally accused under the notorious conspiracy laws of plotting to do something which is not itself a crime.

Even the ruling class is worried about the scandalous nature of the conspiracy laws and proposals have been floated to change them.

And there are already signs that the Public Prosecutor believes the original charge cannot be upheld and the charges will be much reduced.

That, however, would not reduce the other alarming aspect of the trial: it is a show trial designed to reinforce reactionary and oppressive attitudes towards sexuality.

The trial is being used by the police, the legal authorities and the capitalist press to reinforce the already massive prejudice against paedophilia as "child molesting"; and they link this with bigotry against homosexuality, the reactionary glorification of the family unit and the suppression of children's sexuality.

It would be a grave error for socialists to react to this ideological onslaught by distancing themselves from the defence of the PIE defendants because of widespread prejudice against paedophilia since the attack on paedophiles is inextricably linked to sexually oppressive attitudes in general.

We believe that socialists should oppose the oppressive laws related to the age of consent which both discriminate against male homosexuality and impose arbitrary state prohibitions on personal relations.

At the same time we oppose sexual relations of any kind involving coercion. Consent must be the basis of any free sexual relations.

People who accept these points also sometimes argue that paedophilia should be condemned because no sexual relationships between adults and children can be based on consent.

This assumes that children are incapable of consent and that adult-child sexuality is necessarily corrupting.

Such a crude argument has to be rejected, though this is not to deny that the definition of consent may be particularly problematical in relation to very young people.

It is for this reason that many on the left in the feminist movement and gay movement feel that adult-child relationships are oppressive rather than liberating for the child

concerned.

But the question of consent is frequently problematical too in relation to sexual relations more generally.

And one of the reasons that particular problems may exist in relation to adult-child relations is the systematic denial of rights to children in present-day capitalist society—particularly in schools and in the family.

This conception of childhood as sexless and irresponsible "innocence" is itself in large part an artificial construction of society and not a law of nature.

## Not so different

So while 'consent' and 'coercion' in relation to paedophilia definitely raise some special problems and controversy even on the left these problems are not nearly so different from the problems involved in personal

relations in general as is usually asserted—and as those prejudiced against paedophilia would like to believe.

In relation to this question the Campaign Against Public Morals has produced an important pamphlet "Paedophilia and Public Morals" which deserves wide discussion.

It is obtainable for 95p plus postage from CAPM, BM Box 1151, London WC1V 6XX along with more information on the trial.

The CAPM pamphlet contributes a well-argued case about how prejudice against paedophilia is inextricably linked to the sexual and social oppression of women, children and gay people.

It helps, therefore, to highlight the need for all those against social and sexual oppression to oppose the PIE show trial.



# UNEMPLOYMENT:

## the vanishing thousands

As unemployment hit its highest figure for 45 years, British employers made it clear that there is much worse still to come.

2.42 million people are officially registered as unemployed. This figure *excludes* tens of thousands of married women who are ineligible for unemployment benefit and do not sign on the register; and it *excludes* some 828,000 people artificially kept in work by government "training" schemes and short-time working compensation schemes.

### Underestimate

The overall figure of 9.3% of the workforce unemployed and the regional percentages are therefore a deceptive underestimate.

At the same time these overall figures conceal the much higher levels of unemployment faced by youth—in particular black youth and young women.

The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development has predicted that youth unemployment in Britain will reach 20% by mid 1982.

But there are more sackings on the way. In manufacturing the CBI is predicting that no less than 500,000 jobs will have been lost in the six months October 1980-May 1981.

James Cleminson, chairman of Reckitt and Coleman and head of the CBI's "economic situation committee" told the *Financial Times* last week that:

"Business prospects remain very bleak... Business is still declining and there is still no indication of a bottom to the trough."

The CBI's ex-Ford whizz-kid Sir Terence Beckett went even further, anticipating a rise in unemployment lasting until at least mid-1982.

Bosses with an eye to the slump are also investing less and running down their stocks of raw materials and finished goods. Private manufacturing investment is expected to have fallen by 15% in the year 1980-81, and may drop by as much as 30% in the 18 months between January 1980 and June 1981.

### New technology

The dwindling investment that is taking place is angled towards new technology to maximise production with the minimum number of workers.

The effect on overall employment is shattering. So far over one million jobs have been wiped out in the present recession—a far larger and faster decline than any period since the war.

Jobs are disappearing not



only in manufacturing industry but also in service industries—and increasingly also in the public sector.

But the fall in the number employed is far greater than the rise in the number of unemployed. 770,000 jobs disappeared in the 15 months to September 1980; but only 566,000 more workers signed on as unemployed.

Yet in that same period a

further 250,000 workers should have been added to the labour force as the population expands. In other words some 404,000 workers have "vanished" from statistics in only 15 months.

Some of these will be older workers made redundant and taking early retirement. But most seem likely to be married women driven out of the workforce by the slump—and consigned to the menial and claus-

trophobic confines of domestic labour in the home.

As the 1980s depression deepens, and trade union and Labour leaders wring their hands while lifting not a finger to fight mass redundancies, the economic crisis continues to take its toll on the whole working class and in particular its most oppressed and down-trodden sections.

## CUTS LOBBY

Over 100 trade unionists took time off work to join a lobby of a Fife County Council meeting last Tuesday in protest against cuts in local government spending.

Among the lobbyists were 50 manual workers from the roads department who had staged a half-day strike in order to participate, and a contingent from the nearby GEC plant.

### Stand firm

A speaker from the Fife Trade Union Action Committee was allowed in to address the

full council meeting, where he called for the council to stand firm against Tory spending cuts.

The Labour group is to meet on Monday to finalise its budget proposals. The Action Committee will decide its next steps on Friday.

### MARCH AND RALLY AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT

Called by Central Region Against Unemployment

Stirling 7 February  
Assemble 10.30 a.m.  
Raploch Community Centre

Rally at 12 o'clock  
Albert Halls

## Wage cutting begins

Employers in Scotland have begun to seek ways of exploiting the mass unemployment to increase exploitation.

A number of textile mills have begun to cut bonus payments. And one Courtaulds subsidiary—Lyle and Scott in Rosyth has gone so far as to cut wages.

This has been met by strike action from the usually far from militant National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers. The plant has been at a standstill for a week.

There is no doubt that if Courtaulds are allowed to carry through this attack other employers will hasten to follow suit—and poverty-line wages will follow in the wake of chronic unemployment.

## Journalists' Charter: a healthy development

About 50 people attended a conference of Journalist Charter, the NUJ left caucus, on Saturday 31 January. The conference was called under the title "Charter '81": A Programme for Action' and its purpose was to vote on proposals set out by the steering committee on jobs, the closed shop, press freedom, print unity, Ireland and the Labour Party.

This was Journalist Charter's first conference since the relaunch conference last autumn. Charter had been in some disarray for several years following the break up of the Socialist Workers Party within the NUJ who had formerly dominated Charter and whose politics had alienated many on the left from Charter's ranks. The question in some delegates' minds was just how different would Charter turn out to be this time round.

The morning kicked off with reports on the occupation at the British Printing Corporation from Jenny Vaughan, a member of the Chapel committee.

The Chapel continues its solid stand against redundancies and is stepping up its fight for supporting print blacking.

### Much tougher

At the Times the situation is rather grimmer with Jake Ecclestone, former FoC of the Times Chapel, stressing that with the General Secretaries of the print unions ready to sell out on jobs and technology the possibilities for a fight back are that much tougher. If Murdoch does take over Times Newspapers and gets what he wants (which includes amongst other things over 50% de-staffing in the comp room for a start) job loss is going to sweep through Fleet Street and may involve as many as 14,000 jobs.

The conference resolved to call a meeting for printworkers in Times Newspapers from which to try to initiate action against job loss.

The conference then moved to the discussion on a programme for fighting job loss. The debate was surprisingly low key, probably because the arguments had already been fought out over several months on the organising committee.

### Work-sharing

There were some amendments from the floor all of which were accepted. The programme agreed upon includes:

1) Total opposition to all

forms of job loss.

2) Strikes, occupations or sit-ins to prevent closure or job loss as appropriate.

3) Work-sharing on full pay as an answer to redundancy.

4) The books of employers to be permanently open to elected committees of union members.

The programme ends with the declaration "ultimately we believe the only way to save jobs is through the extension of public ownership under workers' control."

The morning ended with a brief discussion of the closed shop with the conference committing itself to campaigning to extend the closed shop by traditional means and where necessary defying the Employment Act 1980.

### Press freedom

After lunch the conference reconvened for a report on the strike to stop the closure of the Camden Journal.

This was followed by a brief report on press freedom from Geoff Sheridan which was referred to the organising committee for action. The most important issue raised in these proposals was that of press ownership and alternatives to the capitalist press.

The conference then heard a report on the forthcoming NUJ/ACTT conference as media censorship of the war in Ireland with various proposals also being referred to the organising committee for action.

The final section proved to be the most contentious in introducing it, Simon Collings, a National Executive member and *Socialist Press* supporter, said that he would be surprised if the conference voted for his proposal that Charter support a campaign for NUJ affiliation to the Labour Party but that nevertheless he saw his contribution as hopefully initiating a serious debate on the issues.

### Affiliated

He said that Journalist Charter could not avoid the question as it was being raised in the union anyway.

He also stressed that if Charter was serious about print unity it would sooner or later have to confront the fact that the other print unions are all Labour Party affiliated.

Over and above this Collings stressed the sound political reasons for Labour Party affiliation, arguing that the record of Labour in power would not be challenged by ignoring it but by being part of the historically unprecedented period in Labour's history which has been unfolding over the last 18 months.

Owing to lack of time the discussion was brief and along predictable lines. Aidan White was the main opposition speaker.

At this point several SWP members clearly realised that this was not the Journalist Charter they had known and loved and there was a distinct air of panic as one of them called for a postal ballot of the membership (!) on the question.

### Healthier

In the event the motion was defeated by two to one, but if the furious discussions in the corridor after the conference were anything to go by that vote represented the beginning of a debate rather than the end of one.

At the end of the day it was a healthier Journalist Charter in terms of its programme and politics which emerged. *Socialist Press* will be watching further developments with interest.

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# Tenants organise to fight Tory rent hike

As Heseltine tells councils to increase rents as part of the Tory cuts in local authority spending, the fight back is beginning to appear in Oxfordshire.

In an estate in Oxford one tenant on his own initiative collected over 600 signatures to a petition calling for rent strikes in opposition to Heseltine's housing cuts.

A Committee was formed and a meeting held two days before the Labour Group met.

Sanction for the Labour Group to increase rents by £3 and rates by over 3p was later granted at the General Committee by 47 votes to 38 despite strong speeches for no rent and rate increases.

A resolution supporting the Rose Hill tenants and others prepared to carry out a rent strike was lost by 33 votes to 39.

## Tenants groups

In the nearby Tory-controlled Cherwell District Council over 30% of the tenants are refusing to pay an increase of £3 (due to 'accounting errors').

The new Heseltine increase has yet to be discussed and implemented.

Out of this struggle thriving tenants groups have been set up in the Kidlington, Bicester and Bloxham areas and even in Deddington where there are only 12 council tenants surrounded by many home owners.

Further across the county, Tory-run South Oxfordshire District Council is to increase its rents by over £3.

A meeting called by three Labour Councillors on Monday 26 January attracted over 200 angry tenants. The Labour Councillors held tight control of the reins at the meeting, recommending that tenants apply for rent rebates.

## "Difficult"

Bill Buckingham, the leader of the eight member Labour Group on the Council stated how difficult it was when they were in the minority. They had argued for 'cushioning' the effect of the increase to a rise of £1.51.

Rumblings from the meeting indicated as had a local reporter in that evening's paper "that some tenants feel the Councillors and their cushions can get stuffed".

South Oxfordshire District Council though has actually made a profit from its housing revenue account of £307,000 and will be £594,000 in surplus if the increased rents are collected.

Reality came to the meeting when the Chairperson of the Rosehill Tenants Association, Dennis White, related to the Didcot Tenants what a Labour controlled Council was doing in Oxford and how the tenants were going to resist.

He insisted that Labour councillors, whether in control or not, should be saying NO to

Heseltine:

"The Tories are taking everything away from us and we'll end up paralysed if we let them get away with it."

## Link up

A 'Council of Action' was formed which included those present at the meeting who were taking up the call for a rent strike: "What can they do? They can't kick us all out if we stick together," was the feeling and one mobile home tenant said if they evicted him he'd smash up his 'concrete slab' first.

Another speaker from Oxford suggested ways in which the campaign would be successful; she stressed that it must not be isolated but link up with other tenants associations within their district, county and nationally.

And more importantly tenants must take the issue into the trade union movement—especially NALGO—for support.

## Myth

What was most discredited at the meeting was the myth that we're daily told of the working class being unwilling to fight, sitting indoors, watching Dallas.

Angry women kept getting to their feet venting years of frustration in the home and demanding action rather than appealing to the Tories' better nature.



Tenants demonstrate against Tory Rent Act 1972

# FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN SCOTTISH LP

The agenda for the forthcoming Scottish Conference of the Labour Party reflects the growing concern within the Party not only with mounting a fightback against the Tory government but also with ensuring a greater degree of accountability of the leadership to the rank and file.

Four resolutions (Nos. 144-147) from local Labour Parties precisely detail the ways in which Labour councillors at

district and regional levels must work more closely with and be more responsive to the policies and opinions of the local Parties.

For instance, the resolutions specify that Labour Groups on councils shall "be bound by policies included in the election manifesto" and "the local Party to take the final decision on all issues of disagreement on the interpretation of Party policy".

Although seemingly more mundane than resolutions on general policy questions, these moves both express the demand for democratic accountability that is sweeping through the

Party and are a key issue in the fight against cuts in the social services at a local level.

The conflict between the demands of local Labour Parties and right wing councillors has been seen recently in Glasgow where the Labour Group on the District Council has been censured by the District Labour Party for selling houses and raising rents and rates.

Censure does not amount to control, but the passage of such resolutions at the Conference on 12-15 March will be a step towards ensuring that elected representatives of the labour movement at a local level do not, once in office, renege on their pledges and treat their promises to the working class with contempt.

The implementation of such moves would ensure a more successful campaign against the cuts demanded by Pollock CLP (No. 16) which calls for "persuading controlling Labour Groups to refuse to implement the cuts, with full financial and physical support for any Councillor who may be victimised", "backing all trade unionists who take action against the cuts" and "persuading all controlling Labour Groups to implement a policy of no cuts, no increased charges, no natural wastage, no rates or rent increases."

## CPSA debates pay

Special pay conferences of the two major civil service unions, the CPSA and the SCPS, agreed last week to go for a 1981 claim ranging from 15%-19%.

The other civil service unions such as the Inland Revenue staff and the IPCS are likely to follow suit.

The key question to be resolved before the April 1 review date, however, is what action the union leaders are prepared to call to make the claim stick.

The Tories have already spelt out that they are not even bothering to reveal the findings of the Pay Research Unit this year (PRU is the comparability body which decides on civil service pay claims each year).

Thatcher has clearly indicated that 6% will be the absolute maximum throughout the public sector.

Against this background the union leaderships have been desperately clinging to PRU in the face of growing pressure from the membership to recognise that PRU is dead and that special pay conferences should be convened annually to decide on a claim put forward by the rank and file.

At the key CPSA special conference on Thursday Ken Thomas and the 'Moderate' group-dominated NEC just managed to defeat a move to break with PRU by 87,000 votes to 83,000.

Right wing President Kate Losinska then stage-managed a debate on this year's claim to ensure that 15% with £10 underpinning got through—despite demands for speaking rights from delegates from branches with motions demanding 20% with £20 underpinning.

Little serious debate on the conduct of this year's campaign was allowed, though the strategy will clearly be one of odd one-day strikes and longer action in computer centres (with membership levies to pay the sections called out).

With the annual elections coming up in May it is vital that the left (in the CPSA in particular) fight to expose the kind of craven leadership that has dogged the civil service unions during a year in which cuts, victimisations and the threat of new technology have combined to hit the low-paid clerical staff most of all.

# Post workers fight speed-up

Tom Jackson and the UCW (formerly UPW) executive are about to face a major confrontation with the membership of the Manchester Amalgamated Branch who were forced into strike action last week.

The bureaucracy seems to have settled a similar dispute in London last week, but the Manchester dispute could escalate into other areas.

The dispute is round the divisive "Improved Working Methods" (IWM) which is a polite phrase for local productivity deals.

The UCW bureaucracy had been trying to sell the deal to the membership for some years and finally succeeded last May by a narrow margin.

Jackson emphasised then that the scheme was voluntary, and would be controlled, monitored and agreed by those participating.

The Post Office management in the Manchester area have been trying since last June to negotiate such a deal.

This would have meant an end to statutory meal breaks, the mobility of staff to change duties, and removal of concessions as well as loss of posts.

Talks reached deadlock and the management instead of taking it to national level gave each member an Edwardes-style letter on how much would be gained, quoting bogus facts and figures supposedly from the Preston Office involved in the scheme.

The management, seeing that the membership could not be divided, issued a statement saying that the scheme would be implemented on Monday 26 January whether there was agreement or not!

# Tories sell off Southend Cleansing

In August 1980 workers at the Southend Borough Cleansing Department were told that their Department needed to make savings of £180,000 if the service was not to be allotted to a private contractor.

Management demanded rationalised working methods and an end to "restrictive practices".

Union officials and stewards went so far as to propose a package of measures to save an estimated £217,000. But their plans were dismissed by the Highway Committee chairman Norman Clark.

By late November articles began to appear in the local and national press stating that

Southend Cleansing was about to "go private". The unions had still not been officially informed.

On December 4 a special full council meeting was told that the successful tender was from the Exclusive Cleaning Group, a subsidiary of Brengreen Holdings of Walton Cross.

## £100 per copy

The chairman of this company, David Evans, is a Tory councillor and Highways Committee chairman in St. Albans.

It has emerged he was invited to tender for the contract as early as March 1980!

The tender document drawn up by Southend's borough engineer has been available to any interested local authority at £100 per copy. It is believed that over 100 have been sold.

The document specifies that the selected firm will have to purchase the whole 60-vehicle Cleansing Service Fleet—valued at £300,000. But Exclusive Cleaning appears to have escaped this, and is selecting only 17 vehicles.

The firm has stated that only 205 of the present 250 cleansing employees will be employed—and Evans has refused to speak to union representatives until after the operation has commenced in Southend.

This move is plainly a pilot run for a wholesale Tory attack on local government services. The TGWU 1/293 Branch is mounting a campaign against the plan, and is seeking moral and practical support.

Contact A.B. Smith, 39 Earlshall Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

# NUM ballot

Yorkshire miners voted last week on whether to give their Area Executive the authority to call strike action against pit closures.

Yorks NUM President Arthur Scargill said in the January issue of Yorkshire Miner that the Tory government is seeking revenge for 1972 and 1974 and want to smash miners' jobs so that the union would never again be able to protect its members.

Scargill went on to write: "Give us the authority to save your job so that you and your sons are not added to the scrapheap of unemployment. Vote YES as though your livelihood depended on it: it does."

## Support

The Yorkshire ballot follows a little publicised vote by South Wales miners which was 95% in favour of industrial action to protect jobs.

In the three-week campaign thousands of Yorkshire miners attended meetings throughout the coalfields. Support has been pledged from Scotland, South Wales, Derbyshire, Kent and Lancashire.

Miners must ensure that in the event of threatened closures this verbal support is turned into all-out action to defend every job.

However it is not lack of militancy that is the main danger but the limited programme the campaign is being fought on.

The call of all literature and meetings is for import controls, but this is a call for an answer within capitalism—a system whose crisis is forcing forward the closure of whole industries.

What is needed is a programme of action to bring down the Tory government and bring to office a workers' government answerable to the rank and file.

The call for import controls creates the illusion that "British" capitalism can be propped up and somehow cater for workers' needs.

It cuts across the necessary international solidarity of the working class in the face of the world-wide attacks of the employers.

We say 'Yes' to action against pit closures: 'no' to nationalism and import controls!



# SOCIALIST PRESS

## CONFERENCE

### Policies to Stop the Cuts

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

Saturday March 21

10.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.

Islington Central Library, Holloway Rd.

London N7

Details and credentials from CDLM, 169 Barclay Road, Smethwick, West Midlands

# Camden councillors face £2 million surcharge

Tenants fight back—p.9

As councils face the problems of budgeting for Heseltine's cuts in the Rate Support Grant and demand for rent increases, the sharp confrontations focus on London boroughs.

Most dramatic and immediate is the situation in Camden, where the District Auditor has lodged an affidavit preliminary to a High Court case seeking to surcharge 33 Labour councillors for a total of £2 million in council funds.

The Auditor claims that the funds were illegally used in the settlement of the 1979 pay strike by local authority manual workers in the borough.

Through the negotiation of a "Camden supplement" the manual workers secured a £60/35 hour week.

## Surcharge

If the court now finds in the Auditor's favour, the Labour councillors will each face a £60,000 surcharge—bringing with it removal from office and personal bankruptcy.

The implication of this legal attack is that the Labour council can only avoid worse penalties by offering no increase at all to manual workers in the present pay round!

But this is not the only dilemma facing the councillors. They are already committed to raising rates by 50% to compensate for the fact they will receive no rate support grant at all from Heseltine this year.

## Mobilise against Tory cuts

The problem is, however, that the Tories' housing cuts place a question mark over 600 jobs in the council's Direct Labour Organisation.

To save these jobs would mean adding a further 20% to the rates—plus a £3 increase in council rents on top of Heseltine's £3 increase.

## Contradiction

Camden tenants also face a £2.40 per week increase in heating charges. The total potential increase comes to a staggering £14 per week—a dramatic cut in living standards.

The Labour right wing are using this situation—and will no doubt also exploit the unexpected court case—to argue that the DLO should be axed.

The contradiction is that even to close down the DLO would cost tenants £1.75 extra per week in rents—simply to finance redundancy payments!

It seems more than likely that the right wing and the weakest elements of the left will now hurry to cobble together a package of spending cuts and rises in rates and rents in the

hopes of appeasing the Auditor and the courts.

It is plain that Camden is being used as a scapegoat to intimidate Labour councils all over the country into acting as lackeys of the Thatcher government.

## Resistance

The legal attack must be met by full-scale resistance by the whole Camden labour movement.

Meanwhile in Lambeth the left wing Labour Council has for several years attempted to compensate for government spending cuts by raising the rates. That policy has just brought an average £50 per household supplementary rate to be paid by April—and is likely to mean a 60% rate rise in the 1981-82 financial year.

Coming on top of Thatcher's tide of inflation these increases have pushed many working class families to the limit.

But they have also enraged local businessmen and reactionaries, who resent paying anything to maintain necessary social services in Lambeth.



Lobby of Camden Council meeting during low pay strike

In the absence of a clear campaign from the left against the rate increase policy, it is these reactionaries who have taken the lead in mobilising several large demonstrations—up to 1,000-strong.

Among these forces are the National Front, whose new headquarters is sited in Streatham.

Six Labour councillors are currently under police protection after threats of violence from the extreme right wing.

The growth of this backlash

is confirmation of the danger and futility of seeking to defend social services by raising the rates rather than preparing the ground for confrontation with the Tory government.

It poses important questions for workers in Lambeth who this week will be engaged in a week of action against the cuts supported by week-long strike action from TGWU, UCATT and NUPE members.

A picket will be maintained on the Town Hall in the hopes of stopping NALGO members—who narrowly rejected a strike call—from crossing.

The Lambeth week of action is an important lead in the fight to mobilise the workers' movement.

It shows a willingness of public sector workers to fight in defence of jobs and services.

But if the anger and frustration of council tenants and working class householders are not to be increasingly diverted along the reactionary channels of right wing-led rate revolts, the labour movement must be offered a firm fighting lead for a confrontation with the Tories, centred on demands for:

\*No rent or rate increases to compensate for Heseltine's cuts!

\*No cuts in services or jobs!

\*Open the full accounts of the local authorities to elected trade union committees! Refuse to pay bank interest charges!

\*Organise strikes, occupations and mobilise working class estates in rate and rent strikes to resist any Tory attempt to remove Labour councillors, surcharge them, or install officers of the court to close down services.

\*Demand full-scale support from unions in both public and private sectors and from other Labour councils. For mass working class action to bring down the Thatcher government!

\*Demand the Labour leadership pledge fully to restore public spending to 1976 levels, fully protected against inflation by a sliding scale of spending.

# LONGWORTH SNATCH REBUFFED

A concerted bid to smash the ten-week work-in at Longworth Hospital in Oxfordshire was foiled on Monday February 2 by the determination of staff and supporting pickets.

The attacks came after a week in which COHSE members at Oxford's Warneford Hospital had taken one-day strike action to back a 50-strong lobby of the AHA to support the work-in.

The Area Health Authority chaired by leading Oxford Labour Party member Lady McCarthy, attempted, under the thin disguise of arranging a "holiday", to remove three patients from the hospital.

The removal of patients is essential if the AHA are to implement their planned closure of the top floor of Longworth as a prelude to its complete closure—and the loss of a further 35 geriatric beds in the Area.

8 am. on the Monday morning was the chosen time for the AHA's planned snatch: they had alerted local press, television and radio crews to cover the events on the gates. They hoped in this way to intimidate pickets into allowing the patients to be removed sooner than be accused of blocking a seaside holiday for three old people.

## Plan of action

But pickets, too, had been alerted, and a plan of action agreed. The gates had been padlocked, and an alarm system set up to alert the staff as soon as the AHA gang arrived.

They turned up with a minibus ironically inscribed "Friends of Cowley Road Hospital". Cowley Road was a large geriatric hospital recently closed down by McCarthy and the AHA axemen in an area already 200 geriatric beds short.

Pickets stood their ground and refused to allow the AHA into the occupied hospital; they



brushed aside cynical accusations that they were acting "callously"; and they challenged management to give a written assurance that the patients would be returned to Longworth if they were allowed out.

Management refused—and finally went away declaring that it was "unlikely" that they would try the same stunt again.

Instead their tactics seem to focus increasingly on behind-the-scenes deals with the leadership of COHSE.

Encouraged by the complete absence of any national campaign from the COHSE execu-

tive in support of the Longworth occupation, the AHA has gone over the heads of the branch and regional officers of the union to seek collaboration with the bureaucracy at national level.

In the aftermath of the "holiday" raid ACAS officials made their first appearance—a storm warning of an underhand deal in the offing.

Messages of support and donations can be sent to: Barbara Russell, Whitebread Cottage, Farringdon Road, Longworth, Abingdon, Oxon.