

CHARTIST

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END LABOUR-TUC WAGE-CUTTING UNITE FOR AUTOMATIC PAY RISES

THE SOCIAL CONTRACT, which has slashed working class living standards by as much as 20 per cent over the last three years, is now coming under heavy fire from significant sections of the trade union movement. In response to rank and file pressure major unions including the white-collar ASTMS, CPSA and AUEW (TASS) have announced limited opposition to a further round of pay restraint. Miners President Joe Gormley, not known for his radical views, has told the TUC not to ask its members for another year of restrictions. British Airways European Engineers have also come out against more wage restraint.

Spearheading the rank and file revolt against the Labour and TUC leaders wage-cutting policies have been British Leyland car-workers. These workers have seen their supposedly nationalised company baled out to the tune of £2.8 billion by the Labour government, with massive job-loss. They staged a 6,000 strong march through Birmingham last month to demand a return to free collective bargaining.

conference

Communist Party stewards—who have played a key role in selling the Ryder 'mock' participation committees to Leyland workers, and who are now feeling dissent amongst their members grow, are now giving organised expression to this dissent. Derek Robinson—chairman of the British Leyland Combine shop-stewards committee—announced a rank and file conference in Birmingham on April 3rd to co-ordinate an attack on the social contract. Though this opposition is compromised by talk of a return to free collective bargaining "after August" implicitly accepting the current pay restraint.

But meanwhile TUC and Labour leaders continue to fiddle over a new pay policy within the social

by Graham Durham

contract while prices soar, unemployment creeps upwards and the spending cuts bite deep, leaving Labour's electoral support to burn away—as recent by-elections have shown.

At the end of February the TUC Economic Review was published. It called for cuts in unemployment, measures to deal with price rises—now at an annual rate of 16.6 per cent—without mentioning wage restraint which it clearly supported by calls for the continuation of the social contract. Virtually all trade union leaders still hide behind the bogey of a "wages explosion" or a "free-for-all" if pay restraint is ended. Hugh Scanlon has instructed the 3,000 striking toolmakers at Longbridge to return to work and has ruled out any special AUEW Conference taking place until AFTER the pay talks have been completed.

welcome

While all socialists must welcome a re-emergence of wage militancy aimed at the TUC-Labour government deals to hold down wages, it is premature to speak of any sort of victory against the Social Contract. As they showed in bullying the seamen's leaders into submission and the Labour government showed in its concessions to the miners—our leaders are determined to continue



Photo: DAVE EVANS (IFL)

6,000 demonstrate in Birmingham against Social Contract last month.

their offensive to make workers pay for the capitalist crisis.

While Len Murray talks of the possibility of a gradual return to free collective bargaining, other TUC leaders are busily exploiting possible gaps in the current offensive against pay restraint. Tom Jackson (UPW) and Frank Chapple are defending continued restraint on the grounds that free collective bargaining only benefits better paid workers.

This wretched argument must be met quickly by militants. Already Alan Fisher of NUPE—a union which has run a limited campaign against the cuts—has expressed doubts about a return to free collective bargaining saying it would hurt the low-paid.

These union bureaucrats are nonetheless picking on one of the weak flanks of the current 'economic militancy' opposition to the social contract. What is required are arguments and policies that can unite the whole working class movement—low paid and higher paid, men and women, black and white, organised and unorganised.

Such policies should start from a rejection of the view that workers should make sacrifices for 'Britain' and work harder for Jones's 'Year

of the Beaver'—a view that tries to identify the antagonistic interests of capital and labour. The patent nonsense that wages cause inflation is now exposed more clearly by the contrast between price rises and earnings. The alternative political policy, which must be hammered home at the April 3rd Conference and all union conferences should include:

policy

- A £50 minimum wage for all workers linked to an 'escalator clause' providing for automatic increases in wages to fully compensate for rises in a workers' cost of living index.
- Defence of the right of all women to work at equal rates with men.
- Reversal of all cuts in social expenditure, defence of all white-collar workers jobs.
- For a crash programme of public works to employ the jobless and meet social needs and for work-sharing on full pay in the event of redundancies.

Coupled with a determined fight to defeat the pro-capitalist policies of the Labour Government and construct a leadership which will attempt to mobilise behind socialist policies it is possible for the Labour Party to avert decimation at the next election.

A ONE-DAY NATIONAL strike and lobby of Parliament against the Social Contract for mid-April, has been called by the Conference of the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU), which met on February 26th. This call deserves the backing of the whole labour movement.

Undoubtedly, this was one of the most representative conferences of the trade union rank-and-file for some time. Over 1200 delegates representing 132 shop stewards committees, 272 TU branches, and many other bodies. This is a clear indication of the hostile mood developing after the last three years of Labour Government wage-cutting—meaning a rough-ride for Callaghan,

LCDTU calls for 'kill the Con-trick' Demo

Barbara Castles 'In Place of Strife' in 1969.

As delegates pointed out time after time, they and millions of workers had supported a Labour Government—but not to implement the policies of the CBI, IMF and EEC! Bob Wright, AUEW Asst. General Secretary called on the Labour Party to stand by the struggles of the working class—where its own roots lay.

Though this movement of tens of

there is a dangerous weakness in the LCDTU's failure to offer any programme to organise around. Most delegates simply took the cue from Ford convenor Sid Harraway's call for a return to 'free collective bargaining'!

This is all very well for the skilled and traditionally well-organised sections as in engineering etc.—whose differentials have been clobbered by wage restraint. But nobody could

in the public sector and less well-organised industries, many of whom are feeling the brunt of Callaghan's job-slashing through spending cuts.

CHARTIST supports the LCDTU call for strike action to smash the social con-trick. But it must be worked for on the kind of programme (outlined above) that can unite the whole movement and break down the sectionalism of 'differential' struggles.

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THE CHARTIST

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Bullock-workers' control or workers controlled?

JANUARY 26th saw the publication of the long-awaited report of the Bullock Committee on Industrial Democracy. The majority report favouring worker directors on company boards sparked off a well-rehearsed series of responses from big business, the Tories and trade union and Labour leaders.

The CBI reacted violently, rejecting the proposals outright. So did the City. The Tories called Bullock "a thoroughly rancid package". The Liberals rejected it because it proposed trade union elections for worker directors. Tony Benn and 70 left MPs called for Bullock's immediate implementation. Callaghan compromised all round. Jack Jones and Clive Jenkins—both on the Bullock Committee—welcomed the report for their unions. Hugh Scanlon for the AUEW was more cautious. Chapple and the EPTU opposed the proposals from the right.

bewildered

Amidst all this verbal swash-buckling, not a few trade unionists will find themselves bewildered and confused over Bullock. What attitude should socialists take to the proposals? Firstly, we need to look at the main points.

- Worker directors on a 50-50 basis with shareholders to sit on boards of companies with over 2,000 employees.
- A third smaller group of directors to be mutually agreed between workers' and management directors and then co-opted.
- Trade unions to organise 'trigger' ballot to determine whether members want worker directors. If so, unions to elect representatives to sit on Joint Representation Committees within companies to operate and coordinate the system.
- An Industrial Democracy Commission to be established to oversee the workings of the system.
- Necessary changes to be made in company law.

On closer reading of Bullock it becomes clear that workers are not merely being asked to participate jointly with employers in the running of private industry but above all to take joint responsibility for its profitability and competitiveness. The Report sees the failure to "draw out the energies" of workers as one of the main reasons for the weaknesses of 'British industrial performance'.

Just what this involves is spelt out:

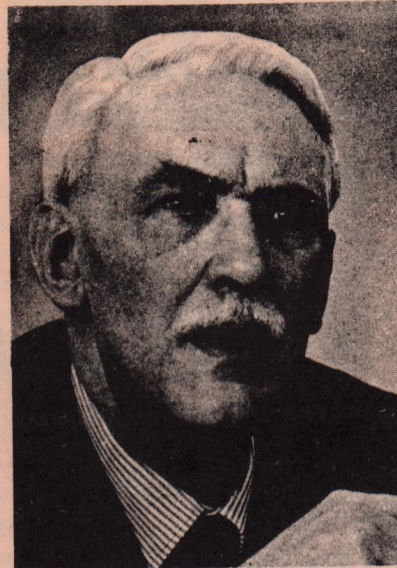
"The way to realise those energies, to provide greater satisfaction in the workplace and to assist in raising the level of productivity and efficiency in British industry is by putting the relationship between capital and labour on a new basis which will involve not just management but the whole workforce in sharing responsibility for the success and profitability of the enterprise."

In these words the Report reveals its central aims. Firstly, that workers must take responsibility for the profitability crisis of British capitalism. Secondly, that the trade unions must subordinate their own independent class interests to those of the employing class and its efforts to introduce speed-up, rationalisation and the scrapping of manning levels, under the cover of "efficiency". Thirdly, to undermine what independent bargaining power shop-stewards possess and introduce class collaboration at the level of the factory floor in the same style as collaboration has been introduced at the level of the state with the social contract.

permanence

Essentially the proposals are thoroughly class collaborationist, accepting the permanence of capitalism and the inviolability of private property. The committee is careful in its report not to challenge the 'charmed circle' of capitalist rights, stressing that the ultimate 'right' of shareholders to withdraw their capital will remain untouched. The whole Bullock formula for worker directors—50-50+X is designed equally to create the impression of power without any real control.

But does all this mean we give a simple 'no' to Bullock's proposals. If the matter were as straightforward as that socialism would have



HISTORIAN COMMITTEE HEAD ALAN BULLOCK

been achieved long ago. Thousands of workers will react to the hostile outpouring of the Tories and CBI. Thousands more will be conned by the talk of Jones and Jenkins and Tribune MPs that the proposals represent a step to genuine workers control. In the same way many workers have been misled into acceptance of the Ryder 'production' committees at British Leyland—despite the beginnings of an alternative in the 'Open the Books' Committee at Cowley—so too could many workers be misled about the essential nature of Bullock.

The Communist Party have opposed Bullock in a round-about way, but the alternative they pose is largely based on the theme of 'restoration and extension of free collective bargaining'. This implicitly accepts the capitalist as a 'bargaining' partner and fails to provide any road to the development of effective workers' control of production, aside from hurried remarks about 'opening the books'.

Equally hollow are calls to reject Bullock in favour of some pre-conceived blueprint for 'workers' con-

trol' based on shared representation of workers, government and trade union leaders.

Bullock must be used as an opportunity to develop workers' aspirations for control over their own workplaces, for a real democracy at work, by outlining an alternative political policy, which if fought for would unmask the mysticism which shrouds the actual exploitative relations of the capitalist system.

Militants should respond to Bullock by taking the offensive. Yes, we are in favour of worker directors as a step to full workers' control of production, but on the following conditions:

- That all workers' representatives are regularly elected and subject to immediate recall, being paid no more than the average wage of the workers represented.
- That no workers' representatives accept redundancies, speed-up or attacks on wages and conditions. That all Board decisions must be submitted to shop-floor and branch meetings for final decisions.
- That all company books and account ledgers are opened to workers' (aided by reliable experts) inspection.

bridgehead

On this basis 'workers on the board' can become a bridgehead into the vital nerve-centres of capitalist production. In no way should such worker representatives be exchanged for the maintenance and extension of shop-stewards and factory committees, which themselves could become the organs for full workers' control in a revolutionary crisis.

All this naturally assumes that Bullock's recommendations will get through Parliament—currently a highly unlikely event. Nonetheless, Tribune MPs should fight to amend any 'Industrial Democracy Bill' on the above lines with the most important aspect being the abolition of business secrets and the compulsory disclosure of company information.

Within the broader labour movement the struggle for the conditions of acceptance will expose not merely the shallowness and dangers of Bullock's proposal's but also open up the way to discussion about the real incompatibility of the profits system itself with any effective workers democracy and control.

Con-Trick chaos at Leyland

SEVERAL RECENTLY published reports have highlighted the dramatic fall in workers' living standards since 1973, the average estimate of the cut being around 20%. Yet, despite this, the Labour Government, and TUC persist in touting their latest wage curb proposals to an audience which listens more reluctantly every day. At his meeting with Callaghan at the end of February, Len Murray did not even mention wages.

With prices rapidly outstripping wages, then, it is hardly surprising that workers are taking steps to dismantle Labour's incomes policy.

The storm centre of these moves is British Leyland, whose workers—before their leaders foisted pay control on them—were the pace-setters on wages in the motor industry. Now, their frustration has burst to the surface, with 30,000 workers laid off and production of 15 of 18 Leyland models at a standstill.

Since 18th February, Leyland's 4,500 toolmakers have been on strike for and end to pay anomalies

by Jack Williamson

much as £15 in the combine—and for restoration of differentials with production workers. The key demand is for separate negotiating rights and for recognition of their unofficial committee as the only negotiating body for a National Toolroom Agreement. Their action has affected many of the combine's 160,000 workers, because of their vital role in production.

Industry Minister, Eric Varley, and AUEW leader, Hugh Scanlon have called on the toolroom workers to go back and have issued dire warnings about the employment consequences of the strike. However, as we go to press, there are four other disputes involving 21,000 other workers.

If Leyland is "in chaos" as the capitalist press never tire of telling us, the responsibility lies firmly with the employers and the Labour Government. No amount of visits to Leyland factories by Varley, Jones and Scanlon can gloss over that fact. And this is the reason for the contradictory nature of the toolroom struggle, which is essentially

a sectional fight, based on a certain resentment at the closing of pay differences between sections of the workforce. Nevertheless, despite the craft-superiority approach of the strike leadership, their action against the Social Contract must be supported.

Other dangers, too, are present. The most important is the very serious danger of corporate negotiations and bargaining, which would eliminate shop-floor power in individual plants. This is a central plank in the British Leyland management's policy and has been since the introduction of Measured Day Work.

Therefore it must be recognized that these disputes reflect a serious intent to break through Labour's 4½% wage ceiling. Already resolutions have been passed on most stewards' committees in British Leyland revealing the strength of hostility to wage control.

The main task for militants now is to build a political awareness of their own fight, which will be side-tracked if leaders like Stalinist, Derek Robinson, have their way.

Robinson, an Executive Committee



Bob Wright and Derek Robinson member of the Communist Party, is on record as saying that "low pay increased resistance to productivity". This plays right into the employers hands. It has been publicised that Leyland—via implementation of the participation fraud—is aiming to double the output per worker. If pay demands are not to lead to sackings and speed-up, they must be formulated 'without productivity strings'. Otherwise the likes of Robinson at combine level, and Scanlon and Jones at national level, will sell them down the river.

The Leyland toolroom workers have taken up the gauntlet. It is now up to their allies—all those who oppose the class collaborationist Social Contract—to support their struggle to smash the Government's incomes policy.

EGA WORK-IN AT CROSSROADS

"THIS HOSPITAL STAYS", was the defiant message from a conference held at the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in London on February 12th. About 150 delegates attended, representing Trades Councils, Constituency Labour Parties, NHS trade union branches and hospital Joint Shop Stewards Committees. Most were from Greater London, but some visited from as far away as Leeds.

Workers in the EGAH are still occupying their hospital and maintaining its services for women. This is the culmination of a so-far successful three-year long battle with the Camden and Islington Area Health Authority (AHA), who have been cynically dropping the hospital into disrepair, intending to have it shut last year. The continuing struggle of the EGA workers is a part of the fight both to save our National Health Service from decimation by the Labour Government and to maintain the right of women to be treated if they wish only by other women. Furthermore, under the shadow of the impending Benyon Bill, the preservation of the EGAH also represents the adamant retention of our much-needed abortion facilities.

OCCUPATION

The Conference was addressed by members of the EGAH Joint Shop Stewards Committee (JSSC) and the following discussion centred around the use of the workers' occupation to fight unemployment and hospital closures in the face of an expected cut of £150 million in NHS spending during this year alone. It was noted that other hospitals, eg. the Metropolitan Hospital in Hackney, had already been shut down easily by the authorities, despite one-day strikes and loud militant noises from inside and outside the hospital.

Some of the problems of the EGA occupation were mentioned. The work-in currently enjoys the support of the EGAH doctors, but what will the rest of the workers do if the AHA succeeds in luring the many of the career-minded doctors away to illusory 'pastures new' at the Whitt-

ington Hospital in Islington? The Whittington workers are not yet sufficiently conscious and organised to say 'No!' to accommodating fleeting vestiges of the womens' hospital within their own over-used resources. The closed-shop NUPE Camden Ambulance Branch have said they will take their orders from the workers when it comes to the crunch for the patients, but it was not represented at the Conference.

The difficulties in obtaining solidarity from the workers who supply wages, electricity, drugs etc. have yet to be faced.

by Richard Shield

Support was gained for a resolution, put by the EGAH JSSC, calling for massive strikes and pickets "in the event of an attempt by the AHA to close the EGAH". It seemed not to be evident to most present that the AHA are still not relaxing any pressure in their insidious measures to achieve just that! Are we expecting a sudden bugle call and the rumble of red-cross tanks over the metropolitan horizon? While they have strength left, and they seem to have plenty, the EGA workers must call for outside support for their occupation now and demand that the AHA pledge themselves fully to upgrade and re-equip the neglected hospital or to give them a brand new building.

An amendment was accepted from the floor, to the effect that the conference called on the NUPE Greater London Divisional Committee, the NALGO Metropolitan District Committee, the NEC and Division 8 of ASTMS and the COHSE London Regional Councils to organise a strike before April 13th—the current closure date wielded by the AHA. Let us see if the vague noises of our national trade union leaders are intended for REAL struggles to save REAL hospitals. It was noted, however, that this would have to be coordinated with the call already made by the NUPE Greater London Divisional Committee for a one-day holiday on May 11th.

Callaghan guns for Joan Maynard

Brynley Heaven

ONE SERIOUS CONCLUSION to emerge from the Fleet Street saga of Joe Haines and Marcia Williams is the confirmation that Jim Callaghan is a very different breed of politician from his predecessor. While maintaining the illusion of a Wilson-style balancing act in promoting David Owen (on the right) and Judith Hart (perhaps in hope of silencing her muted criticisms) in the post-Crosland reshuffle, Callaghan is in fact moving hard and fast against the Tribune group.

Firstly, he has given the go-ahead for a cabinet minister, former Gaitskellite Bill Rodgers, to launch the "Campaign for a Labour Victory". This latter-day version of the "Campaign for Democratic Socialism" will be expected to organise the right-wing at constituency and conference level as a counterpart to the right wing Manifesto group of Labour MPs. They plan to avoid the hysterical red-baiting inanities of the Social Democratic Alliance.

Secondly, and much more sinister, is the attempt to include a dirty political deal with the union chiefs in the current back-stage manoeuv-

dominate elections to the NEC's trade union and women's sections. Their first target is Joan Maynard, prominent left winger, sponsor of the anti-tied cottages bill and leading "Troops Out of Ireland" advocate. They find her arguments an embarrassment because they chime in with so much feeling in the party. Her removal at conference this year would be their first step to restoring the reliable (i.e. right wing) National Executives of yesteryears.

So it ill-becomes Tribune spokesperson Ian Mikardo to vent his spleen on the marxist left. With the exposures of CIA funding and secret organised meetings on their part, now is the time to press the question of Labour Party democracy against the right. Throw it back in their faces! Let's give the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy some teeth, organising publicly in the constituencies.

We insist that Mikardo and his co-thinkers, in parliament and in the party, campaign for the re-selection of MPs, the election of the leader, the cabinet and all public officials and against bans and pro-



New Race Law will not stop Racism

THE NEW Race Relations Act has not drawn much attention yet. The National Front haven't bothered to demonstrate against it. Most people don't even know it exists. In fact, it merges the old Race Relations Board and the Community Relations Commission (CRC) into a Commission for Racial Equality (CRE).

Unfortunately, not much has changed except the initials. The job of the CRC was the nebulous task of furthering 'relations' between the 'communities'. It set up local Councils for Community Relations which were responsible not to these 'communities' but to the Home Office.

It is not surprising that organisations which were neither set up or controlled by the black and Asian communities were useless in combatting the surge of racialism last summer. The new Act promises no improvements.

discrimination

The Race Relations Board (RRB) had to investigate the claims of those who argued they had been discriminated against in the fields of jobs, housing etc. But discrimination is often very difficult to prove. Less than a quarter of the thousand or so cases the RRB handled each year were proven. Clubs won't be able to discriminate under the new Act but apart from that, the CRE is unlikely to prevent direct discrimination any more than the RRB could. Nine years after the last Race Relations Act black and Asian workers are still concentrated in the worst jobs.

The new Act does concentrate on 'indirect' discrimination. No longer can an employer claim a certain test which all candidates for promotion have to pass, is fair because it applies to all. If a far smaller proportion of applicants of one race pass, the employer, will have to prove that passing that test, or a particular part of it, is essential for the job. A language test, for example, might exclude Asians from a job where the ability to speak English was unimportant.

The CRE can investigate practices of local and central government - even Immigration Laws. They could find out that a local authority keeps blacks out of council housing or crams them into the oldest estates. But will the new Act stop this? Could the CRE investigate cases of police harassment as at the Notting Hill Carnival last summer?

Enoch Powell claims that he

the new Act, the fact that the speeches could incite racial hatred could jail him for two years. He needn't worry. The Attorney General must agree to prosecute and our friend, Sam Silkin fears that Powell would become a martyr if he was convicted. Silkin could have prosecuted the National Front and National Party under the old Act, but refused.

Whatever good intentions lie behind the new Act its reliance on the courts and arbitrary machinery means that no effective fight can be mounted through it against racialism. The government's other policy on race highlights the real hypocrisy of all supporters of the Labour Government's policy on racialism. That is, the maintenance of the 1968 and 1971 Immigration Acts in complete defiance of 1976 Labour Party Conference policy. The Labour leaders are staging a complete capitulation to the right-wing lobby for 'tighter immigration controls' with the new 'Nationalities Act' now in preparation.

controls

All immigration controls confirm the view of the racials that the entry of black and Asian people into this country harms the indigenous population. The only argument remaining is "there's too many already and should we therefore send some (or all) back!" or "existing legislation is sufficient to keep the numbers down". The government is saying to the racials: "We'll do a deal. We will keep the blacks out. You treat those already here nicely".

Anti-racials in the labour movement must see the Act for what it is, whatever its intentions. That is, little more than a cover for a government which pursues economic policies that hit blacks and Asians even harder than whites, and which passes and maintains racist legislation.

Our fight cannot rely on the law or courts to defeat racialism. It must be based firmly in the labour movement and black and Asian communities. A major task will be to force the Labour Government to repeal all anti-immigration legislation, confront all racist ideas and the imperialist system which generates them, and above all commit all workers organisations to support black and Asian workers fighting for democratic rights and better conditions, as for example at Grunwick. In these tasks, all the Race Relations legislation will be more

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY



What sort of democracy is this?

SHIRLEY WILLIAMS RECENT SPEECH on the theme 'Trotskyism and Democracy'— although an attack on Labour's left-wing— gave intellectual expression to a commonly-held view that Parliamentary democracy must not be challenged in the struggle for socialism. It is a view shared by virtually the whole of the Parliamentary Labour Party and even the Communist Party never tire of defending the "sovereignty of Parliament". Essentially it is the reformist view which sees Parliament and the capitalist state as neutral bodies standing above society. **Geoff Bender** examines in more depth the substance and compatibility of these views with the fight for a workers' state and socialism.



1905 St. Petersburg Square

IN THE LAST issue of the *Chartist* we gave a short rejoinder to Shirley Williams attack on the right of Marxists and Trotskyists to fight for their views in the Labour Party. She argued that, "Modern Trotskyism, like the Trotskyism of Trotsky himself holds democracy and personal freedom in complete contempt". In order to prove this she produced two quotes — 20 years apart, torn from their historic context — out of the hundreds of thousands of words Trotsky produced on the subject in a political career spanning 43 years.

But where do Marxists stand on the issue of democratic institutions and rights? Isn't it true that they stand for "the forcible overthrow of all existing conditions and institutions" and the "dictatorship of the proletariat"? These issues are not only of concern to Labour Party members; they are the issues which are tearing apart the Communist Parties of Western Europe and the liberation movements of the underdeveloped countries. The Marxist answer to these questions has always marked a sharp line of demarcation between them and their reformist, centrist or anarchist opponents.

DUAL REALITY

As early as 1843 Marx began to develop a critique of the modern representative state. He recognized that the advance of capitalism shattering previous social relations had forced a schism between social and political life and the realm of the political state detaching itself from society had come to occupy the position held by the Church under feudalism. Just as before God and the Church, noble and serf stood equal, while in the material social world their relations were those of oppression so in the modern state which enshrined in its constitution, before its courts, and Parliaments the equality and freedom of its citizens, the social reality of class exploitation, inequality and oppression was concealed.

As Marx continued his researches he was finally able to trace this dual reality to its roots — in the social organisation of production — where under the guise

of an exchange of commodities of equal value the wage earner is robbed of the creative power of his labour and the surplus he creates accrues to capital.

Just as the sphere of circulation of commodities appears as "that very Eden of the innate rights of man where alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham" obscuring the reality of class exploitation in production, so the representative state — before whose institutions capitalist and worker stand in relations of formal equality — obscures the daily relations of oppression. Such a state cannot but help separate the "political" from other areas of social activity, build a Chinese Wall between representatives and presented, rulers and ruled and in the last analysis defend the continuance of the system which has produced it.

However, even such a state Marx regarded as a "definite advance", the more so as it became evident that the rise of even this formal democracy was by no means an automatic consequence of the spread of capitalist industry but rather had to be fought for. In 1848 in the *Communist Manifesto* Marx and Engels speak of the need for the working class to win the "battle for democracy" as part of the struggle for socialism.

After the failure of the revolutionary events in Europe in 1848 it became increasingly obvious that the struggle even for the formal democratic rights of universal suffrage, secret ballots, freedom of assembly and press could not be left in the hands of the ruling class. Today, the democratic rights enjoyed by the countries of Western Europe owe more to the strength of the Labour movement in each country than to progressive Parliamentary legislation or constitutional reform.

Dictatorship of the Proletariat

But the experience of even the most democratic of capitalist countries shows that the empty abstraction of Parliamentary democracy is not a form of rule by which the working class can come to power. For that a new kind of state is required. But what kind?

The answer Marx gave to this question in 1843 was

the same essentially as he was to discover some 28 years later in history in the Paris Commune of 1871 and which has emerged time and time again in proletarian revolutions since that date.

It is a state which smashes once and for all the separation of political and social life. It is a state where the functions of legislating and executing legislation are merged; where no caste of privileged legislators or administrators stand above the citizens of the state; where all representatives are mandatable and subject to recall. It is a state where the police and army are replaced by the armed organization of the citizens themselves and where all state officials perform their work for workers wages.

This is "the dictatorship of the proletariat" of which Marxists speak. Its social basis — the abolition of classes through the common ownership of the means of production, just as the social basis of the modern state is capitalism — the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie — no matter how democratic its forms. The proletarian dictatorship can offer from the very beginning a democracy wider in scope and broader in content than any enjoyed under capitalism. Its only enemies are those who wish to restore by force the rule of a minority — the expropriated capitalists over the majority. It is a state which is already in the process of dissolving itself in society.

DEMOCRACY

Yet for Shirley Williams, quoting the guru of Labour's right, Britain's belated Bernstein, the late Anthony Crosland, individual freedom and social ownership are incompatible. Posing the question thus, she then asks the Marxists who wish to join the Labour Party if they are prepared to place "democracy" above "socialism".

We will not pause here to ask Shirley Williams if she has acquainted herself with Clause IV of the Labour Party Constitution and if she believes this to be compatible with the democracy she defends but we will answer her question as she herself has posed it. No, as Marxists we will not subordinate the interests

of the working class to the empty abstraction of Parliamentary democracy while the real means of power, the ownership of the means of production remain in private hands.

We will not defend in abstraction the rights of freedom of speech, freedom of the press and assembly but will fight to imbue them with real concrete content. How can speech and the press be free when they are subordinate to the laws of the market. How can the right of assembly be guaranteed unless meeting places are in the hands of the working class? Yes, socialism — common ownership of the means of production — is incompatible with the Parliamentary democracy she defends because it *does not go far enough*. The democracy Marxists inscribe on their banner — the democracy of the Paris Commune and the Russian Soviets — is indispensable to the planning of a socialist economy and the development of social relations of human solidarity.

But what of Trotskyism — with its insistence on the armed overthrow of the existing state and the permanent nature of world revolution? Can this be reconciled with the full exercise of democratic liberties in the course of transition from parliamentary to socialist democracy?

TROTSKYISM

Trotskyism developed as an independent current in the world workers' movement to continue the finest traditions of the Russian Bolsheviks, against the darkening backdrop of the late 1920s. Triumphant fascism in Italy and Hungary, the defeat of the British General Strike, the crushing of the working class vanguard by Chiang Kai Shek in China, and the strangling of the democracy of an exhausted working class in the Party, the state, and the unions by the Stalinist apparatus in the Soviet Union. These were some of the events out of which the Trotskyist movement took its birth.

In the following decade Trotskyists, with their tiny forces harried and slandered, emerged as the most consistent defenders of the democratic rights won by the working class in a century of struggle. But they fought for these not as ends in themselves but as steps on the road to the world wide socialist revolution.

In Germany, from 1928 to 1933 they fought against the sectarianism of the Stalinized Communist Party for a united front with the Social Democrats against the Nazi threat.

In Spain, from 1931 onwards they raised, against anarchist, reformist and ultra-left critics, democratic as well as socialist slogans. As the revolution gathered pace in the course of the Civil War it was the Popular Front government who unleashed the bloodhounds of Stalin's GPU on the revolutionists who refused to subordinate the interests of the working class to the formal constraints of capitalist democracy.

In the Soviet Union, while Trotskyists were dying in Stalin's jails and prison camps for daring to oppose the bureaucratic usurpation of the rights of the working class, Shirley Williams' Fabian ancestors Shaw and the Webbs fawned on Stalin's Russia. The Trotskyist programme: the restoration of the Soviet democracy of the early days of the revolution.

Throughout the dark years of the 1930s the record of Trotsky and his followers was one long struggle for personal liberty and democratic rights in the service of the struggle for socialism. A glance through any of his writings of this period will reveal this.

What of the question of revolutionary force? Marxists do not advocate the use of force — but they recognize its existence and counterpose to the force of the capitalist state-exercised in the interests of a minority — the revolutionary force of the great majority.



Communards in Paris, 1871 surround the fallen statue of Napoleon I which had originally surmounted the Colonne Vendome.

The first expression of workers democracy.

Y OR ACY?



viet (Trotsky is on far left).

Behind the formal facade of the most democratic capitalist state hide the naked instruments of coercion — armies, police, prisons. Ask the people of the Six Counties in the North of Ireland! In Britain these instruments of repression are not even under the formal control of the "will of people" expressed in Parliament but Parliament itself, its power established by a revolutionary force which did not hesitate to execute a king, is under the formal control of the monarchy along with the Courts and Armed Forces.

Thus even if Parliament, itself was capable of a revolutionary transformation — which it is not — the forces of capital organised around the apparatus of the state could still act to crush the labour movement.

Particularly ironic is the fact that Shirley Williams while opposing the use of force in politics hold high the tattered banner of national — rather than class — interests — the same banner under which Social Democracy in Europe in 1914 and in the "Democracies" in 1939, mobilized the working people of their respective countries to their deaths for the imperialist re-division of the world. What more convincing testimony can there be to the Marxist position that violence permeates like a cancer the very pores of capitalist society than these ten years of barbarous slaughter? What other cure is possible for such a cancer than the surgery of workers' revolution?

Shirley Williams summing up the entire theoretical stock-in-trade of modern Social Democracy reveals its bankruptcy. She confuses Parliamentary democracy with democratic rights and individual freedom, "democracy" in general with its Parliamentary shadow, which she then (quite rightly) sees as incompatible with socialism.

REVOLUTIONARY FORCE

She therefore feels compelled to defend the "mixed economy" (capitalism) against further nationalization as necessary for the defence of democracy. Seeing all freedom and democracy enshrined in the Palace of Westminster she would zealously keep it there lest it escape to the society outside. Opposing revolutionary force she defends that of the existing state and the blind unconscious coercion of a society whose laws operate behind the backs of men and women. In short, she emerges as no socialist at all but a liberal.

On these grounds she would deny membership to the Labour Party to all those who fail to meet her requirements. But why this attack now?

The movement in the constituencies against the policies of this government, for the re-selection of MPs and so forth poses, however dimly and unconsciously, against Parliamentary democracy the democracy of the Labour movement — recallability, the ending of privileged representatives, the smashing of the barriers which separate representatives from those they represent.

Revolutionary Marxists encourage and develop this trend, and make it conscious knowing that in the final analysis its conclusion can only be the replacement of the Parliamentary system with the direct rule of the organization of the Labour movement themselves. To achieve this will mean awakening to conscious political life the millions of Labour voters who have allowed the likes of Shirley Williams for too long to speak in their names.

It is with a dim realization of these implications of the current movement for more democracy in the constituencies, the Party and the trade unions that Shirley Williams speaks. It would be a richly ironic reflection of the limits of Parliamentary democracy if her first broadside in its defence should provide the pretext for a purge.

THE FEBRUARY Revolution which overthrew the Tsar solved not one of the questions which had precipitated it. The weak and vacillating regime which emerged from it—composed of liberal Cadets, the peasant-based populist Social Revolutionary Party and the right-wing Social Democrats, headed by the Liberal Prince Lvov—were trapped by the whirlpool of class forces the revolution had set in motion.

Under pressure from the Allies—France and Britain—they were incapable of bringing Russia's participation in the War to a close. Tied to the large landed interests and needing their support for the war they dare not encourage the peasant movement for land. The government resting on the Cadets dare not antagonise the employers; leaning on the workers' Soviets it dare not attack the workers.

In reality, already, in the large cities power had fallen into the hands of the Soviets who under the leadership of the Menshevik and Social Revolutionary deputies were handing it back to the government of Prince Lvov. Clearly the future of the Empire of the deposed Tsar rested with the leaders of the various factions of the working class movement, as expressed through the Social Democratic organisations and the Soviets.

tested

The policies pursued by the two parties of Russian Social Democracy were shaped by the entire preceding period from the foundation of the Party, through the split in 1903 and tested in the tremendous events of the First Russian Revolution in 1905.

The revolution of 1905 was the laboratory from which emerged all basic groupings of Russian political thought, and where all tendencies within Russian Marxism took shape. No one in the ranks of Russian Social Democracy doubted that the coming revolution was a bourgeois revolution because it set out to liberate bourgeois society from the chains of absolutism and feudal ownership.

The MENSHEVIK faction, from this drew the conclusion that Russia would have to go through a similar period of capitalist development to the West, and that along this path she would acquire political freedom indispensable for further struggle of the workers for socialism. The task of the hour for the working class was the struggle for political freedom in alliance with the bourgeoisie. Later, on a higher level of capitalist development, the proletariat would carry



60 YEARS OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION



Bolshevik banner, 'Workers of the World Unite', carried by Russian demonstrators

The three views of the Revolution

Part 2 by Graham Bash & Geoff Bender

out the social revolution against the bourgeoisie.

Irreconcilably opposed to the ideas of unity with the bourgeoisie, were LENIN and the Bolsheviks. To Plekhanov's concept of an alliance between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, Lenin counterposed the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry.

To Lenin, the liberation of the productive forces of bourgeois society, signified, first and foremost, a radical solution of the agrarian question in the sense of the complete liquidation of the landowning class and the revolutionary redistribution of land ownership.

Since the liberal bourgeoisie was intimately bound to large landed property interests, the genuine democratic liberation of the peasantry could be realised only by the revolutionary co-operation of the workers and peasants. According to Lenin, their joint uprising against the old order must lead to the establishment of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry". But for Lenin, this dictatorship was still a bourgeois dictatorship.

For the sake of preserving its alliance with the peasantry the proletariat would in the coming revolution have to forego the direct posing of the socialist tasks. But this would signify the renunciation by the proletariat of its own dictatorship.

Standing outside of both the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks, was Leon TROTSKY—whose theory of the PERMANENT REVOLUTION was to foresee the course of the Russian Revolution, a decade before it occurred. Trotsky agreed with Lenin

that the agrarian revolution, and consequently a general democratic revolution also, could be realised only by the united forces of the workers and peasants in struggle against the liberal bourgeoisie. But this left open the question of which class would wield the real dictatorship.

Trotsky was clear that the peasantry was incapable of playing an independent revolutionary role and of concentrating the revolutionary power in its hands.

Trotsky concluded that the Russian bourgeois revolution could solve its tasks radically only in the event that the proletariat, with the aid of the peasantry, proved capable of concentrating the revolutionary dictatorship in its own hands. The dictatorship had become the instrument for solving the tasks of the historically belated bourgeois revolution.

But having reached power, the proletariat would be compelled to encroach ever more deeply upon the relations of private property, that is, to take the road of socialist measures.

first stage

Trotsky agreed that Russia, in and of itself, was not ripe for the socialist revolution. But the world economy and particularly the European economy was fully ripe for the socialist revolution. The Russian Revolution was to Trotsky, the first stage in the European and World Revolution and whether the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia could lead to socialism or not, and at what tempo and through what stages, would depend on the fate of the world revolution.

In the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm which greeted the February overturn all the parties favouring the revolution blurred into one indistinguishable "revolutionary democracy". The self-appointed Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet made up mainly of Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries made haste to transfer the power which the workers and soldiers had wrested from the Tsar and his minister and were thrusting into their shaking hands into those of the workers' worst enemies.

"Thus," as Trotsky explains, "as a result of a victorious insurrection of workers' and soldiers, there appeared at the helm of government a handful of the richest landlords and industrialists..."

In the coming month even the Bolsheviks, trained in the spirit of fiery class independence, were to yield to the politics of "democratic conciliation" and "social patriotism". How the return of Lenin at the beginning of April was to change all this we will explain in

Spain: The struggle for Euzkadi by Martin Cook

FOR MANY YEARS now the turbulent Basque country of Northern Spain - 'Euzkadi' - has been the sharpest thorn in the side of the dictatorship of Franco and his heirs. It presents a unique combination of nationalist feeling and working class militancy. Last December, the Basque provinces of Vizcaya (centred on Bilbao) and Guipúzcoa (around San Sebastian) were among the few areas whose heavy abstentions dented the generally overwhelming majority for Premier Suárez's pseudo-democratic reforms.

Many of the biggest and most militant strike waves since General Franco's death in November 1975 have been in Euzkadi. Most notable was the colossal general strike after the slaying by police of four workers in the southern Basque town of Vitoria last March: more recently, there have been repeated strikes in the cause of a total amnesty. Most of the 250-odd political prisoners not so far released are Basque Nationalists.

challenge

To meet this challenge the Government has been negotiating on amnesty and possible autonomy with Basque leaders. Concessions include the legalisation of the Basque flag, the Ikurrina, King Juan Carlos's ministers risk provoking Falangist hard men with such moves, but their priority has to be to defuse the explosive discontent of Euzkadi.

To understand the background to the present situation, it is important to realize that "Spain" has never become a homogenous nation-state like France, for example; rather it is a multi-national state. Euzkadi, like Catalunya (Catalonia) is a nation within it. The Basque language (Euskera) is a very unusual and ancient tongue dating back 3,000 years or more, unrelated to any European language except possibly Georgian. The rugged mountain terrain of the Cantabrian Cordillera along the Bay of Biscay allowed it to retain a separate identity and autonomy even under the Spanish kings.

Ironically, however, the Basque nationalist movement is a very recent phenomenon. Until the end of the last century, Euzkadi was a thoroughly backward land of priest-ridden peasants. Then came an extremely rapid develop-



ment of heavy industry, based on the local iron ore plus coal from the nearby Asturias. In a few decades an aggressive, expansionist industrial capitalism had emerged. Bilbao became a centre of ship-building and had most of Spain's merchant fleet, while in 1913 Britain derived 65% of her iron ore from the Basque mines. The heavy industry was dominated by finance capital - the powerful Banco de Bilbao and Banco de Vizcaya grew to become two of the "big seven" banks in the Spanish state. Basque interests controlled railways, metal industry, and hydro-electric production around Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, etc. Euzkadi produced 90% of the metal goods of Spain.

separation

At the same time a great concentration of militant workers was rapidly emerging. Because of the large units of production, they were the most homogenous working class in Spain. The nationalist movement developed initially as a reaction by conservative peasant aristocrats to the invasion by a 'foreign' (i.e. Spanish) irreligious, and 'racially inferior' proletariat; and also to the defeat of Spain by the USA in the war of 1898 (ending her role as a serious colonial power). The Basque Nationalist Party (PNV) was founded in the 1890's by Sabino Arana, a right-wing Catholic crank.

The Basque capitalists never really supported the extreme separatism of the PNV. Their economic interests tied them to the Spanish

state. (The four Basque provinces even today have only 2.3 million people: a hopelessly small market). The PNV gradually evolved towards a paternalist 'Christian Democracy', substituting demands for autonomy for separatism. It developed a wider social base as economic advance created new layers of white collar workers - facing discrimination, if Basque-speaking. It set up its own yellow strike-breaking union, the STV (Solidaridad de Trabajadores Vascos), which still exists.

strong state

The government in Madrid, based on a weak capitalism which needed a strong centralized state to survive, never had much time for Basque aspirations. In the Civil War crisis of the 1930s, the PNV ended up half-heartedly on the Republican side, though their fear of the workers' struggle led them to sabotage the fight and cave in easily to Franco's Nationalists. For having chosen the losing side, the Basques were stripped of their newly-won autonomy: for the last forty years their language and culture have been savagely suppressed. State officials, army and police were largely non-Basque, and treated Euzkadi as an occupied province.

In conditions of illegality, the pacifist and pro-American PNV fell into decline. Finally disgusted by its irrelevance, a group of young militants split away in 1959 to form the urban guerilla liberation movement ETA (Euzkadi ta Askatasuna). This organization pursued a confused course

between straightforward nationalism and a socialist approach (attempting to have the best of both worlds). Its main period of successful military activity began around 1967, culminating in the wave of protests that reprimed its militants at the 1970 Burgos trial and the assassination of the Prime Minister, Carrero Blanco in 1973.

ETA, however, has always remained a group of a few hundred middle-class activists - despite the widespread sympathy they have won, especially in the smaller towns. The prominence of Euzkadi in the struggle against Franco had much more to do with the strength and vitality of the industrial workers as the economy forged ahead.

rightist

The 30-year struggle was heralded by a mass strike in 1947, and nationalist groups like ETA have not played a leading role in any of the big workers' movements since. Since the death of Franco, the mainstream ETA-V has become more isolated and suspended its military operations, in readiness to negotiate. In the workers' movement the social-democratic PSOE has always been strongest in the Basque country, but when normal political activity is legalized the PNV is likely to regain much of its old ground among the Basque middle class.

Euzkadi is not like Ireland, for instance, - downtrodden, economically backward and politically reactionary. But this does not mean the left can ignore the National Question. This was the case (disastrously) during the Civil War. It is still the case with the PCE (Communist Party of Spain). They oppose the call for Basque self-determination for fear of alienating the army leadership and other rightist sections. The effect of this attitude is to hand over the movement for national liberation (which has wide working-class support) to the bourgeois PNV.

The opposite danger is to support self-determination as a purely democratic "first stage", which is what many sections of the Spanish left do. This can only create illusions in a new Basque Popular Front to derail the workers' struggle. Self-determination for Euzkadi has to be placed very firmly in the context of the fight for socialism throughout the Spanish state.

IN THE MIDST OF proceedings in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg against British government torture of nationalists in the north of Ireland, revelations that similar practices of repression are being used by the green capitalist government in Dublin have caused a storm.

"Brutal interrogation methods are being used by a special group of Gardai (police) as a routine practice in the questioning of suspects about serious crimes. This group uses physical beatings and psychological techniques similar to some used in Northern Ireland, to obtain information and secure incriminating statements." Thus began the 'sensational' article in the Irish Times on 14th February, exposing the work of the 'heavy gang'. After the acquittal last year of six members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party charged with bank robbery it became common knowledge that torture was being used by the Southern police and had been used to extract their 'confessions'.

Now these 'subversive' allegations have been proved, the Southern Irish

Torture allegations expose Dublin Government

by Peter Chalk

Government finds itself in an embarrassing position as it presses home the case against Britain at the European Commission of Human Rights.

Their dilemma, however, arises naturally out of the central contradiction of the Southern Irish State itself; a state founded on a disastrous division of Ireland and politically dominated by British imperialism. The sections of the Irish bourgeoisie that supported partition have been forced on the one hand to suppress the Republican movement and, on the other, to recognise the national aspirations of the Irish people as a whole.

This is behind the controversy over the attempts of Labour politician Conor Cruise O'Brien to delete Art-

icles Two and Three of the Irish Constitution relating to sovereignty of the whole of Ireland. Most politicians in the South would prefer to ignore these sections but Fianna Fáil, the traditionally more nationalist of the capitalist parties, was quick to exploit O'Brien's speech in the run-up to the election. Many Fine Gael and Labour Party members (who make up the present coalition government) merely criticized him for his "bad timing".

While desperately trying to attract foreign capital into the depressed Southern economy, the last thing the Southern Ireland ruling class want is a revival of the bitter controversy over the North. Their aim is a 'respectable' regime in the Six Counties that

satisfies Catholic apprehensions about British rule. This accounts for the two-fold attitude towards Britain at present; the 'friendly' talks between Mason and Dr. Fitzgerald, the Irish Foreign Minister, and the 'hostility' over the torture allegations.

The one objective that the British and Irish Governments are unanimous about, however, is the necessity of defeating the Nationalist movement. The Emergency Powers Act introduced last October in Dáil allowed 'suspects' to be detained for seven days and the Irish Times pointed out that the Gardai torture has 'become more entrenched' since then. But the paper also pointed out, gloating over the South's repressive laws, that 'the Gardai have plenty of law at their disposal - more, indeed, than their counterparts in Northern Ireland - and they must be able to discharge their brief within those legal limits'.

The implication is clear - smash the progressive forces but do not put off foreign capital. The 'carnival of reaction' that James Connolly predicted as a consequence of partition is clearly still continuing.



From I.S. to S.W.P

IN JANUARY 1977, the left-wing group, the International Socialists, transformed themselves into the grandly-titled Socialist Workers Party. A party, mark you, which is to be seen as "the infant of a socialist party which can transform society".

Accompanying the occasion of the birth of the SWP is a pamphlet entitled "Why you should be a socialist", by the radical journalist and editor of 'Socialist Worker' (weekly paper of the SWP) Paul Foot. The pamphlet purports to argue "...the case for the new Socialist Workers Party". We can only say that it is an extraordinarily weak case indeed.

British tradition

The former IS, as an organisation, belongs to the peculiarly British tradition of radical socialist movements which somehow always seemed to find itself excluded from the major debates and discussions which raged through the revolutionary workers' movement internationally. This tradition began in the last decades of the 19th century with Hyndman's Social Democratic Federation, was kept alive in the 1930s by the Maxton-led Independent Labour Party and is today represented by the newly formed SWP.

What marked off the preceding organisations, and today characterises the SWP, is the profound belief that 'British' circumstances impress the need for a 'British' approach to the class

ONLY NAME HAS CHANGED

Colin Kennedy

struggle, which effectively excludes any serious discussion of the international nature of the crisis and the likewise international character of the working class response.

In the 90-odd pages of 'Why you should be a socialist' there are a few anecdotes about workers' struggles abroad, but never a serious discussion of the consequences of say, the Southern African or Irish national revolution for the class struggle in Britain. Instead, Foot confines his writings to establishing a very 'British' case for socialism, where all the workers are seen as trade unionists, miners, engineers, and hence primarily concerned with struggles over wages, conditions and so on, in good 'British' economic fashion. Under these conditions it must be seen that workers will best appreciate the need for socialism if it can be argued that socialism is merely the logical extension of all their previous militant, trade union traditions.

Socialism hence becomes narrow, insular and quite content to rest in the ruts laid down by a million struggles over wages and conditions. Nothing is effectively challenged in the existing consciousness of these militant workers. History becomes a series of anecdotes about workers' councils in the 1926 General Strike, or

what one shop steward said to another in 1972.

Contrast this approach with even the earliest statements of the founders of the revolutionary socialist movement. In the opening pages of "Manifesto of the Communist Party", issued by Marx and Engels in 1848, the class struggle is placed in an international context in the opening lines of the Preface:

"A spectre is haunting Europe—the spectre of Communism. All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre; Pope and Tsar, Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police spies."

Or the programme of the Russian Bolshevik Party in 1917, which began by placing all the traditions of the Russian socialist movement in an internationalist setting.

"Russian Social-Democracy (ie. Russian Revolutionary socialism DF) regards itself as a detachment of the world army of the Proletariat, and is working towards the same ultimate goal as the Social-Democrats of all other countries."

This struggle to place the class struggle in Britain in an internationalist context of world capitalist crisis and workers' and anti-colonial

revolution is wholly absent from the case for socialism according to the infantile SWP.

Other criticisms, from almost every page of this "case for the Socialist Workers Party" could be enumerated by the score. Foremost would be the utter indifference to serious Marxist analysis of the crisis. On page 23, Foot even states that the reason why the Keynesian solution to the capitalist crisis will never work is simply because the capitalists are too greedy and selfish to try it! How unutterably foolish of them.

Frankly, this reviewer weeps buckets for the time lost (about 2½ hours) reading this shallow little pamphlet. We can only advise readers of the Chartist to treat this pamphlet with the seriousness it deserves.

WHY YOU SHOULD BE A SOCIALIST

PAUL FOOT

...the case for the new Socialist Workers Party

After Geneva—what next for Zimbabwe

THE ATTEMPT by the imperialist powers to talk the Zimbabwean Nationalists into a sell-out to the white-settler regime appears to have collapsed for the present. Kissinger's 'swan-song' proposals have been exposed as a fraud. The two key proposals, for an equal-parity and white chaired two-tier transitional government and the control of the Justice Ministry and the security forces by the white settler interests during this period, proved unacceptable to the black nationalists. Smith refused to accept any modification of these pre-conditions for 'independence'.

intransigence

Clearly Smith must have gone to Geneva with secret assurances of support from South Africa for his intransigence. This was confirmed by the post-Christmas shuttle of Ivor Richard, the Geneva chairman, around Southern Africa. He was desperately trying to twist a few arms—the South Africans to put more pressure on Smith to be reasonable and the 'front-line' Presidents, Nyerere, Kaunda etc, to moderate the demands of the Zimbabwean nationalists for majority rule. Nothing better demonstrated the wasted muscles of the toothless British lion. South African Premier Vorster told him to take a running jump and the African presidents came out in open support for the more militant Zimbabwean Patriotic Front of Nkomo and Mugabe.

Even without covert support from South Africa Smith would have been totally incapable of selling any alt-

by DAVID HOOKES

'home'. So Richard waddled back to Britain, tail between his legs, having achieved the precise opposite of his intentions. Shortly after his return Smith felt confident enough to announce that he would not himself be returning to Geneva.

Why then did the Geneva talks take place? It must have been obvious that Kissinger's proposals had little chance of success. Apart from U. S. imperialist regime's domestic political considerations (winning the US black vote for Ford) Smith and his imperialist mentors probably wanted to have a close look at the black nationalist leadership. Most importantly he must have wanted to see if it was possible to drive a wedge between the 'moderate' leadership of Muzorewa and the 'extremist' guerrilla leadership of Mugabe.

polarisation

He seems to have had a modicum of success in this aim. Muzorewa disassociated himself from some of the militant rhetoric of the Mugabe camp. He subsequently returned to Rhodesia to demonstrations of mass support. The subsequent open support by the front-line Presidents for the Patriotic front indicates some polarisation among the Nationalists.

The central problem for imperialism remains the existence of the guerrilla army with its growing support amongst the Zimbabwean blacks—especially the youth, as the recruitment of almost 200 school-students in a well-publicised demonstration of support showed recently. The need either to physically liquidate or politically neutralise this force is para-



Zimbabwean guerrillas ready for Smith's "last stand".

by now that the overt political leaders of the guerrilla movement, Nkomo and Mugabe, are not much more than power-hungry opportunists, particularly Nkomo.

Smith appears to be aiming to split this alliance of the Patriotic Front by encouraging a 'moderate' African leadership with some claim to a mass following (for example Muzorewa). This might tempt the more blatantly opportunist elements of the guerrilla leadership to abandon armed struggle.

Having isolated such a moderate leadership Smith could then negotiate a Kenya-style solution, in which the interests of white farmers and the foreign imperialist mining and manufacturing companies could be safeguarded. This policy would be aided by a 'counter-terror' policy to break the masses from support for the guerrilla army.

The recent 'terrorist' shooting of unarmed black workers and white catholic nuns and priests may well have been the work Selous Scouts—

Such counter-terror gangs were organised by out-old friend Brigadier Frank Kitson during the Mau-Mau emergency in Kenya, to discredit the freedom fighters and justify the large scale atrocities against the African population.

For socialists in the British labour movement the task is to expose the servile connivance of the Labour Government with these imperialist manoeuvres to avoid a revolutionary crisis in Zimbabwe. The interests of the British working class are objectively the same as those of the exploited masses of Zimbabwe, that is, the total expropriation of the reactionary white settler clique and the imperialist concerns, lock-stock-and barrel.

We must demand that the Labour government openly disassociates itself from British capitalist interests in Rhodesia (Lorrho's, Barclays Bank etc), and provides immediate military and material support to those forces seeking total defeat for the white settler regime and immed-

"INSTEAD OF TALKING with the Tory backers of Grunwick and the NAFF, the leaders of our movement should combine to stop all services to the company until it recognizes our Union and takes back all those who have been on strike".

This is the challenge the Grunwick Strike Committee has laid down to the TUC, the Labour Government and the entire Labour movement in the wake of the ACAS report recommending recognition of their union APEX.

After 30 weeks on the picket line, the Grunwick strikers know full well that the ACAS report is a worthless piece of paper, unless it is immediately backed-up by the industrial might of the Labour movement imposing a total black on Grunwick's services - particularly the mail-order work, which comprises 60% of the company's business. They know from their own experience that Government 'conciliation' has helped the bosses by dragging out the dispute and enabling Len Murray, Tom Jackson and the APEX leadership to play it the 'legal way', thus avoiding the crucial question of industrial action and trade union solidarity. That is why they are demanding ACTION NOW!

no legal road

As the Chartist has pointed out, there is no "legal", proceduralist road to victory at Grunwick's. An ACAS recommendation is one thing, actual recognition and reinstatement is another. It could take months of haggling in the courts before a decision is reached on the ACAS report. Even then there is not the slightest guarantee that one striker will be reinstated.

In any case, the company itself has made it clear that it "will not be bound by the ACAS report". Throughout the dispute the Grunwick management have been able

GRUNWICK BOYCOTT IS KEY TO VICTORY

to play cat and mouse with ACAS and the Employment Protection Act. They have made a complete mockery of laws which are supposed to give workers the "right to join a union" and to "protect" them from arbitrary action.

When ACAS officials visited Grunwicks in November the management refused to let them in and threatened to take legal action if ACAS balloted the employees, including scabs, inside the factory. As a result, ACAS was only able to conduct a ballot among the strikers.

exposed

Now the bosses are taking ACAS to court, claiming that the strikers are not "workers" since they have been "sacked", and that the ACAS ballot is "illegal" because only strikers took part. By their legal manoeuvring, the bosses have exposed Labour's Employment Protection Act as a pathetic substitute for trade union action.

The management fully understands that, when it comes to the crunch, the law exists, not to "protect workers", but to guarantee the right of the ruling class to make profits.

- In November, UPW blacking was brought to an end by a High Court injunction sought by the CIA-backed NAFF.

- In January the Court of Appeal upheld NAFF's case against the UPW, effectively denying the Union the right to take any industrial action.

- On Thursday 24th February, Willesden magistrates convicted six Grunwick pickets (one striker and five members of the Labour Party) of "obstructing the highway".

By Frank Hansen

This arose out of an incident on November 1st (the day of the UPW blacking!), when the police suddenly arrived on the picket line and arrested eight pickets.

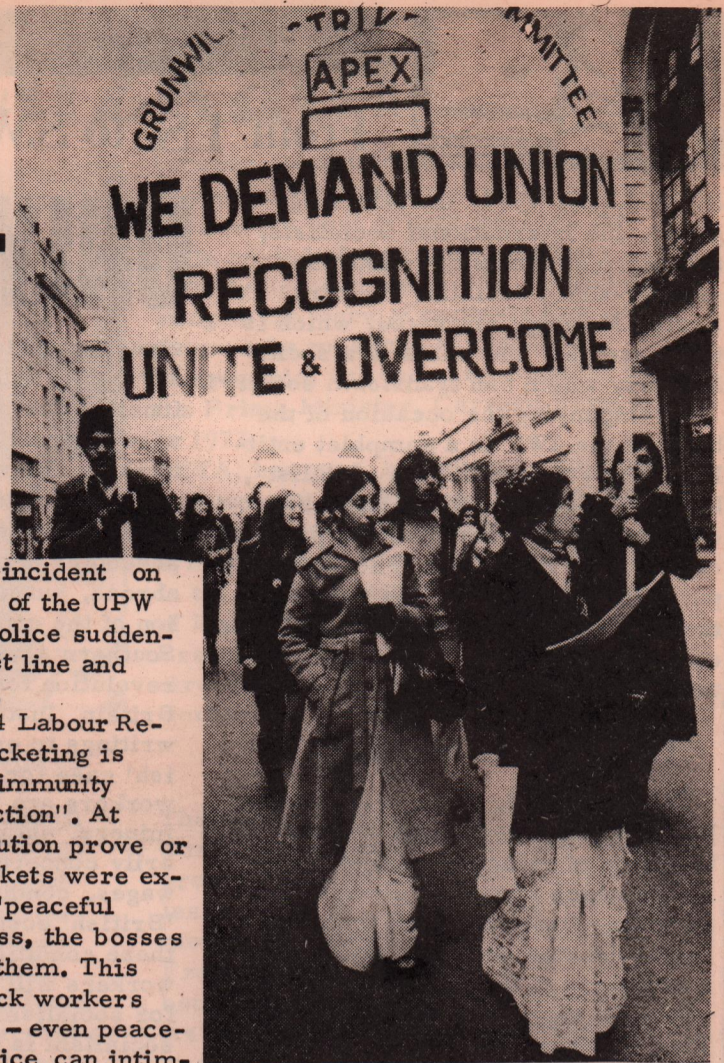
According to the 1974 Labour Relations Act peaceful picketing is "lawful" and provides immunity from "unlawful obstruction". At no time did the prosecution prove or even claim that the pickets were exceeding the bounds of "peaceful picketing". Nevertheless, the bosses court convicted six of them. This means that the Grunwick workers have no right to picket - even peacefully - and that the police can intimidate the picket line any time they choose. (The Grunwick management are now threatening to take Brent East Labour Party and Brent Trades Council to court for picketing chemists that deal with the company).

What is at stake here is the right of immigrant workers to resist slave labour conditions and to join a trade union. If the Grunwick strike is defeated, then all the fine speeches by the Labour leaders denouncing racialism will be shown up to be nothing more than hot air.

- Defy the High Court ruling, black all Grunwick's services, including the mail-order work.

- Labour - repeal those sections of the Race Relations Act which prevent the right to strike and all other anti-trade union laws.

This is the message which must be rammed home in every trade union branch, trades council and constituency Labour Party throughout the country.



Calling all GLRC delegates

support the Brent East Emergency Resolution on Grunwicks demanding the restoration of the blacking, the repeal of the 1953 Post Office Act and calling on the Greater London Regional Council to set up a Grunwick fighting fund for the strike and those arrested.

GRUNWICK STRIKE COMMITTEE Benefit Disco-Dance, Saturday 5th March. From 7pm to midnight. £1. Abbey Hotel Nth Circular Rd NW10.

Labour M.P.'s support anti-abortion Bill

FLYING IN the face of Conference policy on abortion, 46 Labour MPs voted in favour of Tory William Benyon's Private members Bill on the 25th February. The new Bill gives extensive power to the police to enter abortion clinics and examine medical records, as well as making the procedure for obtaining abortions far more difficult, as outlined in last month's Chartist.

The vote was 170 for the Bill, and 132 against. Many Labour MPs did not even turn up to vote on the Bill, displaying a total lack of responsibility to party conference directives. By allowing MPs to exercise their 'consciences', they were allowing them also to ignore the policies of their CLPs, many of whom have opposed Benyon's Bill.

It is easy enough for David Ennals to proclaim publicly his opposition to the Bill, but he or any other Labour MP who has opposed further restriction to the 1967 Abortion Act must be prepared to fight the anti-democratic tactics which are being employed by the government. Among those champions of Labour Party democracy were none other than Sir Harold Wilson, Roy Mason and Fred Mulley.

Labour Party activists should ensure a full discussion takes place in their CLPs and call upon their MPs to put his or her position to the membership. MPs should be mandated to follow conference policy, and force the Government to abandon its abstentionist position on abortion. Support the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign by affiliating to it, further details from: LARC, 73 Albion Road, London N. 16.

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STOP LONDON LABOUR MANIFESTO FRAUD

WITH THE MINIMUM of fanfare and publicity the new GLC election manifesto, "It's Looking Good", was unveiled to view by a suspecting London. Sir Reg Goodwin has got the manifesto he always wanted - "one that commits us to nothing".

The GLC leadership still suffer from the effects of the 1973 manifesto which was "the most socialist we ever had". It committed Labour to municipalisation, low fares and an expanded housing programme. It reflected the views of the London Labour Party's annual meetings and played a major role in the massive Labour victory that followed.

But the leadership were never happy with the manifesto and from the moment the Labour Group met they started to backtrack on its commitments.

The pledge to fight the Tories Housing Finance Act went out the window when Labour capitulated after just one visit to the Minister who just sent them away after listening with obvious boredom.

Attempts were even made to reverse the pledge to scrap the motorways and although this failed work went ahead on preparing for the reversal on fares. Twice the Labour Group rejected a fare increase so the GLC leadership switched their tactics.

Distorted financial information was fed to the press who ran massive

Ken Livingstone (G.L.C. Norwood)

scare stories about the financial position of London Transport and the Whips were put to work.

In other councils the Whips' job is to maintain a Labour majority on committees and council but at County Hall their job became one of ensuring that the leadership got their policies through the Labour Group. Anyone who did not toe the line was sacked from positions and denied the patronage of trips abroad, conferences and even flights to the Indian Ocean in Concorde! Not surprisingly the leadership managed to reverse all major manifesto pledges in under two years.

The final act was the most disgusting. The Housing Programme was cut by 30 per cent (£150 million). The GLC cut its housing programme without any pressure from the government. The reason was simple in Reg Goodwin's eyes, "we have more chance of being re-elected in 1977 if we keep the rates down by cutting the housing programme than if we go into the election with a massive housing programme and higher rates".

The voters will give their answer to that on May 5th. So many cuts have been made, so many jobs lost that the rate has remained the same for three years.

The present manifesto has not re-

peated the "mistakes" of 1973. It ignores decisions of the conference on fares and cuts. It was written by a GLC officer answerable only to Reg Goodwin. It was pushed through the Regional Executive which was overburdened by GLC Chairmen such as Norman Howard, Frank Cooper, Jim Daly and leading right-wingers like MP John Cartwright.

Most disgraceful of all the manifesto was published just 15 days before the Annual Meeting of the GLRC despite pleas that it should be considered by the Conference.

The movement has got wind of the goings-on however and the main composites on Housing and Transport include amendments to the manifesto. We must ensure that these are carried by Conference.

Reject the defeatism of the leadership and their non-existent manifesto. Their main interest is no longer in the GLC but in who is going to get a peerage for services to the cuts—once the election is over.

Labour can still win the GLC election if it gets the policy right. Opposition to cuts and increases in fares and rents must be the basis of the campaign coupled with firm action on interest charges which this year will consume over 50 per cent of all the money spent on housing. Conference must give a lead.