

# CHARTIST

LABOUR'S REVOLUTIONARY VOICE No.66 MAY 1978 10p



1955 . . .  
and  
'They're  
welcome  
here'  
was the  
official  
slogan . . .



1978 . . .

## IMMIGRATION CONTROLS ARE RACIST

THE TORIES ARE DETERMINED that immigration controls will be a central issue in the next General Election with their warnings that black immigration threatens to 'swamp our culture and civilisation'.

The Labour Government might object to the tone of these utterances. They might criticise the more severe proposals in the Select Committee Report (analysed on Page 3). They agree with them that black people, and not their racist tormentors, 'harm race relations'. They believe that if they can convince people who are swayed by racist arguments that Labour too is tough on immigration then they won't vote Tory or NF. But every concession they make does not satisfy the racists but encourages them to demand more.

### argument

Supporters of immigration controls argue that Britain is overcrowded. They didn't all use this argument twenty years ago when the economy was booming and there was a labour shortage. Enoch Powell, then Minister of Health, put adverts in West Indian papers asking workers to come over to the 'Mother Country'. Punjabis were attracted to Southall in the same way.

They are unmoved by the fact that the areas of highest unemployment, such as Glasgow, Tyneside and Belfast are the very places where few black people live and with the highest EMIGRATION rates. Or that while the population of some inner-city areas has declined by up to a third over the last decade unemployment there is rising.

BY BERNARD MISRAHI

They don't think it is relevant that the population of Britain is static. When it is pointed out that emigration from Britain exceeds immigration some racists have an honest answer: - 'White people are leaving black people are coming'. This over-simplification at least demonstrates that the clamour for immigration controls has nothing to do with numbers and is thoroughly racist.

### welcomed

Even the Parliamentary Labour Party used to oppose immigration controls. Callaghan declared in 1946, 'We ought to be a country where immigrants are welcomed. We should break away from this artificial segregation of nation from nation. . . . Who is going to pay for the old age pensions and social services unless we have an addition to our population which only immigration can provide?' Hugh Gaitskell, Leader of the Labour Party, led a campaign against the 1962 Immigration Act.

Such opposition didn't last very long. After the fright they got in the Smethwick bye-election which was won by the Tory on the slogan 'Vote Labour for a nigger neighbour' the Labour Government passed the 1965 Act which reduced the number of vouchers given to workers from

the black Commonwealth from 20,000 to 8500 a year.

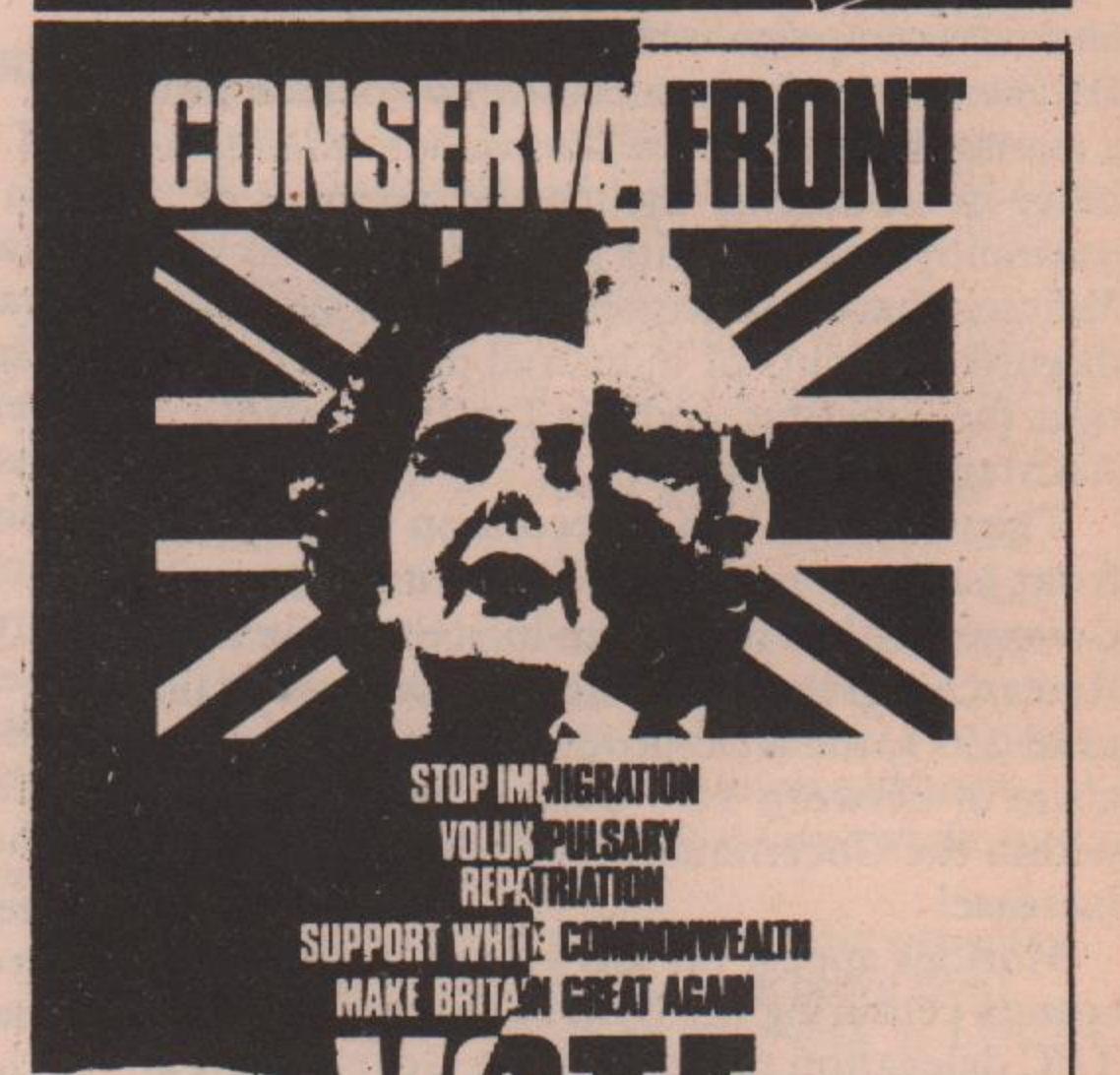
In 1968 they capitulated to the pressure to keep out the Kenyan Asians who were being harassed by the Kenyan government. In only a few days a bill was drafted which prevented them from exercising the right, so recently granted them, of coming over here.

Labour now zealously implements the 1971 Immigration Act which they didn't oppose when the Tories passed it. They have issued a Green (discussion) Paper on Nationalities Law which will create a category of 'British Overseas Citizens' who will be barred from Britain. The Chartist wonders when a Labour government will succumb to pressure to start repatriation.

### campaign

The Labour Party has launched a campaign against racism. This must be extended to a fight against the lynchpin of racism - immigration controls - ALL immigration controls. We support the right of everyone to live and work wherever they want. There is plenty of work to be done renovating and building houses, providing a decent transport service, repairing the damage done to the NHS by the cuts, to name just a few jobs, to provide work for everyone who wants to come here. If the Tories want to make an issue of immigration controls, let this be Labour's answer.

**CARF**  **Special**  
PAPER OF THE ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-FASCIST CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE



**NO TO RACISM**

no.5 available now

3/4 June in London

CARF CONFERENCE

The conference will be open to local committees, to shop-stewards' committees, to Trade Councils, to immigration organisations, to ethnic minority organisations, and to community groups.

There will also be an anti-racist theatre, a social, work shop discussion groups, a creche, and [we hope] accommodation for those outside of London.

For more details of the conference and credentials [Delegates fees £2.50 each Visitors fees £2.00 each] Please write to: CARF Conference, Box 53, Rising Free, 182 Upper Street, London N.1.

## More of the same?

THE HEALEY budget of April 11 was as predictable as it was ineffective. £2 billion in tax relief was its main proposal resulting from a lower 25 per cent income tax band for the first £750 of taxable income. Not content with pursuing Tory policies in all but name Healey tries the old election trick of tax handouts in what has been rumoured as an "election year".

Three "successful" phases of wage restraint policy, almost three years of a million-plus unemployed, £5,000 million public spending cuts, three years of orthodox Treasury deflationary policies, appeasement to racialism, curbing trade union rights (the list goes on)—all under the banner of the crusade against inflation. But is this the real purpose of the Labour Government's anti-working class measures? Not at all.

The function of these policies was spelt out by Chancellor Healey over two years ago: "to restore profitability to British industry" Never mind that unemployment has to reach 2 million (if those who don't register are included in the figures). Never mind the human cost to the sick, the elderly, the children and youth, to women and working people generally of cut-backs in public expenditure. Never mind the three years in which real purchasing power was eroded by anything up to 20 per cent for some workers.

### SACRIFICE

And has all this sacrifice delivered at the altar of Capital produced the goods—a restoration of health and profitability to a sick and decaying capitalist system? Ask the CBI. Ask the City of London. Ask the Treasury. Ask the banks. Whilst some profits might have improved, overall, the rate of return of invested capital is still, as the business journals would have it, "depressed"

What of the fate of the unemployed? Labour's manifesto for October 1974 promised to restore "full employment". When the cure-all social contract was dreamt up by the TUC and Labour leaders, 1978 was to be the year when the fruits of sacrifice could be

delivered—unemployment was to be reduced to 3 per cent, "full-employment" by post-war standards!

Instead unemployment has topped the official million mark (August 1975) and remained constant at over 6 per cent for the last year. Most recently, within the so-called nationalised industries, workers have experienced the Varley-Benn axe in British Leyland, British Steel, British Rail and the Post Office where up to 80,000 jobs are to disappear. In many cases this means compulsory redundancy as at British Leyland's Speke plant in Liverpool where closure will doom 2,500 jobs, or at numerous steel-works like East Moors where 2,000 steel-workers will be going down the road.

### UNEMPLOYED

In the private sector giant monopolies (like Spillers French) are to sack up to 8,000 workers in their baking division. Instead of guaranteeing every job on full pay and a reduced work-week the Government turns a blind eye.

The truth is Healey, Callaghan and co. are playing the deflationary card in an attempt to restore confidence to British capitalists, encouraging them to invest their capital at "home", instead of speculating in commodities or investing abroad. But recent surveys conducted by the CBI and government departments, show no appreciable increase in domestic investment, especially in the manufacturing industry which has been declining for many years.

By increasing unemployment the Labour leaders hoped to make the labour movement sufficiently vulnerable for the massive restructuring and rationalisation of British capital necessary to restore falling profit rates. But the persistence of world recession, depressed world trade and cut-throat competition combined with the backwardness and obsolescence of British capital has conspired to thwart the plans of the reformists.

### WHIRLWIND

Today the Labour Government is reaping the whirlwind. In bye-election after bye-election the swing against Labour has been over 5 per cent. Even Healey's vote-catching budget did not stop a swing of 9.3 per cent away from Labour in Lambeth Central. And the government still persist in cosmetic 'job-creation' schemes (tea-spooning the ocean) for the unemployed and preparations for a new stage four incomes policy.

Having stolen so many of the Tories clothes, the Lib-Lab pact government has pushed the Thatcherites into adopting the most reactionary right-wing policies since the General Strike to justify their existence. These policies are exemplified in their current flaunting of outright racist policies. Little wonder that these are the cards Thatcher plays when the Labour government has done little to unite the labour movement and oppressed and everything to divide. With a divided working-class perhaps a strategy of confrontation with the unions would come off, the Tories speculate.

The alternative for our Labour leaders lies not in another round of wage restraint disguised by the TUC in talk of "orderly bargaining". Or Moss Evans' "responsible bargaining", or the Sid Weighell/David Bassett plan for an agreed approach to stage four from all unions. Nor does it lie in crocodile tears for the unemployed. Rather the alternative lies in policies and action to promote the struggle of trade unionists for improved wages (and conditions) fully protected against inflation by cost of living increases, a national minimum wage, action to eliminate unemployment (not to reduce it to 700,000 by 1981 as Labour's NEC suggests) immediately through guaranteeing work on full pay in any firm declaring redundancies and a crash programme of public works to employ the jobless in socially necessary labour.

### RACIALISM

The Joint Labour Party-TUC campaign against racialism should swing into action with existing campaigns on the basis of the 1976 Labour Party Conference decision which included proposals to repeal the Immigration Acts, and support for black people organising against the racists. Police protection for fascists should be ended, but not with undemocratic state bans.

At a time when world capitalism is undergoing a fundamental crisis it is a question of profits or jobs and wages going to the wall. Those Labour Party supporters and trade unionists who adhere to the principle of international workers unity should ensure that Labour's backsliding in favour of profits is fought every inch of the way with policies which strengthen the unity of the movement and champion the struggles of blacks and Asians, women, and youth against their special oppression.

The alternative is more of the same which can only lead to electoral defeat for the Labour Party, Thatcherism and further attacks on the working class.

## LEFT SPLIT IN CPSA

THE 238,000 STRONG Civil & Public Services Association, largest of the Civil Service trade unions representing clerical grade workers, celebrates its 75th anniversary this year.

Delegates attending the CPSA's Annual Conference in Brighton this month will be discussing some of the most important problems confronting workers in the Civil and Public Service today. Their decisions could have an effect on the Public Sector for years to come. In view of the importance of these debates for public sector workers PAUL SUTTON examines some of the main issues before militants attending the Conference.

### RETREAT

The defeat suffered by the DE Section when its industrial action against DE Cuts was called off (by the then Broad Left NEC) signalled the beginning of an almost continuous period of retreat for the union. At last year's Annual Conference the Right Wing National Moderate Group gained control of the Executive for the first time in over five years.

The silence of inactivity over the union's anti cuts campaign is almost deafening—the DE Section has been successfully coerced into a management 'exercise' to evaluate the feasibility of fortnightly signing and payment of unemployment benefits as a means to cut staff. Militants have also witnessed a series of thinly disguised sellouts of industrial disputes (notably over the Gibraltar, and Air Traffic Control Assistants disputes).

The moderate NEC's record on the Pay front has been no better. Following the Government's refusal to re-introduce the Pay Research Agreement of determining pay claims until 1979, the NEC produced an 'independent' claim of between 14—22%... and settled within the Government's guidelines for a 9½% increase!

Motions appear on this years conference agenda censuring the NEC for instructing the TUC delegation to support the Government's 12 month rule despite the 1977 conference decision to the contrary.

### COUNTER OFFENSIVE

The first chance for the left to reform and halt the right wing attack was presented at the November 1977 Rules Revision Conference, where the right had drawn up a package of new rules designed to stifle all effective membership control. The package would have strengthened the bureaucracy, increased the independence of the NEC from, and increased its power over, the membership. Its centrepiece was the introduction of the Postal Ballot. Not only was the left able to prevent the right wing from getting the necessary 2/3rds. But on the issue of postal balloting an overall majority against was obtained. The conference was a crushing defeat for the right, with every major right wing rule being lost.

The right has also suffered a defeat over the "Terry Adams Affair". Following the settlement of the Gibraltar dispute the NEC recommended

that the 1978 Conference should not ratify Terry's appointment because as the CPSA full time official (known to be sympathetic to the Broad left) responsible for the handling of the Gibraltar dispute he was 'too enthusiastic' in his support for the Gibraltar members! The Broad Left (and Redder Tape supporters) campaign to appoint Terry Adams has resulted in 173 censure motions, and forced the NEC to reverse its original decision.

### BROAD LEFT FOR PRESIDENT

The Broad Left itself has been deeply split on its approach to the elections. At its second National Conference last year, the Broad Left was divided over the Presidential Candidature. The Conference split almost down the centre between support for Peter Coltman, a Communist Party member with long standing credentials as a militant in CPSA, and Len Lever a known right winger, who was elected for the previous two years as president with Broad Left support. The Militant tendency argued for continued support for this right winger on the grounds that he would do less damage than the 'Moderates' candidate Kate Losinska.

Despite the Militant tendency's opposition, the Broad Left Conference decided by a small majority to support a Broad Left Candidate. Chartists at that Broad Left Conference argued support for Coltman, and our supporters will be arguing for a vote for Coltman at CPSA Conference, as the only candidate standing on a left wing platform for President.

### CONFERENCE AGENDA

This years Agenda has a record number of motions from branches emphasising both the growing uncertainty of Civil and Public Service Workers for the future and the increasing restlessness over issues such as pay (with motions calling for no return to PRU, for Pay Conferences to thrash out alternatives etc). Hours, leave, Whitleyism, against racialism and immigration controls, against casual recruitment, anti-cuts, for election of Full Time officers, are points included in motions.

The section on International Affairs is headed by two motions on Ireland, one supporting the International Tribunal on Britain's presence in Ireland the other campaigning for Troops Out Now and Self Determination for the people of Ireland.

## Apex and Grunwick conference

THE GRUNWICK conference scheduled for May 14th takes place in an atmosphere of press speculation that the strike will end in a few weeks. However, the strikers determination remains. They are demanding that their union APEX and the TUC comes clean. They want APEX to publicly declare whether they are fighting for reinstatement, and to call on the TUC to get the blacking of all services implemented by the UPW, EEPTU, and GMWU.

It must be pointed out that there is little hope of unofficial action from UPW members after the staggering fines of £1,400 imposed on 7 LDC officers and members by Tom Jackson and Co.

The APEX EC would certainly feel more comfortable if they did not have to contend with the prospect of a Grunwick National Conference. APEX have their own conference

from 28th April to 1st May where there will be many criticisms of the way the EC has conducted the strike.

The EC report to conference omits to mention the role of the NAFF in the dispute, the fines imposed by the UPW leaders and certainly nothing about the blackmail of July 29th last year when the strikers were forced to call of the August 8th mass picket and Cricklewood UPW were forced back to work.

Absolutely nothing is stated about the 'secret talks' APEX had with the TUC. The resolutions on Grunwick include a condemnation of the EC for its cowardly betrayal in cutting strike pay because of the hunger strike. The TUC is also criticised. Questions are raised about the role of the Special Patrol Group and the police. Calls are made for the resumption of mass picketing and blacking along with support for a National delegate conference. The strikers themselves will have an opportunity to address conference and clearly spell out the issues.

The Grunwick National Conference on 14th May will have many questions laid before it. The possibility of mass pickets is a consideration, bearing in mind the chances of blacking, to go alongside it.

APEX itself is unlikely to condemn the TUC for its lack of support and its total subservience to the Labour Government in "not rocking the boat". The conference will take up the lessons for the future, and discuss the dangers of relying on legal procedure, and the role of the Court of Enquiry which was clearly to defuse militancy.

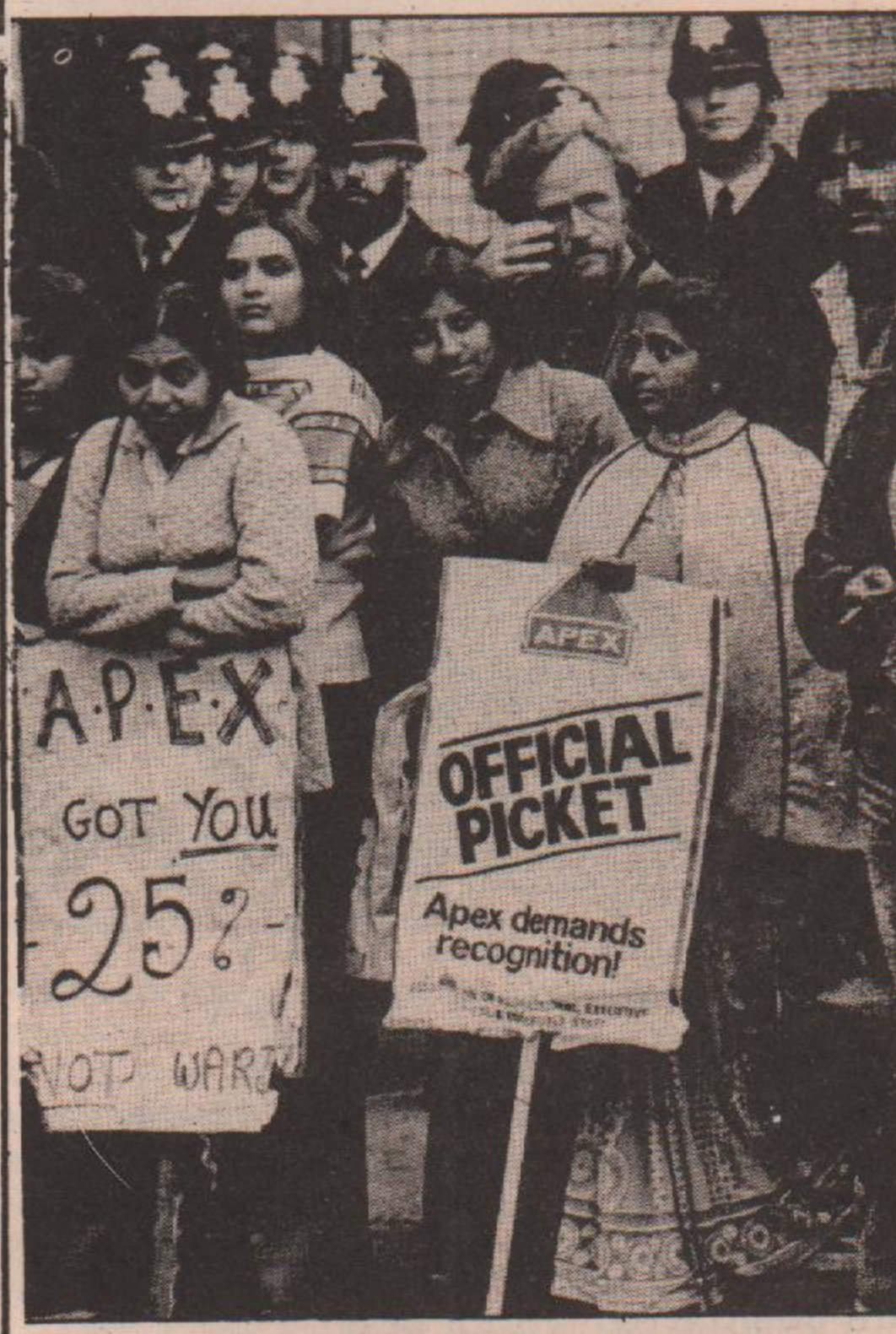
Len Murray's famous words "we are not only behind you, we are right beside you", now ring hollow in the movements ears.

The conference will also have the task of discussing the role of the police and courts and the treatment of pickets. In some cases imprisonment and two-years suspended sentences have been imposed. The Grunwick Defendants Fund has demonstrated the type of solidarity required to help combat this sort of intimidation. But more donations are still needed to pay the enormous fines.

All trade unionists, Labour Party members and socialists should make a bit effort to attend the conference to discuss these vital issues and the fate of the strike.

Details from: Grunwick Strike Committee, Brent Trades and Labour Hall, Cricklewood Lane, N.W.10.

by Angie Shariff  
(Brent East CLP).



However, as we have always stated in the past, simply gaining a majority on the Executive or passing a series of very good motions at the conference is no substitute for building a strong movement within the union based on vigorous clarity of the tasks facing our members. The task of arming militants with such an understanding has still a very long way to go. For the Broad Left to fulfil this role it must be able to involve all sections of the left in a free and open debate, any attempts at imposing a false monolithic unity on the membership must be rigorously opposed.

# 'problem is not immigration, but racism'

'DOCUMENT OF SHAME' was how we described the Report of the Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration in last month's *Chartist* (No.65). A unanimous report—signed by 5 Labour and 5 Tory MPs—it marks a clear attempt to establish a bi-partisan approach on the issue of race and immigration.

Despite the howls of outrage which Thatcher's contribution on the issue raised from various Labour MPs, the Select Committee Report goes a long way to meet the policies she proposed. As in so many other cases bi-partisanship means for the Labour Party's representatives: capitulation.

## IMPARTIALITY

Under the mantle of impartiality enhanced by unanimity the Select Committee report starts from 'the unwritten assumption that immigrants (ie, blacks and browns) are somehow undesirable per se.' (*The Economist* March 25th)

Given the inherent racism of such premises the racism of the conclusion flows inexorably out despite the assertions of the Report's authors that 'Nothing in this report should give rise to fears in anyone, irrespective of race, colour or creed, who has lawfully settled in the United Kingdom'.

The naivety or the cynicism of such a statement is truly staggering. How can a debate which is solely concerned with establishing the quickest and most effective way to prevent coloured immigration into Britain not give rise to fears—fears which are more than warranted by the conclusions of this Report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

What, for example, are coloured immigrants (or indigeneous black and Asian people) to make of Recommendations 4 to 7 of the Report:

4. We recommend that the police, the Immigration Service Intelligence Unit and other authorities should be afforded substantially more resources to trace overstayers and to tackle all aspects of illegal immigration.
5. We recommend that the Department of Health and Social Security introduce without delay new procedures to tighten up identity checks . . .
6. We recommend that, as a matter of urgency, the Government . . . should introduce measures . . . to provide effective sanctions against employers who knowingly employ overstayers and illegal immigrants.
7. In addition to the other recommendations we have made, we recommend that the Government should institute an independent inquiry to consider a system of internal control of immigration.

## POLICE STATE

If all this does not add up to a system of police state harassment of immigrants, then it is difficult to see what would. Even the *Financial Times* commented that these proposals would resemble the South African system of pass-laws!

What of the Select Committee proposals for control of immigration? How do they relate to the Tories' new tough line? How do they relate to the facts?

Under pressure from the demagoguery of politicians and the press to cut immigration the Select Committee found themselves in the embarrassing situation where there was precious little to cut without renegeing on promises to British passport holders or

contravening the European human rights convention.

West Indian immigration reached a peak of 30,000 a year in 1960-2 but has been consistently falling since and there is, in fact, now a net outflow of people of West Indian origin. Immigration from the Indian sub-continent also peaked in 1960-2 with 50,000 a year coming in. 'Subsequently there has been a decline interrupted by an increase in 1967-9 and to a less extent in 1974-6'.

As for the famous 'flood' from East Africa: 'In 1968 their entry was restricted and has been regulated by the Special Voucher Scheme but there was a peak of 35,000 in 1972, caused by the expulsions from Uganda. The numbers are now falling sharply. . . it seems that most of those who wish to come to the United Kingdom have done so.'

## DISBAND

*The Economist* gives total figures of black and Asian immigration into Britain as 53,265 in 1975; 55,013 in 1976, and 44,155 in 1977. Under these circumstances the best policy for the Select Committee would have been to declare itself redundant and disband without a Report.

But undeterred the intrepid and, of course, unanimous, band of MPs including Tribune Sidney Bidwell, adopted the course pioneered by Mr Enoch Powell—if in doubt, challenge the figures'.

'We believe that the Government and the public are inadequately informed about immigration. We consider that the control of immigration should be made more effective.'

Thus from existing figures it was inevitable that immigration from the Indian sub-continent would provide the main target of its attentions. In order, to isolate its victims still more the Report divides immigration into 'primary' and 'secondary' categories. 'Primary' immigration is the entry of adult (male) workers; 'secondary' immigration is that of their dependents.

On 'primary' immigration the Report says 'We believe that the Government should make it unequivocally clear that subject to the present law and our membership of the European Economic Community, there will be no further major primary immigration and, especially in this context, we are convinced that the law of nationality needs speedy restatement and revision.'

## ENDORSES QUOTA SYSTEM

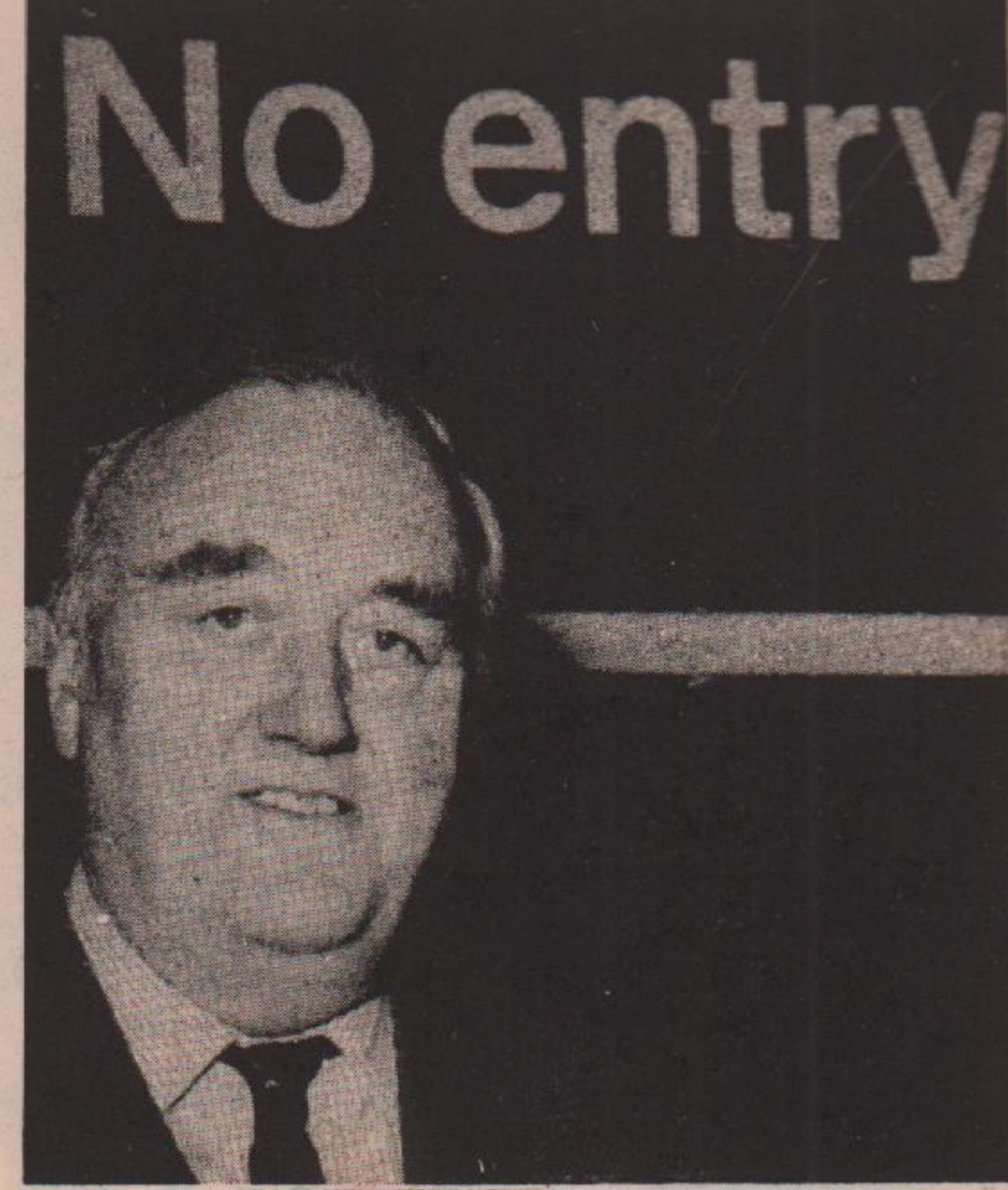
While rejecting the Tory proposal for a register of dependants of 'primary' immigrants, the Report endorses a quota system either on a global basis or a separate quota for United Kingdom passport holders in India, the publication of separate figures for special vouchers, and entry clearances for eligible dependants and those actually issued and the numbers admitted.

After a certain time at which the Government can 'fairly claim to have afforded to those whom it is clearly committed the opportunity to settle in the United Kingdom, then . . . it should announce a date after which special vouchers will be issued only on exceptional grounds in individual cases.' The closing of the door!

## VICIOUS

Particularly vicious in the Report is the recommendation no.16. 'We recommend that the provisions regarding the admission . . . of wives and children be amended to provide that, where a person who has settled in the

GEOFF BENDER examines the main proposals in the Select Committee Race Relations Report and the Tory plans to 'halt' immigration.



The message from the Tories

United Kingdom, has a child born . . . to a wife abroad, then, . . . the admission of such a mother and child to settle in the UK should normally be limited to children under 12 years of age . . . What the fate of children over 12 is to be in such cases is clearly not the concern of this Select Committee.

Despite the convoluted prose, the bureaucratic guise of impartiality and the unanimity of its signatories the Report makes it 'unequivocally clear' that insofar as immigration—at least of British passport holders and dependents of immigrants already here—is at present a necessary evil, it should be got over with as quickly as possible and the door slammed tightly shut.

## ARROGANT

Work permit holders will no longer be able to apply for an indefinite extension of their stay after four years in approved employment and quotas for overseas workers in hotel and catering and domestic work and as nursing auxiliaries should be reduced and dates set for their termination.

The Report in all its recommendations is a slap in the face of all foreign workers in this country and in Britain's former colonies. Those Labour MPs who try and justify it as the ending of the last remnants of Britain's colonial past demonstrate in their own arrogant attitude to the peoples of Britain's former colonies that the mentality of British imperialism is far from dead.

## SPRINGBOARD FOR TORIES

The Tories are well aware of this and are quite happy to use this Report as a springboard to launch their own racist campaign to scoop votes out of the gutter for the coming General Election. Unveiled by William Whitelaw, generally regarded as a 'liberal', ' . . . Tory immigration policy panders to racials and, by rewarding them for the pressure they have exerted, threatens to make life harder for Britain's black and brown population.' (*The Economist*)

- Tory policies would:
- \* End the practice of accepting people for permanent settlement after they have been allowed in for a temporary stay. Last year a mere 391 immigrants from the Indian sub-continent were allowed to stay on.

- \* Allow in only those parents, grandparents and children over 18 who were living in demonstrable hardship. Last year 1,268 such relations of settled immigrants came to Britain.
- \* Restrict employment for which work permits are not needed (doctors, dentists etc.). In 1971, 46,000 people, of which only 1,353 were from the sub-continent, came in on this basis.
- \* Stop those with work permits staying on after their four years were up. Last year 391 from the sub-continent were allowed to stay on.
- \* Close the 'loophole' through which husbands and male fiancés enter. Last year out of a total of 5,607 just 1,366 came from the sub-continent.
- \* Compile a register of all immigrants.

## RACISM PROBLEM

All told these proposals would amount to a cut of 6,000 in the annual rate of immigration from the Indian sub-continent: a rate which is falling anyway. 'Scarcely worth the effort' as *The Economist* observes.

The Report of the Select Committee and the Tory proposals underline what the *Chartist* has always maintained: **the problem is not immigration, but racism.** There are not too many black and Asian people in the country, nor trying to enter, there are too many racials.

For those committed to a struggle for socialism the international unity of working people across national boundaries and racial differences is not a luxury for May Day speeches—it is an indispensable necessity. The five Labour MPs who put their names to the Select Committee Report—'The Document of Shame'—have helped to destroy and disrupt that unity as surely as if they had scabbed on a strike or voted Tory. They should be treated accordingly.

## UPW at the crossroads

THE delegates at Union of Post Office Workers (UPW) Annual Conference this year (Blackpool May 21st to 26th) are indeed meeting in a period that is clearly a cross-roads for the UPW as a whole. The delegates will be faced with problems even more acute than in most other Unions. You will have your own views on the important areas but this article will concentrate on what seems to be a problem for the UPW as a whole.

Before the UPW can halt the retreat on all fronts that it is embarked on it must first of all be able to turn round and fight. The Executive Council (EC) of the Union has abdicated its ability to do so. It has abdicated that right with the agreement of the majority of delegates at last year's Conference.

Indeed the decision at last year's Conference to reject the blacking of Grunwick's mail has provided the EC with the ammunition for a wholesale retreat on all fronts. It has also opened the door to EC attacks on the members like the fines of £1,400 imposed on the London District Council 3 (LDC3) seven.

At this year's Conference the Union Chairperson has attempted to ban any instruction to reconsider the ban since any such decision would be illegal. We now, according to the Chairperson, have no right to discuss industrial action because of its "illegality". Last year we were at least able to discuss it, even if we lost.

Of course this retreat has been part of an overall offensive around the Grunwick issue which regular readers of the *Chartist* will be only too well aware of. Indeed the decisions of Conference delegates are clear examples of the limits of Trade Unionism in the face of Sexism, Racism and legality.

However even if we lose again we should have the right to take that decision at Conference. We should be able to spell out that the right to strike is a fundamental democratic right without which unions are no better than staff associations, toothless lions, or even paper tigers. Thanks to the cowardice and short-sightedness of the EC and indeed last year's Conference we have lost that right.

The way to win it back is for the EC to be committed to opposing the ruling class laws in reimposing the blacking of Grunwick mail and to campaign for support for that position inside and outside the Union. Just saying that demonstrates the inability of the present EC to carry out such a fight.

Any other issue that requires a fight like wages, fascism, jobs, hours of work cannot be fought to a successful conclusion by the UPW alone. It must be fought in alliance with others, both workers and non-workers. We have only to look at our defeat in 1971 and the similar FBU defeat in 1977 to see that.

That is why the Bill wending its way through Parliament is a sham because it gives us the right to strike but only *on our own* (therefore it is no help to the Grunwick strikers, for example).

All this is very fine but given the present state of the UPW how do we achieve this? Even such a previously strong body as LDC3 was unable to resist the pressure of the media, the law and the EC. The first lesson is that we must cease to be parochial within the Union as well as without. The recent wages ballot, which accepted a below 10% offer, was a very good demonstration of divide and rule.

It is evident that those who are not content with what has been done must get organised. Those who wish to combat the retreats of the leadership and those who wish to campaign within the Union must combine as a broadly based grouping.

Initially we should unite around the right to strike. In the opinion of the *Chartist* that means fighting racism, sexism and the conceptions of law and order that have underpinned much of the opposition to the Grunwick blacking. However we do not demand that others agree with us before we can unite with them.

The magnificent response to the Appeal Fund set up to combat the EC attacks on the LDC3 officers is a sign that we do indeed have the basis for such a grouping. Let us make no mistake the EC will no doubt attack again if anybody gets out of line. We must be organised in advance.

(A UPW member)





Above: Solid phalanx of CRS bar the way to a student demonstration during May 1968.

# MAY '68 - TEN YEARS AFTER

## WHAT HAPPENED IN MAY

AFTER 20-ODD years of general social peace, economic expansion and political "consensus" in Western Europe, the French "May Events" (*événements*) of 1968 burst on an unsuspecting world like a thunderbolt from Zeus. They were not totally inexplicable, however. The French working class had suffered ten years too many of De Gaulle's authoritarian "strong state" — the "Fifth Republic" — installed by a military coup led by Algerian "ultras" in 1958.

Ten years of union-bashing, attacks against democratic rights, and pogroms against Algerian immigrants. After a big isolated miners strike in 1963, the period since 1966 had seen a big build up of industrial disputes—often involving factory occupations, imprisonment of managers by workers, and bloody battles with the CRS riot police.

Much of this had been dissipated by the unions with the time-honoured tactics of lightning strikes and "revolving" strikes — that is futile protests. A big issue had also been a massive rise in social security contributions. It is worth noting that every serious LONG strike since the War had been an *unofficial* one.

Meanwhile, student discontent had been building up to fever-pitch. Partly, this was an expression of the world-wide student movement against the Vietnam War and their own incorporation in the faceless technocratic bureaucracy of modern capitalism.

### ANGER BREWING

In France, anger had also been brewing around miserable overcrowding and lack of facilities — eg. up to 500 students jammed in a small room trying to listen to one lecturer.

Nowhere were feelings worse than at Nanterre — a jerry-built "instant campus" in the Western suburbs of Paris. At Nanterre was founded the March 22 Movement — an anarchist-type grouping, in which Danny "the Red" Cohn-Bendit played a big role, and which expressed most fully the libertarian strength and the romantic naivety of the May events.

After a whole series of demonstrations involving violent clashes and arrests, matters came to a head on May 3rd. when the rector of the Paris University called the police to evict and arrest several hundred students from the Sorbonne (the main university precinct in the Latin Quarter). Spontaneously students fought the police all evening and a general strike of the university was declared.

Further mass meetings and demonstrations built up to the celebrated "Night of the Barricades" in the small hours of May 11th, when over 50,000 students and workers fought pitched battles against huge police contingents armed with tear-gas. Sixty barricades were built.

Later that day student leaders met representatives of the main union federations — the Communist-led CGT and the Socialist (ex-Catholic) CFDT, who declared Monday, May 13th as a one-day general strike against police brutality. (Despite the fact that Communist spokespeople had been denouncing the students for weeks as "provocateurs" and children of capitalists who would soon be off to run daddy's factories! Actually, it was precisely the sight of these "bourgeois" students taking on the hated *flics* in the street and winning which inspired thousands of young workers to join them on the barricades.)

The 13th saw up to 10 million on strike, a million in one demonstration: that night the students liberated the Sorbonne and occupied it.

Yet this was only the beginning: the students' bravery was to catalyse one of the biggest strike movements in European history. This was initiated the next day by the workers of Sud Aviation in Nantes who went on indefinite "responsible" control.

By the 16th this movement had spread to the strategies Renault car plants, where the striking workers demanded 1000 francs a month basic, a 40-hour week, retirement at 60 and trade union freedom in the factory.

Following in the footsteps of Renault, engineering factories and the rest of the industrial work force joined in rapidly. By the 20th, there was a general nationwide stoppage estimated at ten millions — with transport workers out, the country was paralysed. Red flags flew everywhere. Though the movement was completely spontaneous, the CGT leadership (dominating the key proletarian sectors) made haste to declare it official and bring matters under its wing.

The paradox was, that just as the movement gained its maximum effect in the latter part of May, and by its paralysis of the state posed a "pre-revolutionary situation" of sorts, so it began to run out of steam politically. After all, where next?

Doubtless, only a handful of the millions of strikers had thoughts of socialist revolution — the majority were just glad to vent their gut hatred of De Gaulle and Pompidou's Government, of years of police thuggery, of long hours for low pay in rotten conditions.

The efforts of the revolutionary student enthusiasts to spread their new gospel at the factory gates would hardly have changed that situation overnight. However the key role was that played by the bureaucracy of the French Communist Party (PCF) and the CGT.

For their routinist, cautious, conservative mentalities were dumbfounded at the prospect of a revolutionary challenge to the capitalist state, what really struck terror into their souls was surely the fact that such a movement had developed quite outside their disciplined and 'responsible' control.

### REVOLUTIONARY IMPLICATIONS

Hence they battled might and main to slough off the revolutionary implications of the strike, to prevent democratic rank-and-file control and grass-roots unity of the oppressed. . . but most of all, to inoculate against the dreaded virus of 'ultra-leftism' (*gauchisme*).

To cut a long story short, the PCF/CGT leaders beavered night and day to cobble together an agreement with Pompidou and the employers for a return to work on the basis of significant wage increases and promised cuts in working hours — small beer compared with what could have been won from such a position of working-class strength.

These 'Grenelle Agreements' were initially rejected when CGT leader Ségué took them to the key Renault-Billancourt plant (on an island in the Seine downstream of Paris) for approval. However, things could not drag on indefinitely.

On May 30th, De Gaulle announced fresh parliamentary elections — on the surface a concession to the workers' and students' demands for an end to his rule.

Bereft of any further perspective from their traditional organisations, which encouraged them to make sectional plant or industry settlements, workers terminated the strike divided and unco-ordinated over the next fortnight. In the ensuing atmosphere of retreat and demoralisation, the Gaullists scored a crushing victory for their campaign in defence of "order" at the elections.

For the May Movement to have proceeded beyond its stalemate, the experience of the most conscious and advanced sectors would have to have been generalised to the broader ranks. In a few instances, revolutionary-minded militants were able to secure mass factory occupations, democratically-elected strike committees and regular debates on the political situation.

Many striking workers — especially the younger ones — visited the occupied Sorbonne to be impressed and momentarily enthused

with the iconoclastic zeal and creative rebellion of the student leftists — themselves able to learn from the more down-to-earth experiences of the shop floor militants.

More often however, the strike was run by the CGT machine from the top down, factory occupations were restricted to the hand-picked few, and all contact with the revolutionary students shunned like the plague. Far from integrating the movement, the Communist Party cadres sought to fragment it into a series of localised and sectional disputes.

Any subversive aims of challenging the Government were consistently disowned. In some areas, local Action Committees and *Comités de base* (rank-and-file committees) attempted to maintain solidarity of the unionised and non-unionised, of workers in different plants, and with other sections of the community. At Rhone-Poulenc, the Committee almost supplanted the union for a period. While at Nantes and St. Nazaire strikers virtually took over the towns, distributing food and other commodities, looking after needy families. Generally, however, the CGT's bureaucratic strait-jacket prevailed.

It would be idle to labour the point about the revolutionary potential of the movement—something latent in any such phenomenon, irrespective of the consciousness of those involved. Or to further elaborate on the role of the PCF/CGT in consistently ensuring such potential remained far from realisation — pouring extinguishing foam rather than petrol on the flames — as they gladly admitted.

More to the point is to ask what political alternative has been developed by the far left in order that things might be different if such a situation re-occurred.

However, one point should be answered — the threat of army intervention. The police certainly, were seething with discontent and the Government dared not use them against the workers. As for the army, the *Times*' defence correspondent wrote on May 31st:—

"In an extreme emergency the troops could be brought into operation, but it is appreciated that they could be used on only once. . . before the largely conscript army was exposed to. . . a general campaign of subversion which it would probably not withstand."

A final indicator of potential was that in the elections — despite the big overall rightward swing — the Left Socialist PSU (which had publically identified with the revolutionary students — doubled its vote to nearly 400,000: while the oh-so-cautious PCF lost 600,000 of its own poll.

THE IMMEDIATE impact of the May Events was to produce mass euphoria among the grouplets (*groupuscules*) of the far left. Surely their decades of isolation and irrelevance must be over at last?

In fact, they were mainly carried along by the wave rather than playing their self-appointed "vanguard role", and the 'spirit of May' was generally very hostile to them, correctly viewing them as usually sectarian, bureaucratic and manipulative.

The main exception was the March 22th Movement — basically a spontaneous product of the struggles at Nanterre.

Their mood of romantic enthusiasm put the emphasis on grass-roots democracy, exemplary acts of confrontation to 'expose' the state and inspire the masses, and encouraging people to fight on their own behalf rather than furnishing them with a pre-determined "line".

In June 1968 all the main revolution-

ary factions were banned, and once the movement was over the flexible new structures (action committees, rank-and-file groups etc.) tended to wither away.

When the dust had settled it was clear that the *groupuscules* still dominated the left — and had in fact been re-inforced by a whole new layer of militants.

The dominant illusion was that the "betrayal" of May would make the breaking of the Communist Party's historic control of the French labour movement a fairly easy matter.

They differed, however, on strategy: did one go straight to the CGT's factory strongholds and outbid them trade-union militancy, or seek to outflank them by orienting to "peripheral" sections such as the youth, women and workers in small enterprises/the provinces (the latter being the tendency of the Ligue Communiste — now the LCR).

The most spectacular feature of the

MARTIN COOK looks back at the revolutionary May-June 1968 in France, that for many marked an era of capitalist stability and working class qu

AFTER THE May Events the authorities symbolically laid asphalt over the *pave* (cobble) in the Latin Quarters — weapons the students had so effectively used in the street fighting. But the memory of what had occurred would hardly be so easily effaced—either in France or elsewhere.

May 68 burst on a Western world grown smug and complacent in "affluence" and "consensus", where politics had become a bore and the Cold War taken for granted.

Its links with the Third World Liberation movements (the Vietnamese 'Tet Offensive') and the anti-bureaucratic movement in the East were strong and well-understood. Internationalism was a key aspect: when the government and the Stalinists denounced the "foreign agitator" Daniel Cohn-Bendit, students marched chanting "We Are All German Jews!"

While on the one hand the power of the general strike gave the lie to the theory that workers in the West had been irretrievably "bought off", at the same time the appearance of new sectors in the struggle with new problems and demands made it clear future

## EUROCC

CONTRARY TO any romantic delusions of some of the revolutionary left after May, the French Communist Party and the CGT have retained in full their status as the primary barriers to the establishment of a mass revolutionary socialist and internationalist current. Before 1968, PCF membership had crumbled to less than 300,000 from its post-war peak of a million-odd. Since then, in a more radical climate, it has recovered somewhat to over the half-million mark.

Nevertheless its voting strength has stagnated to just over 20% at best: an electoral "ghetto" of its traditional base among organised industrial workers. In the 50's and 60's it was able to alienate the left with its disgusting backing for French colonial barbarism in Indo-China and Algeria, while putting off everyone else by backing the Soviet invasion of Hungary.

Constant zig-zag manoeuvres, internal bureaucracy, and a desire to be all things to all men kept up the party's Stalinist image long after the Italian C.P. had managed to integrate itself as a broad-based reformist

## Odysseys of

post-1968 far left taneist current ("Vive la Révolution Gauche Proletarienne" owed more to the March 22nd Movement, christianity, and Chinese Cultural orthodox Peking-Leninism.)

They were mar contempt for the paganda and for workers' organisations denounced in inc terms as the work "social-fascists." via the "propaganda" On the one hand luxury groceries were distributed to be factory gates. The attacks on foremen threats to smash of the rich.

All this led to



Above: Monster demonstration of May 13th, when workers and students joined hands to usher in a new stage of working-class action, characterised by the great sit-in strikes.  
 Right: Police repress a French Women's Liberation Movement (MLF) demonstration during the trial of a young girl of 16, accused of having had recourse to abortion (1972).



## WOMEN ON THE MOVE

THE SPECIFIC demands and independent organisation of women were conspicuous only in their absence in the May Events. However, it was largely women politicized by that experience — and often with spontaneist views about the most oppressed being the most revolutionary — who turned their backs on the “traditional left” and created the French Women's Liberation Movement (MLF) in the early 1970s. And in some ways they continued to incarnate the verve of the “spirit of May” better than anyone else. “*Changer la vie; tout et tout de suite*” — “change our lives; completely and all at once”.

The dominant tendencies in the early MLF were the radical feminists (that is, “war of the sexes” approach), a reformist current (League for Women's Rights), and those who concentrated on the necessary analysis of psychological and ideological oppression. At the same time, the arrival of women from the less hide-bound leftist groups produced a “class struggle” wing around the journal *Les Pétroleuses*.

The circumstances were fairly favourable: the influence of the Catholic church has always been relatively weak, and there is a generally politicised atmosphere. Moreover, the proportion of women working has been high and still rising. Women increased from 36.6% of the working population in 1968 to 38.6% in 1976, especially due to younger women going out to work.

The Government (especially under Giscard d'Estaing's liberal conservatism from 1974 on) reacted with new laws to facilitate divorce and abortion and to provide maternity leave. However, the successful and effective pro-abortion (contraception movement MLAC) has had much work to do in combatting restrictive abortion legislation — as shown in an important trial of women at Aix in 1977.

Moreover, the period of economic crisis

since 1975 has led to a subtle change of emphasis as the ruling class stresses measures to help *the family* rather than to help women by encouraging women not to seek work to keep unemployment figures down, attempts to reverse the fall in the birth-rate, flexible hours and part-time working for working mothers.

More and more women have been joining T.U.'s and engaging in struggles. In 1976, of 200 struggles 110 were of women workers; examples have been bank workers, shop assistants and the Lip watch factory.

Attempts have been made to involve husbands in support of striking wives, as well as to organise male strikers' wives in support committees. Women's groups — although estimated at no more than 7,000 women in 500-odd local groups — have become influential.

Moreover, both the Unions and the workers' parties (PCF & PS) have been impelled to convene women's commissions and conferences. They have had to come out in more or less enthusiastic defence of abortion and contraception (quite a break for the PCF and the ex-Roman Catholic CFDT). The CGT has recognised contraception and sexuality as being legitimate concerns of the unions, while the CFDT has denounced predetermined sex roles.

The Socialist Party has probably put across the most “feminist” image of all. Much of this, naturally, remains so far more a face-lift in order to recruit women supporters than a genuine conversion!

Sexism remains a powerful adversary. One Gaullist candidate said he regarded the PS as a joke, since they were running a woman against him. While a TV personality said Giselle Halimi, leader of the Women's Party, should be tied down and raped then sent to a lesbians' club!

## MODERN FRANCE

IN THE last 30 years, France has undergone what might almost be called a social and economic revolution. This is crucial in understanding the changing (and enduring) patterns of French politics. Historically, the Industrial Revolution has occurred in localised and stunted form: up to World War II modern industry was largely confined to the Paris region, Lille/the North (textiles/coal) and Alsace-Lorraine (steel/coal).

The vast tracts of the South and West (NB' France has less population than UK. in *twice* the area) remained dominated by peasant agriculture, small shopkeepers, and petty workshops.

In such rural towns and villages, politics hinged less around your attitude to trade unionism or capitalism than to the Catholic Church, the Republic, and the great Revolution of 1789.

For instance state v. church control of education was a very hot issue. The parties of the Right reflected this — being impossibly split between Radicals, Conservatives, and MRP Christian Democrats (while the left would appeal for support on the basis of its '1789' credentials).

To these divisions was added the bitter antagonism between the Vicky collaborators and the Gaullist Free French. Such disunity, as well as the intractable colonial wars (Indo-China, Algeria), created the political paralysis (“*immobilisme*”) which was to destroy the Fourth Republic of 1946-58.

Yet paradoxically this same period laid the basis for a resurgent prosperity and confidence of French capitalism

State Intervention was the key, by means of: (i) Nationalisation of vital infrastructure (coal, rail, electricity) (ii) State subsidies and investment in advanced technology sectors (chemicals, electronics, aircraft) and (iii) the system of Indicative Planning to co-ordinate the economy, direct investment to the highest return sectors and so on. The rapid economic growth that resulted was in some ways more

spectacular than even the West German “miracle”.

The explosion of modern industry and large-scale production had a disastrous effect on the peasants (who have declined from 25% to 10% of the population since 1945) and on the million-odd small businesses.

Their sufferings produced the populist “Poujadist” movement of the 1950's.

Wage and salary earners were only 58% of the working population in 1900: by 1968 they were 76% and still rising (NB. most of the new growth being technical, supervisory and clerical rather than manual employment).

The late General de Gaulle had the political genius to capitalise on this changing scene, to blow apart the old divisions among capitalist parties (see above) and create a new stable, populist conservative party (the UDR, now the RPR).

He also gave the ruling class his autocratic Fifth Republic: whose 2-round electoral system serves to unify the anti-Communist vote, while its Presidential powers enable even a ‘non-Gaullist’ like Giscard to keep his own side in order while dividing and out-manoeuvring the parties of the left.

Ironically it has been the small businessmen who have voted massively for the Gaullist, while their decline in an increasingly modern economy has not slackened.

Moreover, the pro-American liberal-Conservative policies of Giscard's Republicans have probably been more logical for French capitalism than de Gaulle's short-sighted chauvinism and authoritarianism (compare Ted Heath vs. Maggie Thatcher).

So May 1968 occurred in — as an expressing of — a context of a newly-prosperous and well-educated society which was still rapidly — changing and deeply divided. The forces of reaction have been able to adjust to this — the ability of the ‘official left’ or the far left to analyse changing reality and come to appropriate conclusions remains more dubious.

## THE 'SPIRIT OF MAY'

revolutionary movements would not be simple re-runs of the past.

In its zest, its radical questioning of received ideas, its hostility to hierarchy and bureaucracy of whatever kind, and in its fresh and imaginative posters, the May movement often approached the spirit of Surrealism. “Run Comrade, the old world is behind you”... “Power is in the streets”... “Take your wishes for reality”... ran the world-renowned slogans

Far too often, of course, the youthful iconoclasm of the student revolutionaries led to ultra-left disdain for parliamentary democracy, the traditional workers' parties, the trade unions, and the “battle for hearts and minds” generally: especially after 1968 with the constant attempts to start May all over again with the magic formula revolt-repression-revolution. There was often a mood of *violence and irrationality* — against the boring normality of the status quo.

The movement notably brought into play a whole range of groups not normally linked to left politics and trade unionism. Showgirls and prostitutes in Montmartre, lawyers and

sometimes supervisors and scientific staff joined in. Students, film-makers, journalists, architects, technicians and others produced critiques of the way their work was organised in bourgeois society, of the authoritarian structures and alienation from fellow workers — together with bold and imaginative plans for “self-management” with schemes for putting their skills at the service of society rather than of profit.

Unfortunately, rather than take up the challenge of such new dimensions to a socialist transformation of society too many of the left groups have been mired in fruitless searches for latter-day Bolshevik Parties and Soviets.

Daniel Singer has quoted the views of Sieyès on the Third Estate of the French Revolution. “It had been nothing, it could be everything, it wanted to be something.” May saw the eruption of millions of ordinary people on the stage of history for a brief moment. If they do so again, will the left be able to come to terms with their manifold aspirations for personal and social liberation?

## COMMUNISM IN FRANCE?

formation into society.

In the more favourable period since 1968, opposition to the Czech invasion, support for East European dissidents, dropping of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” and backing for the French nuclear deterrent have all been to no avail. The emergent layers of technicians clerical workers and feminists have turned rather to the re-vamped Socialist Party (PS).

The PCF leaders have, nonetheless, been able to adopt to some of the new conditions (e.g. over women), to move to the left when appropriate, and to keep their stranglehold over the CGT union and such strongholds as the Paris “red belt”.

Unlike social-democratic parties, they organise in a tight and disciplined way in tens of thousands of workplace and locality cells. The tactics of the radical left have hardly hindered the Party's consolidation — veering as they have between attempts to ignore or by-pass it and (more commonly) virulently hysterical and ultra-left denunciation; at best,

abstract “révolution” — mongering. The overall effect has been to play into the hands of the leadership's anathemas on the *gauchistes*.

Because of the PCF's monolithic and bureaucratic nature, internal dissident currents have always been forced to organise clandestinely. At the last Party Congress, there was *not one* expression of opposition by any of the 3,000 hand-picked delegates. (This in itself suggests how much faith we can place in George Marchais's espousal of “democratic pluralism” and the like.

Recently, a “left” opposition — known by the *nom de plume* of ‘Max Pierrat’ — has begun organising secret meetings against the ‘social-democratisation’ of the PCF. They call for an active policy of popular unity committees with PS workers — as well as drawing in blacks and women.

However, though (like many CPGB dissidents) they voice a whole series of reasonable criticisms of the Party's reformist opportunism, their uncritical defence of the USSR would seem to place them in the sterile neo-Stalinist category.

## the Far Left

was the Mao-spon-  
 (spontex”) — such as  
 and Alain Geismar's  
 me. These tendencies  
 naivety of the  
 ment, radical  
 lusions in the  
 Revolution than to  
 style “Marxism-

GP in 1970; later one of their members, Pierre Overney, was gunned down by a security guard outside the Billancourt plant.

While the “spontex's” hatred for bosses and bureaucrats had a genuine appeal to some youth and immigrant workers — their zany leftism made it easy to isolate them. The main inheritor of this sort of tradition today is the OCT (Communist Workers' Organisation).

The most *effective* of the groups has been the Orthodox Trotskyist *Lutte Ouvrière* (Workers' Fight). They have built a credible base in the working class by means of consistent distribution of factory bulletins at 200-odd plants. In 1974 their presidential candidate (Arlette Laguiller) gained 600,000 votes — albeit on a very vague programme.

The main problem of LO (like many other would-be Bolshevik parties) is their belief that revolutionary socialist consciousness can flow fairly directly

from the day-to-day fight on bread-and-butter issues — neglecting the more subtle ideological and cultural aspects of life.

Too many of the *groupuscules* have alienated support with their frozen “Leninist” dogmatism, rigid bureaucratic “activist” organisations, and insensitivity to new developments such as the Women's Movement. In this respect a more flexible tendencies such as the Trotskyist LCR and the “self-management” oriented CCA may possibly have more potential.

Despite gains in certain areas, the revolutionary left *all told* is still far from able to present a serious alternative for workers to the PCF and CGT.

This is not due to a lack of hard draft or goodwill, but to overestimation of the immediate possibilities and blinkered refusal to confront the real political barriers to the creation of a revolutionary tradition in late 20th century France.

# LYNCH AND THE PROBLEM OF IRISH UNITY



IRSP supporters protest at Special Courts frame-up.

THE PRESENT FIANNA Fail Government of the 26 southern Irish counties came to power last June with a massive majority. One of the features of their election campaign was their policy, made in 1975, on the 6 north-eastern counties of Ireland. Fianna Fail committed themselves at that time to aim for 'the unity and independence of Ireland as a democratic republic' and demanded of Britain 'a commitment to implement an orderly withdrawal' from the North. Interviewed on Irish radio last January 8th Fianna Fail leader, and Taoiseach, Jack Lynch reaffirmed these aims of his party and government. Although Lynch was saying nothing new, he drew a hysterical response from Roy Mason, his Tory cohort Airey Neave, and Conor Cruise O'Brien — the Irish Labour Party TD who was rejected by his electorate at the general election, a rejection which must have been, in large part, due to his pro-partition, anti-republican pronouncements.

## SERVED

Indeed, O'Brien had served in the Fine Gael/Labour Coalition Government Cabinet which was responsible for placing on the statute books a number of particularly repressive pieces of legislation, e.g. the Offences Against the State Act, the Emergency Powers Act, and the Forcible Entry Act. The non-jury Special Criminal Courts were also introduced by the Coalition. This battery of legal apparatus was introduced with the sole purpose of harassing and destroying the Republican Socialist movement in the South. The Coalition was also committed to giving every support and assistance to British efforts to defeat Republicanism in the North.

The defeat of the Coalition was, in part, due to its evident anti-nationalist sentiment. Fianna Fail, the party of de Valera, is regarded as the major party of with the best Republican traditions and no doubt this contributed to the FF victory. Another aspect of that electoral victory was the perceived failure of the Coalition to tackle the basic problems of unemployment (which still runs at over 100,000) and inflation. This concern at the economic failings of the Coalition — and especially the part played by Labour in it — was reflected by the formation of the Socialist Labour Party, which at the time of its formation concentrated on economic issues. Working-class hostility to government failures also found expression in a series of long strikes which is still apparent.

## MILITANCY

These things are all indicative of a growing militancy in the 26 counties. Further evidence is found in the response of the politicians — of all major parties — to the Mason/Neave/O'Brien attacks on Lynch's 'unity' interview.

Fine Gael — whose repressive and reactionary role in Government we have already noted — now announce that no real differences exist between themselves and Fianna Fail on the question of the North. They, too, stand for 'an end to UK involvement in Irish affairs'. The European Court of Human Rights acquittal of Britain on the

by Steve O'Brady

charge of torturing internees was announced in the week following the Lynch interview. Garrett Fitzgerald, leader of Fine Gael, expressed his party's astonishment at the verdict and launched into Airey Neave on British TV in an appropriately radical manner.

Last month the Labour Party passed a resolution at its annual conference calling for the repeal of all the repressive legislation it helped pass when in the Coalition. The hypocrisy of Fitzgerald and the Labour Party is plainly an opportunistic realisation on their parts that they are in danger of isolating themselves in Irish political life. Having said that, it is clear that their opportunism reflects the mood of the Irish people.

## RADICAL MOOD

This new radical mood is likely to present problems for an essentially conservative, pro-capitalist government such as Lynch's. Phil Turner in his article 'Class and nationalism in Ireland' (see *Ireland Socialist Review* number 1) explains how the southern Irish bourgeoisie has nothing in common with the Republican movement of today. Turner argues that despite the history of nationalist struggle led by the middle-classes from 1798 through until the 1920s, the conditions under which that struggle took place have irreversibly changed. Those movements for national independence were fought in a bid to create the freest possible conditions for Irish capitalist development. In the past 50 years, however, the southern bourgeoisie has become increasingly bound up in the interests of western capital. At the time of partition the Irish economy was so far behind other capital in terms of prices of production etc. that there was no real prospect for Irish capital to successfully compete in the market economy.

## GUARANTEE

Developments in the Irish economy were dependent upon large-scale foreign investment. The bourgeois government, forced to accept a secondary role to more advanced economies, had to provide conditions that would attract foreign investors. They had to guarantee higher rates of profit than were obtainable elsewhere and provide services to western capital. The Southern Irish ruling-class has come to be 'the servicing agent for imperialism' and is prepared to accept the crumbs of profit that fall from the imperialists' table. Since one of the leading investors in the 26 counties is British capital it follows that from the world economic viewpoint the interests of southern Ireland and Britain are the same. More than this, Turner argues, the continuing nationalist struggle in Ireland — North and South — insofar as it is anti-imperialist, represents a threat to the southern bourgeois government. That government — economically and politically dependent upon Britain and imperialism — must, therefore oppose the nationalist movement in Ireland today. The reunification of Ireland under the southern bourgeoisie can only come about as a consequence of capitalist design and would accordingly be anti-

socialist. So, when Lynch talks of unity does he mean — as he himself has agreed — that he has an aim in common with the Provisional IRA? Turner's argument clearly suggests that this is not the case. Lynch has repeatedly denied the use of violence as being legitimate in the struggle to end British presence in Ireland. His reason for this is simple — and it is not a question of morality — any political movement capable of violently forcing a British withdrawal, would also be capable of unleashing forces throughout Ireland against the native ruling class. That is why, for Lynch, reunification — if it is to come at all — must be a negotiated product of Irish/British collusion. For as long as a 32 county Ireland is incompatible with British needs — and it will remain incompatible for as long as there is no guarantee of stable, capitalist rule — then there can be no unity.

## DILEMMA

This then is Lynch's dilemma. How can he appear to lead, and thereby head-off, sentiment in Ireland which he cannot afford to unconditionally support because of the potential threat it would represent to his government? For him and his colleagues of the FG opposition there are two key things to be done. Firstly, to make loud, if meaningless, nationalist noises; and secondly, to render illegitimate the struggles of radical Republican Socialists.

This explains the superficial contradiction between all-round condemnation of British and Royal Ulster Constabulary methods of 'questioning' Republican detainees in the north, and the (acceptance of) similar methods employed by the Irish Garda 'heavy Gang'. At the moment four members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party are on trial at the Special Criminal Court, Dublin. They are charged with having robbed a mailtrain of £240,000 on 30 March 1976. The evidence against three of the accused consists solely of statements taken by the 'heavy Gang'. The modus operandi of this special squad — formed largely of members of the Garda Technical Bureau — was described by the Irish newspaper, the *Sunday Independent*. 'They are sent for when something big breaks and are immediately relieved of all other duties. . . They are expected to produce quick results. . . The men involved do not conduct detective work in the sense of seeking culprits and arresting them. Their job is solely to make captured men talk and do so rapidly.' The IRSP — 40 of whose members were initially questioned by the 'Heavy Gang' after the robbery — have described the successful methods employed. 'The techniques used included beating with fists, and batons, spread-eagling against walls, jabbing of the groin and stomach, squeezing of the genitals and denial of sleep, food and water as well as psychological pressure such as threats to relatives, blackmail, inducements etc.'

The hypocrisy of the Lynch government is indicated by the fact that they gave the order for this 'trial' to go ahead 24 hours after their attacks on British torturers acquitted at

Strasbourg. This trial is going ahead under legislation provided by the Coalition government which Fianna Fail was quick to criticise. It seems though that when it comes to it nothing does separate the parties.

The Fianna Fail government is also adopting a tough line in the arena of industrial relations. As we described earlier in this article it is vital to Irish capital that it provides conditions attractive to foreign investors. One aspect of this is the provision of a quiescent, low-paid work force. The past year has seen a number of prolonged strikes in industries such as telecommunications, steel and at Aer Lingus.

When last September, Henry Ford decided not to invest £180m in a new motor engine plant in Cork (he chose South Wales) it was reported that one of the reasons behind the decision was that Britain had kept the Ford company supplied with information on the number of strikes in Cork. FF are again in a difficult position. Clearly much of their electoral success was due to the votes of frustrated and militant workers, yet from the point of view of his class Lynch must inflict economic and political defeats on these workers.

## HONEYMOON

Any honeymoon period that might have existed between FF and the Irish Labour movement is now over. It was leaked last February that Minister for Labour, Gene Fitzgerald, was considering the introduction of legislation outlawing unofficial strikes. In dealing with the telecommunications strike that is on at the time of writing the government has adopted an intransigent stance.

All this puts the radical sounding noises of Lynch, Fitzgerald, Cluskey and all into perspective. Plainly his considerations on the 'all-Ireland context' count for little in practice. When Roy Mason accuses Lynch of giving hope to the IRA he characteristically inverts the truth. The strength and resurgence of nationalist sentiment in the south, the growing confidence of forces in the North, have forced the politicians to acknowledge that sentiment. It is also true to say that those politicians will do all in their special powers to castrate that mood, in both their own and British interests.

## PRINCIPLE

For socialists in Britain the whole 'unity' argument raises important points of principle. We are, by now, used to the tactics and methods employed by Britain in the attempt to defeat republicanism. British support for the Loyalist statelet and the guarantee of partition have normally been accompanied by solemn assurances that should the majority of the people in the six counties wish to join the southern state, then no British government would stand in the way.

The theoretical — if remote — possibility of a single, independent Irish nation has usually been conceded by Britain. Roy Mason in his latest outburst, seems to be denying even the theoretical possibility. When talk of 'unity' dominates discussion in Ireland Mason accuses Lynch of interfering in British affairs. In a period when it seems that nationalist movement is about to rise, strengthened, from the grave of history which Mason rashly committed it to last December, and when the issue of partition and the border is in the air (thereby tightening the hold of the Unionists over the protestant section of the North), it is more important than ever that we in Britain re-affirm our support for the right of the whole of Ireland to determine its own future.

As Labour Parties begin to select resolutions for this year's conference it is crucial that enough motions make the agenda to prevent the Standing Orders Committee from leaving the question of Ireland off the agenda as happened last year. It is also necessary that those motions express total opposition to the assumptions behind Mason's propaganda and support the right to Irish self-determination by calling for an immediate withdrawal of British troops.

## THE GOVERNMENT



Jack Lynch (third from left, bottom row) with his Fianna Fail Cabinet.



Reviewed by  
Kate O'Brien

# KOLLONTAI ON SEXUAL LIBERATION

ALEXANDRA KOLLONTAI was one of the most prominent women members of the Bolshevik Party and had led the struggle for women's rights within that party. In 1922 she took a sidestep out of the political arena and accepted a post in the backwaters of diplomatic services.

Appointed as advisor to the Soviet legation in Norway she avoided diplomatic work for some months. Instead she retreated to a Norwegian village and wrote her stories. Three years later she wrote to a friend that she had "just one wish to become a writer again without an official position." Although she continued her diplomatic career for many years, gaining respect for her competence, she had undoubtedly turned her back on the main political issues of the day and in particular the fight against the bureaucratic degeneration of the Russian revolution.

## FROM WIFE TO REVOLUTIONARY

Her political career had not begun until she was twenty six years old when she left her husband and child to study political economy in Zurich. In Russia after the 1905 revolution, she noted for the first time that the Party showed little concern for the emancipation of women.

In the face of the rising bourgeois feminist movement, she threw herself into the organisation and education of working women.

Forced into political exile, she joined the German Social Democrats in 1909 and spent hectic years touring Europe organising and speaking. She watched with growing anticipation the development of an international movement of socialist women.

After joining the Bolsheviks in 1915 she fought constantly for the recognition of the need to take up women's issues and for special organs in the party to achieve this.

Elected to the Bolsheviks Central Committee in 1917, she held posts as Commissar for Social Welfare and worked in the Central Women's Department. Thus she played a large part in introducing many of the new laws which were keys to the emancipation of her sex.

She had many fears about the growing bureaucratisation of the Party, the lack of debate and objected to the New Economic Policy (NEP) because of the concessions it made to foreign investors, peasants and traders.

As a member of the Workers Opposition she fought until 1921 for a reversal of the New Economic Policy — which encouraged elements of capitalism to assist the stabilisation of the enfeebled Soviet state. But given the economic situation in the early 1920's, with high unemployment and sluggish industrialisation, her criticisms of the NEP were idealistic. Only a few months after the defeat of the Workers Opposition she accepted the post in the legation to Norway.



## 'NEW WOMAN' AGAINST A TIDE OF SEXISM.

Kollontai's personal life was no less colourful and her sexual freedom made often the object of scathingly sexist criticism and scandal. For example, "As for this woman", wrote a critic, "it is plain her revolutionary enthusiasm is nothing but a gratification of her sexual satyrism. In spite of her numerous 'husbands' Kollontai, first the wife of a general, later the mistress of a dozen men, is not yet satisfied. She seeks new forms of sexual sadism. I wish she might come under the observation of Freud and other psychiatrists."

Regardless of scandal and isolation, Kollontai championed the cause of the 'New Woman' — women whom she saw as rejecting the traditional straight jacket of the family and boldly defying the sexual double standards.

She traces the development of this new heroine through history and literature in a chapter of the book "The New Morality and the Working Class." (This chapter is included in the publication "Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman").

Of great importance in the emancipation of women's personality was a dramatic change in self-identity so that emotion and feeling no longer dominated. Freedom could only be maintained if love affairs took second place to work and/or political commitment. Kollontai latterly comments, "over and over again the man always tries to impose his ego upon us and adapt us fully to his purposes."

## LOVE AND WORK

The painful contradictions Kollontai experienced and observed are sensitively retold in the three stories of "Love of Worker Bees" — the search for new forms of sexual relationships, new forms of living that translate principles of socialism into our personal lives. To burst from the cocoon of the traditional wife many women (as is often the case today) had to break from the husband or lover they loved. This is the predicament of Vasilisia in "Vasilisia Malygina".

At the beginning of the novel Vasilisia, a party activist, is immersed in the difficulties

of setting up an experimental communal household "filled with genuinely communist spirit". She goes to join her husband a successful business man — it is not surprising that the men in all these stories have been corrupted by the NEP. In contrast to her previously active life Vasilisia is thrust into the suffocating role of the passive, decorative wife, although on the very edges of her life she continues some political work.

The short story "Sisters" presents the woman in a similar situation but the strength of the relationship between the women indicates Kollontai's optimism about women's affection for each other and their solidarity in shared oppression.

## SEX-LIKE A GLASS OF WATER

In "Three Generations" Kollontai examines the relationship between society, culture and sexuality. She achieves an historical approach by narrating the love affairs and sexual attitudes of grandmother, mother and daughter.

The radical sexual behaviour of the daughter, Zenya, shocks the older generation because her many sexual relationships are devoid of love; she reserves her emotional energy for friends, comrades and the party.

This new phenomenon found in Zenya and her young comrades in the post revolutionary period is observed uncritically by Kollontai. She leaves an open question on the future: in which way will sexual relationships develop under socialism?

When the three stories were published in the Soviet Union in 1923, Kollontai's ideas were grossly distorted. Particularly, the character of Zenya, it was said confirmed that Kollontai had a flippant attitude towards sex. Her antagonists claimed she stated that sex should be as simple and natural as drinking a glass of water.



Quite obviously Kollontai meant nothing of the sort but the three stories were considered depraved and petit-bourgeois with an unhealthy pre-occupation with sex.

## BACK TO THE FAMILY

Ironically, Kollontai's writing has achieved wide international recognition in a new generation but she had obviously sought to reach in her own time a wider audience with her novels than she had through her political writings: she may well have sought to rekindle the dying struggle for women's liberation in the Soviet Union.

In the following years however, she watched impotently the degeneration of the revolution and the reversal of the steps taken for women's emancipation.

Under Stalin, the Women's Department she had fought to set up was closed down, abortion became illegal, motherhood and the traditional family enshrined. It is little wonder that "Love of Worker Bees" received limited circulation and fell on infertile ground.

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY — AN INDICTMENT

A few years after the failure of "Love of Worker Bees", Kollontai wrote her autobiography but it is difficult to see why and for what audience she wrote it. It begins with a totally unconvincing attempt to justify her taking up diplomatic posts; she skims briefly through her public life and makes some interesting statements about her attitude to her personal life.

However, she remains silent about details of her personal life and makes no attempt to explain the political differences she had with the Bolsheviks. It remains too brief a sketch to be satisfactory. This edition is worthwhile however because it includes the chapter "The New Woman" and an excellent afterword by Iring Fetscher.

This is the first time the complete 1926 autobiography has been published and it has been reconstructed to include passages Kollontai had deleted. Her prose is often turgid and lacks the warmth and boldness of her novels and the strength of her political pamphlets.

Her pen has crossed through most passages where she wrote strongly about the liberation of women and almost all references to the international struggle of the working class.

It is this self censorship which indicates most sadly Kollontai's capitulation to Stalinism, to the entrenchment of women's traditional roles and to the concept of socialism in one country.

# A state of waste

THE WELFARE state is also a wasteful state. It has long been a charge of socialists that the operations of the modern state and the resources it commands are used wastefully.

Apart from the waste of one and a half million people being unemployed and the vast sums of money spent on socially irrelevant items of military 'defence' there is a considerable drain of resources associated with the operations of our welfare system.

This year the Government plans to spend £4,000 million on Housing and £7,400 million on Social Security. In addition some £6,000 million will be spent by Local Councils on Social Services.

All in all then twice the amount spent on actually housing these people will be spent on supporting the unemployed, pensioners, and families in need.

'From the cradle to the grave' was the slogan of the Labour leaders when they set up the apparatus of the Welfare State in the late 1940's. It was a compromise, from the beginning, with capitalism and the needs of economy. 'An insurance against revolt' was the way it was put in its defence against the Tory opposition.

Today it continues to come under political attack from the reactionary Right whilst the services it provides to the many millions in need are cut-back by our (Tory) Labour Government.

But it has been almost the sole defence of the Labour right-wing, the reason for their existence when under attack from the socialist Left.

The compromise it was founded on is not

## WHOSE WELFARE STATE?

just with its limitations when meeting the needs of ordinary people. The logic of the means test and the 'poverty level' are still there. The other element of compromise is the way in which the whole welfare system operates, day by day. In order to ensure that its services will never come under the direct control of the workers and their families which need it — the beneficiaries — an entire bureaucracy, made up of white collar workers has been built to administer it. Let us look at the way in which housing is run, for example.

If there is one single social condition which affects all people it is housing. Even with the enlightened system of welfare nurtured by the social-democrats — the conditions of housing for millions still shows the greatest waste and drain of resources associated with Labour's 'mixed economy'.

Despite the fact that private house building has been in a radical decline since the 1930's and that the demand for decent housing is finite, unlike social services or health — the state has failed totally to deal with this

BY MARK DOUGLAS

vital area of everyday need.

Today, more than ever, housing and its commercial market is dominated by private finance capital. The only profit to be made from housing is in its 'servicing': mortgages, deposits, fees and capital interest. The actual building of houses became a loss making enterprise several decades ago.

Yet because housing is still basically, 'private', that is, because the majority of housing is actually owned by occupiers or landlords or building groups, the state has never seen to make it part of the 'economic planning' sphere which we normally associate with the nationalised industries.

## THE ROLE OF LOCAL COUNCILS:

There are still one million people on house waiting lists in Britain. Another three million families live in housing which lacks one of the three basic amenities (WC, hot water or bath) and just under another million houses have been classified as unfit for habitation — but people still live in them!

Alongside these facts there exists *one million empty houses!!* Because public housing has long been 'decentralised', that is, under the initiative of local councils, these appalling facts have never been remedied. Even today the most urgent 'action' which the Labour Minister for Housing, Peter Shore, can bring himself to do is ask all public organisations to release their 'spare land' for the use of their local communities.

It is conceivably possible, even under our present bureaucratic mixed economy, for every working family in this country to live

in their own secure housing accommodation. But it will never happen as long as finance capital and the bureaucratic state exists.

Not because the actual resources: land, materials, existing housing stock and the labour to do the job are not there — they are.

But because socialist planning and initiative cannot co-exist with the present local council system. It is perhaps the most glaring indictment of the inadequacies of the 'welfare system'.

Many short-term policies can be achieved with the present system — but only so far. It is possible to challenge the domination of capital in the 'people's public services' — but not to defeat it without re-creating a new socialist democracy at the national state level. The strangle-hold of interest repayments on local council budgets (taking away more than all the rent income from public housing at present) could be challenged by cancelling and refusing to pay the capital debts on which they feed — these policies can be tried. The public requisitioning of all empty buildings is also possible — but not without challenging the whole basis of law and the state bureaucracy at the same time. The lessons of Clay Cross (1972), the St. Pancras Rent Strike (1960) and the Glasgow rent strike of 1915 (which began the whole council housing system after the First World War) are still very relevant.

The solution to the existing housing crisis lies with a challenge to the inadequate welfare state, not its reform. Along this road many socialists on local councils must discover the means to a planned socialist economy which will eliminate the waste of human and material resources of today's compromise with the state capitalism.

### Women's Rights

This Conference recognises that sexual oppression is a key weapon used in capitalist society to divide the working class. Over the past four years, there has been the quadrupling of female unemployment, massive cuts in social spending which particularly affects women and an increasing ideological offensive to drive women back into the domestic slavery of the home.

We further recognise the total inadequacy of present legislation such as the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act in providing opportunities for women at work. Male dominance is rooted in class society and is perpetuated by the sexual oppression of youth and women through the church, family and schools.

Whilst Conference supports campaigns such as the Working Womens' Charter, it recognises that they do not provide in themselves the basis for confronting the roots of sexual oppression in capitalist society. In order for the LPYS to wage a successful struggle against sexual oppression, branches should prioritise a full discussion and initiate or support campaigns around the following:

1. An immediate campaign amongst women to enable them to take an active part in trade union and political life. Campaign amongst male trade unionists, showing them that it is in their interests also to fight for these demands, whose realisation is inseparable from the wider measures necessary to socialise the economy and transform society along socialist lines.
  2. Support for the right of women to organise separately and especially womens' sections in the Labour Party, and caucuses in the trade unions.
  3. Campaign for Womens' Aid Centres to be provided and financed by the state and democratically controlled by committees of women and local Labour movement representatives.
  4. Campaign for free Day Abortion Clinics on the N.H.S.
  5. Guarantee of sexual rights of youth, adequate provision of suitable accommodation with privacy for young people so that they can engage in sexual relationships at any age and without hindrance. Only such curbs as are necessary to protect young people from sexual exploitation or abuse should exist.
  6. Sex education at all levels in secondary schools and the abolition of sexual segregation in schools.
  7. Propaganda to remove the social and economic oppression of homosexuals and lesbians, for example equal rights of custody of children for homosexual parents.
  8. The extension of the protection of women who are victims of rape.
- Conference calls on the N.C. to organise a one-day LPYS conference to discuss sexual oppression and the organisation for a national campaign around the above demands.

LEEDS SOUTH EAST LPYS

## SEXUAL OPPRESSION AND LPYS—DELEGATE REPLIES

IN INTRODUCING the composite motion on women at the 1978 Labour Party Young Socialist Conference Ali Southern, the delegate from Leeds S.E. YS. stated that, "the position of women in the struggle for socialism does not begin and end with the formal issues of equality in the workplace. The broader issues of sexual oppression of women in the home, in the family. . . are also raised". She went on to outline the complexity and breadth of that oppression. For her pains she was pilloried by the capitalist press and her arguments were crudely distorted by *Militant* supporters at the conference. Here she and John Sunderland explain our position.

THE REACTION of the gutterpress to the debate on women's rights at LPYS Conference was to totally ignore the real issues being discussed. The composite moved by Leeds S.E. recognised the sexual oppression of women, gays and youth, and located that oppression in the family. This oppression is reinforced by the church, schools and the media and is manifested in the social and economic subordination of these sections.

Class society is a male dominated society. By linking the struggles of these particularly oppressed sections the resolution pointed a way to challenging that male dominance. This is a challenge to the ideological foundations of capitalism.

The press, by a cynical use of titillation, have managed to ridicule this debate and reduce it to a call for state-aided "sex parlours". The sordid hypocrisy of scandal-sheets like the "Sun" which exploit sex and degrade women for commercial gain defies description.

Women are not just super-exploited workers, they are oppressed as women. There is nothing congenital to women that implies their particular suitability for domestic labour, unskilled, low paid employment, or emotional dependence on men and children, and yet on the grounds of their sex, regardless of ability or desire, they are forced into these roles. Their subjugation is reinforced by advertising and the media and the sexual abuse and degradation of women is publicly acceptable.

Young people are subject to the influence of a morality which is riddled with superstition and self denial. Confined within their families, emotionally and economically dependant, they are unable to form their own relationships without interference.

They are forced to lead sordid and shabby sex lives, in deceit, behind the bicycle sheds, or in lonely isolation in their bedrooms (if they are lucky enough not to have to share with relatives). This contradiction between their desires and the expectations of parents

leads to a miserable twilight of guilt and apprehension.

Lesbians and homosexuals have to contend with a compulsory heterosexuality which confronts them everyday. They are the butt of malicious humour, the source of titillation for more 'normal' people, and the prey of maniac 'queer-bashers'. Some are even led to despise themselves to the extent that they become the willing victims of torture and undergo lobotomy or aversion therapy.

What purpose is served through all this misery? We must understand that the family is a key weapon in the perpetuation of bourgeois ideology. Its role as an authoritarian structure is to secure an emotional commitment to the authoritarian institutions of capitalism. It is the first arena where authority is imposed and people are conditioned to accept it.

The result is the suppression of the individual's critical ability and the forging of their dependence upon and allegiance to that authority. The sexuality of children is denied. Any expression of it such as masturbation or exhibitionism is punished.

The resulting guilt and insecurity will only be alleviated through obedience, whereupon the subjugation to authority is rewarded by emotional support. Thus commitment (dependence) is established through insecurity.

Male domination in the home compensates for the worker's impotence in the workplace, and women bear the burden of this domestic haven. The family is an instrument for maintaining the status quo therefore any display of independent sexuality or deviation from the clearly defined gender roles is stamped on heavily through ridicule and punishment.

The realisation of sex as pleasure, divorced from procreation and heterosexuality breaks down the moral restraints and authoritarianism of the bourgeois family structure.

When we talk about building a socialist

alternative society we must not offer abstractions. Socialism is about human liberation, it is about recognising the struggles of the most oppressed sections of society and translating them into socialist revolution. To do this we must recognise and support the autonomous organisation of the oppressed, for only they can fully appreciate their own oppression.

This does not mean complete separatism. It demands that the labour movement creates the mechanisms within its own organisations, such as women's caucuses, to facilitate mutual understanding and development which, far from dividing the working class, can only strengthen its character and ensure continued progress after the revolution.

The real crime of capitalism is not just that it pays lousy wages but that it distorts human potential. We are not concerned with mirroring the bourgeois ideals of humanity, we are out to build our own, and the fight begins now, in the home, in the bars and discos, and in the workplace.

John Sunderland and Ali Southern, Leeds S.E. LPYS.

### Out in May

Ireland Socialist Review No.2

Articles on Trade Unions in Ireland, the International Tribunal, the Northern Ireland economy and the Quigley Report and a critique of ISR No.1.

Available from: Brixton Books, 60 Loughborough Road, London SW9.

Price 30p + 10p postage.

## Fascists in Lambeth

THE NF COULDN'T even canvass in the Lambeth Central by-election without police protection. They came to Brixton twice to sell their paper. On the second occasion they sheltered behind ten coachloads of police. Those who were sharp-eyed could pick out about thirty National Fronters behind the blue bodyguard.

The police even acted as stewards for their election meeting at Loughborough School on the 15th April. A few anti-fascists were allowed in after being screened by NF Organiser Martin Webster. Apart from those, only carriers of certain orange cards could pass the police cordon to the meeting. Any member of the Brixton public curious enough to find out what their NF candidate, Helena Stevens, had to say would be disappointed. As were the thuggish-looking band in regulation combat jackets who hadn't been considered worthy enough to receive a ticket, and had to wander the streets away from the taunts of 'reject' from their opponents opposite the cordon.

Because this was so clearly a non-public meeting, Ashley Bramall, leader of the Inner London Education Authority, banned the NF from holding another election meeting in Deptford. Even the comparatively small, mainly local, mobilisation easily prevented the NF meeting from being public as few but the hard-nut supporters, would dare to run the gauntlet to get in.

The NF got 1293 votes in the election, just over 6%. 1293 too many, of course. But this was only a slight improvement on the 5% they received in the GLC elections last year without all the publicity they got this time. Lambeth Central is predominantly white. If they can't do better than this in what they call the 'front line' then all Tyndall's talk of what they'll do to their opponents when his party win power is rather pathetic.

The police, however, are not pathetic. They call the tune in most of the confrontations. They arrested about thirty people on the 15th. A few anti-fascists were hauled in as they struggled to leave the meeting when they were attacked. A few more were grabbed at random outside. Six black youths a long way from the meeting were arrested on 'sus'. Just for balance, Martin Webster was nicked with some of his comrades.

Two anti-fascists were recently jailed for twelve and six weeks respectively. The fines imposed on others total thousands of pounds. But how else can fascist public activities be restricted?

A defence campaign had been set up for those arrested at the Loughborough School meeting.

Donations should be sent c/o: 506 Brixton Road, London SW9.

### Subscribe!

12 copies Only £2.00

from: CHARTIST PUBLICATIONS (address below)

Name .....

Address .....

.....

## Black women unite to fight 'sus'

by DON FLYNN

A GROUP of Black Women in the north London Borough of Haringey have joined together in an important campaign designed to confront racism in the local community. Known as the United Black Women's Action Group (UBWAG), the organization has played a leading role in the Borough's anti-racist campaigns and is particularly strong in the fight to end police harassment of youth under the 'SUS' laws.

The stated aims of UBWAG are:

- 1 To assist Black Women to help themselves;
- 2 To see to the cultural and social needs of Black Women;
- 3 To take up issues of concern to Black Women.

In its cultural and social role the Group has connections with other Black Women's Groups in areas like Deptford, Walthamstow and Brixton. It has been involved in discussions about the Soweto uprising in South Africa, housing, women's rights and schooling.

But the single issue which is doing most to bring UBWAG to prominence in the local anti-racist movement is the fight against the notorious 'SUS' laws, which give police the right to engage in the constant harassment of black youth, not only in Haringey, but throughout the country.

SUS means 'suspected person loitering with intent to commit a felonious act'. The only evidence needed to convict someone under a SUS charge is the work of a single policeman or policewoman.

In areas like Wood Green or Tottenham, both in Haringey, hanging about on a street corner is a traditional activity of the unemployed, not erstwhile thieves and burglars.

The black youth of the area suffer particularly badly from high unemployment rates and because of this, combined with a racist tendency in the police force, are frequent victims of SUS.

These youths are being constantly harassed, moved on, and eventually pulled into the local police station for no other reason than some cop 'didn't like the look' of them. For this reason, the Action Group point to the racist as well as to the anti-civil liberty character of SUS. UBWAG, in line with the national campaign against SUS, calls for:

- 1 A review of the Vagrancy Act 1824;
- 2 Repeal of Section 4 of the same Act.

The Action Group quoted the experience of one local black youth, Tony Anderson from Tottenham, with SUS:

"Tony had been harassed by the police for three years prior to his arrest and imprisonment. It all started one night when Tony was walking home when a policeman called out to him "Hallo sunshine". Tony said his name was not sunshine.

'For answering back he was punched in the kidneys by the policeman's mate. When he returned home he was obviously in great pain and his mother took him to the police station



Another arrest—an everyday event for persecuted black communities

where he was examined by the police surgeon and found to have severely bruised kidneys. His mother filed a complaint. Attempts were made to frustrate her complaint which was eventually dismissed and from that time onwards Tony was harassed. He was arrested several times on trivial charges until finally he was framed for assault and sent down.

Tony's case has been taken up by the local Labour Movement Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Campaign and has already led to one demonstration. The Haringey United Black Women's Action Group should be given the fullest support by the north London labour movement and every assistance should be given to scrap the racist, anti-democratic SUS laws!

For further information about UBWAG, contact 20 Chacewater, Boyton Road, London N8, or 118 Tangmere, Broadwater Farm, Tottenham, London N17.