

# RED WEEKLY



**BAN**  
all private practice  
**DEMON-STRATE**  
12.30 on 25 April,  
Hyde Park to  
Trafalgar Square  
Called by the National Co-ordinating  
Ctte against cuts in the NHS  
Supported by NALGO, NUS, SMA,  
AUEW, Sheffield Dist.Ctte,  
CLPs, Manchester TC, etc

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# FIGHT WILSON'S HEIRS

The Labour leaders have changed seats. The election round-about has ground to a halt. But Callaghan will be playing the same tune as Harold Wilson. Perhaps the notes will be a little harsher on the sensibilities of the left MPs, but predictably they gave both Callaghan and Wilson a standing ovation at the Parliamentary Labour Party meeting which announced the election of the new leader.

\* \* \*

The first major test of the Callaghan Government will be the Budget proposals. The union leaders have put up a show of debate and disagreement about the form of the next stage of incomes policy. But their arguments merely centre on what is the most effective way to drag down the living standards of their membership. Healey has already indicated that wage settlements cannot be more than half of the previous £6 limit, which itself has meant increased poverty for millions.

\* \* \*

Healey's offers of tax concessions are a fake. They will not even compensate for the effects of inflation over the last year. In order to keep tax revenues intact to pay off the national debt to the big finance houses and the trusts, the Government will have to slash spending on housing, health, education and all the gains made by the working class in social services. The 'concessions' given with one hand will be taken away with a vengeance by the other.

\* \* \*

The TUC leaders have set up a meeting of union executives in June to try and force acceptance of the package down the membership's throats. They will try to stamp on any resistance even from the smallest groups of workers, as Scanlon showed with his marching orders to the British Leyland toolroom strikers. Any resistance to the policies of this Government will meet with opposition from the likes of Jones, Scanlon and all the supporters of this Government's policies.

\* \* \*

The left MPs will doubtless show their true colours when confronted with the vote on the Budget. Those who claimed in front of the National Assembly on Unemployment to be opposed to the Government's policies should vote against the Budget as the basis for the Government's strategy over the next year -- or be revealed for mere left talkers.

\* \* \*

But as the non-fight continues in Parliament, the struggle which really counts is rising again. Following the National Assembly on Unemployment, support is building up for the day of action on 26 May. A new wave of struggles has hit the motor industry and the fight against the cuts will take another step forward with the demonstration against the health cuts on 25 April. Demands for ending wage controls, cuts and for nationalisation to establish the right to work are building up. It is in these struggles that a real class struggle opposition to defeat Callaghan and all the heirs of Wilson will be forged.



# ALL OUT ON 26 MAY

# FOR LEYLAND WORKERS IT'S NOT SO EASY RYDER

The ins and outs of the five strikes that nearly brought British Leyland to a halt last week are as complex as Birmingham's Spaghetti Junction, near which SU Carburettors is located.

It was the month-long strike by 32 toolmakers at this latter plant which had the Government, press, BL management and the Executive of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers falling over themselves to get a return to work. In the end the 32 workers were summoned from their beds early on Saturday morning and virtually marched back by union officials, after a 4-hour secret meeting with management and union officials the previous evening had failed to persuade the men to obey the AUEW Executive's *diktat* to return 'forthwith'.

## Differential

The root cause of the strikes, which cost BL £44 million and at one time led to 18,500 workers being laid off, has on the workers side been the erosion of pay differentials for skilled workers through successive incomes policies and the £6 limit. At SU Carburettors, where the toolroom workers negotiated a £5.50 rise last April with the promise of a review in December to bring them up to rates equivalent to toolroom workers in other Leyland plants, this meant particularly 'rough justice'.

The December increase was ruled out by management and the Department of Employment on the basis that it broke the twelve month gap between pay settlements demanded under the £6 limit — although 125 members of the white collar union



ASTMS last year received a £150 back-pay lump sum for a similar claim to that of the toolmakers in BLMC. And the striking toolmakers in the Rover plants actually won a victory in their demand for an extra £1.85 a week backdated to January 1975 because specific dates were written into their last agreement with BL management.

So what were management up to in these disputes, in which both sides have emerged bruised but neither beaten? As always, implementation of the Ryder Report was not far from the surface.

Leyland today has 58 separate wage bargaining units in its 34 plants, a situation which shop stewards were able to exploit in the boom years to ensure a continual leap-frogging of wages to improve their members' standard of living. At a time when a massive new productivity offensive is opening out — Leyland plans to increase production from 14,000 a month in December to 22,000 a month this autumn, with a workforce that has been cut

from 130,000 a year ago to 114,114,000 today — BL are determined to eliminate sectoral strikes.

The class collaborationist Joint Committees are one half of this. The other is the attempt to establish collective agreements covering all workers in the plants. Only the toolmakers refused, insisting on maintaining the 1940 National Toolroom Agreement.

## Hysterical

The toolroom strikers have for the moment won this battle. And the success for management of participation is far from guaranteed, since only last week the workers at the Rover Solihull plant — where 400 toolmakers were on strike for three weeks — voted by a majority of 800 to reject worker participation.

But this alone does not explain BL's hysterical reaction to the toolmakers' disputes. The fact is that British Leyland management nearly

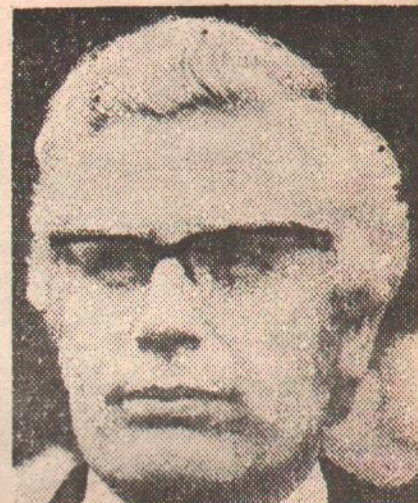
cut its own throat last December when it put a four month freeze on capital investment to 'make the boys behave'. In the two months previous to this, £22 million of Ryder money had simply gone on paying current debts.

Now, in a situation where the car market is expanding faster than expected, BL is literally ill-equipped to take advantage of it. Last month Leyland's share of the British market fell to 27 per cent — behind Ford, 5 per cent behind imported cars, and a long way behind the 33 per cent market share designated by Ryder as the minimum necessary to make Leyland profitable.

The disputes have also highlighted the scandalous policies being pursued by the AUEW Executive. Their claim that they could not support the strikes at SU Carburettors and Triumph, Coventry because they broke the £6 limit was a smoke-screen.

The truth is that the AUEW Executive, lefts and all, have accepted the Ryder Report and its implication that profitability and stamping out unofficial stoppages come first, jobs and living standards last.

Unfortunately the 'special case' arguments based on the need to protect differentials cut the toolmakers off from other BL workers, leaving them wide open to the witch-hunting attacks that they were 'jeopardising jobs'. Even at Rover Solihull



BL chief Alex Park: 'So far we have managed to avoid any permanent damage from the four months standstill [on investment]. . . But we have virtually exhausted any leeway remaining to us.' And he isn't just bluffing.

— where there was a successful three-week strike against speed-up late last year — militant shop stewards were unable to win support from other sections for the toolmakers, and their picket lines were in the main ignored. By placing the fight against Ryder and the defence of living standards at the centre of their struggle, wider support could have been won.

Finally, the most important effects of the toolmakers' strikes lay outside Leyland as such. The Government and the trade union bureaucracy now realise that to have any chance of making 'son of £6' stick they must include some system of pay differentials and productivity bonuses.

Jack Jones's conversion to such a policy, announced in his speech at West Bromwich last Saturday, shows where the next attack in the war on workers' living standards and jobs will come from. A new productivity offensive throughout British industry is being pushed forward. More jobs are being laid out for the chop. 'Son of £6' will be part of this process — and it will no doubt be 'justified' on the basis that cutting inflation is essential to save jobs. Newspeak here we come. Mick Gosling and John Graham

# Civil service union under fire from right

Two years of intensive campaigning by the right wing inside the Civil and Public Services Association is building up to a climax at its annual conference in May.

The biggest civil service union has been plagued over that time by anonymous 'moderate' circulars, red baiting and general smear tactics. The campaign is intended to bear fruit in the Executive elections to be held at the conference. A longer term aim, according to the union's right-wing president Kate Losinska, is that the present convulsions inside the union 'will bring about a situation similar to that which gave rise to the investigation (in 1962) into the security procedures in the Public Service.'

Among the results of that enquiry, the Radcliffe Report, was the dismissal of a number of officials by the union and a recommendation that there should be no negotiations with union officials suspected of Communist associations.

Articles in the *Sun* and *Daily Mail* recently have carried allegations of an extremist take-over — not only of the union, but also of the whole state apparatus (the CPSA represents workers in several crucial areas — Air Traffic Control, Post Office Computers, Customs and Excise).

The peak of this press campaign occurred with the publication of an article by Losinska in a symposium in the *Readers Digest* called 'The Marxist Battle for Britain'.

As the conference approaches, writs have begun to fly in all directions. Los-



Red-baiter Kate Losinska

inska has got Mr Justice Brightman to say that the union can only have the privilege of replying to her article if her name isn't mentioned and there is no implication that she has been guilty of misconduct against the union. The judge also made a temporary order prohibiting the circulation of the agenda for the national conference because it contains an Executive motion of censure on Losinska.


The intervention of the courts into the business of the union has accompanied the revelation that the Conservative Central Office has written to all its agents, MPs and trade union activists urging them to support 'moderates' in the forth-

coming elections. Mrs Losinska's name, of course, heads the list.

This frantic right-wing activity started after the Broad Left won a majority on the Executive three years ago. The CPSA was the only union to oppose the social contract at the 1974 TUC conference. The union then went on to oppose the £6 limit at the 1975 TUC Conference. And recently it has campaigned for a recall TUC to reconsider the trade union movement's support for the Labour Government's policies.

Much of this militancy has been a posture. Several motions to the next conference condemn the union's failure to fight the £6 limit in action as well as words. Furthermore, the failure of the Broad Left to follow up their fine words has played into the hands of the right by disillusioning many union members. Their election machine, which is run on 'lists' and bargaining instead of on the basis of a fight for policies, has given substance to the right's allegations of vote fixing in the eyes of some of the rank and file.

CPSA militants must avoid at all costs being dragged into the 'right/left' mudslinging that will most likely substitute for a debate on the way forward for the union. With 'son of £6' coming up, the chief task must be to force the Executive to oppose any form of wage restraint and to mobilise the membership against the cuts which threaten many civil servants with redundancy, the whole membership with worsening conditions, and the deterioration of all the services in which CPSA members are involved.

BRITISH  
  
LEYLAND

## Rover Triumph

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## Main Entrance

## Birmingham stewards debate fight against £6 limit

The first step to launch a campaign against the £6 limit was taken at a Birmingham AUEW shop stewards quarterly meeting last week. A resolution calling for a mass lobby of the May meeting of the AUEW National Committee to demand that it rejects the £6 limit and any other form of incomes policy was moved by Mick Rice, a steward at Lucas Shaftmoor Lane.

Although the Communist Party-led Broad Left has done nothing to mobilise the rank and file against the £6 limit, the resolution was only defeated by 18 votes in a meeting of 250 shop stewards. While representing a defeat in the fight for a mass lobby of the National Committee, the large vote for the resolu-

tion demonstrated the growing opposition to the right turn taken by the AUEW leadership. If the Broad Left threw its weight behind such a campaign a clear majority against incomes policy and cuts in living standards could quickly be won.

The task now is to launch a campaign amongst those opposed to the present conniving between the TUC and the Labour Government for opposition to any form of incomes policy. The letter to be sent out by Lucas shop stewards to all AUEW shop stewards committees in the area calling for a meeting to discuss how to fight incomes policy is a good start which should be repeated up and down the country.

# Storm clouds gather for 'Sunny Jim'

The clique politics of the Parliamentary Labour Party have produced the desired result. Jim Callaghan, Wilson's preferred successor, has been elected leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister.

The left MPs are already falling over themselves to pledge loyalty to the new leader. They were not even willing to break with the fraud of the elections to fight for a Labour Party Conference to decide the issue, still less to stand a candidate who would have opposed the central planks of the Government's policies of unemployment, cuts and a reduction in real wages.

## Record

Callaghan's political record shows a life devoted to the service of capital and personal advancement — a combination he has never found to be at odds. As Foreign Secretary most recently, he displayed a remarkable talent for following every twist and turn of US foreign policy as expressed through the personage of Henry Kissinger.

The 1969 intervention of the British Army into Northern Ireland in a 'policing role', introduced by Callaghan as Home Secretary, was intended to prevent the civil rights struggle from turning into a fight by the anti-Unionist population to bring down the sectarian Orange statelet. The intervention of the Labour Government paved the way for the Bloody Sunday murders in January 1972.

Another achievement masterminded by Callaghan was the writing of racialism into British law in 1968. Capitulating to Duncan Sandys and Enoch Powell, Callaghan talked of a 'lemming-like rush' of Kenyan Asians who had been deprived of citizenship in their home country into Britain. His Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968 distinguished between white and black immigrants coming into Britain — all white immigrants were allowed in without restriction.

At the same time Callaghan continued 'unofficially' to represent the interests of the Police Federation by putting the dead hand of the Home Office on provisions for civilian investigation into complaints against the police. Callaghan had earlier been raking in £3,750 a year as a paid adviser to the Federation — more than his salary as an MP.

## Exchequer

As Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1964 and 1967, Callaghan bound himself hand and foot to the Treasury chiefs. Richard Crossman, Labour Housing Minister at the time, remarked in 1965: 'The truth is that Callaghan just took over the Treasury policy of Tory estimates and is trying to hold down expenditure within a Conservative framework.'

At first deflation was used through prices and incomes policy. This was not drastic enough, however, and in 1967 big finance, the old Tory policies and James Callaghan were pushed aside to make way for the devaluation of the pound.



Callaghan managed to weather that storm through his base in the Labour Party apparatus. His climb to high office in 1964 was marked by the stout support of the right wing in the party.

## Connections

Callaghan, despite his air of solid working class incorruptibility, has not hesitated to use his party and governmental connections to help old friends turn a quick profit. As *Private Eye* has pointed out, his connections with Julian Hodge, Welsh based financial juggler, are less than wholesome. The magazine drew attention to:

- \* The 1967 Budget, which gave inexplicable concessions to three wheel cars. Hodge just happened to control one of the only two manufacturers, Reliant cars.

- \* Callaghan's directorship of The Commercial Bank of Wales, another Hodge enterprise.

- \* The part letting of Julian Hodge House, a property white elephant, to a Whitehall department.

Callaghan protects this position from attack by his 'cloth cap image' and bureaucratic local party organisation — common to that group of MPs known as the 'South Wales Mafia'.

## Image

The cultivation of his image of 'working class boy made good' is not purely affectation, however. Callaghan's contempt for the attempts of the 'intellectuals' — whether of the right, like Crosland and Jenkins, or of the old Bevanite left — to resolve the crisis of the Labour Party is unconcealed.

The disarray of the Labour Party, and the reason why it will never be the permanent natural party of government, arises from its central contradiction — it is a party with a bourgeois reformist programme but based on the working class.

Crosland, chief spokesman of the 'revisionists', tried to theorise that capitalism no longer existed. It had been replaced by the 'mixed economy', which meant that class divisions in society were rapidly withering away. The Labour Party could pursue a bourgeois programme fighting the vestiges of the old class divisive ideas summed up in Clause 4 of the Constitution.

Bevanism, on the other hand, tried to overcome the contradiction — though in a very confused way — by bringing the programme of the Labour Party into line with what it saw as the interests of the working class.

## Broker

Wilson, like Callaghan, had his base in the Labour Party structures. But unlike Callaghan, he used verbal concessions to the left in order to balance between left and right — sometimes supporting the left in words, while always supporting the right in deeds. Wilson let this broker's role between left and right override the relation with the trade union bureaucracy.

Wilson could back *In Place of Strife*, but Callaghan would not let internal party fights jeopardise that relationship. This, and not some sudden left turn, was why he opposed the proposed legislation.

For this reason Callaghan is ably equipped to play his part in the present wage negotiations while Jones, Scanlon and Basnett pursue their right-wing line. But as the revolt of the rank and file starts to throw the bureaucrats off course, and these contradictions become more sharply expressed in the Labour Party, Callaghan can find himself in deeper trouble than Wilson.

STEVE POTTER



Slogan in Cardiff underlines Callaghan's preference for the company of dubious financiers like Julian Hodge over the needs of working class communities like Splott

# IN FOCUS

## ORGANISE FOR 26 MAY

After several months of sporadic actions and forced retreat, the working class will be given a golden opportunity on 26 May to express its disgust with the unemployment policies being pursued by the Government. This is the date named by the 3,000 strong National Assembly on Unemployment for a day of action against unemployment.

In itself, this is a reflection of the growing mobilisation of working people against Labour's Tory policies, highlighted by the unofficial rail strikes, the new wave of struggles in the car industry, and the mushrooming fight against the cuts which reached its high point with the general strike in Dundee on 5 March. It shows that the working class is beginning to recover from the betrayals of last summer, when the trade union bureaucracy foisted the £6 limit upon their members and the TUC and the Labour Party conferences accepted these positions. More than that, 26 May will provide the opportunity for co-ordinated national action, helping to tie together all the struggles that are developing, at least in the fight against unemployment.

But to achieve this, militants in the movement will have to strain every muscle to take 26 May beyond the token protest action desired by its major sponsors, the Communist Party and sections of the Labour lefts. It must become the first step towards building a fighting, organised class struggle opposition throughout the labour movement. This will also mean taking up a whole number of issues — opposition to any incomes policy, against the cuts, for the rights of women workers and racial minorities — that were ignored by the Assembly organisers. So what needs to be done?

### 1. Build Action Committees

The first step is to create in every town the action committees to which the Assembly resolution gave its verbal blessing. At present the forces prepared to fight the Government's policies are scattered in particular factories and sites or individual campaigns. Only nationally at the Assembly were they able to meet together and measure their strength. The forces at the Assembly, consolidated into a network of local action committees through report-back meetings to every sponsoring body, will be able to organise really effective action for 26 May and the ongoing struggle against cuts and unemployment.

All eyes in the labour movement, and those of the employers and the Government, will be turned on this day to see just what the bureaucracy will or will not be able to get away with in the next round of wage controls. Every single leader in the labour movement supporting the Assembly — especially Buckton of the rail drivers' ASLEF and Ernie Roberts from the Engineering Union — must be forced to campaign for national strike action by their members. A lobby of the TUC Special Conference of Executives in June must also be called for. Action committees themselves should build massive public meetings and leaflet every factory in their area.

Those workers actually in struggle should be brought to the forefront of the campaign for action. A first chance will be the unofficial strikes planned by Southern Region train drivers against the implementation of new cuts on 20 April. Where will 'left' talker Buckton stand on this one?

### 2. Take up 'missing issues'

But what about the issues the Assembly didn't take up? In resolutions calling for action on 26 May, militants should demand no more £6 limits, 'sons of £6', or any wage controls under capitalism.

In the fight against the public expenditure cuts, the National Co-ordinating Committee Against the Cuts in the NHS has given a fighting lead with the demo it is building for 25 April in conjunction with the 500,000-strong National and Local Government Officers Association. The policy of opposition to all cuts and an injection of funds into the NHS — passed by last year's Labour Party conference — should be taken up and applied to their own areas by workers throughout the education, health, housing and other social services. Already a Labour Against the Housing Cuts group has come into existence. Building such bodies is the way to guarantee that 26 May is more than a one-off token protest.

As for women, 1976 is the year of the great betrayal. Labour's cosmetics — the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Act — are already peeling, and a ferocious attack is being carried out by the right against abortion rights. All action committees should support the activities of the Working Women's Charter and the National Abortion Campaign, which are leading the fight on these issues. These in turn should affiliate to the action committees and build contingents for the 26 May demonstrations.

Not least, militants should vigorously contest the racist offensive opened up by the right and fuelled by reactionary demands for import controls, which seek to divide on national rather than class lines.

### 3. Class Struggle Opposition

To maintain a national focus after 26 May, the building of a network of action committees must be directed towards a recall National Assembly in the autumn. This is the process through which a mighty class struggle opposition to the policies of this Government and the traitors who lead the labour movement can be built.

Those traitors will naturally be the backbone of the opposition to the day of action. Already they have started their campaign of sabotage through the TUC's new Rule 14, which seeks to turn trades councils into the General Council's policemen. They will pull out all the stops to split the growing movement of opposition to Labour's Tory policies. Building the day of action and developing a class struggle opposition is the way to carry the struggle forward against these policies and these bureaucratic misleaders.



It was demonstrations like this (in the Caribbean island of Martinique) which finally won a reprieve from the death sentence for Dominican militant Desmond Trotter. The spotlight brought to bear on the case by international solidarity led to a confession by the chief prosecution witness at his trial that her evidence had been concocted by the police. It is now essential to get the case re-opened altogether after this proof of a frame-up, as well as going on to take up the case of other Caribbean political prisoners whose plight has been highlighted by Trotter's case.

# SMASH THIS RACIST ACT

On Sunday 11 April the Campaign for the Repeal of the Immigration Act is organising a demonstration and march to call for the repeal of the 1971 Immigration Act and all immigration laws. The demonstration starts at 2.30pm from Speakers Corner. Below SHEILA MALONE explains the effect of the legislation and why socialists must oppose all immigration laws.

'Imported? Control it!' is rapidly becoming the war cry of the Labour and trade union lefts and their friends in the Communist Party. It's but a short step from demanding import controls on foreign goods to demanding 'import controls' on the number of foreign workers entering the country.

Just this happened at the massive Assembly on Unemployment on 27 March, when one delegate from the Seamen's Union, welcoming the demand for import controls from the conference organisers, went on to demand an end to immigration. He was rightly shouted down. But if the so-called lefts are opening the door for racism, what can we expect from the right?

We needn't look far to find out. It was the last Labour Government that introduced the 1968 Commonwealth Immigration Act to keep the Kenyan Asians out following hysterical racist speeches by Enoch Powell and Duncan Sandys.

The Act was piloted through Parliament by James Callaghan, then Home Secretary, who wrote racism into the law by distinguishing between ordinary immigrants (who were black) and immigrants whose fathers or grandfathers came from Britain (who were white). White immigrants from Kenya or anywhere else were not subject to any controls.

## Notorious

It was a short step from this to the Tories' Pakistan and Aliens Acts, and the notorious 1971 Immigration Act which has been used with vicious and cynical effect to keep out foreign workers and their families on overtly racist lines. The Act requires work permits for all immigrants before they can enter the country - (residence permits for EEC nationals), to be issued for a specific job and renewed every four years.

The threat this poses to black workers and the whole of the working class at a time of mass unemployment has been sharply demonstrated in recent months. A circular from the City and East London Health Authority, City and Hackney District, informed heads of department of a Department of Employment instruction that 'posts held by employees subject to work permits will be treated as vacancies when the period to which the work permit relates expires... If suitable British nationals are available for work, we will be expected to employ them in the place of the foreign nationals concerned.'

That is the situation of those 'lucky' enough to get work permits. Those who don't but are forced to enter the country illegally - often by vicious repression in their own countries or the destitution wrecked by decades of imperialist exploitation - are literally the hostages of their boss. This was vividly revealed last year when the collapse of the London Eating House Group threw 800 mainly Turkish workers onto the dole, or whom only half had work permits.

## Harrasment

Persecuted from their own countries, at the mercy of their boss here, and then made the prey of racist thugs and police harassment - that's the lot of increasing numbers of immigrant workers. Any attempt to organise here is met with vicious resistance. To cap everything the TUC is now calling openly for the non-renewal of work permits, while the Labour Government is proposing an astronomical increase in overseas students fees which will exclude all but the very rich.

Not only does this play into the hands of the bosses, who like nothing better than a divided, weakened workforce quarrelling amongst itself, but it opens the working class to the racist and fascist filth poured out by the far right, and thus to its own defeat. Socialists must campaign for the ending of the 1971 Act and all immigration laws, mobilise against racist organisations like the National Front, and fight to eradicate all traces of racism from the ranks of the working class movement itself.

# RULE 14 FIGHTING THE NEW BLACK CIRCULAR

The campaign against the TUC's new Rule 14 is hotting up. Hackney Trades Council is the latest to vote, by 24 to 19, to throw out the rule - which would ban any trades council attempting to 'cooperate with or subscribe to the funds of any organisation whose policies or activities are contrary to those of Congress'.

A particularly positive feature of the Hackney vote was that Communist Party members voted against the rule. Elsewhere in London - in Hammersmith Trades Council, for instance - it has been the Communist Party that has piloted through the new rule. Worse still is the situation in Camden, where the CP-led leadership of the Trades Council is 'reorganising' the Trades Council off its own bat to exclude delegates from union branches that oppose the new rule - although both the Annual General Meeting and a subsequent meeting of the Trades Council refused to accept the new rule.

The left is fighting back against these manoeuvres and the vice-chairman, treasurer and five executive committee members are calling for the April meeting of

the Council to go ahead as planned, despite the attempt to cancel it by the chairman and secretary. As opponents of the new Rule 14 have pointed out, Camden Trades Council removed the CP from the list of proscribed organisations two years ago while maintaining the part banning 'Fascist parties'. For this entirely correct action they should have been disaffiliated by the TUC.

With the annual conference of trades councils approaching on 22 and 23 May, the opponents of the new Rule 14 must maintain a united front against acceptance. Any retreat now in areas where the struggle has developed much faster and deeper would demobilise the growing movement against it.

To prevent this happening it is essential that those trades councils opposing the new Rule 14 immediately send out a call for a national meeting of all those trades council delegates opposed to the rule prior to the annual conference in order to work a common strategy. In London, where many trades councils have voted on the rule, a similar meeting of all trades councils and individual delegates opposed to it is urgent.

## Acting for what?

Democracy in the union, the 'Fringe' theatre and the amalgamation of the entertainments industry into a single union will be the major issues at this weekend's annual conference of the actors' union, Equity.

Underlying the whole discussion will be the devastating effects of Government policy on the jobs and living standards of the vast majority of Equity's 24,000 members. The recently reported 30 per cent rise in the Arts Council subsidy, heralded by the press as a great boost for the arts, will barely meet costs in an already depleted field.

Seventy per cent of Equity's members are unemployed at any one time. Many of the rest get only a £36 a week minimum - the national council's willing acceptance of the £6 limit leaves them way below the target of £45 set at last year's AGM. Resolutions censuring the executive for this and calling for an increased minimum and cost-of-living increases based on a real price index have been tabled.

In the past five years a major struggle for democracy in the union has broadened out to involve the whole membership in the fight for more representative structures - local branches and a delegate conference. This fight is essentially between the superstar clique of Olivier, Goring and Davenport and friends, who see the union as a professional body preserving the *status quo* in the industry, and the thousands who are victims of the economic crisis.

## Essential

The outgoing right-wing leadership have spent their time in office preventing the circulation to the membership of the Rules Revision Committee's report on restructuring. Motions have again been tabled to set this work in progress, realising that a representative structure is essential if Equity is to fight for the interests of the vast bulk of its members.

In much the same way the right wing have disbanded the committee looking into the Fringe theatre - which

now has approximately 1,000 workers, including 400 Equity members playing to audiences who never enter the West End - and ignored its findings on contracts and 100 per cent unionisation. Instead a proposed standard contract has been drawn up in cahoots with the Arts Council under which companies who do not meet the requirements, including the payment of a vast deposit, will have their subsidy cut off!

A campaign drawing on the Fringe's thousands of trade union supporters has been set in motion to fight this, and resolutions at the conference seek to reverse the council's decision and reconvene the sub-committee.

Amalgamation of the entertainments industry into one union is in fact official Equity policy, but it has been predictably ignored by the council. The fight for a conference on amalgamation will be the best way to begin, although this does not preclude local initiatives and discussion between the unions involved.

## Hairbrained

The greatly depleted numbers of the Workers Revolutionary Party, once a major force on the left in the union, will be present again this weekend. But they have learnt nothing from their previous setbacks.

Correct positions on nationalisation and a plan of action to achieve it including opening the books, occupations and so on are followed by hairbrained schemes to force the Labour Government to resign, to be followed by a general election for a new Labour Government pledged to socialism - a typical combination of ultra-left and right-wing nonsense. The motion is being amended, however, to call for local and national action by Equity members in conjunction with other trade unionists, including for the 26 May day of action, against the policies of the Government and for the removal of the right-wing leadership.

IMG members in Equity

## -WHAT'S ON-

**THE CRISIS** - and the Socialist Solution: North London IMG public meeting, Weds 14 April, 8pm in John Barnes Library, Camden Road (next to Holloway prison). Speaker: Bob Pennington (IMG Nat. Organiser).

**NINE DAYS** and Saltley Gate - play performed by Foco Novo about the 1926 General Strike and the mass picket of Saltley in 1972. Sat 10 April, 7.30pm, in AUEW Building, 4 Smallbrook Ringway, Birmingham.

**EAST LONDON** Action Committee against the Cuts and Unemployment is holding a fund-raising social on Sat 10 April, 8-12pm, City of London Poly Students Union (Aldgate East tube). Disco and bar.

**BENEFIT SHOW** for Campaign to Repeal the Immigration Act - General Will present 'Me See It Gonna Blow'. Sun 11 April and Mon 12 April at 7.30pm in Half Moon Theatre, 27 Alle St, London E1 (Aldgate/Aldgate East tube). Entrance 50p.

**THE LEFT** and the Labour Party - open forum with Ralph Miliband (author of 'Parliamentary Socialism') and Tony Banks (former Labour candidate). Thurs 15 April, 7.30pm at Socialist Centre, 233 Jesmond Road (nr Cradwell pub), Newcastle. Social afterwards.

**PORTUGAL**: Meeting with Newsreel Collective's new 50 min film, 'On the side of the people'. Speaker from Liverpool Big Flame. Mon 12 April, 7.30pm, Charlton House, Charlton Rd, SE7. Admission free. Buses 53, 54. Train to Charlton.

**REVOLUTIONARY** organisation in the present class struggle - Big Flame meeting with speaker from Liverpool. Tues 13 April, 7.30pm, Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Walk, Brixton, SW9. Info: 659 3895.

**GREATER MANCHESTER** Troops Out Movement forum: 'The background to the present situation - British imperialism and Ireland'. Tues 13 April, 7.30pm, the Black Lion, Chapel St, Manchester 3.

**GENERAL STRIKE** - 50th anniversary delegate conference, 23-25 April at Sussex University. Details/ delegate credentials (£3) from: Pete Cresswell, Trade Union Group, Sussex University Union, Falmer, Brighton.

**NEW PAMPHLET** produced by Birmingham IMG - 'The IMG: What We Stand For'. Proceeds to Red Weekly Fighting Fund: 15 copies, 10p each + 10p postage; 5-10 copies, 10p each + 15p postage; over 10 copies, post free. Write to: Martin Tolman, Aston Union, Gosta Green, Birmingham B4 7ES.

**JOINT** Red Weekly - Chartist - Workers Action public meeting - 'What policies to beat unemployment and the cuts'. Tues 13 April, Star & Garter pub, Fairfield St (nr Piccadilly station), 7.30pm.

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**DEFEND THE RIGHT** To Work badges - 17p including postage from: Jo Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. Bulk rates on enquiry (01-278 9526).

**GLASGOW** Socialist Forums - every Thursday in the Iona Community Centre, 7.30pm.

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)



Workers from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital in North London, together with supporters of the campaign to keep it open, lobbied the Area Health Authority meeting on Monday where the future of the hospital was being discussed. The hospital has been run down to such an extent that the lift is out of action and very few patients remain. Despite Barbara Castle's promise that the special services for women would be maintained elsewhere, no alternative premises have been found. A mass meeting of EGA workers last week voted to demand that the AHA make funds available immediately to repair the lift as a first step in preserving the services for women and the jobs of the workers there.

# Area meetings make BIG PUSH FOR DEMO

JANET MAGUIRE, national organiser of the National Coordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS (NCC), reports on what is being organised in the localities to build the 25 April demonstration against the cuts and private practice.

The list of sponsors is now growing rapidly. Sheffield Trades Council have decided to sponsor the demonstration and send a coach. Sheffield NALGO and Sheffield COHSE mental hospital branch have both agreed to support the demonstration — the latter have sent a resolution to their area shop stewards committee calling on it to take action in support of 25 April. Sheffield District NUPE has decided to circulate all its branches and shop stewards in the area with details of the demonstration.

In South Wales a meeting has been organised for this Saturday sponsored by Cardiff Trades Council and the Riverside Labour Party. The meeting, which has been called to oppose the cuts, will also urge building support for the demonstration.

Beginning at 11 o'clock in the AUEW Rooms, Fitzalan Place, Cardiff, the representative platform includes Dai Davis (South Wales NUM executive), G Cronin (NALGO Senior District

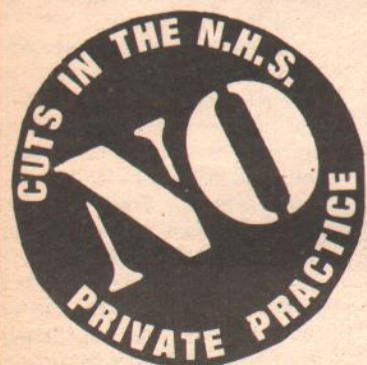
Officer), Stuart Hastings (NUPE Organiser, West Wales), Dr Dipak Ray (Medical Practitioners Union), and Dr Paul Stern from the NCC. The meeting will be chaired by D.I. Davies, a member of NUPE and vice-chairperson of the Welsh TUC (in a personal capacity).

Cardiff are also hoping to take up a suggestion from the NUM of booking two special coaches on a British Rail train to bring down the South Wales contingents to the demonstration.

## Meeting

The Birmingham Campaign Against the Cuts Committee, which is affiliated to the NCC, is holding a public meeting on 14 April starting at 7.30 pm. This is being held in the AUEW Hall, Smallbrook Ringway. Speakers include Steve Johnson (NALGO national health official), Chris Adamson (NUPE Area Officer), and Dr R Osborn, who works in East Birmingham Hospital. The meeting has been sponsored by the West Midlands Socialist Medical Association, the Highcroft Hospital Branch of NUPE, and Selly Oak Labour Party.

The NCC brochures and leaflets for the Birmingham meeting and the 25 April demonstration have been officially circulated by NALGO, NUPE, the West Midlands SMA, Birmingham Trades Council, Birmingham Labour Party, and ASTMS, as well as by a number of shop stewards committees such as Rover Solihull and Lucas BW 3. The Birmingham TGWU branch 5/909, which covers Rover Solihull, are sending a delegation from their 1,800 members.



SUNDAY  
**25**  
APRIL

**STOP**  
the NHS cuts

**BAN**  
all private practice

**DEMONSTRATE**  
12.30 on 25 April,  
Hyde Park to  
Trafalgar Square

Called by the National Co-ordinating Ctte against cuts in the NHS  
Supported by NALGO, NUS, SMA, AUEW, Sheffield Dist.Ctte, CLPs, Manchester TC, etc

Birmingham NALGO is organising coaches for the demonstration which are free to NALGO members.

The Humberside Committee Against the Cuts, which is also building support for the demonstration, organised a meeting recently at which the Red Ladder Theatre Group gave their play on the NHS called 'It Makes Yer Sick'. Two hundred people attended, including a group of sixth formers from a local school who pledged that they would bring a much bigger delegation from their school to London on 25 April.

Leicester Trades Council has carried a resolution supporting the demonstration and Oxford NUPE (Hospital Branch) are also sponsoring the demonstration. In London the Metropolitan District of NALGO has circulated all the NALGO branches in its area calling on them to turn out on 25 April.

Support is growing right across the country. The big job now is to push forward to make sure that every single organisation in the labour movement that can be rallied for this demonstration is brought out on Sunday 25 April.

# Occupation at Aston

An occupation of the Vice-Chancellor's office and a large section of the administration building at Aston University was students' response to a Senate meeting which had voted to implement a 30 per cent increase in tuition fees. The decision would lay an intolerable burden on the 900 students who pay their own fees, particularly overseas students.

The students who occupied on 23 March immediately set about the task of mobilising for an Emergency General

Meeting of the whole student body. The sell-out policies of President Ian Minnis were rejected by a 500-strong meeting, which voted to support the occupation and continue a campaign of direct action next term. The decision brought about the resignation of Minnis and three other members of the Executive.

The three day occupation gathered support all the time. Mass occupation meetings affirmed the need both to replace the Union's right-wing Executive

and to reverse Aston's decision to leave the National Union of Students. Support came not only from the students but also from the campus white collar unions, NALGO and ASTMS.

The message is loud and clear: the fight against the right in the NUS is best carried out through direct action against the cuts, of which the increase in fees is a part. Let the Minnises of this world beware!

ASTON IMG SOCIETY

# STUDENTS: Clarke in Llandudno Wonderland

Mystified delegates at the National Union of Students conference currently in session at Llandudno heard Charles Clarke, their President, deliver a speech on Monday which papered over all the main problems facing them.

Clarke, a member of the Communist Party-backed Broad Left grouping, made no mention of the deep crisis in the NUS. Not a hint was given that the right had campaigned successfully for the disaffiliation of a number of students' unions. This 'omission' should come as no surprise to anyone.

## DEMOCRACY

The Broad Left has no intention of fighting to extend and deepen democracy in the NUS based on the sovereignty of mass meetings. In addition, to take up the 'splitters' would have involved a full-blooded attack on the activities of the right wing in the unions; and it was Clarke who personally led a campaign for a joint statement between the Broad Left, the Federation of Conservative Students, and the Labour and Liberal student organisations.

This statement pretended that the disaffiliation campaign was the work of a few right-wing 'extremists'. By linking their star with the FCS, the Broad Left hide the fact that the FCS are aiming not for the break-up of the NUS, but for an NUS which fully takes the responsibility for the crisis of education and puts it on the back of those who study and work within it.

Such tactics are strongly reminiscent of the period when the Broad Left tried to convince students that in order to win higher grants they had to ally with 'progressive Vice-Chancellors' — the same people who while declaring their devotion to education were actually starting to implement the cuts and college closures which students face today.

## PRAISE

Clarke's speech did not come out openly against incomes policy, and although he roundly condemned the economic policies of the Labour Government he did not advance any concrete policies or actions that students could take in the next year. On the contrary, Clarke blandly stated that the key question was winning the whole of the student movement to changing the course of society.

Praise was heaped on the recent Cambridge 'Economic Policy Review' which recommended import controls. In trying to persuade students to adopt this measure, which seeks to divide workers along national lines, the Broad Left show the bankruptcy of the 'economic strategy' to which they seek to commit the student movement 'as a whole'.

This call was combined with stress on the need for an alliance with the labour movement. But made without any criticism of the leadership of the labour movement, who whole-heartedly base themselves on the policies of this Government, such calls make the notion of a student-worker alliance a farce. Demagoguery of this kind merely infuriates the right wing and

leaves the student membership with no clear line of advance.

The main priority for the student movement as soon as the conference is over will be linking its opposition to the cuts in action with the strike call for 26 May against the Labour Government's mass unemployment policies. Clarke did recognise the importance of the National Assembly on Unemployment and coupled this with a call for the defence of the 44 arrested Right to Work marchers. What he failed to mention was that the majority of the Executive had roundly condemned the Right to Work March initiative, refused to support it in any way, and came within an inch of circulating all student unions with a specific recommendation to boycott it.

IMG delegates at the conference have been campaigning for the NUS to call and organise for strike action in the colleges in cooperation with the trade unions on 26 May.

## REVEAL

Conference resolutions put by the IMG and accepted by student unions also call for a campaign to open the books of the college authorities to reveal all plans for cutbacks, and on this basis to plan out a fight against their implementation through the formation of action committees in every locality to build a student-worker alliance in practice. In this way students can link their fight against education cuts to the movement beginning to develop inside the working class against Labour's cutbacks.

The resolutions insist that in order to guard student grants and social expenditure as a whole against the ravages of inflation, automatic compensation for inflation should be built in to increased cash levels.

The conference will also have before it resolutions to commit the NUS leadership to join the campaign for recall Labour Party and TUC conferences, to break with the policies of the Government and to put the left-talking bureaucrats in whom Clarke places his trust to the test before the whole labour movement.

## TALK-SHOP

The South-East region of the TUC mobilised over 300 delegates to its conference in London last Saturday on how to fight education cuts.

The conference was introduced by Kent miners' leader Jack Dunn, who said that trades councils should be the main focus for local activity in the fight against the cuts. Ironically enough, Dunn is a member of the Communist Party — which is collaborating with the TUC's attempts to limit the independence of trades councils through its new Rule 14.

The main speaker was 'left' MP Stan Newens. Unfortunately his only answer to the crisis was to call for import controls. This attempt to draw a line between nations rather than classes was also reflected in confused talk about education as an investment for national economic recovery.

The conference was sponsored by many union branches, trades councils and several Labour MPs. It also involved many people concerned with education who were not in teaching unions. But instead of giving a lead by calling for support for such actions as the 25 April NCC demo and the 26 May day of action on jobs, it was simply reduced to a talking shop.

## The changing face of the civil war

The civil war in Lebanon began almost a year ago with a military offensive launched on 13 April 1975 by right-wing militias against the Palestinian resistance.

The right-wing parties, notably the Phalangists, had been arming and training for several years in preparation for a more determined attack on the resistance, since the Lebanese army had proved incapable of this task. But the offensive came at a particularly delicate moment.

Internally, the authority of the bourgeois state was increasingly discredited by the existence of the strong independent Palestinian presence, and by the tremendous mobilisations of the Lebanese masses — seen in the growing strikes by workers, peasants and students.

Externally, the step-by-step diplomacy of Kissinger was running out of steam. Egypt wasn't a major problem, but the united Syrian-Palestinian insistence on a global settlement — also supported by the USSR — posed serious obstacles to the enforcement of *Pax Americana* in the Middle East.

### Palestinian

The position of the Palestinians in Lebanon was key to the whole operation, since pressure on them here — and thus indirectly on Syria — could force them into concessions that would allow for a more global and durable settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This settlement, by setting up a Palestinian entity on the West Bank under conditions accepted by the US, would lead to the abandonment by the Palestinians of their base in Lebanon, thus allowing the Beirut regime to re-establish its authority over the Lebanese territory and crack down on the mass movements and leftist parties.

The previous major attempt to weaken the Palestinian resistance in Lebanon had been made in 1973, when the Lebanese army launched attacks on the refugee camps. But the operation was a complete failure for the army, while the Palestinians

## Release prisoners in Egypt!

Five revolutionary militants arrested by the Egyptian regime last summer are still being held without trial or even formal charges. The five are Abdel Kazim Shahit Mahmoud and Muzahim Muhi el-Takriti, both Iraqi teachers; Rada Ibrahim Farag, a student; and Mahmoud el-Sayid Muhammed el-Sayid and Rashad Mansour Mustafa el-Bedawi, both workers.

They were among sixteen people originally arrested in early July 1975. The Egyptian press reported then that they would be charged with having made contact with the Revolutionary Communist Group in Lebanon and the Fourth International, and with having organised to 'overthrow the political and economic regime' in Egypt and replace it with an 'extremist Trotskyist Communist regime'.

others have been given bail — although they too have not been formally charged. Their release shows that the Sadat regime, which is now trying to polish up its 'liberal' image, is susceptible to international pressure on the question of political prisoners. However the continued imprisonment of the other five may indicate that the regime intends to hold them indefinitely, while refusing to risk a political trial.

International solidarity can be vital in ensuring their release. But while they remain in jail some of their families are deprived of any income and desperately need assistance. Please send contributions to Gisela Scholtz, Postal Account Number CCP000-1085001-56, Brussels, Belgium, together with notification

won important political victories.

In the period leading up to the civil war, attempts were made to weaken the Lebanese mass movement by concentrating on localised areas and avoiding a generalised confrontation. These tactics also met with failure. When the army opened fire on a demonstration protesting against the establishment of a fishing monopoly in the southern city of Saida, killing a Moslem community leader, the result was a mass insurrection; the army was forced to withdraw, leaving the city openly outside the authority of the state.

The failure of these tactics opened the way for the intervention of the right-wing parties. But they preceded their offensive with a political campaign designed to enhance the prestige of the army and thus allow its reintroduction onto the political scene.

### Phalangists

But it turned out that the Phalangists had miscalculated the role which the army could play. The appointment of a military government in May by the right-wing President Franjieh

Once again the Middle East is occupying a central place in international politics. The civil war in Lebanon and the upsurge in the West Bank have dramatically underlined the fact that the struggle of the Arab masses continues despite the relative gains made by imperialism since the October war in 1973.

The October war had complex effects on Arab politics: At a certain level it succeeded in bringing about a temporary stabilisation of the Arab ruling classes, in comparison with the pre-October 'no war, no peace' situation. To this extent it assisted the rightward evolution of these regimes and Sadat's 'economic opening' to imperialism and the West. The imperialist project of a 'peaceful settlement' of the Arab-Israeli conflict was therefore carried several steps forward, especially in Egypt after the signing of the capitulationist Sinai accords by the Egyptian regime.

However, this very important development at the level of the bourgeois state has not yet been translated into a decisive smashing of the mass movement in Egypt. On the contrary, the depth of the economic crisis, the concessions made to Zionism in the Sinai accords, the abrupt rupture of ties with the Soviet Union, and the suddenness of the opening to imperialism have all helped in the development of a powerful and rising mass movement in Egypt — seen in the outburst of strikes and demonstrations at the end of March.

caused such a massive armed reaction within the Moslem neighbourhoods that it had to resign three days later.

Direct army intervention on the side of the Christian Phalangists was too dangerous, as it could cause a split in the army along confessional lines. As the civil war intensified, however, moves were once again made to prepare an intervention by the army as a 'neutral force' which could underpin a Bonapartist military regime.

But the army was increasingly racked by massive desertions. When General Aziz El Ahdab, a Moslem officer described as a friend of the Christian bourgeoisie, finally launched a military coup after eleven months of civil war, he found himself controlling less than a thousand men. The vast majority of the Moslem rank-and-file had gone off to join the anti-Phalangist forces.

The Phalangists and other right-wing Christian parties were unable to count on direct military intervention by their imperialist allies; and they faced a distinctly unfavourable relationship of forces since the Moslem majority in Lebanon would side for Arab nationalist reasons with the Palestinian resistance.

The Christian minority in Lebanon, which was traditionally protected and given political and economic privileges by the colonialist powers, had long taken a position against Arab nationalist and anti-imperialist struggles. The Christian bourgeoisie's only hope, therefore, lay in turning the war into a religious civil war, mobilising the Christian petty-bourgeois masses by whipping up their religious fanaticism.

### Ceasefire

The Moslem bourgeoisie, while also favouring the repression of the Lebanese mass movement and the Palestinian resistance, clearly could not go along with such schemes without being completely compromised in the eyes of the Moslem masses (their electoral base). Their role, therefore, was to distract the left-wing groups, Moslems and Palestinians with all sorts of political negotiations and ceasefires which pre-

On the Palestinian arena the advance of the imperialist 'peace' project was reflected in a rightward evolution of the Arafat leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and its gradual integration into the dead-end road of bourgeois diplomacy and politics. At the same time this evolution was matched by the formation of a wing inside the Palestinian resistance movement — the so-called 'refusal front' — that rejected the peaceful settlement.

It should be pointed out that following Hussein's massacre of the Palestinian resistance in Jordan in September 1970, the 'Palestinian arena' became in reality restricted to Lebanon — the only remaining country in which the resistance movement still had a mass base in the refugee camps independent of the Lebanese regime. The origins of the Lebanese civil war have to be located in the tremendous impetus that this Palestinian presence in Lebanon gave to the development of a genuine left-oriented mass movement of opposition to the Lebanese Government. It was this independent Palestinian presence and the rise of the Lebanese left that formed the pretext for the reactionary Phalangist offensive in Lebanon.

Finally Zionism's war against the Arabs in October 1973 was only won at the cost of a very great economic, social and especially political loss. The growing international isolation of the Zionist state and the political victory that th-

against the Phalangist attacks.

No real challenge to this was offered by the left reformist parties. They centred their mobilisation around demands for greater political power to the Moslems, and subordinated themselves to the Moslem bourgeois leaders — who were forced to participate shyly in a confessional movement aimed at limiting the privileges and power of their Christian bourgeois allies.

The reformist left also uncritically tail-ended the Syrian regime. Here, however, they were in for a nasty surprise. Syria had at first sided with the Palestinian resistance against the Phalangist attacks; but the increasing prospect of a strengthening of the resistance did not serve Syrian interests at all. Preservation of the *status quo* in Lebanon was all that was wanted.

As the Lebanese left, the Palestinian resistance and the Moslem mass movement began to score growing successes in the later months of the civil war, the Syrians shifted their weight more and more against their previous allies — a turn which was reinforced by pressure from Saudi Arabia, the US, and arrangements made with the Lebanese bourgeoisie. This has recently developed into an open political conflict between the Syrian regime and the left-wing parties and Palestinian resistance, even involving light military clashes between the two sides.

The latest ceasefire imposed by the Syrians through the left reformist leader Kamal Jumblatt is even more tenuous than previous ones. No basic agreement had been reached when it was declared.

Short of dramatic developments in negotiating a settlement of the Palestinian question, the only solution for the Lebanese bourgeoisie that would stabilise the political situation and contain the radicalised mass movements is a Bonapartist regime, agreeable to both sides in the conflict, which could win popular support simply by putting an end to the murderous civil war and then use this support to rebuild the foundations of a strong bourgeois state. That, however, is easier said than done.



# THE EXPLOSION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

## Trotskyist

INTERVIEW WITH  
GROUP (LEBANON)

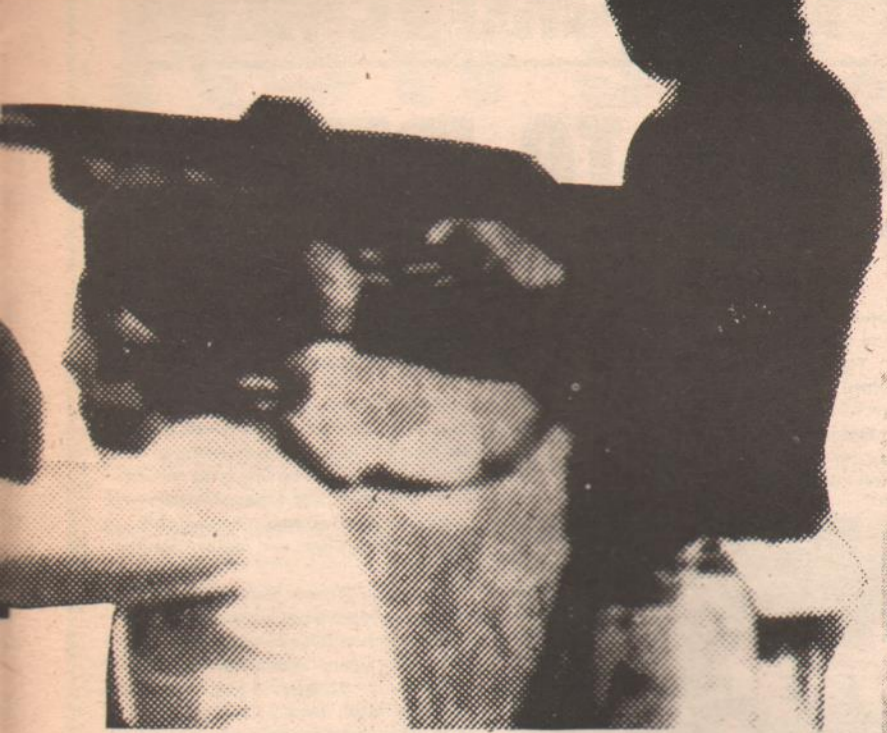
● How have the comrades of the RCG intervened in the Lebanese events?

We have attempted to combine a military and a political intervention. Our comrades tried to participate in as many military operations as possible, because it was primarily through such means that we could make our politics understood by the left and the masses who were faced with a very serious military threat from the Phalangists.

Of course the character of our military participation paralleled the independence of our political line and intervention. Militarily and politically the most important thing for us was to avoid being tarred with the brush of a religious war at the same time as we pressed forward for the complete defeat of the reactionary Phalangist forces.

We therefore fought and propagandised on a clear-cut class line in opposition to the reactionary Moslem currents who on several occasions would direct military operations against Christian communities simply because they were Christians.

Since the war had been unleashed by the reactionary Maronite Christian wing of the Lebanese bourgeoisie, against the Palestinian resistance movement and the growing mass movement inside the Moslem neighbourhoods and community areas, we adopted the perspective of a military defence of such neighbourhoods. This led to the establishment of our main barricades in the very important neighbourhoods of Shiah and Nabaa in Beirut.



Arab regimes extracted out of their military defeat partially called into question the process of *de facto* colonisation of the 1967 occupied territories. In the West Bank this has brought about a qualitatively new rise in the mass upsurge against the Zionist occupation, that for the first time has had profound repercussions on the Arab population living inside the pre-1967 boundaries of Israel (i.e. those Arabs under colonisation since 1948 or 1956). Furthermore, the mass upsurge of the Arabs under occupation is also in large part influenced by the Lebanese events, due to the physical intermingling of the Palestinian movement and masses in both countries.

It is therefore clear that since October 1973 the implementation of the peaceful settlement has not taken place 'smoothly' in the absence of mass confrontations and political explosions. The special interests of different sections of the Arab ruling class, combined with the unevenness of development of the mass movement in the Arab world and its uneven ability to apply pressure on these same ruling classes, have placed contradictory conditions on the successful implementation of an imperialist settlement in the Arab region. It is these contradictions that are being reflected in the explosions going on today in the Middle East.

Majida Salman and Saleh Jaafar

## Leftists fight for mass actions

MEMBER OF THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST  
SUPPORTERS OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)

tails of the sort of work that developed following the establishment of such barricades? Throughout the civil war there were two main things that had to be done, sometimes simultaneously and at other times independently of each other. First of all we had to defend the neighbourhoods from our permanent positions on the barricades against the military assaults of the reactionaries. We also of course would participate in proportion to our strength in the military attacks launched by the left forces.

Secondly, however, we had to try to use this same base inside the neighbourhoods in order to participate in and push forward the processes of internal reorganisation that were going on amongst the inhabitants. One should not forget that the state authority has more or less completely collapsed.

We responded to this by trying to initiate examples of self-organisation of the working population on matters of everyday life. For instance, on the question of food, we organised an expropriation of a supermarket warehouse, the contents of which were distributed by community committees.

However, we were unfortunately alone in emphasising that this distribution of food should not be carried out by the left in a paternalistic manner as if we were some kind of welfare agency. Rather we should attempt to make it the beginning of a process of mass participation in the running of their own affairs.

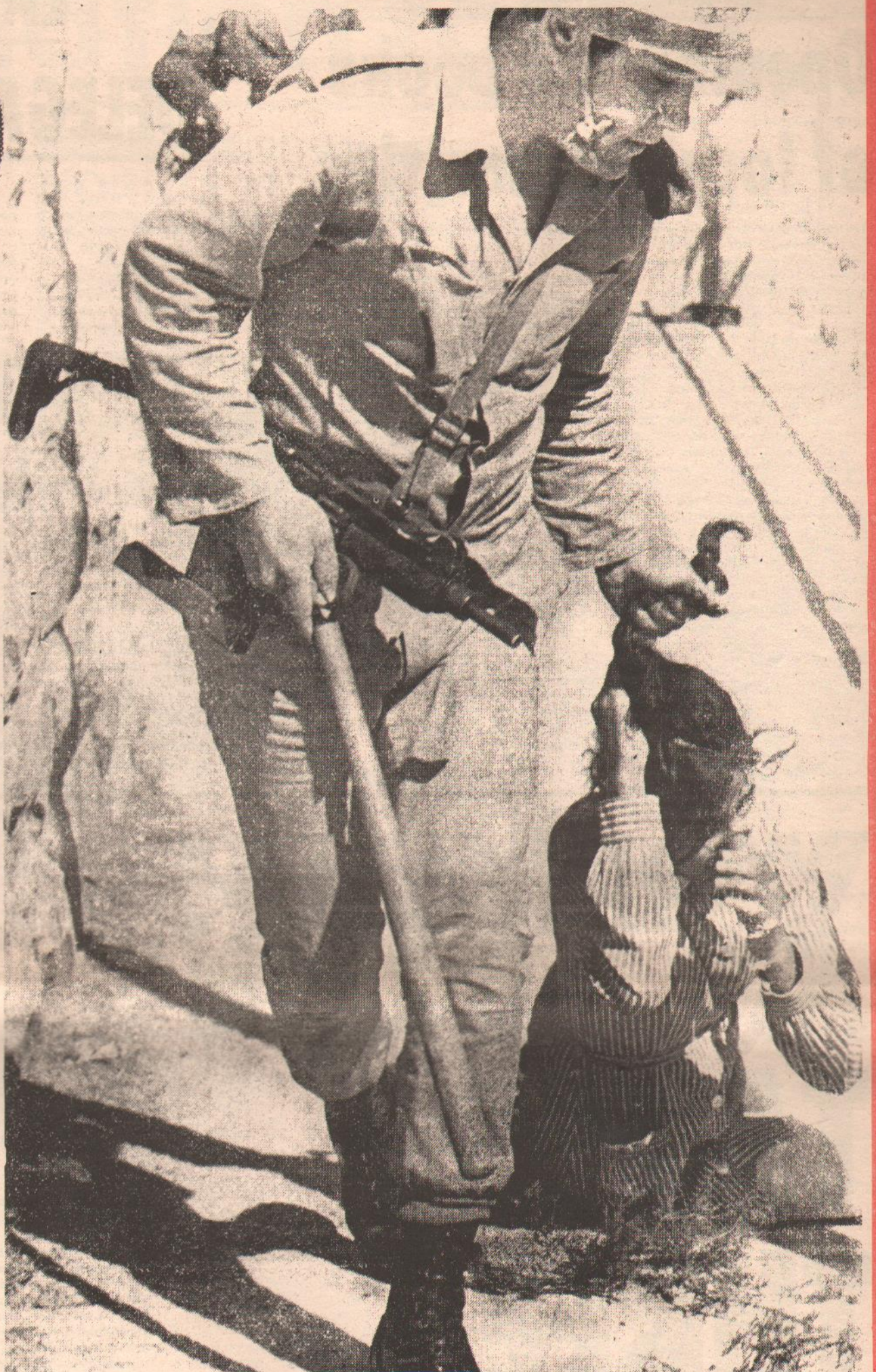
It is important to understand

which the various neighbourhoods and groups are not dominated by highly conscious revolutionary leaderships, expropriation can occasionally take on the character of looting and mere robbery. Therefore, we centred this kind of political intervention on the importance of transforming 'expropriations' into genuinely revolutionary acts, that could facilitate the further development of more advanced methods of mass self-organisation.

Also, in the Moslem neighbourhoods which we were defending, we tried to defend wherever necessary the Christian minorities who were still living in these areas. This was in order to undercut the sectarian and confessional character which the war was more and more developing into.

We also took the initiative, along with other leftist groups, in developing a campaign inside the neighbourhoods against the landlords, who were still collecting rents from the poverty stricken masses even though they had not been receiving regular wages for almost a year.

As I have said, a large part of our work was directed towards defending the political rights of the masses to develop their own independent organs of authority inside their own neighbourhoods. On this question we organised several meetings which naturally had to be defended not only from the Phalangists, but also from the confessional and reactionary Moslem representatives, who would try to disband our gatherings sometimes



## 'We want our land!'

The settlement of Jews on land robbed from Palestinian Arabs has been the cornerstone of Israeli government policy ever since the establishment of the Zionist state in 1948. The uprising in the Galilee on 30 March and the growing level of struggle in the West Bank amount to the most profound challenge to Zionist colonisation in the Arab region since the October war in 1973.

At least six Arabs were killed, untold numbers wounded and over 300 arrested on 31 March, during clashes with the Israeli army in the Galilee northern region of Israel. This is the first time since 1948 that Israeli troops have been used in such a confrontation with the Arab population of Israel (as distinct from the population of the occupied territories).

The occasion for the clashes was the day-long general strike initiated by Rakah (the Arab Communist Party inside Israel) against government attempts to compulsory purchase around 5,000 acres of Arab land in the Galilee for use as the site of a Jewish Housing Development project. Hundreds of inhabitants of the three main Arab villages involved in the land expropriations - Sachnin, Deir Hana, and Arabe - attacked a military convoy of soldiers armed only with bottles, stones and tin cans filled with burning paraffin.

All of the major towns on the West Bank were affected by the strike, including a large number of Israeli Arab towns. Official Zionist policy to 'Judaise the Galilee', to say nothing of the Israeli settlements going on in the West Bank and the Golan Heights captured from Syria, has undoubtedly received a serious political setback. The divisions that are appearing today amongst the Zionist leadership concerning the best way to handle the complex situation inside Israel are reflections of the gravity of current developments from the point of view of the Zionist establishment.

The next stage in the rising struggle of the Palestinians under

West Bank municipal elections on 12 April. The traditional Arab-Zionist collaborators are today not putting themselves up for nomination out of fear of the anger of the West Bank population. Meanwhile more than 500 candidates have registered - the overwhelming majority of whom are supporters of Rakah or the Palestine Liberation Organisation. In such an explosive situation the Israeli state may very well cancel the elections, which in itself would present the West Bank masses with a direct challenge.

It is important to assess the effects these mobilisations may have on American imperialism's attitude towards the possible formation of a Palestinian - Jordanian 'bantustan' on the West Bank. One thing is very clear. There is no question of any military threat to the Zionist state from these explosions.

However, the political consequences of conceding the West Bank to some kind of PLO-Jordanian leadership in the wake of the latest struggles could very well prove extremely damaging for the long-term continued existence of the Zionist state - and consequently for imperialist interests in the Arab region, which cannot afford to give up their single most reliable ally. There is no guarantee that the establishment of a West Bank mini-state under the present circumstances would serve to defuse the rise of the Palestinian mass movement as it is presently unfolding.

In order for this to happen, it is not enough for the PLO leaders to offer paper guarantees to imperialism of their future peaceful intentions. These leaderships will have to be put to the test, and demonstrate to imperialism and Zionism that in fact they are capable of smashing and curbing the rise of the mass movement. Only then will such leaderships prove that they have become worthy bourgeois allies who can safely be entrusted with the repressive functions of a Palestinian mini-state in the West Bank. But they have a hard ride before them.

## LETTERS

## Opening the books of local authorities

I agree with the tenor of your article 'Action Needed — Not Just Words' (*Red Weekly*, 18 March). But may I suggest a slight amendment? Talking about the effect of economies to local government expenditure, you say that a major problem is caused by 'a black-out of information about the cuts'. You raise the demand for the opening of the books of local authorities for inspection.

Well, they are open for inspection. Under Section 24 of the Local Government Act, 1933, the Clerk to the Council is legally obliged to place notices in local newspapers. This informs the general public that 14 days hence the annual audit will take place. Then the accounts of all the various committees are open to scrutiny. For the payment of a nominal fee — ten pence, I think — ratepayers can inspect them, making any notes they want.

Clearly, this is not the complete answer for opponents of the cuts. What we require is day-to-day knowledge of proposed economies, not merely statements of the situation annually. Nevertheless, it can be a help. When information gleaned from the audit is added to that obtained from the monthly minutes of the council and its committee meetings, a fairly good indication of policy trends can be acquired.

By law, local authorities are supposed to possess only those powers entrusted

to them by Act of Parliament. If they exceed those powers, then they are said to have done something that is *ultra vires* (outside their powers). Whoever was responsible for the decision is curbed out of their own pocket. Each year ratepayers have the opportunity of making a formal objection to the district auditor, bringing to his notice any financial malpractice of the council.

I once used this right. I was staggered to see the way it threw the Clerk to the Council into confusion and panic. That a formal objection had been made to the district auditor, particularly as it related to his own conduct, he treated as a very grave matter indeed.

Of course, my objection was not upheld. Nevertheless, in my opinion, it was worthwhile. At the present time, it seems quite justifiable to use every means, including those conveniently provided by Act of Parliament, to harass those who are carrying out the cuts in public expenditure.

To end this letter with a personal confession: I find fighting the class struggle is made just that little bit more satisfying when it is combined with tweaking the bottoms of those in authority! — RAY CHALLINOR, Whitley Bay.

The Troops Out Movement is organising a mass, labour movement delegation to visit Ireland over the weekend of 18 or 25 September. The purpose of this delegation is to establish the facts about the situation in Ireland, thereby enabling the British labour movement to develop an informed and progressive

policy in support of the Irish people's long struggle for self-determination.

The British Government has been forced to abandon the latest in a long line of attempted 'solutions' and return to Direct Rule in Northern Ireland. But the war and bloodshed continue and the threat of civil war grows greater, not

less, each year. It is therefore imperative that we, in Britain, develop a clear understanding of what is happening there.

To this end the delegation will visit Dublin and Belfast, where it will meet representatives from trades councils, trade unions and shop stewards committees; sections of the main political parties; tenants, community and civil rights organisations; and radical lawyers groups.

We, in the Troops Out Movement, are raising funds to finance the visit. This clearly involves large sums of money, since many labour movement bodies are not in a position to pay their delegates' fares. We are therefore asking every progressive group/organisation/branch/individual in Britain which supports the Irish people's right to self-determination to make a contribution towards the cost of the delegation.

This could be done by holding raffles, collections, any fund-raising activity — or directly from the pocket! Any sum, however small, will help — but obviously the larger the better. Cheques and postal orders payable to 'Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland', should be sent to TOM, 1 North End Road, London W14. It's a small sacrifice to make when so much is at stake.

BILL FREEMAN (Treasurer)

## History workshop at Ruskin

I would like to inform your readers about the 1976 History Workshop at Ruskin College, on 29 and 30 May, which is on Workers' Education and Class Consciousness. In a wide ranging series of workshops and plenary sessions we will be discussing the experience of working class and adult education, from the Chartists to the WEA, from Vietnam and Cuba to the South Wales Miners. On Sunday morning, school children from the East End of London will re-create a Socialist Sunday School service. A winding

up session will try to apply the lessons of the past to workers' education today.

We are sure that this year's History Workshop will not only be varied and interesting, but will demonstrate that knowledge of our history is essential in tackling the problems facing the labour movement today. Tickets are £2 each (OAPs 50p). Enquiries should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope and sent to: Ruskin History Workshop, Ruskin College, Oxford OX1 2HE — BOB PURDIE (Chairperson)

## workers' ACTION TAKES THREE STEPS FORWARD

The Labour leadership elections provided another important test of the politics of groups on the revolutionary left. In most cases the positions taken were entirely consistent — and wrong.

The International Socialists, for instance, simply denounced the whole thing in ultra-left terms as irrelevant, without even raising the elementary demand for a Labour Party Conference to decide the issue.

The *Militant*, on the other hand, came out with its usual combination of ultra-left rhetoric and right-

wing practice. Formally it called merely for an emergency Labour Party Conference, refusing to support a vote for any of the candidates. The actual thrust of the paper, however, went in completely the opposite direction, since two of its major items were an uncritical interview with Benn and an article — printed without comment — by Syd Bidwell MP.

Only *Workers Action* — a newspaper whose line is in general supported by the International Communist League (ICL) — took a position on the election with which we would agree. This paper had already taken a number of important steps forward

in its political line in recent weeks. After initially launching a vicious sectarian attack (which unfortunately was only too reminiscent of the old *Workers Fight* style polemics) against the IMG for raising the slogan of 'Recall the TUC', *Workers Action* has now adopted this slogan itself. After polemicising against all demands to 'Make the Lefts Fight', *Workers Action* has now correctly moved to take up the demand that the left MPs should vote against the Budget.

Finally, in relation to the candidates in the Labour leadership election, *Workers Action* took the correct position of calling for a vote for Benn and nobody else. Furthermore, the arguments it gave for voting for Benn and against voting for Foot were entirely correct:

'Some time ago, before the present Government, the candidature of Michael Foot might have given hopes of a "left challenge" to the leadership. Now that is not the case. Foot is the government side of the hinge that links the Labour Government to the trade union bureaucracy. He is Mr £6 limit just as much as Jack Jones on the trade union side.

'This leaves Benn. *Workers Action* says that socialists in the Labour Party should tell their MPs to vote for Benn.

'Why? Not because his policies provide the working class with any way forward out of the crisis. Not because he has stood out against Wilson. Certainly he has had his differences, but he accepted collective Cabinet responsibility for the £6 limit, the Healey cuts, and all the other right-wing policies. And not because we have any confidence that he will push for the reforms in Cabinet procedure, like the election of the Cabinet rather than its appointment, which he speaks of.

'But his candidature is the only one which expresses any desire to break with the ways of Wilson....Benn, however, will almost certainly have to drop out after the first ballot. That will leave a group of candidates all pledged to continuation of the present policies lock, stock and barrel. Foot will, if he is still in the running, get most of the Left's votes at this stage, because of his past. But his present record determines that no-one claiming to be on the left should vote for him....or any of the other candidates.'

*Red Weekly* would have no serious difference at all with the position taken by *Workers Action* on the leadership elections. But this and its correct changes in line in the period before the election raise a number of important issues for the comrades of the ICL.

Firstly, the slogan of 'Recall the TUC' was adopted without any reference at all to the silly violent polemic previously launched against the IMG for making the same call. Instead it was accompanied by yet another violent attack on the IMG, which served merely as a smokescreen to cover this change in position. Such stupid sectarianism obscures rather than clarifies political debate.

Secondly, it is relevant to ask why *Workers Action* thinks the Benn candidature would have the objective character it describes. For *Red Weekly* this is no problem. We have consistently analysed Benn's role as remaining within the Cabinet while attempting, within cowardly limits, to differentiate himself from the Government's policies. We have campaigned to expose this role by demanding his resignation from the Government — which in relation to Benn is simply the application of our position to 'Unité

to fight the policies of the Wilson Government and remove the Wilson-Healey leadership'.

But *Workers Action* has taken a different position. It has stated that on crucial issues, for example the EEC, Benn was actually to the right of Jenkins or Wilson. It has attacked the IMG for saying that there is a difference — not a historic difference but a difference in their immediate relation to the working class and the ruling class — between Benn and Wilson or Jenkins.

Why therefore does Benn objectively have behind him forces opposed to the Government according to *Workers Action*? Is it simply his demagoguery? Should they not now seriously reconsider this position in the light of the line they correctly took on the leadership — after all, a line on an election should flow logically from what went before it.



Finally, despite the fact that on these issues they clearly find themselves in agreement with other sections of the revolutionary left, including the IMG, the ICL and *Workers Action* unfortunately continue to maintain their ultra-sectarian attitudes. This is not a question of individual sectarian positions or acts — every organisation on the revolutionary left is guilty of this — but of a sectarian political framework. *Workers Action* continues to divide organisations into only three camps — reformist, revolutionary (which is essentially itself), and centrist. This leads it to absurd positions — such as declaring that the IMG is not a Trotskyist organisation but is a centrist one.

Unfortunately this approach has no justification either in theory or in history. There are many divisions within the positions of revolutionaries. The differences between the ICL and the IMG, significant as some of them are, are not those which separate Trotskyists and centrists — they exist within a framework of two Trotskyist organisations.

We hope that the change of line by *Workers Action* on the slogan of 'Recall of the TUC', and the correct position it took, with the IMG, on the question of the vote in the Labour leadership elections will help the comrades of the ICL to break from their sectarian political framework and embark on the type of serious discussion with the IMG which is correct between two revolutionary Trotskyist organisations.

Peter Jameson



# New situation for US politics

In its two hundredth year of existence, the American political system is feeling its way through another Presidential and Congressional election. Most attention focuses on the highly publicised differences between the Democratic and Republican parties. But, as ROBIN WHITMAN explains, the British press ignores the fact that underlying the present campaign is an entirely new set of problems and tasks for every political force.

Since 1960 sections of the American people have undergone a process of deep and widespread radicalisation — for many of them a serious questioning of everything they had believed and never questioned about their society. This began to break down the suffocation of domestic movements against the *status quo* accomplished by the forces of 'democratic capitalism' in the atmosphere of the 1950s — of the Cold War and of McCarthyism.

At that time the AFL-CIO (the US equivalent of the TUC and perhaps the world's largest trade union federation) was totally co-opted and purged of leftists, becoming a subscriber to the 'American dream'. It was an active accomplice of imperialist foreign policy within the international trade union movement.

## BOOM

Most American opinion accepted the conclusion put forward by its social scientists, journalists and philosophers, that America had overcome the conflicts created by earlier forms of capitalism, that social contradictions were ended, that the natural working of society produced harmony, and that all wants and needs within it could be satisfied with judicious social adjustment. This convenient theorising appeared to be supported by the most extended economic boom of the century.

Resistance to this 'American dream' began in the basement, deep down in the depths of America, over the oppression of millions of Black people. Capitalism's racially-selected reserve army of the unemployed, the oppressed Black nation, began to say 'enough!' In the 1950s a mass movement was born: the civil rights movement. Highly visible, on the streets everywhere in the country, its demands were democratic: the rights implicit in the legal fiction of citizenship.

The richest economy ever known had to suppress the captive Black nation within its borders just as it did many outside them, in order to assure itself an adequate margin of profit. Both the oppressed Black Americans and the oppressed Cubans began to struggle to gain control of their own destinies at about the same time. These two blocks of people in motion had a profound effect on American consciousness, both at the mass level and in particular on those

groups moving to the left.

Numbering about thirty million people, the non-white national minorities in the United States are strategically placed in regard to American industries. Afro-Americans constitute 10 per cent of the US population, others (predominantly Latinos) make up another 5 per cent. The workers are, moreover, disproportionately concentrated in heavy industry in the large cities. In this core of the economy, they are not infrequently represented in amounts double that of their overall weight in the population. Clearly this, the most politicised and radicalised section of the proletariat, is critical for the left in the US.

Serious doubts about the 'sincerity' of the 'professed goals' of American policy in the 1950s and 1960s were aroused by the clear hypocrisy of the society's racism, and the miserable failure of the Government's attempt to overthrow Castro in Cuba. Because of its revolutionary origins in the War of Independence, American politics is infused with a democratic ethos — a formal commitment to freedom, the rights of man, and national self-determination. Faced with the realities of racist politics and the Cuban intervention, cynicism and disillusionment with the established order became more widespread and entrenched.

## VIETNAM

The early 1960s saw an eclipse of liberalism in American, mainly caused by its failure to deal with the civil rights issues and foreign policy questions from Cuba to the Congo. But it was Vietnam that broke liberalism's spine.

Vietnam was an important brick in the wall of the 'containment' policy against the USSR and China constructed as the Cold War set in. But it contained many contradictions even for US liberalism. The fact that Ho Chi Minh was in effect the 'George Washington' of his country deeply troubled many Americans.

The hypocrisy of US policy became increasingly visible, and at the same time the costs of Vietnam drove prices higher and real incomes lower. A definite break in the willingness of the people to follow 'their' Government in a foreign war became clearer. Inflation and higher

## WORLD'S HIGHEST STANDARD OF LIVING



There's no way like the American Way

taxes were felt in particular by the working class, whose children were most likely to die thanks to the policy of educational deferments to conscription.

Vietnam and the ensuing international recession have hit deeply at working class support for the capitalist system, formerly relatively unchallenged. This reintroduction of anti-capitalist politics is at present in its early stages.

But there is no doubt that the previous fifteen years of radicalisation, most visible in the petty-bourgeois milieu of the universities and the 'youth culture', have penetrated the working class. There has been a massive questioning of previously unchallenged assumptions about the 'correct' sanctioned way of dealing with social questions. The costly experience of Vietnam has been a powerful force for changing the attitudes which bolstered the ability of the ruling class to use its military strength to intervene internationally against revolution.

The recent inability of the US Government to interfere in the Angolan conflict reflected the fact that the American electorate no longer has the confidence in its ruling class which made it possible for Lyndon Johnson in 1965 to slap

40,000 Marines into Santo Domingo, using as justification a list of 53 'known communists'. Thus the room for manoeuvre of the American ruling class has been severely modified by the radicalisation and its recognition of the need to cool the heat of the populace's anger.

Culturally the deepest area of the radicalisation has been the rise of the women's liberation movement. Within two years this movement mushroomed to involve millions of people. Radical ideas and demands were transmitted by it into every aspect of politics and economics. The pressure is felt in business and trade unions, government, churches and educational institutions.

Within the workers' movement, the Coalition of Labour Union Women (CLUW) has made itself felt on a national scale.

## BIAS

The movement for the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution — intended to assure legal equality for women — has however been stalemated for months in the various state legislatures, highlighting the capitalist bias built into the working of the legal order.

On top of this general social crisis of the 1960s has now come the crisis of the once seemingly all powerful American economy. The really serious rise in unemployment to over 8 per cent, and the actual fall in the material living standards of the American workers, has made more clear to them the price they have to pay for imperialism's continuation. Polls reveal that around 60 per cent of the people believe that politicians speak exclusively in the interests of big business. The potential clearly exists for the left to force a breach in the masquerade of capitalist politics.

In retrospect, the rise of the mass movements when compared with the earlier political landscape represents a profound transformation of the political situation in the United States. Yet every one of these obstacles in the path of the defenders of capitalism was generated by the normal and necessary workings of the capitalist system. There is no question that America has been able to stand above history or outside the working of the laws of social evolution. Neither internationally nor domestically can the US ruling class evade the costs of the system it defends. This lesson is crucial for the left.

**NEXT WEEK: The Democratic and Republican Parties.**

# ZIMBABWE: the blind alley of nationalist solutions

The petty-bourgeois ruling groupings in 'independent' Africa, besides demonstrating their hostility towards the armed struggle in Zimbabwe — with its inevitable radicalising effects in their own countries — have shown their dismal inability to carry forward the demands of their own masses.

The economic barbarism of the colonial era remains: the super-exploitation of workers is now policed by the 'Africanised' institutions of the bourgeois state, in the interests of imperialism and the privileged layers — largely the bureaucracy that services those institutions; attempts at agrarian reform are a catalogue of disasters, with the majority of poor peasants still firmly chained to their subsistence poverty, and the remainder forming the rural proletariat on the large, essentially intact, farms and plantations of the colonial era.

Such is the promise of a purely 'national liberation' programme for Zimbabwe. With Joshua Nkomo playing

a willing part in the 'detente' strategy hatched by Vorster, colluding in the isolation of his own guerilla militants, and urging Britain to complete her 'historic task' of handing over 'independence', can we expect otherwise?

Can we expect him effectively to challenge, in the mining and industrial sectors, the power of such multinationals as Lonrho and Anglo-American, or to pursue vigorously the expropriation and redistribution of the vast farms, ranches and plantations that dominate Rhodesia's tobacco, maize, cattle and sugar industries? In short, can we expect from the accomplices of detente the willingness — let alone the ability — to undertake the massive task of eliminating a century of oppression and exploitation and embarking on the country's transformation towards a socialist Zimbabwe?

The experience throughout neo-colonial Africa gives the resounding answer — 'No!'

The crude appeal by these petty-bourgeois governments to 'national

solidarity' and 'common national interest' in a programme of 'national reconstruction' is just an attempt to conceal the failure of their narrow and restricted ideologies. And where this guise is transparently exposed, they answer the legitimate impatience of workers and peasants with the same crude oppression — legal devices and physical force — that was the hall-mark of the colonial period.

The idea of a staged progression from colonial barbarism to Utopia is patently defunct. Indeed, the 'national independence' stage can only be a cul-de-sac, leaving petty-bourgeois nationalism floundering in the morass of international capitalist manipulations and crises — as the experience of Nyerere in Tanzania, Kaunda in Zambia, and many others have so unequivocally demonstrated.

The removal of the cruder manifestations of imperialism — racism and colonial domination — has laid bare the true, international class character of the

struggle. The exploited urban and rural masses are experiencing in the arena of their contemporary struggle the realities of the petty-bourgeois, neo-colonial scenario; and they are refusing to postpone to a later date the anti-imperialist route that their governments can't or won't take.

Thus support for national liberation in Zimbabwe can only be seen in terms of a continuing process in struggle by the Zimbabwean people towards *real independence* in a genuine socialist democracy. Clearly this requires an unflinching and uncompromising anti-imperialist stance, a vigorous exposure of the collaborationist nature of the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaderships, a clear understanding of the role of South Africa in imperialism's Africa strategy, and a revolutionary programme of political and economic aims and objectives.

The on-off 'settlement' drama in Zimbabwe sees the Smith regime buffeted between the inexorable logic of a global



Nkomo — accomplice of 'detente'

imperialist design, the escalating threat of the guerilla offensive, and the blind intransigence of its white electorate. Events will, sooner rather than later, mock Smith's 'no majority rule in my lifetime'.

In short, a revolutionary party of workers and peasants must take up the tasks in Zimbabwe — as in all neo-colonial states — that petty-bourgeois nationalism is incapable of fulfilling.

MATHIAS MURUNGU

On behalf of all women and men involved in the struggle for the liberation of women in Portugal, I give greetings and solidarity with your demonstration today.

Despite the revolutionary upsurge of the mass of working people in Portugal in the past eighteen months, and the increasing involvement of women in events in the factories, the local neighbourhoods and the countryside, women are still a long way from winning the fundamental right to control their own fertility. Contraception is very difficult to obtain, because no publicity is allowed about it and there are very few clinics providing a service. In Lisbon, for example, there is only one clinic, open for two hours a week, to cope with the needs of 800,000 women.

Abortion is still illegal for the vast majority of working class women. The rich of course can afford to pay the exorbitant price necessary to get their abortions done by private doctors beyond the reach of the law. Meanwhile,

## The following message of solidarity from a Portuguese militant was read out at last Saturday's NAC demonstration.

180,000 backstreet abortions are performed every year, taking their toll of the lives of 2,000 women and maiming and crippling thousands more.

There is no national health service in Portugal, and Portuguese women have to rely on untrained nurses and midwives for most of their health care. The grip of religion is very strong, and this has been reinforced by the fascist nature of the rule in Portugal which has held back the ability of women and men

to express their sexuality and control their fertility for so many years.

But there has been developing in Portugal a movement to fight for health rights for women and their families. A 'people's clinic' was set up in an occupied mansion in Lisbon last year, run by a few sympathetic nurses and doctors, with equipment given by the Lisnave shipyard workers, and involving local people. Among other things, it has been possible to perform

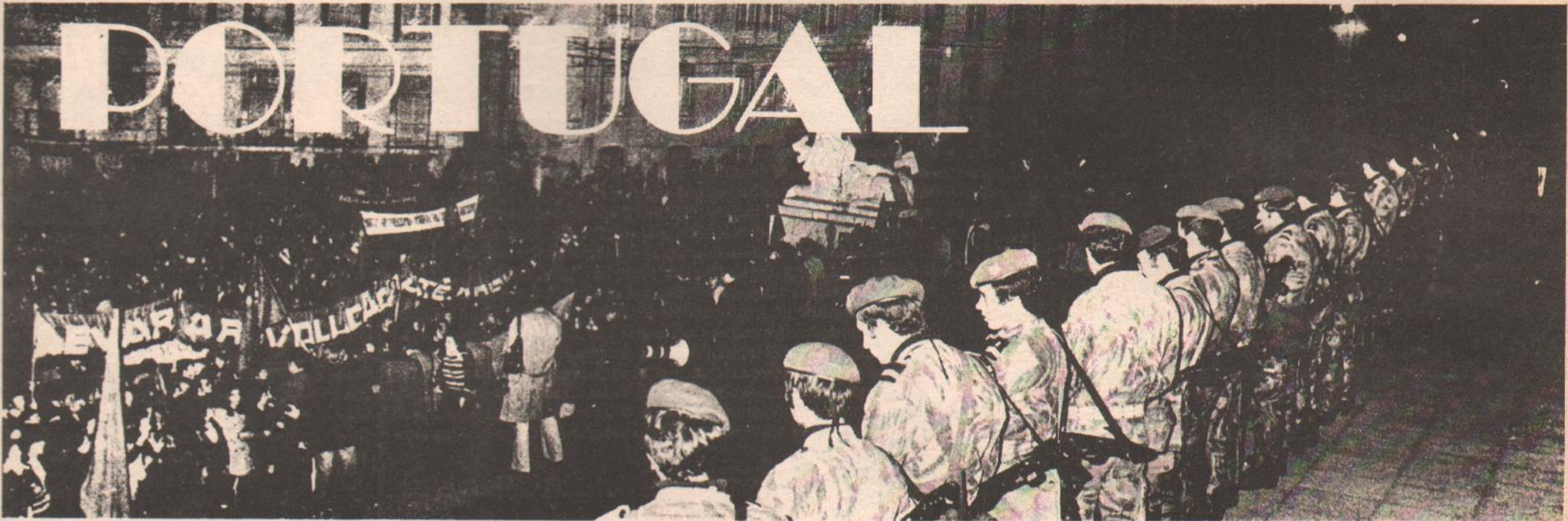
some abortions with the new simple Karman method, and to spread information about such things amongst ordinary women.

In February this year, a film made by women running the clinic was shown on television and has created an uproar. The most widely read woman's magazine, which usually just talks about fashion and knitting, was forced to devote a whole issue to contraception and abortion, coming out in support of it. There have been many letters and discussions

in the media, and the whole debate is now in the open.

But the right-wing Christian Democrats, aided by the police, are coming into the attack in force, have destroyed the film, raided the clinic, and are issuing writs for arrests. Despite this, abortions are still being performed, but secretly in premises provided by neighbourhood committees and the shipyard workers. It is clear that at this time particularly the widest possible support is necessary for those who are struggling to win free contraception and abortion on demand for women.

The success of the movement in Portugal, which is still only just beginning to develop, depends on this. I therefore send this message of solidarity with your fight in Britain, in the hope that your movement will consider itself a part of a much wider international struggle of all working class people to win the right of women all over the world to control their bodies — and their lives.



# WHAT LINE FOR THE ELECTIONS?

The second anniversary of the fall of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal on 25 April will be marked by the holding of elections to the Legislative Assembly.

In the voting last year, the parties claiming adherence to socialism — the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the revolutionary left — won more than 60 per cent of the vote. This April it appears likely that the parties of the ruling class — the liberals of the PPD (Popular Democratic Party) and the conservative CDS (Democratic and Social Centre) — will win an absolute majority of the votes cast. Hence for the first time the ruling class will be able to form a government which with the 'mandate' of the elections can implement its authoritarian proposals.

The ruling class has won this greater room for manoeuvre primarily as a result of the defeat suffered by the left on 26 November.

On the other hand the working class has not let up in its struggle. There have been a number of exemplary strikes and occupations — for example at Timex, Molaflex and Firestone. In the last few weeks a wave of strikes has swept the country.

The workers commissions still exist and continue to function, while the first stirrings of opposition are again being seen within the armed forces. For the working class the elections are important not in themselves, but because they allow the workers and peasants to prepare for the crucial class confrontations that will inevitably follow.

## Farce

In fact the elections are a farce. Two months later, in June, another vote will take place for the post of President. In a pact agreed between the Revolutionary Council of the Armed Forces Movement and the major political parties (including the Socialist Party and the Communist Party) tremendous power has been assigned to the President, who is certain to be a strong military figure. The likely candidates are the current President, Costa Gomes, the Prime Minister, Azevedo, or a right-wing general like Eanes or Galvao de Melo.

The pact, signed finally on 26 February, gives the President the right to veto laws passed by the Assembly unless they are supported by a two-thirds majority of the deputies. The President, to be elected by universal suffrage every five

years, will appoint the Prime Minister. The Revolutionary Council will continue to exist, but only in an advisory capacity.

However the capitulation of the SP and CP knows no bounds. During the recent strikes they have told the workers to go back so as to avoid disturbances that might upset their chances in the elections! This is the first time since the first and second Spinola governments that the CP has resorted to open strike-breaking.

Fourteen parties are standing in the elections. Apart from the SP



Maoists regard CP 'social fascists' as main enemy—PCP(ml) attempted to register this as their symbol!

and CP there are four right-wing groups — the CDS, the PPD, the monarchist PPM, and the Christian Democrats (PDC), who were banned from last year's elections after the attempted Spinola coup on 11 March.

Among the many so-called revolutionary organisations standing there are three Maoist groups, whose main aim is to unmask 'social fascism' in the guise of the CP; three centrist groups including the large UDP (Popular Democratic Union), which also has leanings towards Maoism, but doesn't make social fascism the basis of its politics; and both the LCI (International Communist League, sympathising section of the Fourth International) and the PRT (Revolutionary Workers Party, which also supports the FI).

## Absentee

An absentee from this list is the PRP (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat), which is supported by the International Socialists in this country. One must say of the PRP that it is consistent — consistently ultra-left. Last year the PRP stated in their manifesto: 'No to bourgeois elections.' This year they have simply repeated the message.

In *Left-Wing Communism — an Infantile Disorder*, Lenin polemicised in the strongest manner against the 'lefts' of the German, Dutch and British parties, whom the PRP take after today. His advice to the British Communists was: 'Everywhere try to get the people to think, and draw the masses into the struggle, to take the bourgeoisie at its word and utilise the machinery it has set up....utilise parliamentary elections and the parliamentary structure in a revolutionary and communist manner.'

The LCI is taking Lenin at his word and standing 58 candidates, who include textile workers, engineers, building workers, domestics, telephonists, mechanics, teachers, printers and Setenave shipyard workers. They are standing in all 18 district capitals, as well as the European and World emigrant constituencies.

As part of the process of fusion between the LCI and the PRT, it was hoped that the two would stand a single slate. This has not been possible. After agreeing to a first draft, the two groups were unable

to agree on a governmental slogan for the campaign.

The PRT, arguing that the SP is the 'hegemonic force' within the working class, supported the call for 'a SP government based on the worker deputies and the mobilisation of the masses'. The LCI correctly argue that while the SP has the support of a majority of the working class, it does so basically via its electoral influence, and not through industrial cells and trade union fractions.

## Slogan

The governmental slogan of the LCI in the election period is therefore for 'the SP and CP to accept their responsibilities and form a government, without representatives of the bourgeoisie, breaking with the pact and applying a workers plan of struggle'. Such a plan would be worked out by a national congress of trade unions and workers commissions. In other words, the LCI is demanding that the SP and CP follow the wishes of the workers and peasants and form a government — but a government based on the organisations of the working class, and not those of the bourgeois state.

## Campaign

The other central points on which the LCI is campaigning are:

- \* For united action of the working class, via the workers commissions and the trade unions, against the austerity measures and for a workers plan of struggle.
- \* Against the pact with the bourgeoisie; no compromise with the bourgeoisie or with those parties applying the austerity programme.
- \* For socialism and workers power; for a national congress of the organs of workers power to destroy the bourgeois state that exploits and oppresses.

The candidature of the LCI throughout Portugal is a great step forward not just for the LCI and the FI, but also for the Portuguese workers and peasants. It is through this election campaign that the working class will prepare itself for the imminent class confrontations. This is the message that the Portuguese Trotskyists will be taking into every factory, farm, home, school and barracks in Portugal.

Ric Sissons

# Women's rights: Labour's skin deep solutions

The Working Women's Charter has been adopted by 12 national unions and by hundreds of trade union branches, trades councils, Labour Party branches and women's organisations in the two years since it was first drafted by the London Trades Council. More than a third of the delegates at last year's TUC voted for the Charter to become the basis for the fight on women's rights. Now the Campaign set up after the 1974 London Trades Council meeting is holding its first national conference this weekend.

## CELIA PUGH reports.

This conference can mark an important step forward in drawing all supporters of the Working Women's Charter into a nationally coordinated fight for women's rights.

Since the Working Women's Charter was first drafted, the Labour Government has announced the dawning of 'equality' with the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay legislation. These Acts are a clear response to the increased demands and struggles of women, and will increase expectations of equality and independence. However, the legislation itself only skims the surface of an oppression which goes much deeper than the Labour Government is prepared to delve.

of any fight-back which proceeds in unity and undivided strength.

The demands of the Working Women's Charter are particularly important in taking up this fight. Unlike the Labour Government's legislation and the TUC's own Charter, the Working Women's Charter goes to the roots of what denies women independence and equality — their position and responsibilities in the family.

## CLIQUE

The fight for the Working Women's Charter exposes the reality of Labour's attacks on women and has to form an inseparable part of any alternative leadership and policies to the Wilson-Healey-Callaghan-Foot clique in Westminster.

The task facing this weekend's conference is to provide a framework for activity to resist these attacks and to carry forward the fight for women's rights around the demands of the Charter. Local campaigns should be organised around the inadequacies and sabotage of the recent legislation, with support for equal pay strikes and the setting up of investigatory committees to look into the workings of the Acts.

These committees could lay the basis for campaigns such as the fight for positive discrimination in education and apprenticeships previously denied to women. Local activities of this kind should culminate in a national mass rally in December to draw together the threads of the fight for women's rights, one year after Labour's legislation came into force.

## WORK

The conference will also have to take up the fight for the right of women to work, through solidarity with women fighting redundancies and the integration of women into all organisations resisting unemployment — particularly necessary in the case of part-time and weakly organised women workers. These initiatives must also be extended to the fight against the cuts in social expenditure.

Such activities can begin to end the usual isolation of women's struggles and their specific problems from the mainstream of the workers' movement. To this end the call for a national conference on 'Women, the Cuts and Unemployment' will be an important step to ensure that the particular needs of women are recognised and taken up in the wider resistance to the Labour Government's attacks.

## ASSAULT

In reality the Labour Government has presided over an outright assault on women's rights, through cuts in social expenditure, unemployment and attacks on abortion rights. Between January and September 1975, the rate of unemployment amongst women rose by 121 per cent (compared with 48 per cent for men). At the same time, Healey's cuts in social expenditure increasingly thrust the weight of responsibility for health and welfare onto the shoulders of those 'naturally destined' to service the needs of children, husbands and elderly relations.

The surface nature of Labour's legislation was highlighted last week in a research study published by the Labour Research Department, which concluded that 'one of the main obstacles to the proper working of the recent sex discrimination legislation will continue to be the lack of places where pre-school children can be looked after if their mothers go out to work'.

These attacks affect the whole working class, because along with the crescendo of the right-wing SPUC and Life crusaders singing the praises of family life, they strengthen the traditional notion of women as self-sacrificing handmaidens to the never-ending demands of children and husbands. In this way the attention of the working class is directed away from the malignant source of the crisis — the capitalist class and their bankrupt system.

## FIGHT-BACK

If the working class as a whole is to resist the offensive of the ruling class, then it must take no responsibility for the crisis. The fight to defend and extend women's rights is therefore an integral part



Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

Ten thousand people marched through London last Saturday in support of 'free abortion on demand — a woman's right to choose' and against the return to backstreet abortions threatened by the reactionary Parliamentary Select

Committee.

Jo Richardson, speaking at the final rally in Trafalgar Square, supported the refusal of the National Abortion Campaign to submit evidence to the Select Committee (which now consists solely

of anti-abortionists). She said she was glad that the Privileges Committee had found NAC not guilty of a breach of privilege, although she 'would have liked to have seen all these thousands of people on the march before the House, bringing the issue right into the chamber itself'.

Other speakers included leading doctors and trade unionists as well as Tessa Van Gelderen from the Working Women's Charter Campaign. Many stressed the need for the TUC and Labour leaders to act on the successful conference resolutions supporting 'free abortion on request'. As Maggie Hunt, T&GWU shop steward and secretary of Eastbourne Trades Council, pointed out, 'their time for procrastination is ended'.

International support was represented in a speaker from the Bangladesh Women's Association and messages from the US Socialist Workers Party and women involved in abortion struggles in Portugal and India.

The WWC group at the DHSS headquarters is taking up a campaign for a nursery on site and is also supporting a campaign for a nursery on the Longbenton council estate. It is also taking up discrimination against women in terms of promotion. The majority of the 8,500 clerical workers at Longbenton are women, organised in the CPSA (Civil and Public Services Association). A WWC group in a large workplace like the DHSS is an excellent way to take the campaign forward, as it gets the trade unions directly involved and means that the group has to relate to the day-to-day problems confronting women workers.

Kate Lane

## CAMPAIGNING ON TYNESIDE

Three WWC groups now exist on Tyneside; one in Newcastle, one in North Tyneside, and one at the headquarters of the Department of Health and Social Security at Longbenton. The latter is one of the first workplace Charter groups in the country.

The Newcastle and North Tyneside WWC groups are taking up a campaign for unionisation of women workers in the area. The campaign is based around four activities: (a) encouraging women not in unions to join them; (b) assisting women in unions to play a more active role in them; (c) campaigning for nursery provision to involve women at home as well as those already at work; (d) changing the attitudes of male trade unionists.

These Charter groups have distributed publicity material for the campaign to several trade unions and trades councils. They have also participated in two successful demonstrations organised by a local Nursery Action Group, which pres-

ented petitions to the Education Committee and the Social Services Committee for more nurseries.

The nursery campaign is being taken up by Tyneside Action Committee Against the Cuts, which is sending a questionnaire to candidates in the local council elections in May. The questionnaire asks them what they will do to fight the cuts. The results will be published before the elections.

On May Day Newcastle Trades Council is holding a demonstration against the cuts and unemployment. The WWCC will have a contingent on this demonstration to explain that the right to work must include the right to work for women, and also that the cuts in housing, education and social services are hitting women particularly hard. This means that the trade union movement must involve women, whether they work outside or inside the home, in the fight against the cuts and unemployment.

## Not only sex discrimination

One of the crucial features of the WWC is its recognition of the fact that what have traditionally been seen as *personal* aspects of women's lives are in fact part and parcel of their total social and economic situation. For example the right to choose whether or not to have children and the ability to return to work having had them (i.e. the question of nurseries, maternity leave, abortion and contraception) are just as central as equal pay and opportunities and sex discrimination at work. Furthermore, they are also inseparable because, at the ideological level, it is the role of women in the family which determines their situation as workers — low pay, reserve labour, etc.

Whilst it is necessary to remember that the Charter is in no way intended to be a watertight programme for the achievement of women's total liberation, it does need to go a step further in this recognition by drawing attention to the fact that *sexuality* is also not a separate, 'personal', issue. This can be seen very clearly, in the level of discrimination against women at work specifically because they are gay.

Take the case of a student nurse, for instance, who was thrown off her course — and thus out of her career, since no other training hospital would take her afterwards — as soon as

it was discovered that she was a lesbian. Similarly, student teachers who have been known to be gay have found they couldn't get teaching jobs. There are many documented cases of women who have lost their jobs because they were lesbian, although other pretexts have often been given by employers.

Then there is the frequent discrimination against gay mothers in divorce cases. If it is known that they are lesbian, they are almost certain to lose custody and care of their children regardless of other circumstances.

The question of sexual preference is relevant to all women: lesbianism implies a social, economic and sexual independence which is in contradiction with and challenges the man-dependent status which is assigned to women because of their role in the 'typical' heterosexual family. It is important to extend the Charter to make it applicable to the specific discrimination against lesbians, and *Red Weekly* asks all delegates to this weekend's conference to vote for the amendments proposed from the Gay Workers and Lesbian conferences and to explain the need for these amendments in their unions and groups.

Anne Chesterton

# FREE SPANISH POLITICAL PRISONERS NOW!

Last weekend thousands of demonstrators defied the brutal paramilitary police of the Spanish dictatorship in the streets of Madrid and Barcelona to demonstrate for democratic rights and the release of all political prisoners. Two of the militants whose freedom they are fighting for should be of special concern to socialists in this country:

EVA FOREST is a prominent left-wing intellectual, internationally known as a feminist militant and opponent of the dictatorship.

This made her a hated enemy of the dictatorship. So, in September 1974, she topped the list of a number of artists, intellectuals and workers leaders who were rounded up by the police on a trumped-up charge of involvement in the bombing of a Madrid cafe.

All those arrested were brutally treated, but the worst was reserved for Eva Forest, who was tortured both physically and mentally, and



EVA FOREST

sexually assaulted. The State then accused her of involvement in the assassination of Prime Minister Carrero Blanco the previous year.

Eighteen months later Eva Forest is still in prison, although no evidence has been brought against her and she has never been tried. The State's charges are so flimsy that most of those arrested with her have been released on a token sum of bail. Only she and building workers' leader Antonio Duran continue to languish in prison.

## Phoney

The case of Eva Forest shows just how phoney is the 'justice' which has put 1,500 militants into the dictatorship's prisons and continues to keep them there.

Another victim of this 'justice' who is at present in the greatest danger is SABINO ARANA, a militant of the LCR-ETA VI, Spanish



SABINO ARANA

sympathising organisation of the Fourth International.

Arana was arrested for the first time in 1963 while still in his teens. Arrested again in 1964, he was held for two months and again tortured. He was released because of his ill health — by this time he had already contracted tuberculosis.

## Hunted

From 1966 onwards he was hunted by the Francoist police, and was finally caught in March 1968. After ten days of torture he was brought to trial and given a sentence of 32 years in prison by a military tribunal.

For the past eight years he has been in almost every political prison in Spain, under conditions that have continually run down his health. Despite this he has continued the struggle, taking part in eight hunger strikes in solidarity with other victims of the dictatorship.

# RED WEEKLY



Demonstrators in Barcelona flee last weekend as police move in to break up their march

For this continuing militancy he has served more than 300 days in harsh 'punishment cells', despite his ill health. Since December he has been in the Carabanchel Prison hospital. But his serious condition, inadequate facilities, and the hostility of the prison authorities give strong grounds to fear for his life. (He was forced to make the 13 hour journey to Carabanchel with his hands chained to his feet and subject to continual beatings by his guards.)

A campaign is being launched in this country around the case of Eva Forest. The first meeting will take place this Friday, 9 April at 7.30 pm in the Essex Road library. Dr Berry Beaumont, from the NAC Steering Committee (in a personal capacity) will be in the chair, and speakers will include a woman militant from Spain.

For information about the case of Sabino Arana and the international campaign around his case write to: LCR-ETA VI, c/o 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

# £1,500 a quarter - BUILD YOUR PRESS

A re-equipped and expanded design room, improved photo files, a clippings library and justified typesetting (that means the typing reaches the margins on both sides of the column). These are the improvements that we will be able to make in the production of Red Weekly over the coming months as a result of our readers' magnificent response to the £10,000 Fund Drive launched to strengthen Red Weekly and the work of the International Marxist Group.

## Supplement

We have also set aside part of that money to start regular production of a monthly supplement to the paper which will take up the key issues of debate on the far left today. This will include contributions on the history of the Fourth International, the revolutionary party, the crisis of the Communist Party, and Portugal.

On top of this, of course, we are steadily building towards being able to sustain a 16-page paper to cover the wider issues of history, society and culture which our present size largely prevents us from taking up today.

All this has cost money — your money. But you don't seem to have lost your enthusiasm. Last month, immediately after the end of the £10,000 Fund Drive, we collected

another £446 for the Red Weekly Fighting Fund.

Now's the time to make sure that we get that amount and more every month. To do this we have decided to alter the way in which we get it.

The experience of our supporters in fund-raising gathered over the last few months is that large well-planned activities combined with consistent motivation of financial donations to the readers of the paper is the best way to raise money. Consequently we are going to launch a quarterly £1,500 Red Weekly Fighting Fund to ensure that the money necessary to help us maintain and extend the improvements to the paper is raised.

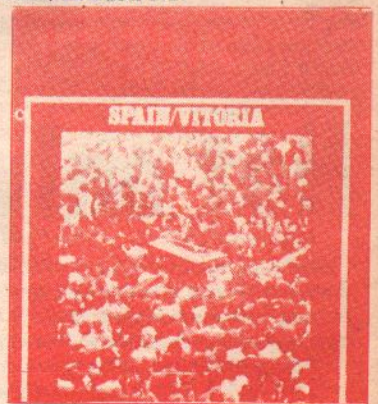
## Targets

Over the next week targets will be going out to all IMG branches and areas so that they can begin to plan major activities now. We want to know about them as well! All suggestions/activities can be printed in our regular Fighting Fund spot, which other supporters can draw on in different areas.

By the way, don't wait for us to contact you. Start sending in the money now. Meanwhile our thanks to those who've jumped the gun: Nottingham IMG have come good with £30; Birmingham IMG, £8.41;

Reading and Basingstoke IMG, £10; Edinburgh IMG, £5.75; York IMG, £1.50; Crewe IMG, £1.50; Linda Simon, £20; Callum Tod, £3; R. Darby, £1.50.

That's a good starting total of £81.66. Keep the money rolling in and plan those fund-raising events now! Make cheques/POs out to Red Weekly (FD), 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.



## The present crisis in China

is just one of the topics covered in *Inprecor*, the fortnightly information journal of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

Make sure of your copy now for 30p (plus 10p p&p) from RED BOOKS, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. Or why not take out a subscription — just send £7 to Red Books and receive every copy for a year.

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