

RED WEEKLY

SUNDAY
25
APRIL

STOP
the NHS cuts

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,
GLPs, Manchester TC, etc.

22 APRIL 1976

No. 147

PRICE 10p

NO CUTS IN

JOBS

WAGES

SERVICES



THROW OUT THE BUDGET

'LEFTS' PLOT BUDGET SELL-OUT



The press this week is full of the 'tough' line supposedly being taken by trade union leaders in the negotiations with the Government on the Budget deal. Jack Jones's call for a 35-hour week, the bringing forward of pension increases, and rejection of a 3 per cent wage limit was headline news.

But the real manoeuvres behind the headlines have come out in new revelations from the Treasury. Although officially the TUC is being offered a 3 per cent increase, evidence to the House of Commons Expenditure Committee showed that all the calculations of the Government have been done on the basis of a 5 per cent deal. This is, 'by accident', just the figure which the TUC is supposed to be discussing.

This reveals clearly the deals which are going on behind the scenes. The recent Sunday Times exposures have shown that even under the Tories trade union leaders, including Joe Gormley, secretly met Cabinet figures to decide on an 'acceptable' pay figure. With this Government, the Treasury revelations make it quite clear that all the outlines of the

plan have been worked out in advance. The TUC is merely going through an elaborate fraud to try to convince the working class that it has in the end gained 'concessions' from the Government.

There must be no confusion in the labour movement as to what a 5 per cent increase would mean. Living standards have already dropped by 6 per cent under the present £6 limit. With inflation running at well over 10 per cent, a 5 per cent limit would mean savage cuts in the standard of living for the second year running. Coupled with social expenditure cuts and dole queues of over 1½ million, it adds up to the most sustained anti-working class attack since the 1931 Ramsey MacDonald Government.

The response of the Labour and trade union lefts is pathetic. Tribune last week rightly commented: 'This Budget must be one of the most reactionary ever produced by a Labour Chancellor.' But every single Tribune MP then went on to vote for this 'most reactionary' Budget. Not one called for the TUC Congress to throw out the whole thing.

Meanwhile Jack Jones, the father of the £6 limit, went last Thursday for a private meeting with Callaghan. Scanlon prepared to push the Budget deal through the AUEW by settling on a plan to use the National Committee to mandate AEU representatives, where the right has a majority to vote for pay controls in the full AUEW conference — where the right and left are more evenly balanced.

In this framework it can be seen that Jack Jones's call for a 35-hour week is simply hot air. Such a demand is of course vitally important for the working class in the fight against unemployment. But it will never be achieved by capitulating to the Government on wages. The only way anything will be achieved is through struggle, and Jones proposes no way to fight for a shorter working week any more than he proposes to defend living standards.

Jack Jones's speeches are merely intended to divert attention away from the wage-cutting deal he has cooked up with Healey. The way forward is through a struggle to reject wage controls, demand automatic cost of living increases to compensate for inflation, demand

the complete reversal of the cuts, and tackle unemployment through a programme of nationalisation and public works on a scale to ensure the right to work. The first step in that struggle is to work for a massive day of action on 26 May. The next step is to throw out the 5 per cent or any other Budget deal at the special TUC Congress in June. All those who refuse to support that are merely leading

the working class to defeat.

Fortunately the fight back against wage controls is getting under way. Despite the defeats, the strikes in British Leyland were the first serious shots against the £6 limit.

Attempting to persuade Jones and Healey is useless, but provided militants organise a fight leading up to the special TUC, it is still possible to defeat the manoeuvres of Callaghan, Jones, Scanlon and the supporters of the Government's policies. This is a vital part of the struggle to build a class struggle opposition in the labour movement.



Photo: DAVE EVANS (IFL)

Pickets out in force at Rover Solihull during the recent dispute

Even worse, by not openly opposing the £6 limit the CP leadership concentrated on advancing entirely sectoral and divisive demands, isolating the tool-makers from the rest of Leyland's workers. By placing at the centre of their argument the need to defend differentials, they only prepare the way for a different form of wage cutting. Living standards will still be cut, but the union officials will be given just enough room for manoeuvre to take some of the heat off their backs.

At Austin Longbridge on 9 April, CP members initially proposed that the toolmakers should wait five days before striking. But such was the feeling at the thousand strong mass meeting that the proposal was withdrawn and there was a 3-1 vote for strike action.

Nevertheless, after a trip down to London to see Hugh Scanlon on 12 April, the strike committee reversed this decision without winning any concessions from BL management on their £9 a week claim. A subsequent mass meeting voted 4-1 to return to work.

Although the recent struggles in BLMC represent a growing opposition

to policies of wage restraint and the attempts of BLMC management to implement Ryder, they also reveal very sharply the crisis of perspective and political leadership in the labour movement. Fragmented struggles will not deter the Labour Government or the union bureaucrats from pursuing wage restraint.

Strategy

What is needed is a clear national strategy around which the trade unions in BL and the rest of the motor industry can wage a united fight against both the policies of wage restraint and the attempts of the employers to cut manning levels and cause redundancies. This must include a workers plan for the motor industry drawn up after exhaustive inquiries by the workers in the industry themselves.

Such a plan must centre on the need to defend jobs and living standards through demands for work-sharing with no loss of pay, the opening of the car manufacturers' books to the inspection of trade union representatives, and work-

ers control of line speeds and manning levels to lead the way for the fight for the nationalisation of the motor industry under workers control.

A small step in this direction has been taken by militants working under the auspices of the Institute for Workers Control to draw up a workers inquiry and report on the motor industry. Only through the successful development of such a national strategy and the winning of its acceptance among wide sections of motor industry workers will the long-term plans of the Labour Government for massive redundancies and closures as spelt out in the 'Think Tank' report be averted.

JOHN GRAHAM (Birmingham AUEW)

In order to publicise the Institute for Workers Control's enquiry into the motor industry, a public meeting is being held in Birmingham on 23 May at Digbeth Civil Hall, 7.30pm. Speakers will include: Tom Litterick MP; Jim Shutt (AUEW-TASS shop steward, Chrysler); Bob Ashworth (TGWU shop steward, Rover Solihull).

IN FOCUS

Labour's racism

Two pieces of news last week spotlighted the continuing racist offensive in Britain. The most publicised was Powell's new outburst claiming that mugging was a 'racial question'. This speech reflects the mounting pressure from sections of the ruling class for a new openly racist policy to split the working class — the same pressure seen in a series of nauseating articles on immigrants which have been appearing in the Daily Mail and the Sun.

But the event which showed the most dangerous tendency at present was Callaghan's sacking of Alex Lyon — the Home Office minister responsible for immigration policies. In himself, of course, Lyon was no obstacle to racism — he was a right-winger even in Labour Party terms. But he had at least been prepared to protest verbally against blatant racist attacks — he opposed, for example, the 1968 Immigration Act brought in by Callaghan to keep out Kenyan Asians after Powell's racist speeches at that time; and he was a well-known opponent of the 1971 Immigration Act.

Callaghan's sacking of Lyon is an open declaration that not even this kind of opposition to racism will be put up with by his Government. It is a nod and a wink to every racist bureaucrat and backward worker.

The TUC and the union bureaucrats have also been making their real position clear on the question of racism and immigrants. Having supported immigration controls in the past, they have confirmed this position recently by coming out openly against the reissue of work permits to foreign workers if a British national can be found to fill the job. Their chauvinist support for import controls on foreign goods — which off-loads unemployment in this country onto the backs of workers abroad — is well-known; and extending opposition to foreign goods to opposition to foreign workers is an easy step.

The unholy alliance of Government and unions on immigration control has effectively stopped the entry of immigrant workers into the country. But there remains the 'problem' (for them) of the already existing immigrant communities. The immigration policies of the 1950s brought large numbers of Asians and West Indians in particular to Britain to fill a labour shortage in mainly unskilled and service jobs (hospitals, catering, transport, and so on). An opposite situation of unemployment has since resulted in legislation to keep any more out. But the 2 per cent black population of Britain, originally brought in as a cheap, expendable labour force, has increasingly fought back — not only at this role, but against attempts to use them as scapegoats for the present crisis.

Struggles against lay-offs, against low wages and conditions have increased, and squatting movements, parent and student movements have organised opposition to racist policies in social service expenditure, in education, the police, and so on. Not least has been the opposition of the growing number of wageless and homeless black youths, who are no longer prepared to accept the bottom end of the scale in whatever the present system offers — whether in education, jobs, houses, or other facilities.

It was not surprising that Enoch Powell once again singled out this layer to attack. With unemployment twice as high amongst blacks as whites, and up to 40 per cent amongst youth in the cities, their numbers will only increase and their situation worsen under the Government's present policies. After the failure of Sir Robert Mark's £25,000 recruitment campaign to get blacks into the force to police their own people (not a single suitable candidate came forward!), we can therefore expect a return with a vengeance to the all-too-familiar hard line of racist harassment and thuggery from the police in the black communities. (Another speaker at the same seminar as Powell suggested that both unemployment and rising crime could be solved in one go by — yes, you've guessed it — recruiting the unemployed into vigilante groups!)

Lyon's sacking and Powell's speech may not herald yet a new open racist offensive — the ruling class is more interested in getting the TUC to accept wage restraint than in supporting racism as a main tactic. But as working class resistance to cuts in living standards mounts, the capitalists will come out with the old tactic of divide and rule by launching the most vicious assaults against black people. Already such a new offensive is being prepared through victimisations, withdrawal of work permits, threatened deportations, exclusion of families from abroad, harassment of young blacks, and every other step.

Callaghan and the TUC have already given notice that they will do nothing to halt the racist drive. On this issue more than any other, it will be rank-and-file militants, the revolutionary left and the black communities themselves that will have to lead the fight. Demands for repeal of the Immigration, Pakistan and Aliens Acts, for massive propaganda in the working class against racism, for solidarity with black struggles and for defence of the black community will take on an even greater importance in the coming months.

CHOICE FACING SCOTTISH TUC

(Resolution No. 17)

This Congress recognises that the £6 wage limit and the cuts in public expenditure are measures which help to extend mass unemployment. We have no option but to conclude that the present Labour Government is deliberately using mass unemployment as an economic policy.

This Congress rejects policies which are aimed at making working people pay for the crisis in the capitalist system. It instructs the General Council to fight unemployment by campaigning for:

1. Immediate implementation of the 35 hour week with no loss of pay;
2. Longer holidays with no loss of pay;
3. No redundancies without adequate alternative employment at an equal status being provided;
4. An opening of the books of any company declaring redundancies;
5. Nationalisation without compensation of any company unable to ensure full employment at a living wage for its workforce;
6. An end to cuts in public expenditure and a new programme to restore the cuts in housing, education and health;
7. An end to incomes policy measures like the £6 wage limit, and any similar scheme;
8. Full cover of all major agreements against inflation by cost of living clauses;
9. Full cover in all state benefits and grants to individuals for cost of living increases.

The General Council should coordinate a campaign against unemployment and the cuts; this should be done at two levels, nationally through the unions, and locally through the Trades Councils.

Moved by Stirling Trades Council.

(Composite B [covering motions 12-16, 18-22])

This Congress, gravely concerned at the unacceptably high level of unemployment in Scotland, insists that every effort should be made by the Government to drastically bring this down. Recognising the cost of unemployment to the Exchequer and to society as a whole, funds should be redirected to this end. Congress firmly refuses to accept the use of unemployment to regulate the economy. To reverse the present trend the following measures are proposed:

- (a) Extension of the temporary employment subsidy;
- (b) Assistance to industry to allow it to build up stocks of components and raw materials;
- (c) Increased investment in key nationalised sectors, such as steel and rail;
- (d) Selective import controls;
- (e) An immediate cessation of the outflow of capital;
- (f) Restoration of cuts in social services;
- (g) Cuts in arms expenditure;
- (h) Extension of school, hospital and house building;
- (i) The creation of an expanding economy parallel with extension of public ownership and control;
- (j) Allocation of substantially increased resources to the National Enterprise Board and the Scottish Development Agency;
- (k) Extend public ownership of the key industries and financial institutions.

Moved by General and Municipal Workers Union.

Seconded by National Union of Railwaymen, Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staff, and the following trades councils: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Greenock, Motherwell & Wishaw, Clydebank, Clackmannanshire, and Cowdenbeath.

class struggle or class collaboration

The most important meeting of the workers movement since the Budget measures were announced has been taking place this week with the conference of the Scottish TUC in Perth.

The present capitalist crisis has been aggravated in Scotland by decades of regional decline, particularly in heavy industry. Unemployment runs to double figures in many areas, housing is a chronic social problem, and the social services are falling apart through neglect.

Not surprisingly, therefore, Scotland has thrown up the spearhead of working class resistance to the policies of the Labour Government. Struggles have included the Person-

na occupation for jobs last year, victorious battles for equal pay at Magnetic Electrical Alloys, Hamilton, Wheway-Watson and Cockburn Valves in Glasgow (the last won after a three month strike), a half-day strike against the cuts in Glasgow, and of course Dundee's 30,000 strong general strike on 5 March.

Enough, one would have thought, to have produced an agenda bristling with militant resolutions to beat back the capitalist offensive. But not a bit of it. The first major debate on unemployment on Tuesday morning - occurring as we went to press - reflected the division running right through the conference and through the working class itself.

'It is the division between those who are prepared to fight against the policies of the Government and those who, whatever their militant words, simply advance alternative schemes of class collaboration', we were told by Stirling Trades Council delegate Roland Sheret.

The fact that the whole of the heavily Communist Party influenced Scottish TUC General Council is supporting the anaemic composite motion on jobs shows exactly where we will find the CP 'leaders' when they are faced with a clear class struggle line. They would prefer to form alliances with right-wing General Council hacks like Alex Donnet of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, who disrupted a recent conference on the cuts in

Glasgow with an impassioned defence of Healey's economic strategy against what he called 'a tiny minority of the trade union movement'.

There is little doubt that this unholy alliance will carry the day, although last year Stirling Trades Council were successful in pushing through a motion calling for cost of living clauses in all pay settlements, state benefits and grants to defend them against the ravages of inflation.

But the importance of their stand - not just on jobs, but also on housing, transport, and troop withdrawal from Ireland - is that they are advancing a programme for class struggle against the class collaborationist schemes of the Communist Party and the 'lefts'. This fight must be repeated at every union conference this summer and at the TUC and Labour Party conferences. It is the key to beating back the anti-working class offensive of the Labour Government.

RULE 14

An open letter to *Socialist Worker*

We are delegates to the Camden Trades Council who oppose Rule 14. As you know, the majority of delegates voted against the rule at the Council's AGM.

We note that *Socialist Worker* has consistently pointed out the dangers of Rule 14 and the need to fight it, although without saying how this should be done. In some trade union branches (e.g. ASTMS, Charing Cross) affiliated to CTC, however, IS members have urged acceptance of the blackmail letter from the CTC Secretary, which stipulates that only those branches supporting the rule will be admitted to the May delegate meeting.

If your idea of struggle against Rule 14 is to capitulate to the bureaucracy's first slap, you will be in no position to give a lead and, worse still, you will badly let down other trades councils who have thrown out the rule. We believe



we have a united fight of all trades councils should be waged against the rule - but such a fight cannot even begin if delegates who in theory oppose Rule 14 refuse to do so in practice.

We ask that you make clear your position; in particular:

1. Will you oppose signing an undertaking that branches support Rule 14?
2. Will you fight Rule 14 up to and beyond the point where the TUC suspends and disaffiliates trades councils?
3. Will you actively support the all-London campaign against Rule 14 launched by CTC delegates (including IS members) and work for its meeting on 6 May?
4. What steps will you take on behalf of any delegates who may be excluded from trades councils because of their opposition to Rule 14?

Support for rank and file initiatives such as the 26 November demonstration or the Right to Work Campaign would inevitably fail into this category. So would support for the policy of a union which opposed the £6 pay limit which the

General Council has endorsed. Already the TUC has suspended Camden Trades Council. Association of Trades Councils voted to reject Rule 14 on Saturday. The vote was carried by a large majority. UCATT regional official and a member of the Communist Party, had argued that Rule 14 should be accepted since it was 'more progressive than the last one', which forbade trades councils

to support with funds the Communist Party or fascist organisations. The secretary ruled that the meeting could not go on, since the Association would have to be immediately disbanded. In the end, he decided that all the delegates would have to take the issue back to their trades councils, get a mandate and vote again at the next Association meeting in three months time.

NORTHAMPTON: A letter from Tom Graham, Secretary of the TUC Organisation and Industrial Relations Department, claims the Northamptonshire Association of Trades Councils cannot be represented at the Trades Councils Conference.

HILDA KEAN, DENNY FITZPATRICK (Westminster Trades Council delegates)

Revolution in the pits?

Seemingly revolutionary demands for workers self-management in the mining industry have won the unanimous support of the National Union of Mineworkers Executive.

Their proposals include the scrapping of the present joint consultative committees which operate at every pit, and their replacement by colliery management teams with the miners electing 12 representatives at each pit. Not only would the teams have responsibility for appointing colliery managers and mine experts, but control over planning, production methods, output, investment, financial targets and marketing and a host of other management functions would be in their hands.

But just how 'revolutionary' these demands are is revealed when simultaneously the NUM calls for the strengthening of present national consultation arrangements and an extra full-time member on Derek Ezra's National Coal Board to be nominated by the miners.

The NUM proposals may be more radical than most 'worker participation' schemes - but in essence they are exactly the same. So long as the power to determine how, where, when and for what purpose coal shall be mined remains in the hands of the NCB and the Government, nationalisation and any number of participatory committees will remain subordinated to the interests of capitalism.

No wonder Joe Gormley said that the plans were 'not intended as a union grab'. As was argued by Nottingham's notorious right-wing president, Len Clarke, to involve miners at pit level in running the mines will be 'more conducive ... to good relations and improvements in coal output'.

The reaction of the Communist Party leaders in the pits has been just as bad. Bemoaning the out-of-date character of the present consultative committees, Jimmy Miller, CP member and secretary of Kellingly Colliery, Yorkshire's newest pit, proclaims that the 'proposed management committees are the answer'.

Some of the blame for this unholy alliance, stretching from the extreme right of the NUM to the CP, must rest with Arthur Scargill and his supporters. When Tony Benn, then Industry Minister, told the NUM to work out these plans at last year's annual conference, Scargill's reaction was simply to raise the cry of a return to 'free collective bargaining'.

At last week's annual conference of the Yorkshire Area NUM he restated the Area's aims as higher wages...and the overthrow of capitalism! The trouble is what goes in the middle, what provides the transition.

Veto

So long as the left fails to develop schemes for workers control that provide the bridge between the two, the right will step in with radical-sounding schemes which simply tie miners' futures to the productivity drives of the NCB. The first step to workers control is the right of the miners alone to veto management decisions - not collaborate in them.

Union militants should reject the latest schemes and begin a fight inside the NUM to commit it to a struggle for workers control. Members of the Communist Party in particular should insist that their leaders break from this class-collaborationist alliance with Clarke, Gormley and the NCB.

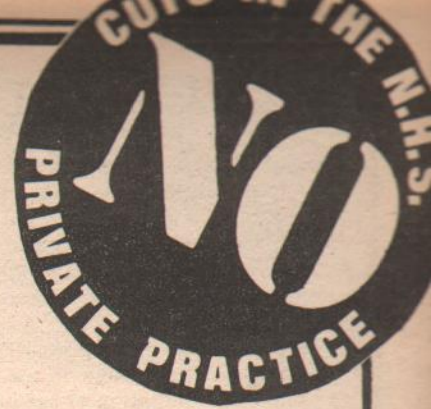
... and a mistake by *Red Weekly*

Although we agree that it is important for *Red Weekly* to analyse and criticise the position of the International Socialists on Rule 14, we also think it is important that such criticism is based on facts. On Westminster Trades Council all the revolutionary delegates strongly opposed Rule 14 both times it was proposed by the Communist Party.

Although some IS and Workers Revolutionary Party delegates did vote for Rule 14, this was only because they

were mandated by their branches and they did so reluctantly. *Red Weekly* must obviously criticise the IS when they do not take seriously opposition to Rule 14, but must also support the position IS delegates on Westminster Trades Council took and urge IS delegates on other trades councils to likewise fight the pernicious Rule 14.

Fighting the cuts - the way forward



Against all the cuts in the NHS and for the abolition of private practice — that is the theme of this weekend's demonstration organised by the National Co-ordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS (NCC).

The NCC demonstration is part of the growing opposition in the grass roots of the workers movement to the Tory policies of the Labour Government. Our problem is how to bring these new angry forces into effective action. Unemployment, the fraud of the 3 per cent increase and the tax 'concession' gimmick, and the cuts in the public sector all go together.

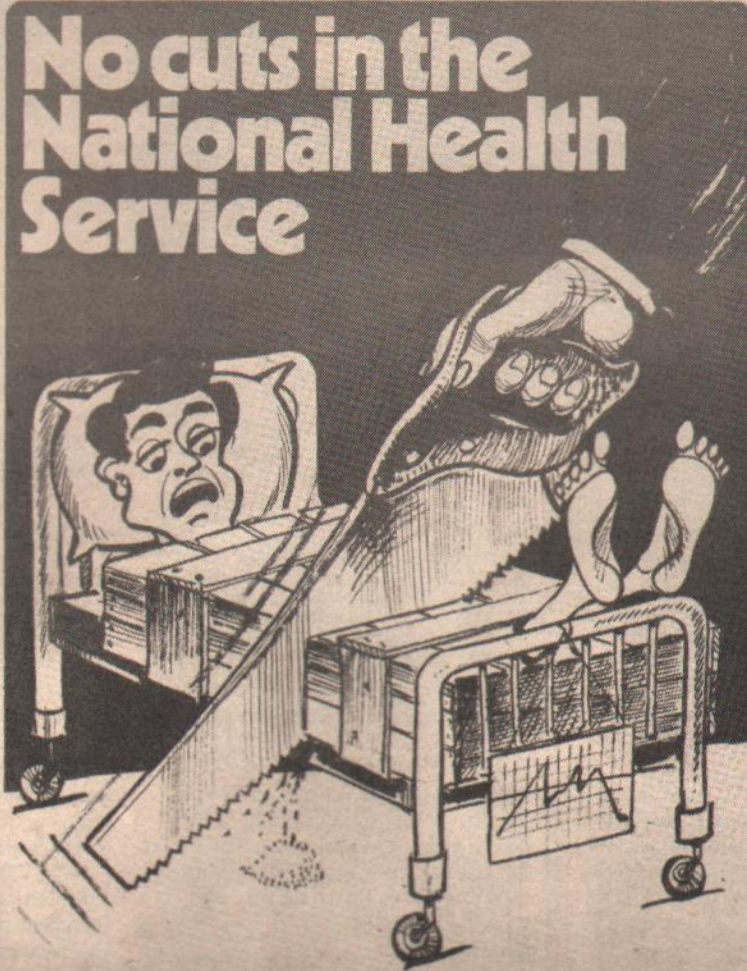
The bosses won't produce because profits are not high enough — so they throw people out of work. To boost profits Labour pumps in money to industry — borrowed from the finance houses, who then demand repayment out of the social services which have been fought for by decades of struggle. The incomes policy aims to keep those profits healthy by depressing living standards — six per cent knocked off since last year.

HAS TO BE WON

The fight against this offensive is just beginning, and it has to be won. Defeat would point the road back to the Thirties, with worsening living standards, the demoralisation of permanent unemployment of millions, and further cuts in welfare provision.

This fight can't be won by relying on the 'left' MPs and those trade union leaders who 'regretfully' not only support wage restraint and cuts in public expenditure, but actually sit in with the Labour Government concocting these schemes. Nor are protest and pressure politics effective. It is not enough to do as the left MPs did on the cuts, abstaining in the vote on Healey's proposals but then standing on the sidelines, failing to organise any real resistance.

Mass action against the Government's austerity broadside has been slow and hesitant to date. But organisation is growing. The massive turnout of 3,041 delegates to the Assembly on Unemployment last month, which voted for national action on 26 May, is the most important development. There are others. Twenty thousand thronged the streets of London in February to protest against the education cuts. 5 March saw the city of Dundee brought to a standstill as thousands of workers streamed out of the factories striking in protest against cuts.



National Co-ordinating Committee against cuts in the N.H.S.

One more signpost is the 25 April demonstration. Behind the banners of the NCC there will be dockers, printworkers, building workers, representatives from the car industry, transport, Labour Party, the women's movement and of course health workers.

From the start the NCC has correctly tried to build a movement against the health cuts involving every section of the labour movement. Workers in the health sector are too weak to roll back the cuts single-handed. The National Health Service is the concern of the whole working class. This cannot be done without opposing the policies of this Government, policies which all tie in together.

Of course opposition by itself is necessary, but it is not enough — alternative policies

have to be fought for. This means demands which show that there is another road from that of the cuts; and forms of organisation which can mobilise people for action.

The veil of secrecy which drapes the plans and financing of the NHS have to be exposed through the demand of opening the books to the inspection of the entire trade union movement. This information has to be got to everyone concerned with the future of the health service, through a workers' enquiry.

Such information should be used to draw up a programme of action which should insist that the public sector be made 'inflation-proof' through a sliding scale of social expenditure. Such a programme must not only defend the existing provision in the health

services, but also show how the working class can go forward to extend these services and bring them under its own control.

All over Britain action committees in towns and cities have mushroomed to fight the various cuts. National bodies like the NCC and the Labour Party Committee against the Housing Cuts were formed to fight around particular issues. In the weeks leading up to the demonstration NCC teams have been touring hospitals, building sites, and workplaces to agitate and get support.

Similar actions are going forward on health, education, housing, pensions, and so on. A further step must be collaboration and coordination between these bodies. The decision of the NCC to support the 26 May Day of Action is an excellent example of how that collaboration can be put into practice. It also highlights the demand for a programme of public works to meet social need and employ the jobless.

The calling of local and national meetings of all those fighting the cuts to discuss joint activity can begin from the starting point of the Day of Action. The task involved is big. It means involving the widest possible forces from the factories, the sites, the docks, the unions and the Labour Party to link up with all the various struggles on cuts and unemployment.

DIRECT ACTION

It was the strength and power of the workers movement that rolled back the Industrial Relations Act. It was the miners' direct action which defeated Heath's incomes policy and eventually brought his Government crashing down. To defeat the aims of the ruling class and their agents in the 'new' Callaghan leadership will require similar action.

Organisations like the NCC have to set themselves the aim of mobilising industrial action against the anti-working class policies of this Government. The NCC also has to try to win support for every attempt to defend any section of the social services under attack.

The campaign for a recall TUC to break with the Government's policies is central to that general offensive — to rid the workers movement of last year's decisions to support the Government's economic strategy and to prepare a struggle against those policies. The fight to build the NCC on the basis of a real united working class resistance to the run-down of the NHS is part of the fight against the cuts as a whole.

NUPE calls for campaign in Labour Party

The National Union of Public Employees, with 200,000 members in the NHS, is starting a campaign against the Government's backsliding on private practice.

When the independent action taken by health workers against private practice began to ebb, Mrs Castle was able to start dealing with the consultants behind the workers' backs. But Castle's acceptance of the Goodman proposals, which mean keeping a large slice of private practice inside the NHS, has been met by a demand from NUPE that the Government return to its original intention of fixing a date for the complete removal of all pay beds from the NHS.

Alan Fisher, NUPE's general secretary, has written to more than 600 Constituency Labour Parties asking them to raise the subject with their management committees. Fisher describes it as 'a matter of urgency', and says that the union is 'anxious that all sections of the labour

movement should demonstrate their determination that the policy of the Party, agreed at the 1975 Annual Conference, should be implemented by the Government.'

Clearly every Labour Party should support Fisher's demand and a flood of resolutions should deluge the National Executive of the Labour Party. If the NUPE leaders really intend to fight on this issue there are a number of obvious steps they can take.

To start with they should immediately instruct their members to place an embargo on all facilities being offered to private patients inside the NHS. They should also approach other unions in the health service, such as COHSE, ASTMS, NALGO, the TGWU and GMWU, calling for joint actions and embargoes by all the health unions against private patients.

Such action would not only win real support amongst the rank and file of

the health unions but it would stimulate support for Fisher's campaign inside the Labour Party — which could then be asked for support action at both local and national level.

Fisher's protest and his appeal for support are a good starting point, but more has to be done. The task is to organise for action against the policies of the right-wing Labour leaders. If no action is taken, the consultants will get their way and private practice will stay inside the NHS as well as flourishing outside it.

The Labour Government will not retreat on its sell-out to the consultants unless it is forced to do so by action in the hospitals, combined with support from other sections of the working class. Militants in the health service and organisations like the NCC must pull out all the stops to make sure such action takes place.

Janet Maguire



Recent picket against private practice at Hammersmith Hospital

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

1 What policies does the IMG put forward to defend the National Health Service?

The IMG calls for an immediate cash injection of £1,000 million; for a sliding scale of social expenditure; for the opening of the books; for the immediate banning of all private practice, inside and outside the NHS; for a workers' enquiry; for abortion on demand, freely available on the NHS; and the nationalisation of the drugs industry under workers control.

These demands were adopted at the conference held in London last October organised by the Medical Committee Against Private Practice. A number of these demands were also contained in the resolution carried at the 1975 Labour Party Conference — a resolution moved by NUPE. Unions like ASTMS and NALGO have also gone on record for many of these proposals.

The IMG says that we should organise all those forces in the labour movement who want to fight the cuts inside the health service. The support that the MCAPP conference got (there were 395 elected delegates present) and the wide sponsorship for this weekend's demonstration shows that there is potentially a big movement that can be brought into action against the Labour Government's cuts. Over three million votes were cast at the Labour Party Conference against the Government's policies, and those delegates supported most of the demands outlined above.

2 Why do you think these demands are so important?

AN IMMEDIATE CASH INJECTION OF £1,000 MILLION is urgently needed to stop the appalling decline that is taking place inside the NHS, which now stands on the brink of complete collapse. It is vital that new hospitals are built, new equipment is bought, that far more staff are recruited and that all staff's wages and conditions are drastically improved.

If money is not put into the NHS now then the health service will continue to deteriorate and the necessary improvements will be ruled out.

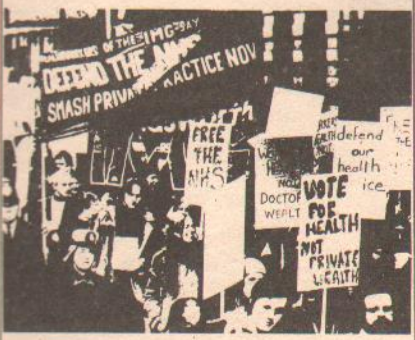
A SLIDING SCALE OF SOCIAL EXPENDITURE is needed on top of this to compensate for the effects of inflation. Next year total NHS spending is budgeted to increase by 10 per cent. But with inflation running at around 15-20 per cent this will in fact mean another big cut in the real income of the health service.

In real terms capital spending on new hospitals and facilities for the NHS was cut by 28 per cent between 1972 and 1977. Only by guaranteeing the NHS against inflation — by putting extra money into the NHS to compensate for every penny rise in the cost of running the service — will it be possible to maintain the necessary standards.

To defend the standard of treatment given now would furthermore require not just protection against rising prices but increases in expenditure to keep pace with the rising demands for treatment. A more genuinely comprehensive health service would further increase demands for treatment, and money has to be

CRISIS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION



'STRUGGLE FOR HEALTH' PAMPHLET No. 4
IMG PUBLICATIONS 15p

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)



MCAPP Conference votes for sliding scale; open the books; workers enquiry

available to meet that demand if health standards and health care are really to be improved.

OPENING OF THE BOOKS is also vital. Whilst it is true that the books of the NHS are allegedly open and available for inspection, what we mean by this demand is the ending of all secret plans and negotiations behind the backs of the working class between the Government and the hospital administrations, etc.

The National Coordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS (NCC) have uncovered a number of documents revealing secret Government plans for massive hospital closures. All this information should be made available by right to health workers and the rest of the working class, because they are the people affected by these plans.

This means that the state and the medical profession would have to submit any plans to the workers movement before they were allowed to go ahead with them. Plans for centralisation into larger hospitals, the closure of smaller hospitals, the building of community health centres, and budgets for new equipment and staff would all have to go before elected committees of the workforce, who would have an absolute right of veto over any aspect of any plan.

Only by having access to all information and only by having the right to decide in what way resources shall be used can the democratic rights of the working class be guaranteed. Unless they exercise their control over the health service the health care of working people will be subordinated to the needs of private industry and its custodian, the capitalist state.

THE BANNING OF ALL PRIVATE PRACTICE, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE NHS is necessary to stop the present drain on the resources of the NHS. Inside the health service it uses NHS equipment and staff. Outside the NHS it attracts staff and money away from an already depleted health service.

All private health care facilities outside the NHS must be taken over and brought into the NHS. No compensation must be paid. Because the NHS is so inadequate a growing number of working people are already putting their money into private health schemes. This is simply another way in which the Government shifts the burden of the capitalist crisis onto the individual, and leads in the direction of a two-tier health service.

As long as people have the right to 'buy' better medical care and the 'right' to jump the queue it is not possible to develop a genuinely socialist health service. A private sector justifies the sordid practice of exploiting the social needs of people for capitalist gain, because medical care is hawked around like any other capitalist commodity and sold to the highest bidder.

A WORKERS' ENQUIRY can focus the attention of the whole working class on the need to defend and extend the health service. The NHS is short of funds. It does not have enough staff, equipment and facilities. At the same time it is coming under attack from a Labour Government which intends to run it down even further in order to pay for the capitalist crisis.

This constitutes a massive attack on the working class. The lives and health of all workers are in danger.

The workers movement cannot afford to leave the future of the NHS to some Royal Commission set up by the capitalist state. The job of the Royal Commission is to justify the present cuts and produce reasons for making even more. The labour movement has to set up its own enquiry in opposition to the Royal Commission.

An enquiry is needed, based on the whole trade union and labour movement, which will set itself the task of determining the health needs of the working class. This means an enquiry which will determine how to begin building new hospitals, training more staff and providing more equipment. It will also have to discuss where the funds will come from to make such a programme of expansion possible.

Evidence for such an enquiry must be collected from all the organisations of the working class. Really to improve the NHS it will also be necessary to have more out-patient abortion facilities, more money must be devoted to research into diseases and ailments which specifically effect women — and of course there is a need for more nursery facilities for both patients and staff. In order to ensure that these needs are met, such

A SOCIALIST ANSWER TO THE NHS CRISIS

The IMG health workers' programme on how to fight to

an enquiry must involve organisations from the women's movement.

A workers' enquiry would have to enlist the support and collaboration of socialist health workers. Such people can play an essential role in preparing a plan in consultation with other trade union members that challenges the capitalist basis of the medical care that is now practised in the NHS. They can also help to prepare and work for a real alternative to the present domination and monopoly of knowledge exercised by the medical profession.

At local level the threat of any cuts should be met not only with resistance by the workers movement but also with the setting up of local workers' enquiries. These can be used to demonstrate to trade unionists and the whole of the community what the real priorities are.

Such enquiries can give clear and precise examples of how resources are drained away because local authorities are paying exorbitant interest rates on loans, which depletes the budgets of the essential social services. Enquiries can also bring right to the fore the decisive question — who shall decide, the capitalist state or the working class.

3 When committees are set up to fight the cuts, does the IMG insist that they be set up on the

basis of the above demands?

No. We say that the basis of all committees should be an agreed opposition to all the cuts in the NHS. It would be sectarian and divisive to tell some trade union militant who wants to fight against the closure of a hospital that they cannot join because they do not agree with all our demands. The task is to mobilise the biggest possible forces in the workers movement to resist and fight back against every attempt of the Labour Government to attack the NHS.

However, the IMG does insist that a successful fight against the cuts means taking up these demands. Such demands offer the only practical way to fight attacks on the NHS. In any committee or organisation that is set up to fight the cuts, we will fight for the adoption of this programme and try to win people over to fight for these demands.

4 You mentioned the Labour Party Conference resolution earlier. Surely you realise that the Labour Government has no intention of implementing it? The carrying of such a resolution is only the first step. Clearly it would be crazy to sit back and expect the Labour Cabinet to put it into practice when they are busy sabotaging



Believe it or not, this is the same hospital: de luxe breakfast service for the rich, decline and disintegration in the public ward

Photos: Chris Davies (Report)



SPECIALIST OVER TO CRISIS

Commission puts forward its proposals to defend and extend the NHS.



Mass action is the only effective way to fight the cuts

National Health

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NO to the cuts

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and running down an already depleted NHS.

This resolution has to be fought for by mass working class action. That is why the IMG supports organisations like the NCC, which has been able to win support from some important sections of the labour movement.

The NCC is the first step towards building a bigger and more genuine united front in the working class

movement which can give real backbone to the struggle to defend the NHS. During the nurses' dispute in 1974 it was the strike action by groups like the Welsh miners and the Manchester dockers which forced the Government to make a settlement in excess of what they really wanted to give.

It was the action of health workers that stopped cuts in many hospitals. It was the bans put on private practice by workers in hospitals like Charing Cross that forced Mrs Castle to speed up the phasing out of private practice. As soon as that struggle subsided and the embargoes were dropped, Castle felt confident enough to accept the Goodman proposals — which mean the continuation of private practice in many areas of the NHS and its rapid extension outside.

No confidence must be placed in the words of MPs or so-called leaders. They can only be judged on what they do. At national and local level the need is to organise every working class organisation and every militant who wants to fight this Government's anti-working class policies.

This means a serious struggle to build mass demonstrations, organise mass pickets and working towards national and local strike action against the Government's cuts. It also means mobilising all these forces to remove every Labour MP and every Labour Councillor who does not vote against cuts in public expenditure.

That fight also has to be taken into the trade unions. If we are opposed to the cuts, if we are in favour of implementing the Labour Party Conference resolution, then we have to be in favour of removing from their official positions inside the Labour Party and the trade unions all those leaders who support Labour's cuts.

5 Where does the money come from to pay for your programme?

The first job is to get our priorities right. British capitalism has made one and a half million people unemployed and has caused a drastic fall in living standards. At the same time the 'welfare state' is falling apart. The Labour Government's plans will make things even worse.

Public spending is going to be cut by £3,000 million, whilst private industry is getting a subsidy of £429 million. This is supposed to encourage the financiers to invest their money in British industry. But even in the halcyon days of 1972, when £1,500 million was invested in industry, £1,472m. of that went abroad where profits were bigger. We say that the first priority is to stop sub-

sidising the bankrupt capitalist system and turn the resources towards protecting the health, education and social welfare of the working class.

Take council spending. 'Debt charges' accounted during 1975 for something like 40 per cent of gross council expenditure. The interest paid nationally in 1974 on loans for social spending totalled £750 million. In April 1975 the Treasury admitted that 10p in the pound of all Government spending went on paying interest on the public debt.

In Islington, London, the Borough Council paid out £16½ million last year in debt charges and over £15 million of that was in the form of interest. The IMG says: stop all repayments to the money-lenders and use the money that is saved to finance the NHS and the other social services. Either the NHS and the rest of the social services collapse — with all the catastrophic consequences for the working class that that means — or we refuse to line the pockets of the money-lenders.

The capitalist recession has meant that building materials are lying around unused. There are 748 million bricks stockpiled, and the brick-making firms are working to only 30 per cent of their capacity. These materials should be requisitioned and put to use in the construction of hospitals, schools and homes. Not only would this free idle materials, it would also provide jobs for thousands of workers.

Capitalist arms expenditure should be abolished and the money and labour used in the armaments industry turned towards manufacturing socially useful and necessary goods. During 1975 military expenditure drained the economy by almost £5,000 million, and it is still climbing. In 1975 it cost £4,976, which is more than the total expenditure on the NHS of £4,887 million.

Another way to raise finance for developing socially useful and necessary services and production is to abolish compensation payments to the owners and shareholders of the nationalised industries. These payments, swelled by interest charges, are crippling and a permanent burden.

The drug industry is a parasite on the NHS. The profit rates of the drug companies easily outstrip the profits of any other manufacturing industries. Roche has knocked up

profit rates as high as 2,000 per cent on its products. The wastefulness of the capitalist drug industry is shown by the fact that 95 per cent of all new drug products are nothing more than copies — with suitable and cynical adaptations to dodge the patent laws — of current medicines.

The drug firms justify their high profits by claiming that the money is needed to finance their research programmes. But not more than 10 to 20 per cent of the money allocated for research and development goes towards research into useful medicine. The other 80 to 90 per cent is spent on researching into chemical changes for already existing drugs and the development of more or less useless drugs like cosmetics.

Research, medical needs and social responsibility are subordinated to the search for profit, which leads to anarchy, massive waste, inflated prices — in all a gross failure to meet the real health needs of the working class.

The nationalisation of the drug

industry, under the control of the workers, is therefore vital if we are to develop a genuinely comprehensive health service. Furthermore it is essential to stop the drug monopolies bleeding the NHS financially.

The banks and the finance companies are the key linchpins in any economy. In 1971 industry borrowed £6.41 billion of which £732 million came from the banks. By 1973 bank borrowing represented £4.5 billion out of a total of £13.98 billion borrowed. In two years industries' loans from the banks jumped from 12 per cent to 32 per cent — a clear indication of the growing power and control of the banks over investment.

The finance companies wield tremendous power over industrial investment. Over 50 per cent of shares in this country are in the hands of the insurance companies, pension funds and other finance institutions. Clearly the nationalisation of this sector of the economy is vital if investment is to be really planned to meet social need instead of private gain.

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PHOTO: MIKE SHAW (IFL)

Equal Pay Act - a lie exposed

The inadequacies of the Equal Pay Act have already been exposed in several recent disputes - including a strike by women workers at the GEC factory on the Treforest Trading Estate at Pontypridd in Wales.

The GEC women were demanding that they be paid the minimum semi-skilled man's wage, requiring an increase of £3.40. Eventually, after six weeks on strike, they were forced to accept £2.50. Meanwhile, however, the Women's Rights Committee for Wales had written to Employment Minister Michael Foot about the dispute.

The Women's Rights Committee reminded Mr Foot that they had expressed their disquiet to him about loopholes in the Equal Pay Act at a conference held

by Rhymney Valley District Council in October 1975. He had assured them then that he would personally act upon information received about women workers not receiving equal pay. So would he issue a statement of support and give other positive help to the GEC women?

Five weeks later, on 1 April, the Women's Rights Committee finally got a reply - not from Mr Foot, but from some low-level bureaucrat. 'To help', he wrote, 'I am enclosing a copy of a Guide to the Equal Pay Act'!

He kindly went on: 'I understand that the women at the GEC factory were not doing the same or broadly similar work as a man in the factory nor had their work been rated as equivalent

to a man's so that this provision of the Act did not apply....The Act does not require job evaluation.'

And while the Act also provides for the removal of discrimination against women in the provisions of collective agreements and employers' pay structures, unfortunately 'I am advised that the pay structure at the GEC factory did not discriminate against women in a way that could be referred....for amendment under the Act'.

In other words, the gaps left by the Act are wide enough for the employers to drive a cart and horses through, and Mr Foot and the Department of Employment are not prepared to do anything about it.



Struggle can succeed where the Act fails. After three months on strike, supported by their male colleagues and laid-off shop floor workers, women staff workers at Cockburn Valves near Glasgow won increases of between £5 and £8.30 as management caved in completely.

The fight for women's

rights

Celia Pugh reports on the steps taken to unite the struggle at the recent Working Women's Charter conference

The first ever conference of the Working Women's Charter Campaign on 10-11 April attracted 270 delegates and a further 100 visitors and observers. The delegates came from every part of the country - from 45 trade union branches (representing 15 different unions), nine trades councils, nine Labour Party and LPYS branches and 17 Charter groups.

The weekend marked the first crucial steps towards uniting all the experiences of fighting for the Charter on a national scale. Particularly notable was the stress laid by most speakers on the need to link the fight for women's rights embodied in the Charter into the struggles against Labour's cuts in public spending, jobs, and wages.

BUDGET

A delegate from South London explained that the latest Budget proposals, for instance, will set back women's fight for financial independence even further. Married women make up a quarter of the workforce, on an average wage of £25 a week. For tax purposes their income becomes their husbands'. Healey's proposals would simply reinforce women's dependence on their husbands by denying them tax concessions in their own right - and anyway, what use is 3 per cent of peanuts when inflation is running at 15-20 per cent?

Healey's savage cuts in public expenditure will further strengthen the noose of family responsibilities as care of the sick, elderly and children are thrust back onto the family; as women's rights to abortion are whittled away; and as women's jobs come under the chopper.

A visitor from Ireland to the conference explained how the Government of the 26 Counties is threatening further unemployment if women pursue the fight for

equal pay. A Coventry delegate reported how local authority canteen workers came up against the same blackmailing tactics over the £6 limit - only to find their jobs in the firing line when the Council started to impose the cutbacks in spending.

The Charter conference resolved to meet these assaults on women's rights by stepping up resistance to Government policies; by demanding that the trade unions and Labour leaders break with these policies and throw their weight behind this movement; and by developing alternative solutions based on working class need rather than profit.

In addition to calling for an immediate programme of socially useful public works, nationalisation under workers control of companies declaring redundancies, and the opening of the books to lay the basis for a fight for a workers solution, the conference outlined the necessary steps to organise for these demands.

DEFEND JOBS

It pledged itself to struggle for the defence of women's jobs and the social services by supporting and gaining representation on action committees and other labour movement bodies fighting the attacks on working class living standards. In particular, the conference decided to strengthen the resistance to nursery cutbacks and abortion rights, and to support the 25 April demonstration against the NHS cuts and private practice.

The conference also agreed to work for representation on action committees against unemployment set up from the 27 March National Assembly; and to build contingents for demonstrations on the 26 May Day of Action demanding the right of women to work and calling on the trade union leaders to break with the Government's policies restricting women's rights.

The organisation of a conference later this year on 'Women, the Cuts and Unemployment' was also agreed, to ensure that women's needs are

not dismissed as 'luxuries' but are taken up as an integral part of an undivided movement.

While the conference recognised that the main focus of struggle on women's rights must be the demands of the Working Women's Charter - and its defence against the hammer blows of Government policy - it also acknowledged that the Sex Discrimination and Equal Pay Acts offer a springboard for this activity. The limited gains represented by these Acts must be seized upon - the mass of the working class will only be drawn to the Working Women's Charter by experiencing in struggle the limitations of Labour's solutions.

MONITOR

The conference agreed to set up local investigatory committees based on trade union and Labour Party branches as well as women's organisations, to monitor the implementation and sabotage of the legislation and to prepare a fight around it. It was decided to hold a national mass rally in December to draw together these experiences and project the Working Women's Charter.

The final afternoon of the conference was devoted to discussing the adequacy of the Charter demands. The conference agreed that it should be seen as 'a banner for women's rights to rally behind it the widest forces in this fight', rather than as a watertight programme covering every aspect of women's oppression.

While the existing Charter provides a firm foundation for this united fight, delegates felt that recent attacks on women's rights, together with Labour's legislation, highlighted important omissions in the Charter. The conference therefore agreed to propose amendments recognising the needs of the thousands of women threatened by unemployment; part-time women workers with inadequate benefits and protection; and lesbian women open to discrimination and victimisation.

The passing of the Equal Pay Act has exposed a major problem

facing women workers: low pay. After intense debate, the conference agreed that the existing demand for a trade union negotiated national minimum wage should be extended to ensure that these wages are protected by automatic increases based on a working class cost of living index. The conference also agreed to tighten up the demands for childcare provisions and pregnancy leave, so that the barriers to equality exposed in recent *Woman's Own* and Labour Research Department studies can be overcome.

The most controversial item at the conference was the question of the procedure for amending the Charter. After a thoroughgoing debate, conference agreed with delegates from the IMG, the Coventry Charter group, the Hackney nursery group and the Civil and Public Services Association that there should be a period of discussion and consultation with all organisations who have endorsed the Charter before amendments are finally written into it.

Many trade unions, Labour Party branches and trades councils are not affiliated to the Charter Campaign itself, and were therefore not represented at the conference. To amend the Charter without their participation would cut across the possible unity around the Charter between them and the Campaign.

A working party was set up to organise a campaign for the amendments proposed by the conference. Already delegates like Campbell Christie of the CPSA (who moved support for the Charter at last year's TUC) have agreed to take this discussion into their organisations.

The CPSA delegates also proposed the setting up of a trade union advisory committee to work alongside the Campaign. This was welcomed by the conference as a real move towards strengthening the unity which is necessary to turn the tide of attacks on women's rights and make the demands of the Working Women's Charter a living reality.

CELIA PUGH



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

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CPSA delegate Len Lever—his union's proposal to set up a trade union advisory committee to work alongside the Charter Campaign was welcomed by the conference

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

PORTUGUESE ELECTIONS

THE REAL CHOICE

The Portuguese elections on Sunday take place exactly two years after the overthrow of the Caetano regime — two years in which the Portuguese working class has tasted the possibilities of workers' power through the creation of its own independent organisations like the workers and neighbourhood commissions.

Last summer the disarray of the bosses and landlords, of the bourgeois politicians and the military leaders was such that the institutions of the capitalist state itself began to tremble violently. But the abortive left-wing revolt of 25 November enabled the bourgeoisie to take temporary advantage of the situation to impose a defeat on the independent soldiers movement, to regroup its forces and to put the workers on the defensive.

The Portuguese ruling class has already had some success with this project. The suspension of the collective labour contracts, the increasing professionalisation of the army, However, they have not as yet been able to win back the land or the factories.

The bourgeoisie hope that the results of the elections will enable them to make advances in this arena as well. The Portuguese Landowners' Confederation (CAP) and the Portuguese Confederation of Industry (CIP) have already laid their cards on the table: against the agrarian reform; against the workers' commissions; against the trade unions; for a 'free' market economy; for 'favourable' conditions for capital investment; for 'law and order'.

Fascists

Increasingly fascist bands are attacking the militants of all the workers parties. Last week they murdered Father Maximino, a member of the extreme left Popular Democratic Union. This week a new fascist paper has been published, *A Rua*. The Social Democratic Centre, the most right-wing of the bourgeois parties and the one that will make the largest gains in the elections, have been able to organise rallies and hold meetings in towns where last year they were unable to show their faces.

But the ruling class has not only itself to thank for this advance. Without the active collaboration of the reformist leaderships of the Communist and Socialist Parties, the situation of the capitalists would be altogether more difficult.

The CP and SP have joined the CDS and Popular Democrats (PPD) in signing an electoral pact and voting for a constitution which gives

the military leadership and the president (to be elected separately in June) the final decision for the next four years on matters of government policy. Both reformist parties have also called for a 'social truce' during the election campaign.

DAVE WIMHURST reports

Already the CP has used its weight to call off a national strike of construction workers against the Prime Minister's refusal to honour a wage agreement reached before 25 November. It should be added, however, that in Setubal and Beja the workers refused to follow this Stalinist directive and forged ahead with the strike. The recent national strike of nurses was

in the civil service, in the engineering industry, in the building industry, in the docks, at Timex, in the breweries, on the farms.

In spite of the policies of the reformists and the manoeuvres of the right, the workers control literally hundreds of enterprises, organising themselves in workers commissions. On the land the peasants are organised into hundreds of agricultural co-operatives. The trade unions are gaining strength. A number of neighbourhood commissions are still functioning. The workers and peasants, although on the defensive, are very definitely undefeated.

It is against this general background that the elections are taking place, with the active participation of 14 political organisations (see box), including our comrades of the Internationalist Communist League, Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International.

Candidates

The LCI is standing 330 candidates throughout the whole of Portugal, including candidates for the Portuguese workers living as immigrants in other countries. During the last elections, for the Constituent Assembly, the LCI stood candidates in only four electoral districts. This alone shows the extent to which the organisation has developed during the last year.

The LCI's programme is based on the necessity to struggle for the defence of all the gains made by the workers — the collective bargaining agreements, the increases in wages, the nationalisations, workers control and the agrarian reform. Basing itself on the struggle of the masses, the LCI has called for a democratic congress of all the trade unions and a national congress of the workers commissions as the best means possible for the workers to answer the growing offensive of the bosses.

Addressing itself to the reformist leaders of the CP and SP, the LCI demands that they break completely with the forces of the bourgeoisie and assume their responsibilities by forming a government that is responsible to the trade unions and the workers commissions.



**Manifesto
Eleitoral**

da
**Liga
Comunista
Internacionalista**

L.C.I.

also savagely denounced by both the CP and the SP.

Nor have the reformists uttered so much as a squeak of protest about the use of the police against the workers' reply — pickets and occupations — to the lock-outs imposed by the bosses. Yet the new constitution, voted for overwhelmingly by these parties, explicitly prohibits the lock-out.

But against the steps of the ruling class, against the class collaboration of the CP and SP, the workers are actively searching for the best means possible to defend their gains. Literally hundreds of strikes are taking place all over the country:

ers implicated in 11 March coup. Links with German Christian Democracy. Small but rich.

Portuguese Socialist Party (PSP). Nearly 38 per cent in last elections. Vote likely to drop this time after open attacks on workers. Internally has a left wing and a young socialist organisation — increasing tension between these and leadership. Voted for the constitution, and campaigns under the slogan 'Rebuild the Country'.

Portuguese Communist Party (PCP). Together with petty bourgeois allies of MDP (not standing this time), won 17 per cent in last elections. Prepared to form government with SP. Leadership thoroughly Stalinist, but base open to influence of revolutionary politics. Voted for constitution.

In particular it calls for an end to the infamous class collaborationist pact signed by these parties with the bourgeois parties.

Given the opportunity to speak to the masses via the national radio and television networks, the LCI denounced in its first broadcast the role of the Council of the Revolution — a role of repression that has already led to the deaths of a worker in Lisbon, a worker in Setubal and a worker in Beja at the hands of the para-military police, the GNR and the PSP. It declared that the 'democracy' advocated by the Council of the Revolution merely meant continued freedom for the bosses, and that their form of socialism amounted to open collaboration with international imperialism. For stating the truth in this manner, the LCI was warned by the Council.

After a second broadcast, in which the LCI declared its support for all those CP and SP voters demanding that their leaders break with reactionary military figures like Jaime Neves and Pires Veloso, the Council banned the LCI from making any further broadcasts on the national radio and television networks for a period of eight days. Unable to answer the accusations made by the LCI in front of the masses, the military hierarchy knows only one road — the road of repression.

The ability to speak to millions may have been temporarily denied to the Portuguese Trotskyists, but the campaign goes on — in the factories, in the commissions, among the soldiers, on the land and in the streets. And throughout Europe, wherever there are Portuguese workers. Vote LCI!

The Parties standing

Social Democratic Centre (CDS). Less than 8 per cent in last election. The most right-wing of the bourgeois parties. Aims to establish itself as the party of big capital. Many fascists in its ranks, generally organised in armed gangs. Voted against the constitution and will revoke it if it ever gets to power.

Popular Democratic Party (PPD). 26 per cent in last election. More liberal than the CDS, but also organises armed bands. Based on small capital, and counterposes European links to CDS's ties with US capital. Formed opposition under Caetano. Voted for the constitution.

Popular Monarchist Party (PPM). Insignificant — can't even decide which monarch to support.

Christian Democratic Party (PDC). Banned last time after some of its lead-

Movement for Reorganisation of the Profletarian Party (MRPP). Maoist and very right-wing. Will form alliances with bourgeois parties against 'social fascists', i.e. everybody left of SP. Uses physical intimidation against other organisations, particularly Stalinists and Trotskyists.

Portuguese Communist Party (marxist-leninist) (PCPml). Another right-wing Maoist group. Slogan: 'Each deputy is a bone in the throat of Cunhal' (CP leader)!

AOC/FDN. Electoral front for PCPml so that they can have double time on the networks. Non-stop attack on the PCP.

Popular Socialist Front (FSP). Just over 1 per cent in last elections. Small split from SP.

Left Socialist Movement (MES). 1 per cent in last elections. Centrist current that has suffered three splits in the last year.

Popular Democratic Union (UDP). 0.79 per cent in last elections. One deputy, who voted for the constitution. Largest far left group but moving to the right. Slogan: 'Against fascism and misery. For a patriotic and independent government'.

Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT). Entered agreement with LCI to run joint campaign, but then broke it and is standing in four districts. Slogan: 'Socialists and Communists break the pact. For a Socialist Government of workers deputies.'

International Communist League (LCI). 0.2 per cent in last elections. Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International.

The myth and the reality

By
GEOFF
BELL

In August 1969, when the people of Derry were engaged in a four day battle with the Royal Ulster Constabulary, a certain local Republican took to riding round the Bogside on a bicycle. When it was pointed out to him that this was rather a foolish thing to do, as the streets were littered with broken glass from exploded petrol bombs, the bicyclist waxed indignant and replied that during the Easter Rising of 1916 the Irish Citizen Army had made great use of the bicycle.

There are ways and ways of remembering 1916 — there are lessons and lessons. Maintaining the superiority of the bicycle for street fighting is not one of them, but too often Irish Republicans and British socialists remember 1916 with the same emotional romanticism of the bicyclist in Derry.

STOCK

There are two stock responses. One is the hollow religiousness of the present Irish Government, which commemorates 1916 with a pomp which denies its relevance for today — for how could it be relevant when the same Government is locking up those who carry on the tradition of the fighters of 1916?

The second response is that of the good socialist who toasts 1916 with an alcoholic romanticism but who, in the sobriety of the morning after, will say: 'Of course James Connolly was wrong to take part; he should have built the revolutionary party.'

And so 1916 becomes an event to be stored away and brought out with a flourish once a year. It is safer that way. Fortunately 1916



JAMES CONNOLLY

cannot be treated so easily. On this its 60th anniversary, British troops are still murdering Irish Republicans — or, as the eternal euphemism has it, they are 'shot while trying to escape'.

Any judgement on 1916 must start with its historical context. The Rising took place during the First World War, in which the leaders of the accommodating Irish Parliamentary Party had handed over the lives of Irish men and women to the British war machine; when the promise that Ireland would be given self-government was linked to the good behaviour of Irish nationalists during the imperialist war.

QUALIFIED

Furthermore, the Rising occurred when even these promises of self-government were being severely qualified. Already the leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party were accepting that any self-government would be accompanied by the partition of Ireland.

Such was the background from which the alliance of those who took part in 1916 was formed. On the one hand there were the romantic nationalists led by Padraic

Pearse, who wrote: 'Freedom being a spiritual necessity transcends all corporeal interests, and when freedom is being considered corporeal interests should not be spoken of.' But there was also the Irish Citizen Army led by James Connolly, who insisted that the cause of labour was the cause of Ireland.

That these two elements came together in 1916 is the Rising's greatest significance, because both before and since 1916 there has been a failure to realise the essential link between the Irish national struggle and the struggle for socialism in Ireland.

Many mechanical Marxists have criticised Connolly's support for the Rising as 'liquidationism'. But Connolly himself had no illusions about those with whom he joined. He told the men and women of the Irish Citizen Army just before they went into battle:

'In the event of victory, hold on to your rifles. Those with whom we are fighting may cease before our goal has been reached. We are out for economic and social as well as political liberty.'

Even viewed in that perspective, 1916 could be described as more of an adventure than a serious attempt to seize state power. But again the history of 1916 should be borne in mind.

BLOW

For example, the Rising suffered a serious blow when just before it took place the leader of the Irish Volunteers, Eoin MacNeill, ordered his men not to take part. So an uprising which should have broken out all over Ireland was in the event confined to Dublin. Nevertheless, even if MacNeill had supported the Rising its final outcome might well have been no different.

The Rising lasted just over a week, even the working class of Dublin failed to respond, and while a number of strategic buildings in Dublin were held for a few days the British Army had little difficulty in crushing the revolt. It was only when its leaders were executed that the Irish people rose to the memory of Connolly and Pearse and began to build a mass movement which was to take up arms again three years later during the Irish War of Independence.

By any standards 1916 was a desperate action. But the whole point of Connolly's view of developments was that such desperate tactics were needed. The fact that the leaders of the Second International had capitulated to national chauvinism in their support for the War was for Connolly a tragedy which required some attempt at salvage.

EUROPE

Thus he hoped that his actions 'may yet set the torch to a European conflagration which will not burn out until the last throne and last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war-lord'. And he was driven on by similar considerations in Ireland itself.

For Connolly the prospect of partition was unthinkable — not because of any abstract commitment to national unity, but because of the effect partition would have on the working class. He wrote: 'It would mean a carnival of reaction both north and south, would set back the wheels of progress and would destroy the oncoming unity of the Irish labour movement.'

It was such fears that led Con-

THE EASTER R



nolly to the desperate gamble of 1916; but despite the War of Independence, partition was eventually forced through — and ever since the Irish working class has remained divided.

UNFINISHED

In this sense the Irish national revolution remains as unfinished today as it was when Connolly was executed. For socialists, the tragedy of 1916 lies not so much in the executions themselves but in the fact that the death of Connolly robbed the movement of its greatest organiser and theoretician.

For Irish socialists therein lies the relevance of 1916. Connolly's insistence was on the impossibility of creating a socialist Ireland while partition remained; a recognition that any attempt to forge economic unity between the two sections of the Irish working class while Ireland itself remained divided was a stages theory to socialism with so many stages that socialism would evaporate into thin air.

LABOUR

But if Irish socialists cannot ignore the national question, nor can those who wish to see Ireland free from British imperialism say that 'labour must wait' as did the leaders of the War of Independence in 1921. While labour has waited British imperialism has remained. For British socialists, however,

such considerations are not their prime concern; it is not their task to concentrate on telling the Irish people how to complete their national revolution. The task in Britain is a lot less complicated, and is summed up in a conversation Connolly had just before the Rising.

He was asked by a friend, her mind on spiritual matters: 'Jim, do you think there will be anything on the other side?' Connolly's mind not being on thoughts of the hereafter, he misunderstood the question and replied: 'The British Labour Party? They won't lift a finger to help.'

Indeed they did not; in fact, there were cheers from the Labour benches when it was announced in the British Parliament that the leaders of 1916 had been executed. Today they are still cheering; and today equally few fingers are being lifted to support those who continue to fight British imperialism.

For the working class in this country this is a major lesson of 1916 — and a major error that remains to be corrected. A solidarity movement supporting the right of the Irish people to self-determination has still to be constructed. No matter how much we praise the comrades of 1916, no matter how many articles we write in commemoration, the task is not to mourn; the task is to organise.

Geoff Bell is the author of *The Protestants of Ulster, to be published by Pluto Press on 13 May (£2 paperback).*

Against

'Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence in any one generation of Irishmen of even a respectable minority ready to die to affirm that truth makes that Government for ever an usurpation and a crime against human progress.'

These lines represent the last testament of the Irish revolutionary socialist James Connolly, and were spoken at the secret trial held before his execution by a firing squad of British soldiers on 12 May 1916 for his involvement in the Easter Rising a few weeks earlier.

Connolly was a workers' leader, committed to the international struggle for socialism, but his socialist comrades deplored his involvement in this rebellion. Connolly himself understood that the socialists of the world would not appreciate his motives.

Only Lenin and the Bolsheviks took up the defence of Connolly and the Irish rebels. Lenin recognised the international significance of the Easter Rising, explaining that its effect would be to 'sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe'.

He declared that a blow struck against British imperialism in Ireland was 'of a hundred times greater political significance than a blow of equal weight in Asia or Africa'. And in reply to the Polish revolutionary Karl Radek, who had described the Easter Rising as a putsch, Lenin argued: 'Whoever calls such an uprising a putsch is either a hardened reactionary or a doctrinaire hopelessly

SING, 1916

7 DAYS in the 26 COUNTIES



Wholesale arrests of members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party in Dublin indicate a concerted attempt to smash this Left-Republican organisation. The brutality accompanying interrogations has sparked off a campaign against the rising tide of police brutality and in defence of civil liberties.

Seventeen members of the IRSP and six friends and relatives of members were arrested and held for varying periods between 31 March and 10 April. All were questioned about the recent robbery of the Cork-Dublin mail train, and five have been charged with conspiracy and with the armed robbery of £221,000.

IRSP leader Seamus Costello is emphatic that all those charged can prove conclusively that they were not at the scene of the crime with which they are charged: 'This is quite clearly an attempt to smash our party, to suppress our paper, and possibly to close our offices, as was done in the case of the Provisional Sinn Fein offices three years ago.'

Arrested

Costello was arrested on 5 April, held for 48 hours, rearrested within the precincts of the Bridewell Police Station, and held a further 11 hours. As in the cases of other IRSP members, Costello was moved from station to station during his period of detention; and the only way his solicitor was able to locate him was by threatening to bring an action of habeas corpus in the High Court.

Particular attention appears to have been reserved for Osgur Breatnach, editor of the *Starry Plough*, who was first arrested on 31 March, held for 48 hours, rearrested, held again for 48 hours, and rearrested again. In a habeas corpus action, a doctor stated that Breatnach was in need of hospital treatment as a result of injuries received while in police custody.

The court ordered that he be transferred to hospital until the evening of 8 April, when the court again ordered that he be released. However, as Breatnach stepped out of the court he was rearrested and charged with the train robbery.

On the evening of Friday 9 April, Mick Barrett, a friend of one of those charged with the robbery, was arrested. Barrett is a witness to the fact that the charged man was nowhere near the scene of the crime. By arresting him and attempting to implicate him, it may reasonably be presumed that the police intend to destroy his credibility as a defence witness.

At the same time, the friend at whose house Barrett was arrested was also arrested; and next day the friend's wife and 13-year old son were also arrested. None are members of the IRSP.

Beatings

On 11 April a doctor stated that Barrett and Sean Murphy, also arrested on the Friday night, had received severe beatings; and that Barrett had been beaten about the throat with a wire brush. The same day another defence witness in Limerick was arrested.

Of those arrested, twelve were beaten during interrogation — some very seriously. The cases of members who were beaten are being taken up by the Association for Legal Justice (ALJ), a group of lawyers in defence of civil liberties. It has announced that it is providing funds in order to take up the cases of the IRSP members. One member, Anthony Walsh, explained the serious-

ness with which they view the situation:

'Increasingly over the last two months the Special Branch appear to have received carte blanche from the Government to do as they like. What is particularly sinister is that they have taken to arresting material witnesses. Obviously this kind of intimidation may make witnesses unwilling to come forward.

'We also have clear evidence of brutality on the basis of statements; and there is ample precedent to suggest that if a person is brutalised then their detention may become illegal.'

The IRSP arrests are merely the latest stage in a build-up of the repression which has involved all the parties in the Dail (Parliament).

During a visit of European jurists, the previous Minister for Justice, Desmond O'Malley, first denied that there were any political prisoners in Irish prisons, then stated that political prisoners — that is, Republicans — were 'animals' and should be treated as such. The present Minister for Justice, Mr Cooney, has said that in his view prisoners

have no rights; he also, in a speech at University College Dublin, stated his intention to smash 'street politics'.

Anthony Walsh considers that the IRSP affair represents an extension of the already-stated denials of rights to include all political opponents of the consensus represented in the Dail. He views the fact that the Labour Party has 'sold its soul' by its participation in the Coalition Government as particularly unfortunate, since the Labour Party is one of the elements which should be taking part in the defence of civil liberties rather than in their denial.

Weakness

In the context of the weakness of civil rights forces in the Republic, international pressure gains added importance. Says Walsh: 'We particularly want to get across to trade unionists, lawyers and others in Europe that what is happening in Ireland is a microcosm of the kind of developments that could occur in the rest of Europe.'

We would ask readers, trade union branches, student unions etc. to send telegrams protesting at the police brutality and intimidation in the case of the IRSP members to the Irish Embassy, 17 Grosvenor Place, London S.W.1. Copies of such protests and details of pickets, petitions, meetings, etc. should be sent to the ALJ, 11 South Frederick Street, Dublin 2, Ireland.

STEVE MacDONOGH



Starry Plough editor Osgur Breatnach is rearrested on leaving court

TIMOR MEETINGS

FRETILIN, the Front for National Liberation in East Timor, has hit back hard against the Indonesian troops since their full-scale invasion last December. Latest news is that for the first time, fighting against the troops has started in Dili, the capital. An army convoy was ambushed, a tank destroyed and a large amount of weaponry and electronic equipment captured.

The 30,000 troops, the warships, napalm and chemical defoliants and planes which the Indonesian regime is using against the people of East Timor have not been able to crush the liberation movement. FRETILIN has re-established radio broadcasting and is now in control of 80 per cent of the country.

In Australia, support for FRETILIN is very strong. The ACTU (Australian TUC) has passed a motion condemning

the invasion, and the waterside workers are blacking trade with Indonesia. On 18 March international protests took place throughout Australia and Europe, including a picket on the Indonesian Embassy in London.

The British Campaign for an Independent East Timor is holding a public meeting in London on Friday 23 April at 7.30pm at Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, London N.1. There will be a slide-show on East Timor and a film on Indonesian prisoners, plus speakers from BCIET and an MP. On both Friday and Saturday, 23/24 April there will be an exhibition and film-show beginning at 10am showing in depth the situation in East Timor, the policies of FRETILIN and the nature of the Indonesian regime at Artists for Democracy, 143 Whitfield St, London W.1.

-WHAT'S ON-

MAY DAY Folk Song Concert, 1 May, 7.30pm at the Bentley Hotel (The Drum), Bentley, nr Doncaster. Admission 35p.

BENEFIT SOCIAL for Working Women's Charter, Sat 24 April, 8pm at the Old Fire Station, 84 Mayton St, London N7. Everyone welcome. 60p.

CRITIQUE SEMINAR series: Mike McKenna on 'The Necessity of Hegel'. Tues 27 April, 7.30pm, in Room S-418, St Clements Building, London School of Economics, Houghton St.

ANGOLA WORKSHOP, Sat 8 May, 10.30-5.30 in Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2. Send 50p for registration and papers to: Angola Solidarity Committee, c/o 30 Romilly Road, London N4.

GREATER MANCHESTER Troops Out Movement forum: 'The role of the Army in Ireland'. Tues 27 April, 7.30pm, the Ducie Arms, Great Ducie St (Victoria).

'CHILE 1973': Benefit performance by Teatro Popular Chileno, a group of exiled actors and drama students, to get the company going. Fri 23 April, 8pm, at The Young Vic, The Cut, SE1. Tickets 80p.

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DEFEND THE RIGHT To Work badges—17p including postage from: Jo-Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1. Bulk rates on enquiry (01-278 9526).

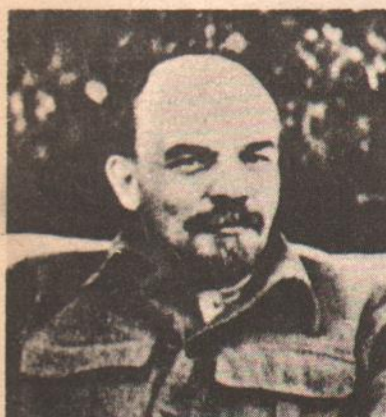
GLASGOW Socialist Forums—every Thursday in the Iona Community Centre, 7.30pm.

CRITIQUE CONFERENCE: 30 April/1 May, Kings College, Cambridge. 'The Future Socialist Society': Friday—Trotsky and Counter-revolution, M. Cox and D. Law (7.00); Saturday—The Transitional State, S. Meikle (10.30); Social Planning and Self-Management, C. Goodey (2.00); Central Planning and the Problem of Prices, G. Smith (4.30). Social in evening. Sleeping bag accommodation—please register needs in advance with John Barber, Kings College, Cambridge. Registration: £1 for Critique subscribers, £1.25 non-subscribers.

'THE NEW TECHNOLOGY and the Fight for Jobs in the Print', meeting organised by Committee against Print Redundancies, Thurs 22 April, 7.30pm in Freeman's Arms, Long Acre (Holborn tube). Speakers on the British and American situations plus two print-workers from the occupied IMRO works in Rouen, France.



the stream



incapable of picturing a social revolution as a living thing.'

Lenin continued: 'The misfortune of the Irish lies in their having revolted prematurely when the European revolt of the proletariat has not yet ripened.'

Sixty years on, Ireland is still under the heel of British imperialism. In the North, the British Army carries on a campaign of repression against the nationalist working class. In the 26 Counties, the servile Coalition Government enthusiastically throws Republicans into prison and makes every effort to block solidarity with the struggle in the Northern ghettos.

Just as Connolly in his time was branded as a criminal by British imperialism and the Irish capitalists, so today these same people attempt to brand the resistance fighters and isolate them from

the mass of the population. But the thousands of workers who are taking to the streets this week in marches commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Easter Rising are a clear expression of the will of the Irish working class to expel British imperialism once and for all.

As in 1916, the resistance is characterised by numerous weaknesses and errors. But after seven years of struggle and questioning, there are signs that new layers of militants are emerging who recognise the importance of providing a clear socialist perspective for the national revolution in Ireland.

For the first time in Dublin and Belfast this Easter, there have been united commemorations organised by the revolutionary left along the theme of '1916 — what lessons for the working class?'

The Movement for a Socialist Republic (formerly RMG), Irish section of the Fourth International, is fully involved in these activities and is committed to developing the broadest unity of the revolutionary left and the anti-imperialist movement as a whole.

The challenge that faces Irish socialists today faces not them alone but internationalists everywhere. In the stance adopted by Lenin to the 1916 Rising is a clear example of genuine proletarian solidarity that must be developed and followed by class conscious workers everywhere to strengthen the struggle in Ireland today.

JOHN MAGEE

RED WEEKLY

THE HORROR OF SPAIN'S JAILS

The campaign to free Spanish militant Sabino Arana, currently in the Carabanchel Prison hospital awaiting an operation under the auspices of the fascist prison authorities, goes on throughout Spain and Europe. The following letter was smuggled out of the Puerto Santa Maria prison - Spain's toughest institution for political prisoners - where Sabino Arana was being held before his hospitalisation.

At the end of last year Arana was transferred from Segovia to Puerto Santa Maria with eleven comrades. This transfer was to punish us for having tried to regain our freedom in the only way possible under the dictatorship - by escaping.

In Puerto Santa Maria he spent a month in a punishment cell, and it was during this time that the symptoms of his disease [tuberculosis] appeared again. After a hunger strike and ten days without leaving one's cell, no-one takes to the exercise yard with a brisk step, but Sabino could scarcely walk at all.

He moved slowly and immediately became tired. He had to sit on the ground until he could prop himself up against the wall. After several days he stopped coming out for exercise. The first day he wanted to remain lying down, he had to resist the shouts and threats of the screws, who took his mattress away and tried to make him get up.

It will seem unbelievable to all those who read this that they could put a man who was incapable of moving and was urinating blood into a punishment cell; unbelievable that he was given no help and forced to sit on the ground. He couldn't remain standing up for 16 hours, and the wall was the only assistance he had available in the cell; his only company, as he recounted it later, were 'the rats which come out of the ventilators, the cockroaches, the fleas, and the jailers four times a day'.

Those who read our letter will equally be surprised by the reluctance of the doctors to send Sabino to hospital. But

this attitude sums up the bestiality which governs the prison regime. Here, as in other prisons, the doctor opposes the transfer to hospital of those who have 'a bad attitude' - and Sabino certainly had the honour of representing the very worst of attitudes for his jailers.

The dictatorship's brutality never misses a chance to display itself. When they brought us from Segovia the Civil Guards were set against Inaki Sarrasketa from the moment we left the cells, and they set about beating and mistreating him in every way possible, even though he was then in the midst of several days of hunger strike.

They didn't miss the opportunity to show what they are with Sabino either. Knowing full well that he was sick, because they had just brought him straight from hospital, they handcuffed him and forced him to remain, for several hours during the journey from Madrid to here, in a position folded up like a ball.

Those who still do not believe that life in the prisons is just a slow form of death - let them look at the ruined health of Sabino Arana. Let us at least hope that medical care can save his life in order that we may count on his inestimable assistance in the revolutionary struggle; and in order that he can play his part in the overthrow of the dictatorship - the aim for which he has fought throughout the past 15 years, the last eight of them in prison.

Freedom for Sabino Arana!
Freedom for all political prisoners!
His comrades from the Puerto Santa Maria Prison, March 1976.

For the future!

The strain's clearly beginning to tell. In the third week of our new £1,500 quarterly Fighting Fund for Red Weekly, we received only £52.

That's not bad by past standards - but we're fighting for the future. A new future for humanity, where all traces of capitalist exploitation and oppression are wiped away through a successful socialist revolution led by the working class.

Red Weekly plays a vital part in the fight to unite the working class around a programme which can meet up to the needs of this struggle. But to safeguard our future means that we must ask our readers and supporters to make a new commitment to the Fighting Fund. Remember - every penny we get will be used to improve and expand the resources of the paper to provide you, our readers, with a better fighting weapon for the socialist alternative.

With this week's contributions we've topped 20 per cent of our target. The total now stands at £318.86. Our thanks this week to: South West London IMG, £20; Glasgow IMG, £15; Sheffield supporter, £10; Oxford IMG, £4; M.Vosner, £1; Bath IMG, £1; Anon., £1. And don't forget - the address is: Red Weekly Fighting Fund, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.



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French students take to streets

A massive march of 40,000 college and school students in Paris last Thursday came up against one of the most savage police attacks since the events of May '68. On the same day tens of thousands of students marched through the main towns of France. These demonstrations mark the high point of a campaign for the repeal of a proposed 'reform' of the university system which would tailor further education in France more closely to the needs of big business.

The evolution of the French student movement has achieved a new stage with this campaign, reaching out to hitherto uninvolved colleges on the basis of the students' own demands.

Even before last Thursday's demonstrations, the French Government had been forced to retreat by delaying the application of the 'reform' to allow 'consultation with all concerned'. This climb-down was a symptom of the nervousness of the regime, which was shown in the recent local elections to have lost majority support in the country. But the students were not fooled by this manoeuvre, and have shown their determination to force the total repeal of the 'reform'.

A series of unlimited student strikes, often supported by the teachers, culminated last week in a national delegate conference representing all the colleges on strike, which called for a national student strike. Student leaders have also started discussions with the leaders of the CGT and CFDT, the two main union federations in France, to seek their support and link the student struggle with the current wave of workers' struggles against unemployment.

The Government's reply has been savage repression in the streets of Paris,



often prepared by provocations carried out by small squads of fascist thugs. Several students were injured by gas grenades fired directly at the demonstrators, and hundreds of demonstrators were beaten up in police vehicles and police stations.

This recourse to repression reflects the regime's isolation on this issue - even the university rectors have now come out against the 'reform'. But if the regime is increasingly scared of a new May '68, so too are the Communist and Socialist Parties.

Their perspectives are entirely electoral. They come forward with no demands capable of seriously tackling the problems confronting the working class. Instead of using the students' fight to drive forward the struggle against the Government, they are attempting to limit it by constantly counterposing negotiations to any action. In this situation Rouge, the new daily paper of the French Trotskyists, has become one of the chief instruments in organising and extending the campaign.

The French regime is now in serious trouble. The latest cloud on its horizon is the threat of a further struggle against closure at Lip, the watch factory whose occupation in 1973 evoked a mass response inside the working class movement. Like their Portuguese, Spanish and Italian comrades, the French workers are set to make a powerful contribution to the unfolding of the European revolution.

L. Martin

Iranians face deportation threat

Two Iranian students face an immediate threat of deportation to Iran after a court case last week.

The two were arrested together with a Spanish militant during a demonstration in London last September following the executions in Spain. The Spanish demonstrator was acquitted, but the two Iranians were found 'guilty' on charges which included assaulting the police and possession of an offensive weapon (a banner!).

BEATEN

One of the two, Mohammad-Reza Poorian - who was so badly beaten by the police when he was supposed to have been assaulting them that he had to be taken to hospital - was sentenced to six months in prison. The other, Mahmoud Tourneh, was given a three months suspended sentence. Both were recommended for deportation, and the deportation order is being considered at

a further court hearing on 22 April.

Neither has a valid passport - and the Iranian Embassy is unlikely to renew them. If deported, they would as a result have serious difficulty in finding a country which would accept them as political refugees; their deportation could effectively mean handing them over to the Iranian secret police, SAVAK. In Iran they would face long term imprisonment and torture because of their political activities and their membership of the Confederation of Iranian Students, which is considered illegal under reactionary Iranian laws.

The harsh treatment of these two Iranians once again shows the disgusting support given by the British authorities to the Shah's barbaric regime. Having failed to use the conspiracy laws against the Iranian 21 earlier this year, they are now trying to please the Shah - and

thus safeguard British business contracts - by taking revenge on these two Iranian students.

THOUSANDS

What is at stake is not simply the fate of these two students, serious as that is, but also the threat of deportation hanging over thousands of other politically active foreign nationals whom Home Secretary Jenkins, using the reactionary Immigration Act of 1971, can deport if he finds them 'undesirable'.

Iranian students are launching a campaign to prevent the deportations. They need your immediate support. Only strong pressure on the Home Office will prevent the deportations. Raise this issue in your trade union, student union, etc. and get protests sent to the Home Secretary demanding that the two Iranians should not be deported.