

RED WEEKLY

NO DEAL WITH HEALEY

20 MAY 1976

No. 151

PRICE 10p

26 MAY - STOP THE RETREAT

If the kid glove fails then use the iron fist. This was Hugh Scanlon's message this week to the AEU National Committee as he forced wage cuts down the throats of his members.

It was a performance which should break all illusions in the present role of the official trade union 'lefts'. Every trick and threat in the book was pulled out.

He threatened to resign from the TUC negotiating committee if his position was 'undermined' by the union's rejection of wage controls. He claimed that rejection of the pay deal would bring down the Labour Government. He said that any move to challenge the Government's policies would lead to a Tory Government 'being unleashed on us'.

It was a performance which could not have been bettered by Carron, Boyd or any other right-wing leader of the AEU past and present.

It was also a speech which had not a single point of contact with reality. Resign from the negotiating committee as a threat? Nothing could be better, when all that this committee has negotiated is a 6 per cent fall in real wages last year and up to another 5 per cent this year.

Government

Bring down the Labour Government? The utterly disastrous policies of this Government are already ensuring that. The huge losses suffered to the Tories in the council elections are only a foretaste of what is to come if the wage cutting, dole queue creating, welfare slashing policies of this Government are not defeated.

Unleash a Tory Government? The only way to defeat the Tories, if the betrayals of all those who support this Government's policies let them back, is in the same way that Heath was brought down — through the mass action of the working class.

Scanlon, by fighting for wage cuts and against the struggle to defeat this Government's policies, fights for the disillusionment of millions of workers — which will not only bring down the Labour Government, but will leave the working class demoralised before what would be the most vicious Tory Government since the 1930s.

Toolmen

He has fuelled that threat not only by his speech on Monday, but also by his previous action in ordering the S.U. Carbuettors and Longbridge toolmen back to work when they attempted to defend their living standards.

But at the same time as Scanlon was speaking, another section of the labour movement was showing the way forward. A hundred and fifty delegates at the South Wales Miners' conference voted overwhelmingly to reject the pay deal.

The resolutions before the NUM for £100 a week for face workers and before the AUEW for a £28 increase reflect the real will to fight which still exists in the labour movement. Instead of giving leadership to this fight, Scanlon and the other 'lefts' have aided the Government at every step.

Despite this open sabotage, the struggle against the policies of this Government can go forward. The next big step is a massive turn out on 26 May and to fight to win the miners' ballot against the pay deal. Despite all the sabotage of Scanlon, the Communist Party and the lefts, a powerful day of action can be built and the right in the NUM can be defeated.

Fight back

It is only the launching of such a fight back which can begin to turn the tide against the disastrous course which the trade union and Labour lefts are supporting. It is the first step to the building of a class struggle opposition and a new leadership in the labour movement.



Scanlon—forcing wage cuts down the throats of his members

'Probe cuts man'

Students at Brunel University in Uxbridge, Middlesex last week occupied the sociology department in protest over its running by the head, Professor Hopkins. The occupation was sparked off by the decision of the university vice-chancellor to advertise the jobs of two sociology lecturers after explicit assurances to the students and the lecturers' union (ASTMS) that negotiations for their future employment would continue.

Although the demand for the subjects given by the two lecturers is high, such popularity now seems to be a threat to the plans of the university to stream-line courses to meet the needs of industry and the ruling class. Radical lecturers, helping to organise an academic group in their union and giving such courses as Marxism, obviously don't fit into the scheme of things.

The top academics are more interested in fulfilling their contract with the DHSS on how best to make cutbacks in the NHS. The concern of the students in the occupation, on the other hand, is to study society and its problems from the point of view of the working class.

The blatant attempts by Hopkins to steamroller through his decisions have forced the students to widen the basis of their campaign and focus on the need for an independent inquiry into the running of the sociology department. This demand has already won the support of the NUS and the local Trades Council, which proposed that local left MP Joan Lester should head the inquiry. If the inquiry is not to be a whitewash, it will obviously have to be made up of students and workers and will have to demand the opening of the books to see just how the department is financed and what effect this is having on the courses at the university.

An outstanding feature of the occupation has been its democratic organisation. All policy for the occupation has been made by daily general meetings of those occupying, with the decisions being implemented by everyone. Besides holding workshops on the general issues raised by the occupation, the general meetings have supported the struggles of their French counter-parts and the day of action against unemployment on 26 May.

WORKERS FAIL TORIES 11+

The newly elected Tory Council in Tameside near Manchester has a nasty shock in store for it. Trade unionists in the region are preparing to counter the Council's proposals to reintroduce the 11 plus and selective education with direct action.

Immediately the Tories were elected on 6 May they instructed local government workers to end all work connected with the scheduled introduction of comprehensive education in September this year. Although 3,700 children had been sent letters on 3 May informing them which school they would be attending, the Tories have now decided to scrap these plans. Yet 96 per cent of the

children would have gone to the schools of their first preference.

The new Council says that it will introduce the 11 plus next Friday, 21 May. This drastic move is being masterminded by Councillor Thorpe, the Tory education committee chairman-elect. Strangely enough, his son is at the only junior school in the whole of Tameside that has been preparing for the 11 plus all year!

Banking

The new Council is banking on the return of a Tory Government that will scrap the Government's present powers to force councils to go comprehensive. The Tames-

ide Tories believe that it is their sacred task to save the fabric of our society. Tory leader Colin Grantham says: 'The standards in our schools are already dropping, and that drop would accelerate calamitously under a comprehensive scheme'.

But the Tories do not care a fig about standards, or they would not be cynically playing around with the lives of the children caught in the middle of this row. And their plans have not gone unanswered. At a special general meeting on 19 May, the Tameside Association of the National Union of Teachers was expected to pass a resolution recommending 'that members take no part in selection procedures for secondary education'.

strike action in the event of any teachers being disciplined for their stand against the 11 plus. Confronted by this outstanding show of working class organisation, the Tory leaders are already beginning to whine. 'This began as an argument about where children go to school. Now it is a matter of democratic principle, a question of whether we have any freedom left. Are the unions or the elected members in control of Tameside?', Grantham blusters.

Generalise

With a 28 per cent turn out in the local elections, Grantham can hardly claim to represent the working class of the area. So angered was one trades council delegate at his statement that he proposed that the Trades Council should occupy the Town Hall and disrupt the Tory Council's first meeting to show just who should be in control. It is this kind of fighting response that has to be generalised.

Red Weekly urges all its readers to send messages of support to Bert Ellicott (Secretary), Tameside Trades Council, c/o AUEW Offices, Ashton-under-Lyne; and Gordon Powell, General Secretary, Tameside Association (NUT), 110 Thornfield Grove, Ashton-under-Lyne. Copies should be sent to the Department of Education and Science, Tameside Council, Town Hall, Dukinfield, Cheshire; and to the NUT, Hamilton House, Mableton Place, London WC1.

Radio workers win sit-in

Radio Trent, the commercial radio station in Nottingham, was the scene last week of the first militant struggle by workers in independent radio.

When a reactionary anti-union management — which has so far refused to sign national agreements covering minimum pay and conditions — sacked programme director Bob Snyder (a member of the Association of Broadcasting Staff) on the spot, the combined membership of the unions on the station (ABS and National Union of Journalists) held an urgent stop-work meeting.

This became a 36-hour sit-in as management agreed only 'to go through the motions' of seeing an ABS official about the

case. The workers (disc jockeys, engineers and journalists) occupied the master-control studio, reducing the station's output to a rushed series of records played by a scab relative of the firm's chairman!

Victory

This all-night sit-in resulted in total management capitulation when the ABS official arrived to demand the full and immediate reinstatement of Snyder. The firm agreed that in future it would abide by the industry's agreements on job security and protection against arbitrary dismissals. The message has filtered through this new industry that the unions are now a force to be seriously reckoned with.

Opposition

The Association has already put on record its opposition to the Tory proposals at a 200-strong meeting on 12 May. The same night saw Tameside Trades Council calling for a mass picket of the Council's inaugural meeting, and pledging full support for any teachers who refused to take part in 11 plus exams, as well as for any other action teachers are prepared to take.

Local members of the National Union of Public Employees and the National and Local Government Officers Association will be putting proposals to their local branches for

SCOTS STUDENTS OCCUPY FOR JOBS

More than 2,000 student teachers in Scotland could find themselves on the dole queue at the end of this term. But they won't be there without a fight.

Last week Moray House Education College in Edinburgh was occupied by students calling for the reversal of all public expenditure cuts and a campaign for the right to work. The occupation raised the demand that the Labour-controlled Regional Council refuse to implement the cuts and that a job be found for every student leaving the college.

EXTEND IT!

Any campaign with these important demands needs to be extended through mass action. So delegations were sent to other teacher training colleges in Scotland. The results were good. Dundee College of Education occupied three days after Moray House. Two other colleges, Craiglockhart and Callander Park, gave an enthusiastic reception to the call.

Jordanhill College of Education, the other major college in the region and a stronghold of the Communist Party-dominated Broad Left, also promised to occupy. But the Student Representative Council refused to organise the action. Moray House students responded by sending over delegations which built a mass meeting, winning a commitment to occupation despite the role of the SRC.

The Moray House occupiers also criticised the leadership of the main teachers' union, the Education Institute of Scotland (EIS), for agreeing to understaffing. This policy has boosted unemployment levels among teachers. So flying pickets were sent around the schools to build a campaign to reduce class sizes and create jobs.

Under pressure, the leaders of the EIS offered verbal support and issued protest statements criticising the use of a lottery to decide redundancies in Fife. Militant teachers will take up the role of

the EIS leadership at its conference next month, fighting in addition for the right of unemployed teachers to be members of the union.

The Labour leaders of Midlothian Regional Council have consistently condemned — and consistently implemented — the cuts in public spending. Calling for an end to the occupation, they proposed joint deputations to meet the Government.

If students are to provide an alternative to these gestures and succeed in getting the Council not to implement the cuts, they must join with all groups fighting the cuts in the Edinburgh area. They must demand that those left councillors who denounce the cuts should vote against them, revealing their full extent and how much is spent on interest repayments to the finance houses.

The occupation at Moray House can be turned into a centre of enquiry into the cuts, linking up all those who are resisting them. Armed with the full information, the labour movement can force the Regional Council into refusing to implement the cuts.

OPPORTUNITY

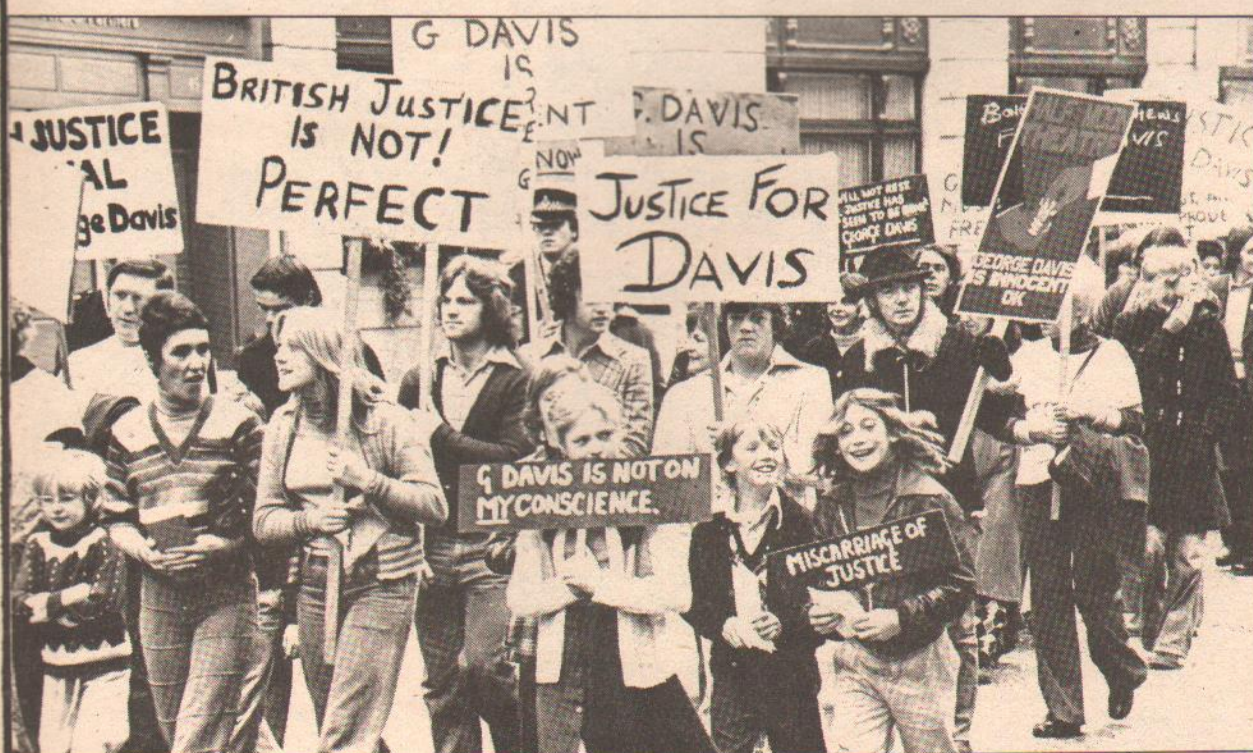
The present wave of occupations provides a real opportunity for a fight against the cuts and unemployment in opposition to the protest politics of the EIS leadership and the Scottish TUC. The campaign can be built into one of all-out opposition to the Government's policies and those leaders in the workers movement who support them.

The task of all militants in the colleges must be to organise solidarity with the Scottish occupations and build for the strike action on 26 May.

Chris Bambery and Des Tierney report from Edinburgh.

Telegrams of support and money should be sent to the Occupation Organising Committee, c/o SRC, Moray House College of Education, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 3AQ (tel 031 356 5184).

Mass action frees George Davies - OK!



George Davis is free — though not yet 'innocent'. His release was a tremendous victory for the campaign of direct action launched by his wife (pictured above leading one of many demonstrations in the campaign) and friends throughout the East End of London. Meanwhile jailed Shrewsbury picket Des Warren — whose release has been demanded in words by union conferences galore as well as last year's Labour Party and TUC conferences — languishes in jail. An object lesson if ever there was one! (Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report))

IN FOCUS

See how they run

Two months after 3,000 delegates at the National Assembly on Unemployment voted for a day of action against cuts and unemployment on 26 May, it is quite clear that the Communist Party, the main force behind the Assembly, is doing nothing whatsoever to fight for serious action. In Manchester Trades Council they even went so far as to rule any discussion on the day of action out of order in the report back from the Assembly delegates. In other towns they have refused even to call demonstrations.

The reason for this attitude, this complete waste of the possibilities created by the National Assembly, is quite clear. The 'lefts' so beloved of the Communist Party refuse absolutely to support any actions against the Government's wage cutting and unemployment policies.

The last weeks, in fact, have seen the most humiliating climb-down by the CP's favourite lefts in years.

* Only one year ago, Tribunate MP Eric Heffer could refuse to support the £6 limit. This year he writes in the *New Statesman*: 'I am in favour of a voluntary wages policy Although I am unhappy about the way the Government/TUC agreement was reached, and its contents, it would be futile to oppose it as such.'

* Two years ago Benn came out and called for 'an irreversible shift in the balance of wealth and power in favour of working class people and their families'. Now he boasts to the North West conference of the NUM that the new wage-cutting plan 'has greatly and permanently increased trade union influence in the formation of public policy, and whatever government is in power that particular clock will never be able to be turned back.'

* The role of Scanlon is perhaps the most disgraceful of all. The disastrous policy retreats of the Broad Left in the AUEW have allowed the right wing to become increasingly entrenched there. Now Scanlon stands up at the AEU National Committee as a firm spokesman for wage controls — something Boyd and the right wing have advocated for donkey's years.

Real meaning

It is this type of capitulation which shows what the CP's policy of 'unity of the left' really means. United action of the working class is vital, but it cannot be achieved by uniting with those who are on the wrong side of the dividing line. You can't have unity between prisoners and cops, and you can't have unity between those who are imposing wage cuts and those who are fighting them.

United action with left leaders for practical steps to defend the working class, such as the AUEW official strike against the NIRC two years ago, is completely correct. But to maintain that unity when they move into open opposition to the interests of the working class is mad. The CP sabotages the day of action because it turns unity in action into unity at all costs and at any price.

Actions on 26 May on jobs and cuts will have to be built against the lefts and despite the CP. Every militant worker should draw their conclusions from this.

of management and provide a basis for drawing up alternative plans which can safeguard jobs — enforced by workers control.

The campaign against the cuts must fight for a workers veto on all closures of hospitals and the like. Maximum advantage must be made of the fact that over 40 per cent of most local authorities' income goes to the finance houses.

Raising the level of political consciousness over the erosion of the basic gains made by the working class in decades of struggle must be the starting point for a fight. Opposition to incomes policy can only be built on a permanent basis if an alternative can be presented which comes to grips with inflation.

The policy of a sliding scale of wages puts the problem of inflation firmly on the backs of the employers. Resolutions to trade union bodies opposing incomes policy must include the socialist alternative.

What is needed is a permanent opposition. The Tories know that their time is coming. The preparations to resist the return of a Tory Government are not going to be found in the way forward offered by the trade union leaders — support of Tory policies carried out by a Labour Government.

DEFEND THE 44! NO MORE SHREWSBURYS!

The 44 workers arrested in the police attack on the Right to Work March will appear in court on Friday 21 May.

The National Right to Work Campaign calls on all trade union and labour movement bodies to send delegations to a picket outside the court on Friday 21 May at 10am. outside Hendon Magistrates Court, The Hyde, Edgware Road, West Hendon, London NW9.

Send delegations. Make sure you are represented. Bring banners.

CUTS-It's black in the Black Country

ism. He encouraged those workers present who, while opposing the cuts, echoed Edge's nationalist sentiments with calls for immigration controls.

IMG and some Labour Party members met Edge's dangerous ideas head on. The fact that 40 per cent of local authority revenue is devoted to the repayment of debt charges was brought to the fore. A resolution adopted called on the Labour group on the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council to oppose the cuts, demand the restoration of all cuts, the exposure of all plans for proposed cuts, and the protection of social expenditure from inflation.

The failure of people like Geoff Edge to wage a fight for a socialist solution to the crisis ends up adding fuel to the fire being kindled by the National Front. The fight by bodies like the Walsall cuts campaign can provide an alternative way out for those crushed under the weight of this Labour Government's policies. Val Jones

on the cards when local Tribunate MP Geoff Edge addressed the meeting: 'The cuts won't be necessary if we control imports. Let's have British jobs for British workers.'

This little Englander was waving his Union Jack for a prosperous capitalist Britain — he made no mention of social-



Who's letting the Tories in?

The Tory Party love-in with the unions has come to an abrupt end judging by the speech of Shadow Employment Secretary James Prior last weekend. Scots Tories heard him threatening new laws on picketing and a ban on Social Security benefits for stikers.

Just a few months back, the startled press heard Margaret Thatcher tell a Conservative trade unionists conference of the need to 'go into the trade unions'. Prior himself spearheaded the drive into the staff union ASTMS, voting in a somewhat bewildered way for Communist Party candidates in local union elections!

What lies at the root of this shift back to traditional confrontationist sentiments? Many top Tories, including Thatcher herself, were never really convinced by the need to make concessions to the trade union bureaucracy.

WEAKNESS

She and others argued that the trade unions were now starting to operate from a position of weakness. The acceptance of an incomes limit of 4½ per cent — for which the Tory leaders would have been crucified two years ago — seemed proof positive of her view.

The irony of the trade union leaders tumbling over one another to accept the pay deal and keep out the Tories is that they provide precisely the conditions for the demise of the Government by attacking the living standards of Labour's electoral base.

The fight for action on 26 May decided on by representatives of six million workers at the National Assembly against Unemployment in March is an uphill one. Workers who feel that the time has come to take firm action not only have to confront the open threats of Scan-



lon and Jones but also the cowardice of the 'left' leaders and the Communist Party, who refused to face up to the anti-working class actions of the TUC General Council top dogs.

The decisions for industrial action on 26 May in Dundee, Glasgow, Sheffield and other industrial centres — partial and fragmented though they are — provide a vital opportunity to group together all those forces who find themselves a fighting minority in the labour movement.

The first steps have got to be taken at the local level. The formation of action committees can address themselves immediately to the task of making sure that the minority is seen and heard at the special congress of the TUC on 16 June.

FIGHT

The demand must go up for those trade union leaders who have been mandated by their union conferences against the 4½ per cent limit to organise all those unions who have a similar position into a fight against it — and its architects and supporters in the trade union movement.

in?

But the building of a permanent opposition in the localities against the vicious triangle of unemployment, cuts and incomes policy will require more than protest action. Unemployment at presents tends to hit workers out of the blue, without time for the preparation of tactics like occupations and demands that can provide work for all, such as work-sharing without loss of pay.

The corporations are beginning to turn in increased profits. The demand must go up for the opening of the books to investigate the plans



Jack Jones—his support for Labour's Tory policies will only let real Tories in

'We'll break a few bones tonight'

-the meaning of Rule 14

By GEOFF BELL (Executive Committee, Camden Trades Council)

Amidst frenzied scenes, an alleged 'meeting' of Camden Trades Council finally agreed last week to accept the new Rule 14 into its constitution.

Rule 14 is the dictatorial instruction from the TUC prohibiting trades councils from supporting any organisation which does not support TUC policy. The implementation of the rule would mean that trades councils would not be allowed to support the day of action against unemployment called for 26 May; and it would prohibit support for such organisations as the Working Women's Charter, the National Co-ordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS, or the Troops Out Movement.

At its annual general meeting in February, Camden Trades Council refused to accept the rule. This did not prevent supporters of Rule 14 from raising the matter again, although this was entirely unconstitutional. And for a second time Rule 14 was thrown out.

Frantic

It was at this point that members of the Communist Party on the Trades Council — who in supporting Rule 14 had acted as the TUC's policemen — now became the TUC's informers. Frantic phone calls by secretary Sid Gregory and chairman Bill Lloyd broke the news to the TUC. In return for this act of informing, the TUC gave Gregory and Lloyd a free rein to deal with the opponents of Rule 14.

Their first step was to 'suspend' the Trades Council — a suspension later approved not surprisingly by the bureaucrats of the TUC. Gregory and Lloyd then cancelled the April meeting of the Trades Council and the Executive Committee, but called a meeting last week with the single aim of ensuring capitulation to the TUC.

These manoeuvres fell totally outside the constitution of the Trades Council, and this cynical disregard for all the standards of working class democracy was completed when Gregory attempted to rig the meeting by saying that only those who supported the rule would be admitted. Indeed, the meeting itself displayed as nakedly as was possible just what Rule 14 means, and the dangers it represents for the entire trades council movement; because the entire evening was a farcical travesty of everything the working class movement stands for.

Shouted

At the start of the meeting, chairman Lloyd stated that the gathering was not one of the Trades Council but to 'reconvene' it. When asked then what the status of the meeting was, and on whose authority it had been called, Lloyd shouted: 'I am

answering no questions.'

When asked under what standing orders and what constitution the meeting was operating, he replied: 'I am taking no discussion on constitutional matters.' When secretary Gregory was asked to explain why he had refused to consult the Executive Committee of the Trades Council, an embarrassed Lloyd stopped Gregory's pathetic attempts at self-justification with: 'Sit down Sid, don't answer them.'

Such behaviour set the tone for the rest of the meeting. When a delegate challenged the chair, Lloyd ignored the challenge. He refused

throughout to take points of order or points of information; he ordered any critic to sit down the minute they tried to speak.

Such jackboot tactics from the chair were accompanied by storm-trooper tactics from the supporters of Rule 14 on the floor. At one point a delegate whose branch opposed Rule 14 was grabbed by one of the self-appointed TUC policemen and threatened with physical violence.

The same individual and others constantly interrupted the meeting with such shouts as 'we'll put you in boxes', 'we'll break a few bones

tonight', and 'fuck off you bastards, you pricks'.

The intimidation, the rigging, the attempt to restrict the meeting to supporters of Rule 14 worked, and it was duly passed. But it was a hollow and meaningless victory. The whole way in which the meeting was conducted and convened gives this vote not one ounce of constitutional or democratic validity, and delegates to Camden Trades Council should press home this point when the next properly convened meeting takes place.

In the meantime, the lessons should be absorbed both in Camden and elsewhere. Militants should note the danger of the advice that Rule 14 is meaningless. The behaviour of its supporters in Camden over the last two months has shown to what lengths they will go to gain acceptance of the TUC dictate.

Even the TUC would not give approval to such tactics unless they had a purpose in mind. That purpose is to use Rule 14 against those who seek to challenge the current anti-working class policies of the Labour leadership and the TUC bureaucracy.

Vindicated

Furthermore, the meeting completely vindicated those in Camden who had argued against capitulating to Gregory and signing an undertaking to support the rule. Although Gregory had said that only those who gave in to this blackmail would be allowed in, and although one or two pathetic attempts to enforce this ruling were made, delegates whose branches indicated opposition to the rule were admitted and their votes were counted.

Gregory's rigging attempt proved to be a bluff — a bluff which could be called because those who opposed Rule 14 had refused to give in on the point of principle, and because the campaign they had waged against the rule both inside and outside Camden had made it impossible for Gregory to carry out his threats.

Principled

It was the same campaign and the same principled opposition which secured the removal of Gregory. Amid shouts of laughter, he explained that he was resigning to 'concentrate on home decorating'.

The campaign against Rule 14 will go on, both in Camden and elsewhere. It will go on in individual unions, in trades councils, and in a national campaign leading up to the TUC Congress in September.

What the experience of Camden has now manifestly shown is that the fight can only be waged on the basis of no concessions. No concessions to Rule 14, no concessions to the TUC policemen and informers, no concessions on the principle of workers democracy.

IMPORTANT

The all-London meeting called by the Defence Committee for all trade unionists opposed to Rule 14 will now take place on Saturday 10 July.

All trade unionists should put resolutions through their branches to be forwarded to their union executives, calling on them to oppose Rule 14 at the TUC. They should also get sponsorship from their branches and trade councils for the 10 July meeting and the lobby of the TUC on 6 September.

Details from: Defence Committee, 164b Haverstock Hill, London NW3.

17,000 votes for revolutionaries in AUEW elections



Above: LEN BLOOD, who polled 7,684 votes; Below: STEPHEN PERKIN—won 9,904

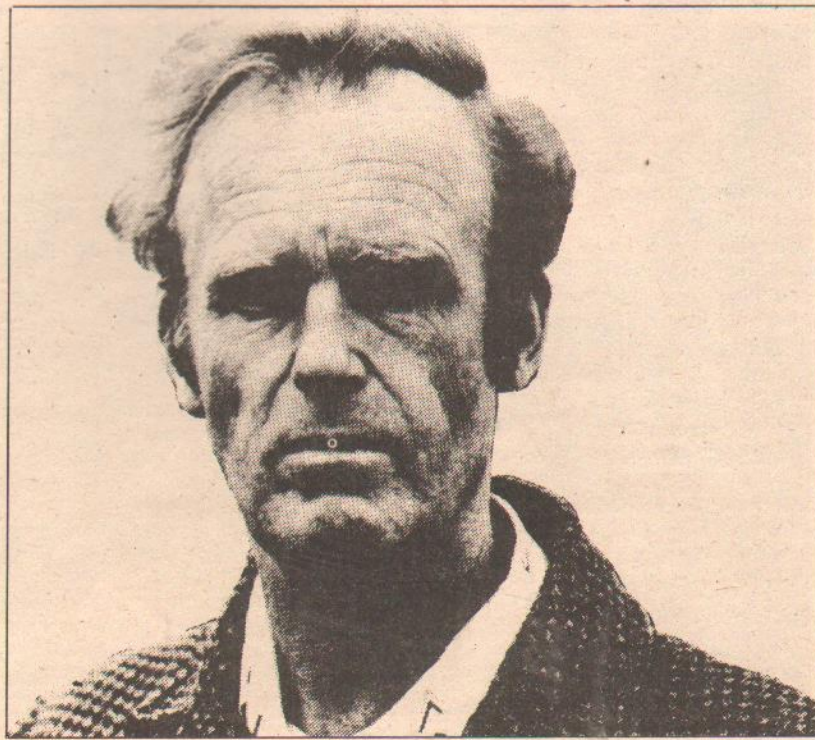


Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Photo: News Line

The recent first round election for the post of Assistant General Secretary of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (Engineering Section) saw 17,588 votes go to candidates put up by the revolutionary left.

Stephen Perkin, a Coventry member of the Workers Revolutionary Party, won 9,904 votes; while Len Blood, a candidate for the International Socialists' front group Engineers Charter, won 7,684. The poll was topped by right-winger John Weakley with 82,094 votes. In the second round he will run off against Broad Left candidate Bob Wright, who came second with 63,723 votes. A total of 255,906 votes were cast in the first round, a 29.7 per cent poll.

The margin of nearly 20,000 votes between Weakley and Wright was only to be expected. Wright's involvement in selling the redundancies at Chrysler, his acceptance of Ryder and participation at British Leyland, and his refusal to come out openly against incomes policy has left the door wide open to the right wing and the capitalist press barons.

Significant

It is not so easy to assess the significance of the vote for the revolutionary left, both because of the nature of the postal ballot and because of the fact that the two organisations involved — IS and the WRP — have actually undergone a decline as an active force in the union over the last two years. Despite these election results, neither has made any significant impact in organising among union activists. The Engineering Voice group in Birmingham is the only one that actually organises a significant number of militants independently of the Broad Left.

Nevertheless, although it cannot be claimed that these votes represent a clear vote for revolutionary positions, they do record a growing dissatisfaction with the present rightward drift of the AUEW — and of the Broad Left in particular. It was because candidates like Wright do not even offer a minimum basis of unity against the Labour

Government's anti-working class policies that *Red Weekly* called for a vote for Len Blood (the first revolutionary candidate to be announced).

The most important task, though, is to organise the opposition of those prepared to fight the right wing. This means working for unity in action with the many militants who still support the Broad Left.

Discontent

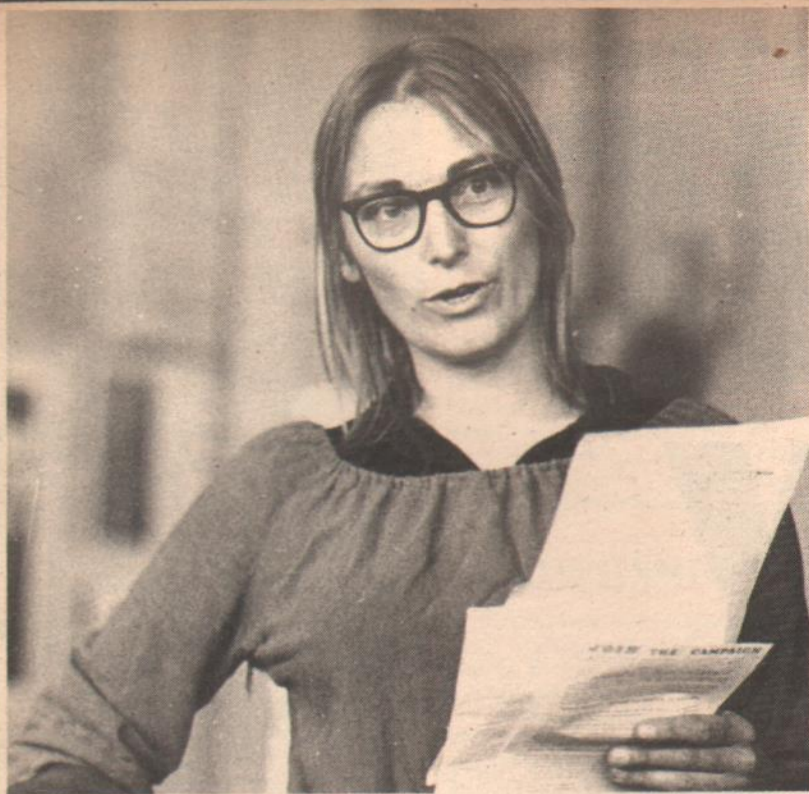
The IS, by setting up their own separate front organisation, only isolate themselves from such militants. The WRP's attitude is even more sectarian — one of their members commented in a recent issue of their paper *News Line*: 'Just as we can beat the Broad Left, we can beat the right wing'. They do not differentiate between Weakley and Wright in the second round of voting, whereas *Red Weekly* calls on all militants to vote for Wright against the right-wing offensive.

What is necessary is to take initiatives — against incomes policy, redundancies and the cuts — which can draw in the large number of Broad Left militants prepared to fight the right wing. The 26 May Day of Action, and the lobbies of the special TUC on 16 June and the TUC Congress in September, are obvious focuses.

Where militants can be organised outside the Broad Left to fight for such policies — as in Birmingham and Wolverhampton — then clearly this should be done. But such groups should have a central aim of mobilising inside the Broad Left and the AUEW as a whole.

Such a process can give a real meaning to the standing of candidates against the Broad Left. Without such a campaign, the votes cast against the Broad Left will simply remain a passive opposition of discontent. The key task now is to transform the discontent shown in the recent election results into action against the Government's right-wing policies.

John Graham (Birmingham AUEW)



PAM JONES, a NUPE shop steward from the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital, speaking at last Saturday's conference of the East London Action Committee Against the Cuts. Unfortunately the conference, attended by 55 delegates, was prevented by its International Socialist organisers from discussing any real programme of action which could link up all those fighting the cuts. Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)

Faced with these underlying threats both to jobs and to the very future of the services provided by the hospital, there has been widespread support for a campaign to prevent its closure. This has involved not only the EGA workers themselves, but also unions in the other hospitals of the area, women who have used the service, the Working Women's Charter and National Abortion Campaign groups, the Camden Cuts Campaign, and the London Regional Committee Against the Cuts.

The EGA workers, in fact, have only recently become actively involved in the campaign. An action committee was formed in 1974 when Castle first cast a shadow of doubt over the future of the hospital, but this consisted mainly of consultants and senior nursing officers, and made no attempt to involve the mass of workers.

Many of the latter are members of the National Union of Public Employees, the only union with any significant base in the hospital. It is now up to NUPE to take the lead in organising regular mass meetings to ensure the maximum participation of all the workers. Out of these a representative committee could be elected to take on the task of preventing any further run-down in the hospital's services (the only lift has been left unrepaired, and all the wards on the first floor have been closed — leaving only thirty beds occupied).

Potential

They could also co-ordinate activities with the campaign outside the hospital. This would mean not only tapping the tremendous potential support from the women's movement, but also linking up with all forces in the labour movement prepared to fight the cuts in public spending and jobs. In particular there is a need to get together with representatives from all the other London hospitals faced with closure, so as to work out a common strategy as well as to give mutual support.

Given the weak position of many of these threatened hospitals, which are often small and poorly organised, an important part of such a strategy would be to secure pledges of industrial action from the rest of their fellow hospital workers, and from other sections of the labour movement.

Another important weapon in fighting the attacks of the AHA and their masters in the Labour Government is to expose their real plans to run down the NHS in the area, by demanding that every last detail of their financial dealings and the exact schedules for closures and sackings be made public to all those who have to rely on their services for adequate health care.

Developers

The AHA must especially be forced to explain why it refuses to use its £300,000 plus surplus from last year's budget to make urgent repairs to the EGA and restore its services in full, when it is obvious that it has nowhere else to house the EGA's facilities. And it should be made to say what it intends to do with the highly valuable site of the EGA — sell it to property developers, or build a new hospital?

Those lefts on Camden Council who say that they oppose government policy should be made to take a clear stand in support of the campaign, and take positive steps to assist it by opposing any planning permission for future redevelopment of the EGA site and demanding full restoration of the EGA's services now. In this way they would be doing no more than putting into practice Labour Party policy on the NHS as expressed in last year's conference resolution.

PUBLIC MEETING—Tues. 25 May 7.30pm, William Collinse School, Charrington Street, NW1
Speakers include Lena Jeger MP, an EGA shop steward, TU and WWC representatives. For more details ring 388 0877.

OUR STATE OF HEALTH 3

'Democratic' cutbacks not the answer

In previous articles we have shown that the National Health Service is dominated by the needs of the capitalist system. The 'solution' of the left social democrats — most notably the Socialist Medical Association — is to reform the NHS. But this fails to confront the issues of who controls the health service and in whose interests it is run.

The SMA makes most of the correct demands for reforming the NHS. It calls for more funds; the abolition of pay beds; the introduction of preventative medicine; the extension of health education; and the nationalisation of the drugs and supply industries. It also explains that if the NHS is really going to serve the needs of working people, then it cannot be left in the hands of the consultants and the DHSS bureaucrats.

These policies must be fought for as part of the fight to transform the NHS, but they would not transform the NHS into a socialist institution.

The first thing to note is that the socialist planning and provision of health care not only requires that hospitals, staff and supplies are brought together in one planned national system — it also requires that health care gets at the social roots of illness. Socialist health care depends upon the democratic planning of all social life. Drainage, housing, production processes in the factories — all have to be freed from the anarchy of the capitalist market before socialist health care can begin.

It is not possible to bring about socialism piece-meal — first the health service and education, later private housing and industry. It is because there can be no island of socialist health care in a capitalist country that the fight to transform the health service has to be seen as part of the fight for socialism and the ending of capitalism.

We can see this still more clearly if we look at the second policy put forward by the SMA — the introduction of reforms into the NHS such as an occupational health service, preventative medicine, and so on.

HAZARDS

As soon as you seriously begin to examine health hazards at work, it is necessary to begin to question the whole way in which production is organised. In the car factories, for instance, the speed of the line, the monotony of the work, the constant noise, and the machinery used not only result in accidents on the shop floor but also affect the health of workers in their personal life long after they have left the factory.

An occupational health service that accepted the 'rights' of employers to make a profit, and therefore to organise the speed of the line, the division of labour, the machinery used, and all other aspects of the production process in order to maximise their profit, could not even begin to get to grips with the problems of health at work. Indeed, because these 'rights' of the employer are defended by the courts and police, such an occupational health service would be forced to operate within those confines — trying to prevent the 'worst excesses' of the employers.

It is necessary to fight for such reforms in the NHS. But we should not pretend that in themselves they will 'put a little socialism back into the health service'. Rather we should explain in the course of this fight that, at present, the NHS is not at all designed to serve the needs of the working class.

The SMA, however, see the solution in terms of 'democratising' the NHS. What do they mean by this?

In the resolution to the last Labour Party Conference (1975), which was a composite of resolutions from the SMA, NUPE and Wavertree CLP, 'democratisation' was posed as follows: 'Management bodies to be democratically elected and to include representatives of all grades of employees within the health service.' What are these management bodies?

The present administration structure in the NHS — the pyramid of the DHSS, the Regional and the Area Health Authori-

ties — was not created just because Keith Joseph was a Tory and wanted to exclude workers' representatives on these bodies. The creation of this highly centralised structure was part and parcel of the re-organisation of the NHS, which involved closing smaller hospitals and concentrating resources in large ones, abandoning plans for new community health centres, etc. to achieve the massive cutbacks in spending that the Government wanted to carry out.

PYRAMID

To carry out this 'rationalisation', the new pyramid structure was created, with all the people on the Regional and Area Health Authorities being appointed by the DHSS. At the time this caused quite a controversy. Organisations like the SMA carried out a campaign denouncing this as bureaucratic and undemocratic, and demanding that these bodies include representatives of the labour movement.

That these bodies are 'undemocratic' is neither here nor there. The point is that they were created to carry out a certain job for the state — to cut back the NHS, which also required re-organising the NHS.

To fight for representation on these bodies is to mislead working class people as to their real purpose and the true nature of the health service. For example, what would we say on an Area Health Authority when the DHSS says — 'cut-back by this amount now'? We would have to do what other representatives have done in the past — either walk out of such bodies and say we will not participate in implementing the cuts, or start to haggle about 'the best way to make the cuts', as do those who argue for more for Brent and less for Merseyside, or those who say more for health and less for education.

To participate with the state and the medical profession in the running of the health service is to accept the arguments of Barbara Castle and the Labour leadership — that cuts are necessary and what has to be discussed is how to carry them out.

The proposals of the SMA, which are also supported by those like *Tribune*, lead right back into class collaboration; despite their 'reforming' intentions, they cannot challenge the grip of capitalism over the NHS. Next week, in our final article, *Red Weekly* will put forward the Marxist alternative to the crisis in the NHS.

Fight to save women's hospital

In North London alone, at least ten hospitals are due for the chop in the next two years. One of the first threatened is the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital in Camden.

This women's hospital, set up in 1872, is one of the two remaining such hospitals in the country. A hospital run by women for women, it provides extensive services for patients from all over Britain. Many immigrant women avail themselves of these services for cultural reasons. The hospital also has a particularly sympathetic attitude towards contraception and abortion.

Barbara Castle was forced to acknowledge public demand for the hospital's services when she re-

cently promised that a condition of its closure would be maintenance of the EGA's services in an identifiable form in another hospital within the Camden and Islington Area. However the planning committee of the Camden Area Health Authority has not been able to come up with any alternative plans for housing the EGA.

This is hardly surprising, because the drastic cutbacks in the Area budget have led to deteriorating facilities, staff shortages and threatened closures in the rest of the Area's hospitals. Furthermore, the AHA has refused to give the EGA workers any guarantees of alternative employment.

-WHAT'S ON-

GREATER MANCHESTER Troops Out Movement forum: 'Why self-determination', Tues 25 May, 7.30pm, Ducie Arms, Great Ducie St (Victorial).
CAMPAIGN to Repeal the Immigration Act: benefit performances of 'Me See It Gonna Blow' by the General Will, Fri 21 May, 3pm Brixton Market, 7.30pm Westway Luncheon Club (Ladbroke Grove tube); Sat 22 May, morning Portobello Road, 7.30pm Centre-prise (136 Kingsland High St, E8); Sun 23 May, 7.30pm Oval House (Oval tube).
OCCUPIED IMRO printworks in Rouen—solidarity visit planned 4-6 June. For details phone Carl Gardner, 01-278 2377 (work).
OXFORD ACTION GROUP Against Dictatorship in India—public meeting, Fri 21 May, 8pm in Ruskin College, Walton Street.
CRITIQUE SEMINAR series: Liz Hodgkin on 'Women and Revolution in North Vietnam', Tues 25 May, 7.30pm, in Room S-418, St Clements Building, London School of Economics, Houghton Street.
CHILE: labour movement conference organised by Manchester and Stockport Chile Committees. 2-5pm, Sun 23 May, in AUEW offices, The Crescent, Salford. Speakers include: Pedro Cornejo (CUT), Andrew Bennett MP, Colin Barnett (NUPE), Mike Gatehouse (Nat Sec, Chile Solidarity Campaign).
RED LADDER THEATRE wants more rungs... We are a collective touring theatre company based in Leeds, and we want: (1) A Performer—of either sex, preferably with Equity membership and musical skills; (2) An Administrator—she/he should have organising experience and knowledge of the trade union and labour movement; (3) A Musical Director—she/he should be able to play one or more musical instruments and write and arrange music. All to start in September. Wage £45 a week. Please write giving details of experience and reasons for interest in the work, Red Ladder Theatre, 20 Westminster Bldgs., 31 New York St, Leeds 2. Leeds 46342.

FOR SALE: giant (30"x40") 3-colour poster commemorating the Irish Citizen Army. Limited edition. Price £1 (plus p&p). From Red Books, or send £1.10 to TOM, 1 North End Road, London W14. All proceeds to finance Labour Movement Delegation to Ireland on 18 September.
LIFTS OFFERED in minibus to Morocco leaving 24 July. Possibility of return lift—share petrol costs etc. Write Box RW6/5, 97 Caledonian Rd, London N.1.
FAST ACCURATE typist wanted to operate IBM Selectric composer—training given if necessary. To start early June or early September. Phone Stephanie immediately on 01-837 9987.
DESMOND TROTTER benefit to raise funds to continue the campaign for his release. Show and dance, Whit-Monday 31 May, 3pm—midnight at Abeng Centre, 7 Gresham Road (off Brixton Rd), E1.25.
SOCIAL on 26 May organised by Hackney Trades Council, 7.30pm onwards, bar extension, raffle, music, Middleton Arms, corner of Middleton Rd/Queensbridge Road, Hackney E8. Admission free.
HISTORY WORKSHOP 29/30 May, Ruskin College, Oxford—'Workers Education and class consciousness'. Creche if notified in advance. Tickets £2 (OAPs 50p) from: History Workshop Collective, Ruskin College, Walton St, Oxford.
WOMEN'S RIGHTS day school: Sat 22 May, 10.30-5pm at Nottingham Teachers Centre, Cranmer St.
MOTOR INDUSTRY: IWC meeting, Sun 23 May, 7.30pm, Digbeth Civic Hall (Crse Rm 2). Speakers: Tom Litterick MP, Jim Shutt (AUEW/TASS), Bob Ashworth IT&G.
MICHAEL FARRELL on 'Northern Ireland: the Orange State'. Peoples Democracy public meeting, Fri 21 May, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1.

CRISIS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION

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

New IMG pamphlet, price 15p plus 8p p&p from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY REVIEWS THE GENERAL STRIKE.....

RIGHTING HISTORY

Karl Marx often commented that the weight of dead generations weighs on the minds of the living like a nightmare. The Communist Party of Great Britain has its own bad dreams: attempting to explain the betrayal of the General Strike fifty years on, when the very 'left' leaders they tail-end today were those responsible for the 1926 defeat.

All this became readily apparent earlier this month in the pages of the *Morning Star* and the Communist Party's theoretical journal, *Marxism Today*. Not once was the Communist Party's major slogan in the nine months after Red Friday (July 1925) — all power to the TUC General Council — mentioned and discussed. Not once was there criticism of the role of the left trade union bureaucrats, hot on words but going along with the right-wing Thomases and Citrines in practice.

Instead we had a series of articles whose main political conclusion was to build left unity, build the Communist Party, and increase the circulation of the *Morning Star*.

Vital

Yet the lessons of the General Strike are of vital concern to every serious militant. The history of our struggles must be learnt if past mistakes are to be overcome and future errors avoided. History is not dead. The way it is written and interpreted is permeated by the political understanding of the living.

Miners protest against wartime profits of the coalowners in 1917



The Communist Party's contributions on the General Strike are in reality the 'historical' rewriting of its present political line. In the rest of this article we will look at this strategy, what it means read back into 1926, and what the real lessons of the General Strike are for today.

The underlying theme of the Communist Party's strategy for socialism is the anti-monopoly alliance. It is argued that as capitalism has developed, the ruling class has in fact become smaller and smaller — essentially restricted to the heads of the great multinational firms and the top echelons of the state bureaucracy. The aim of the CP is to work for the political isolation of this tiny fraction of the population by grouping together all other sections of society against it.

State

The problem of the capitalist state and the necessity to overthrow it by revolution is neatly side-stepped by reducing the state apparatus to the reactionaries that run it. Remove the reactionaries — 'democratise' the civil service, police and army — and magically the capitalist state is removed.

Within this perspective the major political problem for the CP is 'unity of the left', because it is only by achieving a majority of Labour Left and Communist Party MPs in the House of Commons that the necessary legislation to bring about these changes will be made possible. 'Unity' as an end in itself becomes of over-riding importance and the mass movement is reduced to a tap to be turned on and off according to the ebb and flow of events in Parliament.

Unions

In the unions, this means resolution-mongering, taking action only when the left bureaucracy at least supports it, and a refusal to do more than mildly lecture these lefts when they capitulate to the Labour Government's wage cuts and mass unemployment policies.

It is this last aspect of the Communist Party's strategy that militants will be most aware of, simply because the CP's strength lies in the industrial field. The spectacle of having Jack Jones write in the *Morning Star* on the 35-hour week just after he had denounced a resolution at the Scottish TUC which proposed a fight for this very demand against the Government's unemployment policies must have sickened many.

Mick McGahey, leader of the Scottish miners and chairman of the Communist Party, wrote in the *Morning Star* on 7 May that 'to celebrate the anniversary of the General Strike with a deal that ensures cuts in workers' living standards is to commit the same crime as the betrayal of that great upsurge in May of 50 years ago.' So Jack Jones, architect of a crime against the working class comparable to the betrayal of the General Strike, has the pages of the *Morning Star* opened to him!

Similarly the Communist Party has been to the fore in enforcing the TUC's

new Rule 14 in trades councils, riding roughshod in the name of 'unity' over the rights of bodies of the labour movement to decide their own policies.

It follows from the CP's dominant concern for 'unity' that the party is incapable of printing one line of criticism of the lefts' role in 1926. Bill Wainwright wrote of 'the greatest crime ever' (*Morning Star*, 3 May) that 'it was a classic case of the right wing in the TUC and Labour Party leadership demonstrating their role, outlook and basic policy as servitors of capitalism' (our emphasis).

Leaving aside the fact that the 'lefts' to a person supported the sell-out, this article quietly refrains from mentioning that the CP's major slogan in the nine months between Red Friday and the General Strike was 'All Power to the General Council'. Militant resolutions galore were passed at the 1925 Scarborough Conference of the TUC, but the General Council singularly refused to prepare any action — and unfortunately the young Communist Party fed the illusion that left rhetoric was practical reality.

Pollitt

In the wake of the Scarborough conference, CP leader Harry Pollitt declared: 'In view of the overwhelming decision for complete solidarity registered at Scarborough, the new General Council will simply have to prosecute more vigorously the fight on behalf of the workers. True, the right wing of the Council is strengthened by the return of one or two people who do not give support to the idea that we are engaged in a class struggle, but I think that mass pressure from behind will force even them to toe the line.'

For different reasons the Communist Party today is telling the working class the same thing — and the results will be the same.

Between 1924 and 1926, the Communist Party correctly sought to apply a united front tactic towards the 'left' leaders based on the specific demands of the Minority Movement's programme. Indeed, this was the major reason for the Minority Movement's initial success and growth to an organisation capable of attracting representatives of one million workers to its conference in March 1926 — a quarter of all trade unionists at that time.

Tragedy

The tragedy was that after Red Friday, 31 July 1925, the influence of the Stalinisation of the Third International and the presence of the British lefts on the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee led the CP leaders to ignore J.R. Campbell's warning in September 1924: 'It would be a suicidal policy, however, for the Communist Party and the Minority Movement to place too much reliance on what we have called the official left wing.'

It was only after the betrayal that the Communist Party denounced the role of the lefts. But by then it was too late. And the present day leaders of the CP fail to do even that.

Indeed James Klugmann, who in his history of the CPGB wrote of the slogan 'All Power to the General Council' that it 'was certainly incorrect', did not mention this in his *Morning Star* article on 1 May. But Klugmann does claim that the CP and the Minority Movement 'called for preparation, indicated lines of action, emphasising the role of factory committees, trades councils, and above all councils of action.'

Calls only

The problem is what the CP actually did. Klugmann is correct to say that mass pressure forced the strike on 3 May — indeed, the TUC voted 3,653,527 to 49,911 for the strike. But why in that case was it so easily sold out?

The answer lies in the fact that the CP — which was small, but gaining a massive audience in the period after Red Friday — only called on other people, the General Council, to prepare. Indeed, while the March conference of the Minority Movement on 'preparedness' called for Councils of Action — and a few were already in existence — the whole direction of the CP's policies was towards reliance on the existing leadership.

This was spelt out by the acting general secretary of the Minority Movement, George Hardy, in a report to a special session of the Executive Committee of the Comintern in March 1926: 'We are not afraid of this giving all power to the General Council ... should they use that power wrongly, it only means that we have got another additional task before us of forcing them in the right direction, which direction they will ultimately have to take' (our emphasis).

Continued

And this was continued in the *General Strike* itself. Hardy recalled in *Those Stormy Years* that on the eve of the strike: '...we sent out from Minority Movement headquarters instructions to our members to work for the establishment of Councils of Action in every area. We warned, however, that the Councils of Action were under no circumstances to take over the work of the trade unions....The Councils of Action were to see that all the decisions of the General Council and the union executives were carried out....'

A revealing indication of what this meant was contained in an interview in the *Morning Star* on 8 May with Robin Page Arnot, a veteran CP member who had just been released from jail in May 1926 and immediately went to North-East England to help organise the strike. An 'all-in' non-exclusive meeting was called by Chopwell and Blaydon area miners on 2 May to set up a Council of Action — more precisely, to adopt Arnot's own proposals for the conduct of the strike. Arnot recalls the meeting:

'No time to be spent tonight on discussion of purpose of strike (to aid the miners) or origin of possible ending, or national aspect or international aspect. Not concerned for



Glynneath Soviet Level supplied strikers with

next few days with any wider horizons; concerned only on concentrating on our limited objective, to defeat the civil commissioner appointed for the region and all his strike-breaking apparatus.'

It is true that in the North-East and particularly Newcastle the self-organisation of the working class such that it really did begin to challenge the power of the capitalist state, taking over completely the distribution of food and supplies. But if these embryonic elements of dual power were to be consolidated it was precisely 'time for politics' that was needed.

The whole ideological attack on the ruling class was centred on the threat to the constitution. In see

EDUCATE

Red Weekly readers interested in learning more about the General Strike may wish to find some of the following books useful.

Roderick Martin's *Communism and the British Trade Unions* (£2.50) is the only major work on the National Minority Movement and usefully details its growth, development and decline.

An outstanding collection of essays written from a Trotskyist standpoint are brought together in *Essays on the History of Communism in Britain* by Woodhouse and Pearce (£1.50). An unconvincing effort to challenge their analysis is made by Hinton and Hyman in *Unions and Revolution* (90p).

The best value commentary on the General Strike itself is Christopher Farman's *The General Strike: Britain's Aborted Revolution* at just £1. Julian Symons' *General Strike* is an extremely readable introduction, but you'll only be able to get it in a second-hand book



1926. Photo: South Wales Miners Library

.....THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS HAVE THEIR OWN IDEAS

If the 50th anniversary of the General Strike provided an opportunity for the Communist Party to render 'historic' its present reformist political strategy, for the International Socialism group it was an occasion to 'build the rank and file'.

In an attractively produced special issue of *Socialist Worker*, Laurie Flynn brought together stories, pictures and anecdotes that recalled much of the flavour of those 'days of hope'. But whilst recalling that the General Strike 'proves once again the creative capacity of the masses' an editorial warned that 'for those who worship at the shrine of spontaneity, however, the General Strike shows the enormous importance of leadership'.

LEADERSHIP

That, at least, was a correct starting point. Unfortunately the *SW* special then went on to equate leadership with rank and file organisation:

'The leadership necessary is leadership from the bottom up, leadership that draws together each and every militant anxious for the future of the working class.

'We need rank and file organisation fighting for leaders who are paid average wages and not vast salaries, often with perks on the side. Having leaders who are subject to regular recall strengthens the rank and file. It means that workers become part of a real army and not a stage version. It makes for better leaders, and a chance to get rid of those who fail.'

And the revolutionary party? The paper went on: '....the activity of socialists inside the militant rank and file movement is essential. To win through we also need to build a new workers party that will fight every inch of the way. We urge you to join us.'

LESSONS

So the lessons of the General Strike for today would seem to be: build the Rank and File Organising Committee, IS members step up your activities inside it, and non-IS members join IS. Well....

In fact all the problems start where the *SW* special stopped. What sort of rank and file organisation is needed?

The IS see the basic division in the unions as one between the membership and leadership. Therefore the most important demands are those that centre around union democracy and so on. 'It means that although crucially important splits and divisions take place inside the trade union bureaucracy, both right and left share common limitations.'

In other words, the IS approach the sort of problems the young Communist Party had to confront with the emergence

of the left bureaucrats – the question of the application of the united front tactic around specific demands and actions – simply by denouncing the equally traitorous role these left bureaucrats play today.

This may be a good recipe for building a rank and file sect, but it doesn't get to grips with the real problem of building a movement of class struggle opposition to the policies of the Labour Government and the class collaboration of the TUC. This task clearly demands partial and episodic agreements with the 'left' reformists who seek to limit their opposition to mere words.

Although it is always dangerous to draw precise analogies, the experience of the Minority Movement – which the *SW* special hardly mentioned – is instructive. It was precisely its initially correct application of the united front tactic, both within individual unions and across union lines on a number of issues, that allowed the tiny Communist Party to win a mass audience for its policies. It thus helped to develop the ground swell of working class radicalism which forced the leaders of the TUC to call the General Strike against their wishes.

In contrast to the *Socialist Worker* special, a much more serious attempt to

come to grips with the strategy of the Communist Party in the general strike appears in *International Socialism 88* (May 1976). Here Duncan Hallas takes to

task Hinton and Hyman, authors of *Trade Unions and Revolution*, for absolving the Third International's increasingly Stalinist bureaucracy of its responsibility for the conduct of the CP.

The reality of Hinton and Hyman's position is clearly demonstrated when they suggest that the situation in the Twenties after the defeats of 1921–22 was 'profoundly unfavourable' to building a mass revolutionary party and that the CP should have concentrated on propaganda work to build a 'quality' cadre party. As Hallas points out: 'It was the historic achievement of the CPGB to overcome this tradition of abstract propagandism, a tradition with a long history in the British movement.'

In a sense, it's not surprising that overall the IS presented a somewhat eclectic analysis of the lessons of the General Strike. For today they present an equally eclectic political strategy of rank-and-fileism and joining IS as the way forward in Britain – and such positions are bound to show through in analysing the great events of the class struggle.



TUC President Alonzo Swales—a fake left, but how do you deal with him?

'WE ONLY NEED THE RANK AND FILE'?



J. H. Thomas to Ramsay MacDonald: 'You've got to hand it to Purcell, Swales and that lot though. Without the help they gave me I could never have got away with begging and grovelling to Baldwin.'

ing to defend the miners' wages, the workers had – indeed, were forced by the ruling class – to challenge this self-same constitution. Yet the CP itself insisted that the strike was simply about the miners, failing to raise even the question of a Labour Government until the third day of the strike.

To carry on the strike in face of the opposition of the bureaucracy, right and 'left', after 12 May meant saying openly that if defending the miners meant challenging the constitution, then to hell with the constitution. No amount of organisational creativity and self-sacrifice – a fifth to a quarter of the Communist Party's members were arrested during the strike – could substi-

tute for his lack of political preparation.

It is not surprising that the Communist Party can draw no lessons from the General Strike for the struggle for socialism today. For what are the major political lessons? That absolutely no trust can be put in the words of any labour leader. That if under the impact of the capitalist crisis certain of these leaders turn to the left and revolutionary socialists form alliances with them, this must be on the basis of specific demands and actions to take the struggle forward.

Right turn

Yet as we have seen in recent weeks in the CP's half-hearted mobilisation for 26 May, when the 'lefts' of yesteryear like Scanlon and Jones turn sharp right the CP chases after them and makes no overt criticism.

Finally, a word must be said on the way the Communist Party writes history. In contrast with the Stalinist practices of former years, sins of commission are now replaced by sins of omission.

For all John Gollan's talk of socialist democracy and the new 'self-critical' posture adopted by the CP leadership on past 'mistakes' like the Moscow trials and Stalin's purges, the CP is incapable of confronting its own history in the General Strike – precisely because it would mean confronting the political strategy they pursue today. That is also a lesson of the 'lessons of the General Strike' to be learnt!

MICK GOSLING

AGITATE

shop or a library. New from Penguin is *General Strike* (£1.50) edited by Margaret Morris.

For the Communist Party then as seen by the Communist Party now, James Klugmann's *History of the Communist Party of Great Britain* – two volumes at £5 a throw, currently being reprinted – covers the years up to and including the General Strike. L.J. Macfarlane's *The British Communist Party: Its Origins and Developments until 1929* (out of print) is packed with information but little analysis. The CP's anniversary publication is *1926: The General Strike* (£2). Edited by Jeffrey Skelley, it reads back the CP's current perspectives into 1926.

Except where stated otherwise, all are available from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1. Add 25p postage and packing for a single title, 50p for two or more.

According to official capitalist economic theory, prices are supposed to be regulated by competition in the market. If demand falls then prices fall. By cutting back demand in the economy — 'deflation' as it is generally known — prices are supposed to be stabilised. This is the official theory on which the Labour Government operates.

The reality, however, is very different. A modern capitalist economy is not a competitive economy but an economy dominated by giant monopolies — in Britain today, a mere 100 companies account for over half of all manufacturing output. Monopolies do not have to cut prices when demand falls or supply increases. They are in a clear position to manipulate the market, and monopoly prices are undoubtedly a first driving force of price increases.

A classic case of monopoly pricing was the Hoffman La Roche scandal. This vast drugs company was shown to be charging the health service £922 a kilo for a drug which could be sold outside its patents for £20 a kilo. Thus its monopoly enabled it to make a profit of several thousand per cent.

Hoffman La Roche, however, is only an outstanding case in a classic pattern. For example, in the United States a tremendous overproduction of beef developed in the summer of 1974. According to classical capitalist economy theory, meat prices should have fallen in these conditions — and indeed on the wholesale markets, reflecting the price paid to the farmer, meat prices *did* fall by 30–50 per cent. But the price in the shops did not fall at all.

MONOPOLIES

The reason is clear. The various monopolies in the food processing and retailing industry used the fall in farm prices not to cut prices in the shops but to put up profits. While prices in the shops remained the same, and prices to the farmer plummeted, the largest food retailers increased their profits by 59 per cent on a sales increase of only 14 per cent. The result was inevitable — farmers stopped producing because of the low prices, huge quantities of meat remained unsold and wasted because of the high prices, and meanwhile the monopolies cried all the way to the bank.

A similar type of development is taking place with chemical prices at the moment. Chemical sales have plummeted during the international capitalist recession. According to classical capitalist economic theory, we should be seeing a huge fall in prices. But the chemical industry is dominated by huge monopolies such as ICI. Therefore instead of a fall a rapid increase in chemical prices is taking place.

Last autumn the giant American chemical monopoly Dow was already announcing price increases of 10–15 per cent. Furthermore, this was only the beginning — the *Financial Times* (6 October 1975) said that the chemical companies 'must think in terms of generating much higher prices — up to double existing levels in some cases'. Under these conditions it is no surprise that a massive chemical monopoly such as Du Pont could register a 600 per cent increase in profits this year (*Newsweek*, 26 April).

The general effects of such monopolies on prices is clear. For example, 27 out of 28 studies made by the Anti-Trust Division of the United States Government found that monopoly was linked together with price increases (cited in Holland, *The Socialist Challenge*, p62); and the American economist G.C. Means showed that over a nine year period 85 per cent of price increases could be traced back to products of branches of industry which are heavily monopolised (cited in Mandel, *Late Capitalism*, p429). In Britain the situation is no different.

INDEXATION

The Hoffman La Roche and Ferranti Bloodhound missiles scandals are only the tip of the iceberg.

While monopoly prices are a chief driving force of inflation — although, as we shall discuss next week, it is only government control of the money supply which actually allows these huge profits to be realised — the capitalist class is by no means content with simply this source of increased profits. Once inflation is underway, the capitalists also use inflation to carry through further attacks on the working class and increases in profits. Some of these capitalist mechanisms for profiting from inflation are extremely complex and hidden by their code of business secrets. Nevertheless, we can throw some light on the means they use.

The first and most obvious way for the capitalists to use inflation in their interests is simply to hold down the rate of increase in wages below the rate of increase in prices. Under these conditions real wages and working class living standards fall. By these means the wage cuts which the capitalists had to carry out directly before the war can now be carried out more indirectly by inflation. It is by these means, for example, that the real income of the working class has been reduced by 6 per cent in the last seven months.

But if holding down wages below prices is a fairly obvious example of how inflation is manipulated in favour of the capitalist class, it is by no means the only one. There are also the whole range of techniques which come under the general title of 'inflation accounting', or 'indexation' as it is sometimes known.

The technical details of all the methods involved in this are too complex to go into here — they are chiefly embodied in a huge document known as the Sandilands Report — but the basic mechanism is very simple. The essential thing is to manipulate the difference between money income and money prices — prices, wages and profits calculated in pounds and pence — and real income and prices — what can actually be bought with any sum of money.

In non-inflationary conditions, this difference

THE PROFITS OF INFLATION

Ever since the Second World War the rate of price increases has been speeding up. In recent years the increase has become a gallop.

The capitalist press blames the increase in prices on 'excessive' wage demands. The figures show that this is rubbish. Throughout the whole period of soaring inflation, the share of wages in the economy has actually been falling. In this article we look at some of the *real* causes of inflation — and who gains from it.



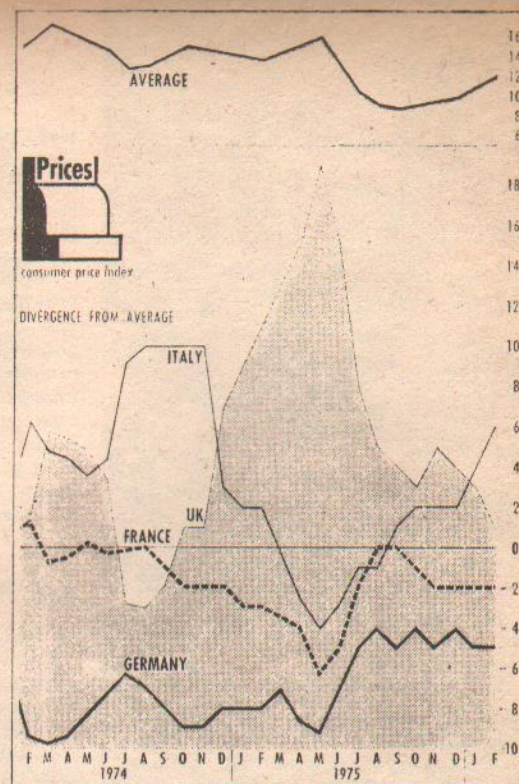
between money and real prices and income does not matter very much. In highly inflationary conditions, however, manipulation of the difference between the two — the fact that if prices rise more rapidly than money income then real income falls, and that if prices rise less rapidly than money income then real income increases — can yield huge profits for the capitalist class and produce massive attacks on the working class.

The most widely used area where the capitalist class applies 'indexation' measures to its own benefit is in the field of taxes. Inflation has the effect of automatically putting up taxation as people pay more tax on higher money wages, pass for the first time to a money wage where income tax is paid, or pass up into higher income tax brackets. It is this mechanism which chiefly explains why, for example, in 1968 a worker on the average industrial wage with two children paid only around 10 per cent of wages in taxes, while by 1976 he or she is paying over 20 per cent.

But while inflation clearly increases taxes on

working class wages, manipulation of the relation between real profits and money profits allows the capitalist class to make huge direct gains. Already in the period of the 1950s and 1960s an informal sort of indexation took place, whereby much greater adjustments were made for inflation in company taxation than in personal taxation. The result was that between 1949/52 and 1965/68 taxation on profits fell from 37 per cent to 19 per cent while direct taxation on wages increased from 10 per cent to 16 per cent.

But in the last two years this taxation fiddle has been made more systematic, and is now clearly moving towards an 'indexation' situation. What has occurred is that Healey has exempted companies from paying taxation on the increased value of their stock resulting from inflation i.e. so they pay taxes on real profits and not money profits on this. The value of this is huge. The *Guardian* was able to write quite correctly on 17 February this year that Denis Healey had given 'British industry what is arguably the biggest government concession ever recorded in



recent industrial history — worth £4,000 million over two years.'

In the Budget, Healey extended this still further into the future. As *Tribune* pointed out on 14 May, by the end of 1976 this concession could be worth around £7,000 million.

The next stage, of course, is to make these concessions permanent — which is just what an 'inflation accounting' system of the kind the CBI is now pressing for will be designed to achieve. No wonder the chairman of British Aluminium declared that Healey's tax move 'was really helpful, and, it must be hoped, something which will be perpetuated by the recommendations of the Sandilands system' (*Financial Times*, 1 October 1975).

Even before any permanent system is introduced, however, the combined effects of inflation and Healey's measures on relative taxation of wages and profits can be seen. In the last full year the burden of personal income taxation, which falls mainly on the working class, went up from 11 per cent to 13½ per cent of the economy. But taxation on companies, corporation tax and capital taxes, fell from 3.9 per cent of the economy to 3.1 per cent.

Not all of this, of course, is accounted for by taxation changes. But there is no doubt that Healey's huge £4,000 hand-out helped enormously. Once 'inflation accounting' is formally adopted the effect on taxation will be enormous.

PLUMMETED

It is no accident that the country in the world which has most fully developed the 'inflation accounting' system, where indeed virtually everything except wages is automatically adjusted for inflation, is Brazil — home of the vile dictator Geisel who has just graced our shores. In Brazil the standard of living of the working class has plummeted amid soaring profits, soaring output, and one of the most horrific dictatorships in the world. There is no doubt on whose side of the bread 'inflation accounting' is buttered.

Another slightly more complex application of an 'inflation accounting' manoeuvre concerns the 'price codes' which are now operated by virtually any government under highly inflationary conditions.

For example, the present Government 'price code' means that companies have to fix profits in relation to the best two years profits they achieved in the period 1967–72. At present wages and profits are calculated in money terms. Suppose, however, that 'inflation accounting techniques' were applied to profits and not to wages, and it was deemed that neither profits nor wages must rise by more than 5 per cent. If inflation was running at a rate of 10 per cent, then each year profits made could increase by 15 per cent in money terms without in any way infringing the price code while wages would be held back to 5 per cent. While wages would fall by 5 per cent in real terms, profits would not fall at all but would actually increase by 5 per cent. No wonder that individuals such as R.E. Utiger, managing director of British Aluminium and chairman of the CBI Prices Negotiating Team, are given centre page articles in the *Financial Times* to advocate simultaneously 'relaxation' of the price code and the introduction of 'inflation accounting'.

AUTOMATIC

The one area in which the capitalists want no 'inflation accounting', of course, is *working class* incomes. Automatic increases to compensate for inflation are excellent for profits, but they must be kept well away from wages. As long as this can be ensured, then the capitalists will gain from inflation with both hands — increasing prices with one hand through the monopolies, and with the other manipulating wages, taxation and price controls to take further benefit from the very price increases they have created.

But if it is the monopolies which are a driving force of inflation, even they are not the real giant price inflater. That 'honour' belongs to the crisis of the capitalist profits system itself, and to the relation of the capitalist state to this. We will look at this next week.

JOHN MARSHALL

B-movie horror hits Ford

By ANITA BENNETT

The crisis in the US Republican Party deepens daily as President Ford tries to keep afloat after a series of losses in key primaries. Readers outside the US can only marvel at the success of Ronald Reagan over the incumbent president. How did the former cowboy — once head of the red-baiting Hollywood Screen Actors' Guild, and more recently the Governor of California who helped to jail Angela Davis — get to such a position? Is the country taking a fast lurch to the right, back to the days of Barry Goldwater and states' rights over the Federal Government?

Behind the rise of Reagan lies the profound crisis in confidence experienced by the majority of Americans in their government. The betrayal of Vietnam, the Angolan bluff, and the irrefutable meddlings of the CIA in the affairs of other countries, together with the worst recession and racial polarisation since the war on the domestic front, pose immense problems for the twin parties of capitalism.

The main difference between the two parties in this election is that the Republicans, particularly Reagan, take clearer positions than the Democrats on major issues such as detente. For Reagan, 'it is time to "eyeball" the Russians'. This places Ford and Kissinger in an embarrassing and conciliatory position towards their right flank. Kissinger's African visit, coming a week before the Texas primaries, did little to enhance Ford's chances; he was unable to capture a single delegate out of the 96.

turbulent leftist dictator'. But this conclusion might be challenged by those currently protesting against Torrijos' expulsion of leftist professor Miguel Antonio Bernal from Panama.

What Panama shows very vividly is US imperialism's new uncertainty after Vietnam on how to maintain its domination over such colonial countries. The objective remains the same, but the ruling class differs on the tactics needed to achieve it. And this is only one of the dilemmas facing the Republicans during this election year.

Bussing

Another much touted issue is detente. Here, Reagan's position doesn't differ too much from that of Democratic front-runner Jimmy Carter, who thinks that detente is under attack 'because of the way it is exploited by the Soviet Union'. For both of them the Cold War is still on. One very clear example is their position in Israel, which both parties regard as a key test for the US in facing up to the Russians.

And as can be seen by the Jewish Defence League's bombing of the Soviet Embassy, the Zionist lobby is not insignificant in the US. New York alone has a larger Jewish population — primarily Zionist — than the state of Israel.

But if the elections can even claim to be about issues, the most important is perhaps the most unspoken and unmentioned: bussing. Not one candidate of either major party has unambiguously endorsed court-ordered bussing.

Carter's remark about 'ethnic purity' was no slip, but most black people couldn't care less about Carter's opinions about their 'purity' at a time when they are increasingly unemployed and physically attacked by racist mobs. They have not been blind to his racist policies all along. Such comments only serve to underscore the intense black disaffection from the two party system.

A massive anti-racist demonstration called for 24 April in Boston had to be cancelled because of the racist hysteria prevalent in Boston at the time. This received not a mention in the British press. Yet Mayor Kevin White's 'Procession Against Violence' on 23 April, 95 per cent of whose participants were white, did receive coverage.

Abortion

The only presidential candidates to incorporate bussing and equal rights in education into their programme are those of the Socialist Workers Party. Their stand has resulted in increased coverage of Trotskyist ideas in mass-circulation black newspapers amongst others.

Abortion is the only other issue to have embarrassed most of the candidates so much. But Reagan, like Richard Nixon, believes in 'the sanctity of life'. Another candidate, Ellen McCormack, has turned her



Vociferous

One of Reagan's most vociferous campaigns in the Texas primary concerned the question of the Panama Canal. Latin America is the US's second largest trading partner, and within that Panama ranks fifth.

One section of the multinationals see their long-term interests best served by a negotiated settlement in the Canal Zone. As Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker put it: 'If we try to maintain the status quo, we will face mounting hostility in both Panama and Latin America — and a possible loss of the very interests we want to preserve' (quoted in *The Nation*, 3 April 1976).

Reagan, however, carefully advised by right-wing ex-president Arnulfo Arias, is holding firm on America's rights to the Zone: 'Personally I would tell this tinhorn dictator friend of Fidel Castro's [Panama's General Torrijos] that we bought it, we paid for it, and we are going to keep it.' Columnists Evans and Novack have echoed Reagan with references to 'Panama's



New issue with articles on Italy, Portugal, Spain, Japan, India, Venezuela, Britain and Argentina. 30p plus 8p p&p from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Rd, N.1.

campaign into a single issue crusade against a woman's right to choose.

The number of Republican delegates needed to nominate a presidential candidate in Kansas City this summer stands at 1130. To date Reagan has won 426 to Ford's 331. The best advice the latter's aides can give him is to look 'more presidential'. But even the most reactionary voters, many of them turncoats from the Wallace camp in places like Alabama, Indiana and Georgia, know that a candidate must have some answers, no matter how 'presidential' he looks.

In looking at the American elections, Marxists do not take sides with either of the two parties, but seek to bring out those very class issues that the candidates seek to hide, such as the true state of the economy and the capitalists' responsibilities for unemployment and inflation — to say nothing of the political questions raised by the struggles of women and oppressed minorities. In a later article we will cover the campaign of Peter Camejo and Willie Mae Reid, SWP candidates for president and vice-president respectively.

AUSTRALIAN RAIDS

New moves are being made to frame the Australian Trotskyists of the Communist League.

On 30 April police carried out armed raids on the homes of CL members with warrants to search for explosives. While charging one comrade with possessing stolen goods, the police also alleged that he had been involved in a conspiracy to assassinate a newspaper proprietor, a TV director, and a Liberal Party Minister.

These raids are a clear attempt to pick off leading militants at a time when working class opposition to the Fraser Government is growing. Hands off the Communist League!

absence through medical unfitness — a physical condition directly ascribed by the court-appointed medical advisors to the conditions in which she had been held prisoner.

If it is right that Ulrike Meinhof did kill herself, then in these circumstances it is hardly surprising: she was facing a massive battery of charges and yet was unable to attend much of the hearing and, indeed, unable to hear, let alone answer, much of the evidence against her.

The lawyers she trusted were not allowed to conduct her defence, and in their stead there were appointed by the Court lawyers who were manifestly out of sympathy with their client and in whom she could not conceivably have placed any trust. She was being held, and tried, in concentration camp conditions; and if she finally formed the view that there was no prospect of otherwise leaving that place, then that is a view that it would be hard to condemn as unreasonable.

Whatever Ulrike Meinhof may have done, she was entitled to a fair trial and the right of reply. It is unacceptable that a so-called civilised society should deprive any accused person of these rights. But in her case the West German establishment went further than that. The planned and calculated assault on her psychological integrity comprised of the conditions of her imprisonment, added to the method of trial referred to above, combine to make out a damning indictment against the authorities for what — even if she did perform the act itself — has already been described as a case of murder. — DAVID WATKINSON (on behalf of the Action Group).

LETTERS

Pressures on Meinhof

The Action Group For The Defence of West German Lawyers was formed by lawyers concerned at the efforts of the West German authorities to interfere with the free defence of members of the Red Army Fraction, the so-called Baader-Meinhof gang.

The Group learns with distress of the death of Ulrike Meinhof. Assuming that the reports of how she died are correct — that is to say, that she committed suicide — it is right that at this time the pressures which led her to do this should not be ignored. Those pressures included the following tactics:

* Ulrike Meinhof was arrested in 1972 — but her trial began during the latter part of 1975, and up to the time of her death she had spent four years in jail, most of the time in solitary confinement.

* For a period of approximately two years she was kept in conditions of complete sensory deprivation.

* Her trial itself was being held in a specially constructed courtroom, under heavy armed guard, surrounded by barbed wire and all the accoutrements of a top-security establishment — conditions which are wholly incompatible with the concept of a fair trial by civilian jurors.



ULRIKE MEINHOF

* Her defence was severely restricted, her lawyers were harassed, their offices burgled for privileged defence documents, and some of them subsequently disbarred from the profession, on unacceptable and unjustifiable grounds.

* She was deprived of her right to a joint defence with her co-accused by the hasty passage of laws fundamentally in conflict with internationally accepted precepts of human rights.

* The same laws permitted the Court to proceed with her trial in her

Trotskyist candidate challenges general, admiral

DAVE WIMHURST reports

Having failed in their attempt to win a parliamentary majority, the Portuguese ruling class is more anxious than ever to see a 'bonapartist' president installed who can advance their interests while appearing to be above the hurly-burly of the class struggle.

The main contender will be Ramalho Eanes, head of the army, who to date has won the official support of the Centre Democrats (CDS), the Popular Democrats (PPD), and the Socialist Party. Without a doubt he is the best possible choice for the bourgeoisie at the present moment.

It was Eanes who led the attack against the soldiers' revolt in November, enabling the bourgeoisie to regain control of the mass media and to purge the army of all forms of soldiers democracy. And well before these events, his credentials were already impeccable. A member of the army general staff for many years, a 'Spinoist' who was never implicated in the events of 28 September 1974, a general who is thoroughly professional and has to date never 'got involved' in politics, he has all the qualifications necessary for becoming a Portuguese De Gaulle.

STRONG ARM

Unlike prime minister Pinheiro de Azevedo, who is also standing for the presidency, Eanes has no record of being overtly 'anti-worker'. His base is not a political one but lies in the army itself. Thus he can appear to stand above the parliamentary squabbles between the various parties, above the class struggle itself.

The bourgeois parties have achieved a very important tactical victory with the support for Eanes offered by the Socialist Party. This support follows some less than subtle wooing by the PPD and the CDS, who both say publicly that they are not opposed to the formation of an SP Government.

From their point of view the election of a strong arm president in command of the army plus a Socialist Party Government would be an admirable match. It would provide a perfect cover for the ruling class to step up the fight against the workers, to organise and consolidate their positions behind the Socialist Party governmental programme for the reestablishment of Portuguese capitalism.

TROTSKYISTS

Thus the picture emerges of a president elected to power through the support of the PPD, the CDS and the SP, who will then preside over the parliamentary struggle, able to veto any measure of a Socialist Government if it is too pink, and favouring the development of the bourgeois parties and their anti-working class offensive.

However, this general project carries within it certain dangers for the ruling class. With two candidates standing from the armed

forces, and with the Communist Party still silent on the question, the emergence of a third candidate sponsored jointly by the Trotskyists of the Internationalist Communist League (LCI) and the Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) has already had a considerable impact.

Most immediately, this has been around the fact that the candidate is a woman - Arlete Vieira da

Silva. This in itself stands out in a completely male dominated society, and will allow the Portuguese Trotskyists to take up the question of women's oppression much more widely than has been possible so far.

But apart from this reason, the presentation of a civil candidate, of a workers candidate standing against an admiral and a general, will allow the Portuguese Trotskyists to present a programme of struggle to the workers and peasants that cuts across anything and everything that the general or the admiral might have to say.

A WOMAN, A WORKER, A REVOLUTIONARY . . .

ARLETE VIEIRA DA SILVA was born in 1940. A militant in the Communist Party from the age of 16, she worked full-time in the underground and was one of those in charge of the party's work in the Lisbon industrial belt. That cost her five stays in prison, the last of three years, as well as torture and beatings. She revealed nothing, and after visits to Prague and Moscow she went back to take up the struggle underground in Portugal.

Arlete left the CP towards the end of 1975, but she had resigned as a full-timer shortly after 25 April 1974. 'How could I accept the sight of the party attacking strikes and sitting at the same table as Spinoist and (PPD leader) Sa Carneiro', she says. Today she is a Trotskyist, and a candidate in the presidential elections.



British television viewers got all that they ever wanted to know about the current bug-bear of Western governments last weekend in an interview with the number two figure in the Italian Communist Party (PCI), Giorgio Napolitano.

Napolitano, described as 'witty and urbane' by *Newsweek*, is the PCI's linkman with the trade unions. Speaking to *Weekend World* interviewer Peter Jay, he was asked whether his party would set up a one-party state in Eastern Europe. The glib answer rolled off: 'We are in favour of a multi-party democracy'.

This formula has a very specific meaning for the leaders of the PCI. Their perspective is that of 'advanced democracy' - a restructuring of the post World War II regime in collaboration with the most 'dynamic and modern' sections of the bourgeoisie.

Independent

No mention is made of the fact that these 'dynamic sections' of the ruling class are wedded to a strategy of sharp increases in the rate of exploitation to restore Italian capitalism's fortunes. The road of an independent struggle for power by the working class, leading all the oppressed layers of society, is dismissed by the PCI as 'the road to



defeat'.

Mr Napolitano does have a way to overcome the deep crisis of the economy: 'There is a role for private enterprise, small medium size and even the larger companies like Fiat. All have an important position in helping to maintain employment.'

Not once did he mention nationalisation. Apparently the role of privately owned capital is now to maintain em-

ployment - not to create unemployment. The laws of capitalism change magically when viewed through the rose-tinted glasses of the 'historic compromise'.

Beneficiaries

'We believe in a mixed economy run in the interests of the people and the nation', says Napolitano. He makes no mention of the working class - and more importantly, of some other beneficiaries. But his colleague Luciano Barco has already let the cat out of the bag in an interview with *Newsweek*: 'The aim of the PCI proposals is to convince US industrialists once again to invest in Italy.'

Even Peter Jay thought it was time to remind Napolitano where his party came from. Didn't Marx talk about 'the common ownership of the means of production under the dictatorship of the proletariat'?

No, Napolitano preferred a more 'precise' formulation. In the time-worn manner of labour bureaucrats, he explained that he wanted to see 'a gradual change to socialism, social justice and an end to exploitation'.

International relations also seem to be all sewn up by the Italian Communists. They want a Europe neither 'anti-

Soviet nor anti-United States'. Consequently the maintenance of NATO as a 'defensive alliance' (against whom is unclear) is not only necessary but desirable. The strengthening of the Common Market is equally an aim of the PCI.

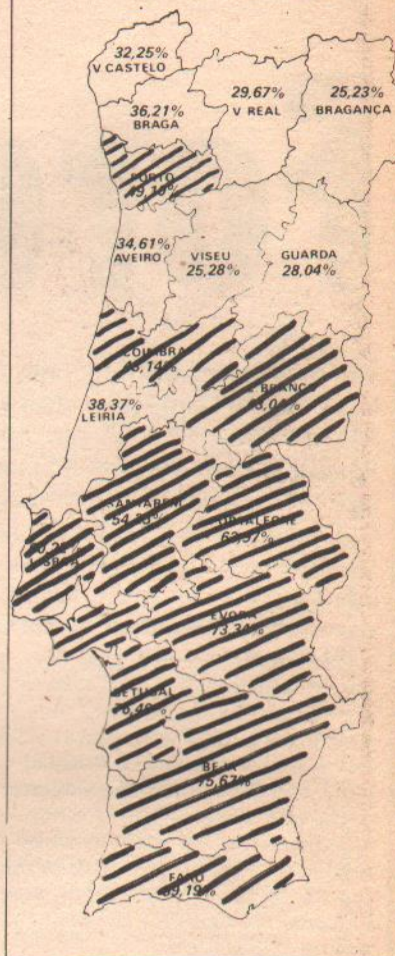
'Urbane' Mr Napolitano certainly is. His willingness to go all the way with Jay provides a significant signpost on the likely attitude of the PCI to somewhat more powerful interlocutors - those who have not merely to enquire on behalf of British public opinion, but are responsible for defending world imperialism.

JOINT SLATE FOR FAR LEFT

THE FAR LEFT groups in Italy will be putting up a joint list of candidates in the 20 June elections. The central committee of the PDUP (Democratic Party for Proletarian Unity) initially voted 60-40 against a united slate, but this decision was reconsidered after the minority threatened to split the organisation.

PDUP will therefore join Avanguardia Operaia and Lotta Continua in a joint campaign, although each organisation will continue to put forward its own programme. This campaign will be supported by our comrades of the GCR (Revolutionary Communist Groups).

VOTE FOR SP AND CP



In the shaded areas the combined CP and SP vote was greater than that of the PPD and CDS

neither for the independence of the working class nor has he ever firmly placed himself in the workers' camp. Apart from the fact that he is a vacillating demagogue, Arlete reaffirmed our opposition to any military candidate.

The presentation of a joint candidate by the two Trotskyist organisations can help to clarify these misconceptions, and marks an important step forward in the relations between the LCI and the PRT. While they will publish a joint programme for the elections, each will then retain the right to publish additional propaganda separately.

In this way the political differences that still exist between the two organisations will not interfere and present themselves as obstacles in the campaign to reach out to the militant base of the CP and SP and build a real revolutionary pole in the presidential elections.

Napolitano explains how....

T.U. DELEGATION TO IRELAND GETS UNDER WAY

The National Delegate Conference (NDC) of the Troops Out Movement last weekend made some important steps towards consolidating the campaign and taking it forward. Most notably, this meant working out the detailed aspects of the forthcoming trade union delegation to Ireland.

The successful proposals, put forward by the IMG, dealt not only with the concrete programme of activities to be arranged for the delegation in Ireland, but also with what should be done after the delegation returns. It will now be possible to campaign for a series of regional conferences and trade union conferences to discuss the delegation's report-back and plan for an open conference for Labour Party members.

Out of such conferences and report-back meetings, support groups for TOM can be built in the unions and CLPs. This will help to overcome the isolation and separation TOM has experienced in relation to the mass organisations of the working class.

There are still many problems, though. This NDC was much smaller than the previous one, and many branches of TOM were not represented. Furthermore, there has been a decline in membership. All this could have been foreseen given the lack of political clarity which

flowed out of the last NDC, but it will be a very dangerous feature if it goes unchecked.

Despite the political gains of this NDC in relation to the delegation, other important aspects of the IMG proposals were not accepted — most notably, that the Delegation Planning Committee should be opened out to become a broad body of activists from trade union branches, Labour Parties, TOM branches, revolutionary groups and students.

In other words, the Delegation Planning Committee should have been an open body and not simply a sub-committee of the TOM. Not only would this have given a tremendous lease of life to building the delegation and taking the follow-up into the labour movement, it would have been a model for the organisation of TOM itself.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. The rigid, party-like structure of what ought to be a broad campaign has contributed heavily towards the inward-looking factionalism that marred the TOM

for a whole period after last May's Labour Movement Conference. The tight and exclusive structure of TOM provides a feeding ground for groups who put their own narrow interests above those of the campaign as a whole, leading to threats of 'disciplinary' action and the like.

These lessons have still not been learned, and indeed this NDC saw the TOM Constitution tightened up yet another notch. The IMG is convinced that the future development and even existence of the TOM depends on clear politics and correct organisational forms. Progress has been made on the first, but not as yet on the second.

However the main question of the moment is the trade union delegation. The positions adopted at this TOM NDC, despite the other shortcomings of the conference, will enable the IMG to devote significant resources for building the delegation and the TOM in the next few months.

Ted Coxhead

Northern Ireland is a haven for religious and moral fanatics.

The 'born-again Christians' who populate the Loyalist parties are not only entrenched against any move towards the unification of this country — they are also utterly opposed to children having a swim in the park on Sundays, and to workers having a swim in the council baths or going to the cinema. And in most parts of this statelet they have the power to ram such reactionary nonsense down the throats of the whole population.

More importantly, the views of these fanatics also reign supreme on matters of social legislation. This column has already reported on the plight in which Irish women find themselves.

On these matters, however, at least some movement is underway to gain improvements.

to carry out a campaign of harassment against Northern Irish gays.

One such campaign is in full swing at the moment. Diaries, letters, address books, gay liberation literature, and correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association (NIGRA) over reforms which NIGRA is seeking — all these have been seized by the police. Seven men have been subjected to lengthy interrogation by the RUC: this was conducted in a very hostile fashion, and by all accounts went into the most degrading detail about their sexual behaviour and acquaintances.

All seven were also threatened with exposure to family and employers — but as none have made any secret of their homosexuality, these threats backfired in the face of the police. However, the names and addresses of people who are

7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES

JOHN MAGEE reports from Belfast

But one oppressed section of society in the North remains in total isolation — the estimated 72,000 homosexuals and lesbians, who make up approximately 5 per cent of the North's population.

The overwhelming majority of people in both the Loyalist and anti-Unionist communities regard homosexuality as a case for psychiatric and penal treatment. It is regarded not merely as offensive but as a sickness and an unnatural vice. Aversion therapy, self-denial, and even prayer are prescribed; and if that fails, then there is always prison — because, of course, homosexuality is a crime in the North.

The 1967 Sexual Offences Act in Britain, which legalised homosexual relations between consenting adults (over 21) in private, does not apply in the North of Ireland. As a result, the Royal Ulster Constabulary have total freedom

intensely afraid of exposure have been taken by the RUC in a series of raids since 20 January.

The intimidation of gays, and the removal of files and membership lists, is clearly designed to disorganise and stifle the young gay liberation movement in the North; and it has to an extent succeeded. There are few in the Six Counties to whom the gay movement can turn for solidarity and support. That is why revolutionary socialists must be outspoken in defence of the right of gays to define their own sexual orientation and organise in defence of this right.

Socialists and gays in Britain can also help by sending telegrams/letters of protest against the RUC's harassment to Merlyn Rees, and telegrams/letters of solidarity to the Northern Ireland Gay Rights Association, c/o Students Union, Queens University, Belfast BT7.

REFORMIST RIDDLES

Judith Hart, Labour 'left' MP, is 'as near a pacifist as one can be', But southern African 'convention of war' Means 'guerilla warfare' and therefore, — well, here she could call for arms to the liberation movements or on British workers to take industrial action in solidarity with black workers in southern Africa. But no, she bleats: we (Britain) must not indulge in hypocrisy...

Sorry Judith, your performance last Wednesday at Friends Meeting House was good but not convincing. What is going on in southern Africa is not a 'totally new concept of warfare alien to everything Western defence programmes are about'.

You recall wartime exploits by British 'heroes' in Yugoslavia, we recall the sustained guerilla struggles against British aggressors in Malaysia during the 1950s, in the Arab east (especially in Oman), and on our own doorstep in Ireland. The principle of armed struggle by an oppressed nation for national liberation is too much for you to swallow, so you argue that southern Africa is a 'special case' — but it is not!

Nor are the death sentences announced last Wednesday by South Africa on Namibians Aaron Muchimba, SWAPO National Organiser, and Hendrik Shikongo. Not to campaign for their release would be a disgrace to the working class movement, but the Labour misleaders have already passed over the murder of

dozens of nationalists in Smith's prisons in the interests of negotiations to impose a bourgeois neo-colonial state in Zimbabwe.

The possibility of achieving this via the 'peaceful' road is now remote, but a break with this strategy on a principled basis would be social democratic suicide. So suddenly we have 'totally new situations' and 'special cases'. But patching-up will solve nothing. What is needed is a campaign in solidarity with the liberation struggles still unfolding in southern Africa, to educate the British working class in its responsibilities towards the struggle against a common oppressor: international capitalism and its drive for profits at the expense of workers' living standards everywhere.

LIZ WARDLE

RACIST ROAD Cont. from p 12

One and three quarter million black people live in the UK, almost exclusively in urban areas and in the centres of industrial cities. No Government operating in the long term interests of British capitalism would totally abandon attempts to integrate the leading forces in those black communities given that strategic reality.

In the short term, however, growing alienation of black people from such projects, and the sharp growth in instances of police repression in black areas, could lead to a loss of immigrant electoral support from the Labour Party and heightened black militancy. This could be a price which the present Government might accept in return for popular white support for a racist offensive to blame the economic down-turn on immigrants.

The vulnerability of the organised white working class to racist agitation has already been clearly demonstrated in the anti-immigration speech made by Councillor William Jarvis, president of Birmingham Trades Council and chairman of West Midlands County Council.

In these circumstances revolutionaries must move quickly and effectively to combat racism in the labour movement. The extension of anti-fascist committees must be accompanied by consistent propaganda on the need for workers self-defence.

Mass actions on a national scale must also confront the racist project in the bud by demanding the repeal of all anti-immigrant and anti-black legislation. In the trade unions the fight for the right of self-organisation of black workers into caucuses is an essential starting point for the struggle against discrimination in all areas of social life and in the workplace.

Revolutionaries must expose the nationalist arguments of the Labour lefts, who tread on the shoulders of black people to concoct utopian schemas of an alliance between the British working class and the bosses.

Tearing up the racist card will only result from a consistent fight for the right of self-organisation and defence of the black communities and a principled campaign for policies which directly confront the reformist leaders of the working class.

RICHARD NEUBAUER

***** Speaking tour on SOUTHERN AFRICA

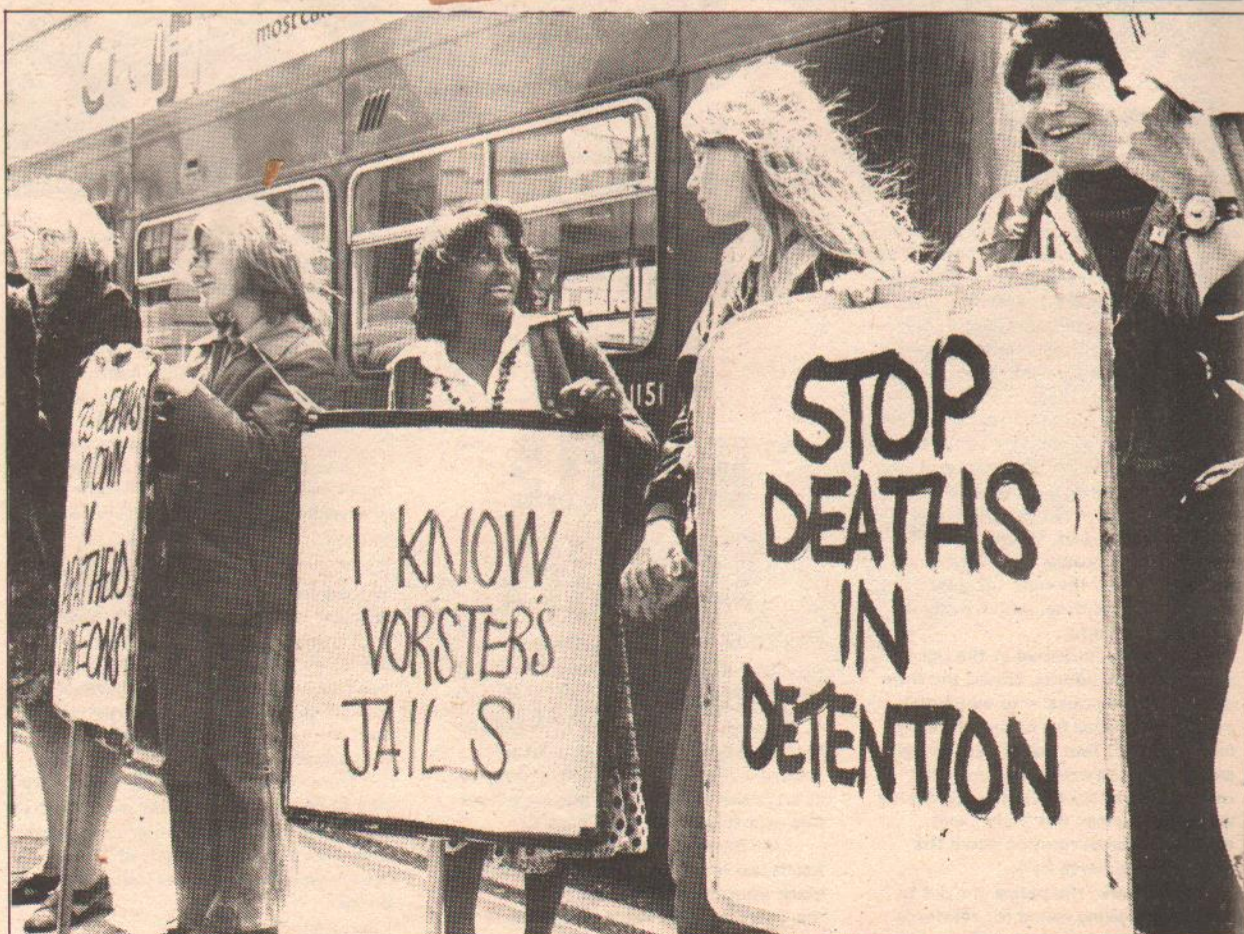
organised by IMG Student Commission

MONDAY 24 MAY
Lunchtime (1pm): North London Poly, Ladbroke House, Highbury Grove.
Evening (7.30pm): Essex University — Lecture Theatre B3.

TUESDAY 25 MAY
Lunchtime (1.30pm): Bath University
Evening (7.30pm): Cardiff College of Art

THURSDAY 27 MAY
Evening (7.30pm): Bristol University

FRIDAY 28 MAY
Lunchtime (1pm): Sussex University
Evening (8pm): Canterbury University
If you want to organise a meeting on southern Africa in your college, contact IMG Student Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1 (tel. 01-278 9526).



Picket of South African Embassy on Monday against torture and murder in South Africa and Namibia. In centre is Shanthie Maidoo, who spent more than a year in jail under the Terrorism Act for refusing to give evidence in the trial of Nelson Mandela.

Labour's racist road

The successes scored by the fascist groups in the local elections — after their apparent disarray following the National Front/National Party split — raise important questions for the left and the whole labour movement. The answer lies in the gradually changing relationship between the British ruling class and their governments and the black immigrant community.

After the war, British capitalism encouraged the flow of immigrant workers into Britain to meet the expansion of the productive forces. As the crisis began to assert itself, the door started to close.

Each new piece of immigration control legislation has however been accompanied by 'liberal' anti-discrimination laws. Thus control has always been greased by provisions which aim to integrate the leaders of the black community into the system of agencies set up by the Race Relations Act.

But now a new trend is appearing in the policies of this Government. It was highlighted by the outburst of Alex Lyon when Callaghan sacked him as Minister of State at the Home Office. Lyon declared: 'I have paid the price for trying to get justice for the blacks of this country. Jim has never had much time for those who espoused that cause.'

The Labour Government has already cut the annual quota of work permits for foreign nationals in the hotel and catering industry from 8,500 in 1975 to 6,000 in 1976, and for domestic and hospital workers from 8,000 in 1975 to 2,500 this year.

These measures have been taken as the result of pressure from the trade union bureaucracy. The TUC has called for the complete abolition of the quota and stricter checks on illegal immigrants working in hotels and restaurants.

National Union of Seamen delegates at their annual conference recently heard a Government minister promising to phase out wage discrimination against Asian and African seamen on British vessels. But the same minister cynically declared that the exemption clause for shippers in the Race Relations Act could not be removed immediately because of the pressure it would bring on the shipping industry. In the context of a declining British merchant fleet, this 'fighting space' is likely to be used to

phase out those workers themselves, rather than the discrimination.

The press has devoted very little space to this battery of measures on immigration. It has chosen instead to turn the spotlight on an unfortunate homeless black immigrant family housed by local officials in a 'luxury' hotel. Remarks by the young children in the family about others outside Britain 'who would like to come' have been blown up into stories about an imminent black 'invasion', while the controversy over the BBC's showing of the special anti-immigrant 'Open Door' programme is still fresh in many minds.

The whole racist pot is being continually stirred by the incessant nationalist chatter of the Labour Party and trade union 'lefts' about import controls and 'saving British industry'. Such cheap and easy solutions find a ready response from within a working class which is suffering cuts in real income, social services, housing and other deprivations.

The reinforcement of the racist drive by the Labour Government has provided the fascist groups with a unique chance to overcome their recent splits and defeats. This trend is not likely to diminish in the coming period.

Fascism is not 'round the corner' in Britain. No significant section of the ruling class backs the fascists. What is possible is a racist offensive for which this Labour Government has built up the foundations.

But playing the 'racist card' — elevating the race question onto the political level — is always a risky tactic for the bourgeoisie, particularly in a situation where the black population is far from cowed and is beginning actively to organise. So such a political offensive by the ruling class would be in the context of preparing for a possible defeat of the social contract/wage controls package at the hands of an increasingly restless labour movement.

Such a bid would however only be part of a political strategy by the ruling class, and would have certain 'undesirable' side effects; street violence and other social disruptions together with increasing resistance by the black community.

Such mass action by black people is already well advanced. Hundreds of black youth joined the militant anti-NF demonstration in Bradford on 24 April, and Birmingham saw a repeat of this experience.

Cont. on page 11



Photo: DAVE EVANS (IFL)

BLACKS RISE AGAINST RACISTS

Hundreds of black youths and leftists poured onto the streets of Birmingham on Saturday to protest against a National Front demonstration outside Winson Green prison.

The fascists were protesting against the imprisonment of Robert Relf, an avowed racist jailed for contempt of court for refusing to remove a 'For sale to an English family' notice from outside his home.

The NF's newly discovered hero has previously been jailed for daubing racist slogans, breaking an Indian's shop window, and in 1965 throwing a thunder-flash at then Foreign Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker. He was previously a member of the Nazi National Socialist Movement and the Ku Klux Klan. He

is also an open admirer of Rudolf Hess.

Although the Birmingham District Labour Party voted by 140 to 7 to support the anti-fascist demonstration, the almost simultaneous call for an end to immigration made by William Jarvis, Birmingham Trades Council president and chairman of the West Midlands County Council, reflected the backward sentiments in sections of the labour movement on which the racists can breed.

However, a meeting of the Trades Council devoted entirely to this issue passed a resolution calling on Jarvis to withdraw his statement, reaffirming its policy of opposition to immigration controls by 83 votes to 52.

As with the recent anti-fascist demonstration in Bradford, it was the mobilisa-

tion of the black community on the 1,800 strong demonstration that was the distinctive feature. Demonstrators replied to police cavalry charges with a hail of half bricks and staves. Thirty-eight arrests were made, and the Birmingham Anti-Fascist Committee is establishing a defence fund for their costs.

A defence fund to help cover the costs of those arrested on the Bradford demonstration on 24 April has been set up with the sponsorship of Bradford Trades Council, the Indian Workers Association, and the Pakistani Workers Association. The hon. treasurers are AUEW convenor Terry Farrer and Labour Councillor Brian Rhodes. Please send all contributions to: Manningham Defendants Fund, 41 Athol Road, Bradford 9.



Photo: DAVE EVANS (IFL)

A confrontation between the police and over 200 black youths last week in Tottenham ended with the arrest of 18 black youths (nine teenagers and nine juveniles) plus one adult, charged with offences ranging from possession of an offensive weapon to assault on the police to insulting behaviour.

The trouble started after the Harringay inter-schools meeting at New River Sports Centre. The boys and girls were making their way home when a fight started between two girls, and a large crowd formed. When the fight stopped, large groups of youths made their way down the road till they reached a sweet shop, which some of them tried to enter.

The owner, petrified at the sight of so many black youths, closed the shop and called the police — to which the youths responded by calling the shop owners racist. Two police cars arrived, and the youths moved on down the road, followed by the police. Suddenly someone shouted out 'fight', and everyone started running down the road towards Perth Park.

At the park, the police got out of their cars (having called for reinforcements) and started chasing the youths.

TOTTENHAM COPS BATTLE YOUTHS

Fights broke out between the police and the youths as the former started arresting people.

Many of those involved in the conflict were unemployed school leavers. Amongst the rest were a large proportion of boys and girls who are leaving school this year to join the dole queues.

Like Bonfire night in Chapeltown, Leeds last November, when about 200 black youths battled with the police, the Tottenham incident provides another example of the growing awareness amongst

an increasing number of black youths of their group strength in situations of conflict with the police.

Justice and respect for the law are meaningless concepts to a growing number of black youths, who find themselves automatically unemployed, dejected and demoralised, constantly under the threat of unprovoked attacks by power-drunk racist police; people defined by their colour and class origins as inherent criminals, guilty by virtue of their very existence.

The question of how we relate to the growing rebellion and hostility amongst the youths, who find themselves the victims of both class oppression and the racism of the bourgeoisie and the working class, is something to which the revolutionary left must seriously relate. And the answer does not lie merely in propagandist denunciations of racism.

The cases of the nine teenagers charged will be heard on 11 June at Tottenham Magistrates' Court; the other nine youths, who were between the ages of 14 and 16, have been reported to the Police Juvenile Bureau.

Leroy M. Gordon

DON'T FORGET THE FIGHTING FUND!

Rush your contribution now, to: Red Weekly Fighting Fund, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.



NAME.....	SUBSCRIPTION RATES
ADDRESS.....	DOMESTIC: £7 per year
.....	£3.50 for six months
.....	FOREIGN: £9 per year surface mail
.....	£12 per year airmail

Write to RED WEEKLY (distribution), 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.