

RED WEEKLY

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Fascists poll 44 per cent in Deptford election

LABOUR FEEDS RACIST SURGE

THEY CREMATED HIM on Saturday. The body of 18-year-old Gurdip Chaggar, stabbed to death by racists, was followed by thousands of mourners through Southall. To the end the Asian community's reformist leaders refused to back the militant youth — denying them the right to carry his coffin.

But things are changing. The 6,000 strong demonstration on the following day, 4 July, heard a unanimous call from these self same leaders for black self-defence. They have changed their tune. The impatience of the youth with the community leaders' line of reliance on the police, courts and Labour Government has threatened their positions. The Labour Government will not act to halt the racist tide. Callaghan

has been accused of being a racist by a former ministerial colleague. He has not even bothered to deny the charge. Michael Foot and Tony Benn will not speak out against the racists. The Labour Party National Executive Committee has put a block on participation by the Labour Party in counter demonstrations to the National Front.

To make quite clear the contempt in which he holds black

people, Callaghan treated the delegation from the Asian Action Committee who visited him with child-like patronisations such as 'Do you know that you are now sitting in the very chair which Mr Healey sits in?' and other white sahib-type sentiments.

But the cloddish racialism of the Labour leadership is not the most serious aspect of their actions. Accommodating completely to the demands of Enoch Powell and the Tories, they plan to reintroduce emergency measures including a register of all immigrant dependents, to step up the hunt in the black communities for illegal immigrants, and further constrict the possibility of black people entering this country through the passing of the Nationality Bill.

All this is combined with massive increases in the tuition fees of overseas students and the choking off of further overseas students intake. The effect of these laws going through Parliament will further encourage the racists and fascists.

The Deptford council by-election saw the fascists poll more votes than the Labour candidate. The philistine Labour leaders will see in this a sign to introduce further measures to restrict immigration — not change their disastrous social and economic policies.

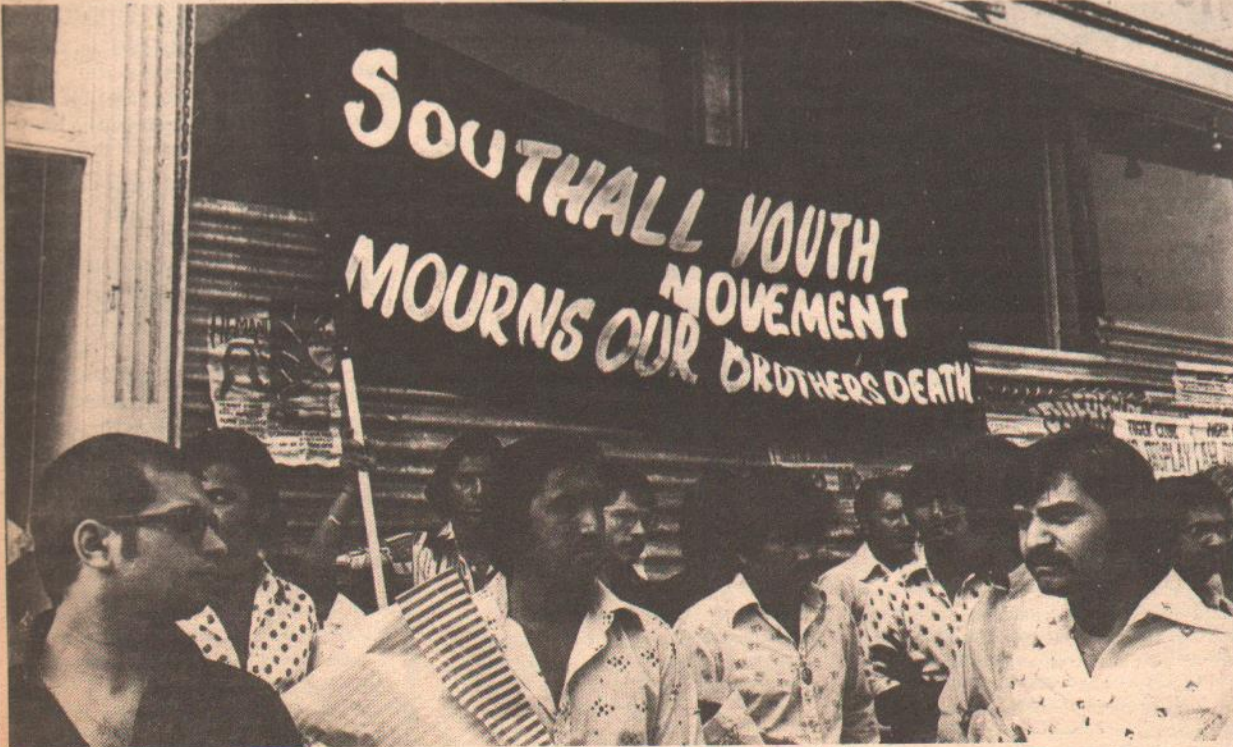
Their actions, like those of the Fleet Street gutter press are giving the racists and fascists a field day. They refuse to take the only principled stand that will halt the racist surge — labour movement support for black self-defence as the first and necessary step to workers defence.

The building of anti-racist committees must go alongside mass mobilisations to deny the freedom of the streets and platforms to racists and fascists. The witch hunt of the Labour Government against immigrants must be opposed, as part of the campaign to repeal all immigration laws.

This is the basis for the only black-white unity that really counts. Fighting unity.



Chaggar's mother with her son's body before the funeral



Southall Youth Movement militants headed funeral procession

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

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FOR SUGAR AND SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE

In the first article of a two-part series, **TUNDE ANTHONY** looks at the historical roots of racism in Britain

British racism and imperialism are not phenomena peculiar to the 20th century, but outgrowths of European expansionism from the 15th century onwards. The conquest of the New World — rich in raw materials and spacious in land, but lacking the manpower for its effective exploitation — necessitated a source of labour. It was this economic need which dictated the transportation of millions of Africans from their homelands to the New World.

There is still a tendency amongst some to interpret slavery as racially determined. This is a gross falsification of history. As Eric Williams wrote in his *Capitalism and Slavery*: 'Slavery in the Caribbean has been too narrowly identified with the Negro. A racial twist has thereby been given to what is basically an economic phenomenon. Slavery was not born of racism: racism was the consequence of slavery.'

Gibson Wakefield pointed out in the mid-19th century that the reasons for slavery 'are not moral, but economical circumstances; they relate not to vice and virtue, but to production'.

The role and importance of slavery in the growth of both American and European capitalism was crucial. As Marx emphasised in a letter to P.V. Annenkov: 'Direct slavery is as much the pivot of our industrialism today as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery no cotton; without cotton no modern industry Slavery is ... an economic category of the highest importance.'

Slavery, and especially the slave trade, played a crucial part in making England the industrial workshop of the world. English industry and commerce underwent a vast expansion in the early 17th century based on the revenue from the slave trade and the importation of raw materials from the colonies.

CHAINS

By about 1700 Bristol had become an important centre of the slave trade, followed by London and Liverpool. Liverpool soon overtook both Bristol and London, however, and slave-trading became the single most important activity of its merchants. By the last decade of the 18th century, 132 slave ships sailed annually to Africa from Liverpool.

At the height of the British slave trade, nearly 90 per cent of the British ships belonging to Liverpool merchants carried slaves. Williams wrote: 'It was a common saying that several of the principal streets of Liverpool had been marked out by the chains and the walls of the houses cemented by the blood of African slaves, and one street nicknamed "Negro Row".'

The trade in black human merchandise was so financially profitable, and so much money poured into the British Treasury from the trade, that the King issued a new coin called the guinea — named after the area in Africa from which many of the slaves were taken.

The economic benefits gained by Britain from the transportation of Africans to the New World was not limited to the direct financial profits accruing from the trade. There were also indirect benefits — for instance, the direct stimulus received by English shipbuilding from the slave trade. English industry also gained

tremendously from the low cost materials cultivated and extracted by slave labour in the New World.

For instance, the growth of the textile industry was an important factor in the development of British capitalism — and until the outbreak of the American Civil War, Britain drew from the Southern States four-fifths of all her cotton imports. It was also profits from slave-trading, particularly those acquired via Liverpool, which provided much of the capital for the industrial growth of Lancashire, particularly Manchester.

COMMERCIAL

Britain was the first European nation eventually to ban slave trading by her subjects. She also took it upon herself to persuade other European nations to follow her example. But contrary to what

we find in school history books, Britain did this not out of philanthropy or even self-righteousness, but for sound commercial reasons.

PLUNDER

By the mid-19th century the development of European capitalism had begun to dictate a different relationship with Africa. It became evident that it was more economically viable in the long run to trade with the continent; instead of transporting African labour to the New World, capital could be exported to Africa and cheap labour could be used on the spot to plunder the natural resources of the continent. But trade in slaves was still highly profitable, especially with the increases in slave prices, and the trade had to be internationally suppressed before 'legitimate' commerce between Africa and Europe could develop.

Although most European nations had illegalised slave-trading by 1842, however, it was not until the cessation of the demand for slaves brought about by the American Civil War

(1861-1865) and the abolition of slavery in Cuba and Brazil (in 1886 and 1888 respectively) that the trade actually came to an end.

With the aim of transforming Africa into a peripheral extension of Europe, to service the European economies with cheap raw materials and provide an outlet for excess production, the abolition of slave-trading was followed by a scramble for the land and people of Africa — which in its execution was as brutal as the slave-trading which preceded it.

Between 1884 and 1898 the soil of Africa was largely apportioned by the European nations amongst themselves. 'By what right', asked the 19th century African nationalist Holy Johnson, 'except that of might, do they instal themselves in any part of the continent, thereby violating the territorial integrity of Africa and depriving traditional authorities of their sovereignty.'

SCRAMBLE

Yes, it was the right of might, plus the self-declared right of capitalism to seek and attain the factors of production at the lowest financial cost regardless of the price paid in

human terms. The scramble for Africa was the scramble for land and people to be devoured by a system whose ultimate sole motivation was that of profit and industrial expansion.

These economic plunderings of imperialism totally disrupted the economies of the colonies — in fact, they led directly to the process of the development of underdevelopment. It is this process which has resulted in the poverty of these economies today. It is this fact that has forced men and women from these countries to seek employment abroad. In other words, black immigrants are here because British imperialism was there and created the conditions in which their economies could not support their inhabitants.

Secondly the importance of emphasising the economic foundations of slavery as opposed to that view which conceives of it as a racial phenomenon — an episode in human history explicable in terms of the subjugation of one race by another — is not merely an academic point. Without understanding the economic functions and foundations of slavery and the racism which developed out of it, the racial twist which Williams mentions leads to a moralisation of the oppression of blacks — which in effect politically paralyses them.

MORALIST

A moralist conception of black oppression — one which views black oppression as merely the consequence of white prejudice — leads logically to the 'solution' of constantly appealing to the moral sense of the oppressor, which is identified as the white race. Hence the liberation of blacks becomes a matter of changing the attitude of whites, without placing the different attitudes and interests of different classes of whites within the context of the socio-economic relations of capitalist society.

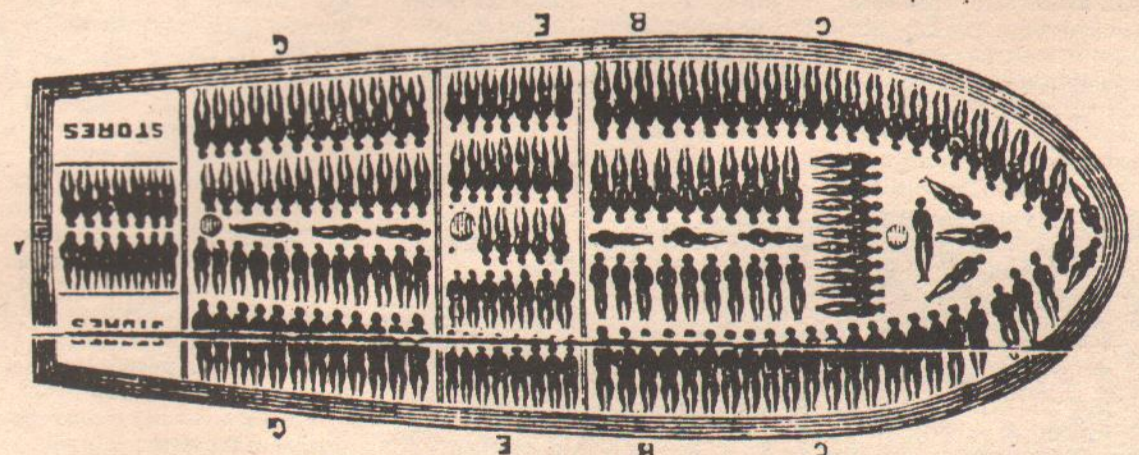
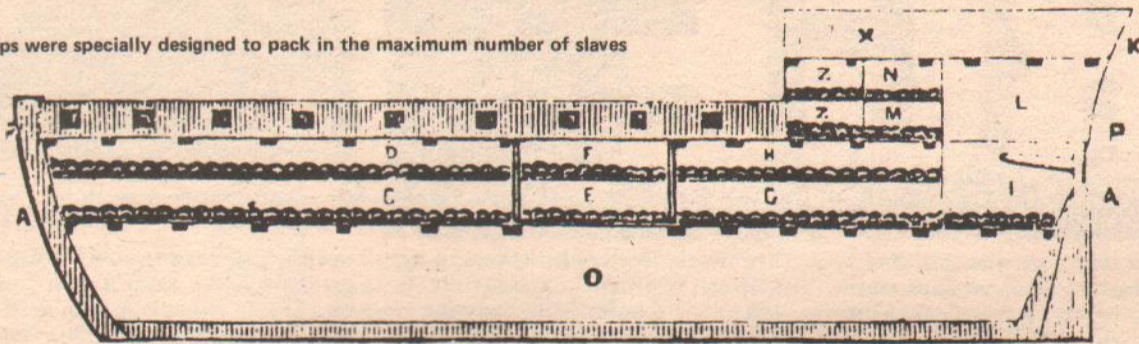
The other logical conclusion of a moralist conception of black oppression is that the struggle for the liberation of blacks is fought simply on a race basis, as opposed to a class basis which takes racism and the added dimensions of black oppression into account.

PREJUDICES

Neither of these approaches can succeed, because they extract racism and pose it as an independent relationship which can in some way be solved in isolation from the general system of society. These approaches also fail to differentiate between the racism of the bourgeoisie and the low political consciousness and race prejudices of the white working class. They fail to understand that racist ideology is not an end in itself but a means which serves to maintain the *status quo* — a part of which is the economic relationship in which black workers are exploited by capitalism.

The second part of this article will deal with the economic and social functions of racism and its relationship to racist ideology.

Ships were specially designed to pack in the maximum number of slaves



Southall Labour says no to immigration laws

Opposition to all anti-immigration laws is voiced in a resolution to the Labour Party Conference passed overwhelmingly last week by the General Management Committee of Ealing-Southall Constituency Labour Party (where Syd Bidwell is the MP). Labour Party members in Ealing-Southall are now working to get a real campaign on the issue off the ground. They are pushing in particular for other CLPs to put forward the same motion, which reads:

'This conference recognises that racialism, by exploiting the concern of working people over the deteriorating jobs, housing and education situation resulting from the present economic crisis, seeks to put the blame on black and immigrant workers in order to divide and weaken the Labour and trade union movement.'

'Conference asserts the basic unity of interest between all sections of the working class and declares that the way

to combat racism is for the labour movement to fight for the end of the system that breeds racial hatred.'

'Conference further believes that the workers of all countries should have the freedom to move from one country to another without restrictions, and should be able to take part in political activity. To this end we call upon the Labour Government to repeal the 1971 Immigration Act, the 1948 Nationality Act, and all other anti-immigration laws.'

IN FOCUS

The heat is on

About the only startling thing to happen at the two day summit of the seven major capitalist countries in Puerto Rico was the arrival of Concorde in the poverty-stricken country. At least that is how it appeared, because all the grafting and fixing had already taken place.

Take Dennis Healey's promise to reduce unemployment in Britain to 600,000 by the end of 1979 — part of the hallowed social contract. The Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development reported about a week before the summit that the main enemy was still inflation. To limit it to an average 7 to 8 per cent per annum for most industrial countries — Britain's rate would still be nearer 15 per cent — the OECD wants economic growth restricted to a maximum of 5 to 5½ per cent a year. The OECD on this projection put Britain's growth rate at 3 per cent — and US President Ford reiterated the OECD position at the Puerto Rican summit.

But as Red Weekly pointed out at the time of Healey's wild claim, it would take a growth rate of over 8 per cent to get unemployment down to the figure he mentioned — which is just as likely as Britain putting someone on the moon. Now she couldn't even borrow a rocket!

And remember that famous strings-free £5.3 billion in standby credit Healey obtained a few weeks back when the pound was on the ropes? Suddenly these non-existent strings have taken the form of veritable steel chains. Mr Gerald Parsky, assistant secretary of the US Treasury, told the Government on 21 June that it was not enough to claim that the money markets had got the exchange rates all wrong — they had to change their domestic policies.

Callaghan wilts

Callaghan promptly obliged. Backed by the Iron Chancellor, he told the TUC-Labour Party liaison committee: 'As leader of the party I can give no guarantee that there will not be further cuts in 1978-79.' Plans for public spending cuts of a further £1,000m in the 1977-8 have been 'leaked'. Schemes for a further £2,500m cuts contingency plan of sterling collapses again have also been ordered by Callaghan according to a report in the 27 June Sunday Telegraph. On 29 June this was followed up by Callaghan telling the left in the Commons that the profitability of manufacturing industry had to take precedence over public expenditure.

The Investor's Chronicle of 2 July has Shirley Williams confidently expecting profits to be as high as £11,600 million in 1976. The reasons for that aren't hard to find. Between January 1975 and January 1976 unemployment virtually doubled, prices soared by 26 per cent and real take home pay fell 6 per cent. From January 1975 to December 1975 total trading profits were £9,516 million according to the Central Statistical Office. In the same period manufacturing industry invested just £1,809 million in new capital.

The idea that being nice to capitalists makes them invest — something the TUC leadership has fully adopted — means that the social services are being bled white — and for what? So that even if firms do invest, more jobs can be 'rationalised' out of existence. In the public sector, 35,000 civil service jobs alone are now being considered for the axe, while one estimate of the number of jobs which will be destroyed by the cuts in public services is 200,000.

But just in case you're worried about your job, take comfort in this. As Dennis Healey said the other week: if Britain keeps it nerve now, continues with the Labour Government's policies, in the next decade Britain will enjoy the kind of economic miracle that West Germany did in the '50s and France in the '60s. Must be the heat.

4 July demo says it loud -



Southall Youth Movement provided a big contingent on the demonstration. Tariq Ali (inset) denounced silence of Labour lefts

self-defence!

The national demonstration against racism last Sunday brought together reformist, Stalinist and revolutionary organisations and groups — spanning from the Westminster CRC (Community Relations Council) to the International Marxist Group.

The International Socialists substituted a van-load of placards for a mobilisation in trying to give the impression that they dominated the

march. Other banners and placards carried slogans ranging from the CP's liberal wishy-washy 'One race — the human race' to those calling for the repeal of all immigration laws, no platform for fascists, and the building of black self-defence. The dominant chants on the march centred around this last question.

The march was preceded by a rally at Speaker's Corner, where representatives from about a dozen political groups spoke. A spokesman from the newly formed Indian Defence Committee called for active self-defence.

Joe Hunt, from the West Indian Standing Conference, called for 'a multi-racial society at all cost'. In reference to the racists, he said: 'We have decided we are going to take on the bull anytime it decides We are the bullfighters.' This rhetorical outburst by the WISC, quite uncharacteristic of the group's actual liberal accommodationist role, expressed the feelings of most of the black and white revolutionaries who responded with loud applause.

Shop Floor

Another speaker from the Afro-Caribbean Association called for action on the shop floor to defeat racism. 'We must stop production unless we stop production we will not make a political point', he said.

Maurice Styles, speaking on behalf of the TUC General Council, tried to apologise for the lack of trade union support on the demonstration by protesting that the TUC did not know about it until three days previously. He was met with chants of 'Where is Murray, Jones, Scanlon'.

Tariq Ali, speaking for the IMG, pointed out the conspicuous silence of Labour lefts like Foot and Benn. These opportunist social democrats are willing to publicly denounce right-wing oppression and brutality in Chile and South Africa, but when it comes to the racist offensive in Britain they say nothing.

Ali also denounced the ambassadors of Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, who in the midst of numerous racist attacks had called on Asians to cool it and show faith in the British police — who are said to be doing a good job.

Those who attempt to counterpose black self-defence to workers'

defence, rejecting the former, fail to understand the relationship between the building of black self-defence and the establishment of workers' self-defence, and also the immediate nature of the need for black self-defence.

It should not be forgotten by those who counterpose black and workers' defence that: (a) blacks form a part of the working class; (b) it is partly because of the dormant state of the labour movement and the traitorous policies of the trade union leaders that the need for black self-defence arises; and (c) building black self-defence in no way hinders our work in educating the working class and demanding as we did on the march: 'Labour Movement Must Support Black Self-Defence'.

Leroy M. Gordon

ROVER'S RIGGED RAFFLE

Why should British Leyland management offer four brand new Rovers, and £5 vouchers for drink, and a free meal for a couple in their raffle. Most workers at the Solihull plant thought it was because the management couldn't afford the back pay which resulted from a strike last November, after the management had unilaterally introduced industrial study engineers in an attempt to push down manning levels. The management owed the workforce £316,824. So they adopted the tactics of the village fete to get off the financial hook.

But there was more to it than that, as stewards discovered. The development of the Rover plant and the new 'flagship' of the luxury Rover are key to the implementation of the rationalisation and mass redundancy plans of the Ryder Report. The new Rover will replace both the old Rover and the large Triumphs. This will enable British Leyland to stop production at the large Canley plant in Coventry. The company will then be reduced to three main assembly sites — Solihull, Longbridge and Cowley.

But things are not going according to plan. Leyland management has not recruited enough workers or installed enough tools to make the magic figure of 2,000 units per week. At present only 100 cars a day are coming off the tracks.

To the anger of a meeting of 2,000 workers called in the Solihull plant, it was discovered that the raffle was in return for a massive increase in overtime working. In addition the management declared its intention to re-introduce the industrial engineers to increase line speeds. In the face of this anger, senior steward Fred Conway, who had been party to the deal, felt compelled to resign.

An alternative policy was then put forward by steward Raghiv Ahsan — to oppose the raffle and impose an overtime ban. Racism was used to oppose this argument. A white worker jumped up and said it was all very well to put forward this policy but everyone knew that Ahsan had six wives and could afford it. This argument got short shrift, however — the speaker was booed from the platform, and stewards discussed the possibility of sending him to Coventry.

GOOD RECORD

Solihull has so far got a good record of struggle. It rejected both the decrease in manning levels and the collaborationist attempts of the Ryder Report to set up joint management committees. The next stage of the struggle will be the fight against the re-introduction of the industrial engineers in the autumn. It is a struggle which should receive the support of all workers in British Leyland, because it involves a fight for the jobs of the workers at Canley, Browns Lane and all the plants threatened by rationalisation.

The raffle was rigged. But as usual you have to look deeper for the reason why the village fete came to the 'most advanced factory in Western Europe'.

The dream factory?

Management claims that working conditions in the new Solihull Rover plant are 'wonderful'. Production workers are supposed to think it is 'just fantastic'. The paintshop, in particular, 'is the most advanced in Western Europe'. Among its 'startling' new innovations is the provision of ducts to get rid of the poisonous carbon monoxide fumes generated when the cars are driven off the line!

The Times correspondent gushed: 'Leyland's new showpiece has gone a long way towards restoring the national pride of at least one motor industry correspondent.'

One fact overlooked by these enthusiasts is that workers in the paintshop have taken to striking from 12.30 pm in recent weeks in protest against the conditions in the paintshop. Funny how differently things look from Fleet Street, isn't it.....?

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

Tour success

The unanimous support given by all black speakers to the slogan of black self-defence at the 4 July demonstration, the large size of the IMG contingent, and the big sale of Red Weekly bore testimony to the success of the speaking tour on racism organised by Red Weekly. Tariq Ali, the main speaker, received an enthusiastic reception in the last week of the tour.

COVENTRY: 'Full support for black self-defence' was the unanimous position of a meeting largely composed of Asian workers, who heard local IWA leader Asmir Bains give a pledge to organise defence in the area.

OXFORD: the hundred strong audience heard Tariq once again rebut the false arguments of the Workers Socialist League, who refuse to support the slogan of labour movement support for black self-defence. At one point, a WSL leader asked: 'Who says that police attack black workers more than white workers?' Tariq declared to applause that he said so, and would go on saying so.

NOTTINGHAM: National Coal Board and National Union of Mineworkers officials have collaborated to make sure that only one pit in the area is open to black workers. This revelation was made to a large meeting in the city by an IMG member of the NUM.

BRISTOL: Over 150 people heard Tariq and local T&GWU convenor Charlie Horton — but only through the firm action of black members of the Community Relations Council. Attempts had been made by a local Labour councillor to get the meeting at the Community Relations Centre called off. The black warden of the centre refused, and threatened a walk-out of all black CRC members if the cancellation bid went through.

At all the meetings Tariq emphasised the need not to let up after the 4 July demonstration, but to support the 11 July demonstration, continue the campaign for labour movement support for black self-defence as the first and necessary step to workers defence, and fight to repeal the immigration laws.

LETTERS

UNITY WITH LABOUR MOVEMENT ACTION Say Avon students

This letter is in reply to the letter from John Webster printed in your issue of 24 June. As members of a College of Education Union which had a strong occupation for three weeks, we find his remarks unbelievable to say the least. We fail to see the point in achieving unity with either the National Union of Teachers Executive or for that matter the TUC when those bodies are acting in compliance with the Labour Government in its attempt to ram the cuts down the throats of working people.

What we are interested in is unity with all those forces prepared to fight the cuts (e.g. Lambeth NUT), not with those who mouth opposition but in reality accept the cuts. We speak from some experience in this matter since our Principal, Mr Jack Taylor, was at the time of our occupation Joint President of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education.

Come down here and ask anyone how much of a fight he was prepared to lead! He actively went back on his own conference decision to support our action (rather like NUS Executive?). We preferred to forge unity with the cleaners, porters, and members of staff who were prepared to fight with us, not against us.

Our Union took a clear position in favour of a fight with the trade union movement against the cuts, hence we opposed a national demo on 15 June, supporting instead the lobby of the TUC and demo on 16 June, to be with those trade unionists in favour of such a fight. Our delegates to the Manchester conference were mandated on this, and after the successful vote we all believed that this was what the Executive would organise.

Over 70 people from Redland came to the lobby and demo on 16 June, as well as 40 from other Bristol occupations, 90 from Bath College of Higher Education, and 20 from Bath University School of Education. They were all surprised and disgusted to see that the NUS Executive had done nothing to implement the Manchester resolution (even the NUS main mailing telling us of the conference decision did not arrive until after the demo) and indeed had actively conspired to sabotage that decision.

Yes, maybe some NUS Area Executives supported the London Student Organisation demo on 15 June, but in that case one can only say that they also have a disrespect for conference decisions. Both Bristol and Bath Area NUS supported the actions on 16 June.

It is simply not true to say that teachers were put off by our march past Hamilton House (for a start, we

are all NUT members as well). In Bristol it is our occupation and the campaign generated by it which has caused NUT members in two comprehensives (none of whom are 'revolutionaries') to pass motions on class size, not the local or national NUT executives.

Rather than attacking co-ordinating committees — incidentally, ours includes Rolls Royce shop stewards committee (AUEW), Commonwealth Smelting (RTZ) TGWU shop stewards, four branches of ASTMS, both Bristol and Bath NUT, two NATFHE branches, and has received a message of support from the Liaison Committee of all NATFHE branches in Avon (Redland also received messages of support for our occupation from the South Wales Miners) — John Webster would be better employed leading the fight for the creation of such bodies in every area, so that the campaign can draw in all those forces prepared to fight Healey's cuts.

If he does not, then we can only say he — and other like him on the NUS Executive — are accomplices of the right-wing Labour Government and TUC leadership in implementing the cuts, along with the NUT Executive from which he wants to differentiate himself.

Signed: GERRY GORING (delegate to Manchester conference and Secretary of Avon Committee against Social Service Cuts)

HUGH L'ESTRANGE (delegate to Manchester)

JACKIE BLUNDELL (delegate to Manchester and NUS Secretary, Redland College)

DIRK LADD
HARRY BAINS
JACK COBBE
HILARY TARR
HOWARD DAVIES
EIRA WATKINS

(Redland College Union councillors)

CAROL SMITH
MARTIN PETERS

(Redland College Executive)

EMILY THWAITE
JOHN EAST
ED WALLER

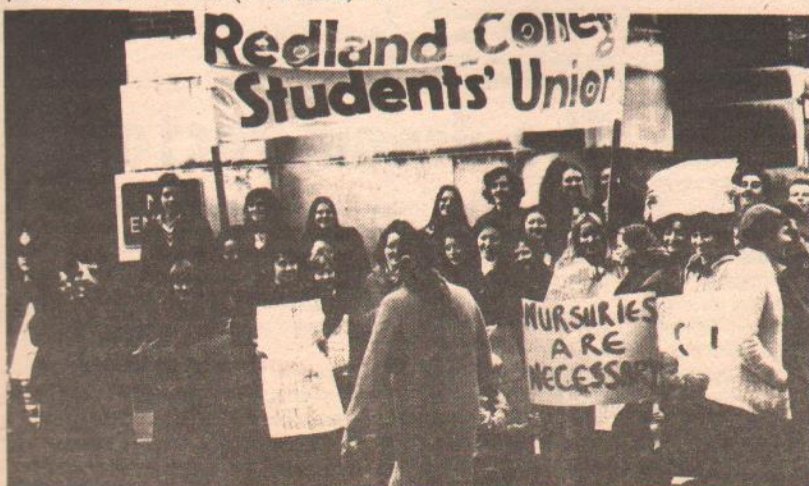
Apart from the above members of Redland College Union, the letter has also been endorsed by

MARK WILER (Secretary, NUS Bristol Area)

GILLY THOMAS (President, Bath College of Higher Education)

PETE CLIFFORD (Bath University delegate to Manchester conference)

IAN SUTHERLAND (President, Bath University)



Redland students have been to fore in building anti-cuts campaign in Bristol

LABOUR CANDIDATE AGAINST LABOUR'S CUTS

KEN LIVINGSTONE was one of only two Greater London councillors who actually spoke against a proposal to increase council rents last week. One of the founders of Labour Against the Housing Cuts (now Labour Against the Cuts), he was also selected as Labour parliamentary candidate for Hampstead last week. *Red Weekly* spoke to him about the effects of the cuts in the London area and how he saw the fight against them developing.

Q. What have the cuts meant so far?

A. Last year the GLC cut £150 million from its capital expenditure budget. £100 million of this was in housing, meaning the end of the municipalisation programme. Seventeen hundred jobs were left vacant and another 300 will be left vacant as a result of the recent Shore circular. Out of 35,000 jobs, 2,000 have been cut.

As its own contribution to a total of 19,000 unemployed teachers, the Inner London Education Authority will be leaving 440 posts vacant. Rents went up by 50p last year and 60p this year — an increase of over a pound in twelve months. Fares have gone up by 112 per cent in 15 months. And of course you've had the £6 limit and now the 4½ per cent limit chopping living standards.

One dramatic effect on social services has been in Southwark: meals on wheels are now 25p a time — and 1,700 pensioners have stopped taking them.

Q. What do you see as the role of Labour Against the Cuts?

A. In the first place it has been educational. We had to deal with — it seems ridiculous now — the fact that there are cuts. People like Foot were denying this.

Now at selection meetings we are getting right-wing councillors removed and replaced by people opposed to the cuts. GLC councillors for next year are being selected at the moment: in all eight places where seats are vacant, anti-cuts candidates have been selected; and a couple of sitting members have also been replaced. Next year the same should be done with the borough councillors.

Q. The conference called by Labour Against the Housing Cuts passed a resolution calling for the opening of the books. What do you see as the relevance of this demand?

A. Until you get the information in the first place you can't convince anybody about the need to fight the cuts. Opening the books can show how local government is financed.

The GLC itself is crippled with debt charges: for each £1 rent paid by a GLC tenant, £1.84 now goes to the money-lenders. This year there has been an increase of £20 million in the debt on housing interest charges.

Q. LAHC's conference also called for the Labour Party to extend its 1975 conference policy of protecting health service spending through a cost of living index to all sectors. How do you see the fight for this?

A. Well, Labour Against the Cuts is part of an overall campaign for a socialist Labour Party, and it's necessary to win people to socialist policies in all fields. For instance, we've broadened out LAHC's journal to include articles against wage restraint.

Now we're changing right-wing

'For each £1 rent paid by a GLC tenant, £1.84 goes to the money-lenders. That shows why you have to open the books.'



councillors and even the Parliamentary Labour Party is being changed.

Q. But isn't that an argument just to sit around? What do workers do now to achieve these demands?

A. We have to get Labour Party conference decisions in line with those of the anti-cuts campaigns, capture the political soul of the party. Then we have to capture the political leadership of the party — and we're seeing the first stirrings towards that.

Q. Will Labour Against the Cuts be supporting the picket of the Labour Party conference called by the National Coordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS?

A. Well, LAC was organising a lobby in any case. Two would obviously be counter-productive, so we will act in unison.

Q. Haringey has given a lead in refusing to implement a new round of cuts. How do you see this being taken up so as to prevent isolation and another Clay Cross?

A. Well, it's not just Haringey. Wandsworth has also been going ahead and spending as usual. How to prevent another Clay Cross? We will try to get other Labour Councils to move into opposition — lots are already not making the cuts the Government require (for example, Lam-

beth cut only 50 per cent of what was asked for and the rest was a book-keeping exercise), so at the end of the day the Government is going to come back for more cuts and meet more resistance.

Moving against Tameside Tory Council is one thing — taking on local Labour councils would provoke massive resistance.

Q. What dangers do you see if a fight back against the cuts and unemployment is not made and the Government continues to carry out right-wing policies?

A. Well, Labour voters won't turn to the Tories. Look at the results of the Deptford Ward by-election in Lewisham.* If the two fascist parties had stood a single candidate they would have won the seat.

In places where there is a solid working class base it is turning towards what appears to be superficially socialist policies, 'left' policies. This is one of the biggest advances the fascists have made — and they're making it because of the right-wing policies being pursued by the Government.

* DEPTFORD BY-ELECTION RESULT

	1976	1974
Labour	968 (43.5%)	1632 (81.9%)
National Party	580 (26.0%)	—
National Front	395 (18.5%)	—
Conservative	256 (12.0%)	186 (9.3%)
Independent	—	175 (8.8%)

Lucas stewards demand wages linked to price rises

The front page of the latest issue of *Lucas Report* reveals that if threshold payments were still in effect, workers would have got fifty per cent over the wage increases they have managed to win under the Social Contract and the £6 limit! *Lucas Report* is the paper of the Lucas Vehicle Components Combine Shop Stewards Committee. The paper says:

'A few years ago the threshold deal was introduced only to disappear very rapidly when it was discovered that continuing price rises led to automatic increases in wages. The threshold deal was not adequate to fully protect living standards. But it should be recognised that threshold payments, if continued to the

present time, would be worth over £25 per week.'

The Combine now considers that the question of wage control is the most important issue facing the trade union movement.

At the moment it is a fight against the stream, following on from the scandal of the special TUC. But the Lucas Combine Committee have adopted a policy on wages capable of uniting all trade unionists. As the front page of their paper spells it out:

'IN FUTURE WE MUST DEMAND THAT OUR WAGES INCREASE WHENEVER PRICES GO UP, FOR THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO DEFEND OUR STANDARD OF LIVING.'



Lynda Rooke as a Salvation Army girl is pleased to have made a convert to 'spiritual values' in Theresa Streatfeild as the Widow Queeck in the Avon Touring Company production of Bertolt Brecht's *The Breadshop*. (Photo: ADRIAN LOVELESS)

Bertolt Brecht's short play *The Breadshop*, written in the 1930s, had never been performed in Britain before until this current production by the Avon Touring Company. And a moving, skilful production it is. On the surface it is a simple tale of the poor and unemployed in the depression in Germany, but it brings to light many of the forces, fears and attitudes which were to play a crucial role in the impending fascist victory.

Through a study of the descending fortunes of Widow Queeck (played with suitable gloom by Theresa Streatfeild) and her five children, we encounter the harsh reality of what it meant to be unemployed in the '30s with no-one to turn to. As the characters sing at one point, reflecting their fateful future: 'When giants stagger, those who only stand and watch get trodden on'.

What Brecht portrays so well is the way in which the demoralised poor seek individual solutions to their problems when organised politics don't appeal. Everything is reduced to the role of base commodities to be bought, sold or even bartered. And the unemployed too are affected, becoming corrupt and heartless — we see Ajax, the baker's assistant, exploiting Widow Queeck's misery by demanding sexual favours in return for bread for her children, her 'only concern'.

Collective solidarity or action, save for a vague and useless pity for Widow Queeck, doesn't exist. Only Mascher, who stones the breadshop on her behalf, offers any resistance — and his individual anger cannot deal with the forces of the state which rapidly overcome him.

But not just the poor are put under Brecht's dramatic microscope. Meininger, the breadshop-owner, shows clearly the frantic, amoral desperation of the small property-owner — trapped between the big banker demanding his mortgage-interest, and the workers demanding bread and shelter. The roots of his later turn to Nazism are there — a brilliant dramatic complement to Trotsky's analytical writings of the time.

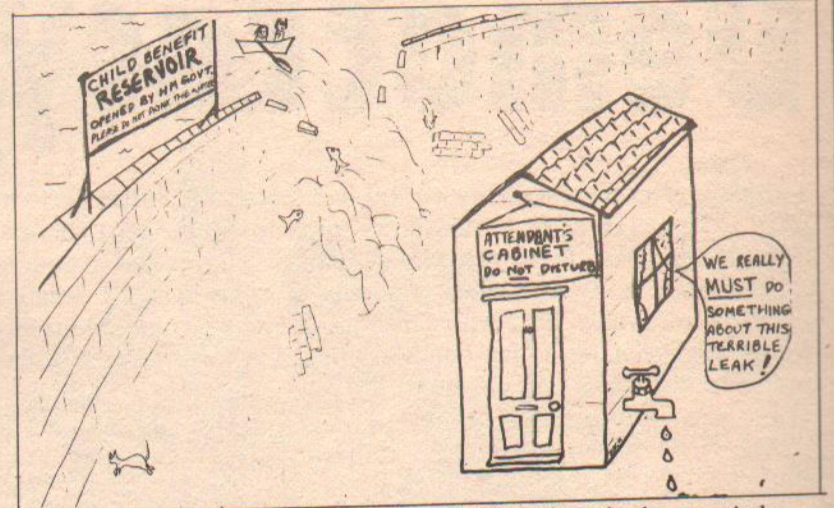
This is a savage yet sensitive play, and a brutal indictment of the barbarity of capitalism rampant. If it's in your area, see it.

Carl Gardner

CHILD BENEFITS: 'LEFTS' SIDESTEP CUTS ISSUE

With frenzied expectations, the popular press awaited a revolt against the Labour Government by 'Labour rebels' last week.

At issue was the Child Benefit Act introduced in August 1975 by Barbara Castle. The Act sought to replace the present combination of family allowance and tax concessions with a single payment to the woman. It was argued that this scheme would help the poor and single parent families who do not pay tax, and would make the woman less financially dependent on her husband's wage.



Poverty

Although socialists should welcome any measures which assist a woman's financial independence and ease the degrading poverty of thousands, the scheme at most meant an increase in family income of £7.50 for a family of five-children in the poorest sections of society. For families paying the standard rate of tax, the increase for a family of five would have been only 92p. Families above the average rate of tax would have faced a decrease in family income.

With inflation at 26 per cent, these increases would have been a drop in the ocean of family expenditure. Nevertheless, the scheme did provide a basis for the state to increase its financial responsibilities for children and for increased financial independence for women.

However, even these limited gains were to fall foul of Healey's axe. In April Healey announced that the £2-300 million needed to implement the Castle plan would be savaged to £95 million. After weeks of backroom discussion (revealed in *New Society*) David Ennals, the Social Services Secretary, finally announced that these principles would be put on ice, and the present system of payment retained with the paltry addition of £1 for the first child.

The reason given for this shift in attitude was that any further cut in a man's take-home pay, through the loss of tax concessions and a direct payment to the woman, was considered dynamite. This excuse does not correspond to the facts.

Sexist

The published Cabinet minutes and subsequent *Sunday Times* articles have revealed that no initial opposition to the child benefit scheme was registered by the TUC. But then Healey used the story that the Cabinet was opposed to the scheme because of the loss of take-home pay as a means of playing on the sexist self-interest of the TUC negotiators, so that they reconsidered their position. Next day, Healey persuaded the Cabinet to oppose the scheme with the story that the TUC was opposed to it!

Since the explosion of the issue, the TUC leaders have openly expressed opposition to shelving the child benefit scheme. Healey and Callaghan have therefore been forced to drop their 'sell the pay policy' arguments and turn to more

accurate reasons, related to the Government's introduction of social expenditure cuts.

Even here, however, the need to cut costs is not the whole argument. The present Ennals scheme and the original child benefit scheme, on the reduced rate, will cost the same amount of money — £95 million.

But Healey and Callaghan are exploiting every avenue to disorient and divide any opposition to Government policies, and to send the 'lefts' up cul-de-sacs which do not directly confront the main road of anti-working class policies. The present dispute over child benefits is just one example. This centres on how to implement a cutback.

Special Case

By isolating as a 'special case' the poor, single parent families and women from the living conditions of the whole working class, the lefts comply with Callaghan's manoeuvres to side-step the central issue of the cuts themselves. They end up claiming, like Helene Hayman, MP, that 'the argument that we are asking for more public expenditure is false'.

We have heard fine words, like those of Maureen Colquhoun MP: 'It is an anti-women decision, and by taking it both the TUC and Cabinet are publicly revealed as oppressors of women! But this response falls in with Callaghan's attempts to use the political weakness of the working class in its defence of women's rights, by playing women off against men, poor against less poor, one section of the economy against another.

This divisive response is adequately expressed in Eric Heffer's statement: 'If it was a matter of choosing between expenditure on child benefit and priorities such as investment and employment in the construction industry, I would choose the industry.'

Bluff

The truth is that the lefts are not prepared to wage a fight against Government policy which accepts that no section of the working class should make sacrifices. This fight would mean an all-out opposition to the central pillars of Government policy. The lefts should be forced to call Callaghan's bluff by taking up the fight for the child benefit scheme as an integral part of an opposition

to Healey's cutbacks as a whole.

Unless they do this, Healey and Callaghan will succeed in diverting their demagogic punches into channels that entail one section of the working class making sacrifices for another, while Government policy remains the same.

Celia Pugh

New from Red Books

Red Books is now in temporary premises at 183 Pentonville Road, London N.1, and its hours of opening are still 10am to 6pm, Mondays to Saturdays inclusive. Among recent publications of interest:

* NEW ISSUE OF 'SOCIALIST REPUBLIC'

The latest issue of *Socialist Republic*, journal of the MSR (formerly RMG), Irish section of the Fourth International, contains a report of the 1976 conference of the MSR; 'Communism and Democracy'; news of the Irish women's liberation movement; and articles on Irish wages struggles; collapse of the Convention; Spain and James Larkin. Price 10p, post 9p.

* ITALIAN FAR LEFT AND THE ELECTIONS

The latest *Inprecor* has important material on the Italian general election; joint appeal of main organisations in Proletarian Democracy; Avanguardia Operaia, Lotta Continua and the GCR (Italian section of Fourth International) explaining their attitudes to the DP; etc. The issue also contains the position of the LCI in the Portuguese presidential elections; and items on the Syrian intervention in Lebanon and South Africa. Price 30p, post 9p.

* SEARCHLIGHT ON RELF

The latest issue of *Searchlight* contains material on the racist 'martyr' Relf, tracing his history, connection with fascist 'ultras', and his flirtation with the Ku Klux Klan. Other material includes an election result round-up; studies on racism in Bradford, Blackburn and Oldham; and articles on Rhodesian fascists and the Union Movement; racism in the press; fascist activity in the Midlands; etc. Price 30p, post 9p.

* 'SOCIALIST CHALLENGE' NOW IN PAPERBACK

Socialist Challenge by Stuart Holland is now in paperback. Holland was one of the architects of the 1974 Labour manifesto, and the book has been described as 'a blue-print for the future', 'a strategy for socialism' and so on. All this looks a bit sick in view of the evolution of the Labour Government, but the book remains useful: containing a wealth of material and arguments about the role of multinationals, meso-economics, increasing state intervention in the economy, etc., which needs to be studied in order to understand the mind of the left social democrat. Price £2.95, post 47p.

Writers Demand Workers Democracy

Two days after mass workers' strikes had forced the Polish Government to cancel its plans to raise food prices by 60 per cent, an open letter to the Polish Parliament has demanded 'an increase in democratic liberties in order to avoid new popular explosions'. It is signed by 59 Polish intellectuals who earlier this year also opposed attempts by the CP leadership to introduce a series of anti-working class amendments to the Polish Constitution.

The writers express their solidarity with the Polish workers and applaud the Government for 'rapidly modifying its attitude, thus avoiding a repetition of the tragic events of Poznan 1956 and the Baltic 1970'.

As the writers put it: 'The events of these last few days showed that, in the existing system in Poland, citizens have only one way of expressing their position: that of demonstrating in order to show their discontent. We feel that discussion cannot limit itself to Cabinet officials only. An authentic dialogue between the authorities and society is indispensable. Such a dialogue cannot take place in a climate of repression, which some people are trying to introduce in order to re-establish their shaken authority.'

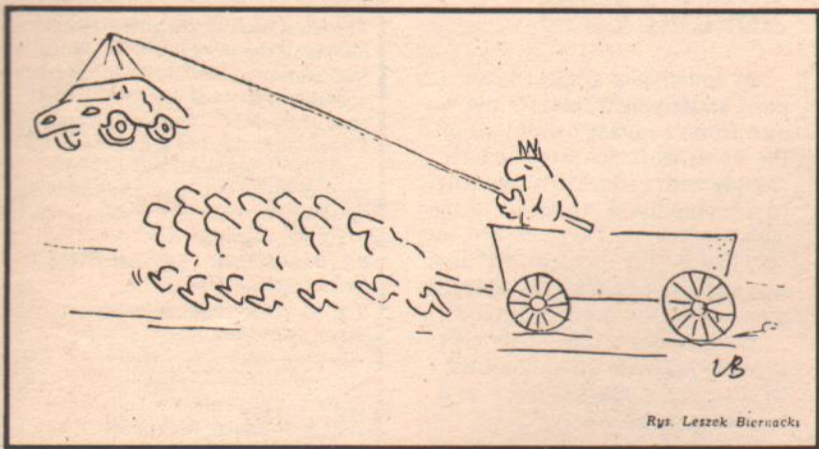
The intellectuals attack the official trade unions, calling them a 'fiction' because 'they do not represent the real interests of the workers'. Instead

would have been a massive 'no thanks' from working class Poles.

Following their climb-down, Polish Party chiefs have been trying to change the political question from prices to 'hooliganism'. The Party secretary in Radom, one of the main centres of revolt, declared that the demonstrators who made the Party headquarters there the target of their anger were a mixture of 'hooligans, drunkards and hysterical women'. In this way the Polish bureaucrats hope to move back onto the counter-attack against the working class.

RISKY

But it is unlikely that anybody in Poland will fall for such language. It is more likely to remind them of the Baltic strikes in 1970, when Gomulka used the very same words. The letter from Polish intellect-



they demand 'democratic representation for the working class'. The letter ends by saying that it is absolutely essential to increase democratic rights, freedom of the press, and of association.

CONSULTED

While this letter was circulating in Warsaw, Party Secretary Gierek travelled to the conference of European Communist Parties in East Berlin. Three or four paragraphs of his speech there were quoted by the *Morning Star* of 1 July, including the following key remark for publication in Western CP papers: 'The Polish people were invariably consulted on all decisions of consequence. This was a correct and fruitful method.'

As the last issue of *Red Weekly* explained, no 'consultation' took place before the price rises were announced. Gierek's carefully chosen words suggest that the Government decided that consultation on that issue would not be 'fruitful' because it would not produce the desired results. The only possible outcome

really hits the nail on the head: such 'hooliganism' is indispensable for the workers movement when no other channels for asserting working class power exist. If workers were able to decide issues like price rises by discussion and vote, how many would resort to the very risky business of waging an all-out strike movement against the Government?

In 1968 the Polish students and intellectuals demonstrated and fought alone against the bureaucracy for democratic rights. In 1970, when the working class rose up, the intelligentsia was passive and demoralised. Today the 'open letter' signals the possibility of a link-up between intellectuals and workers for a joint struggle against a bureaucratic regime badly divided against itself.

The potentiality thus exists for a joint mobilisation to enforce the demands which revolutionary Marxists in the USSR and Eastern Europe have fought for since the 1920s: the demands for independent workers organisations, workers democracy and a restoration of genuine soviet power — a state based on democratic workers councils.



In 1970 the intelligentsia was passive and demoralised when the working class rose up. Today the possibility exists for a joint struggle.

STALINISM IN CRISIS

The conference of European Communist Parties which took place in East Berlin last week ended without singing the Internationale. This was reasonable enough, since the chorus of the Internationale talks about uniting the human race, while the conference was a witness to just how far the once iron unity of the world Stalinist movement has crumbled.

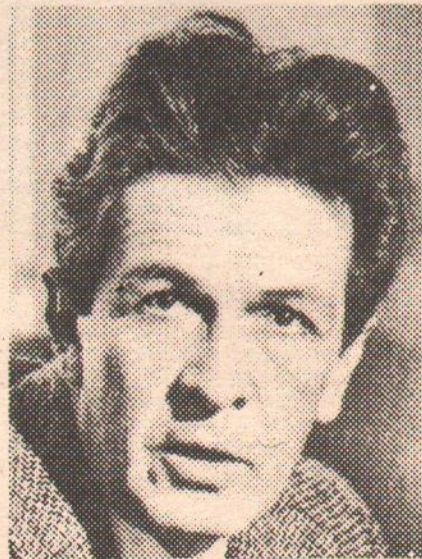
This conference was first floated by Moscow nearly three years ago. The intention was to re-assert the leading role of the CPSU in the world movement, and in particular to issue a condemnation of the Chinese CP. Early calls for the conference from Hungary and Bulgaria were coupled with attacks on the Maoists as an 'anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist trend'.

The Stalinist parties world-wide, however, showed a complete lack of enthusiasm for the idea. The only CPs to take up the call in the first six months were the Polish and Cuban CPs (the latter heavily dependent economically on the USSR), and the West German and Austrian CPs, both insignificant sects.

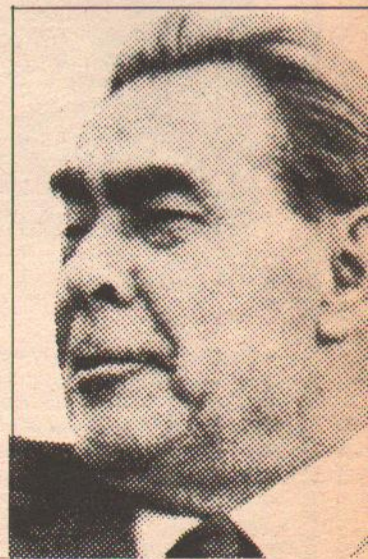
STENCH

Unfortunately for Moscow, most of the West European CPs—in particular those in Spain, Italy and France, who may soon find themselves running their own bourgeois states—had no intention of re-affirming the leading role of the CPSU. Their respective ruling classes would be much less likely to choose them as a strategic option if they were seen to be still at the beck and call of a foreign and non-capitalist power; while the stench of repression that leaks out of the Soviet Union was not something with which these parties, eager to prove their devotion to (bourgeois) democracy, wished to be contaminated.

UNITY CRUMBLES AT CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES



Berlinguer and Brezhnev agree to disagree



They were joined in their opposition to Moscow by the ruling parties of Rumania and Yugoslavia, for whom the reassertion of the leading role of the CPSU carries with it a real threat of military intervention or lesser sanctions to try to bring them back to the fold. A conference of CPs would only be desirable for them if it ratified their independence.

Since the holding of the conference was not of vital importance to the 'independent' parties, they were from the beginning in a strong bargaining position with Moscow. For the Soviet bureaucracy, their position as the

leader of a world bloc is really very important indeed — both because it gives them vital bargaining counter with imperialism, and also at an ideological level within Soviet society itself, where the nationalist pretensions to be the leader of international socialism acts as ideological cement.

Thus the independent parties were threatened not to turn up if Moscow refused to agree to their demands. If it was going to get its conference, Moscow would have to give in eventually. Which it did.

Nevertheless, the protestations



SM IS

The British Communist Party has always called the East European states 'socialist'—and by doing so, they have provided the capitalist class with a tremendous weapon against the socialist movement. Gleelessly the bourgeois politicians agree and proceed to 'prove' that socialism equals what exists today in Eastern Europe: labour camps, psychiatric prisons for oppositionists, and a one-party state; the suppression of independent trade unions, of the right to strike, to organise mass meetings, produce independent papers, issue political leaflets and so on.

Recently the Western CPs, including the British Party, have distanced themselves from the most obnoxious practices of the regimes in Eastern Europe. But they still say that the political set-up in these states is democratic, they still hail the leaders of these states as Communists, and they still claim that the working class still has real political power in these societies.

All that is needed there, according to people like John Gollan in his recent article in *Marxism Today*, is more of what already exists: more 'democracy' and more 'socialism'. Commenting on the bloody shooting down of striking workers in Poland in 1970, Gollan tells us: 'This is the price which any socialist society may pay for any breakdown in its proper democratic function'.

Gollan does not explain when the supposed democracy in 'socialist' Poland had broken down. And has it been restored since 1970? Gollan does not tell us.

But the record of the last couple of months is instructive. In March elections were held in Poland, and the CP list gained a truly staggering majority: more than 98 per cent of the vote. What a mandate! Yet two months later, when the new Government puts forward a central plank of its economic policy, some tens of thousands of workers go on strike against it.

Does the Government say to the Polish workers: we have the democratic backing of 98 per cent of the Polish masses to carry through our programme? Not on your life, nobody believes the Polish Government has been democratically chosen—the Prime Minister certainly does not believe it. That was why the Polish Government cancelled the price rises in 24 hours.

The *Morning Star* has some questions to answer about the Polish events. Does anyone believe that the price rises would have been cancelled without the strike movement? Is it really conceivable that any government would announce 60 per cent price rises one day and then cancel them the next, as an afterthought?

Strikers

And given that the Polish workers' strikes stopped the price rises, why was it felt necessary by those workers to take the considerable personal risks involved in striking and demonstrating? Is it really because these workers were all what a bureaucrat in Radom called them: hooligans and hysterical women? And if the strikers were such deviants, why does the Government bow to them?

No class-conscious Polish worker could take all this nonsense seriously.

All Gollan's phrases about a democratic system in countries like Poland are designed to conceal reality. Marxist ideas are a supreme instrument to reveal the underlying tendencies and processes within society. But in Gollan's hands these concepts become apologetics for the Polish bureaucracy. And the Polish workers' upsurge has blown these soft-soap phrases apart.

Gollan has been in the working class movement for forty years, and for over fifteen years he was the leader of the British CP. During that time we have seen the Stalinist bureaucracy produce the East German uprising of 1953, the Hungarian revolution of 1956, the Polish revolution of 1956, the brutal invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the blood-bath in Poland's Baltic ports in 1970, and the bitter working class upsurge in Poland two weeks ago.

Yet Gollan is still trying to persuade us that these societies are socialist and democratic, socially homogeneous, without any basic contradictions, where the role of the people in decision-making is not 'primarily by conflict and struggle'.

Such views simply indicate how deeply soaked in the traditions of Stalinism the leaders of the British Communist Party remain. The fact that people like Gollan are increasingly shamefaced about their Stalinism does not make them any more trustworthy as honest principled supporters of the struggles of the working classes of Eastern Europe for proletarian democracy.

The Polish workers' victory is nothing but an embarrassment for the editorial writers of the *Morning Star*. They wish the Polish workers had knuckled under. And they have so far carefully avoided expressing any opinion on the issue, far less express their support.

Polish workers embarrass Morning Star



Gordon McLennan, General Secretary of the CPGB arrives at the conference of European Communist Parties.

IS - IN THE DARK

The International Socialism group has always stood on the side of the workers of Eastern Europe in their struggle against oppression at the hands of the regimes of these states. But the tasks of any Marxist political current go beyond being able to recognise and support any mass workers' upsurge. *Socialist Worker* claims to be able to explain what is happening in Eastern Europe, to expose the nature of the real forces at work in a country like Poland, and on this basis point the way forward to defeat the regimes dominating these states. And the IS tries to carry out this task by applying its theory that the East European states are capitalist. The Polish upsurge has put this theory to the test in the sharpest way.

Last week's *Socialist Worker* says that the actions of the Polish regime are '100 per cent capitalist a carbon copy of the infamous Social Contract'. But if so, why did the Polish regime back down in such panic when some thousands — of workers went on strike and demonstrated against the price rises? Do capitalist governments in the West abandon central policies so quickly in the face of a few thousand workers on strike?

they can hold onto power and maintain their privileged position only by preventing the Polish workers from winning political rights.

There is no real mystery about this. In the capitalist world, price rises and unemployment appear to the workers as an act of god or a law of nature, because they are brought about by the private decisions of individual capitalists; they are not legislated by governments. But in Eastern Europe the capitalists have been swept away and the management of the economy is brought completely under the control of the government.

It is thus quite impossible for the workers of Eastern Europe to suffer from the illusions held by British workers that price rises are inevitable, natural things that just have to be put up with. Every working class man or woman in Poland knows that every economic question is a matter for political decisions. That is why — even without their own independent trade unions, parties and newspapers — Polish workers could move into action absolutely spontaneously to enforce their own political decision about prices on the bureaucratic regime.

All these crucial questions are a closed book for *Socialist Worker*. But its confusion goes much deeper.

UTOPIAN

Quite correctly, *Socialist Worker* ridicules the idea that socialism exists in Eastern Europe. But at the same time it seems to accept the same theoretical assumption as the Stalinists: both appear to believe that socialism, a classless society, can be reached in a world where the world capitalist economy is still stronger, more advanced, than the productive forces of the non-capitalist world. This is the only possible conclusion from *Socialist Worker's* definition of socialism as 'workers running society through workers councils they elect and control'.

Decades ago Trotsky and the Left Opposition denounced the Stalinist policy of avoiding trade with the capitalist world and argued that workers states must participate in the world capitalist market, in spite of the fact that it creates economic problems, disrupts planning and can disorganise prices. Trotsky proved time and time again that trying to turn your back on the capitalist world was utopian, and that the problems would continue until the victory of the international revolution.

Yet we find *Socialist Worker* taking over the bankrupt, nationalist notion of creating socialism in an isolated country which refuses to touch the world capitalist market! Instead of exposing the social reasons for the absence of democratic rights in Poland, *Socialist Worker* spends paragraph after paragraph attacking the bureaucracy for buying and selling on the capitalist world market. Scornfully it attacks the bureaucracy for doing something that Poland (or Britain) under workers democracy would have to do — joining 'in the international scramble to buy components and raw materials'.

The comrades of *Socialist Worker* must think this through to the end. One of the biggest items bought on the capitalist market by Poland over the last five years has been a massive Fiat plant to produce cars for the Polish people at a cheaper cost. Should the bureaucracy not have joined this 'scramble'?

EASY

The theory that the states of Eastern Europe are capitalist was adopted by IS at the height of the cold war when Marxists were under tremendous pressure from the bourgeoisie to abandon a principled stand against imperialist efforts to restore capitalism in Korea, China and Eastern Europe. An easy way of dropping defence of Korea against American intervention was to declare that Korea, China and the Soviet Union were themselves capitalist.

Today, in the face of gigantic capitalist crises and the rise of workers' struggles against the bureaucratic regimes of Eastern Europe, the theory of 'state capitalism' is being put to the test of revolutionary events. This apparently radical alternative provides no coherent guide for the anti-bureaucratic struggle, and ends up distorting the entire socialist perspective of the Marxist movement.

OLIVER MACDONALD

by Brezhnev at the conference about not wanting to 're-institute an international centre' must not be read as a final and definitive climb-down by the Soviet leadership. It is remarkable how during the pre-conference discussions despite having no hope of success, the Soviet leadership kept on trying to smuggle a 'general line' into the final document through the medium of the East German drafting commission.

According to the Spanish CP leader Azcarate: 'The tendency to press for a document of what may be called an "ideological type" re-asserted itself. Faced with this the position of a certain number of parties was maintained very firmly.'

DIVISIONS

These divisions within world Stalinism, despite the utter bankruptcy of both the political perspectives offered, are of real importance for revolutionary socialists. They provide the opportunity for a broad political debate on general questions of socialist strategy both in the East and the West, and while the dynamic of the leaderships of the independent parties is firmly to the right, the context of a growing economic crisis and resistance to it from the working class will almost certainly lead to the emergence of leftist currents which can be won to Trotskyism.

The 'independent' parties rightly notice that times have changed since the pre-war and immediate post-war period. But not, as they say, away from the need for an international revolutionary movement, but on the contrary towards making it even more necessary. The Fourth International is the only organisation that can meet that need.



PORTUGAL FORUM



VOTE PATO...

The letter from Ric Sissons in last week's issue of *Red Weekly* raises a central problem for Marxists — one which was merely brought to the fore by the withdrawal of the LCI/PRT candidate, but which becomes increasingly important after the large vote for Carvalho. What is essentially involved in the choice of critical support for Carvalho or the CP candidate is the political relation of revolutionaries to the 'left wing' of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) and to the mass workers parties.

The striking feature of the Portuguese workers is that through two elections (despite MFA calls for abstention) the majority have continued to support the CP and SP, whose leaderships, while proclaiming their commitment to socialism, mislead and divert the working class through the forging of alliances with the bourgeois parties and wings of the military.

Every gain over the past two years has been imposed by the spontaneous mass upsurge, but every one of these gains risks being liquidated unless the Portuguese workers succeed in establishing their political independence and constructing a class front against the bourgeoisie. The principal task of revolutionary Marxists lies in bringing into systematic contradiction the striving of the workers for class independence and the class collaborationist policies of the CP/SP leaderships. A key focus of this is the call for these leaderships to form an SP/CP government, and it was sectarianism and ultra-leftism such as that practised by the Revolutionary United Front (FUR) which let the CP/SP leaderships off the hook and isolated revolutionaries from the ranks of the mass workers parties.

Agitation on this key focus, developed by the LCI over the past months, could only have been drowned in the feverish, apolitical campaign of support for Carvalho. Comrade Sissons admits that 'Otelo fails to call for an SP-CP government', but he does not explain how revolutionaries could have argued for working class independence from the military whilst supporting a candidate whose main purpose was to present a 'left' variation of the AFM-People alliance. Nor does he understand the hostility to the workers movement concealed beneath the petty-bourgeois, demagogic-populist appeals to the workers to abandon their 'divisive' parties and support 'Otelo's popular crusade for socialism'.

This danger for the workers movement is only increased by the support given by the centrists of the MES and UDP who, in return for providing some organisation and coherence for the campaign, gained the illusion that they were hegemonising mass forces and that the days of the 'revisionists' were numbered. (Their 'divisiveness' was kept well under control by the ban on sales of their literature at campaign meetings!) In such a context comrade Sissons' talk of the relative superiority of Carvalho's programme misses the point: such self-styled Robin Hoods need a 'programme' for cover, and, as he demonstrated last autumn, Carvalho is not too particular about its precise colouring.

But, comrade Sissons argues, 'the Otelo campaign represents above all the combativity of the workers and soldiers'. It is true that certain workers, sickened by the policies of the reformist leaderships, voted for Carvalho. But he 'represents' that combativity by channeling it into the whirlpool of military populism, by preventing a challenge to the workers' bureaucracies, by telling the workers to keep up their 'combativity' but to leave politics to the generals.

To suggest, as does comrade Sissons, that what distinguished the CP campaign was its call for the 'AFM-People alliance' is seriously misleading. The most cursory glance at Carvalho's campaign shows that it was saturated with the ideology of the leading role of the armed forces 'in alliance with the people'.

Does this mean that the CP decision to stand Pato was a break with their strategy of an alliance with the military? Not at all. But despite the CP's intent



ions, the standing of a candidate by a mass workers party created favourable conditions for revolutionary Marxists to argue for a thorough-going political break with the military hierarchy. It was this need to assert the political independence of the working class, rather than abstract comparison of programmes or support, that motivated the LCI decision to critically support Pato.

The victory of Eanes is a big blow to the Portuguese workers movement. It highlights the lack of a socialist leadership in a period of acute crisis, and mounting attacks on past gains. The temptation will be strong for advanced workers to despair of finding a road to class unity and to throw everything into a vain attempt to by-pass the mass part-

ies in a 'popular offensive' against the strongholds of power.

Certainly the centrist groups will be feeding off this despair with their project for a revamped FUR. They have learnt nothing from the experience of last summer and autumn when, in a period of heightened struggle, the call for an SP-CP Government could have played a



Communist Party candidate Octavio Pato

decisive role in weakening the grip of the reformist leaderships. Their road is the road to disaster — with a colourful demagogue in the van who is all the more dangerous precisely because of his charisma.

The Portuguese Trotskyists have learnt a great deal from their mistakes of last year, and have an enormous responsibility in combatting this centrist obstacle to the Portuguese revolution.

JACKY GRAY, PATRICK CAMILLER, PAT JORDAN.

OR CARVALHO?

(This letter was received before the voting)

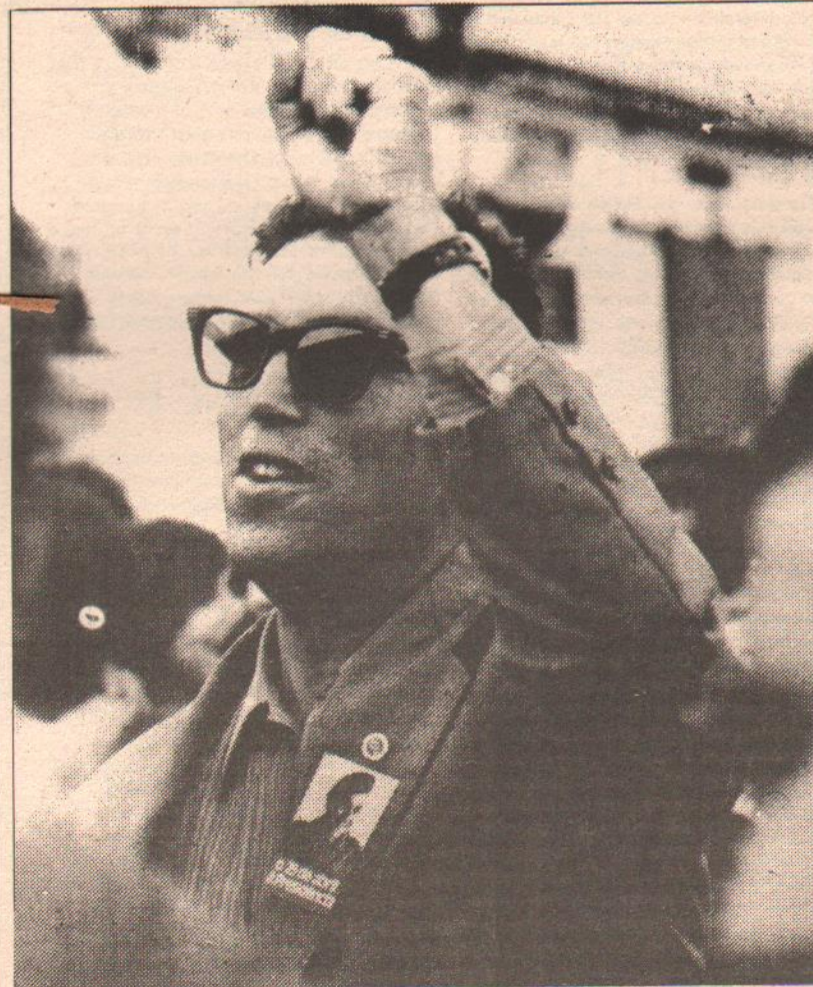
One argument which I have heard used in some quarters to justify a vote for the Communist Party candidate, Octavio Pato, is that he is the candidate of a workers party, while Carvalho represents the bourgeois army. If this were true, it would be decisive. Unfortunately, however, it confuses two things: a *socio-logical* definition of Carvalho's origins and position, and a *political* characterisation of his candidature.

The *political* character of a party or candidature has to be defined not by who comprises it but by whose *interests* its programme represents (and not merely on paper, but in the concrete situation). It is thus necessary to look not at their individual origin but at the actual programme and the social forces polarised around it.

What is Carvalho's programme? In essence, of course, it is based on the Copcon document of summer 1975 and the positions of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) radicals like Deniz Almeida of the RALIS regiment. The backbone of this programme as far as its stated goals are concerned is the more or less total nationalisation of Portuguese industry, radical land reform, and the programme of 'direct democracy' summed up in the 'people's power' formula.

Whose interests does this programme represent? Of course it is not a fully fledged revolutionary programme in terms of many of the slogans and methods it raises — struggle for 'national independence' against the superpowers, MFA-people alliance, bureaucratic approach to the military, non-partyist concept of workers democracy. Nevertheless, the implementation of such a programme — even if the methods it outlines are incapable of realising such a goal — poses without a doubt the destruction of capitalism in Portugal.

Furthermore, it is clear that this programme is far from representing the interests of any section of the bourgeoisie. Talk about a 'Peruvian' model makes no sense, because Portugal is not a colonial country in which a programme of extensive nationalisations of even profitable industry can be a lever for the native bourgeoisie in its struggle with



imperialism over the distribution of the gravy bucket.

Nor are the nationalisations proposed by Carvalho of the classic social democratic type — take-overs of bankrupt but essential industries in order to strengthen the position of the capitalist class as a whole. On the contrary, the nationalisations proposed by Carvalho would actually smash the economic power of the ruling class and expropriate the capitalist class.

Finally, not even the supporters of the 'Peruvian' analogy take it seriously when it comes to analysing 25 November. Logically they should characterise 25 November as an attempt to seize power and install a capitalist military dictatorship. In fact they almost universally described it as an 'ultra-left coup attempt' — which, apart from the fact that it was more of a reaction to a right-wing provocation, is a fairly accurate characterisation.

But ultra-leftism is a current *within*

the workers movement.

The ultra-leftism of Carvalho and the other MFA radicals is — like that of the PRP, MES, etc. — whose line logically led to 25 November — a specific form of their *centrism*. That is why *Red Weekly* was absolutely correct to describe Carvalho, Almeida etc. as 'a confused part of the workers movement' in its issue of 29 January 1976.

The social alignment of forces around the Carvalho candidature fully confirms this analysis of its character. It is *not* supported by any section of the army hierarchy or any section of the bourgeoisie. But it *is* supported by all the centrist political organisations — PRP, MES, UDP etc. — and by sections of the most combative workers, such as those at the Lisnave and Setenave shipyards.

What is more, if we conclude that the Carvalho candidature has a centrist character, then that has certain consequences vis-a-vis the candidature of Octavio Pato of the Communist Party.

Pato's programme is one of complete collaboration with the bourgeoisie and the armed forces. Pato only stood because the CP could not persuade Costa Gomes to run as a single unified military candidate. Pato does not even claim to call for the expropriation of the capitalist class, and his programme threatens none of the latter's historic interests. Pato's is a *bourgeois* programme.

In these concrete circumstances, I would therefore argue that it is correct to vote for the centrist candidature of Carvalho against the bourgeois programme of the CP — although the best solution, obviously, would have been the running of an independent Trotskyist candidate.

While the wider implications of this conclusion are limited, it nevertheless represents the heart of Marxism as Lenin defined it — the 'concrete analysis of the concrete situation'. *Concretely*, in the extremely specific situation of Portugal, centrism developed as one of its particular forms a movement among certain sections of the army. It is necessary to grasp the specific combination of elements which created that concrete situation and then orient accordingly.

— ALAN FIRTH

THE PORTUGUESE ELECTIONS: WHAT THE LEFT PRESS SAID

SOCIALIST PRESS ★

'Portugal Election: Bosses Confi-jent' (16 June)

..... The Stalinists' strategy is to try to win enough votes to be able to strike a bargain with Eanes

A serious obstacle to the CP's manoeuvre is the candidacy of populist Maj. Otelo de Carvalho, who has attracted a large following of militants Carvalho's programme includes progressive slogans such as nationalisation of industry and collectivisation of land, but is full of confusion and inconsistencies.

He stresses the need for 'independence from international capital', instead of calling for the mobilisation of workers against capitalism of whatever stripe. And as if that were not enough, he has pledged himself to appoint Soares as Prime Minister if he is elected!

None of the candidates provides any answer to the central question of an independent working class leadership based on the organs of workers' power. The demand must be for the Socialist Party and Communist Party, which together commanded a majority in the parliamentary elections, to break from the Armed Forces Movement and form a workers' government based on the workers' committees.

THE News Line

'Key election for Portugal President' (25 June)

..... It is this hostility to Eanes among the working class that forced the Communist Party - reluctantly and very belatedly - to put forward their own candidate, Octavio Pato. But the Stalinists have waged only a muted campaign, with Pato confining himself to mild warnings that attempts at 'capitalist recuperation' would lead to social unrest

To back Carvalho, however, as the IS and its collaborators do, is to put left phraseology in place of a real fight to defeat Eanes and the Socialist Party-capitalist coalition. In any case, Carvalho lent himself to the dubious 25 November 'plot' which gave the green light to reaction

In practice, a strong vote for the Communist Party candidate Pato would be a blow both at Soares and his capitalist-military backers, and at the Stalinists who have no wish to be forced out into the open as revolutionary conflicts inevitably draw closer in Portugal.

Socialist Worker

1. 'Left Candidate is "Banned"' (29 May)

.... The Communist Party has been bitterly divided. As reported in last week's *Socialist Worker*, the leadership originally didn't want to put up a candidate because of the logic of their desire for a working coalition with the largest party, the pro-western Socialist Party

The effect of the Otelo campaign was to force the Communist Party last week to change their line and to put forward a candidate of their own, their most moderate leader, Pato.

But there are problems with the Left's campaign for Otelo. Perhaps Otelo is a man of the people, but his history is one of vacillating between the revolutionary Left and the moderate Right. There is a danger that the revolutionary Left, by emphasising his personality, will create illusions that will be dangerous at a later stage.

Otelo himself may have led the military coup that overthrew Fascism two years ago. He will never lead the workers' revolution.

2. 'Big Support for Otelo' (26 June)

..... Otelo is not a revolutionary socialist, and has always wavered between the left and sections of the military establishment. His programme calls for the defence of the gains of the workers, but does not mention the need for democratisation of the armed forces and the election of officers.

But his campaign has served as a symbol for all those in Portugal who want to continue the revolution.....

workers' ACTION

No.21 June 24th-30th 1976 8p

1. 'The Prophet of "Popular Power"'

..... in reality Carvalho's campaign is part of the problem, not part of the solution. The slogans on his posters - 'From 25 April to the Presidency', and 'A Friend in the Presidency' - express only a personality campaign, and certainly no clear policies different from the general promises of liberty, democracy, security, and socialism which all the candidates make

And it is the campaign of a very unreliable personality, at that He has always remained essentially a maverick element within the bourgeois military hierarchy

Portugal: what now?

The election of General Ramalho Eanes as President of Portugal came as no surprise to anybody. But if it was a foregone conclusion as a result of his endorsement by the Socialist Party as well as the bourgeois Centre Democrats (CDS) and Popular Democrats (PPD), the election still held some surprises when the final figures for all the candidates were known.

Most notable of all was the fact that Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, the candidate supported by the centrists of the UDP, MES, PRP and FSP, crossed the finishing line in second place with almost 800,000 votes - more than twice as many as the Communist Party's candidate, Octavio Pato. Moreover, it was in the traditional areas of CP influence - Setubal, Beja, Evora, and to a lesser extent Faro - that Otelo got the greatest support. How is this to be explained?

The Communist Party's candidature and campaign was based on the very hollow theme of a left-wing majority government, a complete refusal to campaign against Eanes, and endless denunciations of Otelo. Having previously supported Spinoza and then Costa Gomes, actively collaborated with the bourgeois parties both inside and outside of successive governments, played a major role in undermining workers' struggles, and acted in the most sectarian fashion towards the Socialist Party - all in order to worm their way into the state apparatus - the CP has now reaped a harvest largely of its own sowing.

Failed

In doing so it has played right into the hands of the bourgeoisie, who have been actively seeking to marginalise the CP as much as possible since 25 November.

In itself, the campaign of Otelo completely failed to answer the reformism of the CP and in no way offered a revolutionary alternative to the Portuguese workers and peasants. However, it was able to satisfy demagogically the general aspirations of a large section of the Portuguese vanguard, and certain sections of the masses, in their overwhelming desire to move forward to a socialist society.

Otelo was able to appear as a 'revolutionary' calling for the extension of the agrarian reform, the development of workers control, and appealing to the instinctive

But what the Portuguese working class needs is not a warmed-up version of the illusions of last year - and this time without the mass ferment in the army that buoyed them up - but action to secure its political independence from all capitalists and generals.

2. 'CP's Third Choice Candidate'

The Portuguese Communist Party is putting up the only civilian candidate in the presidential elections But this candidature is not a real stand for working class political independence

Pato's programme is almost identical to Carvalho's. It differs mainly by having less leftist rhetoric and including a list of concrete reform measures to which the candidate pledges himself. The essential elements - Armed Forces/ People Alliance, defence of the Constitution, 'national independence' - are the same

3. 'A Small and Confused Voice of Independence'

Having outlined what it sees as the inadequacies of the manifesto put forward by the Trotskyists of the LCI and PRT, the article concludes:

However, both LCI and PRT have stood against the pro-Carvalho tide on the Portuguese left, and are proposing critical support for Octavio Pato, as the only candidate of a workers' organisation. This represents an important - though small and confused - voice for working class independence.

DAVE
WIMHURST
reporting from
OPORTO

desire of the workers and peasants for the building of the 'mass movement at the base'. And all this without ever precisely explaining how such steps could be taken. Thus the votes for this candidate expressed a general feeling rather than support for a clearly worked out strategy.

Bankruptcy

The combined vote of Pato and Otelo came to more than 24 per cent, and in spite of the bankruptcy of Pato and the illusions of Otelo, it was an anti-capitalist vote. What, then, are the prospects that face the workers and peasants who voted for these candidates, and for all the Portuguese masses, following the election of Eanes?

The new government, with Mario Soares as Prime Minister and formed by the Socialist Party (although it is possible that Soares will also invite non-SP members to join his government) will take over from the Sixth Provisional Government in about two weeks. While the full programme of this government has yet to be revealed, its general direction is clear. Already a devaluation of the escudo is envisaged to the order of 30-35 per cent, thus severely attacking workers' living standards.

Both Eanes and Soares - not to speak of the CDS and the PPD - are calling for more work, greater productivity, the necessity to combat inflation, the importance of attracting foreign capital 'for the creation of new jobs', the need to strengthen 'law and order' - all generally collected together under the slogan of 'Rebuild the Country'.

Police

Specifically this means isolating and defeating the workers' vanguard, opposing the confirmation or renewal of the collective bargaining agreements, and the establishment of a national police force through the fusion of the GNR and the PSP - which have been responsible for a number of workers' deaths during the past six months. It means launching an attack on workers

control, closing down some of the state-controlled factories, and generally creating conditions for the re-stabilisation of the capitalist economy.

But none of these measures can be undertaken either easily or peacefully. With a Socialist Party government leading the attack on the workers, and with the majority of the trade unions controlled by a party, the CP, which is excluded from any future government, the recipe is one of a general upsurge in the coming months. The left wing of the SP consists mostly of trade union militants, and it is precisely the trade unions that will be launching new struggles around the collective bargaining agreements in the coming months.

In this situation the CP is most likely to put on a left face, both as a result of pressure from the workers in the trade unions and in order to win over those left SP militants who will become rapidly disillusioned with 'their' government as they come up against its attacks.

Danger

As far as the forces around Otelo are concerned, the coming months will see their increasing disillusionment and dispersal. None of the groups which supported Otelo has sufficient political strength to organise even a part of these forces.

Otelo himself has called for a conference of all the support groups formed in the localities during his campaign in an attempt to draw these forces together. But this project is doomed to failure for without even the beginnings of a programme or a unifying political line (apart from general anti-fascism and support for 'Popular Power') these groups will quickly fall apart.

There thus exists the danger that a certain demoralisation will take place in the vanguard in the coming months, which could have the effect of undermining the willingness of many workers and peasants to move onto the offensive once the project of the SP government becomes clear. In this situation it is all the more necessary that the forthcoming national congress of trade unions, to be held in November, is as representative and as democratic as possible; for it is through such a congress that the Portuguese workers will be able to take up the vital questions of a workers' plan for the economy, for a workers' reply to the mounting attacks of the Portuguese capitalists.

The audience leaving a recent debate in London on the Fourth International between the IMG and the International Communist League must have been perplexed as to the reason why the meeting took place. For as the discussion proceeded, under the Chairmanship of veteran Trotskyist Harry Wicks, it became clear that there was no common conception of how regroupment on the far left would proceed; nor indeed, any evidence on the part of the ICL that they wanted any such regroupment to occur in the context of the Fourth International.

Brian Grogan, National Secretary of the IMG, opened the debate. The aim of the IMG's debate with the Communist Party, he said, was to alert the vanguard to the dangers posed by this reformist organisation. As far as IS was concerned, the IMG considered that this organisation was a centrist obstacle to the building of a revolutionary party. The aim of the debate with the ICL, however, was to win them to the ranks of the Fourth International, 'not to expose their perfidy, or win odd individuals from their membership'.

PROGRAMME

He said that a discussion about regroupment could only have positive results if it concentrated on questions of programme, not tactical questions. This point was driven home by Jonathan Silberman, who outlined the method of Lenin and Trotsky in dealing with the questions of splits and unity in the revolutionary party.

Sean Matgama, opening the debate for the ICL, compared the importance of the issue under debate to that of determining the tasks in relation to the

ICL CONFUSION MARS DEBATE

Soviet Union. He accused the IMG of rationalising the internal situation inside their own organisation, using the authority of Trotsky and Lenin.

Ian Macauley explained how the positions of the ICL had developed on the Fourth International. They had taken a position of critical support after the Fourth International had called for a political revolution in China. But they had felt compelled to change their position after the Fourth International had failed to call for political revolution in Vietnam. Sean Matgama had previously explained that this was why they characterised the Fourth International as 'Brandlerite-Deutscherite'.

Peter Gowan (IMG) said that it seemed that the only programmatic difference was on the question of Vietnam and perhaps Cuba. The ICL drew from this the need to 'regenerate' the Marxist International. But if they were serious about 'regenerating the

Fourth International', they should draw a balance sheet of that intention since 1972. They would find it was a negative one.

Tariq Ali (IMG) said that before erecting Vietnam as a shibboleth between the ICL and the FI, they should be clear on the implications of their position. If the ICL took the absence of genuine organs of workers power as the reason for their call for revolution in Vietnam, then they should also have been in favour of a political revolution in the Soviet Union in 1920.

INSISTED

John Hunt (ICL) insisted that questions such as their position of abstention on the Common Market vote, opposition to the slogan of a monopoly of foreign trade, and the question of how the slogan

of 'Recall the TUC' was posed were all principled questions, not tactical ones.

This last intervention, in particular, underlined the fact that there was no common point of departure for the discussion. The ICL's notion of the way in

which such a discussion should proceed was to confront the Fourth International with all sorts of criticisms — from the tasks in Vietnam to tactics in the British trade unions — and to await answers. The IMG's intention was to distinguish between questions of programme and tactics, and then examine whether the differences in programme justified the separation of the ICL from the ranks of the Fourth International.

FRAGMENTED

The significance of debates like this one, however, are considerable. Unless the confusion evidenced last week can be corrected, then there will be no possibility of overcoming the chronic fragmentation of the far left in Britain today.

BARRY MUIR

We will be running a more extensive article on the politics of the ICL in a future issue.

they're WaRPed!

LETTERS

I've just been expelled from the Workers Revolutionary Party without any kind of charges being brought against me, and I think the way I was thrown out provides a pretty good illustration of the methods used by Gerry Healy against all opponents — real or imaginary!

It started when I was at the WRP education centre recently. One member complained that the Government was carrying out Tory policies, as if to imply that it had ever been likely to do otherwise! Admittedly this was rubbish, and I think this was what decided Healy to start a purge. He ordered everyone who'd been to the school before — starting with me — to be interviewed.

That evening Healy heard that two members had tried to walk out of the school. When he heard this he decided to send home six members, including me. Later that evening he called the six

of us in to see him, and threw the book at us for half an hour, calling us police provocateurs, enemies of the party, and every four-letter word he could think of.

The next morning I was told that Healy had no intention of throwing us out of the school or the party, he just wanted to shake us up. From then on the school proceeded quite smoothly, and nothing further happened of note until the last three days, when nobody came round to deliver the *News Line*.

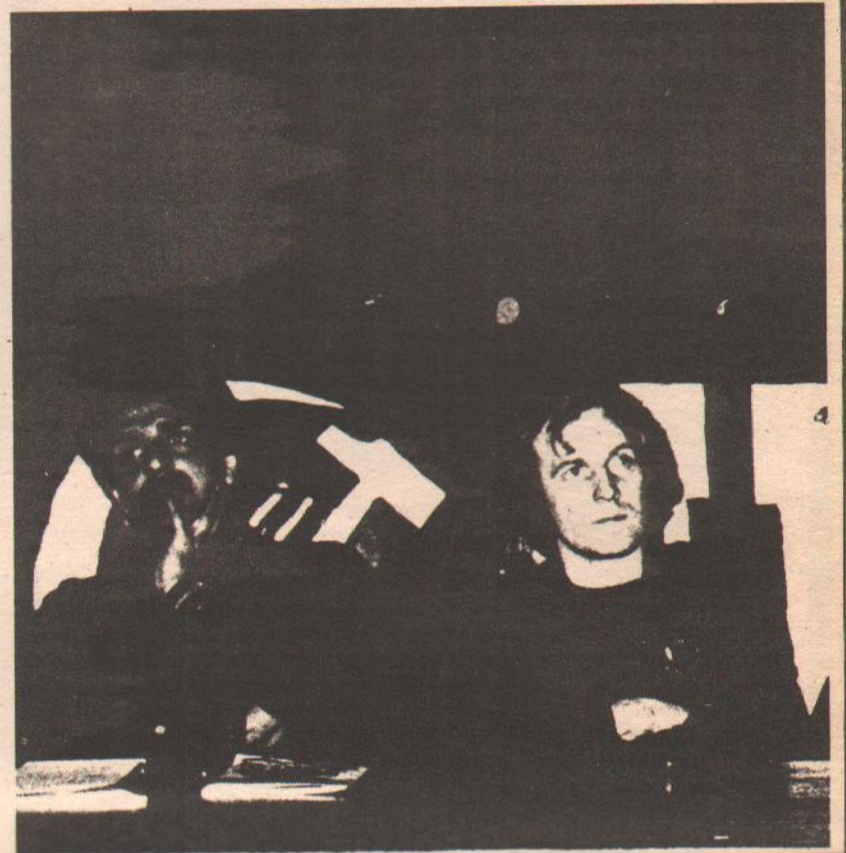
This evening, however, a former member of the YS National Committee came to see me, and after a few brief words demanded my party card back. When I asked why, he was very vague. Eventually it came out: I'd 'been doing nothing to build the party' — such a vague charge that it could have been made against most other members of the branch with better reason.

However, it may have come to the notice of Healy that at various times I told party members that I disagreed with the party line, and agreed with that of the IMG. For instance, I can't see the revolutionary principle involved in condemning the IRA, refusing to support the Cuban revolution, ruling out any united front in a manner that would have excited Stalin's envy in the Third Period, and standing the WRP's own candidate in Newham North-East, where the local Labour Party is likely to choose a candidate of revolutionary tendencies itself.

Of course, Healy wouldn't admit to expelling anyone for political differences. Instead he digs up all sorts of slander

against them — like he did with Alan Thornett, and like he is now doing with comrades Joseph Hansen and George Novack of the Socialist Workers Party.

But enough of Healyism, there's a revolutionary situation in the offing. It needs a revolutionary socialist party based on Marxism to take the working class to power, and the only such party in Britain is the International Marxist Group. Let's go forward and build it! — M.W. (Cambridge).



TARIQ ALI and BRIAN GROGAN were among IMG speakers at debate with ICL

WHAT'S ON

DURHAM conference on unemployment and the cuts, scheduled for 10 July, has been postponed.

HAMMERSMITH Working Women's Charter public meeting — 'Why the Charter?' Speakers on Charter, NAC, nursery campaign and Trico strike. Tues 13 July, 8pm, Swan pub, Hammersmith Broadway.

BENEFIT for Trico women workers: support the equal pay dispute! In seventh week of strike — funds vital. Thurs 15 July, 8pm with Sandra Kerr, Broadside Mobile Workers Theatre and others. Admission £1: Greenford Hall, junction of Oldfield Lane and Ruislip Rd, Greenford, Middx. Organised by Hammersmith WWC, 16 Crookham Rd, SW6 (01-731 1231).

WOMEN AGAINST IMPERIALISM: at the Women's Liberation Workshop on 28 June, several women discussed the relationship between patriarchy, imperialism, racism and fascism. A further meeting to discuss concrete ideas to set up a campaign will be held Fri 23 July, 7pm, at the workshop in Earlham St, EC2. Any women interested welcome to attend.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Group public meeting: 'There is no "British solution" to the crisis'. Speakers David Yaffe and Frank Richards. Fri 16 July, 7.15, Friends House, Euston Rd (opp. Euston station).

SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT — pamphlet containing first thorough critique from a socialist perspective. 23p (inc p&p) from: Socialist Woman, 97 Caledonian Rd, N1.

RACISM in the mass media — how to fight it! Public meeting. Thurs 15 July, 7pm, St Brides Institute, Bride Lane (off Fleet St). Speakers include Darcus Howe of 'Race Today', Upali Cooray and NUJ members.

FREEDOM for South Africa — where does Britain stand? Anti-Apartheid Movement rally, Mon 12 July, 7pm, Central Hall, Westminster.

SOCIALIST WOMAN — new issue out now containing articles on women in Ireland, domestic labour, abortion in Eastern Europe, women and unemployment, the WWC campaign, etc. 23p (inc p&p) from: Socialist Woman, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

COME TO the Summer School for IMG members: 28 Aug — 1 Sept. About £20 in all, including room and board in comfortable surroundings. Reading lists available soon. Book now as places limited! Will be held in Midlands countryside. Further details from: IMG National Centre, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

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.

BENGALI FRIENDS in Europe and elsewhere, for Bengali books and 'Srani-Dai-Biplab' (Fourth International paper) contact: Bengali, c/o Internationalen, Box 3274, 10365 Stockholm, Sweden.

RED BOOKS comprehensive list of titles now available — Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Mandel, Lukacs, Novack, Cannon, Deutscher, etc. Send see for copy to Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

'No to the Police State' — but yes to the police!

A postscript to the infamous history of the WRP was written in Hull on 26 June. Following a Young Socialist demonstration on unemployment, organised to the exclusion of all other tendencies in the labour movement, IMG members were removed by the police (on WRP orders) from inside Bevin House (T&GWU headquarters) where a rally was to be held. Clearly there is a huge gulf between the WRP's abstract sloganising of 'No to the Police State' (a continual theme of the demo) and the reality of their practice.

WRP sectarianism of this kind is no way forward to fighting the Callaghan-Healey measures. It is only through the creation of a class-struggle tendency within the labour movement, based on the broadest unity in action with all forces willing to combat right-wing policies, that the real fight will emerge. In no way can the building of an insular sect substitute for this task — CLAUDE DE CASPARIS (Hull).

SPAIN: How the Civil

By RICHARD CARVER

On 17 July 1936, the Spanish Army in Morocco, led by General Franco, revolted against the Popular Front Government. The working class responded immediately by creating its own organs of power in opposition to both the Government and the fascist forces. In subsequent articles we will discuss the Spanish Revolution in detail. Here we concentrate on the main sequence of events.

The Spanish Republic of 1931 was supported almost exclusively by the working class and peasantry. Then, as now, the bourgeoisie was only prepared to support democratic reforms in a half-hearted manner. This combination ensured that the Republic was a transitory and explosive phenomenon.

The left republican and reformist governments of 1931-33 did not even begin to fulfil the aspirations of the masses. They failed to give land to the peasants; or to resolve the national and colonial oppression of Catalonia, the Basque country and Morocco. The Catholic Church retained its status as landowner and capitalist, while the army and police force of the monarchy were kept intact.

The brutal consequences of these failures were brought home in 1933, when the peasants of Casas Viejas attempted to seize the land they tilled, only to be massacred at the hands of the Civil Guard.

The timidity of the left republicans spelt their downfall and replacement by overtly repressive governments from 1933 to 1935. In 1934 the Workers Alliances, dominated by the Socialist Party, attempted to organise an insurrection against the entry of the crypto-fascist CEDA into the government.

The events of 1934 were a sad prelude of 1936. Only the Trotskyists of the Communist Left understood the need to make these Alliances a genuine united front of working class forces. For the Socialists — even the left wing, which came very close to revolutionary positions — these were no more than bureaucratic agreements.

Only in the Asturias did the Workers Alliances become genuinely

representative struggle organisations. There the insurrection led to the creation of a short-lived 'Soviet Republic'; but the Asturias was isolated and the workers harshly repressed by the Republican Army, led by General Franco!

The experience of two years of right-wing government led to a sweeping victory for the left in the election of February 1936. But this came in the form of the Popular Front — an alliance of workers organisations with bourgeois parties, whose stated aim was the preservation of the bourgeois state.

Fascists

However the election victory unleashed forces which went far beyond the reformist schemas of the Popular Front. In reality the Civil War had already begun, as the peasants finally seized the land which they worked and armed workers and fascists clashed on the streets of Madrid.

Following the 17 July uprising, the fascists were smashed by the immediate response of the workers in most of the major cities. Throughout Republican Spain real power fell into the hands of new representative bodies of workers and peasants.

From July to September 1936 — in some places for much longer — the new state machine of the working class co-existed with the capitalist republic. Neither was able to take the initiative. The Government lacked any social base of support — the bourgeoisie unanimously

supported the fascists. The working class did not have the revolutionary leadership to push forward to the overthrow of the capitalist state.

This dual power was resolved by the treachery of the leadership of the workers organisations. It was principally the Stalinists of the Communist Party who sabotaged the victory of the Spanish working class. For them the main aim



Anti-fascist refugees flee Franco's forces — their

LEBANON: ARAB REVOLUTION THREATENED AS SYRIA, RIGHT WING STEP UP ATTACK

By SALEH JAAFAR

Thirty thousand people have been killed to date in the carnage that is Lebanon's civil war, and the city of Beirut is beginning to give way under the strain.

Even the city's life support systems have ceased to function. There is no electricity in Beirut today and no water supply. Drinking water is being sold for about 70 pence a litre. Garbage is dumped on the streets, and if it is burned it continues to smoulder, fouling the air. The city is alive with rats, pests of all kinds and cockroaches, and there are rumours to the effect that the first hushed up cases of typhoid and cholera have been confirmed.

Tel Al Zaatar, a Palestinian refugee camp with 12,000 inhabitants, and scene of the heaviest fighting over the last week, is estimated to receive anywhere between 1,000 and 3,000 shells and rockets daily. The Beirut river is said to be choked with Palestinian corpses from the Tel Al Zaatar and Jisr Al Pasha refugee camps.

In the early months of the civil war, ceasefires were announced with boring regularity by Lebanese parliamentary politicians. This procedure was more or less terminated in January, when the Syrians took over completely the job of sponsoring ceasefires.

VICTORY

Faced with the strong possibility of a joint Palestinian-Lebanese left victory over the Christian right-wing forces, leading to a shift in the relationship of forces throughout the whole Middle East, which could have damaged Syria's chances of negotiating a settlement with Israel over Golan, the Syrian regime opted for a policy of curbing the Palestinian and left forces in Lebanon.

Between January and May the Syrians developed from a policy of negotiating useless ceasefires, to applying diplomatic pressure on the left, to blockading arms and supplies going to the left, to open political

support for the Christian right, and finally to infiltrating Syrian troops into Lebanon disguised as Palestinians and members of the Saïqa organisation. The failure of all of these measures forced the Syrian regime to play its final and most volatile card.

On 1 June, the Syrian regime — fortified with the blessings of both American imperialism and Zionism, and throwing all pretence of neutrality to the wind — sent several armoured columns into Lebanon from the North and East. With this invasion the total of Syrian-controlled forces in Lebanon was brought up to around 25,000, including several hundred tanks and armoured cars.

CHARADE

But unexpectedly fierce resistance from the Lebanese left and the Palestinian movement brought the Syrian advance to a temporary halt. The game of arranging ceasefires and marking time now devolved on the venerable governments of the Arab League.

On the morning of 10 June, a meeting of the Arab League in Cairo decided to call a ceasefire and despatch an all Arab 'peacekeeping' force to supervise it. The force was to be made up from contingents from Syria, Libya, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, and the Palestine Liberation Organisation. But the arrival of the Arab League contingents was delayed as a result of the refusal of President Franjeh and the Christian right-wing forces to accept the decisions of the Arab League.

Meanwhile the Libyan Prime Minister, Abdul Salam Jalloud, was forging ahead with a Libyan version of 'shuttle diplomacy' in a personal attempt to reconcile the Syrians with the PLO and implement the Arab League decisions. Finally, on 22 June, the Arab League forces entered Beirut composed of only several hundred more Syrian soldiers and a 'token' Libyan force of 'tens of men' — in the words of Jalloud himself.

The Arab world was now treated to the spectacle of Syrian soldiers replacing Syrian soldiers, painting white stripes on their helmets, and hastily stenciling in on their vehicles new Arab League 'peace' markings!!

As if the underline the impotence of this charade, the private reactionary militia of Camille Chamoun (the Minister of Foreign Affairs) launched the most intense and sustained bombardment of the entire war on 23 June on the two encircled Pales-

tinian refugee camps of Tal Al Zaatar and Jisr Al Pasha, just outside Beirut. It is as a result of this attack that all electrical and water supplies to Beirut have been cut off. The left and the resistance responded defensively, threatening to unleash all-out war if either of the two camps were taken.

Reports late last week confirmed that Jisr Al Pasha or parts of it have fallen to the right-wing forces. The left is hard pressed and it is clear that both the Syrians and the right-wing forces have taken their toll during the last four weeks of fighting.

It should be pointed out that the Syrians have so far avoided waging an all-out war themselves on the left and the Palestinians. They obviously prefer to leave this to the Lebanese right, which is benefiting from the fact that the very presence of Syrian troops severely curtails the ability of the left forces both to defend themselves and even more to regain the military initiative.

The situation remains loaded with possibilities. On the one hand, the Syrian intervention against the Palestinians has had its repercussions on the internal situation in Syria, with reports coming in of arrests and deep discontent even within the ruling Baathist apparatus. This increasing destabilisation of the Assad regime makes it much harder for the Syrians to launch an all-out war against the Palestinians.

PROVOCATION

It is apparent that Assad, through agreeing to the presence in Lebanon of a force nominally linked to the Arab League, is now trying to give an all-Arab 'peacemaking' character to the Syrian intervention. Assad prefers to act in the name of the whole of the Arab bourgeoisie in Lebanon, rather than solely in the

name of the Syrian bourgeoisie. To what extent he will succeed in this remains to be seen.

On the other hand, the assault of the Christian right on Tal Al Zaatar and Jisr Al Pasha is clearly a provocation aimed at compelling the Syrians to finish off quickly what they had set themselves to do — i.e. the destruction of the Palestinian resistance movement. The fall of these camps will constitute an important moral victory for the right. But the overall military situation remains such that it is very difficult — if not impossible — for the right wing singlehandedly to defeat the left and the Palestinians throughout Lebanon.

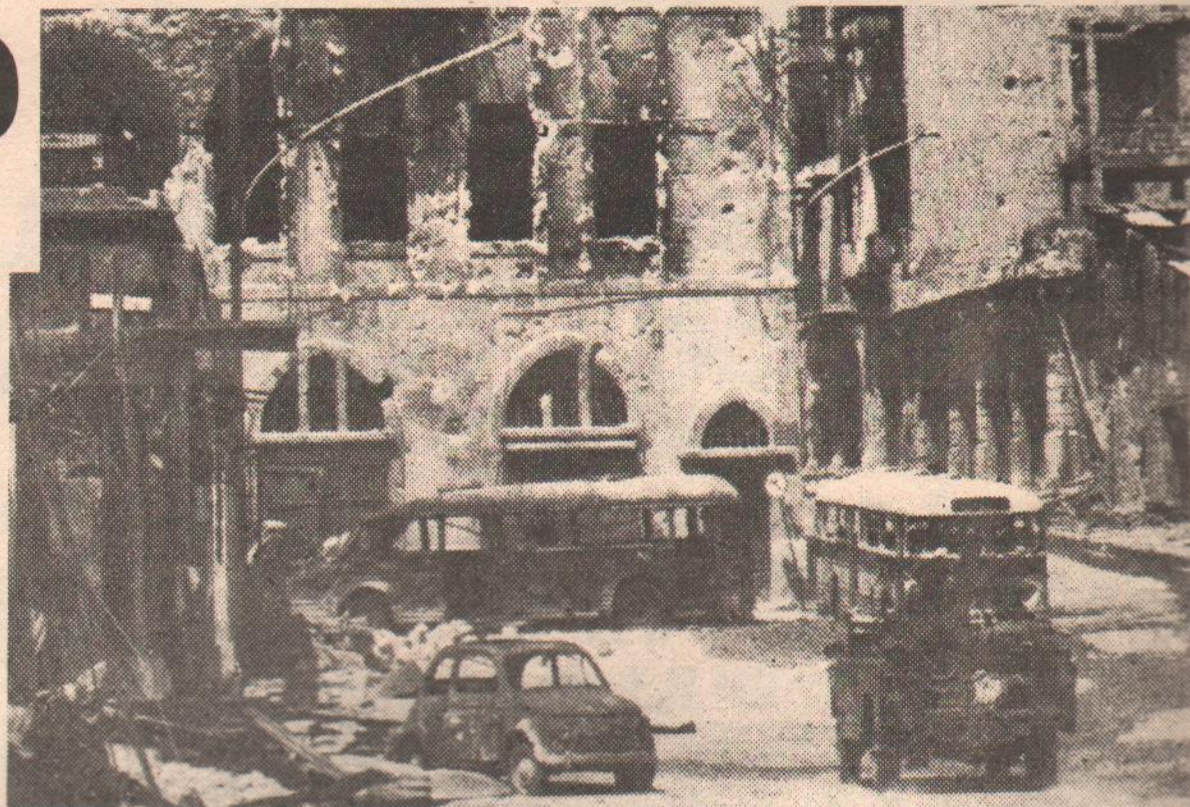
HISTORIC

There remains one fundamental thing of which every revolutionary must be aware. Despite the political backwardness of the Palestinian resistance movement and the majority of the Lebanese left, their decisive defeat on the battlefield will constitute a historic defeat for the Arab revolution. It will set back for a long period of time all the gains made by the Arab revolution since the wave of radicalisation set in motion after the June 1967 war.

Their defeat will automatically be a defeat for the struggle of the Arab masses in the West Bank and Israel against Israeli occupation. It will also be a defeat for the currently rising wave of combativity of the Egyptian working class. A black period of total abject reaction threatens to set in on the whole of the Arab world.

Solidarity with the Palestinian Resistance and the Lebanese left! A war to the finish with reaction in Lebanon!

Syrian soldiers and workers: turn your guns the other way!



War was lost

was the creation of a new entente with imperialist Britain and France. Hence the Spanish revolution had to be sacrificed on the altar of Moscow foreign policy.

As the Government reasserted itself, the impact of the collectivisations of land and industry was reduced. Workers control became mere co-operatives since the banking system and control of credit remained in private hands. Most importantly, the Government began to form a regular army to replace the democratic militias.

The death blow to the Spanish revolution came not in 1939, when Franco's troops were victorious, but in May 1937. The Stalinists and Civil Guard in Barcelona engineered a provocation against the anarcho-syndicalist CNT, which commanded the allegiance of the most advanced workers. Thousands of workers came out on the streets in arms against the Government. Once again the seizure of power was on the agenda, but the CNT and the ex-Trotskyist POUM counselled 'caution', and sent the workers back to work.

This was the signal for the final reversal of the gains of the 'July Days'. The workers militias were smashed, and collectivisations ended. Soon the CNT found itself out of the Government, while thousands of POUMists were arrested or shot.

Basic Truth

A government so concerned with keeping the imaginary bourgeois allies of the Popular Front on its side ignored a basic truth: civil war is won not by arms alone but by political weapons.

The peasant army of Franco could have been undermined by the granting of land to those who till it; the rebel base of Morocco could have been snatched away by the granting of independence. Instead the reformists courted in vain the capitalists of Britain and France, who stayed aloof, and the capitalists of Spain who were the real victors of the Civil War.

As the writer George Orwell, who fought in the POUM militia, observed: 'A government which sends boys of fifteen to the front with rifles forty years old and keeps its biggest men and newest weapons in the rear, is manifestly more afraid of revolution than of the fascists.'



Arab workers and students march in London against the Syrian invasion



irations betrayed by the Popular Front

RED WEEKLY

Civil War Commemorations

The Prime Minister of Spain, Arias Navarro, was sacked last week by King Juan Carlos. But his replacement by Adolfo Suarez spells out no good news for the working class. Suarez was appointed as Minister of the Falangist National Movement late last year just before Franco died.

The future of Spain will not be decided by the factional in-fighting among different Francoist cliques, but by the growing struggle of the Spanish workers, whose ever deepening militancy and organisation are today the root of the political crisis of the dictatorship, and tomorrow will become the force that will bury it.

This month will see various anniversaries connected with the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936.

Nice try, Will. Perhaps if you start now you might be able to get something organised for the 50th anniversary.

But the Manchester conference was not all sorry apologies and empty speeches.

Carlos Elvira, representing the Spanish Workers' Commissions, explained to the delegates what sort of solidarity the Spanish workers really need. Telegrams and collections of money were important, he said, but not enough. Effective solidarity action required the organisation of boycotts, blacking and sympathetic strikes.

From the floor, Jack Robertson, one of two shop stewards from Massey Ferguson, spoke about the exemplary fight being carried on by workers at the Massey subsidiary in Barcelona, Motor Iberica, and the possibility of sending a delegation to visit their struggling comrades.

The conference organisers would allow only general resolutions to be put to a vote. But it was these proposals for concrete solidarity that aroused the greatest interest, and elicited a smile and pledge for assistance from the representative of the Spanish workers there.

CIVIL WAR

ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Friday 9 July, 7.30pm: 'Spain 1936-76—the struggle goes on'. Public meeting organised by 'Spain in Struggle' solidarity bulletin, including first-hand report from Spain. Roebuck pub, Tottenham Ct Rd.

Wednesday 14 July 8pm: 'Spain—40 years after'. Speakers: Valerie Veness (Lab councillor) and Spanish militant. Organised by North London Committee Against Repression in Spain. John Barnes Library, Camden Road.

Saturday 17 July: Picket Spanish Embassy. **Saturday 17 July, from 8pm:** social to celebrate the coming revolution in Spain. Organised by NLGARIS with live band, the Derelicts. Old Red Lion pub, John St (Angel tube).

Wednesday 21 July, 7.30pm: 'Revolution in Spain, 1936-76'. Public meeting on anniversary of workers militia victory in Barcelona. Speakers include Robin Blackburn, also rare film on defence of Madrid. University of London Union (Room 2D), Malet St.

Thursday 22 July, 7.30pm: 'Free Eva Forest'. Public meeting of Free Eva Forest campaign. Includes slide-show on political prisoners. Roebuck pub, Tottenham Ct Rd.

Solidarity

These should be occasions on which we pledge ourselves to fight for the sort of internationalist solidarity that is needed now as much as it was in 1936.

Many militants concerned with the struggles of the Spanish working class have therefore been asking: 'Whatever happened to the 14 February Committee?' Set up by such figures as Jack Jones and Ray Buckton at a conference of delegates from trade union bodies across the country, this self-appointed clique promised to get the ball rolling. Its secretary, Will Paynter, ended the conference with a demagogic appeal for 'mass demonstrations up and down the country' on the 40th anniversary of the Civil War.

Will Paynter finally popped up again two weeks ago at the Conference in Solidarity with the Workers of Spain organised by the Manchester Trades Council. 'What news, Will', he was asked. 'How are you and Jack and Ray getting on with your plans for the Civil War anniversary?'

'Well', he replied, 'I did suggest the organisation of a massive demonstration in London. But they told me it was too late to do that. So instead we are going to send a massive letter of protest to the Spanish Government.'

Summertime Blues?

Well comrades, not bad but not good. In the final week of our £1,000 Fund Drive, another £66 came in to boost the total to £876. Our thanks to John Holloway, £10; S. Raithatha, £5; a Leicester supporter, £1; B.H., £15; North London IMG, £10; Anon, £5; and a fine £20 from Linda Simon. A big thank you to all these comrades and all who have contributed over the past three months.

Now comes the most difficult time of the year for us — summer. We know everyone will have been saving what they can for a holiday, but we still need the same amount of money to run the paper. Nothing in the class struggle will be slowing down over the summer — a new round of public spending cuts are in the pipeline, and the racists and Powell will be busy stirring things up. *Red Weekly* will be as vital as ever, so we appeal to all our readers to make a big effort and give — and give regularly — to the Fighting Fund over the summer.

We'd like to be able to announce that we've received £1,500 by the end of September, so what about getting us off to a good start and sending in a donation this week? Send to: Red Weekly Fighting Fund, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.



Workers at St Matthews hospital in Hackney successfully fought attempts to close the kitchens (Photo: News Line)

OUR HEALTH NEEDS OUR ENQUIRIES

'We're fed up with the Government and the Area Health Authority telling us what hospitals we need, we're going to launch our own enquiry into the health needs of working people'. That was the attitude that last week led Hackney Trades Council to launch a workers enquiry into the state of health provision in the area.

The Area Health Authority's plans are for a 'nucleus' hospital in 1979. But with Callaghan and Healey threatening more cut-backs, many feel it is more likely that existing hospitals will be run down and come 1979 — no new hospital. The ending of money for renovation, improvement and upgrading of 'old' hospitals was also the prelude to the closure of the Poplar hospital and the current threat to the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson hospital.

The deterioration and decay found so far by the trades council delegation — which consists of members of the

National Union of Public Employees, the National and Local Government Officers Association, the National Union of Teachers, and the college lecturers' NATFHE — are consistent with a policy of run-down and closure. However, a workers enquiry is only the first step, arming the local labour movement with the information necessary to combat the AHA's plans and develop its own schemes for health care based on the needs of local working people.

A fight back is just as urgent, and here workers at the St Matthews hospi-

tal in Hackney have put up a stirring fight in recent weeks. When attempts were made to close the kitchens, the workers saw that this was just the first step towards total closure. So they struck. After three days they had won all their demands: no closure of the kitchens, no redundancies, and no transfer without consent.

Meanwhile, similar proposals for the launching of a trade union enquiry into health provision are to be put to Islington Trades Council by workers at the Royal Northern and Whittington hospitals. It now seems certain that Camden and Islington Health Authority will start slashing services at the Royal Northern, spurred on by their success in closing most of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital.

HEMEL

Another Area Health Authority under fire is in Hemel Hempstead, where 80 people picketed a recent AHA meeting to protest against the threatened closure of Sebright ward of Hemel's hospital. The picket was organised by the Trades Council and the Hospital Action Group.

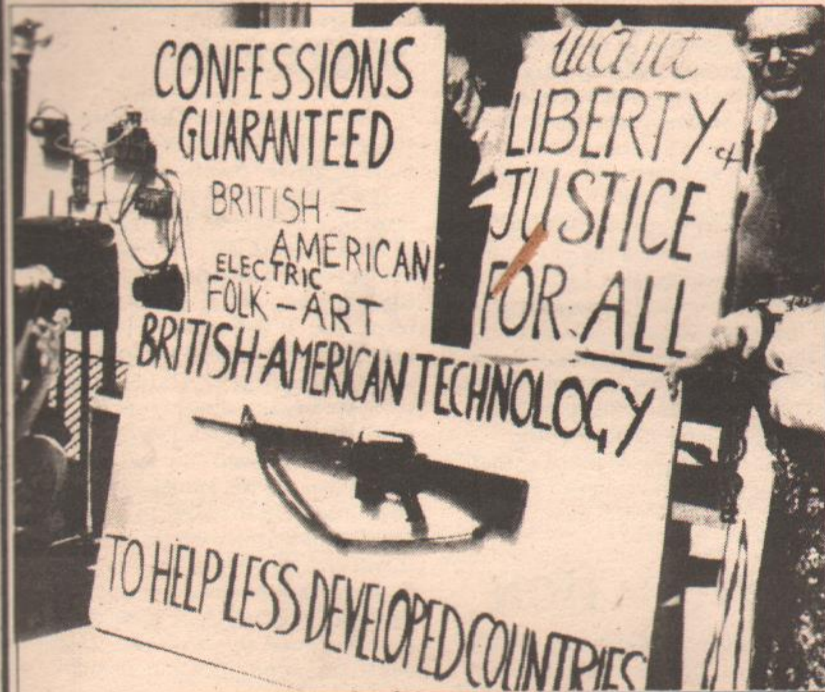
Unfortunately the HAG has tried to maintain a 'non-political' stance, simply demanding a new hospital.

Against this, supporters of the National Co-ordinating Committee Against NHS Cuts have been arguing for workers action against the cuts and the opening of the AHA's books and an area conference to defend the NHS and launch a workers enquiry into the hospitals. Two successful public meetings have been built and the local Labour Party has affiliated to the NCC campaign.

NORTH-EAST

Finally, defenders of the NHS in the North East have been putting the finger on the man most likely to cut and cut and cut. On 3 July the Tyneside Action Committee Against the Cuts (TACAC) picketed the Northern Region TUC where Dennis Healey had been invited to speak. Supported by Newcastle, Sunderland and Darlington trades councils, the NUPE Divisional Council, and the executive of the 7,000-strong Civil and Public Services Association branch at the Longbenton DHSS ministry, the picket attracted 200 people.

The picket is being followed up by a demonstration on 17 July to oppose the closure of the Fleming Memorial Children's Hospital and a demonstration against all spending cuts in October. A mobilising committee will be building up support over the summer, and anyone interested in helping should contact Colin Randall, 85 Adelaide Terrace, Benwell, Newcastle 5.



The right of 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' written into the American Declaration of Independence two hundred years ago is just a hollow phrase if you happen to be an American Indian or a Puerto Rican. This was the message of a picket mounted outside the US Embassy last Thursday to coincide with the opening of an exhibition of British-American folk art.

The US Government showed its utter contempt for the 'liberty' of the people of Puerto Rico when it staged the economic summit there last week without even consulting its puppet governor, Colon. But then there was never anything 'free' about the way in which relations between the US and Puerto Rico were formed. On 25 July 1898, 16,000 US troops invaded the island and conquered it in 17 days — there to perfect the methods it was subsequently to use to extend its economic influence and imperialist control throughout the world.

The US imposed a one-product economy, investing only in sugar. The plantations, controlled by absentee owners, thrived on abundant cheap labour. But in the 1940s even cheaper labour in Cuba, Hawaii and the Dominican Republic meant that the US turned there instead for its sugar, creating massive unemployment in Puerto Rico. Today Puerto Rico is still in economic thrall to the US. Of all retail goods sold in Puerto Rico, 95 per cent are from the US — it is, in fact, the US's fifth largest market. 47.9 per cent of all US profits from investments in Latin America are made in Puerto Rico.

The social consequences of US colonialism almost defy description. Real unemployment stands at 45 per cent, and as many as 40 per cent of Puerto Ricans have been forced to emigrate to the US. Another form of population control being used is sterilisation: 35 per cent of the women of child-bearing age have been sterilised — the highest incidence of female sterilisation in the world! 'Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness' have taken on a new meaning in 1976. No wonder increasing numbers of Puerto Rican people are today organising against their US oppressors.

Derek Brough



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