

RED WEEKLY

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17 MARCH 1977

No. 191

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DEFEAT PHASE 2 BEST WAY TO PREVENT PHASE 3

WHATEVER FLEET STREET tells you, whatever lies the Labour Government spreads, be sure of this: the Leyland toolroom workers have the militant backing of the vast majority of those of us who work at Longbridge.

The management, the discredited union leadership of Scanlon and Jones, the Labour Government, have tried to divide the toolroom workers from other car workers and the rest of the working class. But carworkers at Leyland and elsewhere know that at the root of the toolroom workers strike is an anger against the falling living standards, caused by the Social Contract.

And that 'Contrick', the deal which united the Labour Government and the trade union bureaucracy for two years, is beginning to break up.

Even the very limited demands for national negotiating rights around the decline in their wages has thrown the Labour Government and the Leyland management into confusion.

The treatment handed out to Scanlon when he left Birmingham last week, with shouts of 'Go Home You Bum' ringing in his ears, was also handed out to Geoffrey Drain, leader of the National and Local Government Officers Association, when he as well tried to stop his members in Scotland striking against the cuts.

CONTEMPTUOUS SILENCE

Jack Jones, when he came to visit us at Longbridge last month received the same contemptuous reception.

Workers are looking for an alternative to the policies and leadership of these gentlemen and many of the traditional loyalties are breaking up.

Yet the Communist Party still refuses to break from Scanlon and his fellow Con-Trick conspirators

In the Works Committee at Longbridge, Communist Party members have actively supported the record of the past two years — as a watchdog for the management. They have banned unofficial strikes. They have supported the notorious penalty clause documents. They have accepted the programme for production of the new Mini without hesitation, without finding out what pitfalls the management have prepared for the workforce.

3 APRIL CONFERENCE

At the conference called by Leyland stewards on 3 April, many Leyland workers will, the chair permitting, express their opposition to the 'protest' politics of the CP. Instead the demand will be raised that the strike action proposed for 19 April is turned into a movement which will sweep away Phase 2 as the best way of fighting Phase 3.

This is the type of action that can defeat the Social Contract — not hoping that 'lefts' like Scanlon will finally move, not relying on the likes of Tony Benn who now raises gas prices at will and threatens to use the armed forces to break the strike at Windscale atomic power plant.

An alternative to all these betrayers must be fought for. That is the reason why I, as a revolutionary socialist and a Longbridge carworker, am standing in the Stechford by-election: as part of the socialist opposition that can be built in the course of the struggle against the Social Contract.



By BRIAN HERON, shop steward at British Leyland, Longbridge, and IMG candidate in Stechford by-election

REVOLUTIONARY INTERNATIONAL UNITY IN THE FRENCH ELECTIONS

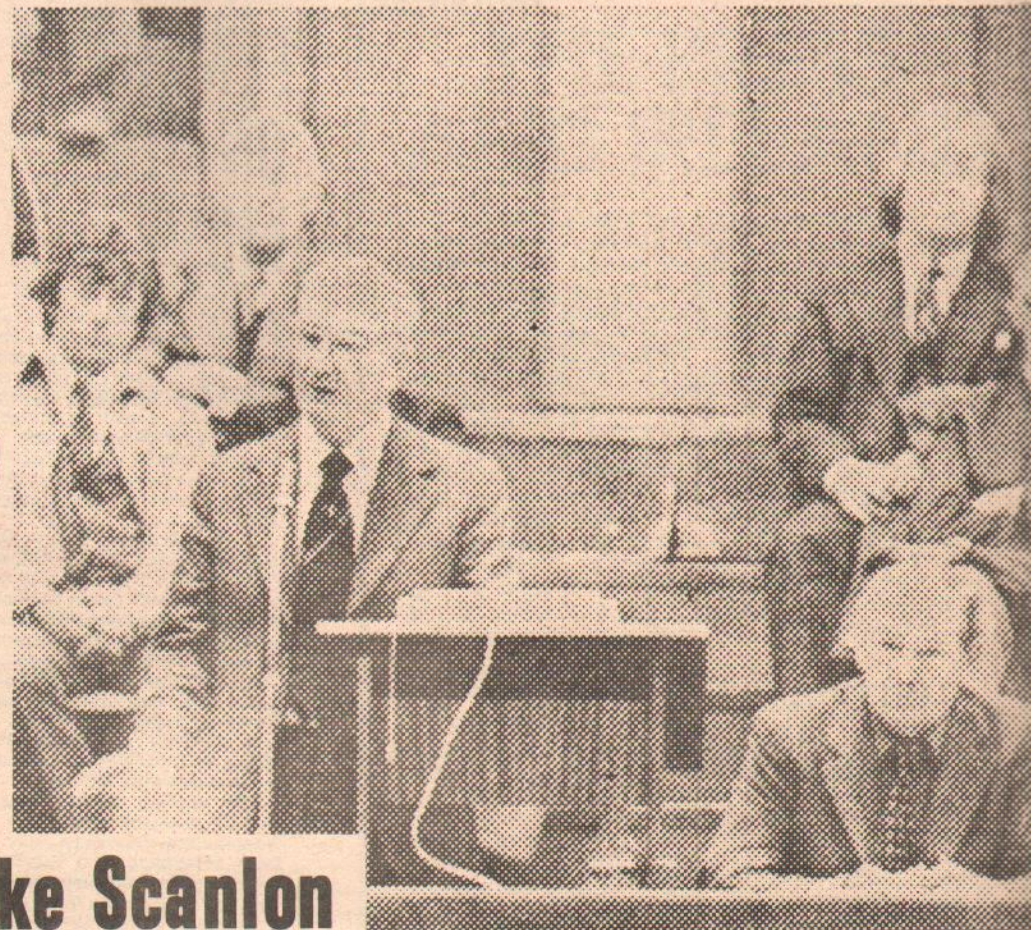
ING
MARXIST GROUP

Speakers: **Daniel Bensaïd**
**Ligue Communiste
Revolutionnaire**
(Revolutionary Communist League)
**A leader of Lutte
Ouvriere** (Workers Struggle)
**A leader of
Organisation
Communiste des
Travailleurs**
(formerly Révolution)

FRIDAY MARCH 18th 7.30pm
CONWAY HALL RED LION SQUARE
WC1 (Holborn tube)

For French elections story see p. 12.

Workers
are
looking
for an
alternative
to the
policies
of the
'leaders' like Scanlon



SUPPORT LEYLAND CONFERENCE ON 3 APRIL

ABORTION RIGHTS: NAC plans mass action for 14 May

The National Abortion Campaign will be holding its second national conference on 19/20 March, almost two years to the day since the campaign was first set up. At its first conference in October 1975, 1,000 NAC supporters established the aims of the campaign — 'to build a mass national campaign to defeat all restrictive legislation on the basis of a woman's right to choose whether to continue or terminate a pregnancy' — and decided upon structures to achieve its aims.

THREAT

The setting of the conference is the fight against William Benyon's anti-abortion Bill — the latest threat to women's fight for equality and independence. The first aim of NAC supporters at the Conference will be to map out clear plans to defeat this restrictive measure and to take the fight for free abortion on demand forward.

The action resolution submitted to the conference by the Steering Committee pinpoints the 14 May demonstration as the next national focal point for the campaign. It calls on the conference to issue a public appeal to the women's, labour and student movement. The appeal will make clear if it is carried that each of these movements have a special responsibility to throw their organised weight and collective efforts behind the fight to prevent the Benyon Bill becoming law.

URGENT

It is within the framework of this urgent task that all other debates at the Conference will be situated. And that is how the Oxford NAC group discussed its attitude to the proposed Bill published by the Abortion Law Reform Association. Pauline Simmonds, a member of the group, told *Red Weekly*: 'We discussed the proposition from two angles. Firstly, does the content of the Bill adequately reflect NAC's understanding of a woman's right to choose? ALRA's Bill accepts the validity of the arguments about foetal viability. It therefore places a limit of 28 weeks in pregnancy on the woman's right of choice.'

'We felt that NAC cannot and should not make any compromises over the fundamental principle of a woman's right to choose, and that any time limit in law would be restrictive.'

'It would also give the anti-abortion lobby an ideal starting point for amending such a law, by merely reducing the time limit on viability grounds. We have already seen this happening with Benyon.'

'Secondly, we considered the timing of ALRA's Bill. The present situation in Parliament makes it extremely unlikely that any positive legislation would be passed, but more importantly, NAC's main priority is to defeat the Benyon Bill.'

ABORTION RIGHTS - A SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE



25p

Socialist Woman pamphlet on abortion available from Reigocrest 97 Caledonian Road, London N1. 25p plus 10p postage.

A second area of debate scheduled for the Conference will be centred on how best to structure the campaign. Chris Walton of Leeds NAC told *Red Weekly* why her group wanted to re-affirm the policy of positively discriminating in favour of women — a policy which revolutionaries should fight for at every level of working class organisations and campaigns.

'NAC is one of the few campaigns which actually draws out and involves all women, whether they be working in industry or at home. These women must be seen and encouraged to take the leading role in the organisation of such a campaign.'

'This is especially necessary since women's traditional role (i.e.

that of housewife and mother) rarely allows them to take an active part in the trade union and labour movement or, indeed, in any sort of militant campaign.'

Chris Walton also made clear to *Red Weekly* how she saw the relationship between NAC and the labour movement. She argued: 'We must remember that women alone will never be able to win this fight. The struggle for free abortion on demand is a class issue which must be taken up the labour movement.'

Perhaps the thorniest area scheduled for discussion at the NAC Conference will be how to democratically express the interests of the campaign in its day-to-day running. *Women's Voice* has submitted a resolution for a more tightly organised structure.

Although they dropped their proposal from last Conference for a delegate steering committee without explanation, they still try to mechanically impose trade union structures on the campaign. The last two years' experience of campaigning show how incorrect this approach is.

RESPOND

Because NAC is an action-oriented mass campaign it must have the flexibility to respond rapidly — paying utmost attention to the need for consistent democratic organisation. And it must also be as open as possible to encourage any new supporters who wish to join — for however limited a time — to immediately assume a full role in the campaign. Care must also be taken to involve delegates and representatives from trade unions, women's groups and campaigning organisations.

The present structure of NAC — with an open Steering Committee to carry out the day-to-day work of the campaign and accountable to regular national meetings of the campaign involving representatives from every NAC group and affiliated body, provide the best basis to achieve NAC's goals.

The attention of the Conference will be best spent on discussing how to make sure these structures can run smoothly and democratically, rather than overthrowing their very basis.

RAPE AND RACISM

The kidnap and rape of a young woman by five Moroccan teenagers hit the headlines of the national press in November last year. With this particular rape, the usual ideas peddled by this racist and sexist society, that rape is an unfortunate but natural aspect of human existence or that it is the expected consequences of the sexually seductive activity of women — all but disappeared.

Instead the mass media, the judiciary and the bourgeois politicians were quick off the mark in taking up the case. Far from any concern for the oppression of women, the interest came from the fact that the rapist happened to be non-white.

This was a good opportunity which could not be wasted, to use this case of rape to reinforce racist ideas. For instance, Tory MP Nicholas Winteron in criticising the light sentences given to the five rapists said that: 'there is no doubt that young men are physically mature, particularly if not British, at a very early age.'

MYTHS

The implications are clear, especially to an audience which has absorbed centuries of racist ideas and myths. Another Tory, Michael Brotherton, called for Judge Sutcliffe's resignation and recommended that 'the Moroccan creatures and their parents should be sent home.'

Two weeks ago the same racist theme appeared in ITV's London Programme. Once again, instead of a serious exposition and attack upon the physical sexual brutalisation of women, a blatant racist attack upon the black community — particularly the youth, was launched. The message insistently drummed home to the millions of viewers throughout the programme's 40 minutes was the contention that black youths occupy themselves gang raping

COMMENTS

The programme was totally based on the comments of three

carefully chosen 'experts' on the social problems of the Tottenham borough of London.

On the basis of the utterances of these three people a report was presented by a supposedly liberal, and prestigious programme. In fact, the result was a programme which stirred up and reinforced racist consciousness with probably greater impact than any obvious fascist propaganda. The message of the programme was simple.

It was illustrated with film sequences of black youths at a disco, black school kids playing football at school and standing on the pavement, playing and talking. With this background, the audience was repeatedly told that young blacks are responsible for attacks on women at bus stops, cafes, and in discos.

In other words — 'the next time you see a number of black youths: scream, call the police, shout rape, because blacks by their very nature are rapist'.

DANGEROUS

This link-up between rape and race is especially dangerous. It plays on some of the most backward and deeply seated racist ideas that are commonly held about blacks.

It is clear that the society in which we live is not only econom-

ically degenerating, but is also socially degenerating. All forms of social violence — such as women bashing, street violence as well as rape — are probably on the increase. And so are other indications of the social crisis like the higher rates of suicides and the increase in alcoholism amongst the youth.

SCAPEGOAT

In this situation, blacks are being used as a scapegoat for the social degeneration of capitalism, as well as for its economic failings. First it was mugging, now it is rape. What next?

The use of race to explain rape not only weakens the working class by stirring up racist sentiments, but it also clouds the real need to take seriously all aspects of oppression experienced by women. It is an attempt to divert consciousness away from the major contradictions of the present social order by setting women — and those who would defend them from whatever point of view — against blacks.

This trend will continue unless there is an alternative explanation and practical measures are fought for in the working class. We must recognise that physical sexual violence against women needs to be confronted. The rally held in Paris on rape last year took the first steps in working out concrete measures for the labour movement to adopt, in assuming its responsibility in defending women who are victims of male brutalisation. One such proposal was the demand for unions to fight for the provision of free transport home for women workers from employers.

CRISIS

As the social crisis deepens in Britain, revolutionary Marxists must play their role in taking further steps along this road.

IN ALL COUNTRIES - WOMEN

ORGANISE



INTERNATIONAL Meeting, PARIS



MAY 28, 29, 30.

THIS POSTER was distributed by socialist feminists in almost every European country on International Women's Day this year. It advertises the first Conference ever to be held on a European scale by socialists active in the women's movement.

Planned for 28-30 May in Paris, the Conference will discuss three major themes — Women's Work

parity.

Support for the Conference has been impressive in many countries. In Spain, for example, it includes women's groups from the workers' commissions in Barcelona.

The call has now gone out for British women's groups and women active in struggles against their specific oppression to formally support this event.

IRISH FEMINISTS ON THE MOVE

A little bit of history was made in the 'Old Burnt Cabin', a social club in the Catholic Andersonstown area of Belfast when on 8 March some 150 people attended a talk and a social to celebrate International Women's Day. The evening was organised by the Belfast Socialist Women's Group and its theme was the struggle of women in Spain.

A speaker from the Socialist Women's Group told the gathering that: 'Women in Ireland face many of the problems faced by women in Spain — the repressive character of the states, the reactionary influence of the Catholic Church, the prohibition of divorce, contraception and abortion — and as our sisters in Spain have shown, it is only through organising themselves and constantly campaigning that demands are won.'

The evening made history in that it was the first time that International Women's Day has been celebrated in a Republican area. Indeed, any celebration of this day is a recent innovation in Ireland and so far they have been on an extremely limited basis. This is despite the fact that the names of Ann Devlin, Betsy Gray, Constance de Marciewicz, Maire Drumm, the Price sisters, have been to the fore in the centuries-old struggle to throw off the British yoke. But the activities of these women have always been



International Women's Day symposium, with main speakers Evelyn Reed of the American Socialist Workers Party and Irene Brennan of the Communist Party.

Not surprisingly then, there was little outcry when Republicans have dismissed the fight for women's liberation as divisive. Little wonder that the Clonard Martyr's Sinn Fein Cumman can in all seriousness characterise the right to abortion as a devious British plot. In a leaflet which they distributed criticising the 'Peace Movement' and the British Government hypocrisy they raised as evidence that the British Government was responsible for the murder of some 70,000 babies since the 1967 Abortion Act.

This gives some idea of the

today. Things are, it is true, beginning to look better. As well as the Belfast SWG, women's groups are developing in Derry, Newry, Craigavon and Andersonstown, and thus ensuring in a small way that the oppression of women as women does not go unchallenged.

These small forces also hold a tremendous responsibility to intervene amongst the militant Republican women who are spearheading the new mass activity on the streets of the Six Counties in defence of political prisoners and in opposition to the British Army.

Labour MP O'Halloran strikes again

MICHAEL O'HALLORAN, Labour MP from Islington North, has threatened to take court action against 80 pro-abortionists who marched to his surgery on Friday night.

People on the march — organised by Women's Voice but with backing from local Labour Party members — waited for over two hours to see O'Halloran to protest about his open flouting of Labour Party Conference decision for free abortion on request.

O'Halloran's 'open door' policy was slammed shut. He first said that each of the demonstrators would have to see him individually. Worried that this would take until the early hours of the morning, the forty remaining lobbyists moved together into his room.

O'Halloran's willingness to discuss rapidly disappeared. Besides the usual 'No Comment', he is reported to have politically enlightened his constituents with a rather inappropriate 'Fuck Off'. Radio interviews have revealed that it was at this point that O'Halloran launched the first punch.

In the general mêlée which followed O'Halloran bolted out a side door while his constituents walked off, far from satisfied that their MP would let the interests of his constituents decide his future position on the Benyon Bill, rather

STUDENTS FIGHT ON DESPITE BROAD LEFT

IN FOCUS

**RED
WEEKLY**

Nearly 20,000 students marched in London last Wednesday to protest at proposed increases in tuition fees. The end-of-march rally drew to an early close when NUS President Charles Clarke — among others — were shouted down by the chants of thousands of students: 'NUS off your knees, lead the fight to freeze the fees'.

Militant students showed the huge potential for the campaign. They also expressed dissatisfaction with the strategy of 'institutional consensus'. This phrase coined by NUS leaders, refers to the Broad Left strategy for an alliance between the NUS and the college authorities.

NUS Executive member Harry Dean said last Saturday that the aim of the campaign at college level was to unite institutions around opposition to the fee increases for self-financing students.



At a national level, he said, campaigns should try to negotiate with the central Government to completely restructure the fees system. He could not answer where the finances necessary for this would come from.

ACCEPTS

Dean's position amounts to accepting phased fee increases. It puts off the necessary immediate fight against the Government's cuts to some time in the future.

It's clear that students are having little to do with the strategy being offered by the Broad Left. For the ten colleges faced with court orders to end their occupations, 'institutional consensus' is meaningless.

Sussex University students and workers have raised demands which unite the fightback, on and off campus. Local bus workers in

Sussex are distributing student leaflets on the town's buses. All campus trade unions now support the students' demands. This is how to isolate the administrations and force them to implement student demands.

Eight members of the Broad Left in Essex resigned in disgust from their local group. The President and three other executive members were amongst the resignations. They occurred after the Broad Left issued a statement condemning the occupation in its second day. It was described as being in the hands of 'an ultra-left minority'.

The Broad Left hoped to mobilise Tory support for its proposals to call off the occupation in the union meeting. They argued that the occupation should only be short-term.

In their eyes 'an occupation is a tactic to help out in our overall

campaign, we sought to keep the university united, for through unity we can win'. The 'unity' of the mass meeting, rejecting this collaborationist strategy — with the exception of four votes — was firm in its opposition to the Broad Left's sell-out.

The Broad Left has done little better in Sussex University, one of its former strongholds. A mere 20 votes were cast for their position at a recent mass meeting of 1,500 students. Three delegates to the NUS Conference include two members of the IMG Society and only one Broad Left member.

Twenty-six colleges sent delegates to a conference in Sussex last weekend to plan the future of the campaign. The NUS Executive refused to give official backing to this initiative by Sussex until 48 hours before it happened.

Saturday's meeting overwhelmedly rejected the strategy for the campaign offered by the NUS leaders. The demands of the campaign were changed to support a policy of freezing fees now as the first step to their abolition.

A plan of action for the summer term will be submitted as an emergency resolution to the forthcoming NUS Conference. It provides for an organised national defence of colleges facing legal threats.

The Socialist Student Alliance, established last month, distributed 5,000 leaflets outlining an alternative strategy at last week's demonstration. The leadership slate proposed by the SSA is committed to fighting for these policies. A campaign for the election of this slate provides a good basis for socialist militants in the union.

WORKERS AND THE COURTS

Against the background of increasing discontent and struggle against the Social Contract, the courts have stepped in to reinforce the Labour Government's attack on wages and living standards as resistance to these policies grows.

Court orders have been used to legally enforce the wage controls which the Social Contract was supposed to have imposed purely on the basis of the collaboration of the trade union leaders. Now, that collaboration is being challenged. Court orders have also been issued to break the actions of students and workers against cuts.

The Labour Government is now laying the basis for greater use of the courts through its Criminal Law Bill, which seeks to make occupations a criminal offence. The Government is flaunting the opposition to this measure, expressed by both the Labour Party and the TUC.

The bosses have never been reluctant to settle disputes with workers through the courts. Nor have they been reluctant to back up court decisions in their favour by using the police force, or even the army.

Strikers at Windscale nuclear plant ended their bitter seven week dispute over pay last week under the threat of the use of army and airforce, ready to lift supplies and scabs into the plant.

The responsibility for this lies not only with the employers, but firmly in the hands of the supposed friend of the workers, Tony Benn, in his capacity as Energy Secretary.

CONTEMPT FOR DEMOCRACY

Just as serious as the willingness of far-right organisations to rely on the Courts is similar actions by the right wing inside the labour movement. Calling out for 'freedom', the right wing has shown complete contempt for any real democracy. Where they are unable to get their ideas accepted through democratic discussion, they call in the law.

The Labour leadership has capitulated to court interference. The Newham North East Labour Party has still not held its meeting. Some NALGO workers took holiday leave to protest against cuts because of General Secretary Drain's instructions against strike action. In each of these cases, the fundamental democracy of the workers movement is under challenge. Where court orders are complied with, the ability of the entire labour movement to resist future use of the state is weakened.

The fight for workers democracy goes hand in hand with the task of organising a socialist opposition capable of leading the fightback against the Social Contract. Without a united and confident workers movement, the courts will continue to step in to play the role which the Labour bureaucrats are unable to do.

But the Pentonville 5 showed the real character of the law. In the midst of spreading strikes, it took the Law Lords less than a week to throw their writ to the wind, and free the dockers. It is working class action which determines whether the law is enforced. It is time to turn the tide against the law which attempts to shackle the labour movement.

THE PRESS AND IRELAND

It is remarkable that the latest discussion of press coverage of the Irish war should focus on whether the establishment press are 'dupes' of the IRA. Airey Neave, Tory spokesperson on the North of Ireland, last week called for more censorship of Irish affairs, saying that the BBC, of all people, were 'undermining the propaganda war in Ulster'.

The day after Neave's outburst, the *Sunday Times* published a detailed report of various 'dirty tricks' the British Army has been up to in the North of Ireland — ranging from assassinations to the printing of Loyalist newspapers. Doubtless Neave considers such reports as 'damaging to the morale of the British Army'; in other words, 'the truth hurts'.

Neave would be joined by Roy Mason, Labour's Northern Ireland Minister, who recently demanded that the BBC stopped reporting any activities of 'paramilitaries'. On censorship, as on the rest of the Irish war, the line is Tory and Labour Government 'bipartisanship'.

PACT OF SILENCE

The reason for the public raising of a few doubts about Britain's conduct of the Irish war is a desire by the press to appear to be putting their house in order, before others do it for them. That storm threatened to break after the recent revelation by Jonathan Dimbleby that a 'pact of silence' operates in the BBC and the ITA on reporting the views of the IRA. It is brewing up again with the discussion in the National Union of Journalists on press reporting of the North of Ireland. There are four resolutions going to the NUJ conference for an enquiry into this coverage.

There is little doubt that such an enquiry would reveal a web of distortion, lies and black propaganda which would make even the coverage of car workers' disputes seem fair by comparison. All militants have a vested interest in backing such an enquiry; for the sooner the truth about British presence in Ireland is revealed, the sooner the demands will multiply for an ending of that presence.

SCABS CAN'T STOP NALGO STRIKE



Scottish NALGO workers marching against the cuts, in defiance of both the courts and their own leadership.

HUGH SCANLON was not the only trade union leader to be given the bum's rush last week.

On Wednesday 9 March Geoffrey Drain, boss of the National and Local Government Association, was howled

down after a 10,000 strong anti-cuts demonstration in Glasgow, with shouts of 'scab' and 'blackleg'.

The reason for the workers' anger was that the day before Drain had capitulated to a court ruling and called off the

strike. The Glasgow District Committee of NALGO, for instance, suspended its meeting and its members informally decided to go ahead with the strike as unofficial action. Pickets went out and, despite attempts by senior civil servants and police to prevent the pickets operating, most NALGO organised offices were brought out on strike.

ANGER

They joined members of the National Union of Public Employees who also took strike action and participated in the anti-cuts demonstration called by the Scottish Trades Union Congress.

Both the size of the demonstration, and the militancy of the NALGO members in ignoring both their courts and their official leadership, are yet further testimonies to the growing anger felt by trade unionists against the cuts and those in their 'leadership' who by their support of the Social Contract, have helped to cause them.

London NUPE says ALL OUT ON 11 MAY

An all-out strike on 11 May was the unanimous decision of a London-wide Conference of the National Union of Public Employees shop stewards last week. One hundred and fifty delegates at the meeting — organised by the London Divisional Council of NUPE — agreed to organise this action jointly with other public sector unions.

But NUPE's leadership will attempt to keep the affair as low-key as possible. The attendance at the meeting itself was an indication of their lack of seriousness.

Many delegates felt that the 11 May action was too little and too late. They felt that the time had come when area action — and the union's policy of 'guerrilla tactics' — was not enough.

Several speakers demanded to know what the union intended to do for its members who were already being threatened by redundancy and who may well be out of a job by 11 May. Over a third of

change the date to 19 April in line with the one day strike against the Social Contract called by the Leyland combine stewards.

IMG members, with those of the SWP, argued that: 'to fight effectively against the cuts we have to fight the Social Contract'. The continuation of this alliance between union leaderships and the Labour Government is an obstacle to organising a serious campaign against the cuts. As one delegate explained, this was why the TGWU has refused to support the action on 11 May.

Another resolution from Hammersmith Hospital delegates was ruled out of order despite earlier assurances that motions would be allowed from the floor. Their motion called for support for the lobby at the 22 March meeting of the Steering Committee Conference set up on 17 November of last year. The delegates argued that the lobby should call for national public sector strike action on 19

EQUAL PAY-ACTION NEEDED



Yardley strikers' message comes across loud and clear.

PLANS are underway to ensure the delegates at the 3 April Conference called by Leyland stewards do not forget the isolated struggles being fought by women up and down the country.

The Grunwick strikers — over half of whom are women — are entering their 28th week of strike. They are still waiting for support from the TUC in their recognition dispute.

Women at Yardley's, Basildon have forced production to a standstill for four weeks although most of the male workers still cross the picket line.

Electrolux workers in Luton are learning the hard way not to rely on such bodies as the Equal Opportunities Commission for equal pay.

A meeting to be organised by the Working Women's Charter Campaign in Birmingham the day before the Leyland Conference hopes to draw the attention of the dele-

gates towards the need for a fightback which unites the whole workers movement. The 'big battalions' like the car-workers have a responsibility to end the raw deal faced by women workers.

'Protection of the lower paid workers' has been the rallying call of the TUC in its hard-line sales-pitch for the Social Contract. But a recent Wages Inspectorate Report has 'discovered' that traditionally poorly paid sectors are at present earning even less than the abysmal amount entitled to them under the law. Retail and catering workers — amongst others mentioned in the Report — are also in the weakest position when it comes to fighting back against the Social Contract. Low wages, poor organisation

and the 'double work day' are the norm amongst the predominantly female workforce.

ACTION

The Working Women's Charter Campaign points out the right direction for a successful fightback. Discussion on 2 April will centre on the need for action around the following policies:

- * Equal Pay Now, for a national minimum wage, against low pay.
- * Opposition to all grading schemes that discriminate against women.
- * Immediate investigations into the pay and grading of women by the unions.
- * Inclusion of equal pay, low pay and conditions of work in

all wage claims submitted.

The Leyland Conference will only be a beginning in the fight for these policies. The Charter Campaign will be on the 19 April lobby of Parliament. It will be calling on supporters to organise meetings at forthcoming trade union conferences. And it will be in the forefront of any actions taken in opposition to the cuts in public spending like that of 11 May.

TESSA VAN GELDEREN

• Red Weekly endorses the call issued by the Charter Campaign for Leyland Conference delegates, Charter groups, and other militants committed to a united fight against the Social Contract to support the 2 April meeting.

Socialist Teachers score victories

Supporters of the Socialist Teachers Alliance scored a big victory last week when they successfully moved a resolution through the Inner London Teachers Association Council, representing over 14,000 teachers in the Inner London Education Authority, instructing the officers to ballot the membership on national no-cover policy.

If such a policy were operated it would mean that teachers would not cover for absent or non-appointed staff. Such a move could be a powerful lever to win jobs for the 20,000 unemployed teachers and begin a national fight against the cuts.

The vote was carried by 37-35. The motion, which was moved by Bernard Regan, the national convenor of the STA and President of the East London Teachers Association, and seconded by John Esterton, General Secretary of Lambeth NUT was vigorously opposed by leading Communist Party teachers on the divisional council.

For Treasurer
Carter 1860
Picton (STA) 1150
Ransom (R&F) 601

For General Secretary
Leon (R&F) 704
Regan (STA) 698
Richardson 2059

If the results of the East London postal strike and spoil papers were allowed for, STA candidates would have done even better.

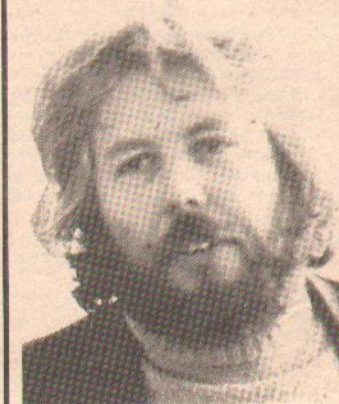
INCAPABLE

Whilst Rank and File/SWP correctly attacks the NUT bureaucracy for their refusal to fight the cuts and their betrayal of unemployed teachers, they have proved themselves incapable of organising the opposition.

Confirmation of this was reflected in the victory of Pat Brown in the recent elections for General Secretary of the East London Teachers Association. Pat — an active NUT militant and STA member — received 276 votes against Blair Peach of Rank and File who received 134.

The high poll in ELTA (42%) in a postal ballot confirms both the growth of a strong opposition against the cuts and the social contract and against the NUT Executive — but it is also a rejection of SWP/Rank and File tactics.

Of course no-one in the NUT should be lulled into any false sense of security over the ILTA council ballot decision. The Officers will undoubtedly consult their mentors on the Executive to see how they can render the decision meaningless.



BERNARD REGAN

The Socialist Workers Party/Rank and File members on the council supported the STA members in their initiative — but despite all their noise about fighting the cuts and operating a no-cover policy — they have never even attempted to move a motion on this topic at the divisional council.

ORGANISE

The task for NUT militants now is to begin to organise the mass of London teachers for a powerful 'Yes' vote which can begin to tip the scales against the right wing NUT Executive.

The time has come for the SWP/R&F to break out of its sectarian politics, acknowledge the STA as a force with equal, if not greater influence both in London and nationally, and unite to win a massive vote in the ILTA ballot.

The STA has asked Rank and File for joint meetings at the Easter NUT Conference so far without success. Red Weekly supporters in the NUT hope that the SWP/R&F will change this decision in order to have the maximum impact against the right in the NUT.

TONY GRAHAM [ILTA Council delegate from East London NUT].



Women's TUC confusion

NO CHALLENGE was made to the Labour Government's and TUC's Social Contract at the 47th Women's TUC Conference in Weymouth last week. Quite the opposite; motions on cuts and unemployment [decided to be relevant to women only after a debate on conference floor!] accepted the Social Contract.

The TUC took the opportunity of the Conference to issue its new 14-point charter for women workers. It is now a bit more in line with the Working Women's Charter, published a full three years ago by the London Trades Council. New additions include demands for free contraception advice and abortion facilities through the health service, and for women's pension schemes to be equal with those offered to men.

A proposal that the Women's TUC Conference should be abolished brought to the fore all of the illusions held about women's positions in this society. Although defeated, supporters of the motion argued with such gems as: 'In negotiations, a woman will always get more out of a man than another man will'.

CONFUSION

The same confusion arose in the debate on whether to increase the number of seats for women on General Council from two to seven. It was passed despite pleas from Len Murray to leave it 'to the wisdom of General Council'.

The Benyon anti-abortion Bill aroused some of the strongest feelings at the Conference. Delegates called on the TUC to take immediate decisive action.

However at the end of the day, Conference was little more than a talk shop. This was quite clearly illustrated at the Conference when Chairperson Marie Paterson refused

Conference quite happily passed motions against racial discrimination and for increased participation of women. Yet a woman who has played an active part in a strike of Asian workers — now in its 28th week — was unable to speak 'because she was not a delegate'. And this in a week when four strikers have been arrested on the picket line, three injunctions have been served against pickets outside a chemist shop, and the whole matter has been made a football in

the High Court.

The APEX delegation, who did not push for Sister Desai to speak, were reduced to collecting for the strikers outside the hall. When Marie Paterson announced the miserable collection of £80 [from over 240 delegates] she had the audacity to say that Sister Desai's visit had not been in vain.

The strike is now at a crucial stage and promises are not enough.

More promises for action have come following a meeting between the Greater London Association of Trades Councils and the North London Federation of AUEW. Grunwick strikers will believe all these promises when it sees the support in action.

Grunwicks have been given consistent and strong backing by the National Association for Freedom. It is a pity the TUC et al cannot give such determined support to the strikers.

Differences - but support this conference

THE GROWING resistance in the working class against any continuation of the Social Contract will be given full airing on 27 March when the recall conference called by the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement meets in Birmingham. The conference provides an important opportunity for militants to discuss how this resistance can be strengthened, and what demands militants can fight for within this resistance.

Consequently Red Weekly is giving full backing to the conference. We are less enthusiastic about some of the details in the resolution of the conference organisers, who are dominated by supporters of the Workers Socialist League.

For example, the perspective of calling for 'councils of action' overestimates the present balance of class forces, and the tendency in the resolution to minimise the importance of all questions except the fight against incomes policy

Accordingly the resolution fails to offer a way in which the various struggles on different aspects of the Social Contract can be linked.

But the central failure of the resolution from the conference organisers is an unwillingness to recognise that an analysis of the current situation, and a set of demands for which workers can fight, whether correct or not, is insufficient.

CONVINCE

For revolutionaries are not just faced with the task of clarifying workers on the issue of the best alternative programme, they need to convince many more thousands who are fighting Labour's policies, that an alternative programme is necessary. This requires intervening in the movements led by Stalinists and reformists, and confronting these leaderships as they twist and turn.

April Leyland Conference, rather than, as the WSL tend to do, merely denouncing it in advance. Similarly, the Organising Committee's resolution neglects to mention the need for the CDLM to work with various rank and file groupings, such as the Socialist Teachers Alliance and Engineering Voice, who are waging their own struggle against the union bureaucracy.

Indeed, at the recent Socialist Teachers Alliance conference members of the WSL went so far as to demand that the STA dissolves itself into the the CDLM, saying that this body was the 'only rank and file movement on a principled basis'.

This is the type of overblown posturing which militants are all too familiar with — whether it comes from the Liaison Committee in Defence of Trade Unions, the Right to Work Campaign, or the All-Trade Union Alliance.

from the sectarian exaggerations of these type of organisations, the WSL appear to endorse them — at least as far as the All Trade Union Alliance goes.

In the 2 March edition of the WSL's paper Socialist Press, for example, there is the claim that the ATUA (a trade union front for the then Socialist Labour League, now Workers Revolutionary Party) 'spearheaded demonstrations and strikes against the Government's plans — culminating in the hundreds of thousands who struck on Mayday 1969'.

NONSENSE

This is nonsense. The ATUA and the SLL, far from leading the massive opposition to 'In Place of Strife', attempted to sabotage it. The Communist Party called a strike and demonstration for 27

workers came out — despite the SLL's opposition to it. And it was this action, not the call for a strike on 1 May in Workers Press the following day, that was the springboard for the May action.

CHANCE

But these errors of the conference organisers are certainly not the most important thing about the conference. The important thing is that a chance for committed militants to meet and discuss the way forward in the current situation is being offered.

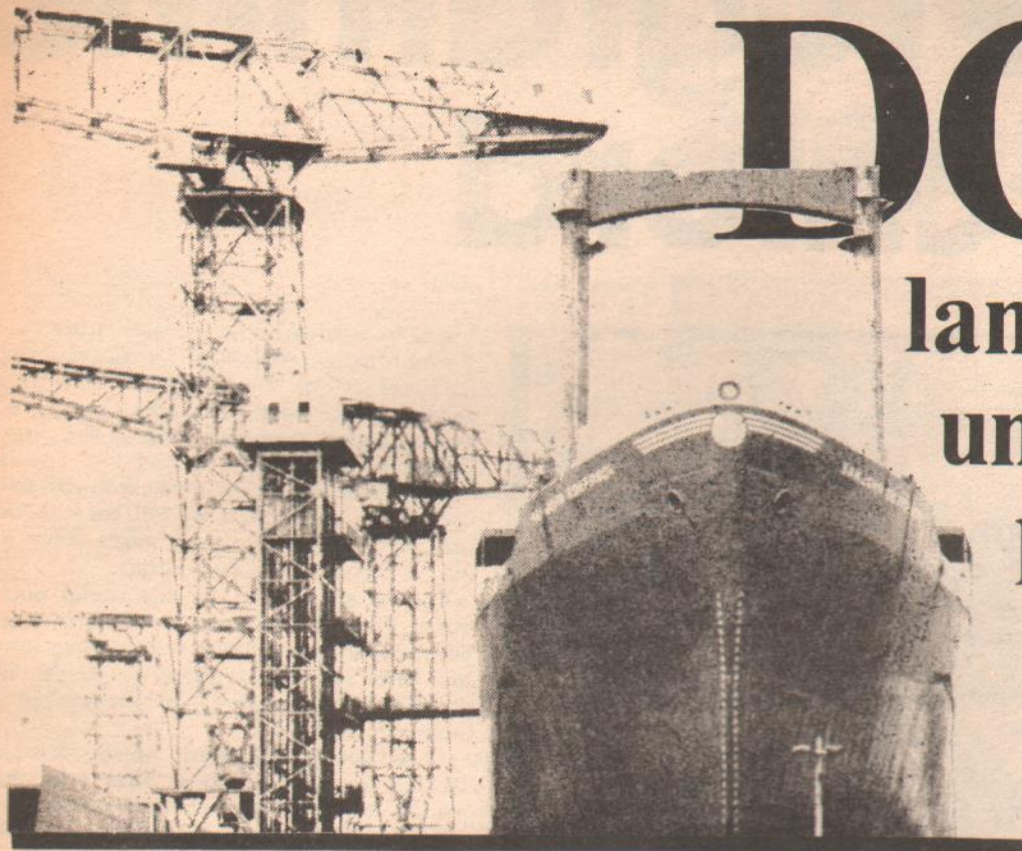
In this respect the invitation of the conference organisers for alternative resolutions and amendments to their own is especially commendable. That does make a break with the sectarian traditions of the ATUA and the LCDTU.

If the theme to emerge from the conference centres on the need to unite in action all those fighting Labour's policies, that would be one more significant step forward in the fight against the Social Contract.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (IFL)

Photo: LAURENCE SPARHAM (IFL)



DOCKS

land of unloaded promises

30,000 dockers will be taking national, unofficial strike action on 21 March. Their aim is to save 160 jobs at the Lancashire port of Preston which the local Tory council have threatened to close because it is 'unprofitable'.

Tens of thousands of workers on strike to save just 160 jobs will doubtless appear 'suicidal' to the Fleet Street press. But for dockers such action is overdue, as the planned closure of Preston is just the latest in a long line of broken promises.

Most recently there has been the defeat of the Dockwork Regulations Bill, which gave some guarantees for the preservation of the jobs of registered dockworkers, extending as it did the geographical limits in which dockers could work.

Then there is the indefinite postponement of Labour's plans for dock nationalisation. At the 1975 Labour Party conference Harold Wilson assured delegates that 'work was being done' on legislation to bring the ports into public ownership.

Now there is the Preston closure — the first time since 1949 that dock employers have tried to

compulsorily sack registered dockworkers. Here again the Preston closure breaks the assurances that dockers have been given, that in accepting voluntary redundancies there would be no arbitrary cutbacks.

Such promises mean little to the Preston Tory Council which controls the docks. It means little to them that there has been a massive decline in registered dock-workers from 55,321 in 1968 to 32,233 in 1974 — a decline which has been accompanied by a massive increase in productivity during the same period.

In the Port of London, for example in those six years productivity increased by 77 per cent, in Manchester by 70 per cent and on the Clyde by 147 per cent.

Much of these, and similar increases in productivity, is a result of the development of containerisation, which has drastically cut the labour traditionally needed to operate the docks. By itself, containerisation is, as a technological advance, not something which dockers automatically oppose; but the way in which it has operated has benefited only the port employers.

So that now, a dock such as Preston, which is not as 'profitable' as the more technologically advanced ports, is to be closed and dock workers there are thrown on the scrap heap.

The other reason behind the Preston closure is the spirit of 'free enterprise' in the shipping business, which means the big shipping lines can play off one port against another to get cheap landing rates.

This can only be stopped if the docks are organised on a national basis, and any 'losses' which a port such as Preston may suffer is made up by the vast profits a fully containerised port such as Felixstow makes.

The various port owners virulently oppose any such national planning.

Only the nationalisation of the entire dock industry can sort out this chaos. But such nationalisation is not in itself sufficient to solve the main problem dockers face — the threat to their jobs that containerisation represents.

Only a nationalised industry controlled by the dockers themselves could answer that problem. A workers control which would ensure that technological change in the dockland, can benefit, not the employers of the docks, not the multi-millionaire shipping lines, but those who actually do the work — the dockers.

FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE T&G

Voting for the post of General Secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union closes on 19 March. The election has been conducted against the background of a continuous campaign designed to prove that the T & GWU is one of the most democratic unions in Britain.

Red Weekly looks at this myth and the campaign of Alan Thornett — the only candidate to systematically draw out the relation between the lack of democracy in the union and the leadership's ability to impose the Social Contract on its membership.

This election of the General Secretary is only the fifth held since the Transport and General Workers Union was founded 55 years ago. It comes at a time when Jack Jones has been in the forefront of attempts to shove the Social Contract down the throats of the working class.

Jones was elected to his position in 1969 by an overwhelming majority. He came to power on the crest of the development of the renewed strength in the shop stewards movement, especially in the car factories in the Midlands. Jones himself played a part in the 1930s in unionising workers in the Midlands — a spot which soon proved to be the main industrial strength of the union.

CHOSEN

The present election will have few similarities. Moss Evans is the chosen heir to Jack Jones — complete with backing from all eleven Regional Committees of the union. But far from campaigning on the strength of a wave of working class militancy, Evans has put in his plug for the leadership of the union at a time when the attacks on workers' living standards has been severe and the fight back is only beginning.

The role of the union leadership in the elections is particularly revealing. A few examples help to explode the myth that the T&GWU is one of the most open, democratic unions in Britain. Officially, the union bureaucracy claims to be neutral in elections. What this really means is that it opposes any campaigning on behalf of the candidates, including banning election meetings on union premises.

This kind of ban was recently imposed on a docks branch of the T & GWU in Avonmouth, when the leadership cancelled a room booking for a campaign meeting organised in support of Alan Thornett.

In line with this fake 'neutrality', the union leadership seems to have adopted a policy of distributing the fewest possible pamphlets of election addresses that it can get

Fleet Street conspiracy of silence which blatantly denies the existence of any left candidates — except, of course, its own tailored 'left' candidate. Alex Kitson, who hadn't even uttered a word against wage controls before the election.

The leadership can get away with these undemocratic policies because of the help it gets from the structures of the union itself. Great play is made amongst the bureaucrats that the General Executive Council is composed of lay members. But this body can in no way play a day-to-day leadership role in the union; it only meets every three months!

In practice, the GEC is merely a rubber stamp for the bureaucracy. One example was the refusal of the Finance and General Purposes Committee (a GEC sub-committee) to pay the £80,000 fine imposed by the National Industrial Relations Court under the Tories. This stand sent Jones and his fellow bureaucrats into a frenzy. It was not surprising to militants familiar with the underlying lack of democracy in the T & GWU that after a two-day onslaught by Jones, the Committee finally saw the light and reversed its stand, voting to pay.

POWER

So, despite the few lay members thrown in for show, the real executive power lies in the hands of the full-time officials. The officials dominate all union committees. And just to tarnish the democratic image of the union a bit further — these officials are not elected, but are appointed for life or 'at the pleasure of the union'.

As if this kind of organisation of union affairs does not do enough to reinforce the position of the bureaucracy, there are further provisos to ensure that any opposition to the leadership remains fragmented. This feat is achieved through the division of the union into different trade groups.

A complex structure of geographical Regional Committees and District Committees based on both geography and trade groups, provides the finishing touch to the union held up as the grand union

these structures prevent the possibility of links between rank and file members throughout the union.

Against this backdrop, the strength of the Thornett campaign has been its insistence on the need to link the imposition of the Social Contract — and the fight against it — to the fight for democracy within the labour movement.

Thornett has been speaking up and down the country since his election campaign was launched. In addition to Preston, Liverpool and Newcastle meetings organised with the help of Red Weekly supporters, Thornett spoke last week to a lively audience at a Scottish Socialist public forum in Glasgow.

He explained the importance of supporting the toolroom workers in Leylands in their fight for a wage demand in excess of Phase 2. 'No group of workers', he said, 'has ever received so many instructions to get back to work. Everyone from the Labour Government and the National Enterprise Board to their own union leaders and plant convenors, are trying to force them back to work'.

He argued there was a crucial need for a programme around which all those affected by the Social Contract could unite. This was why he rejected the 'more militancy' campaign of Tommy Riley, the 'Right to Work' candidate, with his complete failure to provide an adequate programme for the fightback.

London was the scene of one of last week's larger meetings, organised by ACTSS 1/524 Central London branch. Five of the candidates — including Thornett — spoke to the 120 trade unionists.

John Miller, National Officer for the Chemical and Rubber Group, maintained his left rhetoric to the hilt at the meeting. But his urgent plea for a 'fierce political fight' against the sell-out of the union leadership in the face of the Social Contract was weakened when he explained that Jones was really an 'honest' man who was not deliberately selling out, but was merely 'misguided'.

In Bristol, despite its small size, a Thornett campaign meeting was successful in 'laying a basis for continuing to build links amongst workers prepared to fight against the Social Contract in different trade groups in the T & GWU'. Mike Eude, one of the organisers of the Thornett support committee in Bristol told Red Weekly that T&GWU members came from the docks, the smelter and from local hospitals.

All members who attended expressed interest in the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour



Preston dockland — where containers mean closure.

Jack in the docks



Jones is jostled by angry dockers during the strike of 1972.

ONE HIGH POINT of the day of national action taken by dockers will be a lobby of officials of the Transport and General Workers Union.

The stewards will be trying to gain official support for their action. But there are few illusions that this will be forthcoming from any union which Jack Jones is in charge of.

Long before Jones had dreamed up the Social Contract as a way of making workers pay for the bosses' crisis he was doing the same thing in the docks.

In 1967 he took no action when employers diverted work from the militant ports in an attempt to demoralise the dockers and undermine their rank and file leadership.

In 1972 he produced the Jones-Aldington Report with-

April 1975 he succeeded in smashing the dock containerisation strike, promising the type of legislation which the Labour Government has now dropped.

In calling the national dock strike on 21 March, the national organisation of dock shop stewards are establishing the potential of an alternative to the Jones leadership. The best way to develop that potential is to step up strike action in defence of Preston, and to link that action with demands for the implementation of all the forgotten promises that have been made to dockers:

- * No forced redundancy.
- * For the re-introduction of the passing of the Dock Regulation Bill
- * For the nationalisation of the entire dock industry, under workers control.

Long before Jones had dreamed up the Social Contract as a way of making workers pay for the bosses' crisis he was doing the same thing in the docks.

HOTEL WORKERS FIGHT BETRAYAL

The struggle for union rights in the catering industry received a set-back last week. The unanimous demand of the strikers for national backing of the Trust Houses Forte's chain was rejected equally unanimously by the Transport and General Workers Union National Executive.

The fight started four months ago in Oxford at the Linton Lodge and Randolph hotels. Since then it has extended to Sheffield, Birmingham and London.

The betrayal by the T&G leadership may have been an important factor in preventing victory at the Linton Lodge, where management suddenly withdrew an offer which conceded many of the strikers' demands for union recognition and reinstatement of sacked workers.

The demand for national backing is supported by the Oxford District Committee of the T&G. But in Sheffield the Regional Secretary refuse to implement even a regional boycott.

However the resolve of the strikers is still strong as the recent formation of a joint shop stewards committee of hotel workers from Oxford, London, Birmingham, Sheffield and Harrogate to co-ordinate the next steps in the campaign has shown.

DONATIONS and messages of support to:

- * Linton Lodge Strike Committee, c/o Transport House, 46 Cowley Road, Oxford.
- * Randolph Strike Fund [at the same address].
- * Night Out Strikers, Transport House, Broad Street, Birmingham.
- * Grosvenor House Hotel Strike Committee, c/o Transport House, Harstead, Sheffield.

A 50 strong picket in Oxford called by the local anti-fascist committee and the Student-Trade Union Liaison Committee drew attention to the links between the Trust Houses Forte management and the anti-union activities of the National Association for Freedom.

The occasion was last Saturday, when NAFF Council member Norris McWhirter visited the city to autograph copies of his book.

His protestations of ignorance about the dispute carried little weight with the pickets, particu-

A Socialist Programme for Stechford



- I stand for a socialist solution. This means:
- An inflation-proof system for both wages and the social services. This means that both wages and the social services will rise by a comparable amount every time there is a rise in the cost of living.
 - An immediate across-the-board increase to compensate all workers in full for the cuts they have suffered in real wages since the introduction of the Social Contract.
 - A programme of socially useful public works. This will enable us to build more homes, hospitals, schools and turn our decaying towns and cities into places where people can live decently. It will also provide jobs for hundreds of thousands of people.
 - Nationalise all firms which introduce sackings and redundancies. Take over their machinery and assets under the control of the workers, so that we can produce the goods that we need.
 - An immediate reduction in the working week without any loss of pay to end unemployment.
 - An immediate freeze on all prices.
 - A national minimum wage of £50 a week. This is to be paid to the unemployed, the sick and the infirm and the pensioners.
 - Full rights for women. Free abortion on demand on the NHS, full nursery services and an end to low pay. Equal pay now.
 - Full rights for black people. End all discrimination in jobs, in housing and in social and political life. No platform for Hitler's disciples of the National Front to spread their racist poison. End the immigration laws which divide black families. Full support for black people defending themselves against the fascist hooligans.
 - Withdraw all British troops from Ireland. End all links with the racist regime in South Africa. Down with the Smith regime in Rhodesia. For an end to all Britain's military alliances.
 - End all compensation payments to the old owners of the nationalised industries. Abolish all arms expenditure. Stop all interest payments to the banks and the moneylenders. This would provide the resources to carry out a genuine programme of social advance and create jobs for everyone.
 - Nationalise the banks, the finance companies and the insurance companies without compensation so that the resources can be planned in a socialist way.

THE POLICIES of the Labour Government have cut your living standards. Real buying power has fallen by £9.50 a week since 1975.

Unemployment is at a post-war record of 1½ million. Albert Booth, Labour's Minister of Employment, says we will have to 'face the prospect of 2 million being unemployed'.

The Labour Government has cut public spending by £8 billions. Now we have less hospitals and longer waiting lists. We have less schools and fewer teachers. We have less houses, less money for repairs and higher rents. We have less nurseries for the children and less homes for the aged and the infirm.

These policies have boosted and helped the cause of the worst enemies of the working class. The fascists of the National Front have gone onto the streets in growing numbers. They have threatened Labour majorities in many areas.

Anti-working class forces have been encouraged by the Government's policies to launch new attacks on working class women. By supporting the anti-abortion Bill of William Benyon the Tory party and a gang of right-wing Labour MPs threaten to drive women once again to the horrors of backstreet abortions. The Government has refused to vote down this Bill.

The labour movement and working people have suffered by these policies. Meanwhile the banks are making record profits. In February, Lloyds Bank boasted of their £147,734,000 profit for 1976. This was 54 per cent up on 1975.

It is clear that the policies of the Labour Government have served the interests of the bankers and big business and not the interests of the working class.

Working people did not vote Labour for such shameful policies. No government can be called socialist that pays for higher profits by cutting your wage packet. This means you have less money to buy food and clothing. You pay for such policies by you and your friends joining the dole queues. You pay for them by risking your health and your life — because this is what cuts in the health service mean. You pay for them by your children being taught in overcrowded, understaffed, old-fashioned schools.

The Labour leaders and their allies like Jack Jones justify these policies by claiming that they keep Labour in office. The by-election results and the opinion polls show this claim to be nonsense. Callaghan and Healey's policies are demoralising the labour movement. If the Labour Government and its supporters like Jack Jones are allowed to carry on with these policies you will also pay for them with the return of a Tory government. That government would then introduce even worse cuts and even higher unemployment. Only the fight for a socialist alternative to the policies of Callaghan and Jones can keep the Tories out.

Both 'left' and right in the Government have supported the Social Contract. It is this disastrous policy which will bring back the

Tories. Unlike the 'left' trade union leaders and 'left' MPs I stand for a fight-back now.

As a Trotskyist and a socialist I have only one loyalty and that is to the working class and its allies. As a British Leyland shop steward I will be on strike on 19 April. I shall campaign to turn this into a day of national strike action against the Social Contract, inside and outside the car industry.

Workers in the public sector are beginning to fight closures and cutbacks. They need our support. We must insist in our trade union branches, in local Labour parties and so on that we back their struggle. We must organise support for their pickets, their demonstrations and where possible build solidarity strike action to back their struggle.

Every fight against sackings, every fight against pay policy, every fight against the cuts must get the maximum, united support of our working class organisations. We need to organise a united movement of all people opposed to the Social Contract who are prepared to fight back.

Such a socialist opposition must unite people both inside and outside the Labour Party. It would reject any Social Contract with the employers and fight for socialist policies against the right-wing leaders. This is the only realistic alternative to the misery and poverty that big business and its accomplices in the Labour Government want to stick down your throat.

Asian workers back Heron campaign

The following letter was drawn up by a group of Asian workers at an IMG campaign meeting in Stechford. It is being circulated in Urdu among Asian workers in the local community.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,
As you know there are four racist and fascist candidates standing in Stechford. Everybody in our community knows their

policies. You also know the policies of the Labour Government. They support the Immigration Laws and by doing so create the misery of divided families.

They are proposing new tax laws which will stop the allowances for dependents living abroad. A number of local Labour Clubs operate a colour bar.

The 26 February Demonstration Against Racism in Stechford was very large. The Labour candidate, Terry Davis was missing.

The Socialist IMG gave its full support to this demonstration because its policies are anti-racist. The IMG candidate Brian Heron stands for these policies in Stechford:

- * End all immigration controls.
- * No more divided families — complete freedom for all dependents to come to this country.
- * No new tax law — no to second class citizenship.
- * Ban the NF — no platform for racists and fascists.
- * Defend the Mosques against racist attacks.

VOTE BRIAN HERON; VOTE SOCIALIST [IMG]



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Red Weekly)

Brian Heron talks to GKN shop steward Amirkable Khan a campaign activist.

Help needed

The weekends of 19/20 March and 26/27 March are decisive for the campaign. Every single person is needed. We need people out on the knocker, to give out leaflets and put up our posters. If you can come to Stechford ring 021-643 9209. You will be told where to report, and accommodation will be arranged, if necessary. If you cannot come, then send us some money. We cannot wage this campaign without cash. What is more to do it properly we need lots of it. Every penny, every pound, every fiver, or better still tens and twenties will be put to real use in the fight to build a socialist opposition. Send your cash to Phil Hearse, c/o 76b Digbeth, Birmingham.

IMG's Stechford campaign steps up

Last Friday afternoon the writ for the Stechford by-election was issued. By early evening the IMG had started its campaign in the Birmingham constituency.

On railway bridges, in shop windows, plastered across hoardings and pasted against walls, the IMG spelt out its message. Posters said: 'No to any Social Contract'; 'For Women's Full and Equal Rights'; 'For more hospitals, schools and homes' and 'Against Racism' — two of these have been produced, one in English, one in Urdu. The Urdu poster is becoming a common sight in Asian shops and homes.

Heron's election address — copies have been produced in English and Urdu — have already gone through some thousands of letter boxes. A group of Asian workers from local factories who support Heron's campaign are going round the area putting up campaign posters in shops and houses.

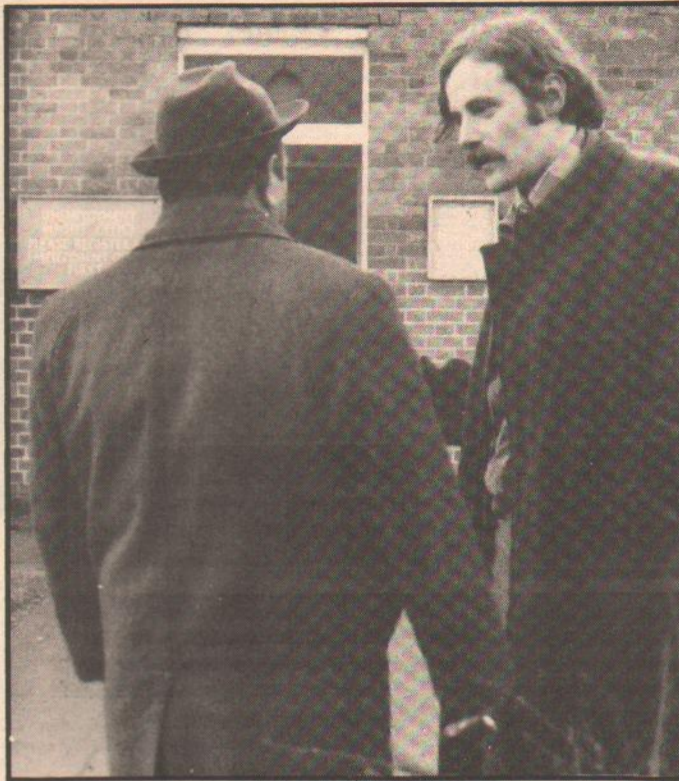
Last Sunday, Tariq Ali spoke to a meeting of campaign activists which included a large proportion of black workers

from the area. These workers pledged themselves to give full practical support to fighting for a vote for Heron in the constituency, but even more importantly, also pledged their commitment to the building of an anti-racist campaign in the area after the election.

Right throughout the election, meetings are being held on the Social Contract, women's rights and anti-racism. Plans are underway for an anti-racist festival on the last weekend of the campaign. Factory meetings are being organised and a series of meetings are also being set up outside primary schools, nurseries and pre-natal clinics.

This week another IMG poster will be out. This says: 'Vote for a Leyland Worker — Brian Heron, not a Levland Boss — Terry Davis'. Mr Davis is general manager at Leyland's Jaguar-Rover-Triumph parts division in Coventry — an impeccable reference for a Labour candidate! No wonder he enthusiastically supports the Social Contract and turns his back on the toolmakers' strike.

As one Leyland worker told me: 'Brian Heron is a shop



Canvassing unemployed workers

steward, and one of us. Davis supports cutting my wages. Of course I know who I am giving my support and vote to!

In the campaign only the IMG is raising the banner of working class unity as the way to fight back against the attacks of the ruling class. The Labour Party campaign is just a cover to smear over wage cuts, reductions of the social service and growing dole queues. The Labour Party also defends the most vile and reactionary immigration laws.

The Socialist Workers Party, who announced the candidacy of Paul Foot in the *Guardian*, by refusing to even discuss having a candidate from the revolutionary left, backed by all those people who support a class struggle programme, have put building their own organisation above the needs of the working class. This weakens the fight against the Social Contract and makes it harder to build a genuine broad movement to fight racism.

This is why we call for full and unstinting support for the IMG candidate, Brian Heron. We appeal to every militant and revolutionary socialist to back

our campaign. Come to Stechford and work for working class unity by supporting Brian Heron. He has a programme that shows a way forward against the Social Contract. It is a programme that can build a real socialist opposition to the attacks of the ruling class and their agents in the Labour Government.

BOB PENNINGTON

★ Brian Heron, the IMG's candidate in Stechford, was among the contributors in an audience discussion on British Leyland in BBC-2's *Man Alive* programme last week. Heron, a shop steward at the Longbridge plant, spoke out strongly against ideas that there was some particular crisis at Leyland.

His members, he said, were well aware that their problem was the same as that of workers elsewhere — their living standards were being chopped to pieces by the Government's Social Contract policies. These policies were the fruits of a deal between the Government and their own trade union officials, and there could be no solution at Leyland until this collaboration was ended.

Housing — central issue in London Polls

Londoners will be going to the polls on 5 May to vote for candidates to represent them on the Greater London Council. The International Marxist Group will be running candidates for the first time in these elections.

Among them will be MICK SULLIVAN, Transport and General Workers Union delegate on Islington Trades Council and a worker at a Housing Aid Centre in his constituency of Islington North. Here he explains why he is standing.

'Far from the claims in the title of London Labour Party's election manifesto that *It's Looking Good*, the present economic and social crisis has taken its toll in the city. The unemployed number 170,000. One in four of all black workers are jobless. The Resource Allocation Working Party has threatened to close 130 of London's 150 hospitals. There are 200,000 homeless in London, yet 100,000 homes are left empty.

It's not surprising that one thousand people leave London each week. To them it looks terrible.

Yet Labour continue to lay out the pink carpet for the return of the Tories by pursuing and supporting the anti-working class policies of the Labour Government. Sir Reg Goodwin, Labour leader of the GLC, makes no bones about this: "We have done what we can within the Government's financial restrictions and make no apologies for this".

The return of the Tories will be guaranteed as long as there is no real socialist opposition, armed with a programme capable of mobilising against Labour's national policies. Labour councillors in the GLC (even the most 'left-wing' of

them) have proved incapable of providing the lead necessary to prevent divisions and demoralisation caused by the continuing betrayals of the leaders of the workers movement.

Yorkshire Television's documentary *Goodbye Longfellow Road* has exposed yet another sordid scandal arising from Labour's GLC policies. This time housing policies were under the spotlight. The furor created by such exposures has been seized upon by the Tories in their calls for further cuts in spending.

In the face of this, Labour has little to offer. Not one of the promises made in the 1973 GLC elections for action against speculators and land hoarders, an end to rent rises and the municipalisation of rented accommodation has been kept to.

Goodbye Longfellow Road lifted a few stones to show us some of the more sordid leeches who profit from Labour's policies on housing. While the main target of the documentary was a shady group of racketeers profiting from council 'short life' housing, the victims of the housing crisis in Tower Hamlets provided good indications of what's going on in London as a whole.



Longfellow Road itself is a street of Victorian houses awaiting demolition. It has been condemned for 35 years. Homeless people squatting in the street number 115. Neither the Council nor the private sector can cater for them.

Division, turmoil and demoralisation are rife. Older, long term tenants react to the decay and neglect around them by blaming its victims — the squatters and other homeless people. An elderly couple, inhabitants of the street for 71 years, are uprooted as 'redevelopment' proceeds. The old man dies six weeks later in his new flat. Forceful evictions cause further

turmoil. Up to 800 people a week face such forcible evictions.

The response of the GLC as they discharge their 'duties' to such homeless people is criminally negligent. GLC Alderman Paddy O'Connor's. 'Single Homeless Committee' seems unusually keen to let property to religious-sounding charities, like the Novo and Second Genesis Group. These groups reap immense profits from the 85 short-life properties they control, of a total of 2,000 owned by the GLC. By handing them over to these groups, the Council evades its responsibility to provide for the homeless. It

helps them keep down the mere £½ million a year paid out for Bed and Breakfast charges.

All of these aspects of the housing crisis are only symptoms of the crisis which Labour's policies have aided. An organised opposition committed to tackling the Social Contract — especially housing, one of its most anti-social aspects — has never been more urgent.

IMG candidates in this election will be giving the London working class a chance to hear — and organise around — an alternative socialist solution to the crisis.'

For a Labour GLC

Build A Socialist Opposition!

INTERNATIONAL
IMG
MARXIST GROUP

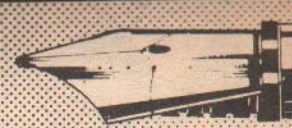
Fight Back!

5 May:
Vote Socialist (IMG)

11 May:
Strike Against Cuts

INTERNATIONAL
IMG
MARXIST GROUP

Letters



In the report of the 26 February anti-fascist demonstration in Birmingham (Red Weekly, 3 March), Bob Pennington jumps to the conclusion that the SWP deliberately organised the diverting of a coach load of anti-fascists away from the demo in order to heckle the National Front.

This ignores the possibility that the SWP comrade concerned may have acted independently, on her own initiative or under pressure from a section of the group's members....

Comrade Pennington's report did not produce any evidence that the stunt was planned or even sanctioned by the SWP leadership: to automatically assume that they are guilty of making a cynical and divisive manoeuvre is simplistic and one-sided, although a possibility.

There are four key points to drive home in connection with this:

* First for someone to split off a tiny section from a united march and divert it to futile yelling behind a police cordon and to possible martyrdom (in hospital or prison or both) can only be adequately explained in terms of lunacy or provocation.

* Second, that even if this particular stunt was not sanctioned by the SWP leaders, it is just one of

Stechford and anti-fascist demonstrations

the many similar adventures that have in the past been encouraged and 'justified' by the SWP/IS; the group's sectarian and undemocratic methods, which have become engrained in many members will lead to many future 'errors' of this sort, despite whatever tactical changes the SWP makes officially.

* Third, the SWP cannot be allowed to get away with any feeble excuse or hide behind phrases about not being responsible for every action and statement of every member: of course this is true to some extent, but any serious revolutionary organisation expects a certain level of discipline from all its members

and in particular, units (branches, cells, committees, etc.) and leading comrades (local and national officers, full timers, etc.) publicly representing the views of the group as a whole.

Lastly, 'sectarianism' does not mean criticising other left groups, as many people seem to think: in fact the suppression of genuine debate and argument is a typical sign of sectarianism.

The WRP is a prime example of a sect that portrays itself as the only true party, that puts building the organisation above all else and that has to rely on distortions and bureaucratic methods both internally and in its relations with other groups. It would be a tragedy if the SWP followed the same path.

The SWP must publicly endorse or condemn the action of their comrade in splitting the Birmingham march and putting a group of anti-fascists in a futile and potentially dangerous situation; if the group condemns it, the comrade's position as an SWP organiser must be discussed — although of course she must not be made a scapegoat for the SWP's everyday sectarian practices.

ALAN THEASBY [Middlesbrough]

I usually enjoy reading your sectarian attacks on the SWP but you reached a new low in your article about the Anti-Fascist march in Birmingham [Red Weekly, 3 March].

I was on the coach met by the SWP organiser. It was an SWP coach. Our organisers do not wear jackboots, carry whips or issue 'curt instructions' to members. Nor were we 'beleaguered' outside the NF meeting since there was a good wall of police between us and the NF.

I saw nothing to gloat about that day, comrades. It was a tragedy that the only opposition the NF saw was one coachload. They must have felt great. It is vital to stop them marching. The only valid criticism of the SWP is that we sacrificed seriously attempting to do this for the complacent unity of a Saturday afternoon parade.

PETE WHITWORTH [London]

Pete Whitworth would have looked in vain for a more objective account of the demonstration in the paper of his own organisation — Socialist Worker. It is true that Socialist Worker did not gloat over the Stechford demonstration. It didn't even mention it!

The reason for this was made clear, not by the next issue of Socialist Worker, but by the Guardian of 8 March which announced that Paul Foot was standing in the Stechford by-election, a fact that was difficult to square with Ken Appleby addressing the demonstration as SWP candidate.

That is real sectarianism, comrade Whitworth, the suppression of the reality of the class struggle in the narrow interests of your



Potential workers' defence guard?

own organisation.

Pete Whitworth says that the object of the demonstration should have been to stop the NF marching. But there is also the necessity of mobilising the working class. From that point of view the demonstration in Stechford was a success because, unlike the demonstration called the same day by the Birmingham Trades Council, supported by the Labour Party and Communist Party, it set itself the task of mobilising the

community in Stechford in mass action against racism and fascism. The doubling in size of the demonstration with black workers drawn from the Stechford community was proof of the correctness of that aim.

But perhaps Pete Whitworth could not have appreciated this, hidden behind a 'good wall of police' from the attentions of the NF. — EDS

Photo: Socialist Worker

KURDS: repression not proved?

The report published in Red Weekly [24 February] under the heading 'Kurds: 20 months of repression' contains a number of unsubstantiated indications of Arabisation of Kurdish areas.

1) The ideology of the Ba'athist party is to unite all Arabs in the world in their struggle to fight imperialism and Zionism and to support developing countries. There is nothing unusual in having Egyptian peasants in different areas in Iraq, for the purposes of multiplying manpower for purely agricultural development.

In what sense then do you relate this normal procedure to the fabricated talk about depriving Kurds of their territories?

2) The fact that Kurdish graduates cannot get a job has no basis in contrast to what is contained in the Draft Law of Progressive National Front for Autonomy of Kurdistan Region.

3) Untrue mentioning of money paid by the government to Arabs who marry Kurdish women.

There is an important question that we like to forward you; why has the struggle of Barzani and his group come to an end after the Iraqi-Iranian accord was signed in the Shatt-Al Arab issue. Doesn't it occur to you that Barzani was gaining outside support to create unrest in the region? And does a

genuine struggle with a true cause ever cease?

Mullah Mustapha Barzani is one of those who betrayed their peoples and all national and patriotic values. He put himself in the service of foreign and enemy interests as a result of a combination of complex historical and personal factors which have in the end formed his blood-thirsty personality.

Barzani will remain bound up with his direct relation with CIA and what his relation means in the conditions of the intense struggle which the peoples, loving peace and liberation, undertake against colonialism and American imperialism and its ally, Zionism.

NATIONAL UNION OF IRAQI STUDENTS (Cardiff)

For reasons of space I cannot answer all the questions raised. I hope to be able to give further evidence of the policy of Arabisation in a future article.

However, more substantial points are implied in the letter. Revolutionary communists defend the right of nations to self-



determination, including unconditional support to the struggle of oppressed nations against their oppressors.

Thus, we defend the right of secession of the Kurdish nation, irrespective of the betrayals of the feudal-bourgeois Barzani leadership. Our correspondents are silent on this fundamental point, which reduces their remarks to the level of chauvinist sniping, rather than criticisms aimed at strengthening the proletarian tendencies in the movement (which we have consistently done). The attempt to deny Kurdish rights by attacking the movement's best-known leader is scandalous.

The Kurdish struggle has persisted with Barzani et al through the period of the Mahabad republic, exile in the USSR, the overthrow of the Hashemite regime in 1958, the fight against Kassem,

'Sell Out' - not recommended

GIVEN the combined talents of Roger Smith and Tom Kempinski, one would have thought their latest cultural foray would produce something better than a cross between 'Oh, What a Lovely War' and a Workers Revolutionary Party lecture on the 1931 crisis.

However, their musical comedy-cum-political documentary *Sell Out*, recently shown at the Library Theatre in Manchester, does not do so, despite its serious effort to present socialist ideas in an entertaining manner.

The action begins in 1929, 'boom time', as the opening song calls it. We see the machinations of the Wall Street whizz-kids, whose guiding light leads them to where the fastest buck can be made.

Starkly, against the bright lights and razzamatazz of the 'roaring Twenties', the 'hungry Thirties' march — or rather trudge — onto the stage in the shape of a group of workers protesting about their consignment to Skid Row. Who arrives to rescue them from their plight? None other than Ramsay MacDonald, proclaiming the formation of a minority Labour Government. 'Now', says he, 'is the time to put aside party bickering' and solve the crisis.

ARRESTED

Outside the storm clouds gather. A worker is arrested for stealing a tomato from a box about to be dumped to 'keep prices up'. MacDonald addresses Labour's Conference, cleverly depicted as a circus. MacDonald is cast as a tight-rope walker and fake left Jimmy Maxton, his supporting act, is a ventriloquist 'talking out of both sides of his mouth at once'. MacDonald makes a passionate appeal for unity and wins the day thanks to Maxton's faint-hearted withdrawal of a critical amendment.

Unemployment rises. MacDonald helps capitalism. There is a run on the pound. After hilarious panic in Threadneedle Street, America forks out, on condition that public spending is axed. MacDonald's pals don't want to cut the dole — or their own throats



RAMSAY MACDONALD — WRP play almost makes the audience sympathise with him.

cuts will cause revolution. The misery of cuts and the Means Test results.

That's the story-line. It is funny, the songs and music are lively, the actors perform well. So what can be wrong?

The playwrights have leaned heavily on Brecht, the famous German socialist playwright and

the appearance of being grafted on to fill gaps. Also it portrayed the workers as robot-like, sour stereotypes, their words almost torn from a vulgar Marxist phrasebook and lacking a semblance of reality.

Brecht's workers were never like these wooden caricatures. In contrast, MacDonald is endowed with such vivacity that the audience almost sympathise with him — at least he's a bit of a character.

Despite the pretence, the class struggle never enters the play except as a superimposition. The class antagonists box in separate corners, if the workers box at all. For all the WRP's endless babbling about 'philosophy', the opposites never get near enough to be in conflict.

SIDELINES

The bourgeoisie, MacDonald and the workers are all self-contained and detached. The more the play evolves, the more the workers end up on the sidelines, only being introduced to stir the conscience of the audience.

Worse still, the WRP's Third Period Stalinist outlook is on show. The worker who has just torn up his union card — hardly a paragon of class consciousness — is one of those who 'will fight for his class' and who 'will win his demands'. Through what agency, comrades Smith and Kempinski? He's got no organisation. So how will he win his demands? Spontaneously perhaps?

The play aims at drawing parallels between 1931 and today, between MacDonald and Callaghan. We do have a crisis, unemployment and cuts now as then. But, the central factor — the strength of the working class — is different. The labour movement has suffered no defeats remotely like 1926 or 1931, defeats from which the mass of the class did not recover for over a decade.

CARDBOARD

Today's workers are on the move against the Social Contract, cuts and wage controls. The parallel, unless it is to warn of some imminent repetition of 1931 — as Healy has been doing almost daily since 1964 — does not stand up.

To have been more than anti-reformist propaganda, the play needed life, conflict, the richness of working class life, not the 'helpless' or 'militant' cardboard cut-outs dished up here. Unfortunately, the propaganda never rises to the level of art. 'Not recommended' says the TV advert. Its message applies well to *Sell Out*.

Trotskyists Answer



The new draft of The British Road to Socialism, which is currently under discussion in the Communist Party, contains a significant change since the first version was published in 1951. It raises, and answers in its own way the central problem facing every political group claiming allegiance to socialism: how is it possible to make the transition from today's crisis-ridden capitalist regime to the socialist society that will alone remove the obstacles to human progress? PATRICK CAMILLER continues Red Weekly's assessment of the Draft.

Previous drafts of *The British Road* all placed the election of a socialist government at the centre of political strategy. Based on a parliamentary majority, this government would nationalise 'all monopolies in productive industry and distribution, the banks and insurance companies' and initiate 'socialist national economic planning, to cover the economy as a whole'.

In this tidy schema, everything had its due place. For the first time in history, the 'revolution' would accomplish its mission without destroying any of the existing institutions (apart from feudal relics such as the House of Lords). The British people, proud of their centuries-old parliamentary tradition, had no need of the advice of that long-dead Russian socialist, Lenin, whose wild talk of 'smashing up' the state apparatus still embarrassed sophisticated political company.

HOSTILITY

And yet, any government that attempted to implement a genuinely socialist programme would be faced from the start with the hostility and rebellion of that state apparatus: of the civil service departments that have repeatedly shown their ability to impose their will on whichever minister happens to be their 'guest' at a particular time; and of the officer caste of the armed forces, which is the principal centre of the bourgeois machinery of repression. How, then, would the 'socialist government' introduce socialism with such an apparatus?

Again the answer of the 1968 version of *The British Road* is simple. 'Political power' would be consolidated 'by ensuring that those in commanding positions in the armed forces and police, the

civil service and diplomatic service' were 'loyal to the socialist government'. And if these commanders did not allow 'their' institutions to be 'transformed into the effective instruments of the people's will', then every attempt of the capitalists to thwart the democratic process would be met by the 'formidable strength' of the popular movement mobilised behind the government.

PRESSURE

This conception of the relation between parliamentary government and 'mass pressure' or 'mass action' is the main contradiction of every strategy that seeks to bring about 'decisive social change' without the creation of a new revolutionary power.

In *The British Road*, it is the traditional state institutions raised above society which carry out the decisive changes, 'supported by' a shapeless mass movement that allows Parliament to overcome the obstacles in its path. But just how the masses will bring their 'formidable strength' to bear on the Ministry of Defence or the Treasury is nowhere explained.

There is no notion of the systematic organisation of the energies of the working-class masses to impose their will and crush capitalist resistance; no notion of the forging of new state institutions and officials and a new army at the heart of the mass movement, and the replacement, or 'smashing' of the old bureaucratic-military machine by these instruments of workers' action.

For *The British Road* is permeated by fear and incomprehension of a genuine revolutionary upsurge — of that sudden irruption of millions onto the political arena that alone makes socialism



(and a socialist government) a real possibility.

STRATEGY

The central section of the new Draft ('Towards Socialist Revolution') starts out from the correct observation that 'a strategy for socialist revolution has to be able to show the way forward, to spell out, not only the ultimate objective, but also the stages in that process.' However, it soon becomes clear that the way forward lies not in mass mobilisation for the defence of living standards, the right to work etc., but in 'winning a Labour Government carrying out a left policy'.

The draft takes great pains to differentiate this 'left government' from a 'socialist government'

fighting for a socialist programme; even though 'the experience of past decades has also shown that capitalism's crisis cannot be solved within the limits of capitalism', nevertheless, 'the political conditions (for socialism) do not yet exist'.

A whole epoch of left governments, each one further to the left than its predecessor, is therefore required before Britain can reach the socialism 'it needs'. In the meantime, the masses will evidently have to put up with 'capitalism's crisis'.

The programme proposed for this 'left government' turns out to be virtually identical with the traditional one of left social-democracy: no longer 'nationalisation of all monopolies in productive industry', but the wily

lawyer's phrase, 'nationalisation of the key firms among the top firms which dominate the economy'; instead of 'socialist national economic planning', an unspecified (and unspecified!) 'effective government control over the operation of the economy'; a ban on the export of capital and selective import controls; increased social spending, and so on.

GRADUALIST

The CPGB's perspective of 'left governments' represents a further step along the road back to traditional gradualist positions. It appears to offer a realistic way forward to socialism, but, by postponing to some future date the struggle for socialist solutions, it leaves the working class helplessly

tied to the existing order and prepares its demoralisation at the hands of the 'lefts' of the day.

In fact, nothing could be more utopian than the idea that, in the present epoch, the social and economic crisis of capitalism could allow the Labour lefts fifteen or twenty years of stable government and organic development towards socialism.

Indeed, the perspective is contradicted by the authors of the Draft themselves when they argue that 'even before such a new Labour government of the left emerged, there would be the utmost resistance from the ruling class to prevent its establishment'. The record of Wilson, Foot, Scanlon and Jones leaves little doubt about the course that would be taken by future 'left' friends of King Street.

When it appeared in 1951, the first version of *The British Road* was the clearest statement of rightist positions by any West European Communist Party. However, the subsequent evolution of the major continental parties has left the CPGB well behind and given its programme the dangerous appearance of socialist radicalism!

BALANCE

The proposed new draft is an attempt to restore the balance by bringing the CPGB into line with its sister parties. From now on, the Labour Lefts will define the horizons of their 'Communist' satellites in a rather more precise manner.

Scarcely ever before in the history of the working-class movement has there been such a sharp conflict between the tasks facing the movement — rooted in the severe social and economic crisis — and its inherited political traditions. Particularly in Britain, the struggle for socialism requires the clearest break with the stifling dead weight of Fabian parliamentarism and gradualism.

The CPGB was founded more than half-a-century ago on the basis of that break. But today it is one of the major obstacles in the development of advanced workers towards positions of revolutionary communist internationalism.

Workers' Jubilee 1917 1977



RIC SISSONS continues our series of articles on one jubilee that really does matter for the working class.

The Russian Revolution reached a decisive turning point on 27 February. It was the day that the Petrograd garrison mutinied, but it also witnessed the first meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers Deputies. After an absence of twelve years the Soviet reappeared as the organiser of the Petrograd workers.

The first ever workers' soviet had met at the Technological Institute in October 1905. A general strike was called by the 40 delegates from local factories. Six weeks later 147 factories, 34 workshops and 16 trade unions were represented. Trotsky, at the age of 26, was chairing the meetings. In the fifty days of its existence the first Soviet had organised the general strike, armed the workers to defend themselves, maintained food supplies and produced its own paper, *Izvestia*.

The experience of 1905 left an irremovable impression on the consciousness of the Petrograd workers. They had felt the strength of a united and democratic organisation in which all the workers movement participated. They would not forget it, even after twelve years.

The initiative to call the Soviet for 27 February had come from a

ers Cheidze and Skobelev the Menshevik deputies in the Duma, and various leaders of the local trade unions and cooperatives. The first session began at 9.00pm in room 13 of the Tauride Palace.

DECISIONS

Ironically, the Soviet met in the left wing of the Palace, the Duma in the right. In the presence of between 125 and 150 delegates, several decisions were taken. After receiving greetings from local regiments the name was changed to the Soviet of Workers and Soldiers Deputies. To live up to its new title, the garrison was asked to send one delegate per company. To guarantee the soldiers' support the Duma was told it could not move any regiments of the Petrograd garrison. The Soviet then decided to send revolutionary guards to the State Bank, Treasury, Mint and Printing Office to protect them against sabotage. Three commissions were established to deal with food supply and the military situation and to ensure the publication of Soviet decisions.

Finally, the Executive was expanded to include other representatives, among them the two Bolshevik leaders in Petrograd, Shlyapnikov and Zalutsky.

In the Soviet and its Executive

On the Praesidium of three there were two Mensheviks, Cheidze and Skobelev, and one Social Revolutionary, Kerensky. Kerensky, the future Minister-President of the Provisional Government, had previously been the leader of the petty bourgeois group, the Trudoviki in the fourth Duma.

After February he joined the Social Revolutionaries, became a member of the Duma provisional committee and also of the Soviet Praesidium. In this one man's political attitude is expressed the whole approach of the Mensheviks and the Right Social Revolutionaries. They wanted to fuse the Soviet and the Duma. In other words to suffocate the political independence of the workers and soldiers.

PAPER

Izvestia reappeared as the paper of the Soviet on 28 February. The print shop of *Kopeyka*, a daily not appearing due to the strikes, was seized, put under armed guard, and its premises used for *Izvestia*. The issue of 1 March carried Order Number One of the Petrograd Soviet. This dealt with the question of the army. Trotsky described it as 'the single worthy document of the February revolution'. The Russian generals blamed it for the

the Duma and the Soviet. The conflict that was to develop in later months between these two bodies, representing different class forces, could be seen already. The Duma provisional committee had stated its aim as 'the restoration of order'.

Soldiers were told to accept the discipline of their officers. Needless to say the soldiers, after years of war, were reluctant to return to the order of the barracks. Jointly with Sokolov, a lawyer and member of the Petrograd Soviet Executive, a group of soldiers drafted Order Number One.

This called on the troops to elect committees in all regiments; to elect deputies to the Soviet; in all political acts to submit to the

Soviet; to keep control of weapons in the soldiers committees and not give them up to officers; to maintain discipline on duty while off duty they have complete rights of citizens, for example not being obliged to salute.

Thousands of copies of Order Number One were distributed all over Russia. Everywhere it became the norm which the soldiers demanded and acted upon. The Provisional Government continually pressed for its repeal. The Soviet refused. But many of the Menshevik leaders would have liked to oblige the Government and the Generals standing behind them. The hot breath of the masses down their necks forced them to do otherwise.

The rebirth of the Petrograd Soviet marked a decisive point in 1917. The working masses had begun to organise themselves. Here the workers and soldiers made common cause. In February the Mensheviks held the leadership of the Soviet.

IMPRESSION

In the next weeks the workers and soldiers would soon learn that the Mensheviks stood not for class independence but class collaboration.

★ Next week: The Provisional Government.





★ CHILE

Chilean dictator General Pinochet has announced that all political parties are to be banned.

So what's new about that? The ban is particularly aimed at ensuring that the capitalist class cannot organise opposition to the junta. Pinochet is getting worried that the Christian Democrats, who initially supported the coup which overthrew the Popular



PINOCHET

Unity Government, are organising opposition to the junta's policies, to lay the basis for a return to 'normal' capitalist rule in Chile.

The attitude of the Carter administration in the USA is probably not encouraging for the junta either. In particular loudmouthed underlings have been taking the American participation in the coup for granted.

Brady Tyson, the deputy leader of the US delegation to the UN Human Rights Commission has publicly apologised for the US role in the coup. The apology was promptly withdrawn by the State Department. The White House Press Secretary refused to comment on President Carter's response when he heard of Tyson's remarks.

★ BRAZIL

American imperialism is carefully cultivating its public conscience over repression in Latin America. Following Brady Tyson's gaffe over Chile, the new administration has raised objections to the widespread use of torture in Brazil.

No such moral concerns affect the attitude of the Soviet bureaucracy. Its ambassador to Brazil has declared that 'the Soviet Union considers the question of rights of man to be an internal problem to each country'.

The United States ambassador too has been at pains to stress that relations between the two countries continue to be 'normal'.

★ GREECE

The Greek working class is the latest to join the European struggle against Government austerity plans.

The past fortnight has seen an extension of the strike wave which has affected large sections of the economy since the beginning of the year. Recent strikes include those by secondary school teachers, telephone workers, television workers and bank employees.

Real price increases in 1976 were of the order of 18 or 19 per cent. White collar workers, who are the hardest hit by inflation, have only received wage increases of around 10 per cent.

★ NAMIBIA

The Turnhalle constitutional conference on Namibia, stage-managed by the South African Government, has produced its proposals for a draft constitution.

Legislative authority will be with a National Assembly of 60. These would be representatives of the various racial and tribal groups in the country proportional to their population. Universal suffrage is rejected because that would lead to the 'domination of one people by another'.

★ FRANCE

From the bourgeois press you could be excused for thinking that the Catholic Traditionalist followers of Archbishop Lefevre, who demand the restoration of the Latin mass, are no more than a bunch of eccentric obscurantists.

However, a French priest who was knocked unconscious when traditionalists occupied his Paris church maintains, with considerable plausibility that their ranks have been infiltrated by members of fascist organisations.

★ USA

Cesar Chavez of the United Farm Workers has signed an agreement with the Teamsters Union for a division of coverage between the two unions.

The UFW, affiliated to the AFL-CIO, has fought a ten year battle for the right to negotiate contracts on behalf of the California and Arizona grape pickers. They agreed contracts



CESAR CHAVEZ

in 1970, but when these came up for renewal in 1973 it was the Teamsters who stepped in to negotiate. This was welcomed by the millionaire farm bosses. The Teamster leadership added scabbing on the UFW recognition struggle to its proud record of association with the Mafia and Nixon.

But the weakness of the UFW leadership has always been its liberal pacifism and refusal to organise real resistance to the Teamster thugs in the fields. Now it has signed an agreement which, while maintaining control over field workers, hands the packing sheds over to the Teamsters.

★ SPAIN

Keith Morfett, the British journalist wrongly arrested by the Spanish police in January, writing in the Sunday Times, has revealed evidence of a bizarre marriage plan.

A retired Spanish diplomat claims that Nazi propaganda minister Goebbels and his wife



planned to marry Hitler to the sister of Jose Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of Spanish fascism. The aim was a revival of the Austro-Spanish dynasty of the Habsburg Empire.

But Magda Goebbels explained why the plan came to nothing: 'It would be possible...if Hitler did not have a bullet in his genitals from the First World War, which has made him an invalid for ever. Impossible, my dear friend... impossible. The Fuhrer would not be able to continue his

SOUTH ASIA IN CRISIS

The deep tensions in South Asia have started to erupt around the Indian and Pakistan elections. Tanks rumble through the streets of the major cities in Pakistan, while Indira Gandhi urges the Indian masses 'to follow the example of Pakistan!' CHRIS O'BRIEN looks at what lies behind the election storm.

Gandhi's election charade

A FEW DAYS before 650 million Indians go to the polls, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi suggested that they follow the example of the Pakistani electorate in returning a 'strong centre party'.

Apart from the obvious irony of an Indian politician holding up Pakistan as an example, Indian voters will not have failed to notice the widespread ballot-rigging in Pakistan and the tanks on the streets to assist Pakistanis in their choice of Government.

Gandhi did not need the Pakistani President Bhutto to show her how to run an election. Already 200 battalions of border security forces and central reserve police have been deployed to help the regular security forces 'keep peace' at the polls. This means an average of some 400 armed men in each constituency.

In Uttar Pradesh, once the stronghold of Gandhi's Congress Party but now threatened by the combined opposition, there have been allegations that duplicate ballot papers have been printed for 40 out of the 86 constituencies. It is generally reckoned that the election will be decided in Uttar

PRISONERS

There are still 30,000 political prisoners in Gandhi's jails, at least half of them arrested before the declaration of the Emergency in June 1975. Despite Government propaganda, the relaxation of the Emergency which accompanied Gandhi's election call represented only a selective easing on the repression.

Prominent opposition leaders were released to give a facade of democracy, while hard line opponents, like George Fernandes, the leader of the left wing of the Socialist Party, are still detained and systematically prevented from participation in electoral activity.

When the elections were announced in January, it was generally considered that the Congress Party was riding the crest of a wave. The economy was looking very healthy. A bumper harvest had boosted agricultural production while inflation was negligible or even negative.

Above all, Government economic policy and the Emergency had provided a much-needed stimulus to industrial production.

The growth rate in all industries for 1975-6 was 7 per cent compared with 2.5 per cent the previous year and -0.2 per cent in the year before that. With the backing of all significant sections of the bourgeoisie and of the Communist Party, Congress was heading for certain victory.

DEFECTIONS

Then came a series of defections of leading Congress politicians, including members of Gandhi's own family. The most significant politician to break has been Jagjivan Ram, a Minister since 1947. The real issue at stake is the Emergency. Important sectors of the bourgeoisie have begun to regard the suppression of democratic rights as counter productive.

The accuracy of this estimation is demonstrated by the swing away from the Congress Party



Jagjivan Ram speaks at election

among the peasantry, formerly its mass social base. It would also seem that large sectors of the Moslem and 'untouchable' population will support Ram — a demagogue who talks of 'scientific socialism adapted to Indian culture' — or the Janata party. The latter is a block of four opposition parties, including the Socialists and the fascist Jana Sangh.

The record of the Janata party on democracy leaves everything to be desired and the Congress Party still has the financial backing of

big business and an electoral apparatus built over 30 years. But still the repression has encouraged massive defections from Gandhi's party.

For the mass of the population, particularly the Moslems and untouchables — the Hindu sub-class — the main issue has become the forced sterilisation implemented by Sanjay Gandhi. The incentives of previous sterilisation campaigns have been dropped in favour of open and barbaric repression. Ram, himself an 'untouchable', has been able to channel this resentment into open opposition to Congress.

Bourgeois commentators suggest that his break with Gandhi after the announcement of elections was a shrewd piece of principled politics. If he had broken before the relaxation, so the argument goes, there would have been no election.

But it is clear that Ram and the fraction of the bourgeoisie he represents actually supported the Emergency as a means of restoring the industrial and agricultural productivity of Indian capital.

The major workers' parties have been consistent in their capitulation to one or other fraction of the capitalist class. The Socialist Party, even the left wing led by Fernandes, supports the rabidly right-wing Janata block. Fernandes himself is running as a Janata candidate from his prison cell.

The long relationship between

every move of Gandhi while raising plaintive objections to certain minor infringements of bourgeois democracy and an equivocal endorsement of Ram's criticisms of Gandhi.

The other major party, the Maoist CPI (Marxist), has long thrown in its hand with the rightist opposition. Indeed its position on the constitution is in some respects to the right of the Janata party, failing to reject the defence of property rights embodied in the present constitution.

The results of the election are not clear. An unforeseen mass unrest towards Gandhi's policies has opened up the possibility of the defeat of Congress and a deepening of the prolonged political crisis.

One thing is clear. Even if legal electoral practice is followed — which is unlikely — even bourgeois democracy in India is a charade. The battalions of troops and teeming political prisons will ensure that that remains the case.

All change in Sri Lanka

The strike wave which hit Sri Lanka [Ceylon] earlier this year has had its effects on the coalition Government of Mrs Bandaranaike.

The Ministers of the ex-Trotskyist LSSP were dismissed in 1975. Then, last month, the Communist Party withdrew its support from the 'United Left' Government with the capitalist parties, under strong pressure from the workers movement.

Already Bandaranaike had suspended Parliament to avoid discussion on a no-confidence motion. Now she has to call a general election and faces realignments of the major parties.

A Ceylonese Trotskyist contributes these observations on the possible realignment of parties.

First there was the threat of a number of SLFP members of Parliament voting against the Government. Then a number of CP MPs would have abstained. In any event the CP was in a dilemma. A much larger bloc of the SLFP was critical of the way the Government handled the strike. There is a crystallisation of

the 'right' behind the Madame.

In the context of a possible defeat and a certain embarrassment to the SLFP and Madame personally, she decided to prorogue Parliament — that is to close this session and recall it on 19 May.

In any event, in doing this, the Government was forced to discontinue the 'Emergency' since

reported to Parliament. This cannot be done while Parliament is not in session. Therefore Madame had to forgo the Emergency. This itself will give some idea of the internal crisis of the SLFP-CP Government.

BLUFF

The CP has come out with a statement strongly disapproving of the prorogation. But in my view this is just bluff. They are the happiest people because Madame has saved them a great deal of embarrassment by prorogation.

The LSSP is happy. They have also criticised the prorogation but in very mild terms. They do not want to antagonise any elements in the SLFP with whom they may be able to collaborate in the future.

It is aggressively campaigning for its 'Socialist Front'. No doubt the four SLFP MPs who resigned will

Thugs enforce Bhutto victory

Unlike the Indian elections, the victory of President Ali Bhutto and his Peoples Party [PPP] was a foregone conclusion. In many constituencies the PPP candidates were elected unopposed as their rivals had been jailed. PPP thugs rampaged through the streets of the major cities threatening opposition supporters.

In Hyderabad they killed at least two oppositionists and wrecked the offices of the Pakistan National Alliance. The activities of the Indian Congress Party youth, led by Sanjay Gandhi, are not too dissimilar.

A press blackout was imposed on the activities of the opposition parties. Not that the opposition itself presented a very inspiring prospect. A motley collection of retired generals and careerists, they were no more able to provide solutions for the Pakistani masses than the Government.

Despite its abandonment of the radical demagogic programme of the 1970 elections, the PPP still seemed a marginally better prospect than the opposition. Its nationalisation of the banks and insurance companies and certain basic industries was no more than a rationalisation of the interests of the chronically weak native Pakistani capitalism. Nevertheless it was enough to ensure victory.

This makes it all the more bizarre that the PPP should have resorted to ballot-rigging. Rigging was centred in the Punjab, generally reckoned to be the key to the whole election. Probably the rigging was organised on a local basis by individual candidates or overzealous officials.

Even Bhutto did not anticipate the size of his victory. With the fake results included it reaches embarrassing proportions!

every move of Gandhi while raising plaintive objections to certain minor infringements of bourgeois democracy and an equivocal endorsement of Ram's criticisms of Gandhi.

The other major party, the Maoist CPI (Marxist), has long thrown in its hand with the rightist opposition. Indeed its position on the constitution is in some respects to the right of the Janata party, failing to reject the defence of property rights embodied in the present constitution.

The results of the election are not clear. An unforeseen mass unrest towards Gandhi's policies has opened up the possibility of the defeat of Congress and a deepening of the prolonged political crisis.

One thing is clear. Even if legal electoral practice is followed — which is unlikely — even bourgeois democracy in India is a charade. The battalions of troops and teeming political prisons will ensure that that remains the case.

bloc of the SLFP — the 'lefts' — to join as well. Then, of course, the CP will follow suit.

Whether or not this will come to fruition is difficult to say at the moment. The 'lefts' are watching the situation. Their first priority is to regain their seats. Therefore if the Government uses its power and money effectively in the next 100 days, to win a substantial section of the voters through artificial job creation, relief to farmers and so on, they will wait within the SLFP to ensure that MPs in their block maintain SLFP nominations.

SPLIT

Therefore nothing can be taken for granted. The SLFP could split and the Socialist Front could emerge, with the right SLFP arriving at an agreement with forces to its right. The elections may produce no stable Government, opening the way for new

BASQUES SPURN FAKE REFORMS

A DEMONSTRATION by Basque nationalists which halted the European indoor athletics championship in San Sebastian was only the most spectacular point in a week of action against Government repression.

Fifteen hundred demonstrators occupied the stadium and only agreed to leave when three leading athletics administrators, including the British president of the European Athletics Association, agreed to accompany them as a protection against the riot police.

The action was triggered off by the killing of two suspected ETA members by the Civil Guard on 8 March. Strikes brought large sectors of industry in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa to a standstill.

VAGUE

This was the week when the Government announced further amendments to Francoist law. Among these was a vague guarantee of amnesty for political prisoners. Martin Fernandez Palacios, a Basque Cortes deputy, sent to 'take the pulse' of the Basque country by the Interior Minister, claims that all the political prisoners will be released.

But nothing is that certain. One newspaper estimated that 80 of the 200 political prisoners will benefit automatically, while a group of lawyers says that only 22 could be certain of release. Basque workers and nationalists have heard too many of these promises to be satisfied until all their comrades are free.

The Basque Nationalist Party thinks that this latest move represents 'a total fulfilment of the Government's promises'. But the tens of thousands of strikers were less satisfied.

Ironically these strikes showed up the limitations of the other 'reform' of the last week — the return of the 'right to strike'. In fact this 'right' is so hedged

around with conditions as to be almost useless. 'Political' strikes, for example, are forbidden, immediately ruling out the Basque strikes of last week.

Also forbidden are strikes against collective contracts which are still in force. This means that workers will be allowed a maximum of one strike a year — and less in many cases — provided that there are no political demands included in the collective contract claim. In the past, workers in many companies have used these claims as an opportunity to take action around demands for democratic freedoms.

This royal decree on labour relations has a real sting in the tail. Its real purpose has little to do with liberalisation. The decree restores to the employers almost total freedom to sack workers. The suspension of an Article of the Franco Labour Law last October was designed to achieve the same thing but working class resistance had made it impossible to implement.

Spanish workers have been the most successful in Europe in resisting the austerity plans of the capitalists. Militant action has maintained and even increased real wages and employment levels have been maintained. The reformist parties have collaborated in the Government's 'liberalisation' but it now appears that the growing economic crisis and the refusal of workers to bear the cost present the greatest obstacle to the stabilisation of capitalist rule in Spain. Far from being a liberalisation, these latest measures are a desperate attempt to stave off this crisis.

• The Spanish solidarity bulletin *Spain in Struggle* is holding the first of a series of forums on Thursday 17 March at 7.00pm. It will take the form of a debate between representatives of the LCR (Spanish sympathising section of the Fourth International) and the PSUC (Catalan Communist Party). The meeting is in Room S241, St Clements Building, LSE, Houghton St, London WC2.

NAC National Conference, Sat. 19 March, South Bank Polytechnic, London.

March against the Criminal Trespass Bill, Sat 19 March, assemble 1.45 in Cardington St (nr Euston Sq), then march at 2.15 to Highbury Fields. Speakers include Audrey Wise MP.

COMMUNIST PARTY Literature Group. One day conference on 'William Blake and the 1790's'. Saturday 19 March. Architectural Association, 34-36 Bedford Square, London WC1. Registration starts 9.30am. Admission £1.50.

OUT IN MARCH: 'Labour Focus on Eastern Europe'. News and analysis for communists, socialists and trade unionists opposed to repression and for socialist democracy in Eastern Europe. £2.25 for nine issues per year for subs up to 31 March. Sample copy 30p post free. Write to 116 Cazenove Road (bottom flat), London N16.

ORGANISER for non-sectarian campaign. Required experience of organisation in trade/student unions, women's or community groups; administrative efficiency, basic writing/public speaking abilities. Long hours. Write giving full details, reasons for applying to CACTL and phone number to c/o 6 Bowden Street, SE11, to arrive by 18 March.

'APARTHEID in Britain — an analysis of the Prevention of Terrorism Act'. A new pamphlet by the People against the PTA, forms part of a national campaign against this repressive piece of anti-Irish legislation. It has been sponsored by nearly half a dozen significant labour movement bodies. Read it, use it. Cost 25p, plus 15p postage from: PAPTA, Box 16, 142 Drummond Street, London NW1. Bulk rates negotiable. Write, or ring 01-450 2905.

A DEBATE between the Young Communist League and 'Militant'. 'Trotsky and the Popular Front in the Spanish Revolution — Past and Present.' Friday 25 March, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Monty Johnstone for YCL, Ted Grant for 'Militant'. Time will be allowed for a limited number of five minute contributions from the floor. Tickets 25p, obtainable from YCL, 16 King Street, London WC2 and Militant, 1 Mentmore Terrace, London E8.

'INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST' No 4, February 1977, out now, 25p. Articles on 'The I-CL and Women's Liberation'; the development of capitalism in Russia; and the debate on the Workers Government at the 4th Congress of the Communist International. 'International Communist' No 2/3 still available, 30p. All orders to G. Lee, 98 Gifford St., London N1 0DF. Add 15% for p&p, with a minimum of 10p and maximum of 70p. Subscriptions: six issues — Britain £1.50, Overseas £2. Libraries £3. Twelve issues — Britain £2.75, Overseas £3.75. Libraries £5.75.

BRISTOL Socialist Challenge Forum. 'Nationalism, Racism and Fascism'. Tuesday 5 April, 7.30pm Baptist Mills Centre, Horley Road, St. Werburghs, Bristol 2 (off Mina Road near M32).

TYNDALE SYMPOSIUM sponsored by Socialist Teachers Alliance. Radical Education and others. Saturday 10



BP backs Vorster

A REPORT published this week by the Anti Apartheid Movement and the Haslemere Group clearly shows the complicity of British firms and the Labour Government with the racist states of Smith and Vorster.

The report is entitled *Shell and BP in South Africa*. Shell's major shareholders are found to be in Britain and Holland. BP is 68 per cent owned and controlled by the British state. The Government obtained a majority holding when the Bank of England rescued Burmah Oil in 1975, thus taking a further 20 per cent in BP.

Shell and BP are up to their necks in the apartheid regime. They supply 40 per cent of petroleum requirements for South Africa, including the army and police. They are thus implicated in the slaughter of thousands of black Africans in towns like Soweto.

South Africa is dependent on imported oil. The source is another bloody dictatorship — Iran. To facilitate its arrival from the Shah's oil-fields, BP and Shell have built the largest refinery in Africa at Reunion. The Vorster regime realises the dangers of its oil dependency and has launched a series of projects to produce oil

internally. Both Shell and BP have set up prospecting companies to scour South Africa and Namibia for oil deposits, while also working on coal-to-oil research. Landlocked Rhodesia is at the mercy of these multinational oil

companies. By January 1966 Rhodesia was receiving 145,000 gallons of oil a day from South Africa. Its requirement under rationing was 83,000 gallons. Much of this oil was supplied as it still is today, by BP and Shell.

The Rand Daily Mail produced a photograph of a BP tanker crossing the border and, if that was insufficient proof, BP, Shell and Mobil built an oil depot with a capacity of 100,000 gallons at Messina in South Africa. Messina is 10 miles from the Beit Bridge crossing into Rhodesia. The report states that operations are carried out under the cover of a firm called Freight Services.

The complicity of BP and the hypocrisy of the Labour Government has been recently shown with the fake independence of the Transkei. The Labour Government, in common with all other Common Market states, condemned this fraud at the United Nations. BP, despite its 68 per cent holding, put a full page advert entitled 'Congratulations to the Transkei' in the columns of the South African newspaper *The Financial Mail* on 22 October 1976.

The policy of the Labour Government in its dealings with the racist states flouts the policy

passed at the last Labour Party conference. This called for an end to investments in South Africa. Resolutions should pour into the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party and to the Labour Government from CLPs and trade unions demanding a full enquiry by the workers movement into the affairs of firms such as BP in southern Africa.

These should also demand that all trade union representation is withdrawn from the board of BP. UPW General Secretary Tom Jackson, who withdrew his union's boycott of South African mail under threat of legal action, is a BP board member.

The books of BP, and all firms investing with apartheid, should be opened before the labour movement. The Labour Government must be forcefully told to end its collaboration and that of British firms with the racists in southern Africa.

RIC SISSONS
• Shell and BP in South Africa, by Martin Bailey. Produced jointly by the Anti Apartheid Movement and the Haslemere Group. Available from AAM, 89 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2DQ.

**Congratulations
to the
TRANSKEI**

BP is proud to play its part
in the development of agriculture
industry and commerce

concerns for its supply of oil. Following the Unilateral Declaration of Independence by the Smith regime in 1965, an oil embargo was imposed, but to little effect.

ZIMBABWE SOLIDARITY NEWS



A WEEK of action in solidarity with the people of Zimbabwe has been called for 9-13 May. A planning meeting will be held on Sunday 27 March, at the offices of War on Want, to work out precise details of activity.

The meeting which set the date also established the outline of a

These points included support to the armed struggle; for majority rule now; an end to exclusive negotiations with Smith; an end to the recruitment of mercenaries in Britain; for the Labour Government to grant political asylum to draft dodgers and Zimbabwean exiles; against any white compensation fund; for the Labour Gov-

the front line states and the refugee camps; against any military intervention by Britain, the Commonwealth or the United Nations; for complete sanctions against the Smith regime and Vorster who provides the lifeline to Rhodesia.

These points will be amended if

their acceptance in principle offers the possibility of building a broad united front to coordinate the week of action. However, the attitude of the representative of the Anti Apartheid Executive Committee at the meeting did nothing to aid such united, coordinated activity.

Chris Childs outlined the position of the AAM Executive for a week of action but against such coordination. They want to set a week aside in which all organisations take up Zimbabwe, but not through joint actions. Such an attitude, essentially a sectarian approach, will only serve to weaken the impact of any week of action. The meeting urged the Executive of the AAM to change their minds and build a coordinated week.

The next planning meeting is open to all organisations who accept the platform, which is similar to that of the resolution passed at the last Annual General Meeting of the AAM, and will begin to draw up plans for the week.

RIC SISSONS

★ Next planning meeting: Sunday 27 March, 2.00pm, War on Want offices, 467 Caledonian Road. (Next door to Caledonian Road

BIG GAINS FOR UNITED FAR LEFT

EARLY RESULTS from the first round of the French municipal elections show a massive swing to the left.

The Union of the Left, the alliance between the Communist and Socialist Parties and the Left Radicals and Left Gaullists, has won 51.5 per cent of the vote in towns of more than 30,000 inhabitants. Just as striking are the gains made by the united slate of the revolutionary left, which has won six per cent of the votes in the provinces and three per cent in Paris — a national average of 5.5 per cent in those towns where the revolutionary left was standing.

There have been spectacular successes: in Orleans 12 per cent, St Ouen 9.5 per cent, Mombelliard 9.5 per cent, Nancy 8.3 per cent, Caen 8.3 per cent, Rouen 7.6 per cent. Even the relatively low Paris poll was uneven. In one industrial suburb, for example, revolutionaries gained 6.7 per cent of the vote.

The significance of this massive electoral gain becomes apparent when it is remembered that the combined poll of the revolutionary candidates in the last Presidential elections nowhere exceeded three per cent.

RESISTANCE

Behind these gains, for revolutionaries and for the left as a whole, lies the rising militancy of the French working class in resistance to Government attacks on living standards. For the Union of the Left this must have enormous implications.

In the second round voting on Sunday the revolutionary votes will transfer to the CP and SP, probably accompanied by some of the votes for the ecology candidates. This could mean a poll for the workers parties of well over 50 per cent.

When Giscard was elected he got less than 50 per cent of the vote. This underlines the bankruptcy of the Union of the Left's insistence that the working class must wait for the legislative election next year, which has served as an excuse for holding back workers' militancy. The Union of the Left leaders have made it clear that they will be happy to have a majority in the Chamber of Deputies and allow Giscard to continue as President.

SIGNAL

This massive display of working class strength in the ballot box must be the signal for a campaign to throw out the Government's austerity plan and the Government with it.

It also shows how pathetic is the block of the workers' parties with the Left Radicals and Gaullists. These results have provided a further demonstration of the need to throw out these rump bourgeois parties and force elections now.

The gains for revolutionaries go far beyond the electoral arena. The united slate of the LCR (French section of the Fourth International-

al), Lutte Ouvrière and the Organisation Communiste des Travailleurs has provided a lasting example of what revolutionary unity can achieve.

RESOLVED

Early disputes over the character of the election campaign were resolved. The OCT was concerned not to 'impose' united slates on municipalities, while Lutte Ouvrière initially saw the agreement as requiring only joint electoral work.

The LCR correctly insisted on the need for a national joint platform, though many independent workers' leaders in their localities stood on the basis of that programme. Our comrades also argued for joint activity to extend beyond the electoral arena, to build the implantation of the revolutionary organisations. The correctness of this policy has been spectacularly demonstrated.

IMPLICATIONS

The implications of this success for our electoral tactics in Britain hardly need to be spelled out. It would be foolish to suggest that the French experience could be exactly and immediately reproduced in Britain. But what is demonstrated is the tremendous united power of the revolutionary parties, beyond the simple sum of their memberships.

The sectarian attitude of British organisations like the SWP is a sad comparison. On the spurious basis of 'party-building' the SWP has consistently refused united action with the other organisations of the far left. It has ignored approaches from the IMG for a joint candidate in the Stechford by-election and a united platform in the next general election.

A letter from the IMG to the SWP proposing a joint slate for the elections to the Greater London Council in May has received no reply.

IGNORED

The SWP has even ignored requests to sponsor a meeting on the French electoral platform to be held in London this Friday. Unfortunately the IMG has had to proceed with both the meeting and the GLC campaign without a united front with the SWP and



other organisations. The meeting on Friday will be the opportunity for the IMG to present its candidates for these elections.

To the SWP we can only say: we will continue to fight for electoral unity among revolutionaries as one of the steps towards building a united revolutionary organisation. 'Party-building' is no excuse since the French campaign has shown that unity builds a far bigger party than sectarianism.

Revolutionaries are now a force to be reckoned with in the French workers movement. United action could bear the same fruits in Britain.



ALAIN KRIVINE [left] of the LCR and Socialist Party leader Francois Mitterand [above]. For the Socialist Party the election victory will be an embarrassment of riches. How can it continue to explain its reluctance to topple the Government?



STUDENTS have battled with police in Rome for days following the murder of student leader Francesco Lorusso, a member of Lotta Continua, during the clashes with police last Friday. The Pope, the Government and the Communist Party have cemented an alliance which is becoming only too familiar to stop the student demonstrations.

We must also correct some remarks we have made in the past weeks concerning the Rome students driving Communist Party (PCI) leader Luciano Lama off the campus. A correspondent in Italy informs us that Lama's bodyguards were themselves armed with paint and fire-extinguishers when they arrived.

One Italian paper carried a photograph of PCI members armed with iron bars entering Turin University. We do not know who struck the first blow but it is clear that the PCI arrived looking for trouble. Whose side do they think they are on?

The students pictured above are dressed as Red Indians! The phrase 'Metropolitan Indians' has been coined to describe all those student and working class youth who identify with the aspirations of the American Indians. Red Weekly will carry a full report on the Italian student movement next week.

Build new paper!

Last week Brian Grogan, the National Secretary of the International Marxist Group, announced the launching of a new paper supporting the Fourth International in Britain.

We are sure that all our readers will have noticed the technical improvements in Red Weekly over the past year. But we have also expanded the political resources

of the paper. This has meant:

- * A regular Battle of Ideas supplement;
- * First-class coverage of national labour movement conferences;
- * A fighting lead in many campaigns, supporting the IMG in its struggle for unity in action;
- * Support for the election campaigns of the IMG;
- * A consistent campaign for a unified revolutionary organisation.

But we are not complacent. Even though Red Weekly has provided an important political service to the working class we know that this is not enough.

The new tasks facing us require a new paper. Among other things, this means strengthening our drive for revolutionary unity by opening its pages for the participation of other revolutionary organisations. This will require new facilities — at least 16 pages, a

bigger staff and new technical equipment. And the new paper will need a new home!

We have already used some of our Fund Drive. We can now announce that in May we expect to move to larger, better premises. But that alone will not meet our needs.

EXTENDING

The Fund Drive has improved considerably over the past month, but because of the slow start we may not reach our target by May. We are extending the Fund Drive to June to coincide with the launching of our new paper.

We urge all members and supporters of the IMG and Red Weekly to make a big push with donations to meet our Fund Drive target. Open up the second front on your pay packets.

Send donations and bankers orders to: Fund Drive, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

We print a list of the donations so far this month:

Anonymous	70
Hull IMG	3
Ex-member in Detroit USA	10
Oxford IMG	5.78
Bradford	2
Manchester IMG	5
Leeds	2
RP	0.67
Darlington	9.80
JW	20
London IMG	
Social	132.25
Reading	10
Birmingham supporter	2
Portsmouth	3

That makes a grand total 270.50 so far in March.



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Write to RED WEEKLY (distribution) 97 Caledonian Road, London N1

CORRECTION

Last week's article on student struggles stated that local authorities could reclaim 55 per cent of the new fees for students on non-mandatory courses from the central Government. On further investigation it was learnt that in fact local authorities could reclaim none of the increase from central Government but would have to finance the extra expenditure through cuts in other budgets. Quite clearly the effect will be a massive cuts in discretionary grant awards.