

RED WEEKLY

This is the last issue of Red Weekly.
9th June is the date for.....

Socialist Challenge

26 May 1977

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LABOUR STARTS RACE WITCH-HUNT

Labour MP Fred Willey and Tory MP Dudley Smith have left for India.

Their aim is to scurry around gathering as much dirt as they can to argue for new restrictions on immigration.

They do so in their roles as chairperson and vice-chairperson of a Parliamentary Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration. According to Monday's *Guardian* 'substantial leaks' from the Select Committee have revealed that MPs are 'alarmed at the number of thriving businesses devoted to providing false papers and advice on how to evade controls for would be immigrants to Britain'.

This system of 'leaks' to the press is a well tried method of gaining acceptance beforehand for later legislation which might prove controversial.

The *Guardian* suggests this is the case with these latest leaks and that 'Merlyn Rees will find it hard to

resist pressure on him to cut down the number of people coming from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh'.

Already there are severe restrictions on the right of immigrants to come to Britain, already Labour's Green Paper on nationality has suggested new ways of depriving West Indian and Asian immigrants of their British citizenship, but apparently this is not enough for the Labour government.

There are no prizes for guessing what lies behind this new attack on immigrants, Labour can see the growth of the National Front and rather than leading a struggle against the racist poison of these fascists they make concessions to them.

Labour sees its own decline of electoral support and rather than after the bankrupt policies of the Social Contract, they are willing to attack immigrants as a way of vote-catching.

* See page 2 on Islington 18.

THEIR DEMOCRACY AND OURS



Socialist Challenge RALLY

Ernest Mandel speaking on Workers' Democracy and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat
Comrade from the LCR in Spain
Other international speakers
Film and Theatre

Sunday 5 June 7-10pm St. Pancras Assembly Rooms, Kings Cross.

£1,274 last week -£4,529 to go!

This will be the last Fund Drive appeal in the columns of *Red Weekly*. The £15,000 Fund Drive will conclude on 5 June with the national rally to launch *Socialist Challenge*. But the need for finances — especially with an expanded newspaper and with the move to our new premises — will continue. That's why we say thank you to all the *Red Weekly* readers and branches who have sent in the total of £1,274.70 this week.

We also say to these comrades that even when the Fund Drive is formally closed, the Fighting Fund to keep *Socialist Challenge* above water will need to be a regular part of the day-to-day work of *Socialist Challenge* readers. So when you are making your contribution to ensure that we do reach the £15,000 mark, seriously consider filling out a bankers' order form so that a regular income can be sustained.

Our thanks this week to:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| Lancaster IMG | 3.00 |
| Rose Knight | 1.00 |
| Oxford IMG | 22.70 |
| Sue Jennings | |
| Socialist Teachers Alliance | 5.00 |
| J. Frost | |
| NALGO | 5.00 |
| Swansea IMG | 10.00 |
| So'ton IMG | 8.00 |
| Railworker, London | 2.00 |
| M'chester IMG | 10.00 |
| Anon | 10.00 |
| Havant Trades Council Delegate | 2.00 |
| AUEW members collection | 85.00 |
| Fourth International | |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|
| supporters in Britain | 175.00 |
| T. Peel (Chelsea) | |
| T. Peel, hospital worker in COHSE | 20.00 |
| D. Harrison | |
| COHSE | 15.00 |
| Anon | 100.00 |
| Anon | 158.00 |
| RW supporter in Italy | 50.00 |
| PL and DL | 100.00 |
| Krivine Rally IOU | 30.00 |
| Sheffield readers | 8.50 |
| Aberdean reader | 12.00 |
| Edinburgh reader | 15.00 |
| Worcester readers | 9.75 |
| Hull readers | 7.00 |
| Total | 2919.70 |

In order to give the Fund Drive a boost in its last days, the National Secretary of the IMG made an appeal last week for 50 comrades to come forward to donate an average of £20.00 each to add a further £1,000 to the Fund Drive. £355 was collected in 2 days. We need another £595 over the next two weeks. Our thanks to the comrades who have responded so far:

| | |
|--|--------|
| D.J. Lawrence | 10.00 |
| NUT | |
| Phyllis Dunipace NUT, | |
| NAC | 20.00 |
| Hilda Kean NUT | 15.00 |
| Jenny Davenport | |
| NUT | 10.00 |
| Tony Graham NUT | 20.00 |
| Karen Margolis | 10.00 |
| Jon Duveen, NUT | 30.00 |
| Martin Eady, NUR | 20.00 |
| Carl Gardiner, NUJ | 20.00 |
| Plus 8 comrades who wish to remain anonymous | 150.00 |
| Total | 355.00 |

Irving gets boot

SIR ARTHUR IRVINE QC, the Labour MP for Edge Hill, Liverpool, is the latest martyr for the cause of Labour moderation. On Friday 20 May his constituency party voted by 37 to 3 to ask their MP to stand down at the next general election.

But it is not simply a case of personalities. Members of Edge Hill Labour Party are correct to sack Irvine for his laziness. Hard work however is not the only criterion for a political representative.

Much more important are the current political issues, in particular the anti-working class policies of the Labour

International Marxist Group and Big Flame have agreed that in the event of an Edge Hill by-election they will support a revolutionary socialist or 'class struggle' candidate. To this end they are approaching local campaign committees, independent working class organisations and other organisations of the far left, in particular the Socialist Workers Party, to discuss promoting such a joint candidate.

Such a candidate would offer a fighting alternative to both Sir Arthur Irvine, the Labour 'moderates' who witch-hunt, and the Labour 'lefts' like Foot who follow the political, economic and social policies of the 'moderates'



battle of ideas
Monthly supplement to Red Weekly

Inside: Martin Shaw — Open Letter to the Central Committee of the SWP.

'Stress' confessions extracted as ISLINGTON 18 TRIAL BEGINS

'CARNIVAL an orgy of mugging and violence — QC'. That was how the press took up the trial of the 18 Islington black youths which opened at the Old Bailey last week.

From the tone of all the papers it seems we are in for another run of biased, racist reporting, this time in the form of an onslaught on the West Indian community in Britain.

This would certainly fit in with the intentions of the police and the courts in staging this 13 week long trial. At the same time, the hysteria of this and other accusations by the prosecution could have come straight from the vocabulary of the National Front.

CHARGES

The 18 defendants face about 20 different charges, all of them typical of the kind increasingly brought against young blacks nowadays. Like, for instance 'Between 20 August and 21 October last year in the Greater London Area conspired together and with persons unknown to commit robberies' or 'on a day unknown in the month of October 1976 did rob a woman unknown of handbag and contents'.

The kind of 'evidence' used to cook up such charges is scarcely what you'd call reliable — as was proved in one instance where a suspect was found to be out of the country at the time!

Much of the prosecution's case is based on accounts from the time of Notting Hill Carnival and statements that were extracted from the youths when they were first picked up.

VAGUE

Given that the present 'sus' laws give the police powers to arrest on the vaguest of charges, they have for a long time exercised a blanket racism in picking up just any black youths and pinning charges on them.

It is no accident that the Islington 18 were arrested soon after last year's Notting Hill Carnival battles, when the police began arresting young blacks indiscriminately, but were met with unexpectedly strong resistance. The police have been smarting from such a defeat ever since.

Since being picked up and detained, the youths have been harassed and brutalised. All efforts were made to get them to admit to whatever the police wanted to pin on them. A lot of time was spent before the trial going over statements made under stress. Now that the trial has started, they are still under that duress, but have all nevertheless pleaded not guilty to the charges.

As the trial drags on for another 3 months, that strain and pressure will increase, as it will also on their families who have stood by them and defended them.

There is no doubt that the police and the courts are making this trial a test case — to prove that they have not been defeated by the resistance such as that shown at the Carnival, and that no matter how much young blacks rebel against racist treatment in jobs (or lack of them), in school, from the police, courts and so on, they are going to be kept 'in their place'.

FRAME-UPS

We've had plenty of such trials before, from the Mangrove case onwards. The way in which the youths, their parents and community have organised to fight them shows that no-one knows better than they what is the purpose behind such elaborate frame-ups. In this case these youths will be used as examples generally to clamp down on young blacks and intimidate and contain the rest of the community; but specifically the trial will certainly create an atmosphere of hostility towards this year's Carnival, and give the police and authorities plenty of excuses for interfering in and policing it on an even bigger scale than last year.

But the second thing that the



Islington 18 demonstration on 23 April.

youths, their parents and those involved know is just what 15 and 16 year olds and their families are having to go through because of such a trial. If the problems of joblessness, homelessness, discrimination and harassment force black youths into confrontation with the police, in the first place those problems

remain for them and their families all the time that they are subsequently dragged through the courts.

So, the Islington 18 Defence Committee is trying to take up both these sides to the trial. All the support possible is needed for the demand to free the 18, to end police harassment. The commit-

tee urgently needs money to assist the youths and their families, and to enable them to organise more widely and effectively. Its address is 161, Hornsey Rd, Islington.

SHEILA MALONE.

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

'Some of my best friends are fascists ...' Andrew Jenkins reviews Martin Walker's book

MARTIN WALKER has written a book (The National Front, £1 Fontana) that will be attacked more vigorously by the anti-fascist left than by the fascists. Already one prominent anti-fascist, Gerry Gable has demanded that his name be removed from the acknowledgements page in disgust with the politics of the book.

Martin Walker is a clever and ambitious journalist. He is a personable young man who has the happy knack of establishing friendships with prominent fascists and anti-fascists. In all this there can be advantages.



The framework in which he examines the NF is simple: 'there are two kinds of society, totalitarian and pluralist'. The totalitarians come in two types, fascists and communists. The fascists want a series of national totalitarian states, while the more tidy minded communists want a world-wide totalitarian state. All good solid cold war ideology.

Walker sees a key feature

system or two loose coalitions opposing one another. Its modern British expression is 'the great anti-authoritarian parties', Conservative and Labour which involve within them many elements who sympathise with totalitarian objectives but are kept in the mainstream of politics by the broadness of the two coalitions.

For Walker this admirable state of affairs is threatened by the growth of Fascists and Trotskyists. This outline is not new, although dragging the English Civil War into the camp of consensus politics deserves a mark for imagination. The crucial point is that Walker is fighting on two fronts, against the NF, but also against the anti-fascist movement.

VIOLENCE

One of the most glaring examples of Walker's 'two fronts' strategy is when he deals with the issue of violence. He allows that the NF makes violent statements, but gives only one example of the direct violence of the fascists, and this was a reprisal raid. The picture that emerges is one of Jews and leftists attacking the fascists who occasionally defend themselves.

Yet Walker is very well aware that the fascist groups have a long history of burnings, bombings, paramilitary groups, attacks on blacks, and arms caches.

Walker claims that from 1962 Jordan and Tynedale realised the counter-productive nature of violence.

The point of Walker's exercise is to discredit the left and to protect the democratic rights of the NF, especially

where they wish.

Walker never clearly explains whether he sees the NF and National Party as fascist organisations, or whether they are right wing parties dominated by ex-Tories within which can be found some ex-Nazis. Partly this arises from the fact that Walker has no clear theory of fascism and appears at times to believe that it consists of wearing uniforms or cultivating funny moustaches.

In the final chapter Walker attempts to explain the significance and role of the NF. In order to do this he has to gesture in the direction of a theoretical framework and outlines what he imagines to be Trotsky's theory of fascism.

According to his summary the preconditions for fascism are an economic crisis, a revolutionary party of the working class and a fascist party growing within the petty bourgeoisie. Once the capitalists discern a fascist movement then they will encourage it by all the means at their command.

Walker then goes on to argue that the events of early 1974 in Britain constituted the classical crisis 'in terms of Trotsky's theory of fascism'. But the NF did not come to power, thus Trotsky's analysis has been proved wrong.

CRISIS

A few comments must be made. First, in spite of the fact that the early months of '74 revealed a major crisis for the ruling class it was not a revolutionary crisis. Even if the situation had been more difficult for the ruling class, Trotsky has pointed out that the capitalists are loath to use the fascist weapon.

go when the pain is unendurable. In early '74 the ruling class had the option of using the Labour Party to carry out the attacks on the working class, using more discreet methods than those Heath used.

Walker is able to make a series of perceptive comments on the loose organisational nature of the NF, the high turnover of membership and the low political level that means the rank and file often does not understand the nature of the Front's programme. The electoral support for the NF is even more distant from the fascist cadre and reflects a confused protest vote or a simple racist response.

PARTY

In passing it is necessary to note that Walker nowhere admits that one of the reasons for the inability of the Front to organise its electoral support is that the anti-fascists have not allowed it to operate as a normal party.

The failure of the NF to transform itself from being primarily a racist pressure group into a party of government does not disprove Trotsky's theory of fascism.

The ruling class drew a very negative balance sheet of fascism in Germany. The emphasis has swung towards building up the repressive organs (army, police, SPG) and harsh laws such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, rather than relying on forces mobilised by fascist adventurers.

But racism can still be useful to the ruling class. The NF can divide the working class by playing the racist card and can be used as auxiliaries to the police and



John Tyndall and Andrew Fountaine, leaders of the National Front, on the 23 April St. George's Day demonstration

long term it may have an even more decisive role to play. But Walker cannot grapple with this analysis since it involves admitting that it is

and their allies that are playing the major role in both spreading racist filth and in attacking the democratic rights of the working

Photo: ANDREW WILD (Report)

FISHER FLOUTS 'NO CONTRICK' VOTE

ALAN FISHER, general secretary of the National Union of Public Employees and quickly becoming the leftest talker in the TUC, wriggled and manoeuvred on Monday to salvage as much as he could of the Social Contract.

First Fisher argued strongly against a motion urging that NUPE should oppose wage restraint 'irrespective of what the TUC decides'. After Fisher had appealed to delegates not 'to close the doors to all options' the motion was lost by 6,562 votes to 3,520. Instead a motion calling for rejection of 'any form of wage control' was overwhelmingly carried. This instructed the Executive Council to 'submit claims for and prepare to lead action in support of a minimum wage of £50, threshold agreements, and a 35-hour week'.

REJECTION

That seemed a clear rejection of the contrick, especially as John Cousins of St. George's Hospital branch in London said: 'We must totally reject any further phase of the Social Contract'. But Fisher interpreted the motion differently. After the vote he insisted that Phase 3 was merely a voluntary restraint, not wage controls, and that the membership in reality had wanted to continue the Contract.

Although the claim for a minimum wage and thresholds was clearly outside the bounds of any Phase 3, voluntary or otherwise, Fisher got round that by saying: 'It would be a fool's paradise to say all the objectives could be achieved at one go. It was a basis on which the union could campaign'.

BLATANT

All this is a blatant refusal to take the conference decision seriously. The resolution spoke of opposition to any form of wage control, and that includes 'voluntary' control. But in his evasions and distortions perhaps Fisher was taking lessons from NUPE's 'Economic Review' which was published for the conference and stated:

'The (trade union) Movement has failed to use its strength and influence to ensure that the changes to which it is committed are carried through.' After this conference it seems clear that Alan Fisher will carry on that tradition.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

IN FOCUS

RED WEEKLY

CRISIS DEMANDS SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

HEALEY'S LATEST TALK of tax cuts in July has led to some Fleet Street journalists predicting that this might be the sweetener before a general election in October. Whatever is behind Healey's reasoning, it's clear that Labour's days are numbered.

Since taking office, Labour has suffered one political defeat after the other. The Lib-Lab pact indicated just how serious Labour's difficulties are. The pact is the closest the Labour Party has ever come in peacetime to entering a fully-fledged coalition government. The by-elections and the County Council elections marked the most stunning electoral reverses suffered by the Labour Party since 1931.

These reverses have been accompanied by an important series of working class struggles. More than a million days were lost in strikes in March 1977. This followed two years during which the numbers of days lost fell below the 1968 level.

These advances in struggle have combined with severe political defeats, like that of Labour's Scottish policy, now the Devolution proposals have been shelved. The collapse of Labour's policies on Scotland enabled the most serious underlying crisis of British imperialism — the continued economic impasse and the failure of the bourgeoisie to inflict a defeat on the working class serious enough to allow for a recomposition in the rate of profit — to take a new and sharper political form.

The crisis of Labour's economic policy is stimulated by two major factors. First, the Government claimed that a new and powerful expansion of the capitalist economy would begin in 1976. But this perspective was completely illusory, although wage controls were accepted on the strength of this reasoning. The much-heralded salvation through world economic expansion and North Sea oil will not occur. There is no serious prospect for an economic revival, despite the big decline in working class living standards.

Secondly, Labour's impasse on economic policy is compounded by the fact that despite the recent setbacks of the past two years, the working class has not suffered a qualitative defeat restoring the pre-1968 balance of class forces. And so, just at the time when the ruling class needs another round of wage controls, more than two-thirds of the total days lost in strikes in all of 1976 were equalled in the first three months of 1977 alone. These have been accompanied by a clear halt to the rightward evolution in many unions that marked the past two years.

WAGE CONTROLS

The ruling class needs Labour to impose wage controls and to inflict its policies of social spending cuts and unemployment. A Thatcher-led Tory Government cannot do the job the same way. But if Labour loses all control of the situation (especially if this is accompanied by an internal crisis) then the capitalists can turn to Thatcher. Until the third round of incomes policy is negotiated, as every major bourgeois journal showed by their editorials against Thatcher's no-confidence motion, Labour will have the support of the ruling class.

Under these conditions the Communist Party has been squeezed on both sides by the repression carried out in unions by the union leaders against their members on the one hand, and the rising struggle on the other. Its policy of 'unity of the left' amounts to refusing to break with the left bureaucrats, while trying to maintain a hold on militant workers: at the same time, 20 April was a clear example of the pressures to which the CP has succumbed. Forced to call the action under the impact of militant workers, it sabotaged the action when the day itself arrived. The relative failure of 20 April can be explained by the refusal of the CP to lead an action against wage controls which involved a head-on confrontation with the party's 'strategic allies'.

The only organised political force which has consistently supported the fight against wage controls has been the far left. The far left has organised solidarity actions and has given a response to struggles which have been in line with the thinking of a layer of workers moving into struggle. This is reflected in a significant increase in the membership of most of the far left organisations today and has been seen in the increased support for the far left in the unions.

REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

The far left has also played an important role — alongside organisations of immigrant workers — to the mounting of the offensive by the racists. In these actions, the far left is gaining a far broader and more receptive audience among the workers than in past years. Its criticisms of the Labour left and the CP no longer seem irrelevant or abstract but directly to the point.

It is because of this increased audience and greater opportunities for a far left intervention that the need for united action of the vanguard forces is even sharper than ever. And with several thousand workers seriously looking at revolutionaries for the first time, the problems of overcoming the traditional divisions and building the strongest possible revolutionary organisation is crucial.

General election talk is in the air. It is the right time for serious preparation for a united revolutionary intervention on the electoral terrain. The pressures towards unity — and the threats to the working class without it — are too

NUS Sellout ends Strouthous Struggle

After ten days in prison, Andy Strouthous, President of North East London Polytechnic and a member of the National Union of Students Executive, was freed last Friday.

The deciding factor was a meeting of NELP Students Union on Thursday which voted to support the NUS Executive's 'peace formula' and instruct Strouthous to undertake to abide by the terms of the injunction served on him by Polytechnic director George Brosan. The NUS peace formula effectively prevents Strouthous from carrying out fully his functions as President of the Union. He is now free to work in the union's offices but if he wishes to speak to students in the coffee bar or to attend a general meeting he has first to obtain the permission of the college director. Many students whilst rejecting the infringements on the Presi-

dent's activities were prepared to back the peace formula because they thought the level of national action to defend Andy was insufficient to win his release. The responsibility for the lack of such national action to defend Strouthous lies with the Broad Left leaders of NUS. President Charles Clarke could only summon up 'deep regret' when he heard of the jailing. The Executive refused to back the demonstration to win Andy's release and on the day of his appeal not one of them turned out on the picket. Students who rang NUS asking what action to take were advised not to take any and rely on NUS negotiations.

The negotiations themselves took place without NELP Students Union being consulted and only the leaders of NUS, NAFTHE and NALGO. The limited action that had taken place had already forced the NELP authorities to back down from their threat to close the college but when they were offered an easy way out by the NUS leadership they grabbed the chance eagerly. Minority members of the NUS Executive from NOISS and the Socialist Students Alliance criticised the actions of the Executive at their meeting last weekend. As Colin Talbot, an SSA member of the Executive, told *Red Weekly*, 'An NUS leadership that refuses to mount a defence campaign for a jailed member of the Executive is one that has to be fought against and removed'.

PAUL BROOKE

* A major feature of the Bristol campaign in defence of Andy Strouthous was the widespread support for the students won from the local labour movement, including Labour MPs and the shop stewards committee of Rolls Royce. Despite the sentences being announced just the previous day, 1,000 students turned out for the demonstration against victimisations last Wednesday. The Socialist Students Alliance made a strong intervention, their slogan of 'freeze the fees, stop the cuts, smash the Social Contract' being taken up by large numbers of demonstrators. The widespread dissatisfaction with the NUS Executive's role in both the fees campaign and in its defence of victimised students was expressed by the 100 students who attended an open meeting after the demo with speakers from the SSA and the Militant grouping.

FIGHT ORGANISED AGAINST SCHOOL CLOSURE

By Betty Hunter
NUT Rep. Lavender Hill School
President, Wandsworth NUT

THE INNER LONDON Education Authority is one of the few local government bodies still controlled by Labour. But the teachers at Lavender Hill School London could be forgiven for thinking differently. For the ILEA have recently revealed that they intend to close the school. They point to the drop in school population and, as Lavender Hill is the smallest secondary school in Wandsworth, say it has to be chopped. But the 300 strong meeting of teachers and parents at Lavender Hill which met last week to protest against the closure have different ideas. They point to the fact that until the recent cuts frenzy the ILEA had every intention of using the drop in school population to improve the teacher/pupil ratio. They argue that this is the policy which should be adopted for Lavender Hill. Already the petition to keep the school open has attracted over 4,000 signatures and the 50 strong campaign committee of teachers, pupils and parents is attempting to establish links with the local trades council and the Weir Hospital in South London, also faced with closure as a result of the cuts. The next event in the campaign is a demonstration from the school on 27 May, ending up with a lobby of the local Labour MP, Douglas Jay. But while fighting for our own school the

be won unless it is part of more general campaign in London to change ILEA cuts policy. Central to that policy is the compulsory teacher transfer of teachers from school to school. This tactic by the ILEA softens up the teaching force for further massive cuts. So a simple decision to keep Lavender Hill open would only delay matters. Instead the stopping of the 'transfer game' must be linked to the fight against closures. A meeting for all London teachers to discuss such a plan of action has been called by Lavender Hill on Tuesday 31 May 6.30pm Conway Hall, Rad Lion Square. Stop them closing our schools. Be there. * An open conference for members of the NUT is to be held in Birmingham on 2 July. The conference hopes to bring together all NUT members who want to discuss and organise ways to broaden the campaign against cuts and unemployment, and to fight for a salaries claim designed to improve teachers' living standards. The conference will be organized around the teachers who are fighting back — those invited to speak include Oxford, Birmingham, Stockport, Oldham, Avon and Hereford. The initiative for the conference has come from an organising committee set up at a hundred strong meeting of delegates at the recent NUT annual conference. All NUT local associations should be approached for sponsorship. More details from Con-

EQUAL PAY STRIKE IN FIFTH WEEK

Support grows for Laird Portch workers

Last week there were about 400 workers in East Kilbride who gave more than a passing glance to the financial pages of the daily paper. These were the strikers at Laird Portch, now out for five weeks to win equal pay.

Their management — who 'can't afford equal pay' — are part of the Coates Paton textile giant. It was the annual returns of Coates Paton which caught their attention — from £36 million to £76 million. This is also the multi-national firm which has South African investment and controls large sections of the British knitwear industry including Jaeger and Ladybird.

The Financial Editor of the Scotsman had something to say about the profits. He concluded that 'the omens are good'. The women on the 24-hour picket line think otherwise. The 'good omens' they are interested in are quite different. They are concerned about the demand they raised for equal pay as far back as December 1975. Since then they have had nothing but broken promises from management about closing the enormous gap between skilled women's rates of pay and that of the lowest, unskilled men's rate. At the

factory, male workers are paid £11 over the minimum rate while women receive £1 above it each week.

The latest moves of management make full use of the loopholes and inadequacies of the Equal Pay legislation. Because men and women do different jobs in the factory, no direct comparison can be made as in the Act. The bosses refuse to implement a job evaluation scheme — an option in the Act — which would place the women in a more skilled section of work, something which would support their claim for at least equal pay with the men.

The Company makes no attempt to deny that equal pay does not exist. In a letter sent out to every striker on Wednesday 18 May, management states that while: '... it is true that there are one or two male workers whose pay is £8 to £10 per week above the basic rates for female operatives... these men have no opportunity to earn piece work or bonus, and their actual

pay is below the earnings of women.'

The false comparison of basic rates and overall earnings is compounded by the misleading assertion that the claim for equal pay cannot be carried out under the current pay policy. The letter continues: 'The company has recently had lengthy discussions with equal pay experts from the Department of Employment. It is now absolutely clear to us that we cannot possibly pay any further increases under the pay policy. Equally, it would be impossible to give equal pay increase to hundreds of women simply by comparing their jobs with one or two individual men.'

The strikers are particularly vulnerable to this kind of attack by management because of the continuing failure of the Government to ensure that every worker is familiar with the terms of the legislation. The real reason management will not concede is that

their cosy relations with tailor workers' union officials have enabled the whole knitwear industry to employ sweatshop female labour for years.

The rules of the NUTGW help this cosy relationship along. They state that before a strike is declared official, a two thirds majority of the workforce must be balloted while work is still going on in the factory. But where there are large stockpiles of cut cloth — as there are in East Kilbride — this procedure would have given the management time to shift the stock and prepare for a long dispute. As it is, the main reason for a 24-hour picket is to stop movement of goods.

With both the bosses and the union leaders to fight against, support is urgently needed if the strike is to be successful. Write to: Strike Committee, c/o Ellen Nicklin, 153 Leeward Circle, East Kilbride.

* John Howard, one of the divisional full-timers for the garment workers union who is backing the Laird Portch strikers, informed a mass meeting of workers on Monday that the tide

was turning in the dispute as the support rolled in. He stated that the decision of management to send out individual letters to the strikers was an indication that they were beginning to feel the pinch. The meeting decided upon a mass meeting on Saturday at the Town Hall. Local MPs will be invited to join Jimmy Milne, Secretary of the Scottish TUC, on the platform. The meeting will hear the results of two meetings scheduled this week. The Department of Employment will be

supporting the strikers — first, through the strike committee, and secondly, the management. Solidarity and assistance is being vigorously organised throughout Glasgow by the women's movement, the SWP and the SSL. Over £100 was collected on the weekend through the organisation of pickets of the firm's outlets, including Jaegers and Country Casuals. This is the kind of solidarity that needs to be taken up throughout the country. JENNY BUCHANAN

Scottish militants plan conference

WORKERS from Laird Portch, Grunwicks, Port Talbot and Trust Houses Forte have been invited to attend a Scottish Conference of the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement. The conference, which will be held in June, was decided on by the Scottish Committee of the CDLM last Saturday.

The Conference on 'Wage Control and Labour Movement Democracy' will be addressed by Alan Thornett, CDLM chairperson and leading militant at the Cowley car plants, Rowland Sheret of Stirling and District Trades Council and John Wyles, chairperson of Stirling Labour Party.

Sponsors for the conference already include the Central Scotland Federation of

Trades Councils, Stirling and District Trades Council and branch officers and stewards from the main public sector unions as well as the Transport and General Workers Union and the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers.

Support from political organisations has come from Labour Party activists, the Socialist Workers Party in Stirling and the Scottish Socialist League.

* Conference on 'Wages Control and Labour Movement Democracy', Saturday 25 June, 10.15am, Cowane Centre, Cowane Street, Stirling. All details, credentials and sponsorship forms from Stewart MacLennan, 18 Carrington St, Glasgow. Phone 041-332 8728

THE RIGHT TO ABORTION

Bolton boots out Benyon Bill

BOLTON Community Health Council voted by 9 to 5 against the Benyon anti-abortion Bill. The decision was taken following a large public meeting called by the CHC where the 150-strong audience was almost evenly divided between pro-choice forces and anti-abortionists of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child.

Activists from the National Abortion Campaign attended the meeting in force, with leaflets, petitions, and with banners flying outside the building.

SPUC's views were represented by lawyer Roger Baldwin, a Tory parliamentary candidate whose great legal expertise enabled him to draw the conclusions that the Bill was irrelevant, especially the clauses which give increased police access to medical files.

Consultant gynaecologist Mr. Stevenson put his case against the Bill. Of 260 abortion cases referred to the local hospital, 230 were agreed to, yet a full 170 women were forced to go to charitable clinics.

Stevenson also explained that all the gynaecologists in Manchester have met to discuss the

Bill. They had come out against it. He also reported on a survey carried out by a Bolton psychiatrist that indicated that none of the women interviewed regretted having an abortion.

But Stevenson himself found abortions a 'tedious and boring' procedure and preferred 'more interesting' work. And he said police already access to medical records.

Sheila Abdulla from Liverpool British Pregnancy Advisory Service put the case for local CHCs to take their responsibility in pressing for day-care abortion facilities. Her concern for women's interests were a far cry from SPUC's Frances Morris.

Morris, 'mother of nine', appealed to the audience with assurances that 'God cares for all the quarter of a million little sparrows', referring to abortions carried out. But questioned whether this care extended to hanging, SPUC's rapturous applause indicated that neither those to be hanged, nor women faced with unwanted pregnancies can expect much mercy from the God of SPUC supporters. SUE JESSUP



The post-natal Bryant Ward of the Weir hospital.

Weir Hospital Occupied!

A MASS MEETING of workers at the Weir Hospital, Wandsworth, voted to occupy their hospital to prevent its closure. The Wandsworth and East Merton Area Health Authority [AHA] intends to turn this specially equipped maternity hospital into an office block.

The bureaucrats of the AHA have already moved in, filling purpose-built wards with desks and filing cabinets. At least this gives the workers at the Weir the dubious advantage of seeing at first hand there the 'experts' contempt for hospital workers as well as the cynical disregard for the effects of their schemes and plans on the Health Service.

The insane logic of the AHA's plans to close the Weir has not escaped even Charles M. Flood, the consultant for the hospital. Writing from Harley Street to the AHA he says:

'The Weir Maternity Hospital at the moment is structurally the best Maternity Unit in the whole Area... Over the last ten years or so sums totalling in the region of £200,000 have been spent, first on the massive reconstruction of the Labour Ward Unit and the building of the Ante-Natal Ward, followed by a complete upgrading of the entire hospital.

Nowhere in the Consultative Document is it stated that the £200,000 of capital expenditure will be completely written off if the Weir is closed as a Maternity Unit and converted to offices, because much of the conversion work, such as purpose-built First Stage Rooms, Labour Wards, showers and bidets cannot be used by the administrative staff!

I note from the Consultative Document that it is eventually proposed to build a Maternity Unit at St. George's Hospital, Tooting, of 84 beds. If my memory serves me correctly the original cost for this Unit was to be £1.75 million, which at present day prices is probably £1.25 million, probably rising every month.

It seems a little foolish to me to write off a purpose built Obstetrics Unit of 76 beds and £200,000 of capital expenditure to replace it in the short term with possibly 50 beds and in the long term 84 beds at the cost of at least a further £2m.

Flood is not telling the whole story of the attempted closure of the Weir. The AHA hope to make a saving in expenditure by using the hospital as offices. It is this attempt to save money which is the real motive behind the attack on the hospital; in other words it is part and parcel of the whole cuts strategy.

FAVOUR

Charles Flood doesn't detail this point as he himself is in favour of such cuts.

Rather than Harley Street consultants it is the nurses, technicians and ancillary workers who are taking action to defend the health service for working people. The Weir occupation is the third in London in the last six months. At the EGA and the Hounslow

Hospital in West London the occupations are still solid.

At the Weir the management has tried to intimidate sections of the staff. Last week the kitchen staff were told that they would no longer receive any bonus payments and as soon as the occupation was announced the District Administrator Mr. Peter Floode (no relation) threatened that all the workers would not get paid at

all. The management has since backed down but it is clear that they will try any number of ways to bully, split and demoralise the Weir staff to defeat their stand against the cuts.

The workers themselves have made a good start to their fight back. A 24-hour picket has been organised and they have banned the AHA staff from the hospital canteen. On 1 June they are striking to lobby the AHA meeting at St. John's Hospital, St. John's Hill, SW11 at 3.30pm to demand that the AHA scrap its plans to close the Weir.



The Jewel Ward at the Weir — formerly the same size and shape as Bryant Ward — has been converted into offices for the administration.

Black Country Rally

NO SURPRISE that the National Abortion Campaign has chosen Birmingham as the place for its next major demonstration on 28 October. In the Birmingham and Black Country areas, the 1967 Abortion Act has never been implemented. The number of abortions performed on the NHS is a mere 13 per cent of the yearly total. Obstructive local consultants and GPs see to it that if women want abortions they are going to have to pay for it!

All of these points were made in a highly successful

hampton earlier this month. Over 60 people in attendance made this meeting the first of its kind in the traditionally very backward Black Country.

Renee Short — speaking on the parliamentary progress of Benyon's Bill — was joined on the platform by Dr. Berry Beaumont of the NAC. Beaumont's sharp criticisms of Labour's appalling record on abortion and her calls for women to organise their own struggles — to force the labour movement into regarding abortion as a class issue — met with a ready response from the meeting.

ASTMS "Alternative" strategy bites the dust

'DON'T PROTECT ME PLEASE' — that was Clive Jenkin's plea to Len Weels, President of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs as he was heckled in the union's Eastbourne conference debate on the Bullock Report.

Jenkins, general secretary of the union, is celebrating 30 years service with the union as an official. He must have wondered who let his members gate-crash the party as they threw out two major planks of his 'alternative economic strategy'.

Conference also overwhelmingly passed a motion calling for an immediate return to free collective bargaining.

Jenkins' battering by delegates started on Saturday when by a three to two majority delegates voted down a resolution supporting the 'basic principle' of the Bullock report in favour of a motion moved by Wakefield delegates calling for workers' control.

But in an about-turn on Sunday delegates supported the appeals of the more conservative insurance members in favour of the policy that the union should not support any proposals to nationalise the finance industry unless members in that industry approved. The resolution was carried by 502 to 346 votes.

The Executive made sure that the motion passed by caving in to the insurance and banking delegates who referred several times to potential splits in the union. ASTMS leaders responded with an ambiguous summing up to the debate.

Many delegates saw this as the principle factor in the union not only losing its past policy in favour of the principle of nationalisation, but also appearing to concede the right of majority decision making in the union.

The massive endorsement of the

Executive's policy for an end to incomes policy was expected. But due to the arrangement of the agenda, delegates were unable to discuss the policies for which to press under free collective bargaining.

One casualty was the policy of Edinburgh insurance which called for a minimum wage of £50 a week linked to the cost of living index and a 35-hour week.

In an earlier debate the Executive was attacked for their failure to mount more than a verbal offensive against pay restraint.

In reply to a delegate from Smiths Industries, who had been locked out over a claim for shift allowances and refused support from the Executive, Clive Jenkins stated that 'we are not kamikaze pilots'.

So of course Clive gave no indication of how he would sink Phase 3 if it was introduced.

THE EXTENSION of the debate on incomes policy denied delegates the opportunity to discuss the witch-hunt that has been waged against opposition in the union to the campaign to 'assist' free speech, by 'endangering' the existence of Socialist Worker.

As part of this campaign 27 full time officials of the union were referred to an investigating committee for speaking out.

Two will face charges alongside lay-members for the 'crime' of distributing appeal sheets against the victimisation of the socialist press.

Fred Jarvis - in a class of his own

FRED JARVIS, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers has never been a teacher. For which generations of schoolkids can be duly grateful.

It would not have been very pleasant to sit in a classroom presided over by Mr. Jarvis, for he is very strong on — almost obsessed by — discipline. He does not like those who break his rules, he gets very angry if anyone challenges his authority.

In the past he has suspended teachers at Little Ilford School, London who dared to take strike action against the cuts without

getting his approval. Now he has turned his attention to the campaign within the NUT to defend the teachers of William Tyndale who have been suspended from their jobs by the local education authority for taking strike action.

With cuts in education continuing, with thousands of teachers on the dole, Jarvis has found time to circulate a letter to a group of teachers who signed a circular calling for strike action on 25 May in defence of the Tyndale teachers.

The letter reminds those to whom it is addressed of Rule 8 of the union which prohibits unofficial strike action. It argues

that the suggested 25 May action is in breach of this rule and 'in defiance of a decision of the Executive of the Union'.

Jarvis continues, 'I must therefore instruct you forthwith to withdraw your support for the statement'. He demands a reply by 19 May and continues, 'I also instruct you to take steps to advise those to whom the statement has been circulated of your action.'

Finally Jarvis talks of the 'extreme seriousness of the action you have taken', and encloses Appendix V of the rule book which threatens expulsion from the NUT of anyone who breaks Rule 8.

Trade union bureaucrats never

like unofficial strike action. Recently, as with the Leyland tool-room strike, union leaderships have even sanctioned the breaking of such strikes. But only very rarely does a general secretary threaten expulsion from the union for simply calling for unofficial action. But this is the depths to which Fred Jarvis has now sunk; and this on the Tyndale issue which raises the whole right to strike officially or unofficially, in the first place.

With union leaders like that, the Tories now in control of local education authorities could feel that they can sleep peacefully at night.



Tyndale teachers answer the call by London NUPE for action against the cuts on 11 May.

THF Night Out sell out

THE FIVE-MONTH strike at the Randolph Hotel Oxford and the three-month strike at the Night Out Club in Birmingham have finally been sold out by the bureaucrats of the Transport and General Workers Union.

As a result both strikes, which were over victimisation of union members, have been defeated.

Last Tuesday TGWU officials said they would withdraw official backing for the dispute if the strikers did not accept the terms of the Trust Houses Forte management. These terms meant the strikers lost their jobs with the payment of 'compensation' varying from £300 to £500. £300 is just one per cent of the money THF recently spent on full page advertisements in the national press

attacking the strikers.

In Birmingham the settlement means that the waitress victimised for union activity will not be reinstated.

The TGWU's insistence that the strikers accept these derisory terms is not surprising considering the role the union officials have played throughout the dispute.

They did nothing to mobilise backing, and it was left to the strikers themselves to organise backing, money and other forms of support.

In doing this they were faced with a THF management which did everything in their power to smash the strikes — from their full page ads to enlisting the help of the right-wing 'National Association for Freedom'.

In the face of all this the TGWU did nothing except finally sell out.

Midlands round-up

PRODUCTION WORKERS AT Southalls sanitary towel factory in Birmingham have earned the distinction of being sold out by the leadership of two different unions within the space of weeks.

They left USDAW the shopworkers union, to join the transport workers' union, led up with failure of union officials to protect their interests. But they haven't fared any better. Branch meetings were never called in USDAW. Union representatives were not elected. And officials only showed their faces at the factory once they were afraid of losing the union dues from the workers when the workers finally struck for recognition of the union of their choice.

Three hundred workers signed up for the TGWU placing great hopes in Alan Law, a central figure in the Trust Houses Forte dispute. But these hopes have now been dashed. Transport union leaders have cooked up a deal with USDAW officials. They have agreed that drivers and distribution workers — mainly white workers — can join the TGWU. But the production

workers — mainly Asians — have been chucked out of the TGWU and forced to remain in USDAW.

Discouraged by the failure of the union leaderships to respect their democratic right to choose the union they feel can best represent their interests, some of the workers began to discuss forming their own trade union. Militants in the Asian Socialist League have successfully argued against this — calling rather for a fight in USDAW against the leadership.

* 250 MILITANTS in the AUEW found themselves locked out by the Albion Bottle Company when returning to work the day following their one-day protest strike against the Social Contract on 20 April.

The District Secretary of the union, Bert Berion joined in with management's charges that the action was 'politically motivated'. He denounced the strikers to the press. Since then a picket has been mounted at the factory to demand the reinstatement of the workers.

B'ham AUEW: 1300 vote against Con-trick

LARRY CONNOLLY — Broad Left candidate for Birmingham East District Secretary of the engineering union — polled 1,300 votes on a programme of clear opposition to the Social Contract. But Ken Cure, current right wing Secretary, was returned by a vote of 4,300 of the 7,300 votes cast. The responsibility for Cure's large vote must be placed at the door of the Communist Party.

Connolly's vote was not as high as his supporters had hoped. But the election campaign did make some gains. It received considerable support from a number of factories — especially from Lucas plants. And it was made clear that Connolly was a different sort of candidate to the usual left opportunist dished up by the Broad Left. He supported a platform in the interests of the labour movement.

The only reason there was no breakthrough in the campaign was the failure of the Communist Party to aid the campaign. The CP — always ready to charge the left with sectarianism — showed the true nature of

their own sectarianism. They forced no less than three different votes in Broad Left meetings for their own candidate, Terry Bradley. They lost each time.

In the face of this failure, the CP practically boycotted the election. They refused to turn up to meetings. And they failed to take any initiatives to support the campaign. Indeed, their only contribution was to object to including the demand for the sliding scale of wages in the election address.

The CP opposes the Social Contract on paper. They even voted against it at the AUEW National Committee. But at every decisive turn in the struggle against Phase 2 they have sided with the right wing. During the Leyland toolmakers strike the CP voted on the executive committee of the AUEW to allow British Leyland to sack the striking toolmakers. And in Connolly's election campaign, the sabotage of the CP made its impact in the votes cast for the right wing.

JOHN GRAHAM (Birmingham AUEW)

Taxing time for wage curbs

TAX OFFICERS have rejected a further phase of Healey's 'tax concessions and wage-curbs' con-trick — and they should know!

Meeting at Peebles last week, delegates of the Inland Revenue Staff Federation defied the advice of their Executive in voting down the extension of the Social Contract. This vote along with the CPSA and SCPS has now committed the majority of civil servants against Phase 3.

The only organised opposition to the right-wing Executive came from Revenue Rank and File group through their newspaper

and daily bulletins.

The number of defeats suffered by the Executive prompted general secretary Tony Christopher to issue a statement attacking Revenue Rank and File as a 'front' of the Socialist Workers Party and hinting at disciplinary action.

In their reply, the Rank and File group appealed to delegates not to allow Christopher to start a witch-hunt and instead campaign to change IRSF rules to permit publication and exchange of views within the union.

DAVE CARTER

Bureaucrats backpedal on Grunwicks

GOVERNMENT Ministers Williams, Howell and Mulley — all sponsored by the Grunwick strikers' union, APEX — joined their picket line last week to proudly proclaim their solidarity, which amounted to a magnificent 30 minutes after 40 weeks' bitter struggle.

While workers at Kodak and Ilford are preventing supplies from these film companies getting through to Grunwick, the Union of Post Office Workers — which holds the key to bringing the scab outfit to an immediate halt — waits patiently for a ruling from the House of Lords.

Attempts at the UPW conference to reimpose

the ban and defy the law were brushed aside by the leaders who defer to the same judicial authority which places the police at the disposal of the bosses.

Yet the 70 UPW delegates who attended a Grunwick fringe meeting at the conference, and the 1,500 demonstrators who joined a mass picket of the firm at the beginning of the month show the determination within the labour movement to win this struggle for basic union rights.

Donations and details of pickets: Brant Trades and Labour Hall, 375 Willesden High Road, London NW10.



Ministers Howell (left), Williams and Mulley put in a token appearance on the Grunwick picket line.

THE STRUGG

GREENWICH OCCUPATION - NOTHING TO LOSE

STRIKERS from the occupied Reinforced Steel Services factory in Greenwich, south east London, lobbied public employees in conference in Brighton last Monday.

STEVE POTTER reports

The occupiers have every reason to bethere. Their dispute started when the British Steel Corporation management of the factory sacked six workers and suspended seven the day after the plant had come out in support of the demonstration called by the National Union of Public Employees in south east London on 11 May.

Paul Lutener, one of the six sacked and the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation works representative in the factory, told *Red Weekly* of the support which had already come from Greenwich District NUPE and workers at the local Brooke Hospital.

In Brighton they were asking NUPE delegates for support of their lobby of BSC headquarters this Wednesday, for money, and to put pressure on their leadership to back the occupation.

The Greenwich occupiers have nothing to lose in fighting for the right to strike. It is as clear as day to all militants like Peter Suret, ISTC branch chairperson in the plant, that to lose the dispute would open up the way

find new jobs.

Only after the workers had occupied and documents come into their possession detailing a move to a much smaller site in Enfield were they fully aware of the management's double dealing.

Peter Suret also told journa-



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Red Weekly)

lists of what he called 'the element of land speculation in the move'. The British Steel Corporation originally owned the land on which both the RDL and RSS plants stand. This land was transferred free to the two subsidiaries who will now chalk

which management used public money to obtain the services of the right-wing Economic League in hiring and firing workers. They had also used the Special Branch to cross-check their information.

Paul Lutener and Mike Duffin

were their targets. Paul and Mike were suspected by the management of engaging in industrial sabotage — a tactic which as Paul pointed out is completely alien to trade unionism — especially militant trade unionism.

This was how the 'experts' of the BSC put together their case — as revealed in the documents headed 'Greenwich Works — Sabotage'. A memo from Roebuck, the works manager, to section heads in BSC says, by way of introduction:

'It should be noted that no proof exists whatsoever against any of the Greenwich employees at all connected with the following reports.'

Then, astoundingly:

'It is our considered opinion that either Duffin by himself or he and Lutener are responsible for the sabotage...'

This conclusion is presumably based on the very accurate information which they have obtained, not from the Economic League, who were unable



once stood bail for someone who was arrested at a demonstration.

The overwhelming case that has been produced by the workers in the plant against management's tissue of lies and deception goes some way to explaining the solidarity in the plant.

Apart from shop floor workers, staff at the plant have played a full role in the occupation, especially five women ISTC members.

The same cannot be said of their union. Telegrams galore have been sent to the plant by ISTC officials — all instructing the workers to return to work. As in the Port Talbot dispute strike-breaking not strike-leading is the method of the ISTC general secretary and his fellow bureaucrats.

This was another aspect of the documents, because they took the lid off the whole sordid collaboration between RSS and the union.

In the safety strike, for example, Mr. Banbury of the ISTC telephoned RSS management on 13 January and said to them that they should 'stick to their guns' and that the workforce should be left 'to sweat it out'.

This was just one example of a now familiar pattern of the union full-timers working hand in glove with management to



Photo: ANDREW WARD (Report)

break the strike.

Some workers in the plant were already discussing the possibility of a badly needed campaign for members to take control over their own union, linking up with similar moves in Clydeside.

The support which they received almost immediately from sister plants in the reinforcing section of BSC gives grounds for optimism, as does the support which the electricians

of Port Talbot have received wherever they have taken the case.

The Greenwich workers know that they risk having everything thrown at them which the Special Branch, the Economic League, the BSC and the union bosses can dredge up. They are ready. Now they need



the support.

* Resolutions, money and speakers: Occupation Committee, c/o Ron Mitchell, 2 Kentmere Road, London SE1

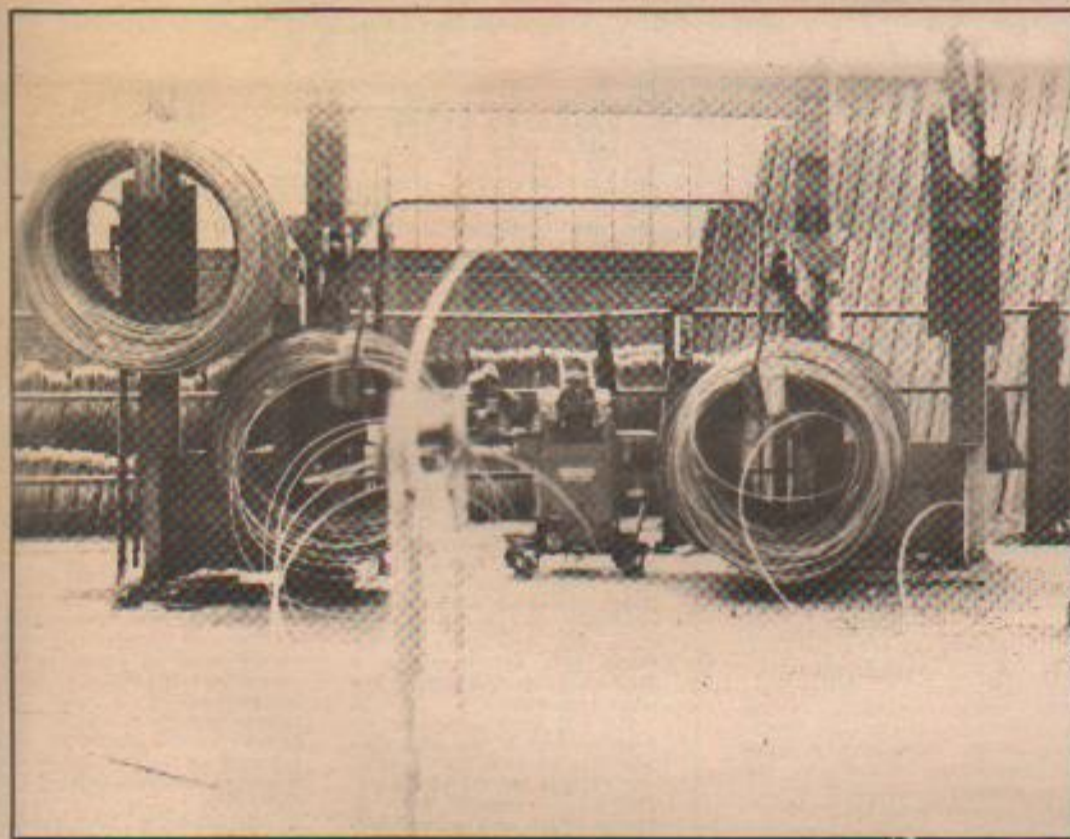


Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Red Weekly)

to the factory being closed and all the workers in their plants losing their jobs.

He told a press conference in the factory last week of the wave of closures in the surrounding area. Redpath Dorman Long, also owned by the BSC and on an adjacent site to the RSS factory is due to close on the 22nd of this month. The giant synthetic gas processing plant also on the same industrial estate is due to make 3,000 redundant before April next year.

The first that workers in the plant knew of the proposed closure was on 21 January this year, the day that they returned from a successful strike against the appalling safety conditions in the factory. Since then the RSS bosses have stonewalled and refused further information, hoping that the climate of uncertainty would encourage workers to leave the plant and

up a healthy profit for them as part and parcel of the move. Of course it matters little to the BSC that this clever accounting fiddle will add more human statistics to the 43 per cent of jobs that this area has suffered in the last ten years.

High rates was another reason given by RSS bosses for the necessity to close the three-year-old plant. They consistently refused to listen to the findings of the workers in the plant who had told them that their estimate of the rates was nearly double the real amount they had to pay. The union leadership exposed the little fact that in common with many other big concerns, RSS had used the rates appeal system to avoid paying for three years!

Among the documents in the strikers' possession were those reported in last week's issue of *Red Weekly* detailing the margin

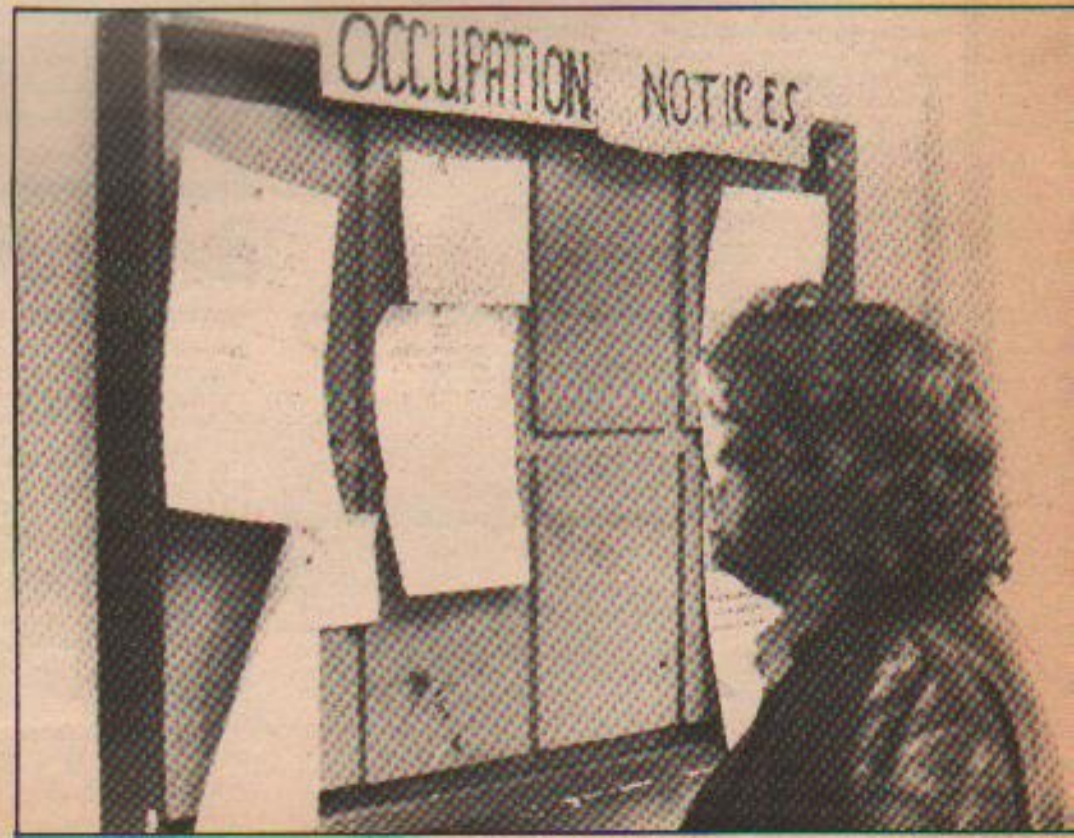
to oblige this time, but from the Special Branch who informed Roebuck that Lutener was 'an active member of the National Socialist Front Movement (sic)' presumably a reference to the International Socialists.

This information is followed by the observation that the Special Branch have 'four complaints' on their file against Paul of:

1. Distributing National Socialist (sic) literature.
2. Disturbing the peace during demonstrations.
- 3 Taking part in illegal demonstrations.

The fourth is omitted, perhaps because they couldn't think another one up or because the Special Branch can't count; **for Paul has never ever been arrested, charged or convicted at any time by anybody for anything!**

What might have got up the collective police nostrils is that he



LES IN STEEL

PORT TALBOT

Steel and union bosses sabotage strikers

The 560 electricians on strike at the Port Talbot steel works in South Wales have had the book thrown at them over the last weeks.

Local officials of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (incredibly there are 28 separate branches of the ISTC at the works) approached the craft unions for a joint approach to the British Steel Corporation to reopen the works without the electricians.

Wisely, the craft unions rejected the call, but nonetheless the ISTC went on to approach Frank Chapple, general secretary of the electricians union, who has refused to recognise the strike, and the BSC to seek their approval.

The corporation must take some action to bring people back to their senses', said Bill Sirs, General Secretary of the ISTC. And to make it perfectly clear that he did not mean the action from the BSC should be to meet the strikers' claim he added that he hoped the electricians 'would have the courage to go back'.

* The British Steel Corporation itself issued a statement that: 'the recently announced £835m

development for the works had been postponed due to the strike'.

Of course, any stoppage at the works would delay the development programme, but the BSC's hollow statement was used by local political pimps to get on the strike-breaking bandwagon.

* The TUC Steel Committee, suitably encouraged by Bill Sirs (again) also issued a strongly worded warning to go back to work. The strikers according to these bureaucrats were not 'heroes' and banged out the same pro-boss warning that there would be repercussions throughout the industry if the BSC were to grant their claim. * Local media contributed their penny-worth featuring the thousands of tonnes of steel coil being imported from Europe to break the strike. (BSC have reputedly paid out over £40m for these imports).

One reporter produced a major article on the effects on the local community — or to be



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

more precise local businesses.

This blitz of strike-breaking propaganda has not been without effect on the strikers. Last week the strikers voted to invite Bernard 'Back-Stabber' Clarke, the local EETPU official who withdrew all union support on the first day of the strike, to address a mass meeting this Wednesday.

But the stewards committee

has remained remarkably strong in the face of the universal hostility they have encountered from the union and BSC bosses. They have conducted the strike in an openly democratic way. Given that there has not been a strike of electricians in the plant since the early 60s, they have put forward inventive and bold tactics.

The same mass meeting which

voted to hear Clarke also accepted a proposal for flying pickets of local steel works.

So this week coachloads of strikers were scheduled to picket the massive Llanwern plant near Newport, and the Trostre and Velindre works, west of Swansea.

These aggressive tactics are the only way that the strike can remain solid. The active, if

belated, participation of more and more strikers is the best way of uniting the strike.

If this strike is defeated it will be a major step backward for all steel workers and those who have everything to lose by the continuation of the Social Contract policies of this Government — and that means every worker.

Steelworkers and Democracy

STRIKE SHY — that is the only way you can describe the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation (formerly BISAKTA), the union to which the Greenwich steel workers belong.

Until the 1970's the union had been involved in no official strike of any significance since the 1926 General Strike.

Ever since its formation as BISAKTA in 1919, through the fusion of 14 or so craft unions, the union has been on the extreme right wing of the labour movement. One of their two sponsored MPs was right-winger Eddie Griffiths, MP for Sheffield Brightside before he was thrown out by his constituency party and replaced by

Joan Maynard.

The last General Secretary of the union, Dai Davies, was made Sir Dai by labour leader Ted Heath for 'services to trade unionism'. And today's general secretary, Bill Sirs, is described as the 'fairest union leader of them all' by the workers' friend — the Daily Mail.

The reasons for the backwardness of the ISTC lie in the nature of the steel industry itself — particularly the seniority system. There is no common rate of pay in the steel industry. Workers rise to more responsible jobs through experience, and every job has its own rate.

This hierarchy in the workplace is carried through into the union structure, where branches based on shops or work processes leads to branch officials tending to be the more

'senior' workers.

As a consequence the right wing union leaders have always relied upon the privileges of the senior men to maintain their base in the union — this and the lack of democracy in the union. One of the favourite methods of the union leadership for stifling any opposition to its policies is the expulsion of members and whole branches from the union. Only the executive Council can sanction a stoppage of work, and it has the power to close or suspend any branch where it feels it 'necessary or expedient in the interests of the Confederation'.

And what of the 'new look' which Bill Sirs has brought the union — for the first time in the ISTC's history an annual conference has been won, but

delegates are on the basis of one per 1,000 members.

Sirs is quite happy to threaten unofficial strikers under the same rules through which his predecessors expelled members. And Sirs is quite intent on continuing the defence of the Social Contract which is attacking his members' standards.

The only way any 'new look' will be given to the ISTC is through a campaign for democratic control of the union by the membership, and a fight against Sirs and Co's policies of collaboration.

The BSC will strive to keep the steel unions as they are — collaborating with the bosses. The Greenwich occupation has shown that the Special Branch and Economic League are only too willing to help them out.

What is the Economic League?

LURKING in the shadows of the Reinforced Steel Services dispute is a mysterious organisation which sees itself as crusading for its own pernicious view of society. Its members distribute hundreds of thousands of factory leaflets but most of their activities, like those of their backers, are carried out in utmost secrecy.

No, not 'Trotskyists' but an organisation whose aim is the preservation of all the worst aspects of society as we know it — the Economic League.

Set up in 1919, its aim is to 'actively oppose all subversive forces — whatever their origin and inspiration — that seek to undermine the security of Britain in general and British indus-

try in particular'. One side of that is its factory leafletting and its courses for supervisory staff.

But far more sinister is the undercover information it provides for employers. One personnel officer who has attended Economic League courses told me how he was given details about the politics of the Trotskyist 'wreckers', based upon copies of Red Weekly and Socialist Worker.

The Labour Research Department reports how a publication of the Economic League, entitled Industrial Subversion, Background to the Future, claims to tell all about organisations like the Institute for Workers Control, the National Confederation of Claimants' Unions and the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade

Unions, as well as the Communist Party and the far left.

Of course this in itself is harmless and the League seems to gain a lot of its kudos with employers from 'exposing' organisations which display their politics quite openly. It is also curious that all its reports seem to be dedicated to proving how ineffective the 'subversives' are — which begs the question why the League should study them in the first place.

But the central part of the League's work — and the reason why big business backs it to the tune of £400,000 a year — is providing blacklists to the employers. The information it supplied to Reinforced Steel Services is a typical example of a practice which has gone on for years in most major indus-

tries.

Particularly well known cases are the building and car industries. Small wonder then, that companies like British Insulated Cables and British Leyland should have been among the League's financial backers. The general practice is to give full details of the political and trade union background of a job applicant.

Most interesting is the inaccuracy of the League's information. Workers in occupation at the Strachan's vehicle body plant in 1974 discovered that one applicant had been turned down on information from the Economic League because he had been a Communist Party election candidate and had written for the Morning Star. Neither piece of information was true.

Who is behind the Eco-

omic League? The simple answer is big business, but the favourite financiers seem to be the banks and insurance companies. However, recent figures from the Labour Research Department show that apart from donations from companies like Sun Alliance (directors include Tory MPs Hugh Fraser and Sir Geoffrey Howe) there are also payments from industrial firms like United Biscuits (James Prior MP) and Cadbury Schweppes.

The directorships of the Economic League council members read like a Who's Who of British Industry: Shell, Burtons, Harland and Wolff, Babcock and Wilcox, Rugby Portland Cement, Granada, Smith's Food, Allied Breweries, British Sugar Corporation and so on.

Perhaps most interesting is the fact that there are contributions from a number of nationalised industries or industries with a high Government stake — such as Shell, British Leyland and some of the components of the new aerospace industry.

And workers at Reinforced Steel Services and Port Talbot might consider this point: that Sir David Baran, a President of the Economic League, is a member of the board of the British Steel Corporation. CHRIS O'BRIEN

*Chris O'Brien has done a detailed investigation into the political activities of some of the Economic League's main financial backers. His report will appear in an early issue of Socialist Challenge

MAY 28 a socialist festival of music

Carol Grimes - Red Square - Leon Robinson
Peoples Liberation Music - Frankie Armstrong
Henry Cow - Red Balun - Music By Light
London Musicians Collective - Donald Mayne
Hackney & Islington Music Workshop - Director
Lol Cabel - Gerry Fitzgerald - Bicycle Theatre
Jack Wainwright - Saxons Katt - Pam Nestor
Brazil Musicians Co-operative - Tim Soutter
Women's Theatre Group - Vic DeMone

SOCIALIST CHALLENGE - 'Voting with my cheque-book'

I ENCLOSE a subscription form for Socialist Challenge. After twelve years activity on the left in three groups, and as a militant in trade union branches and my student union, I feel it is time that those like myself who are isolated and disoriented by the continuous splits on the far left called for a reversal of the process.

I am voting with my cheque book, since you said you could meet your fund with £1 donation from every reader. I enclose a donation for that amount.

The last time I was in a left group I remember going to sell our paper outside a big Labour Party meeting on the Common Market. There were so many literature sellers outside the meeting that delegates had difficulty getting through the crowd to the door.

In the past I had been very good at selling literature - up to 50 or even 100 papers a night. This time no effort of my imagination could create a distinctive slogan or

selling line that marked my paper out from that of the others.

I sold two papers - one to an IS [SWP] comrade and one to an IMG comrade. I bought a Red Weekly and a Socialist Worker, and thought that it was time to quit the whole stupid business.

At the moment I am doing research on aspects of the American CP. In the early days there were three CPs in America. All swore blind obedience to the Comintern and denounced each other as utterly degenerate and beyond salvation. It took several years before the Comintern could sort out the American problem. Finally it did so by Lenin telling them to stop messing about and create one revolutionary party.

Of course, the CPs had the wrong positions on a number of issues. In fact, all of them were ludicrously ultra-left and sectarian. But Lenin's 3rd International said that these weaknesses would not be overcome without taking

the question of the working class revolution seriously enough to unite in one organisation and fight the political problems out in that.

I do not suggest that the other groups on the left immediately enter into fusion with the IMG. But I do say this.

I cannot see any useful purpose (and I mean useful to the revolutionary tasks that confront the working class) served by these groups. I cite the I-CL and the WSL, as symptomatic. They did at least attend the 'Trotskyism Today' rally and present reasonable answers to the reasonable invitation to co-operate in debate and in struggle with the IMG. Until, and unless they (and other left groupings) do I reserve the right to consider them as examples of the not merely infantile, but positively pre-natal, ultra-leftism that was the hall-mark of the three CPs in the USA circa 1920.

JIM MASTERS (Notting Hill)

Saltley CP reply

I WOULD like to state the concern of members of Saltley Communist Party about the unfounded sectarianism expressed in your article on the County Council elections (Red Weekly, 12 May). The article gave greater emphasis to dealing 'a serious blow to the reformist policies of the CP' than fighting fascism or racism.

Saltley Communist Party argue that the Asian Socialist League (ASL) is an IMG front. Though it called for the 'broadest possible campaign... to fight fascism and racism', no realistic attempt was made to develop united action. When the Immigrant Workers Associations didn't respond to your invitation before the Stachford by-election, you rejected them.

Members of the IMG have characterised these groups as bureaucratic and reformist and dismissed the possibility that these organisations are politically advanced and yet did not wish to

stand on a Trotskyist platform. Similarly you decided not to approach Saltley CP about concerted action against racism and fascism despite our consistent work in the area.

The National Front are characteristically strongest in 'white' areas near to, but not inside, communities with significant black populations. This is just one reason why successful opposition to racism depends on uniting the working class (and other classes and strata which can be won) round an anti-racist position, and this requires work amongst both black and white communities.

Setting up separate black electoral parties may be a quick method of achieving votes, but avoids all the problems of winning the white working class from chauvinist ideas. Yet when the Saltley Communists put out a leaflet to explain why we were standing on an anti-racist platform in a principled way, but did

not support the ASL, we are attacked in Red Weekly as 'using every dirty trick in the book'.

I do not wish to belittle the success of the IMG and ASL campaigns in Washwood Heath and Saltley. I would however like to point out that the Communist Party nationally stood 273 candidates and gained 52,000 votes, and not 24 with 8,442 votes as your article stated.

This kind of muck-raking report can only lead to antagonism and misguided policies. The article seems to be in conflict with your stated reasons for building Socialist Challenge: 'to break out of the narrow confines of far left politics... Narrow party chauvinism has to be combated'.

ROBIN WILLIAMS
(Saltley Communist Party)

The number of votes polled by the CP reported in Red Weekly compared only the London votes of the CP with those of the London votes of the IMG. However, the Morning Star failed to even mention the far left votes - in the face of such returns as the ASL's votes which were six times those of the CP.

Music for Socialism

DO YOU regard popular music as having some kind of connection with progressive social attitudes? It has become much clearer to most of us that the 'rock revolution', the 'folk renaissance' and their various spin-off phenomena remain first and foremost a lucrative sector of the entertainment business.

For some performers and music lovers, this process has provided valuable lessons and posed important questions. It has underlined in the first place, that ideas and feelings and 'art' alone cannot change the fundamental social realities of corruption and exploitation in which they're caught up.

It has also helped to dispel any doubts we may have had about the culturally destructive nature of a system under which music is made for a passive market rather than in a dynamic relationship with a real audience or community. It has, in short, confirmed the need to make a direct and public link between the musicians' craft and radical politics.

Music for Socialism is a new organisation, made up mainly of musicians, which is beginning to set about that task. Its first major project is the May 28 Festival at Battersea Arts Centre in south West London.

MFS came together towards the end of last year. One starting point was an afternoon at The Other Cinema in the West End. The film - 'We've got our own song' - was shown and afterwards, Evan Parker played saxophone improvisations. The subject of the film was a music festival put on by radical Swedish performers in Stockholm as a counter to the banalities of the 1975 Eurovision Song Contest, staged in the city that year.

A series of meetings followed, involving performers covering a broad spectrum of styles - folk, rock, improvising, electronic and

many shades in between. Politically, those attending ranged through most points left of 'moderate'. Among them were Henry Cow, Red Brass, Elevator, Peoples Liberation Music, Frankie Armstrong, Red Square and members of The London Musicians' Collective - as well as musicians from a number of theatre groups such as Belt and Braces, Counteract, Sidewalk and the Women's Theatre Group.

A festival seemed a good idea for a number of reasons. First, it would provide a forum in which people with very different notions of what is progressive in music might learn from each other. It would also bring diverse performers to the attention of a wider public. But it was equally important that a start should be made on breaking down the kind of audience relationships endemic to the music business.

So the programme consists basically of a series of 'concert-debates'. In each of these, there'll be a number of performances loosely linked together, either by their style, or by their relevance to a particular problem - such as how music can be useful in a given political strategy, or the position of women in music. This will lead into an open discussion on the theme in question, and on any other issue raised by the performance.

* For more details, write to: Music For Socialism, 30 Hornsey Park Road, London N8. Telephone: 01 888 1161

IMG Notes

International Cadre School, Jubilee Weekend 4-7 June for IMG members and sympathisers.
Agenda: Introductions and workshops on -
* The current state of the world revolution.
* Revolutionary strategy in Europe.
* Marxism, women's liberation and the tasks for the FI
* Main issues facing the World Movement

Reading list from local branch organisers. Poised fare. International leaders from the FI will introduce each session.

National NALGO Fraction, Saturday 28 May. All IMG members in NALGO to attend. All close sympathisers to be invited. Prior to meeting, NALGO members to write and report of their last year's activity in their branch and send to Jack Lewis, c/o 87, Caledonian Road, Tel: 433pm. At Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19. Nearest tube Archway

LONDON TEACHERS EDUCATIONAL SERIES:
For all IMG members and sympathisers in NUT

Monday 30 May - Analysis of NUT. What is the NUT? What is the role of the Communist Party - Bernard Regan.

Reading - Struggle in Education - D. Bailey. 'Noise on the NUT' - Dennis

Monday 13 June - How do we fight to save the Programme. What is the Programmatic Basis? - Rich Palmer.

Monday 20 June - How do we build a

Troops Out: Open Conference called

IN THE PAST the Troops Out Movement (TOM) has played a central role in coordinating anti-imperialist work. However the TOM has suffered an organisational decline and in order to overcome this decline it has become urgent to hold an open conference to regroup forces and to plan new activities.

Such a conference is planned for London on 2/3 July. We wish to clarify some questions about this conference raised in last week's letter from two representatives of a small grouping within TOM.

This letter totally misrepresented the issues involved in the walk-out from the recent TOM conference. The walk-out and open conference are supported by the vast majority of TOM branches, activists and supporting organisations, the only opposition comes from this small grouping.

Our joint sponsorship of the walk-out and our support for the open conference are not dictated by support for any particular political group. The central issue involved can best be described as democracy.

What matters is whether groups such as IMG, Big Flame, ICL and RCG have a right to participate in TOM free from verbal harassment and antagonistic posturing. We say they have this right.

Any significant movement in

this country, which is based on Irish self-determination, will necessarily involve those forces already organised in left wing groups. To say that such groups may not participate in TOM is to condemn the movement to becoming a small sect.

The issue is not whether the IMG 'capitulated' to Loyalism by suggesting that last September's delegation meet the UDA.

The issue is not whether the ICL are 'ultra-left' because they would prefer the movement to have an explicit republican solidarity position.

The issue is not whether Big Flame 'deviate' from the traditions of Trotskyism by promoting a 'community' orientation.

The issue is not even whether the RCG are 'idealists'.

The issue is whether the TOM should be a small London-based sect or whether the TOM can function as a broad front of left wing groups and individual activists in which political differences are acknowledged and tolerated.

The open conference itself gives no guarantee that such unity can be forged. But it does provide an opportunity to rebuild the Troops Out Movement.

It may be true that the sectarianism of the left is such that we are unable to achieve our target. But we consider that the upturn of the struggle both in Ireland and in

Britain is such that a valuable opportunity for unity must not be missed.

We wish to appeal to all past, present and potential supporters of TOM to attend the open conference. All are also welcome to attend the open planning meeting to be held in Birmingham on 11 June. We wish to emphasise that those attending either the planning meeting, or the conference will have full speaking and voting rights.

There should be no illusions that this conference is a 'front' for IMG or Big Flame or any other political grouping.

Apart from the eleven TOM branches now supporting the conference there is support from about twenty left-wing and Irish political groups. There is already ample evidence that the conference is creating great interest amongst many activists who have voted with their feet in the past because they were so disillusioned by the antagonistic atmosphere inside the movement.

We consider this conference to be a genuine and determined attempt to forge a Troops Out Movement which can break with, and learn from, some of the mistakes of the past.

LIZ CURTIS, JOHN LLOYD, AL-ASTAIR RENWICK, PETER STEWART



OPEN LETTER TO BOB PAISLEY

Dear Bob,
It is somewhat grotesque that I should be writing you an open letter as the latter is a device we normally reserve for individuals with whom any other form of contact is difficult. Why is it, then, that you have to do this? It is because, although we are both managers, albeit of different football teams, the only way we have been able to communicate is by screaming abuse at each other from our benches on opposite sides of the ground.

No-one doubts that yours is the best football team in the country, typified by the fact that you won the League, but that does not make you the only team. And, as John Morrison pointed out, after Saturday's result your chances of doing the Treble seem somewhat reduced.

Remember how we used to laugh at Don Revie's pretensions in the 60s, expressed in fantasy formulas like 'Norman Hunter can kick shit out of your for any day'. And just look where Revie is now!

Our fans discovered that there was a great deal of apathy and cynicism on the part of a large number of people who simply could not understand why there were two football teams playing last Saturday.

Between us we managed to score three goals [I don't want to rub in the fact that we scored one more than you] but just think how many more we could have scored if we had all been playing on the same side. Even if you think the time is not yet right for a unified football team surely it would be possible to arrive at some agreement whereby our defenders agreed not to tackle Steve Heighway on the left wing and vice versa.

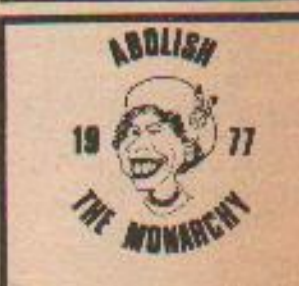
We think that our past victories in Europe are a lesson which we could all learn from. Consider, for example, our 3-0 victory over the Finnish amateurs Athletic Helsinki.

Finally, we will all face great tests in the months and years to come. You, for example, will be coming up against Borussia Muenchengladbach in the European Cup Final on Wednesday.

How much more effective it would be if we unified our forces and sent 22 men out to play in a united football team on Wednesday.

Yours,
Tommy Docherty

* We now know this letter to be a forgery, but as this is our last issue, they can't sue us - eds.



Socialist Review No. 2. 'SR' No. 2 now out. For members and sympathisers. Contains resolutions and documents from the IMG April NC. Price 10p. Get a copy from your branch organiser.

FOUR YEARS OF RED WEEKLY ...

THE FOUNDATION FOR SOCIALIST CHALLENGE

This issue of Red Weekly — the 200th — will be the last. In future, Socialist Challenge — incorporating Red Weekly — will continue in the debates, polemics and actions promoted by its predecessor.

But the format of the new paper, its contents, and its organisation, will all help to ensure that the tasks confronting revolutionaries today are carried out more effectively than was possible through the columns of Red Weekly.

Red Weekly was launched on May Day 1973, when the fortnightly Red Mole ceased publication. Before the launch of Red Weekly changes had already occurred in the Red Mole. These coincided with the miners' strike in 1972 and the subsequent freeing of the Pentonville Five, and were reflected in the changed format of

ship. It was a recognition — somewhat belated — that the nature of the vanguard in Britain had changed. Increasingly, the vanguard was comprised of new layers of workers moving into struggle.

It was fitting, therefore, that one of the first campaigns launched by the weekly paper was that to defend the Shrewsbury building workers. In its early months of publication, the Red Weekly was the only paper on the British left which put the need to defend the building workers to the forefront of its tasks. Both Socialist Worker and the Morning Star turned to this task only after weeks of systematic campaigning by Red Weekly.

During the four years of its publication, Red Weekly scored important successes. At a time of a new upsurge in the world revolution, Red Weekly stood head and shoulders above other papers on the British left. Its ability to provide comprehensive coverage of central developments in the class struggle on a world scale was guaranteed because the International Marxist Group, alone among the groups in Britain, is part of a revolutionary socialist international.

With the march towards victory in South East Asia in 1975, Red Weekly devoted its entire front page and extensive feature materi-



Steve Potter — Red Weekly Editor

al for weeks on end to solidarity with the anti-imperialist forces.

But it was when the revolutionary process began to unfold on the Iberian peninsula that the Red Weekly surpassed even its previous record. Issue after issue of the paper was filled with factual material, on-the-spot reports, analysis and polemic. The pages devoted to 'Portugal Forum' — including the exchange with the International Socialists that centred on the ultra-left antics of the PRP-BR (the group supported by the IS at the time, but which has all

this was the feature material on the work of the CIA in Britain. The publication in March 1976 of the names and addresses of 60 CIA agents in this country caused an impact in the bourgeois media on an international scale, and contributed to a campaign against the complicity of the Labour Government in allowing these agents of imperialism to operate in this country against the interests of the British working class.

Consistent coverage and campaigning around social issues has also been a feature of Red Weekly. The best instance is the way the weekly paper was able to organise forces against the growing influence of the fascists. The march on Red Lion Square in June 1974 emerged as a turning point, with the recognition of the National Front as a fascist organisation.

The continuing activity on this issue — including the decision of the National Union of Students to support the 'no platform for fascists' position — was in large part due to the campaign launched through the pages of Red Weekly. This has been supplemented by the anti-racist coverage stretching from reports on struggles launched by blacks, like the Imperial Typewriters dispute, to countering the racist campaign of hysteria of Fleet Street.

WOMEN

The fight against women's oppression is another area of coverage which has been strengthened since Red Weekly's early days. Red Weekly now has the most extensive coverage of any of the left papers on the abortion campaign and on many of the demands raised by the Charter Campaign.

Improvements to Red Weekly throughout its four years of publication have been enormous. But weaknesses still persist. These partly reflect the weaknesses of the left as a whole. A paper cannot be measured in the abstract. It can only be assessed in the light of the developments within the class as a whole and the role it has played in organising forces on a clear political line of advance.

Many of the weaknesses of Red Weekly have been pinpointed, and will be tackled in the new Socialist Challenge. But successes achieved will depend very much on whether the political goals set by Socialist Challenge are reached. If the paper is able to draw into its Editorial Board organised forces broader than those of the IMG; if it is able to play a central role in organising united action against Labour's attacks; and if it is able to build on the political basis left by the strengths of Red Weekly, then it will have every chance to overcome those weaknesses.

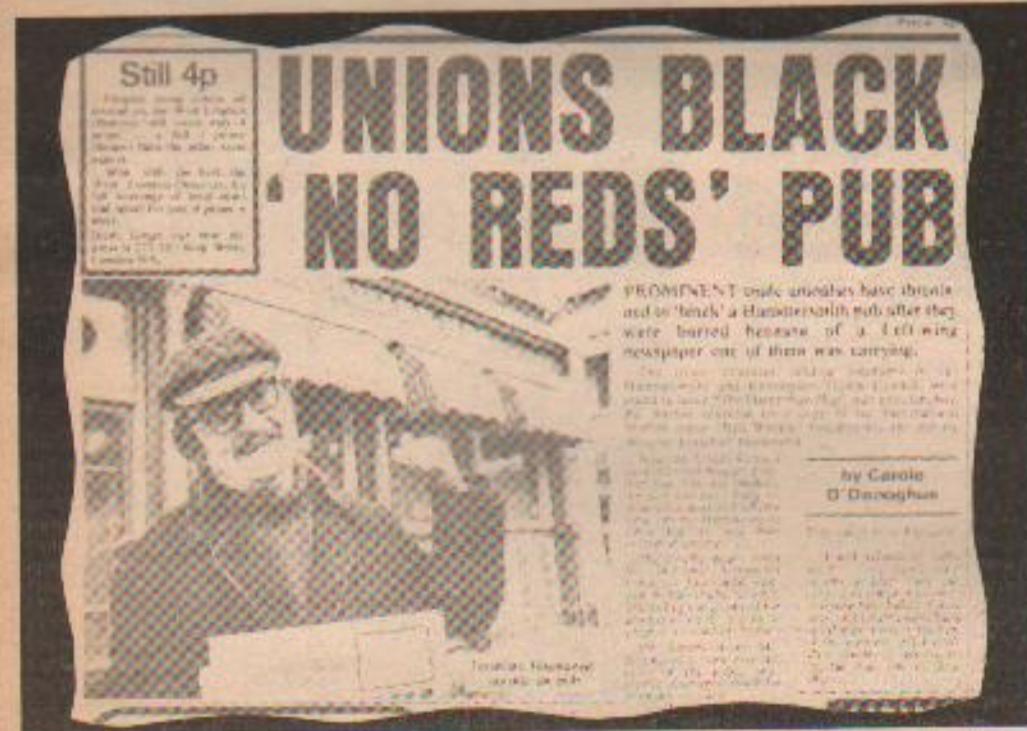
STEVE POTTER



Red Weekly's first edition

the paper. Red Weekly made the changes more systematic. It appeared regularly on a weekly basis.

And whereas Red Mole reached out in its early days to an audience of radicalised youth — from the student militancy and the Vietnam Solidarity Committee — Red Weekly looked to a new reader-



I would like information about the

INTERNATIONAL IMG MARXIST GROUP

Fill in the form below and send it to: National Secretary, International Marxist Group, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1.

Name

Address

but disappeared today) — raised questions of fundamental and immediate importance for the revolutionary left in Britain.

It is around these kind of developments that new political alignments are forged: it is as a result of the test of political lines in the living class struggle. The series of 'Party and Faction' initiated in the Red Weekly's columns ensured that the framework for the debates on splits and fusions was given a firm theoretical and historical basis. This series has today become the cornerstone of the debate which spans the revolutionary left on this question.

Finally, aided by Rouge, the daily newspaper of the French section of the Fourth International, the new rise in struggles for democratic rights in Eastern Europe have been made readily available to British readers.

In addition to the strong international coverage, and the important theoretical contributions made by Red Weekly, it has been able to devote resources, on occasion, to serious investigatory

World Outlook

★ Greece

'Mr Karamanlis and his Government are running up against a "real opposition" much more dynamic than the "legal opposition" represented by the political parties.' Le Monde correspondent Marc Marceau notes that the wave of workers struggles which has hit Greece in recent months poses a far greater threat to the Government than the official parties.

Both Communist Parties (they are split into 'Eurocommunist' and 'pro-Moscow wings) supported the call for a Government by the right-winger Karamanlis when the colonels' regime fell in 1974. Yet it was Karamanlis who presided over a series of viciously anti-working class administrations in the 1950s and 60s.

Now he plays a role which will be familiar to consuls of governments in crisis throughout Europe. Strikes, he says, are 'useless and absurd' and if the Government gives way to pressure inflation will be inevitable — a view which wins little sympathy among workers whose real earnings are already hit by the rising cost of living.

As we have noted in previous reports the strikes have

centred on white collar sectors: for example, air traffic controllers and doctors. The latter has been a particular upset to composer Mikis Theodorakis who claims that the strike was responsible for his aged father's death.

The airport strike has been a particular cause of concern on Government and business circles, coming as it does at the beginning of the tourist season. The Government has drafted in air force officers to scab by bringing night flights into Athens airport.

Other workers, such as teachers and miners, have also come out, unimpressed by Karamanlis's latest economic demagoguery: a tax on caviar and casinos!

Karamanlis's strategy is to try and separate the workers from the trade unions by encouraging the formation and growth of professional associations and sacking union members. The latter move, in particular, has met with strong resistance from striking workers and the far left.

With general elections due sometime next year the 'real opposition' is storing up all sorts of problems for Karamanlis.



Greek Premier Karamanlis

★ Brazil

Students held a day of action against the military dictatorship in all major Brazilian cities on 19 May. The mass demonstrations were the first open show of opposition to the regime since 1968.

The strength of the mobilisation reduced the capacity of the police to intervene with their usual ferocity. Only in Sao Paulo was the demonstration broken up and arrests made. The political message of the placards on the demonstrations was clear: 'Workers, students, united against oppression.'

★ Canada

The results of a survey showing that over half of North Ontario Indians tested in 1975 were suffering from Minamata disease (named after a Japanese fishing village poisoned by mercury in the 1950s) were suppressed by the Canadian Government and only exposed in a book by journalist Werner Troyer, published earlier this month.

The Wabigoon river, a system of inter-connected lakes on the Indians' White Dog and Grassy Narrows reserves, have been polluted with toxic mercury from a Reed International paper mill at Dryden. Commercial fishing was stopped in 1970 after fish has been found to contain high mercury levels, but the Indians and tourists were allowed to continue catching fish.

A spokesperson for the Ottawa-based Indians rights group, the National Indian Brotherhood, said: 'The results of these tests show that we were right in thinking that there was a severe mercury crisis in the area and that the federal and provincial governments have been totally irra-

possible in leaving that river system open'.

★ Netherlands

Dutch television last week carried an appeal for the expulsion of all black immigrants and foreign workers from the country. The broadcast was part of the allotted television time given to the Nederlandse Volksunie (NVU), the first fascist party to stand in Dutch elections since before the Nazi occupation in 1940.

The broadcast met with fierce opposition from the left and there are suggestions that the party may be banned. Led by a former NATO employee, the NVU is similar in its politics to the pre-war Nazi party, the NSB.

★ Bolivia

The Bolivian Government is trying to attract 150,000 immigrants of German and Dutch stock from Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, according to a statement by the Bolivia Committee in London last week.

The committee has a copy of a letter written by a senior immigration official to the Minister of Planning, anticipating the arrival of 30,000 families from southern Africa over the next six years. The plan is to lure white Rhodesians to the Santa Cruz region, which is suitable for tobacco growing.

The letter speaks of West German financial backing for the project, which implies that many of the settlers could be Namibians of German stock.

Bolivia under the Banzer regime is already a pretty nasty place to live. It looks like it could be getting a lot nastier.

Chile's secret prisoners

Information received by Red Weekly shows that the Chilean junta's claims of 'liberalisation' are worth nothing. In March this year eight young workers were arrested in Santiago.

Their names are: Fernando Espinosa, Ulises Galarzo, Eliseo Abeilly, Eugenio Bizama, Luis Quilodran, Roberto Vazquez, Raul Jimenez and Mario Victor Leivo Castro. They were handed over to the DINA, the secret police.

A letter smuggled out of Chile describes their treatment:

Regarding their torture, I didn't mean that I couldn't describe them in a grammatical sense, but it is difficult to make people believe how dreadful they are.

Anyway, I will describe them now: electric shocks all over the body especially in the more sensitive parts — the genitals and the anus. The DINA introduced a rubber tube into the anus and then applies the electric shock mercilessly; simultaneously they tightened with a pincher the testicles and penis.

Electric currents were put through the ears, lips and both temples, as well as the more sophisticated psychological torture.

This torture lasted four days. They were tortured at half hourly intervals throughout 24 hours. The wives of the prisoners who were also incarcerated were threatened with being raped by the torturers in front of their husbands.

POLITICAL

These men were political prisoners and were even described as such by a major Chilean newspaper. But the Military Fiscal handed them over to the anonymity of the Santiago civil prison. This is part of a trend to hold political prisoners on ostensibly civil offences to reduce the official statistics for political

offences.

When the junta first came to power the activities of the DINA were carried out openly. It recruited its torturers from the military, from the highly practised Brazilians with Walter Rauff, an old German Nazi leader, and CIA advisors to complete the spectrum.

SOLIDARITY

The pressure of international solidarity actions was such that even the junta's friends — such as the President of the United States — became increasingly embarrassed. In January 1976 the junta passed a decree 'protecting human rights'. It got its reward in May of that year when US Treasury Secretary Simon granted 90 million dollars US aid. Further indirect aid, received through US financial institutions, made a grand total of 1.8 billion dollars.

From then on the junta adopted a two-pronged method of repression: secret prisoners and prisoners on trumped up charges as common criminals. Chile's secret prisoners have become the norm. In January 1974 three per cent of people arrested then disappeared. By August of the same year the figure was 50 per cent.

Already Hackney branch of the National Union of Public Employees has acted swiftly in trying to get further information on the treatment of these eight prisoners. Readers should try to do the same through their trade unions and political organisations, to get information and publicise the names of these political prisoners.

Further information on the junta's methods can be obtained from the pamphlet *Chile's Secret Prisoners*, published by the Chile Committee for Human Rights, 1 Cambridge Terrace, London, NW1.

Polish clamp-down: Kuron speaks

The Polish authorities have continued their clampdown on the Workers Defence Committee, after the demonstrations protesting at the death of a student member of the committee.

Stanislaw Pyjas was found at the bottom of a stair well, dead from head injuries. The press and radio, who don't usually bother commenting on such events, have gone out of their way to push the theory that he committed suicide under the influence of alcohol.

Quite apart from the unlikelihood of this explanation, this very enthusiasm of the party authorities to clear up the incident has convinced WDC supporters that Pyjas was murdered.

Three leaders of the WDC were arrested as they tried to get to Pyjas's funeral: Jan Josef Lipski, Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik face charges of 'collusion with a foreign organisation', which carry sentences of up to five years. The French Trotskyist paper *Rouge* was able to get a telephone interview with Kuron after his arrest in which he explained that they were supposed to have links with *Kultura*, a right wing emigre paper, and the CIA-financed Radio Free Europe.

Since then Antonin Maciere-wicz, Piotr Naimski, Miroslaw Chojewski and Wojciech Ostrowski have also been arrested. Two other opposition leaders, Vernon Onyskiewicz and Lasarski were victims of a road 'accident'. They were knocked down by a lorry and are in serious condition.

After he had told *Rouge* about the charges against him and the other repressive measures implemented by the Polish authorities, Kuron went on to explain

the achievements and political perspectives of the Workers Defence Committee.

As for the audience we command you have to say honestly that we can't measure it, because in a totalitarian society no-one knows what their neighbour thinks or does. Society is atomised.

However, certain things show that, in general, the committee has greater support than any other institution in Poland except for the Church. For example, we have so far distributed nearly three million zlotys (about 3000 months average wage). The greater part of this money came from tens of thousands of different people. There are petitions with nearly three thousand signatures, including the letter from 1,100 Ursus workers demanding the reinstatement of those who had been sacked.

Finally, and this is the important point, there is the complete blocking of the campaign against the committee which was launched by the authorities last December.

As for the aims of the committee, the first was the liberation of those imprisoned. You couldn't say that this demand has been met yet. There are still five workers in prison [the interview



Workers Defence Committee member Adam Michnik — charged with 'collusion with a foreign organisation'

was given before the latest arrests), the others have had their sentences suspended. The latter have still not received any compensation and are often still at the mercy of the police.

There have been steps forward on the reinstatement of sacked workers. But for several thousand people who were sacked for going on strike wages have often been cut by a third or a half. We must establish that Article 52 of the Labour Code must not be used as an anti-strike law. This article deals with 'a serious attack on the duties of the worker'. You can't consider strikes as an attack on the duty of

a worker. *Rouge* asked Kuron what he expected of the left in the capitalist countries. His answer was simple: Above all solidarity and defence when we are repressed.

* Andy Durgan, an SWP member of the executive of the National Union of Students, tried to raise the question of solidarity with Polish students at last weekend's executive meeting. He was supported by other far left members. But the Broad Left majority (including members of the 'Euro-communist' CP) refused to allow the discussion on the agenda.

Maoists murder Mexican Trotskyist

Alfonso Peralta, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers Party (RWP), was murdered last week in Mexico City.

His killers left his body on the steps of the University near Coyoacan. Thirty-seven years ago Leon Trotsky died at the hands of a Stalinist assassin only a few minutes walk from the spot where Alfonso Peralta lay.

The murderers clearly saw themselves emulating the work of their master. Pinned to his chest was a notice: 'This is the treatment we will deal out to Trotskyists, reformists and police agents.'

The killers are generally supposed to be members of the '23 September Communist League', a degenerate Maoist group which has been making public threats to our comrades for

some weeks previously.

Alfonso Peralta — known as 'Alejandro' in the Fourth International — was thirty years old had been in the Mexican section for ten years. He was a member of the Political Bureau of the RWP and the international Executive Committee of the Fourth International. A university lecturer, he was a leader of the university workers union.

Alejandro's murder met with a national response. All the workers parties, including the entire Central Committee of the Communist Party marched in protest, supported by a number of trade unions and peasant organisations.

Ironically the Communist Party asked that their flag be draped alongside that of the Fourth International on Alejandro's coffin.

Israel: The day of the buzzard

'If Shimon Peres is a hawk, Begin is a buzzard'. The laconic reaction of a Palestinian spokesperson to the victory of the right-wing Likud over the Labour Party in the Israeli elections is not so far from the truth.

The Palestinian description of Menahem Begin as a terrorist also has its echo in Israel's history. Begin was a leader of the Irgun, the underground terrorist group which fought the British mandate in Palestine.

In one famous episode the Palmach, the regular Israeli troops, opened fire on and sank a boat delivering arms to the Irgun, with heavy loss of life. This is not just a part of Israeli folklore. The commander of the Palmach who gave the order to fire was Yigael Yadin, whose Democratic Movement for Change made big gains in last week's elections. The officer who carried out the orders was none other than Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

It is in foreign policy that the most obvious changes will come. Already Begin has made great show of legitimising unauthorised Israeli settlements on the occupied West Bank. For him, as for most Israeli politicians, there are no occupied territories — they are all part of Israel.

HAWK

Although Peres, the new Labour leader, is, as the Palestinians noted, a hawk, the Labour policy since 1970 has increasingly been one of waiting for the disarray of the Arab governments and an aggressive, but passive, military posture to take their toll. That policy seemed to be justified by the repression of the Palestinians by the Jordanian Government in Black September 1970 and again with the Syrian invasion of Lebanon last year.

But the beginning of the end for

caught unawares and the myth of its military invincibility shattered. Military advice had kept the Government up to date on Arab moves but it had dogmatically refused to believe that they would strike.

PEACE

The bourgeois press has shed tears over the Likud's victory and the supposed end of the globe-trotting Jimmy Carter's 'peace initiatives'. In fact peace was never at hand. It is true that the Arab bourgeoisie has co-operated fully with the US initiative and that the defeat in Lebanon has pushed the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation rightward, but the fact remains that no Zionist politician would accept the handing back of all the occupied territories.

The most moderate Zionist position, the 'Allon plan', still requires a substantial Israeli security belt. But for Begin and the Likud the only 'lasting solution' is the full integration of the West Bank and other occupied territories into the Zionist state.

Nevertheless, the end of Labour does spell a setback for US imperialism which saw Syria as taking over more and more of Israel's function as its Middle East policeman. To do that it needed a strong 'dove' faction in the Israeli Government, capable of making at least some concessions on the territorial question.

But the Israeli working class only backed Labour as long as it adopted an expansionist foreign policy which could guarantee further growth in the industrial sector, particularly on the West



Israel's new premier Menahem Begin, Zionism's latest hawk

above all on domestic issues. The final blow which brought down Labour (which really did look like the 'natural party of government') was a series of financial scandals, but behind that lay the worsening economic situation — unemployment and a failure to bring about the promised boost to the industrial sector.

All these go towards explaining the high vote for the Democratic Movement for Change and the big shift of working class voters to the Likud.

Nevertheless the workers movement is in for a tough time as the Likud moves to carry out its anti-strike measures and massive public expenditure cuts. This will particularly hit the oriental Jews who voted for the Likud in large numbers as a protest against Labour's failure to provide them with adequate housing and employment.

But, as always, the real losers will be the Palestinians — spread throughout the Middle East and the Arabs of the West Bank. The West Bank has been in upsurge for months now, a fact reflected in the electoral gains made by the Rakali, the Independent Communists. Begin's early support for the vicious settlement policy will continue — with Zionism there will be no peace in Palestine.

* An interesting postscript concerns the electoral fortunes of Samuel Flatro-Sharon, who stood to gain parliamentary immunity against extradition to France for currency offences. He was, of course, only one candidate but under the proportional representation system he won two seats! Now the Knesset faces an interesting constitutional process.

ALL OUT

for 18 June Soweto Anniversary Demonstration

Meeting 7.00pm Monday, 30 May. Central London Polytechnic Room 115, 309 Regent Street

Among those in attendance — SELBY SEMELA — Soweto Student COLIN TALBOT — NUS Exec. [Personal Capacity]. (Organised by the African Students Union)

TERROR ACT CLAIMS NEW VICTIMS

STATE HARASSMENT of Irish people living in Britain does not seem to have been affected by the recent visit to this country of that self-proclaimed advocate of civil liberties, President Jimmy Carter.

Events in Huddersfield and London last week underlined the continuing harassment of Irish people in Britain.

On Wednesday 11 May, the Huddersfield Special Branch and police entered the home of Ronan Bennet and Iris Mills. They burst in without a warrant, threatening to 'smash in the face' anyone who objected.

Ronan Bennet is an Irish militant who spent some time in Long Kesh. Since coming to Huddersfield he built up an active Claimants Union. He was taken to the police station and held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. After the weekend Iris was also taken in — then quickly released.

In part this was due to the opposition to the arrests that began to grow as soon as they were known. An Ad-Hoc Defen-

ce Committee was formed and a picket of over 50 people was mounted outside the police station on 17 May.

But on the following day Ronan Bennet was served with an Exclusion Order and moved to Albany Jail, Leeds.

So far the media has treated the case with its usual impartiality. They reported that the police had removed certain 'cardboard boxes' from Bennet's house (very sinister).

But TV, radio and press neglected to mention neighbour's reports that they saw police enter the house the previous week, when Bennet was out, carrying boxes in (even more sinister).

An appeal has now been

lodged against the Exclusion Order, and a further picket was held outside Albany jail at the weekend.

Plans are underway to launch an anti-PTA committee in Huddersfield, but if the experience of anti-PTA committees in London is anything to go by, those who protest against the act can suffer almost as much harassment as those who are arrested under it.

Last Sunday for example, the Trade Union Committee Against the PTA was banned from holding a meeting in Hamersmith Town Hall.

The TUCAPTA had booked the hall over two months ago, the booking had been confirmed and the hall paid for. Then, only two days before the conference the premises were banned.

Eventually the official at the Town Hall said the reason for the ban was an article carried in The Times on TUCAPTA's rally in March which alleged that there had been a collection 'for the IRA' at the rally.

In fact the collection boxes were clearly labelled 'Trade Union Committee Against the PTA'.

RECENT EVIDENCE has emerged which shows the British Army didn't let the Loyalists' stoppage interfere with their normal activities.

At 12.25 on the night before the strike began, Danny Rooney was coming out of a social club in a Catholic area of Belfast. He and his friends made their way to Castle Street hoping to get a 'people's taxi' home.

They were stopped by British soldiers who started to abuse Danny and his friends. Danny intervened and was set upon by the 'peace-keepers'. He was beaten up and along with his friends was taken to the army base at the Grand Central Hotel.

There he received more 'interrogation', during which his companions heard him complain and cry out that he was in great pain in his stomach. In fact he was haemorrhaging internally. But he was held until three in the morning when the troops finally rushed him into the Royal Victoria Hospital to prevent him dying in their custody. Later he had an emergency operation.

Danny's stomach had collapsed, there is now a hole in the base of his lungs, poison has set in and he is again suffering from heavy internal bleeding. All this is a result of the beating he received at the hands of the troops.

Perhaps the type of treatment Danny Rooney received is what is meant when the British press say that during the Loyalist strike life went on as normal.

* More revelations from the stoppage. The Kilkeel company of the Ulster Defence Regiment refused to go on duty in case they might be releasing troops to break the Ulster Action Council 'strike'.

Now in most armies mutineers are shot. But not in this case. The top brass of the UDR rushed to Kilkeel to give the mutineers categorical assurances that they would only be used against the anti-Unionists.

So now it's official. A regiment of the British Army is for use against Catholics only.

LIFE 'AS NORMAL' IN THE NORTH

By Ron Daly in Belfast



Photo: G. M. COOKSON (Red Weekly)

Workers' Jubilee 1917-1977

BOLSHEVIKS GROW IN INFLUENCE

RIC SISSONS continues our series on our Jubilee that celebrates the interests of the working class — the sixtieth anniversary of the Russian Revolution.

As the Russian Revolution passed into its fourth month, the crisis racking society deepened. The economy, already in a chronic state, drifted aimlessly as the bosses preferred sabotage to revolution. Old machinery was not replaced. Productivity fell. In May alone 108 factories were closed by their owners.

The war dragged on, bringing in its wake starvation. Only half of the foodtrains arrived at the front. The transport system had collapsed. In certain areas only half of the trains were in working repair. In the cities bread and sugar were in desperately short supply.

The Provisional Government, now including Menshevik members of the Soviet Executive had declared it would solve these problems. Instead they became worse. The Government had attempted to impose 'law and order', to prepare a new offensive at the front and stop land seizures. All these moves ran into the roadblock of the workers, soldiers and poor peasants determined to overthrow all the remnants of Tsarism.

The Soviet Executive came up with a surprisingly radical solution to the economic crisis. It commissioned a programme from its economic department which included 'a state trade monopoly'; state trusts (coal, oil, metals, sugar, paper); and participation of the state in the distribution of raw materials and finished products, and also the fixation of prices... place under control all credit institutions.

Lenin considered this programme excellent, but pointed out that the Executive had no intention of mobilising the workers to implement it. The plan was passed to the Government, who despite the presence of Soviet representatives had no intention of even discussing it.

The Government thought up another solution — move industry out of Petrograd. For the bosses this had three attractive features. Firstly, it would minimise their loss in the event of the complete collapse of the war effort. Secondly, they could move nearer the supplies of raw materials. Thirdly, and most importantly, by moving the factories the Petrograd workers and soldiers would be broken up and spread throughout the country.

For months the ruling class had

these proposals would have met with a determined refusal from the workers and soldiers.

The sailors of Kronstadt became the advanced outpost of the revolutionary masses. The Soviet in Kronstadt, the island fortress in the approaches to Petrograd, met on 13 May. They decided:

'The sole power in Kronstadt is the soviet of workers and soldiers deputies.' The Kadet commissar

release of the officers. The influence of the Bolsheviks was growing. The Putilov factory, employing 40,000 people, had passed from the influence of the Social Revolutionaries to the Bolsheviks. By early June at a meeting of the Petrograd factory and shop committees the Bolsheviks' resolutions won over three quarters of the votes.

It was in the factory committees, who were faced with the day-to-day problems of sabotage by the bosses, that the influence of the Communists grew the quickest. In the barracks of the Volynsky, Egersky and Litovsky regiments it was Lenin's party that now had the ear of the soldiers. Between April



Pepelyaev was removed; card playing banned; brothels closed; drunkenness stamped out.

All this did not please the Government and their mentors, Tseretelli and Skobelev, in the Executive of the Petrograd Soviet. Tseretelli demanded the release of 80 Tsarist officers held in the fortress. The sailors replied: 'And if we keep the enemies of the people in those prisons it is not out of vengeance, but from considerations of a revolutionary self-preservation.'

Despite being defended by Trotsky the Petrograd Soviet condemned the sailors by 580 votes to 162. The Government cut off links with the island. The Peasant Congress threatened to end food supplies. With the help of Trotsky, on the side of the Kronstadt

and the end of June the Bolsheviks in Petrograd doubled their numbers to 30,000. On 1 June in the new elections for the Moscow Soviet the Bolsheviks became the largest grouping.

However, this growth was uneven. In May in workers towns, such as Perm, Tula and Ekaterinburg, the Bolsheviks had not parted company with the Mensheviks, while in Baku this split did not take place until the end of June. The position in places like Odessa in the Ukraine, was even worse in that the Bolsheviks had no independent organisation.

History was on the side of the Bolsheviks. In reality, through their actions, the masses were moving closer to the line of march of Lenin's April Theses. As Lenin himself said: 'The masses are a

IRISH FRONT COMES TO BRITAIN

FINBAR O'DOHERTY, a representative of the Irish Front from Derry, spoke at a Troops Out Movement meeting in Liverpool on Wednesday 18 May. The Irish Front, he said, had also sent its representatives to Europe and the United States to present their position.

He called for a declaration of intent by the British government of withdrawal from Northern Ireland, for the troops to get out, and for the self-determination of the Irish people as a whole.

One of his purposes in visiting England, he also said, was to investigate the recent split in TOM, and to press on behalf of the movement in Ireland for unity, and against personality conflicts which had dominated the TOM.

DUTY

The duty of all British socialists, said O'Doherty, was to demand the withdrawal of British troops, in the interests of both the British and Irish working class. This demand was also inseparable from the fight against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, under which over 2,000 people had already been arrested.

Another member of the Irish Front who should have spoken at the meeting had been stopped at the airport in Belfast and told that they would be sent back if they arrived in England.

* The Irish Front is a broad front of all revolutionary and nationalist groups, which has mobilised 10-15,000 people in Derry against the British occupation, and is now extending to the rest of Northern Ireland.

WHAT'S ON

'IRELAND, the left and the women's movement'. Participants are expected to include members of the Belfast Socialist Women's group, Irish Women United, and representatives of other groups active on the question of women and/or Ireland. Please address all enquiries, donations and contributions on this conference to: Planning Committee, Box W.1., News from Nowhere, 100 Whitechapel, Liverpool.

OUTCOME: magazine of the NUS Gay Liberation Campaign's North West Region. 20p (inc. p&p) from Lancaster University Gay Soc, c/o Students Union, University of Lancaster, Bailrigg, Lancaster. For more information on the campaign speakers, etc. contact Brian Windley, 9 Fern Bank, Lancaster. Tel: Lanc. 06936.

MAY 28, A Socialist Festival of Music. Over a hundred musicians will be taking part including Carol Grimes, Red Square, Henry Cow, People Liberation Music... Tickets available in advance at £1.50. Postal Orders to Battersea Arts Centre, and sent to May 28 Bookings, Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill, London SW11.

REMEMBER SOWETO! 16 June 1978. Demonstrate 18 June 1977. In London. Assembly Speakers Corner, 1.00pm. Rally Bulling (opp County Hall), 3.00pm. Called by National Union of Students, supported by the National Union of School Students and the Anti-Apartheid movement. Contact NUS International Dept., 3 Endsleigh St., London WC1. 01-387 1277 for details and publicity material.

COVENTRY Debate on 'The British Road to Socialism'. Speakers from the Communist Party and the International Marxist Group. Fri 10 June, 7.30pm. Room D14, Lancaster Poly.

PORTUGAL on the cheap — Fly to Porto from Heathrow for amazing £58.50 (usually £110) return. Date — Sunday 26 June for a fortnight. One or more people needed — contact Penny at 061-851 3252.

CARIBBEAN Socialist Group. Summer School, 9-10 July. Caxton House, Holloway, London, N19. Topics include: Development of Caribbean Working Class, Imperialism in the Caribbean, Stalinism, Women in the Caribbean. Phone 837 9967 (10-3pm) for details.

MARXISM AND MEDIA Forum. 'Towards a "Proletarian Culture"'. Speaker Carl Gardner. Sunday 29 May, 7.00pm. London Film-makers Co-op., 44 Fitzroy Rd., London NW1 (Chalk Farm tube or Primrose Hill BR).

HULL PRISON RIOT. The public inquiry into last September's Hull riot, its background and its aftermath, will be held under the chairmanship of John Pratts-Mills QC during the 4 days Friday 27 May to Monday 30 May. Daily 10-12.30 & 2-4.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC1. Further details from PROP, the

WORKERS VOICE Public Meeting. 'Phase 3. Collective Bargaining of working class fight back. Which way forward? Wednesday, 1 June, Ladywell Berbs, Lewisham High Street, SE13.

LABOUR FOCUS ON EASTERN EUROPE

A Socialist Debate Bulletin on Society, Europe and the USSR.

ISSUE No. 2 out now. Interview with Edmund Baluka on the Polish working class. East German Marxists on the present crisis in the GDR. Jiri Pelikan on Socialists and the Bergrade Conference. Tamara Deutscher on Khrushchev. Documents by Mlynar, Patocka, Havel and Uhl from Czechoslovakia. Material on USSR, Romania and solidarity campaigns. Subscription rates: £3.50 per annum. Europe £4.50. North America \$8 (surface mail), \$12 (airmail). Sample copy 40p. Correspondence to Bottom Flat, 118, Cazenove Road, London N18.

ACTS. There will be a meeting for all workers in solicitors offices in W1 organised by the ACTSS Legal Workers Branch at the Marlborough Head, 24 North Audley Street, between 12.30 and 2pm on 31 May. ACTSS. There will be a meeting of ACTSS Legal Workers Branch on Thursday 9 June at 8.30pm at Transport and General Workers Union Headquarters, 203 North Gower Street, near Warren Street tube station. All workers in solicitors offices are welcome. SOCIALIST CHALLENGE Forum, Thursday 28 May, 7.30pm. The Crown, Hill Street, Birmingham. 'Revolutionary Socialism — Why and How'.

ONE OR TWO comrades wanted to share purchase of N. London house. Own room, semi-communal. £300 deposit needed. Contact Sue — 802 0911 (work) or Kathy — 624 9828, as soon as possible. Will start looking for a house with garden as soon as possible.

LEFT UNITY IN LONDON NALGO Public Meeting. Unite to Fight the Social Contract.

Saturday 4 June, 11am-3pm. Roebuck Public House, Tottenham Court Road, London. (near East tube Warren Street).

CRITIQUE Seminar. Tuesday 31 May. Ray Edgery (Editorial Board of Radical Philosophy) — Education for Industry? 7.30pm, Room S421, St. Clements building, London School of

600,000 STRIKE IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY

'Aim at their heads - we must kill them all' CIVIL GUARD OFFICER

The angry crowd assembled outside the Civil Guard post in the industrial town of Renteria. A voice came from inside the building: 'Don't shoot in the air, that'll disperse them. Aim at their heads — we must kill them all.' Sixty-year-old Rafael Gomez fell dead.

Rafael Gomez had dared to call for the release of all political prisoners. Like hundreds of thousands of other workers who struck that day he had dared to say that there could not be democracy while his comrades were still held.

Rafael was only the first to die. Printworker Jose Luis Cano fell victim to a rubber bullet, that 'non-lethal' weapon developed by the British Army in Ireland.

78-year-old Luis Santamaria was standing at his window in a Pamplona street when he too died from a rubber bullet.

Manuel Fuentes Mesa, a member of the unitary current of the Workers Commissions was chased by police as he left a restaurant after dinner with some friends. He was shot down in cold blood.

AMNESTY

And another worker, whose name has not been released, died when police charged a barricade on the road from Irun to San Sebastian. Five dead in four days.

The Basque country has never seen anything like the last week.

It was not just a massacre — it was also a massive show of strength and solidarity by the Basque working class. The day Rafael Gomez was murdered all the major factories had come out for amnesty: Euskalduna, la Naval, General Electric, Altos Hornos and the rest.

By the following day, as news of



the murders spread, so did the strike.

By last Monday everything in the Basque country had come to a halt: not just the factories but shops, bars, transport, the post office, the fishing industry and the offices. More than half a million people refused to work.

The only things which did not stop were the determined marches of the workers, throwing up barricades around their factories and their neighbourhoods — and the rampages of the Civil Guard.

They ambled through Renteria like gunslingers, shooting through windows, shooting at any living



Spanish police implement democracy Suarez-style

thing which came into their path. An officer shouted through a megaphone: 'You deserve everything that's coming to you'.

They passed the spot where five bullets had passed clean through Rafael Gomez' body and lodged themselves in the wall behind.

BULLET

In the fishing town of Ondarrus they arrested young workers and demanded to know if LKI militant Andoni Arrizabalaga was organising the strike: 'If we get our hands on him we'll put a bullet in his head'.

The situation demanded an urgent response. In Vizcaya the three great democratic assemblies of last autumn were reconvened. On both banks of the river Nervion and in Basauri — the very heart of Spain's heavy industry — meetings in factories and working class neighbourhoods elected rep-

resentatives to the assemblies which thrashed out all the urgent matters of organisation and policy.

Each assembly passed a unanimous resolution calling for the smashing of the repressive apparatus of the dictatorship. It did not matter that their traditional parties — the Communists, Socialists and Basque Nationalists — are implacably opposed to that demand.

The workers of Bilbao had no need for their old leaders.

Throughout the Basque country the story was the same — assemblies met together to organise the basic needs of the workers they represented. Above all they

elected defence pickets to protect against the police and fascist gangs. There were no more murders.

At the weekend the Government announced the release and exile of five of the six militants condemned to death at Burgos in 1970 — the first victory for the strike. The far left and radical nationalist parties and the LKI, Basque supporters of the Fourth International, have called a general strike for Monday 23 May. As we go to press we do not know anything about the progress of this strike.

But another week of struggle faces the Basque country. RICHARD CARYER

30,000 workers defy Communist Party



'La Pasionaria'

'We want reconciliation, not revenge. The road to democracy and freedom is not through violence and the forces of reaction are waiting to try and provoke an armed intervention.'

A vast crowd howled down Ramon Ormazabal, general secretary of the Basque Communist Party, as he tried to deliver these words in Bilbao last weekend.

Marcelino Camacho chose the more peaceful atmosphere of a press conference to say his piece. The Basque workers, he said, 'are creating a pretext for a Pinochet to intervene'.

Their gall is astonishing. Workers are shot down on the streets and the Communist Party can only mumble on about the threat of a right wing backlash.

Camacho's press conference was to announce that the majority of the Workers Commissions was calling for a return to work and was opposed to any solidarity action.

The answer of the unitary current of the Workers Commissions, led by the LGR/LKI (Fourth International) and the MC, was immediate: 'Camacho is a traitor — he must be thrown out.'

And 30,000 Madrid engineering workers were equally

unambiguous. In defiance of the party line, they came out in support of their Basque comrades, an action which was supported by thousands of workers throughout the country.

Most astounding is that the Communist Party (PCE) should dare to call for a return to work. Much of the growth of the far left in the Basque country dates from the time in 1974 when the PCE openly scabbed on a general strike. The Basque workers have never let them forget it.

FEAR

In recent weeks the PCE has made its position even plainer. They are prepared to back the Suarez Government through thick and thin. If that means support for the monarchy — so be it. If it means selling out on the struggle of hundreds of thousands of workers, many of them party members — so be it.

Their real fear is not a Pinochet — it is the organised power of the working class.

The perverted logic of Stalinism has forced them to draw every conclusion from recent events except the obvious one — the precondition for defending the democratic rights of the working class is the smashing of the repressive

apparatus of the dictatorship.

It is not the 'ultra-left' and the Basque workers who are 'utopian' when they raise this demand. It is the PCE, who imagine that negotiation with the Government can defend the workers against the bullets and truncheons of the police. And that is worse than utopianism — it is criminal treachery.

The profound fear gnawing at the guts of the PCE was well illustrated by the reaction to another of the speeches at the Bilbao meeting last weekend. 'La Pasionaria', the best-known of the PCE leaders, who has been in exile in the Soviet Union for forty years, returned to give a speech extolling the virtues of her host country. She did not mention 'Euro-communism' once.

Instead she talked about the 'way to construct socialism and live without capitalism'. Of course, this defence of the Kremlin bureaucrats is a million miles away from revolutionary politics, but, coming from the woman who promised that 'they shall not pass' it seemed a sharp contrast to the cowardly capitulation of the other party leaders.

A party official was asked for his reaction to the speech. He explained that 'La Pasionaria' was suffering from a 'slight indisposition'. R.C.

Agee leaves.. temporarily

Philip Agee is being deported from Harwich on the morning of Friday 3 June. But he is only leaving temporarily. He makes it clear that he intends to return soon.

And, as the Agee-Hosenball Defence Committee points out: 'Whether Merlyn Rees likes it or not "security" is a political issue. He may have got rid of Phil Agee, but we're still here.'

Meanwhile Agee has shown his intention to carry on his work of exposing the activities of the CIA by exposing the names of five of their agents in Australia. Australian Foreign Minister Peacock, trying to smooth things over, only managed to confirm

Agee's accusation.

The dialogue at his Brisbane press conference went like this:

Peacock: 'Those allegations to date have named people we have been aware of. You know the KGB and the CIA operate here.'

Reporter: 'Those people named by Mr Agee, you have already been aware that they were CIA?' Peacock: 'Yes.'

Big problems for Malcolm Fraser's Tory Government!

The Agee-Hosenball Defence Committee invites all supporters of the campaign to Phil Agee's Temporary Farewell Party at 7.30 on 2 June at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC2.

OUT NOW! A new IMG pamphlet which pinpoints the nature of the crisis, exposes the bankruptcy of the capitalist system which produced it, and puts forward a revolutionary socialist programme for action.

This pamphlet will be the basis for an open debate on the way forward in the first eight issues of Socialist Challenge. Price 25p plus 10p p&p. Five or more copies post free (cash with order). All orders to Relgocrest, 328/9

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