

# Red Weekly

PAPER OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARXIST GROUP (BRITISH SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL)

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## BLOOD ON LABOUR'S HANDS



Terence MacSwiney, Mayor of Cork, died October, 1920 on hunger strike in Brixton Prison: a political prisoner in the hands of British imperialism.



Michael Gaughan, died June, 1974 on hunger strike in Parkhurst Prison: a political prisoner in the hands of British imperialism.



The Price sisters, MacSwiney's successors in Brixton Prison. The Labour Government would have them face the same fate, rather than meet their simple demands. The labour movement must take a stand against this vicious decision before it is too late.



Irish republican militant Michael Gaughan has died on hunger strike. He succumbed to pneumonia, almost certainly as a result of force-feeding. His blood is on the hands of Home Secretary Roy Jenkins, and the entire Labour Government, who refused to meet the simple demand that he be transferred to a Belfast prison to serve out his sentence.

By the time this paper is sold one or more of the other hunger strikers may be dead. The refusal of the Labour Government to save their lives by returning them to Ireland is not a chance decision.

Fifty-three years ago, in October 1920, Terence MacSwiney, the Republican Lord Mayor of Cork, was allowed to die in Brixton prison after seventy-five days on hunger strike. In September 1917 Thomas Ashe died from force-feeding in Mountjoy jail, Dublin.

The hunger-strikers today are being treated with the cold, ruthless, vindictiveness which British Governments have always reserved for Irish Republicans.

Jenkins' cant about the seriousness of the crime committed by the Price sisters, and the other Winchester prisoners has been exposed. Gaughan was convicted of robbing a bank of £350, hardly the gravest 'felony' committed during the Irish struggle.

The refusal to consider the demands of the prisoners for a transfer to serve their sentences in the North of Ireland has nothing to do with their alleged offences: it is a cold and deliberate political decision not to give an inch to the Republicans.

Jenkins' inflexibility in this matter, can be compared with what happened during the recent Loyalist general strike. While the British Army has been only too willing to engage in any atrocity against the catholic minority, they were clearly in sympathy with the loyalists, treating them with kid-gloves, even when the whole strategy of British Imperialism over the last two years was being destroyed.

But, as Terence MacSwiney said: 'It is not those who can inflict the most, but those that can suffer the most who will conquer.'

When MacSwiney died, almost the only response in Britain came from John MacLean in Glasgow, who produced thousands of leaflets denouncing British imperialism.

The failure of the British labour movement to take up the Irish struggle at that time helped to prevent the complete victory of the national struggle in Ireland. As a consequence the struggle now has to be fought even more bloodily, and the British state has been given the opportunity to tune up its Army for future use against the working class here.

That is why, before it is too late, there must be mass mobilisations in solidarity with the hunger strikers' demands for transfer to an Irish prison and a continuing campaign to get the British Army out of Ireland.

### RALLY

SPEAKERS' CORNER - SUNDAY, 9 JUNE - 2.30 pm  
RETURN THE IRISH POLITICAL PRISONERS

## DEFEND WAGES AGAINST INFLATION

IN A RUSH to beat the Pay Board's deadline for full back-dating, trade unionists across the country are confronting the bosses with demands for 'threshold' cost-of-living pay increases.

The Board has ruled that only agreements negotiated before the publication of the next price index—due out in mid-June—can be back-dated to receive the full benefit of threshold cash.

Accordingly, the clerical workers' union, APEX, has launched a national campaign to get threshold coverage for the 80,000 of its 130,000 members who do not have this protection. They are planning a series of ten, rotating one-day stoppages to cover the entire country. They say that they will not accept any form of partial offer, and will repeat the one-day stoppages again if they don't meet with success the first time round.

Workers at the Wickman's engineering factory in Coventry, on strike for a threshold agreement, have returned to work pending negotiations with management. But militants in the factory say they plan to come out again immediately

if progress is not made in the negotiations.

Workers in the British Leyland subsidiary, Coventry Climax, have given management seven days notice of strike action, and workers at the Chrysler plant in Baginton are banning overtime to back up demands for a threshold agreement.

The unions in Chrysler's Stoke and Ryton plants in Coventry are pressing for threshold protection in the negotiations for their annual pay review, due at the end of June.

Negotiations continue at the Coventry GEC combine over the demand for a threshold agreement to cover 15,000 manual workers. The unions have rejected a management offer of an agreement with a ceiling of £1.60.

## United action needed now

UNITED ACTION throughout the trade union movement is urgently needed to win protection from inflation for all wages, and to ensure full back-dating either by rapid settlements or by forcing the Pay Board to extend its deadline.

The APEX decision on national action is an important initiative, but by itself it is not sufficient. A one-day stoppage is not likely to bring the bosses to their knees, and by the time a second round of strikes gets underway the deadline for full backdating will be imminent.

Wherever APEX members take action they should be joined by all their fellow-workers, both in solidarity and to back up their own claims.

In every factory where the entire workforce is not yet covered by a threshold agreement a claim should be immediately lodged, and strike action prepared to back it up. Joint committees representing all the workers involved should lead the fight for the claim.

The demand should go up from every trades council, union branch and shop stewards committee in the country for national action by the trade unions, and for the preparation of concerted action—up to and including a general strike—by the TUC.

Such action could both force the bosses to concede immediately, and force the Labour Government to provide similar protection for all forms of state benefits—dole, social security, supplementary benefits, pensions and student grants.

In the absence of such decisive action by the 'leaders' of the labour movement, militants should work towards the maximum degree of united and co-ordinated action. Demands should be raised for joint national action between unions, joint meetings and actions should be organised on the regional and district level, and trades councils should organise local conferences on the fight against inflation.

## Extend threshold gains

PLANS must be laid to extend the present threshold agreements. This should be treated as a key question at every union conference this year.

The aim must be for a 'nil norm' threshold that provides 100% protection of all wages against inflation. Trade unionists must reject any idea that the present agreements end when the next round of wage negotiations open. They must fight any attempt to scrap the threshold protection, or to impose another 'threshold' which must be reached before further increases will be granted next year.

At the same time they should fight for renegotiation of the amount of the threshold increases (the present 40p is totally inadequate), and for threshold rises to be taken into account in calculating overtime and bonus payments.

The trade unions must also mount a vigorous campaign to demand full protection of the income of all those dependent on state benefits—pensioners, students, the poor, the unemployed.

The Ulster Workers Council strike may well enter the bourgeois history books as an example of the power of workers' action.

But to adapt Mark Twain's dictum—there are lies, damn lies and history. This particular lie is exposed not just by the reactionary political nature of the strike, but by an examination of the reasons for its victory.

The strike could not, in fact, have succeeded without the support of the protestant middle-class and small capital, and the collusion or benevolent neutrality of the security forces.

In this it contrasted with the strike launched by the Loyalist Association of Workers (LAW) in February 1973, when Whitelaw deliberately provoked and won a trial of strength before the loyalists were ready.

#### INTIMIDATION

The Ulster Workers Council is not a mass organisation, as was LAW. Its membership was built up clandestinely, amongst workers in key jobs—mainly in the power stations. At the start of the strike it used a combination of power cuts and massive intimidation to bring most of industry to a halt.

But the British Government made no serious response—the verbal determination of Stan Orme and Merlyn Rees was not matched by Army action against the intimidation. The UWC, which had begun by being very vague in its demands, began to be more insistent in calling for fresh Assembly elections.

# WHY THE LOYALISTS WON

When the vicious sectarianism of the strike was underlined by the Dublin bombings, the newspapers began to talk about the inevitability of troops being sent into the power stations, the UWC immediately pulled back from its threatened complete power shut-down, in order to arrest this threat.

But this temporary faint-heartedness was overcome when the Army failed to give adequate protection to the 'back-to-work' marches, and then when, having acted on orders to dismantle loyalist barricades they watched calmly as they were re-erected a few yards away.

#### WHOLE CARCASE

It was not surprising then, that the UWC was not satisfied with the postponement of the Council of

Ireland. By that time they wanted not just a pound of flesh but the whole carcase of Sunningdale.

This led to the turning point of the crisis. The postponement of the Council had almost split the Executive. To keep it together, it was decided to move into the power stations.

But this immediately met with resistance at the highest levels of the Army. Top generals told Wilson that the Army did not have the capacity to run the power stations, and that such action would require the calling up of the Reserves, a politically disastrous option.

In trying to get out of this corner the Government settled for a contingency plan to take over the distribution of petrol. This only escalated the strike, however, and won it the support of the protestant

middle-class, who were outraged because the Army was able to distribute less petrol than the UWC had done.

With the farmers joining in—surrounding the Stormont parliament buildings with their tractors—Faulkner was advised by top Northern Ireland civil servants that a total power shut-down would, in a few days, lead to chaos and drastic loss of life.

When his demand for negotiations with the UWC was refused, he resigned. Five months of power-sharing, and two years of British planning, vanished as if they had never been.

#### UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

There are still unanswered questions. Was it possible for the Army to run the power stations? Was a total shut-down inevitable, given the fact that the electricity grid in the North is linked with that of the South? Was the Labour Government's indecision due to a lack of faith in the ability of the Executive to survive, or pressure from the Army?

Two firm conclusions can be drawn. The British Army is only an effective force when used against the catholic minority, and any action by a British Government, whatever the intentions, cannot seriously change the sectarian nature of the State.

The hapless Paddy Devlin, SDLP Minister for Health and Social Security, who resigned on 17 May but was persuaded to 'freeze' this during the crisis, gave vivid evidence of the sectarian bias of the British

Government's actions.

In his resignation letter he stated that he had told Rees that he would not remain in charge of a Department which was being used to paralyse rent and rates strikers, without evidence that internment and detention were being phased out.

He complained of assaults against internees by the Army, the increasing numbers detained, failure to keep promises about large-scale releases, 'inertia' over sectarian assassinations, and Rees's intention, without consulting the SDLP, to re-activate the Emergency Powers Act, despite commitments by his predecessor, Francis Pym, that the opposite would happen.

In other words, the Executive was already being undermined by necessary concessions to the Unionists, the State machine, and the British Army, who all have a vested interest in preventing a conflict with the mass of the loyalists, while trying to stamp out the resistance of the catholic minority.

Far from viewing the UWC strike as an example of working class power, the British labour movement should take note of the power which the top brass of the Army wielded at a decisive moment in the crisis.

That power could be used against working class struggles here, and the methods that would be applied were being tested in the catholic ghettos of the Six Counties, at the same time that the Army was refusing to act against sectarian reaction.

Bob Purdie

AN ENQUIRY has been set up by the Executive of the Transport and General Workers Union into the grievances of the Asian strikers at Imperial Typewriters, Leicester.

The TGWU Regional Committee has been given the task of organising the enquiry. The strikers are complaining that they have been prevented from electing Asian shop stewards, and that the white shop stewards in the factory refused to take up their grievances, both about racial discrimination by the management, and over the bonus system.

The Executive's decision followed a lobby of Transport House in London, by 300 strikers, on Friday, 31 May.

A large number of women strikers

## Imperial strikers win union enquiry

took part in the lobby. The women have been especially militant in this dispute, and in fact initiated the walk-out 5 weeks ago.

Mrs Doshe, a member of the Strike Committee, told *Red Weekly* about the treatment they receive in the factory:

'We are treated like dogs by the management and the white shop stewards alike. Although the women in the factory are only paid 50% of the male rate, the Asian women receive

less than the white women workers. Discipline is strict — no talking on the line for Asian women, but white women can carry on as much as they like'.

She also said that the women, many of whom have difficulty with English, are denied proper representation because they cannot communicate with the stewards. She recounted how one Asian woman was reduced to tears by the bullying of a shop steward, trying to force her

to speak English.

The women have also come in for special attention from the police, who have stepped up their harassment of the picket lines. On Thursday (30 May) nine strikers were arrested. The police have been demanding to see pickets' passports, once more exploiting the anti-working class nature of the 1971 Immigration Act.

#### PRESS

The press campaign against the strikers continues. When the strike committee refused to co-operate with the Race Relations Board enquiry into the factory, the *Leicester Mercury* argued that this exposed as fraudulent their claims of racial discrimination. But in fact this is hardly surprising, since George Bromley, the T&G district secretary who has been trying to smash the strike, was a founder member of the East Midlands conciliation committee of the Board. Black workers have also been disgusted by the white-wash job the Board did on the recent struggle at Harwood Cash in Mansfield.

Another aspect of the press campaign has been to attack 'outsiders' who are 'running' the strike. This is aimed particularly against prominent black militant Bennie Bunsee who has been helping the Strike Committee.

H. Khetani, a member of the strike committee, put the view of most Imperial strikers: 'We invited in Bennie Bunsee and we are prepared to accept help from anybody. We choose our friends, not the *Leicester Mercury*'.

Bunsee commented: 'I would welcome a situation where the local officials were helping the strikers and advising them. But they aren't. In this situation all socialists have a duty to help as much as they can.'

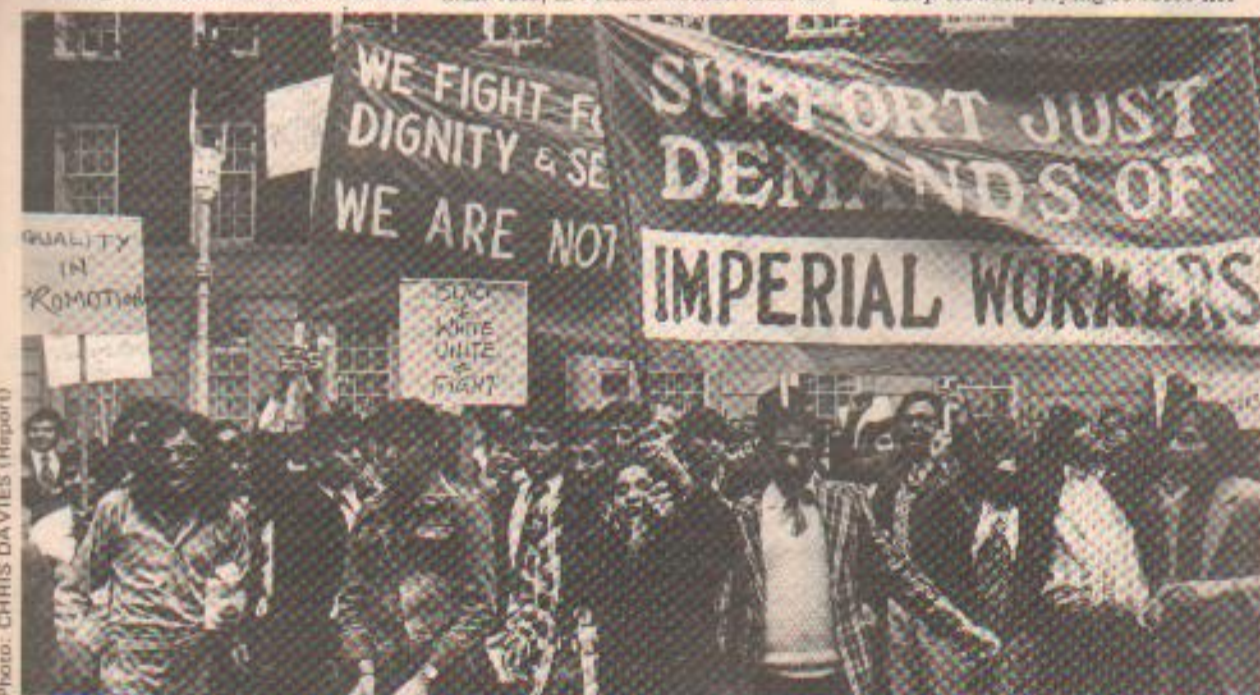
The Strike Committee has written a letter to national TGWU official Moss Evans, who discussed with them during the lobby and promised to take up their demands with the T&G Executive: 'We feel heartened that responsible trade union intervention will be brought into this dispute and we hope it will be carried right through.' H. Khetani commented: 'We welcome the promises but what we really want is action. The union must make this strike official.'

The maximum pressure must be mounted to force the T&G to officially recognise the strike but the fight will not end there. The Art Castings dispute in Coventry was made official but the refusal of the union to impose effective blacking meant that it was lost anyway. And the enquiry must be serious, and not an attempt to get G. Bromley 'JP' off the hook.

The labour movement can ensure that the T&G leadership does not rat on this strike by extending maximum solidarity to the strikers. The strike committee are calling a demonstration on Sunday 16 June, starting at Spinney Hill Park, Leicester at 2 pm. It is essential that a big mobilisation is made throughout the trade union movement for this demonstration.

ANDREW JENKINS

East London IMG is organising a public meeting with Bennie Bunsee, and two members of the Strike Committee, at 7.30 pm, in East Ham Town Hall on Tuesday 11 June. And a coach is being organised for the Leicester Demo. on the 16th. For information phone 01-278 9529. 'The Struggle at Imperial Typewriters', a Leicester and Nottingham IMG pamphlet, 3p each plus postage. Send money with orders to 56 Park Road, Lenton, Nottingham.



Strikers from Imperial Typewriters lobby Transport & General Workers Union headquarters in London last Friday

THE BUREAUCRATS of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) are falling over themselves to turn retreat into total defeat. This follows the forcing back to work of the Islington branch by the national Executive's decision to stop strike pay.

The trade union side of the National Joint Council, the local government negotiating body, decided last weekend to call off the one day strike for the national pay claim, and all action over the London Weighting.

The NALGO delegates on the NJC split 10/10. Only the votes of the six rep-

## NALGO leaders in full flight

representatives from other unions swung the balance.

This exemplifies the contradictory attitude shown by the NALGO leadership since the start of the campaign. They have always been scared of a real mobilisation

of the rank-and-file, and have put forward weak and conciliatory tactics, to guard against being outflanked by the membership.

The NJC recommendation will be discussed at the union's Executive and National Local Government Committee

meetings next weekend. It seems likely that the bureaucrats will argue that there is little support for action among local government workers. Since NALGO's annual conference is taking place next week, they may be hoping to push through a sell out there, as they did last year when they requested a £1 plus 4% pay limit.

This, the latest example of the 'official leadership's' sabotage of effective action, is the strongest argument for democratically elected strike committees, representing those workers taking action, to organise the struggle.

The position of those sections taking action in London is crucial for both the national and London allowance claims, and without some on-going organisation to take over the leadership of the struggles

the retreat of the union leadership will cause widespread demoralisation.

The meeting called by Islington last Friday for all striking NALGO members failed to solve the problems of how to build such an organisation and leadership.

Although an action committee was set up it was restricted to official branch delegates, ignoring the problem of how to spread the strikes.

The action committee will have to be rapidly transformed into a means of centralising and extending actions, regardless of their 'official' status. Otherwise militants will be left sitting on their hands, unable to block the bureaucrats retreat.

ALAN BENNETT

# NO RETREAT ON THE FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM

STUDENTS up and down the country are sharply divided over the National Union of Students' ban on racist and fascist speakers. The NUS conference which meets in London next weekend will be discussing whether or not to overturn it.

Official NUS policy, established a few weeks ago at Liverpool, is to ban racist and fascist speakers 'by any means necessary' including 'disruption of meetings'. Many students unions have since rejected this policy, calling for free speech for racists and fascists like anyone else. A small number, notably Kent, have decided to fight for the original position. The NUS Executive has retreated to a middle-of-the-road position, wanting to retain the 'no platform' position while rejecting direct action to back it up.

It is absolutely essential that NUS sticks to its original policy. The Executive's position misses the whole point about the 'no platform' policy.

## AGITATION

For what is the essential point of fascist agitation? The fascists preach that the problems of the workers and the middle groups of society can only be solved by ridding the 'nation' of 'divisive' elements: communists, militant workers, Jews, black people, and even 'unpatriotic' financiers. Being very practical people, the fascists teach that Parliament cannot be depended on to do this job - only mass organisation to carry out violence and intimidation will do the trick.

The fascists are out to build a paramilitary organisation which can organise this terror, assaulting and eventually exterminating those whom it sees as guilty of 'dividing the nation'. As history warns us, this includes hundreds of thousands of the most politically conscious workers, the backbone of the workers' movement.



Part of the 50-strong picket, which successfully dispersed a group of National Front adherents in Basingstoke, at the Carnival Hall on Wednesday night. Supporters of the picket included students, hospital workers and engineers. Basingstoke has been singled out by the Front for special attention and to counter this threat, an Anti-Fascist Committee has now been formed, which includes members of the Communist Party, the Labour Party, as well individual militants and members of the IMG. The committee is attempting to get official Labour Party and trade union delegates and the issue has already found a favourable response on the Trades Council.

## ITALY - the shape of things to come ?

THE INHABITANTS of the northern Italian city of Brescia live continually under the cloud of indiscriminate fascist violence.

A centre of Italian fascist activities, Brescia has seen no less than nine bombings of left-wing political headquarters and trade union offices this year alone.

The fascists carry out their activity protected by a conspiracy between the police, the courts and the organisations of the extreme right. Open preparation of violent actions has been ignored by the police, and fascist terrorists, if apprehended, can usually count on lenient treatment. This is hardly surprising, since more

Even where it doesn't lead directly to recruitment to an organised right-wing group, racist and fascist agitation stirs up others to commit violence against fascists' targets, particularly black people. Quite apart from the 'respectable' cover racists like Enoch Powell give to the fascists (the NF sometimes operates through Powell Supporters Groups in factories), the racists stir up assaults and intimidation directed against black people, whether by police, fascist thugs, immigration officials, or skin-head gangs.

## FACTS

Without starting from these basic facts, arguments around the 'no platform' position inevitably become bogged down in philosophical debates about 'relative and absolute freedom' or abstract moral principles like 'free speech'. In a pamphlet which the IMG has published, and sold widely on campuses, called 'Racists and Fascists - Free Speech Will Not Stop Them', we point out that the capitalist class does not use such fancy principles to decide who shall speak and who shall be silenced, or whether to pursue peaceful or violent tactics.

However, many students do not see that the fascists represent such a threat. Either they don't know about the violent activities of groups like the National Front, or they consider them to be 'accidental' excesses.

A second IMG publication 'Fascism - Smash It Now' attempts to deal with these problems. It gives an account of contemporary fascist violence in Western Europe. It describes, for example, Ordre Nouveau's participation in violent attacks on immigrant workers in France, and the extensive bombings carried out by the fascist MSI in Italy since 1969.

National Front violence is less spectacular but no less significant. Lack of awareness about it is perhaps understandable. After all, Fleet Street

does not give the same publicity to the near blinding of a black student by the NF in Nottingham as it does to the discomforts suffered by Harold Soref in climbing over a wall at Oxford University. The attack by the NF on a Maoist bookshop in January, in which the shop was smashed and its occupants beaten up, did not give rise to a great wringing of hands at the offices of Beaverbrook Press.

on the head from right-wing candidate Giscard d'Estaing in the French elections, when he used them as a stewarding force for his public meetings. The MSI is given cover in Italy by a massive conspiracy among officials in the Italian police and military.

## STRATEGY

Stopping fascist activities 'by any means necessary' is part of a strategy

## Meanwhile outside...

While the delegates to the NUS Conference are voting, the National Front will be showing it is alive, well and kicking.

The Front has called a national demonstration to protest against the 'concessions' which the Labour Government has given to immigrant families. But as they assemble at Central Hall Westminster next Saturday (2.30 p.m.) and prepare to march to Conway Hall, they will also be displaying their defiance of the students at that moment meeting in London University.

If the delegates supporting free speech for racists and fascists lose the vote, the NF hopes to minimise the impact of this defeat with a show of strength on the streets of London. If, on the other hand, the NUS votes to reopen the campuses to reactionary spokesmen, the NF march will represent a promise to return with fists as well as rhetoric.

Fascists should always be countered when they take to the streets. But this occasion is special. It is a question of backing up the anti-fascist militants in the colleges, and an opportunity for all anti-fascist militants to follow the students' lead by carrying the 'no platform' policy into the workers' movement. It is also a way in which all those determined to fight racism and fascism can stress once again to the NUS that it must stand firm.

'Liberation' is organising a planning meeting this week for a united front counter-demonstration. We call on all working class organisations to build an effective counter-demonstration to the NF for the 15th.

Nor were threats by the Front to bust up Labour Party meetings during the general election thought newsworthy, and recent assaults on the Manchester Martyrs March and the LPYS anti-racist demonstration in Bradford got as little publicity as the events themselves.

These incidents show that violence is not something which the fascists undertake only when they have seized power. It accompanies fascist movements from their earliest days. Without it, they would not grow, for the physical attacks launched by the fascists embody a political strategy for certain layers in society brought to ruin or despair by capitalism, but unable to find an answer in the workers' movement. Without these military adventures, the fascists would have nothing to offer to big business in return for its political and financial support.

## IMMIGRANT POGROMS

True, the ruling class is not planning to put the fascists into power just yet. But it recognises them as useful running dogs, able to perform a variety of valuable services. The anti-immigrant pogroms in France and NF attacks in Britain are useful in discouraging black workers from fighting against their super-exploitation as a migrant reserve army. The bombs in Italy have panicked trade union bureaucrats into calling off strikes, and given the Government a chance to launch massive repression of the left. Ordre Nouveau received a pat

aimed at breaking up the confidence, organisation and combativity on which the lethal cycle of fascist growth depends. This is nothing more than self-defence, and it must be done now before the fascists get bigger and bolder. For this reason the revolutionary left will continue the

Last week the National Front topped off their success in the Newham by-election (where they took 12% of the vote and pushed the Tories into fourth place) by capturing 25% of the vote in a Leicester council by-election, coming second after the Tory victor.

Of course, all kinds of 'special' circumstances exist in local council elections. But this result is one more example of the careful attention the NF has been paying to base-building in the recent period. It is only a short step from this position to the forging of a viable fascist movement with the beginnings of a mass base.

In OXFORD, Martin Webster and Richard Lawson (NF student organiser) addressed an audience of 60 inside the Town Hall on 21 May, while 150 police kept a 400-strong picket at bay. The demonstrators were there in response to



These are some of the supporters of the National Front in Brent (a high immigrant area), preparing for their motor-cade through the Borough last Saturday. The response of the Labour council to their activities has been pathetic, even though they are putting their racist filth out round schools. The labour movement must take their threat seriously - liberalism and 'free speech' will not stop them.

## IMG PUBLIC MEETING:

'No Platform to Racists & Fascists' Speakers will include: TARIQ ALI and a speaker from the National Committee of Trade Unions Against Racism

London University, Institute of Education (off Malet St WC 1). FRIDAY JUNE 14th. 8.00pm.

struggle even though its actions are not endorsed by mass organisations, although we will continually fight for mass involvement.

Of course, it is necessary to fight the ideas of the fascists too. But this task should not cut across the equally important job of driving them off the streets. It is necessary to fight against racism, national chauvinism, sexism and pro-imperialist ideas in the working class all the time.

The policy of the NUS could be the first step in building a real movement against the fascists, encompassing students, workers and black people. But instead of going forward, the NUS Executive is proposing to go back. Such retreats will only encourage the fascists.

## UNITED FRONT

The left made it easy for the NUS Executive to retreat by rejecting the IMG's proposal for a national united front leadership for the anti-fascist campaign. The unfavourable mass response to the resolution, on which the Executive bases its retreat, flows partly from the lack of preparation by the left in the colleges.

The left must launch a united counter-offensive to defend the original resolution. The National Front will be in a good position to make big gains in the coming winter if unemployment rises to the expected 1-1½ million. The NUS could form the spearhead of a militant campaign to isolate the National Front, especially in the working class, before the crisis of capitalist society allows fascism to make any further progress.

TOM CAMERON

## ...and elsewhere

a call by the Oxford Trades Council, supported by local trade unionists, Ruskin College and other students, and local socialist groups.

At a meeting held before the picket dispersed, Joe Richards, chairman of the Trades Council, urged that the offensive against fascism be continued. This was echoed by the other speaker, a militant from Cowley, who laid the blame for the meeting taking place at the door of the Labour-controlled council, who had been approached by the Trades Council to refuse the NF the hall.

In the London borough of BRENT, militants in the North West London Committee Against Racism are organising against local NF activity.

The Committee will be mounting a picket of the next Brent Council meeting, to back up their demand that the Labour-controlled council should refuse all facilities to the NF. They are also putting out a counter-leaflet, explaining what the NF is and what it stands for, for distribution to those schools which the Front has singled out for special attention.

# Former Clay Cross councillor **DAVID SKINNER** explains in an interview with 'Red Weekly' how he sees the issues facing the delegates

# THE CLAY CROSS CONFERENCE

*You've mentioned that the Labour Party has sold you down the river. Why do you think this happened?*

The trouble with the Labour Party is that there's really two parties. There's one in the privileged positions of Parliament, those who can afford to sit back nicely with a nice Parliamentary salary, and who also, may I add, dictate the policy of the party.

The Cabinet and the Parliamentary Labour Party, and some of the trade union leaders—we mustn't forget them—control the party. They think that their collective decisions override the decisions of the Annual Conference. Well, it's been on the cards for a number of years that the rank and file are gradually becoming more politically aware. They're beginning to see that decisions are just being flouted left, right and centre.

We must never forget what the composition of the National Executive Committee is. It's just a sop to the Parliamentarians. They control it along with the right wing leadership of the trade union movement. We've got 12 trade union leaders on there, and six 'constituency' MPs. Now these MPs, the so-called 'left', reflect very little of what the rank and file want. What these MPs want of the NEC, is to make their own policy and carve a career out of it.

We have now taken the line that the NEC should be restructured. OK, you can have your 12 trade union leaders, because they represent some 4½ million affiliated members, but when it comes down to the representatives of the constituencies, then it's a different thing. Nowhere in the whole structure of the NEC are there any rank and file voices, apart from those like Joan Maynard, just breaking through the Women's Sec-

tion. So what we would like to see is the NEC become the broad-based voice of all the movement. We would scrap all these sections, so that the constituency representatives wouldn't be MPs but rank and file members.

*What conclusions do you draw from these lessons you've learnt about the structure of the Labour Party, now that Labour's in Government?*

You've got those who support and ally themselves to the Labour Party, who take part in a political struggle like the Pentonville 5, and who get the mass backing of the movement. But when Labour's in and we're confronting a Labour Government, you find that those people who supported us under the Tories are still there, but whereas it was waves to rock the boat under the Tories, it's just ripples now.

We've got this atmosphere 'we've got a Labour Government, now let's not try to embarrass it too much, let's not wash our dirty linen in public, let's not expose the wrongs of the Labour Government'. When you start like that you're quickly on the slippery road back to 1964-70.

You can see the strategy of the Labour Government: they give one or two careers within the Tribune group posts in the Government—Varley, Heffer, Orme, etc—who are all prepared to relinquish their principles to save their Parliamentary career and the salary that goes with it.

You've got this disgraceful attitude relating to Chile, when a minister can say to Eric Heffer 'Shut up or resign' and he doesn't resign because he's getting the money. And you've got people like Judith Hart, Chairman of the Chile Solidarity Campaign, and she remains in the Labour Party Cabinet—that same body that

has made a decision that the warship sales should go on. There should have been at least half a dozen resignations from the Government.

Don't let anyone tell me 'if that had happened then they would have been replaced by right-wingers, pro-Marketisers etc, at least in that situation, we'd know what we're fighting.

*What difference do you think the return of a Labour Government has made to the working class struggle?*

You see you've got that mysterious organisation called the TUC. If the Tories had been in, they'd have done something about the NIRC because the engineers would have pushed the TUC into it: some time or another, after all the money had been seized, the trade union movement would have had to stand by their brothers in the AUEW. Stage 3 would have been broken, it would have been smashed because the ordinary rank-and-file members in the trade unions would push it.

A call will be made from our conference regarding the four items on the agenda. You've got to have more than just two parties with different names—Labour and Tory. But you've got this attitude 'We've got a Labour Government, let's keep it in and build up a larger majority'. The only problem is, and I'd like to see a Labour Government with a larger majority, that then they'll shove us even further into the dirt. It would pursue the most right-wing policy it could, the Left would splinter in all directions as it usually does, because it's full of careerists. What will happen then, of course is that the Labour Government could never get re-elected.

That's why the rank and file have got to be taught. We in Clay Cross have been doing it for the last ten years, and now everyone in Clay Cross is politically aware—when they read their *Suns* and *Daily Mirrors* they read between the lines, and this is what's got to happen within the whole movement.

The only problem with that is we've got so many splinter groups who are tearing at each other's throats, all with their different papers and what have you, and they all want to get that increased membership. I'm all for it, but you need the situation like we've got in Clay Cross—different political opinions united on the same platform, which is what the local Labour Party is. Despite being affiliated to the Labour Party, Clay Cross's policies are those of the working class.

*So we must continue the struggle whichever of the two major parties is in Government?*

Oh yes, you don't ease up. When you're approaching the winning post, and you get a change of Government, you don't stop and change your procedure altogether. There were people at the 1973 Labour Party Conference who said 'If only we had a Labour Government, then everything would be lovely'. But I was aware, and so were some of my colleagues, that that wouldn't be the case. Harold Wilson when he makes very catchy phrases like 'all dogs are only allowed one bite' referring to High Court judges, that was just a figure of speech for those people he was talking to, not a pledge for action.

*What do you hope will come out of your conference?*

Well, we've no set ideas yet. On the question of Chile there will be resolutions from the floor and they will be composed and that will be conveyed to the Labour Party and

the Labour Government. Also on the question of the AUEW, Clay Cross and the Shrewsbury 6.

The Conference is basically to remind the Labour Government most strongly that we're not prepared to accept this 'minority' Government to carry out a 'minority' form of Socialism. If the Tories could bring it down and it went to an election they would win hands down, so why the hell don't they carry out some Socialist policies—confront them and shove them into a corner so they can't creep any further. So all this talk about anarchy and the Rule of Law can be thrown away. I've known enough about the law in the last two years, and I know that the law is made of plastic—it only needs to be challenged and it can be changed.

The resolutions will not be written before the conference and then put to it. The resolutions will be made up by speakers from the platform and from the floor, composited and then put to the vote. Of course, the resolutions will aim to remind the Labour Government of its promises, but at the same time we will plan action if necessary. Resolutions have no meaning whatsoever unless you're prepared to back them up in numbers.

The Labour Government will not get the idea that this conference will come and go—this is just a start. The conference will terminate in Blackpool in October at the Labour Party Conference and make sure that the Government carries them out.

*What sort of action would you like to see coming out of the Conference?* What I'd like to see is the drawing up of a plan of action. We may see a lobby of Parliament. It may well be that the constituency delegates represented will put their MPs on the spot by demanding that these things are debated out on the floor of the House and not in a tea room. It's got to be on the floor of the House. It may well be that we go to the Public Gallery and make some scenes there.

As far as industrial action is concerned, when the assets of the AUEW were seized the TUC should have called a general strike. But the problem is that this conference won't be quite like those called by the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU). They were composed of trade unionists who could go back to their branches, shop stewards committees etc, with a call for industrial action. Although we have issued some 200 delegates credentials to trade union bodies, there will be in the main constituencies present.

If the trade unionists want to propose industrial action they can do so. I would advocate strike action if it was necessary. We should have had such a call from the leadership, who should be elected, not appointed, and re-elected just like local councillors and shop stewards etc. Of course, Hugh Scanlon might have a battle on his hands every year, but this is what democracy is all about.

If a call for strike action comes from the conference then that's what the conference is all about.

*Is there going to be any form of continuing organisation set up from the conference?* There'll probably be an organisation come out of it, mainly composed of Labour Party members, along the line of the Workers' Control Group and the Campaign for Party Democracy, to unify the rank and file in the run up to the next Labour Party Conference.

## IMG RESOURCES

*The International Marxist Group will be presenting a report on the Clay Cross conference:*

'This conference is the first opportunity together on a national scale, to draw the lessons from the Labour Government. As such this conference, by bringing together councillors, workers and tenants, must give us a clear picture of the situation. It is increasingly obvious that the organisations under the democratic control of the workers, pledged to opposition to Phase 3 have achieved very little. The Labour Government—which is a Government of the working class and put in office by the workers' movement, is not carrying out its promises, and is not serving the interests of the workers.'

'The fight on the question of democracy within the Labour Party—the demand for a conference to be elected, and the demand for a conference to be elected, but must go far beyond it. This democracy must be a democracy of the working class, at the moment mainly taking the form of a conference to discuss key questions of the day.'

'The Labour Government is maintaining a policy of inflation. There is already discussion of further attacks on wages. This takes place at a time of massive inflation—over 10% in some areas.'

'To launch the struggle on these central issues, the IMG will be presenting itself to fight for the following demands:

- Immediate repeal of Phase 3—no wage controls
- Immediate release of the trade unionists, and a full pardon for all those convicted
- Repeal of all anti-union laws, enactment of the right to picket, and abolition of the conspiracy laws
- Full support for the nurses' and health workers' strike, and action by other groups of workers.
- Full protection of wages from inflation

'The fight for these demands, in industry and in the Labour Party, can only be organised through the formation of a workers' democracy. The concrete steps that are required are:

- The convening of local conferences of the Labour Party, and left groups to discuss the above demands.
- The encouragement of democratic struggles—elected strike and occupation committees.
- The launching of a campaign for the election of workers' representatives to the Labour Party, for an enquiry into allegations of corruption.
- The organisation of a mass demonstration to demand an end to the Labour Party, and the lifting of the surcharge on wages of former Clay Cross councillors under the AUEW.

*The IMG will also be presenting a report on the situation in Ireland, and the Chile solidarity campaign.*

## & WOMEN'S DEMONSTRATION



Shrewsbury pickets Ricky Tomlinson (left) Monday, and are seen here with their wives at a demonstration for a full pardon for all those convicted



'The struggle will continue'—a point made by Bristol Joint Housing Action Committee, who last weekend occupied this six-storey office block standing empty in the centre of the city. Backing for the action has come from Bristol Trades Council and several prominent figures in the labour movement.

# CLAY CROSS CONFERENCE

## RESOLUTION

Propose the following resolution to

socialists and militants, meeting to discuss the initial months of the Labour Party's struggle of the Clay Cross conference on the burning issues of the day. The problem of workers' democracy of the working class are not in fact a matter of Trade Unions which were set up under the Labour Government. In the absence of election of union officials and the existence of a party based on the organisations of working people—is not responsible for decisions of the workers' movement—working class.

The workers' movement must take the initiative for the Government to be subordinate to the ending of bans and proscriptions—based on the struggle of the working class through the trade unions, on the Tory's Phase 3 incomes policy, the form of a wages freeze. This has gone up by more than 8% in the last year. This conference should commit

itself to the following

demands:

1. Immediate recall of all Labour Party and Communist Party resolutions on the current economic situation.

2. Immediate recall of all Labour Party and Communist Party resolutions on the current economic situation.

3. Immediate recall of all Labour Party and Communist Party resolutions on the current economic situation.

4. Immediate recall of all Labour Party and Communist Party resolutions on the current economic situation.

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26. Immediate recall of all Labour Party and Communist Party resolutions on the current economic situation.

27. Immediate recall of all Labour Party and Communist Party resolutions on the current economic situation.

# and ALAN JONES puts the position of the IMG

David Skinner has raised many important questions for socialists. The central points he makes about the Labour Party can serve to open up a debate on some of these decisive questions.

In our view Comrade Skinner gives a wrong emphasis in concentrating almost exclusively on developments within the Labour Party—and in particular on the constituency section of the Party. This is natural, of course, if you come from a fighting part of the Labour Party such as Clay Cross. But on a national scale it leads to wrong ideas and policies.

The Labour Party is the only truly mass party of the British working class. But this must not blind us to important changes that have taken place in recent years.

### TRADE UNIONS

At one time almost all those active in the trade union and socialist movement, apart from a small number in the Communist Party, were active in the Labour Party. But in recent years this situation has changed drastically. Over the past 20 years individual membership of the Labour Party has declined by 200,000 on paper, and far more in practice. The decline of its youth wing—the future of any political organisation—is even more dramatic.

Meanwhile forces active outside the constituency Labour Parties have shown a real ability to take action. Tens of thousands of trade union militants who are not in constituency Labour Parties have played a leading role in strikes. Big political demonstrations have been led by the revolutionary left on Vietnam, Chile and Ireland.

None of this means that the Labour Party has ceased to be of central political importance for the development of the working class movement. But to think solely in terms of the Labour Party will lead to the missing of important opportunities.

Chile is a good example. The Clay Cross comrades have correctly put this on the agenda of the conference. Chile has provoked a big row in the Labour Party. But where has the action on Chile come from so far?

One of the most important actions has been the blacking of Chilean goods. This was not organised by the Labour Party, but by the trade unions, and involved important initiatives by many people not in the Labour Party.

The demonstration of 8,000 people held on 5 May was composed very largely (at least two thirds) of militants from revolutionary left organisations. The Labour Party presence was very small.

It is vital that sections of the Labour Party take up Chile. But if people had thought, as for example, the Militant current did, solely in terms of action by the Labour Party they would have missed the opportunity to get the ball rolling.

This lesson must be applied in deciding what to do on Chile after the Clay Cross conference. Comrade Skinner says resolutions will be taken, composed and sent to the Labour Government. This is useful. But it is not sufficient. A massive demonstration must be held in September on the anniversary of the coup. The blacking campaign must be stepped up. These tasks can best be carried out by building branches of the Chile Solidarity Campaign. But to do this effectively will mean grouping together not just forces in the Labour Party, but also the Communist Party, the International Marxist Group, the International Socialists

and many others.

Other similar cases could be given where forces outside the Labour Party are decisive. The Women's Liberation Movement and the struggle for equal pay and against the oppression of women, the revolutionary left and black organisations in the struggle against racism and fascism, the revolutionary left and Irish organisations in the struggle to withdraw British troops from Ireland.

If you do not think in wider terms than the Labour Party a whole series of tremendous opportunities for socialist struggle will be missed.

### WORKERS DEMOCRACY

Seeing things too much in terms of the Labour Party also leads comrade Skinner to miss out some very important points connected with the struggle for workers' democracy. He makes some very important demands about democracy in the Labour Party: the demand that the Parliamentary Party be brought under the control of the conference, that the composition of the NEC should be altered, and so on. We should add further demands, such as the ending of all bans and proscriptions. But the Labour Party is not the only front on which the struggle for working class democracy must be fought. Just as important is the fight for democracy in the trade unions and for the democratic organisation of workers' struggles. This involves demands for election of all union officials with right of immediate recall, election of strike committees, and so on, as well as demands for democracy in the Labour Party.

The question of extending the struggle for workers' democracy beyond the fight in the Labour Party becomes all the more important in view of the enormous development in the trade union movement over the last few years.

While the individual membership of the Labour Party has been declining, the trade unions have been recruiting massively. Even more important than the membership increase has been the role played by the unions in the class struggle. The miners' strikes, Upper Clyde Shipbuilders, the strikes against the Industrial Relations Act, the freeing of the Pentonville Five, these are the great pages of the working class struggle of the last five years.

Of course, practically every active trade unionist is an affiliated member of the Labour Party. But this fact should not mislead us into thinking that trade union militants can simply be considered together with members of constituency parties as 'Labour Party members'. This would blind us to the fact that whereas ten years ago many thousands of militants engaged in socialist struggle through constituency Labour Parties, now they refuse to do so. They do not join their local Labour Parties, and instead engage in the struggle through the trade unions. It is here, in the unions, that the massive forces for socialist struggle now lie.

United action by members of the Labour Party, Communist Party, and the revolutionary left is very important. But the way to involve really massive numbers in struggle is through the fight for political action by trade union organisations.

### DIRECT ACTION

The struggle to win the unions to political action is vital in two ways. First, it affects the way socialists take up the key issues of the day—



IMG contingent on 5 May Chile demo — Clay Cross conference must recognise that forces outside the Labour Party have played a crucial role in launching such actions

inflation, unemployment, Chile, pensions and so on. Resolutions for the Labour Party Conference can be valuable but it is even more important to win the unions to direct action on these questions. United industrial action, if necessary a general strike, can impose key demands on a recalcitrant Labour Government, or even a Tory one, in a way resolutions to the Labour Party Conference never could.

Second, the key importance of the trade unions determines what organisations the struggle must be organised through. Struggle after struggle show that it is trade union involvement and support which is vital for the movement against troops in Ireland, on Chile, in the local conferences which have taken place on the Tory Government, on the struggle for the liberation of women, and so on. This was implicitly recognised by the Clay Cross comrades when they opened up their conference not just to Labour Parties but to trade union bodies as well.

This fight to win the unions to socialist political action is crucial for struggle both inside and outside the Labour Party. Within the Labour Party, given its constitution, it is impossible to get anything done without winning the unions. Outside, the unions can take direct action even where Labour refuses to act. It is the unions which have the heavy battalions necessary to win the decisive struggles.

Every major mass upsurge of the working class has given rise to organisations which go well beyond the Labour Party. Usually the trade unions become the core of the organisations needed. For example, the National Council of Action which prevented a British invasion of Russia in 1920 by its threat of industrial action, had less than one third of its delegates elected from Labour Party constituencies. The Councils of Action which organised the 1926 General Strike in the localities included Labour Party branches, but mostly grew out of the Trades Councils. Even the big demonstrations against Suez in 1956 were not organised simply by the Labour Party but by the National Council of Labour, which included the TUC. The best example of all is the Leeds Congress of Workers and Soldiers Delegates—probably the highest organisational form yet produced by the British working class. This body, which met in 1917, included delegates from the Labour Party, but delegates were also there from the British Socialist Party (which later merged to form the Communist Party), women's organisations, Co-operative societies, and small socialist organisations. The largest group of delegates came from the trade union bodies.

### MASS UPSURGE

The struggle has not yet reached the level of the 1920s. But these historical examples, and the facts about the present struggles, show

clearly that in periods of mass upsurge the political organisation of the working class will extend far wider than just the Labour Party, and the trade unions will form the core of it.

The development of local organisations which involve not only the Labour Party but also other political groups, and which include major participation from the unions, is not only important for the immediate struggles, but is also the way forward in the struggle for socialism. The Clay Cross conference itself, which includes not only Labour Parties, but also the revolutionary left, the Communist Party and, most important of all, the trade unions, also shows what we can hope to see in the future on a national level.

No matter what organisations the struggle of the working class will throw up as it develops, none of them will be any use unless the workers themselves control the leadership of these organisations. The same must apply to any Government that claims to represent workers' interests.

The Labour Party is a party of the working class—based on the organisations of the working class. As long as no other party of the working class has the support of a majority of workers, militants must support Labour forming the Government. But as David Skinner points out, when Labour is in government it denies all responsibility to the organisations of the working class. Instead it bases itself on the civil service, on the pseudo-democracy of Parliament, and on its 'governmental rights'.

It is in the interests of all militants to end this situation: the Labour Government must be responsible to the organisations of the working class and not to Parliament and the capitalist State. This means that the Government must be under the control of the organisations of the working class. They should decide on its policies, and not the Parliamentary Labour Party or the cabinet.

Policies should be carried out through the organisations of the working class, not through the bureaucratic and treacherous machinery of the civil service, army, courts and police. Prices should be controlled by workers' organisations, property should be taken over by workers' direct action, the control of nationalised and private firms should be put under the control of the workers, and so on.

All this will involve a tremendous struggle for working class democracy. This will include democracy in the Labour Party but will go far beyond it. A Government responsible to and based on the organisations of the working class, and not the capitalist State and Parliament, must be the ultimate aim of the workers' movement.

It is in this context that comrade Skinner's points about democracy in the workers' movement can take on a real meaning.

# WORKERS DEMOCRACY



Dennis Warren were released on bail on the hearing. But the fight must continue these trials.

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report 1)

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report 1)

# REPLY TO STALINIST ATTACKS

## Dilemma of Portuguese C.P.

THE BIG WAVE of workers' struggles touched off by the overthrow of the reactionary and repressive Caetano regime in Portugal has presented the Portuguese Communist Party with a serious dilemma.

On the one hand these struggles forced the Portuguese ruling class to include the parties of the left (the Socialists and the Communists) in the new Government in order to stave off a confrontation with the masses.

However the continuation of these struggles beyond a certain point would challenge the very foundation of capitalist rule in Portugal, and thus jeopardise the 'national' coalition of 'progressive' capitalists and reformists which is the centre-piece of the CP's policy.

### ENSCONCED

Little wonder, then, that the CP, once securely ensconced in the upper echelons of the new Government, turned its energies to holding back the struggle and viciously denouncing those who are attempting to carry it forward.

On Friday the Portuguese Communist Party issued a statement attacking Lisbon public transport and bakery workers who had launched strikes for higher wages.

The Party's statement said 'We are facing a conspiracy of the most reactionary elements which have not been dislodged

from their positions of power by the April 25 movement. These elements with the conscious or unconscious help of groups of adventurists from the so-called left, are trying to push towards a situation of economic chaos, hoping to destroy the democratic conquests already achieved.'

Always eager to jump on a promising handwagon, the Communist Party of Great Britain joined the chorus with an editorial in the same issue of the *Morning Star* that published the Portuguese CP's statement (Friday, 31 May):

'As recent experience in Belfast has shown, reactionary forces are quite capable of using the weapon of industrial action for their own purposes... So there should be no surprise at the fact that in Portugal today counter-revolutionaries are provoking strikes to try to discredit and weaken the provisional government, disrupt democratic unity, and prepare the way for the return of fascism. In this... the most reactionary elements are assisted by the ultra-left groups... Their disregard of the stage reached in the people's struggles, and of the need to build broad unity in defending and advancing the democratic gains which have been won, repeats the fatally disruptive role of the ultra-left in struggle after struggle, whether in Spain in the 30s, or in Chile in 1973, or in Britain today.'

### SLANDER

The *Morning Star's* analogy between

Portugal and Ulster is a scurrilous slander (This type of argument, and the ominous references to Spain in the 30s, are revivals of the 'big lie' technique perfected by Stalin in the 1930's, and exposed as such in the mid-50's by the leadership of the Soviet CP. Both the Ulster strike, and the Chilean truck owners strike (which the *Morning Star* editorial also refers to), could be readily labelled 'reactionary' because of the social position of the strikers (in the one case a privileged layer of workers who have historically been partners in the oppression of their fellow-workers, and in the other case a privileged, middle-class group) and the demands of the strike.

But what similarity is there in either respect with Portuguese bus drivers and bakers?

The Portuguese Government, faithfully echoed by the Communist Party, have attacked 'unreasonable' wage claims. In the course of the transport workers' struggle the Government fired the entire management of the Lisbon underground for granting what it considered an excessive wage increase. What did this involve? A minimum wage for all workers of £22 a week!

Perhaps the leaders of the British Communist Party would like to explain to the readers of the *Morning Star* why Harold Wilson's calls for wage restraint in the national interest are to be rejected, while the same call coming from Alvaro Cunhal (President of the Portuguese CP) is supposed to be a shining inspiration for Portuguese workers.

One of the more amazing arguments produced by the Communist Party for wage restraint is that the big Portuguese monopolies will readily grant wage rises in order to drive their smaller competitors out of business and strengthen the monopolies' hold over the economy.

### QUACKERY

This piece of stunning political quackery has only one merit: it exposes the reactionary implications of the Communist Party's 'anti-monopoly alliance' (held by the Portuguese and British parties alike). Under this scheme workers are openly asked to keep their wages down, not even in the 'national interest', but to help maintain the profits of the smaller capitalists!

Apart from its blatantly pro-capitalist character, this argument is absurd. Portugal already has what is probably the most highly monopolised economy in the capitalist world (the largest single monopoly

owns 10% of the entire economy). The monopolies hardly seem in need of a helping hand from the workers' movement.

The positions of the Communist Party may be absurd on logical grounds, but they make political sense given the course the Portuguese CP has adopted. The CP's 'anti-monopoly talk and its concern about 'reactionary elements' is just so much hot air. Let us look at exactly what the Portuguese CP is up to:

\* They are serving as ministers under a President who was a top army official in the fascist regime, who volunteered to fight with Franco against the Spanish republicans in the 1930s, who served with Hitler's armies in Russia, and who was the architect of a brutal 'Vietnam' type strategy for the suppression of the colonial liberation fighters in Guine-Bissau.

\* They are serving in a Government in which the majority of ministers are there purely and simply as the direct representatives of the Portuguese capitalists (including the main monopoly groups) — they can claim to represent nothing else.

\* They are serving in a Government which is presently engaged in diplomatic manoeuvres to keep the Cape Verde islands out of the hands of the liberation fighters in order to save it as a base for the imperialist NATO alliance.

\* They are serving in a Government whose fate is totally in the hands of the army, and calling for 'unity' with the army as a whole, when top army leaders have repeatedly threatened legitimate workers' struggles, denouncing them as 'insubordination', and have threatened the African liberation movements with an escalation of the colonial war unless they agree to a deal.

What are the 'irresponsible', ultra-lefts up to? They are waging a principled struggle to end the dirty colonial wars and concede immediate independence to the colonies, with no strings attached. They are trying to promote and extend the self-organisation of the working class — the only real defence against a reactionary counter-offensive.

One of the main demands being put forward by the Portuguese Trotskyists of the International Communist League (LCI) is for the immediate convening of a constituent assembly, elected by universal suffrage. What has the Portuguese CP to say about this? After all, does this not clearly take into account 'the stage reached in the people's struggles'? And what better way could there be to 'build broad unity in defending and advancing the democratic

gains which have been won'? For the past forty years the Portuguese CP has had a great deal to say about a constituent assembly — it has been the principal plank in their programme. Even a few weeks ago they were demanding such a move. But they appear to have been struck dumb since entering the Government.

They are going along with the military junta's vague promise of elections 'within a year' But why wait a year when elections could be organised within a month? After all, much can happen in a year. Delay simply gives the reactionaries the opportunity to regroup, while the mass struggle is deprived of any form of organised expression.

The Communist Party is holding back on the demand for a constituent assembly not because it is afraid it might lose in the elections, but because it knows it could win. There is no doubt that elections held at the present moment would give a massive majority to the Communist and Socialist Parties.

### PAINFUL

But the CP would then face a choice which, given its political plan, would be very painful indeed.

It could form a Government with the Socialists, excluding representatives of the capitalists. But its strategy of building up democracy gradually (as a prelude to building up socialism), and trying to avoid counter-revolution by coddling up to the top militarists and monopolists, would then go down the drain and it would have no policy to deal with the mobilisation of reactionary forces.

Alternatively, the CP and the SP could try to maintain their 'national' coalition by generously offering cabinet posts to bourgeois politicians who had been exposed in the elections as representing nothing. This might put back the date of the eventual showdown with the reactionaries, but would show to the entire working masses that the CP's alliance with the representatives of the ruling class had nothing to do with the immaturity of the mass struggle, but was due solely to the CP's inability and unwillingness to lead a real struggle. The hand of the revolutionary left would be increased correspondingly.

As in the case of Chile, the Portuguese workers and peasants have before them two roads: they can rely, as the revolutionary left urges, on their own struggles and organisations; or follow the CP and trust in compromises, deals and sweet-talk to stave off counter-revolution. The first is the road to the socialist revolution, the second, as Chile proves, the road to disaster.

The CP is right about one thing: the leaders of counter-revolution are about, and will emerge in the not too distant future to try and do their dirty work. But their faces are not to be sought in the ranks of striking workers or revolutionary demonstrators. They are smiling at the CP from the other side of the ministerial conference table.

CARL OWEN



Spínola (right) and armed forces chiefs — it is here, not in ranks of striking workers, that the real threat of counter-revolution lies

# PORTUGUESE COLONIES: SOLIDARITY WITH THE LIBERATION

Events in Portugal's African colonies are moving almost as fast as in the home country itself.

Independence for Guine-Bissau seems more or less assured as a result of the talks in London between the Portuguese Government and representatives of the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guine and Cape Verde). Now talks on the future of Mozambique will open this week in the Zambian capital of Lusaka.

### GUINE-BISSAU

It was always predictable that Guine-Bissau would be the first to achieve independence. There is no pressing economic reason for the Portuguese to hold on to it, and in the past few years they have been sorely pressed by the guerrilla forces, who now control two-thirds of the territory. The provisional government set up by the PAIGC last September has won diplomatic recognition from no less than 84 countries.

The only sticking point in the Portuguese Government's negotiations with the PAIGC—which were adjourned for a week last Friday—is the

question of the Cape Verde islands. The naval and air bases here are a vital African foothold for NATO, while the island of Sal serves both as a refuelling point for South African Airways—which is banned by 42 African states on the mainland—and as a relay station for the main submarine cable from South Africa to Portugal.

Furthermore, while many of the PAIGC's leaders are Cape Verdeans, conditions on the islands have made guerrilla activity there almost impossible. Only since the coup have there been some small signs of activity—meetings and a demonstration—in support of the liberation movement.

It seems, therefore, that in return for Portuguese withdrawal from the mainland the PAIGC may be forced to shelve its demand for immediate independence for the Cape Verde islands. Of course there are forces in the Portuguese Government—the Communist and Socialist ministers—who nominally stand for independence and could intervene to change the situation. But there can be no doubt that in this sphere—as in others—they will prefer to bow to imperialist

interests and shrug aside the elementary duties of international solidarity.

### MOZAMBIQUE

They will then have to confront the problem of Mozambique, however, where FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) has forced the regime to the negotiating table while continuing the armed struggle.

In the weeks after the coup the military junta engaged in a series of manoeuvres to weaken FRELIMO's position. First of all they tried to persuade FRELIMO to lay down its arms in return for promises of a political role, a referendum, and so on. At the same time they tried to undermine its position by promoting various 'moderate' groups. Finally, they decided to try a dose of the old methods again, and banned groups and individuals from expressing any support for the 'rebels' while the struggle continued.

But none of this worked. FRELIMO went on fighting, rejecting the idea of 'democratic colonialism' and declaring that the right to independence was not negotiable. And in so doing it acted as a remarkable pole of

attraction in the debate over Mozambique's future.

The moment of truth came for the Portuguese Government when the 'moderate' groups it had encouraged—notably GUMO and MODEMO—started declaring their support for FRELIMO. Even a white settler group, FICO ('I stay'), which was formed to oppose independence, was reported to have come round to supporting an independent federation of states in Mozambique, emphasising that 'we are not interested in fighting FRELIMO'.

The Portuguese Government thus had little option but to go to the

negotiating table on the guerrillas' terms—not to discuss whether there should be independence, but simply to decide the actual mechanisms by which it will be achieved.

### ANGOLA

In Angola, however, the situation is not so good. The liberation movements are badly divided. And while most of the political prisoners have been released, the commander-in-chief in Angola, General Franco Pinheiro, has banned all propaganda on behalf of the liberation movements 'until they renounce the armed struggle'.

There are no less than three major

## DEMONSTRATE - Sunday 16 June

Full support to the African liberation movements—FRELIMO, MPLA, PAIGC  
Total independence from Portugal now  
Solidarity with the Portuguese people  
Assemble 2.00 pm Speakers Corner, march to Trafalgar Square. Speakers from FRELIMO, British labour movement, and Portuguese trade unionist.  
Jointly organised by Committee for Freedom in Mozambique, Angola and Guine, and Portuguese Workers Co-ordinating Committee.  
Information and publicity from: 12/13 Little Newport Street, London WC2 7JJ  
(tel: 01-734 9541)

# PUPPETS IN CRISIS

**TOP OFFICIALS** in both the South Vietnamese and Cambodian regimes have recently been unexpectedly purged.

In Saigon it was President Thieu's chief Party organiser, Nguyen Va Ngau, who was dismissed. In Phnom Penh ten army generals were sacked, and President Lon Nol is even said to have toyed with the idea of getting rid of the Cambodian chief-of-staff.

Although these moves are probably unimportant in themselves, they are a good indication of the strains under which the two puppet regimes are currently operating.

## CRISIS-STRICKEN

Contrary to many expectations, the Paris Accords in January 1973 did not help to stabilise the Thieu regime. On the contrary, his dictatorship has limped from crisis to crisis ever since.

Since January 1973 the cost of living in the Saigon-controlled areas of South Vietnam has risen by 70%, while industrial production has fallen. Many investors have begun to withdraw their capital. Saigon's shrinking reserves prevent any importation of the raw material needed to keep industry going, or any development of the infrastructure — both necessary before anyone will even consider putting any money into the country.

Famine is now widespread thanks to the rising cost of living and massive unemployment. Every day there are reports of suicides who have chosen a quick death rather than starvation.

The pressures of the National Liberation Front on the one hand and the economic crisis on the other have led to a growing opposition movement in the cities. This has already won trade union rights and even wage rises for many workers, smashed Thieu's attempts to impose a form of Value Added Tax, and is now beginning to group around demands for democratic freedoms.

## U.S. HAND-OUTS

In Cambodia, Lon Nol's problems are similar but less complicated. The areas controlled by the regime have no industry to decline, and exist entirely on US hand-outs and corruption. The Cambodian currency, the riel, is now virtually worthless.

Lon Nol, too, is now faced with a growing and determined urban opposition to add to the long-established one outside his gates. The strikes by teachers and school students in Phnom Penh have been the most dramatic expression of this new unrest.

In both countries a central problem is the army. The vast outlay needed to maintain the repressive apparatus (40% of the budget in Vietnam) is a huge drain on the economy, but the alternative prospect of tens of thousands of unemployed (and

probably armed) soldiers wandering the country is so frightening to Thieu and Lon Nol that they dare not dismantle it.

## NO MAJOR OFFENSIVE

The central aim of the liberation forces — the FUNK in Cambodia, and the NLF in Vietnam — is now to take advantage of this social crisis of the puppet regimes. In neither country is a major offensive on the order of the day.

In Cambodia, the bloody defeat of the FUNK at Kampot highlighted their inability to sustain a major assault, largely due to a shortage of arms (something for which the Russian and Chinese bureaucrats have a lot to answer for).

They are, however, well able to continue with the low-level type of warfare they have successfully pursued for the last three years: isolating the capital through control of all the Highways; wearing down the Cambodian army by drawing it into ambushes; and slowly nibbling away at the positions still held by the puppets, taking any that become weak enough. This military activity is combined with work in Phnom Penh itself.

In contrast, the Vietnamese NLF have begun to systematically step up their military activity — but have switched the emphasis to guerrilla warfare and moves against the populated centres.

Thieu's sabotage of the diplomatic confrontation has finally removed the last inhibitions against offensive action. The NLF are taking full advantage of this to demonstrate their strength and ability to strike almost anywhere they choose. This in turn is speeding up the demoralisation of the army (already some units are refusing to fight) and the development of the urban opposition.

The pattern of NLF attacks has also changed. The major towns are now increasingly threatened, and even Saigon is coming under siege with the massive attack launched on Ben Cat on the defence perimeter.

In summary, the strategy of the NLF — now that the Accords are implicitly dead — is to heighten the social contradictions inside the regime, demoralise the army, and whittle away Saigon's economic base while keeping its military options wide open.

The present phase of the Indochinese Revolution is therefore likely to be a long

one — but it may also be the last.

## ROLE OF U.S.

The continued role of the US must not be discounted, however. Nixon may have failed to bulldoze Congress into raising the level of official aid to Thieu and Lon Nol, but arms supplies are still managing to find their way to both Saigon and Phnom Penh. Twenty-six B-52 bombers have also been flown from Guam to Utapao in Thailand — from where they could be used in Indochina. And Kissinger now claims to have discovered a magic phrase in the Paris Accords giving the US the right to intervene in Indochina whenever it chooses!

It is not yet clear how immediately serious these warlike gestures are. With the present domestic problems in the US, and the Congressional elections not far off, a direct intervention in Indochina is unlikely at the present time. But sooner or later will come the inevitable confrontation between the Pathet Lao and the reactionaries in Laos, and that may provide the necessary excuse. Certainly it is a possibility for which the world-wide solidarity movement must prepare itself now.

DAVID JOHNSON

# BRITAIN'S SECRET WAR

## Nine years of fighting in Oman

This Sunday 9 June marks the ninth anniversary of 'Britain's secret war' — the struggle in the Omani province of Dhofar by the People's Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf (PFOAG) against the British-trained and British-officered troops of the puppet regime.

The Sultans of Oman have always been British puppets since the early days of the nineteenth century, when the need to defend the approaches to India first made the area important. Between 1806 and 1920 British forces intervened at least 20 times to prevent the regime from being overthrown.

In the twentieth century this role has continued as the area has taken on a new strategic importance for world imperialism. In the 1950s an Omani air force was set up — piloted entirely by British officers — and three RAF bases were established at Muscat, Masirah Island, and Salalah. These have become an essential link in British global military communications — between Cyprus in the Mediterranean, and Singapore and Hong Kong in the Far East.

British forces in Oman fall into three categories:

1. Troops from the Special Air Services (SAS) counter-insurgency regiment. They claim to be simply on training exercises, but are known to have been

used in the October-November 1971 attack on eastern Dhofar. They probably number about 150-200 men.

2. British RAF and military personnel running the bases mentioned above. They are not 'officially' involved, but play an active support role in the war.

3. Several hundred mercenaries, the so-called 'contract officers' who run the Sultan's army. Like US 'civilians' in Indochina they are to all intents and purposes part of the imperialist army, while pretending not to be.

Recently Britain has attempted to share out the burden by involving some of the more prominent counter-revolutionary regimes of the area — notably Iran and Saudi Arabia — in a joint operation against the guerrillas. At least 8,000 Iranian troops have been sent to Oman since December 1973.

But the British army has no intention of pulling out unless it is forced to. Apart from anything else, Dhofar is the only area apart from Northern Ireland where it can acquire the kind of combat experience it needs to be ready for other possible interventions in the future.

For many years the British Government has managed to hush up its involvement in Oman. Now with the growing concern over the Army's role in Ireland comes the opportunity to change this situation and at



the same time expose further the myth of the army as a 'peace-keeping' force. Messages of solidarity with the liberation forces should be sent to: PFOAG, PO Box 5637, Ma'alla, Aden People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

# STRUGGLE!

guerrilla groups in the country. The most important is probably the socialist-inclined MPLA

(Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), led by Agostinho Neto. Then there is the FNLA (National Liberation Front of Angola), led by Holden Roberto and supported by President Mobutu of Zaïre. Finally there is a rather smaller but not insignificant group called UNITA.

All these three have so far stood firm in favour of unconditional independence for Angola. Neto, in particular, has spelt out very clearly the reasons for opposing a referendum:

'We reject a referendum organised by Portugal, which controls the administration, the army and the police in Angola. There could be no guarantee in such a situation of a serious result. We demand that Portugal puts an end purely and simply to the domination of our country. The referendum would be only a means used by the Portuguese to prolong their stay in our country.'

But unfortunately it will be difficult to organise effective opposition to any referendum while the liberation movement remains so divided.

## SOLIDARITY

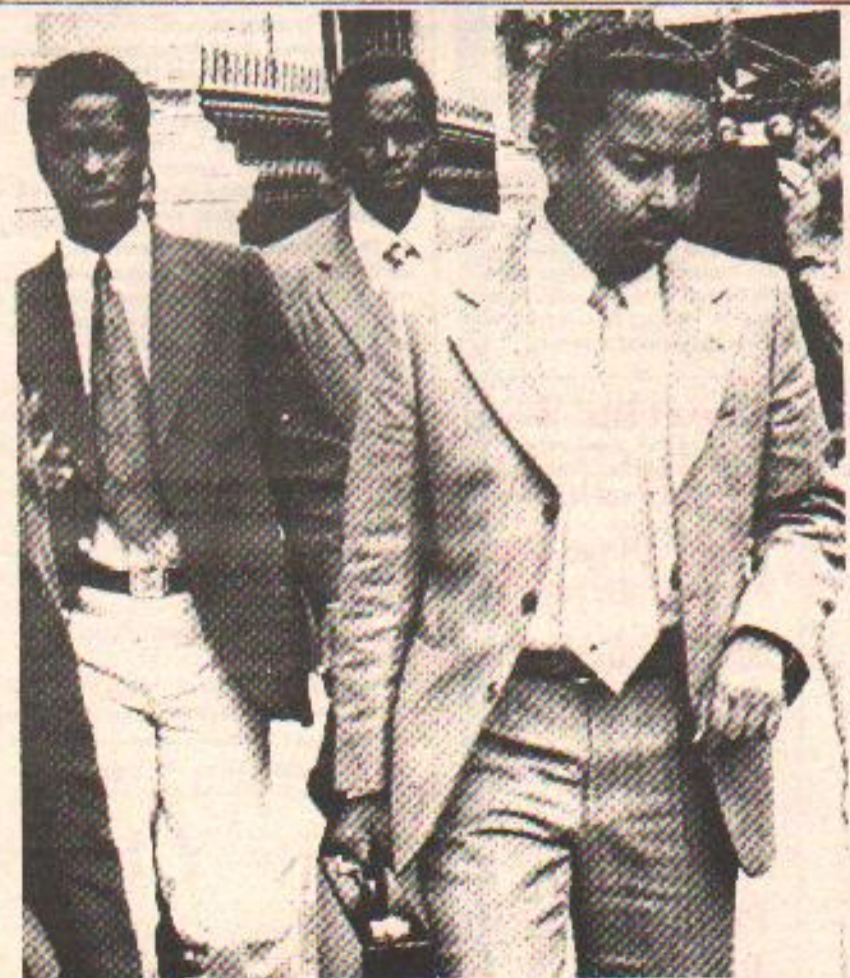
One thing is overwhelmingly clear, however. The Spínola regime (aided

and abetted by its Communist and Socialist colleagues — is far from having abandoned imperialist interests in Africa. The achievement of independence for the colonies, and the withdrawal of Portuguese troops, will not be achieved without a struggle in which continued solidarity activity will be vital.

Obviously such activity will have its most immediate effect inside Portugal itself. That is why our Portuguese comrades of the LCI (International Communist League), together with other revolutionary groups, have put great emphasis on the struggle inside the army and the workers' movement to end the colonial wars.

But continued solidarity activity throughout the rest of the world will also be of crucial importance in bolstering the determination of the liberation forces not to accept the half solutions being thrust upon them. It is with this understanding that the International Marxist Group is working for a large turn-out on the demonstration on Sunday, 16 June, and will play a full part in all further solidarity activity.

JOHN MARSTON



Part of the PAIGC delegation, led by Major Pedro Pires, on its way to the talks in London last week

# WHAT'S ON

**SE ESSEX RED CIRCLE:** 'The Grants Campaign and the Student Movement', speaker Ronnie Munck (expelled/reinstated, Essex University). Wednesday 12 June, 8 pm, 39 Kennel Lane, Billericay, Essex.

**'LONDON TEACHERS - WHAT NEXT?'** Rank and File meeting, Friday 7 June, in Old Lecture Theatre, London School of Economics, at 7.30 pm. Speakers Beth Stone and Dick North, newly elected members of NUT National Executive.

**WORKING WOMEN'S CHARTER:** Public meeting organised by Birmingham WLM to form action committee, Thursday 20 June, 7.30 pm in Digbeth Civic Hall. Creche provided.

**LONDON WORKERS' FIGHT Forum:** Andrew Hornung on 'The Second International, Revisionism, and the Mass Strike Debate'. Sunday 9 June, 7.30 pm, 'Golden Lion', Britannia Street, near Kings Cross.

**LONDON RED FORUMS:** New series dealing with basic questions of Marxist theory. Every Tuesday at 8 pm in 'General Picton', Caledonian Road (5 mins Kings X tube).

**CRITIQUE SEMINAR:** 'The position of women in the USSR' — by Geoff Barker (lecturer in Soviet Studies, Birmingham University). What are the differences between the position of women in the USSR and those in the capitalist West? How can the failures in the USSR be avoided in a socialist Britain? These and other questions will be discussed — Friday 14 June, 7.30 pm in Room S175, St Clement's Building, London School of Economics.

**RED WEEKLY MEETING:** 'Clay Cross — lessons for the struggles ahead', speaker Jack Lewis. Thursday 6 June, 8.30 pm, in Workers Music Association, 1 All Saints Road, London W11.

**'PORTUGAL: Get out of Africa now!'** Public meeting, Thursday 13 June, 8 pm, in Workers Music Association, 1 All Saints Road, London W11. Speakers include Hilary Wainwright and Tony Gifford. Sponsored by CFMAG, Westminster IMG, N. Kensington CP, Kensington LPYS, W. London A-AM.

**'WOMEN AND SEXUALITY':** Harrow/Hillingdon Socialist Women's Group forum, Monday 10 June at 8 pm in Harrow Baptist Church, College Road, Harrow — further details from Jackie, 01-204 3558.

**PICKET WINSON GREEN PRISON,** Birmingham, Sunday 9 June, to demand release of Patrick O'Brien and public inquiry into Special Branch activities in the Lennon affair. Organised by Irish Political Hostages Campaign.

# INPRECOR



**in this issue...**

INPRECOR is the new analytical journal of the Fourth International, which will be published simultaneously every two weeks in English, Spanish, French and German. It will be an indispensable organ for all militants hoping to develop an understanding of the international class struggle and contribute in the building of a centralised revolutionary International. However it can only survive if it has a large number of subscriptions. A year's sub. is £3. Write now, with money, to: INPRECOR, 12/14 Rue de la Buanderie, BRUSSELS 1000.

# NURSES: Red Weekly SOLIDARITY CAN WIN

Action committees to organise the nurses' struggle have been set up in more and more areas over the past week. And other sections of workers have taken strike action in support of the nurses: engineering workers at CA Parsons, Newcastle; 3,000 workers at Automotive Products, Leamington; the 24-hour strike by 800 Manchester dockers.

Doncaster Trades Council is planning to call for a stoppage in the area. Support committees of local trade unionists, students, tenants' associations, and women's groups have been set up in several parts of the country.

## GROWING MILITANCY

It is clear from the growing militancy of nurses that the inquiry is being seen for what it is—an attempt to dampen their struggle and isolate them from other workers.

Although the fight for better pay has gained some momentum, militants face a number of major problems: the lack of a leadership which agrees to a common claim; the lack of a coordinated campaign of action to win the claim; a way of involving sections of nurses who are not organised in trade unions; the involvement of other health workers; prevention of victimisations; and, most important of all, how to win wider layers in the working class to support for the struggle.

In many hospitals and areas action committees have been set up. Such committees should be elected and responsible to mass meetings of all nurses, unionised or not, who are involved in the struggle. With the long tradition of anti-trade union propaganda to which nurses have been subjected, it is only through action that the need for

organisation will be clearly understood.

Limited strike action should be used to free nurses to organise support at factory gate meetings. In Leamington, nurses from Warneford, Warwick and Weston, Royal Midland Home marched to Automotive Products, where the 3,000 workers came out and supported them. Next week these same nurses are planning a similar march to the Ford foundry in Leamington.

Leafleting and pickets calling for industrial weight would be decisive.

## EMERGENCY CASES

During stoppages and bans on extra duties the action committees should be responsible for deciding what are emergency cases. Determining running levels in the wards should also be the committees' responsibility. In this way nurses can begin to draw in other sections of hospital workers, and, for example, investigate which staffing levels give the optimum care to patients.

Joint actions with other sections in struggle should be organised: junior doctors fighting for a reduction in their 102½-hour working week; radiographers and medical physics technicians. Such united action should be seen as first steps to the establishment of joint shop stewards committees where these don't already exist.

Nursing agencies must be picketed to explain why nurses should not go to them, and that the solution to staff shortages is not more agencies but better pay and conditions for nurses.

A ban must be placed on all private patients, and the staff and facilities used for NHS patients.

Indefinite all-out strikes in hospitals are bound to affect the working class. To enable the hospitals to provide essential services, the rest of the labour movement must take strike action on behalf of the nurses.



Workers from Automotive Products in Leamington cheer on a nurses' demonstration. The nurses marched to the plant and 3,000 workers came out in solidarity. Elsewhere, engineering workers in Newcastle stopped work for two hours; Manchester dockers held a 24-hour stoppage; and patients at the Whittington Hospital in North London went on hunger strike for a day in support of the nurses.

## Nurses: uniting the claim

The COHSE, NUPE and RCN bureaucracies are all putting forward different demands. All three have taken different positions since the announcement of an inquiry by the Labour Government, the terms of reference for which haven't even been decided.

NUPE supports a 55% rise, but is awaiting the results of the inquiry before further action. The RCN are just awaiting the inquiry. COHSE have called for a 'ban on non-nursing duties and overtime' in support of an interim award of £6 across the board, pending the results of the inquiry. Different action committees are

also struggling for different demands. Given the lack of any clear lead a major priority must be to establish what claim we are fighting for.

The only way this can be done is by a national meeting with delegates from every hospital and action committee to work out a common claim and a common campaign. Resolutions should also be put calling on the various unions to support this meeting.

Given the rise in the cost-of-living of just over 8% in the first five months of this year, 55% is not adequate. We should be demanding:

\*A £30 minimum wage as a first step to a £40 minimum. (Already the National Union of Seamen, the NUT, the Agricultural Workers, and the Bakers' Union are

demanding £40 for a 40 hour week.)

\*A £12 across-the-board increase (to unite all grades of nurses).

\*A 'nil-norm' threshold agreement.

\*An annual wage review.

\*No increase in meal or accommodation charges—these to be frozen at their pre-rents' freeze level.

\*A 35-hour week—overtime at time and a half—double time for nights and weekends.

In addition we must demand the scrapping of the Whitley Councils, and for direct negotiations at national and local level, for free crèche and nursery facilities for hospital workers use, staffing levels to be observed, no furlough discipline, health and safety regulations to be applied to health service workers.

## Housing activists step up campaign

HOUSING STRUGGLES are becoming a key aspect of the defence of working class living standards, and militant squatters are increasingly drawing sections of the labour movement into united action against the speculators and their allies in the councils.

In Paddington, London, squatters in the Canal Flats, Harrow Rd., are resisting Westminster Council's attempts to evict them in order to demolish the flats. They are being supported by the newly formed Paddington Tenants Federation.

The Labour Group is forcing a debate on the Council, in an attempt to stop the demolition. Squatters and tenants will picket Marylebone Town Hall during the debate, at 5.30 p.m., on 6 June.

## OCCUPIED

On Friday night, 31 May, 20 militants from the Bristol Joint Housing Action Campaign occupied an empty six-storey office block in the centre of Bristol, owned by Mithras Properties, a London-based firm. The militants came from tenants associations, squatters, Case-Con social workers, women's liberation, and the IMG. On Saturday morning the Communist Party joined the occupation, and during the day about 100 people participated. The Bristol Trades Council, and several prominent figures in the local labour movement have pledged their support.

In Brighton police and bailiffs moved in at dawn on Friday to evict a family from a squat in Terminus Road. They were met with barricaded doors and windows, flour bombs, filthy water, and a large militant picket. One squatter chained himself to the door.

This mass resistance forced the police and bailiffs to back down. Local residents have promised support when the forces of 'law and order' return next week, and support is being mobilised at the University.

In London last week, the Action Backed Enquiry into property speculation, which is based in the recently re-occupied premises at 220 Camden High St., held a public meeting on the lessons of Clay Cross. This was addressed by two Labour councillors and IMG member Piers Corbyn.

It was made clear at the meeting that Labour Councillors must not simply be prepared to break with bourgeois legality, but must base themselves on mass action, otherwise demands such as the compulsory take-over of property will simply mean that the working class is made to compensate the property-owners.

## 1,000 jobs to be axed at Cowley

A thousand jobs are to be lost at British Leyland's Cowley assembly plant, due to cuts in the production of the 1100/1300 and 'Maxi' ranges.

A few of the men affected will be absorbed into existing vacancies, and 200 will be required for new work in August. But the rest will go into a 'transitional labour pool' at reduced pay.

At the same time the management will try to increase the work effort on the remaining lines, through the implementation of Industrial Engineer (IE) studies. The victimisation of Alan Thornett, the Deputy Senior Steward at Cowley, was principally due to the fact that he was the architect of the agreement whereby the implementation of IE studies has to be agreed with the shop stewards.

The victimisation of Thornett, and the defeat of the 'Marina' workers who were defending the IE Agreement, has weakened the shop floor organisation. In this situation the Transport and

General Workers Union Regional Committee has come out with its report on charges made against Thornett by the company.

This clears Thornett, but recommends that the Senior and Deputy Senior shop stewards be elected directly instead of by the stewards. They are rushing these elections through, to try to get rid of the present left-wing leadership. They also propose to split up the 5/55 branch between the three factories it now covers, which would give management the opportunity to play one factory off against another.

If the Cowley workers are to resist the coming attacks it is necessary for the stewards to advance policies around which the work-force can be united. The only demand they have put forward so far has been for full pay for the pool workers. This is correct, but must not be allowed to divert attention from preparation for the main battles over redundancy and increased work effort.

They should have prepared the membership to oppose the pool and to demand the sharing of available work between the existing work-force, without loss of pay. But since this has not been

done the pool will be imposed, and it will be necessary to fight for no redundancies from the pool and for the strict observance of the Movement of Labour agreement, to prevent discrimination against militant sections and individuals.

To enforce these demands it will be necessary to maintain trade union organisation in the pool through a representative action committee, elected by the pool, to deal with its immediate problems and above all, to prepare to fight redundancy. Any redundancy will have to be fought on a factory basis, and because of their lack of bargaining power the pool will have to prepare to use tactics like picketing and occupations which can put pressure on the company and help to fight for the support of other workers.

The shop-stewards must meet as soon as possible to thrash out policies to deal with the coming attacks. Then there must be an immediate campaign to win support for these, to inform the membership of the agreements that protect them, and to counter management propaganda that the workers have to pay with their jobs and working-conditions for the crisis in the car industry.

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