

RED WEEKLY

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fund drive

The fighting Fund got a nice present last week from Thames Television, who sent our representative Bob Pennington £5 for his appearance on their programme *Today*. This was particularly pleasing as Pennington had spent his time attacking the monarchy. As he said—it's nice being paid to undermine your enemies.

Barry Bateman, a London teacher, sent us £5; and another reader Mike Rees, forwarded £10. Glasgow chipped in with £22 and Oxford—becoming a reliable source of income—sent £25. Thanks also to Norwich, Bradford, Nottingham, York, Preston, Bristol, Bath, Camden, Hull, Manchester, Coventry and East London.

We are still waiting to hear, however, from West, South-West, South-East and North London. Can they make sure they get their quotas in this week?

The first week has seen the Fund Drive pass the £100 mark. Remember we need £400 to survive. We know Scamman and the police would not be too disturbed if we went skint. In fact it would cause some rejoicing in ruling class circles. But our readers need *Red Weekly*. It is an indispensable weapon in the fight for socialism, and that makes it worth paying for.

Rush your contributions to: Red Weekly Fund Drive, 182 Pentonville Road, London, N.1.

— YOU CAN'T —

'RENEGOTIATE' CAPITALISM

WHEN WILSON WAS PACKING HIS BAGS FOR DUBLIN HE was not asking himself does Britain stay in or come out of the EEC. He has known for a long time now that British capitalism has to stay in Europe and since he has no alternative to capitalism he has lined up on the side of the pro-marketeters.

What the Prime Minister wants from the Dublin Summit is a nice attractive wrapping to package the 're-negotiations' deal so that he can sell it to the working class. He also has to sell the deal to the Labour Party and the unions and that does give him some headaches.

Breathing down Wilson's neck and making ominous noises in the background are the Benns, the Foots, the Scanlons and the Joneses who have declared their opposition to staying in the EEC. Wilson knows that if he cannot put across the new terms and he loses the referendum vote the Labour and trade union lefts will insist Labour gets out.

On the other side of the table the block of Jenkins, Williams,

would be a blow to the plans of all the European ruling classes if Britain left the EEC. Unless the EEC develops viable state-like institutions on a European scale which would be capable of coming to the aid of the national capitalists in their struggles with their own working class the political basis of the EEC would begin to crumble.

The French capitalists probably have the clearest grasp of this overriding political aim and despite their reluctance to make 'concessions' to Britain on certain economic questions they are prepared to pay a price to achieve their political objectives.

For German capitalism economic considerations are paramount—some 60 per cent of their trade and investment is with countries either in the EEC or countries dependent on the EEC. Any country leaving the EEC and reverting to the old-style policy of tariffs would increase Germany's problems in relation to trade and investment with that country.

For these reasons Wilson is fairly confident of getting certain concessions which he hopes will put enough gloss of the 'stay in' campaign's appeal to get a 'yes' vote in June.

But whatever concessions Wilson gets in Dublin from Schmidt, d'Estaing and company, they will not change by one jot the fact that the Common Market is a capitalist body. The Dublin Summit is a gathering of nine capitalist nations and because eight of them are meeting on 'neutral' soil it does not mean that they will leave behind their class interests.

The purpose of the EEC is to strengthen European capitalism at the expense of the working class. Despite the fact that the situation inside his own party makes Wilson's task of representing the interests of the British capitalist class rather tricky, he will not let up on that aim.

The working class movement must spell out loud and clear that it is not interested in 're-negotiating' on capitalism's terms, but is in

reason that a vigorous, internationalist anti-EEC campaign has got to be waged in order to bring Britain out of the EEC.

(see page 2 for more on the EEC).

Racist frame-up trial begins

THE TRIAL of 12 student leaders opened in South Africa on Tuesday (11 March).

The 12 are charged under the notorious 'Terrorism Act' which allows the police to hold them at will without access to family or lawyers, and requires the accused to prove their innocence, rather than the state their guilt.

If convicted the 12 face minimum sentences of five years imprisonment. The maximum penalty is death.

Their crime was to have organised a peaceful rally on a black South African university campus to celebrate the victory of the FRELIMO liberation movement in Mozambique. They are also accused of being members of a number of organisations which have sprung up recently to defend the interests of black people—the South African Students Organisa-

Foot slams thresholds

WITH INFLATION now raging at over 20 per cent a year, the Labour Government is desperate to stop any widescale re-introduction of threshold agreements. They would provide some protection against inflation, but spell financial ruin for the ruling class.

Michael Foot, the most outspoken defender of the social contract, has allowed his Department of Employment to issue a virulent public rebuke to the Post Office for agreeing last week to a deal which offers 200,000 workers threshold payments of 1% for every 1% increase in the retail price index if the cost of living rises by more than 10%.

In other words, even an initial cut of 10% in the real value of wages is not big enough for the Labour Government. And the increases in 'new money' for this miserably paid group of workers gave only 90p to £3.10 a week to postmen; 83p to £2.95 for telephonists; and between £52 and £172 a year for counter clerks.

This is the real and vicious face of the social contract, with its mealy-mouthed rhetoric about equality of sacrifices in order to strengthen the economy and defend the interests of the low paid and boost the social services.

The one thing that could give protection to the poorly paid and weakly organised against inflation—automatic increases in wages to keep pace with the cost of living—is condemned even in the totally inadequate form of threshold agreements.

Millions of workers including
(Continued on page 11).

4,000 march in rain . . .



Last Saturday, a 4,000 strong demonstration marched from Whitechapel, a working-class area of the East End, to Hackney, to celebrate International Women's Day. This impressive solidarity of male and female militants in the cause of women's liberation, was only marred by a small group of feminists who tried to expel sympathetic men from the demo.

END LABOUR GOVERNMENT MILITARY COLLABORATION WITH APARTHEID

DEMONSTRATION — 23 MARCH 1975

Assemble Speakers Corner 1.30 pm

March to Trafalgar Square rally 3.00 pm.

Further information: 23 March Mobilising Committee, c/o AAM, 89 Charlotte St. London, W1, tel. (01-) 680-5311



THE RENEGOTIATION GAME

STEVE KENNEDY

'We won't speak with Powell'

SEVEN of the ten Labour MPs on the Council of the 'Get Britain Out Referendum Campaign' this week announced that they would no longer be prepared to speak on the same platform as Enoch Powell.

Their decision follows close on the heels of Powell's first speech in 18 months on immigration. Addressing a Monday Club rally in Croydon, he had spoken of the 'catastrophe, even death of a nation', which would befall Britain unless large numbers of immigrants were repatriated.

The Labour MPs who have said they are not prepared to speak with Powell are, according to the Labour Party paper *Labour Weekly*, Guy Barnett (Greenwich), Denzil Davies (Llanelli), Doug Hoyle (Nelson and Colne), Neill Kinnock (Bedwellty), William Molloy (Ealing North), Jim Silliam (South Ayrshire), and Nigel Spearman (Newham South).

Red Weekly has argued before that it is precisely because Powell has been able to establish an alliance with the Labour 'left' on the Common Market that he has now returned to the issue of immigration and race. What better way to cover up the anti-working class nature of such reactionary ideas than to put them forward at a time when he is engaged in a common campaign with well known figures in the labour movement?

Such arguments have not until now cut much ice with supporters of a 'broad front' against the EEC—whether in the trade unions, the Labour Party or indeed the Communist Party.

Even a mere two days after Powell's outburst, he was able to address a 'Get Britain Out' meeting in Brighton along with Labour MP Michael English (Nottingham West) and Clive Jenkins of ASTMS. And apart from English, two other Labour MPs on the GBOC Council, John Lee (Harrow) and Max Madden (Sowerby) are still willing to speak with Powell.

But the problem is not simply Powell (or the National Front). While we welcome any move, even a partial one, that begins to undermine Powell's attempts to exploit the EEC campaign for his own ends, the GBOC would, even in the event of his total exclusion, still provide

an object lesson to the working class in how *not* to fight the EEC.

The fact that no section of the ruling class has any strategy for dealing with the present economic crisis except at the expense of the working class underlines the need for the working class to wage an *independent class* campaign against the Common Market. But the seven Labour MPs who have spoken out against Powell have so far shown no sign of withdrawing from the GBOC Council, which not only has Monday Club Tory MP Richard Body as its joint chairman but is also attended by Powell and another Ulster Unionist as well as two Tory MPs and two



Scottish Nationalists. In the struggle against an institution like the EEC, which the ruling class will attempt to use to shore up capitalism and centralise attacks on the workers movement, it is sheer lunacy to ally in this way with the most backward sections of British capitalism, whose intentions differ from this only in that they would prefer these attacks to be mounted by the British state.

For these reasons we welcome Labour MP Norman Buchan's proposal to set up an independent 'Labour against the Market Campaign'. The way to fight the EEC is through a united front campaign of the working class which can, by developing international links within the labour movement, begin to lay the foundation stones for a real working-class solution to the crisis. Although this is, no doubt, beyond the scope of what Buchan envisages, an essential part of such a task will be the exclusion from such a campaign of all those bourgeois forces who will attempt to lead it back up the blind alley of crisis-stricken capitalism.

ANDY NEWTON

The French capitalist press has been grumbling lately about the inconsistency of Harold Wilson—spending most of the 1960s trying to get Britain into the EEC, and now in the '70s trying to get out again. But despite all this, the Labour Government's renegotiations are now being generally accepted by the European ruling classes, who understand what they are: a manoeuvre to sell the Common Market to the British working class.

For British capitalism the EEC is no laughing matter. The decline of the British Empire and the inefficiency of investment-starved British industry has made it absolutely clear that British imperialism can no longer go it alone.

But the Labour Government has to deal with the very strong opposition to the Common Market inside the labour movement. Because Britain joined the EEC at a time when economic crisis was beginning to bite, the Common Market has become associated with all the problems of capitalism in crisis: inflation, unemployment, attacks on trade union rights and on workers living standards through incomes policy, and all the rest.

RENEGOTIATION

The anti-market campaign of the labour 'left' and trade union bureaucrats is based on four main themes: national chauvinism, Britain's financial contribution to the EEC, relations with the old 'Commonwealth', and defence of 'sovereignty'. Wilson's renegotiation is aimed at undermining the last three of these in order to use the anti-market 'left's' chauvinist arguments against them.

At present, the EEC central budget is financed from three sources: customs duties collected by member countries, levies on farm imports from outside the EEC, and a proportion of each country's VAT revenues. Since Britain imports a lot of food from outside the EEC, British contributions to the common budget are relatively high.

The original British proposal was that budgetary contributions should be closely related to the economic output of each country, but this met with opposition from both France and Germany. It now seems likely that a compromise will be agreed under which the present system will be reformed to allow for refunds, not exceeding the contribution any country makes from its VAT collections, to be made in cases where countries whose contribution exceeds their proportion of total EEC economic output are in 'serious economic difficulty'.

FARM POLICY

Under the present EEC Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), farmers are guaranteed that they will not be paid less than a specified 'floor price' for their produce. To prevent prices paid to farmers falling beneath this 'floor' the EEC agricultural department guarantee to buy any surplus produce at this price out of CAP funds.

This has had two particularly serious results. First, it has produced vast butter and beef 'mountains' which the CAP authorities have found hard to dispose of. Second, it has meant that cheaper foods from outside the EEC could not be sold at prices below the agreed 'floor'.

The British position is that farmers' profits should be guaranteed by government subsidies. Retail prices could then be allowed to fall, decreasing the surplus food 'mountains', as well as allowing for the possibility of lower shop prices.

Given the immense increase in world prices over the last year, the possibility of cheap imports from outside the EEC exists only in the case of a very few foodstuffs, since in most cases EEC prices now compare favourably with world market prices. In this situation the small concessions which Labour agriculture minister Fred Peart has already won don't look as pathetic as they would have done a year ago. With EEC subsidies for sugar imports into Britain he can point to at least some economic benefit to Britain from the EEC, particularly in view of the recent decision to allow Britain to continue with a lower 'floor price' for beef combined with subsidies, 35% of which will be paid by CAP.

COMMONWEALTH

The recent aid and trade agreement, signed and sealed last month between the EEC and 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (mostly former French and British colonies) together with certain concessions regarding aid and trade for

ish system is likely to be permitted to coexist with EEC regional policy, at least until 1977. VAT and co-ordination of currency exchange rates have effectively been swept under the carpet until after the referendum. And EEC complaints about the failure of British capital to flow freely into Europe have been damped down by a plea of 'economic crisis' from the British Treasury (this will keep the EEC civil servants busy investigating well into the summer).

ALLIANCES

British capitalists and their European counterparts realise that it is only on a European scale that they can compete with their American and Japanese rivals and confront their domestic working classes. But the ruling classes of America and Japan are equally well aware that without such institutions as the EEC, the dangers of a real setback for capitalist class rule in Europe would be greatly increased. With the passing of the days in which individual imperialist



Labour ministers Shore and Callaghan welcome a new player to the 'renegotiation game'

the Indian continent, could not have come at a better time for Wilson. As even the capitalist journal *The Economist* points out, these agreements will be most advantageous to the EEC countries themselves. None the less, the short term increases in aid will serve as a useful counter to the argument that the EEC does nothing for the former Commonwealth countries.

For the Labour anti-market 'left', as much as for Enoch Powell and the extreme right, the question of 'Parliamentary sovereignty' has been the most prominent plank of their anti-market campaign. The main practical debate has centred around the question of regional aids. Under EEC rules, member countries cannot give subsidies to employers in industrially underdeveloped regions except as direct state subsidies for investment plans.

REGIONAL AIDS

For Benn and the Labour 'left', the issue is that only Britain can decide the needs of its regional policy and that the British system of paying a Regional Employment Premium to firms in underdeveloped regions must be safeguarded.

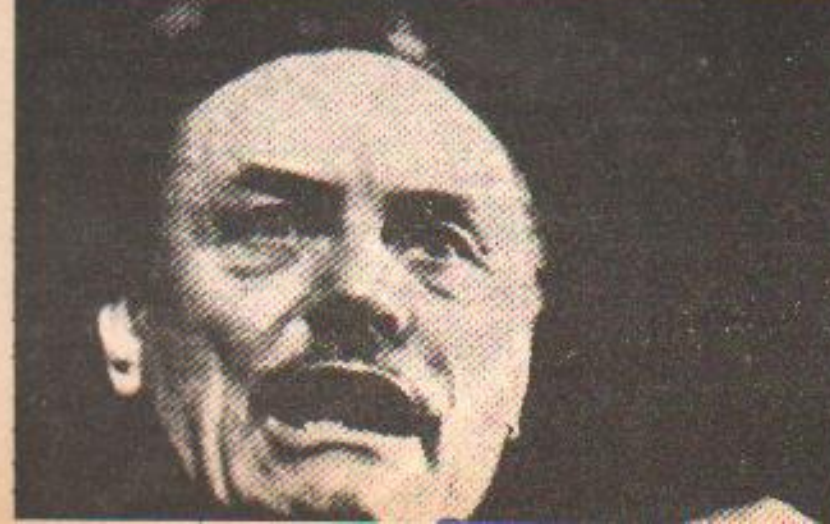
In a similar vein, anti-market 'left' have demanded that the EEC should not be able to determine the level of VAT in Britain, the amount of British investment in other EEC countries, or the exchange rate of sterling with other European currencies.

However, agreement is very near on face-savers for Wilson on all these questions. For regional aids, the Brit-

powers could defend their interests single-handed, it has become increasingly necessary, for the survival of capitalism itself, that they group together in military, economic and political alliances like the EEC.

Of course these alliances have not been easy to forge, and their survival is by no means guaranteed. The need of the great European trusts is for the EEC to be eventually transformed into a sort of European 'super-state' which could effectively guarantee their operations. But this goal is in sharp conflict with the sectional interests of different groups of European capitalists, with the nationalist ideology on which capitalism was built in Europe, and with the distinct interests that each national capitalist class has.

The chauvinist anti-market campaign of the trade union bureaucrats and the Labour 'left' in this country is built precisely on the basis of the sectional interests of British capitalism. In so doing they make it easy for Wilson, in alliance with the decisive sections of British and European capitalism, to out-manoeuvre them by producing a string of 'concessions' out of the renegotiations. The tasks of socialists in the period leading up to the referendum must be to build up opposition to the EEC as an institution of capitalism and to counterpose to the chauvinism of the Labour 'left' the need for real working class solutions to the crisis of capitalism, and the unity of European workers in struggle for a socialist Europe.



SHATTERED!



Andre Henri, convenor of Gilly and militant of the Belgian section of the Fourth International, confronts the bosses

IN FOCUS

Wilson sticks cabinet together

After a brief spate of mutual recrimination about 'welshing', 'economic illiteracy', and 'below par performance', all is once again quiet in the Alice in Wonderland world of the Labour Cabinet.

Wilson has papered over the cracks by attacking Prentice for failing to show his speech on the social contract to the minister concerned before it was issued—in this case Michael Foot. But though Wilson threw Foot a bone, Prentice is the dog being held on a leash.

Wilson said on television that Prentice had 'kicked in the teeth' those trade union leaders who have been trying to cut their members' living standards by forcing upon them acceptance of the social contract. But a few hours later Wilson repeated the substance of Prentice's remarks, when he told a meeting of the trade union group of Labour MPs that 'all of us have the right now to ask that the lead given by our partners in the original contract, the TUC General Council, be followed, and their guidelines observed.'

EXPLICIT ATTACK

Wilson's attacks became even more explicit last Saturday 8 March, when he repeated earlier threats by Chancellor Healey that trade unionists must accept lower pay deals or face mass sackings. Attacking what he called 'irresponsible settlements' in both public and private sectors, he singled out the railwaymen—a particularly low paid group—as a section of workers who risked pricing themselves out of the job.

So much for the 'social contract', which is based on the gigaantic fraud that in return for sacrifices by the more powerful sections of the labour movement poorly paid workers will have their wages boosted and the social services will be improved. As Nora Beloff pointed out in the *Observer* (9/3/75), Wilson is 'a past master at compensating right-wing policies with left-wing verbiage; being nice to the Russians and horrid to Mr Reg Prentice is part of the act.'

But although some form of statutory incomes policy is desperately needed by the capitalist class, Wilson will not impose one yet. Unlike the Prentice-Jenkins wing of the Cabinet, who want to give the ruling class what they want now, Wilson realises that such a course at the moment would lead to a massive loss of working class support for the Labour Government, and even for the Party.

What he is banking on is a vote for staying in the Common Market in the June referendum which for a time will disorient the left of the party and its supporters in the trade union movement. The left's 'alternative' economic strategy, which includes import controls and more central state direction of the economy, is wholly based on the assumption that Britain will not be staying in the Common Market.

ALL CIRCUSES, NO BREAD

Wilson's renegotiation game is all circuses and no bread. As the big business magazine *The Economist* (1/3/75), no friend of the Labour Government, noted:

'The whole future of the rival left and right-wing factions of the Labour Party rests on whether Mr Wilson and his colleagues can carry the country in favour of British membership, now that the cabinet has arrived so close to approving the renegotiation terms that with luck will emerge from Brussels and Dublin.'

In the coming weeks socialists will have to fight a vigorous campaign for withdrawal from the Common Market—not on the basis of the reactionary nationalist positions of the Labour left and Communist Party—but against the Common Market as an attempt by the international capitalist class to strengthen itself on a European and world scale. Forging international links with overseas workers in struggle against the multi-nationals will be an essential part of this.

This will be vital in the fight to smash the social contract and prevent its replacement by a statutory incomes policy. At the same time, full support must be given to all workers going into battle against the social contract, particularly the railwaymen and power workers.

By defeating the strategy of the Labour right and beginning to fight on the basis of class-wide demands, such as the automatic protection against inflation of all wages, benefits and social expenditure, the working class can also prepare an alternative to the bankrupt economic 'strategy' of the Labour left.

offer they could hope to win.

Now there lies before them the task of using the strength and solidarity they have built up to enforce this agreement. As the factory convenor Andre Henri told the Belgian Trotskyist paper *La Gauche*: 'We have begun the second stage of our struggle...we will need to be const-

antly on the alert, and elect a new control committee to oversee what goes on at Gilly—the questions of new investment, subsidies, etc. We plan to hold a weekly mass meeting to maintain our vigilance and militancy.'

These questions raised by the successful struggle at Gilly are not at all abstract for British workers, who face on the one hand a rising tide of closures, and on the other hand a load of nationalist rhetoric over the Common Market referendum. The workers at Gilly, however, have shown that there is an alternative way out of the crisis—to struggle against the Common Market of the capitalists, but for unity of the European working class in struggle.

As the 'glassworkers song' composed during the strike by the Gilly workers put it:

*It's not us who's going to pay
For the crisis of capitalism
A world without class or boss
That's what we're fighting for.
Against the multi-nationals
Across all national frontiers
World wide solidarity*

—multi-national's job cut plan

SIX HUNDRED AND THIRTY JOBS SAVED. A multi-national firm halted in its tracks. That is the proud achievement of the 600 Belgian glassworkers at the Glaverbel plant in Gilly after six weeks of unprecedented struggle.

Yet in Britain those six weeks saw a different tale. Three thousand redundancies announced by the multi-national Litton Industries at its Imperial Typewriters plants, were met with only a queue for redundancy pay at Leicester and a defiant gesture at Hull, where the workers mistakenly believe that they can protect themselves from the storms of international recession by simply sitting tight and wrapping themselves in the Union Jack.

The contrast is marked. But although the battle of Imperial may be lost (and even that is not certain while the Hull workers hold out), the war itself is far from over. Indeed, by picking up a few hints on tactics and strategy from our comrades in Gilly we may well be in a position to swing future battles a different way.

WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

One of the most important elements in their struggle, from the moment when the giant French-based Multi-national BSN announced its intention to close the Gilly plant of its Glaverbel subsidiary, was that of workers' democracy.

From the very beginning all major decisions were made by daily mass meetings of the entire workforce, thus guaranteeing their maximum involvement on a day-to-day basis. An elected strike committee to ensure overall co-ordination was established, with its delegates responsible to and recallable at any time by the base. This in turn set up a series of commissions to oversee particular aspects of the struggle such as fundraising, publicity, etc.

But this democratic organisation of the struggle was not confined to the workforce. In contrast to many factory occupations in Britain, where outsiders have been regarded with extreme suspicion and often kept out entirely, the Gilly workers welcomed all supporters of their struggle with open arms.

Indeed, the strike committee even arranged a series of meetings with delegations from various political groups to discuss their ideas on how the struggle could be advanced. In this way it was possible to draw on the widest possible range of experience and ideas in charting the way forward.

WORKERS' CONTROL

Following on closely from this were the elements of workers' control and management introduced.

From the start the workforce challenged the capitalist ethic of private property by occupying the factory. But there was the problem of the furnaces—if they were allowed to cool down, then at the very least the workforce would be laid off for a whole period.

So the workers decided to continue production on a limited scale—but on their terms, by manufacturing it to non-standard specifications

by
Martin Meteyard

sell it without first calling them in to trim it. Finally, as the struggle wore on, a mass meeting decided to follow the example set by the Lip watchmakers in 1973 and sell the glass directly to the public to boost their strike fund. This met with a huge response and was another blow against capitalist legality.

INDEPENDENT ACTIONS

But it was also necessary, of course, to extend the struggle beyond the Gilly factory. So did the workers place all their hopes on persuading the union bureaucrats and the 'left' MPs of the Socialist and Communist Parties to resolve the situation? Not a bit of it. First they launched their struggle, and then they demanded that these people back up their action if they were at all serious about fighting unemployment.

In other words, they used their own independent actions as a focus for building support and forcing the bureaucrats into action for fear that they might be left behind altogether. In this way they were able to organise support through a regional action committee of the FGFB (Belgian TUC), address an emergency conference of delegates from every factory in the Charleroi area, get a series of stoppages throughout the glass industry and of a more token nature in other industries; and finally pose as a real possibility in the situation the calling of a regional general strike.

INTERNATIONAL

But amidst all these developments the Gilly workers did not lose sight of one very important fact—they were up against a ruthless multi-national whose 'rationalisation' plans involved shutting down at least 10 factories in four different countries. The international resources of such a monster could only be fought by mobilising international working class solidarity against it.

So from the first the Gilly workers sought to make contact with the other factories in BSN's glass-making sector, particularly in France. Delegations met, the issue was discussed in the various factories, collections were raised, and the basis was laid

national solidarity—a demonstration of 1,500 glassworkers from BSN's French and Belgian plants and their supporters together with a small delegation from Germany outside BSN's headquarters in the Paris suburb of Levallois.

Guarding the offices were a line of policemen who refused them entry. But the demonstrators shouted, 'We haven't come hundreds of miles for nothing!' and after a bit of pushing all 1,500 of them poured into the building and started up the stairs. On the top floor they found the head of BSN, Riboud, in the restaurant—so they all crammed in and made clear to him that 'we're not going to foot the bill for the crisis of capitalism', as one delegate put it.

Thus the giant multi-national found itself forced back on the defensive against the international solidarity of its workforce. A couple of days later, and a proposed settlement guaranteeing every single job was on the table waiting to be signed.

SETTLEMENT

Of course it was not a perfect agreement. The strikers had originally demanded no dispersal of the workforce, whereas this settlement envisaged that some would be absorbed into other factories while others would be employed on a new enterprise to be established by BSN in the area.

But the majority of the workforce will continue to be employed at the Gilly plant, thus ensuring that the high level of organisation they have built up will not be destroyed. Furthermore, while the new enterprise is being set up, the workers allocated will continue to be employed at Gilly on the basis of work-sharing with no loss of pay.

In the face of the continued refusal of the trade union bureaucrats to lead a struggle in defence of jobs, a mass meeting of the Gilly workers decided—undoubtedly correctly—that this was the best



CAMBODIA TEETERS ON BRINK

THE CAMBODIAN PUPPET regime of Lon Nol—installed after a CIA coup in 1970—is teetering on the edge of collapse.

Over the last few months the revolutionaries of FUNK have won a series of unprecedented military victories. Because of the exhaustion of their resources and partly out of fear of massive American retaliation they

Franco regime claims new victim

THE GREY-UNIFORMED BUTCHERS of Franco's dictatorship have claimed another victim.

On 13 February Pedro Mora Leon died in the Barcelona hospital where he had been under treatment since 24 January. Up until 21 January he had been in perfect health. The intervening three days had been spent in police custody, undergoing 'interrogation'.

By the time the Spanish cops had finished with Leon his body was covered with bruises, there were second degree burns on his arms and chest, cuts on his tongue, he was haemorrhaging internally, and his kidneys were no longer able to function properly. The police said that he had injured himself while resisting arrest.

It is testimony to the fighting spirit of this militant that he battled for almost three weeks to remain alive.

This incident is a graphic reminder that no matter what left-right shuffle the Spanish Government may be engaged in, the dictatorship and its brutality lives on. It will only cease when the Spanish working class rises up and takes matters into its own hands, sweeping the rotten dictatorship into the rubbish heap and bringing its butchers under the hammer of proletarian justice.

This day may not be so far away, and militants in the workers' movement in this country should be doing everything they can to help the Spanish workers bring it even closer.

SOLIDARITY WITH THE FIGHT AGAINST THE SPANISH DICTATORSHIP!

Public meeting of the Spanish Solidarity Committee, Friday 21 March—7.30 p.m. Conway Hall.

Speakers from the Committee, Amnesty International, and the labour movement.

Mass picket to protest at the murder of Fredo Mora Leon by the Spanish police and in solidarity with all Spanish political prisoners.

Saturday 15 March—11 a.m.—Spanish Consulate, Hans Crescent, London, SW1 (nearest tube Knightsbridge).

always held back from a totally committed assault.

However, since January this year they have carried out a prolonged, sustained drive against Lon Nol's last strongholds. At each stage they have consolidated their gains and tested US reaction before launching the next attack.

CURTAILED ACTIVITY

At the end of last year they deliberately and incorrectly curbed their activity in preparation for the United Nations debate on Cambodia. This resulted in the loss of some ground as well as the deote.

Since the start of the dry season they have gained everything that was lost and much other ground besides. Phnom Penh is now totally isolated. Every road and railway has been cut. The Mekong river has been closed for over a week. All the military bases on the banks of the river are in the hands of the resistance.

Two weeks ago the old capital city of Oudong was liberated with Lon Nol's forces suffering grave losses and key units of his army are bogged down and isolated at Kampot.

Every day the city of Phnom Penh and its airfield, the only link with the outside, are assaulted with rocket and mortar fire which at times has halted the US air-lift completely.

These successes are entirely the work of the resistance forces, which are getting no help from the USSR. In fact the USSR gave only lukewarm support to GRUNK at the UN. China's aid has also been very restric-

ted, although it does supply some weapons to the liberation forces. The bulk of the weaponry—particularly the 105mm howitzer being used with such devastating effect right now—is of US manufacture which has been captured in battle.

China's diplomatic support is mainly directed towards consolidating the Sihanoukist faction at the expense of the more combative and more embarrassingly revolutionary faction led by Khieu Samphan. Nor sadly have they had much help from the international solidarity movement.

LOST SUPPORT

The victories of the Red Khmer have not been solely military. The Lon Nol Government has lost the support of most sections of the bourgeoisie, and it dare not force-draft thousands of students and workers in the capital for fear of unleashing an internal opposition.

The basic strategy of the FUNK has remained unaltered for the last three years. This has been to demoralise and weaken the puppet regime at its roots by laying siege to the capital and prevent it breaking out of the siege by pinning down Lon Nol's forces in different parts of Cambodia. This has now resulted in the regime's army running short of ammunition and even more short of troops and it cannot halt the relentless pressure of the insurgents.

Unlike Vietnam, where over a period of years the USA managed to build up a strong infrastructure to hold up the regime of Nguyen Van Thieu, the relative tranquillity and financial underdevelopment of Cambodia—a product of its position as a 'buffer state'—has meant that Lon Nol's regime has had to be built and sustained by US aid and military power alone. This makes it the weakest link in Indochina and the regime is susceptible to the slightest opposition, the smallest military setback or the least halt in arms and money.

As Lon Nol oscillates between his helicopter and his fortune tellers, the US Congress bites its nails and debates what to do. Although there is ample evidence that the Pentagon has been preparing an invasion it is unlikely that Congress will sanction such a move.

After Watergate, the recent disci-

Demo calls for British withdrawal from Gulf



More than 500 people marched through London last Sunday calling for the immediate withdrawal of British and Iranian forces from Oman, where they are playing a leading role in the war against the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman.

osures about the CIA and the setbacks suffered by the Republicans in the last elections Ford cannot do a Johnson or a Nixon behind-the-door dodge over Cambodia.

FAVOURS DITCHING

There is a strong current of opinion in the American Congress that favours ditching the embarrassing and expensive regime of Lon Nol and using this to gain some credibility with its other clients.

Of course there are ways round Congress. The massive influx of supplies flown every 10 minutes into Phnom Penh by Bird Air—an airline using USAAF planes and pilots and known to be connected with the CIA—shows this. The airlift carrying ammunition and rice for soldiers only into a city threatened with starvation, is an exercise in imperialist cynicism.

The US Defence Officials are un-

NOTE

GRUNK = National United Royal Government of Cambodia

FUNK = National United Front of Cambodia (i.e. the resistance)

An exercise in imperialist cynicism—airlift carries food for soldiers only into a city threatened with starvation



certain whether they should stress Lon Nol's hopeless position to get more money out of Congress or play it cool so as not to make his position worse. This has confused and slowed down the Congress debate. Most shrewd judges know Lon Nol is finished and no amount of money will save him.

The debate is really about how to extricate the US not whether to. The US has no room or time for a Diem-type manoeuvre in Cambodia so the idea of replacing Lon Nol with a more suitable US puppet is a non-starter. Nor is there much likelihood of the Red Khmer agreeing to negotiate a settlement—a position they have held since 1970.

The acute crisis which is tearing Lon Nol's puppet regime to bits mirrors the problem of the Thieu outfit in Vietnam. The recent defeats inflicted on the South Vietnamese Army, the chronic economic and social crisis of the Thieu regime, the demoralisation and wearing down of the army and the erosion of its base both domestically and internationally as well as the increased combativity of the liberation army are pushing the balance of forces decidedly in favour of the insurgents.

DEBACLE

The recent debacle at Phuoc Binh has polarised the urban opposition. Within hours of the town falling the head of the Anti-Corruption Movement was calling for Thieu's removal because he had allowed Phuoc Binh to be liberated. The masses however in the National Reconciliation Movement—nominally headed by An Quang Pagoda—hailed it as a victory.

In the past revolutionaries have tended to be over-optimistic about the tempo of the Cambodian revolution. Now however it does seem certain that Cambodia will be completely liberated within the next few weeks.

This will be a victory not just for Cambodia but for the Indochinese revolution, and the international proletarian revolution. A victory in Cambodia can only hasten the fate of the Thieu Government in Vietnam and will strengthen the base of the revolutionary forces in Laos and Thailand demonstrating the permanency of the revolutionary process.

David Johnson

What's On?

SHEFFIELD RED CIRCLES: Every Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Lion Hotel (corner of the Wicker and Nursery St).

FOR CHEAP, reliable IBM Typesetting with fast turn-around phone Carl or Martin on 01-837 9987.

BIRMINGHAM RALLY—'Against the Common Market, For a United Socialist States of Europe!' Speakers include Ernest Mandel. Thursday 1 May at 7.30pm in Digbeth Civic Hall Assembly Halls. Organised by Birmingham IMG.

'THE STATE, the Law and Ireland' new pamphlet by Steve Cohen produced for Manchester NCCL—available price 20p (plus 5p p&pl from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

CAMPAIGN for full land nationalisation—public meeting, Thursday 13 March at 7.30pm in Friends House, Euston Road (opp Euston Stn). Speakers from UCATT, Camden CPO Committee, BRAS plus Labour councillors and MPs.

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

PAMPHLET on the struggle at Kent University. Excellent value at 5p. Orders to Joanna Haynes, Keynes College, University of Kent, Canterbury.

IMG GAY GROUP: contact J. Mills, 153 Woodhouse Lane, Leeds.

100 MEN WANTED for organising and running creche for women's liberation conference in Manchester, 4/5/6 April 1975. Please contact John at 061-794 1399.

CIA AND BRITAIN: Public meeting arranged by North London Anarchist Worker Association. Tues. 25 March, 8pm, Roebuck pub (corner Tottenham Court Rd and Mable St). Tube: Warren St or Goodge St.

IMPERIALISM and the National Liberation Movement in the Arab Gulf: teach-in on Sunday 16 March at the Poly of Centre, London, 115 New Cavendish St, W.1. (Goodge St tube). Starts at 11am. Further information from PCLSU Arab Society, 104-108 Bolsover St, W.1. (01-636 6271).

'RIGHT TURN'—benefit for Radical Alternatives to Prison with three plays showing some right-wing aspects of society. In conjunction with Unity Theatre on Thurs 20 March, 7.45pm, in Unity Theatre, 1 Goldington St, St Pancras Rd, NW1. Tickets 50p each at theatre before performance or from RAP, Eastbourne House, Bullards Place, E2 (981 0041).

TOURING SOCIALIST Theatre Company needs two actor/musicians (drummer & guitarist—lead or bass) for play being devised on 1926 General Strike. Techs and trade union audiences. £30 per week. 01-989 9348.

'THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL' Stirling Marxist Discussion Group meeting with speaker Roland Sheret. Tues 25 March at 7.30pm in the Cowane Centre, Cowane Street.

WANTED by Up Against the Law: names and numbers of policemen involved in prosecutions over Red Lion Square. Call, write or ring UPAL at 66 York Way, London, N.1. (01-837 4194).

'Our lives are in your hands'

—Can you first say something about the conditions in which they have been held since their arrest?

I met them for the first time in the public jail in Valparaiso, where they were being held separately from the rest of the prisoners in the most secure part of the building, on the third floor. Conditions there were pretty bad, with as many as eight or ten people crammed into small cells, some of which measured only 2 x 3 metres across.

Then we were all transferred to the Melinka concentration camp, near Limache in the province of Valparaiso. It's absolutely isolated on a small plateau at the top of a hill, and the temperatures there are extreme—very hot by day, very cold by night. We were herded into wooden huts, and there was no running water at all. Instead they brought it in a lorry—still water, very infectious, for 200 people.

They also used the water for a special punishment called the 'picadero'. For the slightest transgression you were pushed in the water and then forced to roll in the dirt—and go to bed just like that. It was hardly surprising that many people became very ill. There were always one or two with fever in each hut.

Eventually, however, we were shifted to another camp, Puchuncavi. Conditions there were slightly better—especially as the Red Cross were due to come and inspect it.

—What had happened to the sailors between the time of their arrest and the time you met them?

By the time I met them they had already survived the worst part of their ordeal—their interrogation and torture by Naval Intelligence between August and December 1973.

One of the most common tortures was to take them on board ship, tie ropes to their feet, and then dangle them upside down in the sea. Or again, they might be lowered in the same way into a hole dug in the sand, so that they nearly suffocated. You could still see the marks from this treatment—their toes were unnaturally open from where the ropes had cut into the skin.

Then of course the junta's torturers used electric shock treatment, applying water first to increase the effect. The shocks were administered to various parts of the body, including the genitals—but I can tell you from my own experience that the worst part of all is the mouth. It's so bad that your head seems to burst right open.

The aim of these and other tortures was to get the sailors—and especially their supposed leader, Sergeant Juan Cardenas—to confess that they had been misled by the left-wing and Popular Unity leaders. But none of them gave way—they all stood firm.

So then the torturers tried another ploy by threatening to harm the sailors' families—saying they would rape their wives and kill their children, that sort of thing. But still the sailors refused to sign anything, because they were confident their families wouldn't collaborate, either.

—It was after they had been through these tortures that you met them. What kind of shape were they in?

Well, I think that some of them only survived this kind of treatment because they were so fit as a result of their training in the Navy. By the time I met them they were in very bad physical shape. Some had troubles with their lungs or were urinating blood, and many had ulcers as a result of the extreme nervous tension during interrogation.

But their morale was still surprisingly high—psychologically, they were very well. They have a great confidence in the will of the Chilean people to resist, and they also know that they can count on the support of millions of workers around the world. They believe that if the international isolation of the junta can be maintained then there is a good chance that it may fall quite soon. Even in jail they heard about

in the months before the overthrow of the Popular Unity Government in Chile on 11 September 1973, one of the most telling indications that preparations for a coup were well advanced was the arrest of some 30 pro-Government sailors by Naval Intelligence.

These sailors had become increasingly alarmed at the way in which their officers were openly trying to whip up hostility to the regime. An example of this was the action of some officers in the Second Zone of Talcahuano, who arranged with local businessmen that they would stop supplying the troops and then blamed the shortages on the 'Marxist policies' of the Government.

To voice their concern at this situation, the sailors met with leaders of various left-wing parties—the Socialist Party, the MAPU (Movement for United Popular Action), and the MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left)—in early August. But the officers got wind of this move, and decided to set a trap for them.

In the early hours of 5 August the sailors were told that their commanders had decided to seize power because 'the Government of President Allende is illegal', and were given two hours to get ready and form up in their units. The pro-Government sailors, taken in by this manoeuvre, at once went to their units to start agitating against this mobilisation. There waiting to arrest them were the Naval Intelligence experts.

Despite the fact that the sailors were victims of an obvious provocation by the officers, the Government did nothing to defend them—so anxious was it to placate the top brass. In fact, of course, the Government's weak-kneed stance only encouraged the top brass to go further. A month later came the bloody coup which established the present military junta.

Today those sailors, who saw it as their duty to defend the Popular Unity Government against the reactionary plots of their commanders, are on trial for their lives. Last week, Martin Meteyard talked about their case to a Chilean refugee who was held for some time in the same prison camp as the sailors.

actions such as the blocking of the frigates here, which strengthened their determination not to give way.

—What kind of impact has their case had inside Chile itself?

It's been most significant, of course, in the maritime provinces—in Concepcion, and Valparaiso. Their stand has been held up as an example of what should have been the general attitude of the Chilean people, and as a symbol and inspiration for the future.

Even though they regarded themselves only as 'constitutionalists'—defending the constitutionally established Government in practice they have stood very much firmer than certain politicians who talked a lot about 'revolution' but have now run for cover.

Their case has also been very useful in showing the possibility that existed for work in the armed forces by the left to win the support of the rank and file against the top brass. It has highlighted the serious mistake made by the Popular Unity Government, which by treating the armed forces with kid gloves eventually brought about its own downfall. This is a lesson that must be learnt for the future.

—Finally, what can we do here to affect their fate?

All the sailors are very aware that it is only because of international pressure that they have not been physically liquidated by the junta. The junta has been continually playing for time in the hope that the publicity will die down and leave them free to act against the sailors.

But as Cardenas once said to me: 'We are not afraid of death after all we have gone through, but we don't want to die unless it is useful to the cause. We would go through it all again if only it was useful to the people.'

When they knew I was going to be released they asked me to tell the world about what was happening. They have great confidence that the workers of the world won't be indifferent to their fate.

Even token gestures like the sending of trade union or Government delegations to Chile are important—indeed, I myself was released thanks to one of these. And in Britain it will be particularly important to mobilise in their defence for the actions which I understand are being planned for Chilean Naval Day on 21 May.

say Chilean sailors



FREEDOM FOR THE CHILEAN SAILORS AND ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

“We are not afraid of death after all we have gone through, but we don't want to die unless it's useful to the cause. We would go through it all again if only it was useful to the people”

Juan Cardenas, leader of the sailors who refused to take part in the coup against the Popular Unity government.

RHODESIA

Smith's frame-up backfires

RHODESIA'S WHITE RACIST leader Ian Smith appears to have fouled his own nest in a desperate attempt to split the nationalist movements that represent Rhodesia's black majority.

Last week he had the Rev. Ndabani Sithole, leader of the most militant of the nationalist groups, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), arrested on an absurd charge of plotting the assassination of fellow nationalist leaders.

This step was taken as the whole scheme for 'settlement' in Rhodesia was beginning to come apart at the seams, with the white racists making it clear that they were not prepared to accept the principle of 'majority rule' within the foreseeable future.

This has made it more and more clear that the only terms on which a 'settlement' can be reached would be a total sell-out of the black Rhodesian majority. As a result, important sections of the nationalist movement are beginning to speak out against the whole idea of 'detente' in southern Africa, and in the field ZANU's guerrilla forces have refused to go along with any overtures

Smith clearly calculated that ZANU was his biggest enemy at the moment, and had to be got out of the way so that a sell-out could be engineered with the more 'moderate' nationalists. However it would not do to simply imprison Sithole—it



ZANU leader, Ndabani Sithole

was also necessary to smear him politically. Smith figured that the other nationalist leaders were a bit fed-up with having the ZANU militants breathing down their necks, and would jump at this chance of getting Sithole out of the way. What he failed to take into account—as the racists have so often in the

past—was the political awareness of the Rhodesian blacks. There was no chance of their buying Smith's phony tale, and the other nationalist leaders knew it. The only result of their co-operation with Smith's plot would have been to destroy their influence and strengthen the popularity of ZANU.

All the black leaders have so far refused to continue discussions with the Government until Sithole is released, leaving Smith with a very embarrassing mess on his hands. He can either back off and release Sithole, in which case he openly admits that the whole thing was a frame-up, or he can continue with the charade, in which case the whole 'detente' scheme will collapse. In any event the position of ZANU and the militants will be considerably strengthened.

This latest episode underlines the complete impossibility of the Rhodesian blacks winning any real gains through 'detente' and talks with the white racists. The liberation of the black majority of southern Africa from racism and imperialism can only come from the struggle of the black masses themselves—including armed struggle.

CHILE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION — LIVERPOOL

Saturday, March 15 Assemble Islington Square 12.30 p.m.

Speakers:

MARTIN FLANNERY, MP JIMMY SYMES JOAN JARA

Special train leaves Euston 8.50 a.m. Tickets: £4 from CSC, 129 Seven Sisters Rd., London, N7. 01-272 4298.

THE WELFARE STATE CRUMBLES

IN 1948, Aneurin Bevan said of the consultants: 'I'll stop their mouths with gold.' If only it was so easy for Barbara Castle. With the present economic crisis she is hard pressed to give out gold fillings! But where did Bevan's gold come from?

At the end of the war the British economy was entering a twenty year boom. Profits in Britain and the rest of the capitalist system rocketed upwards, and productivity soared.

The rise in British profits gave the ruling class the financial basis to underwrite the welfare state. They did this not because they are naturally kind hearted people, but because they needed a healthy, efficient and educated work force to complement the advances and scientific breakthroughs made during the war.

The ruling class were also worried about the possibility of a working class upsurge. In order to contain that upsurge, they granted a series of reforms, like the National Health Service.

by Rick Sissons

As in education and housing, the inadequacies and growing crisis in the NHS were partially masked until the economic crisis took a hand. As the boom began to slow profits drifted downwards. The bottom fell out of the state's pot of gold.

The share of profits in the total value added of industrial and commercial companies fell from 15% in 1964, to 10% in 1970, and then collapsed to 4% in 1974. In the meantime the public sector deficit has steadily grown from £2½ billion in 1972-73 until in 1974-75 it rose to £6.3 billion (*Inprecor* No 16/17). Next year the situation will deteriorate even further!

In the Labour Government's White Paper on public expenditure, Denis Healey reckons that public spending will total £43 billion, which is about half of the total British gross national product. The money to fund this sector can either come from profits which as we have seen are falling, or be borrowed, or be taken from the working class through cuts in living standards, higher taxation, and reductions in public spending. The aim of both the Tory and Labour Governments has been to shift the onus of paying for the social services onto the backs of the working class.

The public expenditure White Paper is the last in a long line of documents attempting to solve the

crisis at the workers' expense. The 'strategy' of the Labour Government is spelt out there and by Harold Wilson in his recent speeches. It is all a matter of 'social wages'. The argument runs - 'we will maintain the public sector, with its fountains of false teeth and spectacles, if you abide by the social contract and take a cut in your living standards.'

CAPITALIST PRESS

The capitalist press fully realise this. When discussing the White Paper the *Guardian* said:-

'The squeeze on living standards is going to be more savage and to last longer than even the boldest Government minister has yet dared to hint.' (31.1.75.)



The *Economist* (1.2.75.) went on:- 'So it follows that workers' real incomes must be sharply reduced. As the social contract does not permit a cut in real wages, what does that mean?'

A good question, because you can be sure that whatever is decided it will be the workers who bear the brunt of it. The *Economist* suggested a massive increase in taxation or a statutory incomes policy. The *Financial Times*, three weeks after the publication of the White Paper, had another solution:

'There is an almost universal feeling in Whitehall that something drastic and immediate will have to be done to prevent the public sector deficit from growing any bigger, and that some of this will have to be achieved by cuts in public spending. In the longer term it seems certain that the targets in the public expenditure White Paper for the period up to 1979 will have to be revised downwards.' (21.2.75.)

But how social are Harold's social wages? Firstly, we should remember that British industry was in favour of the welfare state in the post-war period. Its maintenance at a minimal level is also in their interests. They need workers who are healthy and with the right level of education. British bosses also want to see the police, the army and other defenders of the social order and their profits maintained.

You would think that health and hospital building would be a top priority in any notion of 'social wages'. Not so. While the whole of the public sector over the next five years is to expand, in real terms, at a rate of 2.8%, the health services will grow at only 2.7%. This will result in capital expenditure on hospital building between this year and 1979 dropping by a staggering 22%. The figures of 2.7, and 2.8% also represent a drop on the targets of previous years.

The patients' situation will certainly not improve. If it can get much worse then it will! Since 1949 the waiting list for admissions has remained at a steady half a million, which averages out at 3½ months per person. However for non-priority operations the length of time before admittance can be far longer...The *Daily Express* (26.2.75.) reported how one young girl has been waiting two years to have her tonsils out, even though the doctor says it is 'absolutely necessary'

GOT WORSE

In the 1968-73 period the situation has got worse. The NHS seems only a short distance from the death bed. While the number of in-patients has risen from 5.8 million to 6.3 million, the number of beds has declined! In 1968 there were 432,140 beds, but in 1973 there were only 403,521 (DHSS report, 1973). Similarly, the number of hospital beds per thousand members of the population has fallen. In 1949 it was 10.3, by 1968 it had become 9.4, and in 1973 8.7.

The chances of getting a bed are on the wane. When you do manage to get in it is a matter of the fastest possible turn-round time. In the last five years the number of patients using a bed in a year has risen from 11 to 16. Although part of this can be accounted for by scientific and medical advance, it shows the enormous pressure and strain being put on the NHS by lack of finance.

Even within the meagre resources being allocated to health there are some sectors of the NHS which will not benefit. You would think that it would be 'social' to take care of the geriatrics and psychiatrics. The White Paper states:-

'Present levels of capital expenditure will be maintained in the geriatric, mental illness and mental handicap fields.'

Sounds fine, until you realise the present state of those areas. But let us not provide the ammunition, we turn to no better source than the *National Westminster Bank Review* (February 1975):

'There are, of course, very severe shortages of manpower within the NHS. Geriatric hospitals, and those for the chronically sick and for psychiatric cases have not received their share of resources. There are still hospitals for the mentally ill where there is a patient-to-doctor ratio of 660 to one.'

LOW

It may be true that present levels will be maintained, but those are levels which are abysmally and 'socially' low.

As the White Paper has to admit on the health sector:

'Many important schemes...will have to be deferred; and many schemes are likely to have to be significantly modified.'

On the other hand, Harold knows on which side of capitalism his bread is buttered. The expenditure on that crucial part of the 'social wage', the police, the Special Patrol Group and the courts, will increase rapidly. Over the next five years expenditure on law and order will rise by 20%. The coffers for coppers will be full.

A policeman's lot may not 'be a happy one', but it looks a lot more promising than a hospital patient's! Harold would be better calling them 'anti-social wages.'

Rick Sissons

NHS: IT W

'The squeeze on living standards is going to be more savage and to last longer than even the boldest Government minister has yet dared to hint.'

CAPITALISM MEDICINE DIRTY BUSINESS

MOST WORKERS have a respect for the medical profession. They like the idea of people providing a service by healing the sick and trying to make human life more liveable.

The notion that medical people should be allowed to get on with their socially useful job without having to hawk their practice around like touts would, and does, find popular acclaim in the workers' movement.

But life under capitalism is not like that. Medicine as a business is no better than any other business. In fact it is even worse, for the mixing up of a profession designed for service with the business of making money is corrupting in practice and as a spectacle is obscene.

When some well-groomed consultant sounds forth on the 'right' to choose he is passionately interested in freedom. But he means freedom for a small clique of wealthy people who have the right to pay him the highest fees he can screw out of them.

For the poor, the aged, and the millions of less fortunate, they are free to join an interminable queue for treatment. They are free to suffer a lousy declining health service. However, they are able to console themselves with the thought that if they had the money they also would be free to choose.

CYNICISM

Private medicine is a booming business these days. It is permeated with a sick cynicism which puts even some of the more conventional capitalist selling methods in the shade. Worried by the crumbling of the NHS, lots of people are enticed into joining private health insurance schemes.

Slick advertising assures them of a more personal service 'designed for the sensitive man and woman'. Emphasis is put on the personal attention patients allegedly get and the hucksters who write the glossy brochures for these private schemes ruthlessly play on the fears and anxieties of their prospective clients.

However, the reality is different. The three million members of private insurance schemes receive a less than good return for their average subscription of £73 a year. The Nuffield Hospital at Woking, for

example - run by BUPA the biggest of the private health insurance schemes - is hardly the epitome of superb medical care.



There are no residential medical officers in the hospital, so if some patient suffers a relapse during the night they have to drum up a doctor from outside, otherwise all they can do is send for the chef!

Nor does the hospital have a properly equipped pathology laboratory which does constitute something of a handicap when quick and serious investigations are needed.

Drugs, sedatives and pain-killers are indispensable in hospitals. They should always be available in adequate supply and surplus stocks of the less used materials should be on hand for emergencies. This is why a dispensary is vital in a hospital. At Woking there is no dispensary and

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the service is dependent on a local chemist who calls twice a day.
The above service is on hand for £200 a week per bed, plus extras for surgery. If you want an ambulance from Heathrow to London, private practice will lay on one for £18 one-way, which makes even the taxi firms' fees appear reasonable.
Having justified all this in the terms of providing a service the BUPA

tra rooms to house their bodyguards.
Just to ensure that the clients do not feel peckish, the Wellington puts on optional extras like smoked salmon sandwiches at £2 a time.
No doubt all the doctors in these private centres took the Hippocratic Oath, but their business-like methods of operation indicates that they thought it sounded nice on graduation day but it should not be taken too seriously in the hard world of business.

Many doctors will balk at that criticism and will claim that they have to earn a living and that means getting the best possible return they can for their hire. Well they have a point. As long as capitalism and the profit motive exists, medical care can never be a genuine social service.

A CHOICE

But doctors have to make a choice. As long as they operate like business people they forfeit all right to claim that they are rendering a public service.

When they turn their backs on the great mass of people who need their skills in order to perform for the rich they are no different from any other capitalist exploiter, except in the extent of their hypocrisy.

The idea of medicine is to serve, and that is an excellent idea. But it can only be fully realised when medicine is separated from the sordid considerations of the capitalist money-making market.

Socialism is the only system which will give doctors the right to practice their skills in a full, creative and socially useful manner. In a socialist society the contradiction between looking after the medical needs of everyone and clambering aboard the gravy train will be abolished. Because the needs of people will be primary, the resources of society will be used to advance medical knowledge and that will be a good society for doctors and patients.

The choice for doctors is stark. They can either act as buccanniers, flogging their merchandise to the highest bidder, or they can place themselves on the side of those who are fighting for a working class solution to the crisis in the NHS.

Bob Pennington



COR-AU-VIN OR BRISKET OF THIGH?

Private medicine is busy buying up posh London hotels for conversion as private hospitals. Last week BBC's *Midweek* programme focussed its cameras on one London hotel which is converting the top two floors into a private hospital whilst keeping the rest of the hotel for wealthy tourists.
A dilemma, not yet solved—but no doubt ingenuity will conquer—is how to get the bodies of dead patients out without offending the guests. One idea floated is to keep the bodies in cold storage until the dead of night when they can be discreetly removed.
Our resident cartoonist makes a suggestion on where to keep them and how the deceased rich might be put to some use after their demise.

WOMEN TAKE THE CUTS

The cut-backs in spending in the National Health Service mean more than crumbling hospital buildings, chronic staff shortages and the closures of wards, casualty departments and local hospitals.

They also lead to a regime in the hospitals which acts against the patients. Health care and the whole life of patients is ordered to suit administrative convenience—particularly the medical profession—rather than the needs of individual patients. This can and often does result in techniques being used which are positively dangerous.

INDUCING BIRTHS

One of the worst examples of this is the increasing use of methods of inducing births. Originally induction techniques were designed for women who could not go into labour naturally. Now the same techniques are more and more being used to ensure that women give birth at times which fit in with hospital schedules.

Ten years ago only 14.6 per cent of births were induced. Now the figure is nearly 50 per cent. This is not because these techniques are safer for the mother or the babies. The evidence points clearly to the fact that about 3 times as many induced babies need special care compared with natural births. For the women it involves greater physical and men-

tal stress and increased risks such as rupture of the womb and the more frequent use of surgery to increase the size of the vagina. Not to mention other 'side-effects' such as severe depression!

The 'normal' routine of inducing births in most hospitals shows the real reason for the increased use of this procedure. The women are given a drip of the birth inducing hormone (oxytocin) early in the morning to accelerate the onset of labour so that they can give birth between 2 and 4 pm.

It is at this time that the largest number of nurses and staff are on duty because of the overlap of shifts, and therefore most patients can be dealt with. In other words, except for a very short period every day the number of staff is totally inadequate to attend to even the basic needs of patients.

These shortages are of course due to the miserable pay and conditions of work of hospital workers which are a result of the cutbacks in the funding of the NHS. The increasing use of these induction methods is nothing but the abuse of a medical technique in order to cover up the increasing inadequacies of the health service.

The worst effects of the crisis of the NHS are being borne by women. The local hospitals already threatened with closure are mainly those serving working class women and the cuts in

the NHS building programme have meant that most of the projected health centres which could give proper pre- and post-natal care have been axed.

A lot of doctors—probably a majority—support the use of induction techniques. Gynaecology has always been an area of medicine shrouded with myths, hypocrisy and prejudice, all cultivated and encouraged by the medical profession.

Instead of fighting for more resources for the health service, doctors have used the mystique surrounding their profession and their jealously-guarded monopoly of medical knowledge to serve the needs of hospital routine. The needs of the patients are blatantly subordinated to administrative convenience and the doctors' requirements.

The use of induced births shows that doctors are quite prepared to force patients to accept treatment that increases health risks in order to paper over and adapt to the cuts in NHS expenditure.

The fight to defend the NHS and extend the health service into a comprehensive service which genuinely meets the needs of working class patients is not just a battle to get more money—vital as that is. It also involves a struggle to break down the mystique of medicine and a struggle to break the reactionary privileges of the doctors which are an obstacle to medical advance.

Cain Spencer



bosses are warning that 'insurance will have to go up so we can increase the price of our beds'.

Of course there is another and more swish bracket of private medicine which does provide a more deluxe standard. Just opposite Lords Cricket Ground is the £5 million Wellington Hospital.

The Wellington has something of an international flavour. Its £65-a-night rooms are populated by British capitalists, Arab oil sheiks, and American tycoons. For £100 a night you can have a suite which some guests take as an extra. Being popular and well-loved people, they need the ex-



Demonstration against the closure of Liverpool Road Hospital in Islington

Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)



"A workers' enquiry into the NHS would increase their confidence and help bring them to the realisation that their strength extends beyond the factory walls."

MORE THAN 80 trade unionists turned out to a conference in Leeds last week against the cuts in social expenditure. Originally initiated by local militants of the International Marxist Group, the conference picked up wide support from the labour movement in Leeds, where a £12 million scheme for badly needed improvements in the Leeds General Infirmary has recently been chopped. The following is an interview with Terry Jacques, President of the Leeds AUEW and chairman of the conference:

Do you think it is sufficient to rely on Parliamentary struggle to reverse the attacks on the welfare state?

I do not believe that MPs are a group with their finger on the pulse of the nation, who respond automatically to the will of the majority of people. They react to events—they do not lead them. They will only cease their attacks on social expenditure if pressured by the working class. This must be a very united and strong pressure to have any impact.

What do you think is the solution then?

The only real solution is to replace so-called "Parliamentary democracy" with real democracy: a system in which people take their own decisions, rather than having things decided for them by a bunch of faceless bureaucrats.

The lead has been given by the NHS workers themselves. They are not only talking about opposition to private practice, but taking action in support of their ideas. As a trade unionist I have learnt that the bosses only respond to action, and then only to organised, strong action. What the NHS workers did in Swansea is terrific. This sort of action is the only thing that will have an impact.

What do you think of the idea of a workers' enquiry into the NHS?

An enquiry conducted by the labour movement could certainly do no harm. I would welcome it. When workers first come into contact with unions and participate in defending and improving their wages and conditions they begin to sense their own power. Such an enquiry as you mention would increase

further the confidence of workers, and help bring them to the realisation that their strength extends beyond the factory walls.

Both the AUEW and the TUC are opposed in principle to private practice. Do you see this being translated into action in Leeds through blacking of all work on the private hospital that is being built?

Such action is a possibility, but will depend to a large extent on whether the official trade union movement is willing to give a lead. Unfortunately the TUC is sometimes a very conservative body and not easily stirred into action.

I certainly feel that if doctors are going to opt out of the NHS and start charging fees, as has been suggested in some quarters, then the trade union movement should take them on. We cannot allow a group of reactionary doctors to destroy the Health Service.

I think it is important when considering such action as you mention to be positive as well as negative. Thus in the case of the private hospital we should suggest that the building be used as part of Leeds General Infirmary or as accommodation for the homeless. I am



A new private hospital being fitted out at Roundhay in Leeds — just one of the developments the Leeds conference was called to fight.

in any case in favour of small hospitals rather than the massive, characterless buildings we see in most cases.

What would you like to see coming out of the conference?

I don't think the conference has any mandate to call for strikes or blacking of work. Any attempt to push such a line will probably lead to a very disunited conference. Not that I am against such actions in principle. When you have tried reason and got nowhere you do not have a lot of choice. Such tactics would need to be discussed by all the unions involved, and also by the local trades council. There is no reason why the conference should not start the debate on these matters, however.

I think we all hope that this conference will not be a one-off, isolated event. Its prime task should be to discuss the response of the labour movement to the cuts in social expenditure, in order that those attending can take suggestions and proposals back to their unions and so on. Conference may also consider it useful to elect a committee to coordinate the campaign against the cuts. This will need to be talked over by the conference itself. There are many different ways in which the Leeds labour movement can resist the present attack on its standard of living. The purpose of the section on the agenda dealing with resolutions is to allow these different positions to be put and debated freely.



The right-wingers who fled — ex-President Vallance-Owen, and side-kick, former vice-President Timothy Owen.

Student-worker unity as right wing flees

ALL ACROSS THE COUNTRY students and workers are fighting back against the Government's cuts in social service spending in an attempt to prevent the costs of the capitalist crisis being dumped on their backs. But in Birmingham University one little group of aspiring student bureaucrats, led by the latest darling of the National Union of Students' right wing, Andrew Vallance-Owen, decided to scab on this struggle and go along with the hatchet job.

The Students' Union at Birmingham runs its own catering, subsidised by a grant from the University. Last

year the catering service rang up a deficit of £35,000. Instead of leading a fight for an increased grant, the right-wing Student Union officers decided to sack 21 of the 80 catering workers, despite the serious overwork which existing staff already face.

However the student bureaucrats had not counted on the solid resistance which they ran into. Campus trade unionists took a firm stand against the proposed cuts, as did the militant Cuts Action Committee (formed at the initiative of the IMG at a students' union general meeting last term).

On Thursday, 27 February the Cuts Action Committee decided to step up the fight by occupying the University's administration offices to back up their demands. As one leaflet put out by the occupiers said 'We see this occupation as part of the overall fight against all education cuts and see it linked to the struggle of workers against redundancy and inflation'.

The occupation received a big boost the following Wednesday (5 March) when a 750 strong Union General Meeting, the biggest for seven years, voted to endorse the occupation and its demands. The right-wing President and Vice-President promptly resigned, and announced their intention to stand in the by-election on an anti-occupation platform.

The University Administration has tried to break the occupation by every dirty trick they can think of. They have tried to split the students and workers by questioning the representativeness of the union meeting, holding up the example of the right-wing resignations, suggesting that the occupation will prevent the payment of wages to campus staff, and making all sorts of slanders and ominous threats. Their latest 'Information Sheet' warns:

'The salient fact is that a few hundred students, operating under a cloak of sympathy for the Union catering staff, are causing widespread and progressive disruption of the work of the University. It is now urgent that this situation should end. Failure to end it may lead to consequences we would all regret.'

UNITY

But neither lies nor threats nor divisive manoeuvres have been able to block the unity and determination of both workers and students. As we go to press plans are underway for a joint student-worker demonstration (on Tuesday, 11 March) with the participation of students throughout the Birmingham area. Widespread support from campus workers is expected.

One of the most important tasks of the supporters of the occupation now is to throw the right-wing's by-election manoeuvre back in their face. The by-election is due in two weeks time, and the annual presidential election shortly after that. Since the occupation will be the central issue for both left and right in both elections, the IMG and their supporters in the Fourth International Society argued that the best way of creating the sort of unity that could smash the right would be through a slate representing all those involved in the occupation.

This proposal was overwhelmingly endorsed by an occupation general meeting, but has been blocked by the Community Party dominated 'Broad Left' who, in a completely sectarian way, insist on standing their own candidates. As a result the Fourth International Society has had no choice but to put up its own slate for the posts of President and vice-president.

The Birmingham University workers and students will need all the help they can get to win this fight—and if they do win it will be a victory for students and workers everywhere. A good start would be a flood of messages of support from students and trade unionists across the country.

'Wedge' tactic fails

One of the standard tactics of University Administrations in dealing with student struggles is to try and drive a wedge between the students and campus workers.

True to form, they have tried the same sort of stunt at Birmingham. The University's mis-named 'Information Sheet' threatens to withhold staff wages, blaming it on the occupation's disruption of the administrative machinery.

But the scheme has gone sour. There is a significant history of student-worker solidarity on the university, and the campus workers are exceptionally well organised. There is a Joint Union Committee (JUC) representing all the different unions on the campus, including the student union.

The JUC was one of the first to take up the question of the cuts, organising a conference of students and workers last month which adopted a resolution against any cuts in education spending, and has taken a firm stand in support of the occupation.

During recent student general meetings (including the one which endorsed the occupation) catering staff took strike action, and women catering workers spoke at the meetings in favour of the occupation. The union representatives on the JUC

have systematically kept their members informed about the struggle. When the University authorities tried to manipulate the issue of staff wages, representatives of the NALGO, TGWU, GMWU, ASTMS, and EPTU members on the campus issued a statement which pointed out that:

'...the occupation has submitted the following proposals to facilitate the payment of staff wages:

'1. Administration staff will be allowed into the finance office to work out the staff wages and pay them; 2. University workers will be allowed access to the finance office to receive wages.

'We, the following trade union officials, believe that these proposals are fair and reasonable, and the University should accept them. If the University refuses to accept these proposals then the University is alone responsible for the non-payment of wages.'

The JUC has also agreed to support the mass demonstration called for 11 March, and a number of campus workers are expected to stop work in order to take part.

It is this sort of fighting unity between students and workers that gives the Birmingham struggle an excellent chance of being victorious.

Look what we found . . .

Among the more interesting side-lights of the Birmingham occupation have been a few of the confidential documents that the occupiers have stumbled across.

These include various proposals for dealing with student occupations, such as:

'Security staff should be encouraged to gain the confidence of occupiers and to be allowed to enter the building at periodic intervals. In this way we shall receive situation reports from inside the building.' and, 'Senior staff should be seen from time to time with worried frowns and perhaps even begging entry.'

One of the more revealing discoveries is the following memo from the Estate and Buildings Officer:

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL

On a number of occasions the Vice-

Chancellor has suggested to me that it might be possible to install a bell somewhere in the area of the foyer of the Finance Office which would produce such an alarmingly loud sound that it would make life intolerable for students attempting to sit in. On these occasions I wondered if the Vice-Chancellor was speaking in jest, but I now learn that he was serious. I wonder if you would mind looking into this possibility and letting me have a proposal of some sort.

An alternative might be for us to install one of the modern ultrasonic devices which, though hardly audible, are so uncomfortable on the hearing as to make life impossible. I understand that these can be adjusted in such a way that, although life becomes unbearable with them, they can be kept just below the threshold which makes them injurious to the ear drums.

If you have any doubts about these proposals, perhaps we could have a few quiet words sometime.



A further picket to demand the release of Desmond Trotter, the Dominican freedom fighter, took place outside the home of the Dominican High Commissioner on Saturday, 8 March. Trotter, a leading opponent of the Dominican regime, was recently sentenced to death in a wave of repression sweeping this British colony. His appeal, which began on 13 February, will not be decided for another month. Further activities are being organised by the Caribbean People's Solidarity Campaign, and the Campaign for the Release of Desmond Trotter, c/o 37, Tollington Park, London, N4.

BELFAST SHOOT OUT IMPERIALISM ONLY WINNER

DON'T LET FASCISTS BEAT THE BANS

The Irish Republican Socialist Movement have accused the Official IRA of being responsible for the death of leading IRSP member Hugh Ferguson.

Since Ferguson's death on 21 February there have been numerous allegations of shootings, beatings-up, kidnappings and killings of both Official and IRSP members.

Sean Garland, reputed to be second-in-command of the Official Army Council, has been seriously wounded. Garland was shot in Dublin on Saturday 1 March. Other casualties include Ronnie Bunting, a prominent IRSP supporter in Belfast, and Sean Fox, a leading Official.

DETERIORATION

Since Ferguson's death there has been a rapid deterioration in the conflict between the now divided wings of the Official IRA. If a halt is not called quickly then this internecine warfare will have serious consequences not just for the two groups involved but for the whole Irish anti-imperialist struggle.

The IRSP is mainly made up of former members of the Officials who under the leadership of Seamus Costello were either expelled or left the Officials over differences on the national question (see *Red Weekly*, 16 January 1975). Last December they set up their own organisation, which the Officials at first dismissed as 'an ultra-left group' which was 'insignificant'.

One leader of the Officials produced the comical explanation that '... The International Socialists have now set up their own party and are no longer attempting to use Sinn Fein for their own disruptive ends'. (*Hibernia*, 10 January 1975).

The Officials indulged in an orgy of press statements denying that the IRSP had taken away or won any significant support from the Officials. Then the press statements turned sour. On 9 January the Belfast executive of the IRSP put out a statement alleging that four of their members had been kidnapped, held for questioning, and beaten. They also said that two supporters had been shot and slightly wounded.

The response of the Official IRA was revealing. Instead of denying these allegations and condemning such political thuggery they said: 'Over the past few months punitive action has been taken against ex-members of the Official



Official Sinn Fein Organiser Sean Garland, seriously wounded in Dublin



Bernadette McAiskey, leader of the Irish Republican Socialist Party

Republican Movement who had been found guilty of various acts of embezzlement of movement funds and misappropriation of IRA weapons, and other criminal actions'.

Niall Nolan

The statement went on to say: 'All means necessary to terminate these anti-social acts and the present scurrilous attempts to denigrate and subordinate the allegiance of our own members in the Republican Movement will be rigorously applied' (*Irish Times*, 11 January 1975).

The Officials, according to the *Irish Times* of 25 February, said a 'military wing' of the IRSP was responsible for sectarian murders. They went on to claim that investigations by their Belfast Command had revealed that Ferguson was a member of the IRSP's 'military wing'. The statement went on to say: 'The IRA ... will act as they decide and in their own time against anyone whom they establish to be concerned in the promotion of sectarian violence ...'

This is a scurrilous accusation by the Officials. The idea that the politics of the IRSP had led them to engage in sectarian violence is without foundation.

This is not some simple conflict between the two organisations over finance, territory or weapons. The Army Council of the Official IRA appears to have taken a decision to smash the new organisation. Many independent reports allege that the Official leadership has told its rank and file that it must not make the same mistake with the IRSP as it made with the Provisionals by allowing them to establish and consolidate themselves.

A number of political developments within the Officials of late give credibility to such a view. The hard stalinist wing is strengthening its position, and this has many of the overtones of the Communist Party's approach in the 1930s. One young 'Turk' in the Officials, obviously modelling himself on the hard-line CP hacks of the pre-1956 days, said: 'The Official Republican Movement is not yet monolithic, in ideology or in practice. Yet it has made at the last Ard Fheis in particular [when Costello and his supporters were kicked out] immense strides in that direction'. (*Irish Times*, 28 December 1974).

Another indication of the stalinisation of the Officials is seen in the January issue of the *United Irishman* - official organ of the Officials - which carried an

article justifying the suppression of the 1956 Hungarian Revolution by Soviet troops.

ARROGANCE

The present attitude of the Official leadership to the feud is one of aggressive arrogance. They have refused to try and discuss through intermediaries, and are contemptuous of any efforts made to diffuse the tensions. This is in contrast with their position in early 1971, when they were in a similar conflict with the Provisionals and asked: 'Why should republican shoot republican?'

At that time they correctly said that such divisions presented British imperialism and its agents provocateurs with a golden opportunity, and used the example of how the conflict between the rival national liberation movements (FLN and FLOSY) in Aden had been used by the British. If that was true then what has changed now? Maybe the Officials feel the odds are now in their favour this time.

In contrast the IRSP have unequivocally condemned the violence, and say this is no way of solving political differences in the working class movement. They have repeatedly said that they are prepared to use intermediaries to end the tensions and conflict. They have also called for open political debate.

DISASTROUS

It is impossible to say, however, whether all the rank and file of the IRSP have resisted the Official's provocations. If they have resorted to retaliation, such a course would be disastrous.

The Revolutionary Marxist Group - Irish section of the Fourth International - have urged a campaign in defence of the right to organise which would be far more effective than retaliation. Such a campaign, coupled with the demands of the RMG for a code of revolutionary conduct and for a commission to oversee its implementation, could gain a response even within the ranks of the Officials.

TROOPS OUT NOW

SUNDAY 6 APRIL

1 p.m. Clerkenwell Green
Organised by

TOM

Marxists Speak Out

The Revolutionary Marxist Group (Irish section of the Fourth International) considers that revolutionaries have a right to organize freely without physical obstruction or attack from any organisation with which they may have political differences.

It can in no way serve the interests of the working class for opposing revolutionary organisations to abandon political debate and turn to physical intimidation and murder as a means of resolving differences. Furthermore, we consider that members of any revolutionary organisation have the right to break from it and form a new organisation.

We utterly condemn the violence directed by the Official IRA against the Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP). For many weeks now the Official IRA have been carrying out a violent campaign against the IRSP. Their initial response to the first public accusations of the IRSP was to defend their right to carry out such a campaign. At the same time they launched a campaign of smears and slanders, designed to portray the IRSP as a gang of non-political sectarian thugs, and to divert attention from the fact that the split arose out of genuine differences of political principle.

Leading members of the Officials have made clear their intention to prevent the IRSP from stabilising its organisation and carrying out political activities. They have stated that 'more people have yet to die'; and remarks in relation to the Provisionals, regretting that they did not 'stamp on them five years ago' (*Irish Independent*, 3 March) have obvious implications in relation to the IRSP.

The campaign launched by the Official IRA is fertile ground for agents provocateurs and cowboy elements; above all it is counter-revolutionary. We call on the Officials to abandon immediately their attacks on the IRSP, to accept the offers of intermediaries, and to enter immediate negotiations with the IRSP for the diffusing of the situation.

This situation of internecine violence must not go unchecked. We therefore call on all Republican and Socialist organisations to draw up an agreed code of revolutionary conduct in defence of the right to free speech and to free organisation in the revolutionary movement. To this end we propose the setting up of a commission of respected trade union, Socialist and Republican figures, which would also be able to serve as an intermediary body for negotiations and investigations.

In the longer term, the only sure way to avoid outbreaks of the kind we have been witnessing is to break down organisational sectarianism. The 'vendetta' approach to sorting out political differences arises directly from an attitude of sterile sectarianism in dealing with the political questions facing the working class.

There are many Socialist and Republican organisations, which have real differences of political principle between them, but which, at the same time, agree on certain basic issues. It is the duty of all these organisations to unite on questions where there exist no differences of political principle.

We call on all Republican and Socialist organisations to come together to discuss the political issues on which a united front can be built. In this way we can strengthen the revolutionary movement and also deal a body blow to sectarianism.

Political Committee,
Revolutionary Marxist Group,
March 7, 1975.

The fascist National Front is getting increasingly rattled at the success of anti-fascist forces in denting its image as a 'respectable' political force by denying it a platform from which to peddle its racist and anti-working class propaganda.

In many towns Labour-controlled Councils have been forced to deny them meeting halls. Now the NF appears to be turning to more desperate and more traditional fascist tactics.

In LONDON the NF have established a strong-arm squad of 100 to 150 thugs specifically designed to break up left-wing and immigrant meetings. Meetings organised by the Wandsworth & Battersea Trades Council and the IS group have already been attacked.

In BIRMINGHAM a similar attempt was made on 2 March to disrupt a public meeting on 'The Crisis in the Car Industry' organised by the International Marxist Group. During the course of the meeting about 20 fascists entered in ones and twos, after previously telling the police to 'expect' trouble at the IMG meeting, and a large number of police were also noticed hanging around the hall. During the break between the two speakers there was a certain amount of disruption, but the meeting continued with the second speaker.

However it was clear to the IMG members that after the second speaker the NF would attempt to start a fight which would involve the police intervening and the IMG being held responsible for damage to the hall and persons. It was therefore decided to end the meeting immediately after the second speaker and attempt to avoid a confrontation. This was successfully carried out and the NF members left the meeting, allowing it to continue unopposed.

WARNING

These incidents in London and Birmingham should flash the warning lights to the workers' movement. The NF was so successfully opposed in Leicester and London last year, that they are very much on the defensive. The present political situation offers them great opportunities. They would love to march proudly through the streets proclaiming opposition to Britain's entry into the EEC and calling for black people to be kicked out of the country as unemployment rises once again.

But instead they find great difficulty in holding even local meetings, let alone big national demonstrations. So they are waging a desperate defensive battle to get themselves back on the map and to try to physically demonize those who have fought against them so consistently in the recent past. Unless they do this, they risk being isolated once and for all in front of the workers movement.

In this situation, all meetings of the left and of immigrant workers have to be well protected and guarded. The only solution to both fascist and police obstruction will be to prepare adequate self-defence by the organisations of the working class.

The NF are trying, in a very determined manner, to beat the bans placed on them by local councils. On 8 March the NF tried to hold a meeting in the market square at Hyde, near MANCHESTER, after being banned from the Town Hall by the Labour-controlled Council. However, despite the fact that the NF had made the meeting a national mobilisation, to be addressed by Webster, Tyndall and Reed, only 150 fascists attended. They were forced to hold their meeting in a corner of a square surrounded by police, by 250 anti-fascists.

This is a big set-back for the Front who are repeating the attempt to beat the bans in Islington, LONDON, on 25 March. On that day, they intend to hold a meeting on the steps of the Town Hall in defiance of the Labour Council ban.

The NF must be given no opportunity to get back on their feet. Following the example of the anti-fascists in Manchester, a massive turn-out of the revolutionary left and the labour movement must be mobilised to police the ban imposed on the fascists by Islington Council. The nails must be driven into the coffin - hard.

James Drake

A Sense of Our History

Ninety-two years ago, on 14 March 1883, Karl Marx died in London. A recently re-published book* written in 1927 by David Riazanov, a leading Marxist scholar in the Soviet Union, gives us a chance to re-assess Marx's incomparable theoretical and organisational role in the development of the world working class movement during the 19th century.

Riazanov, unlike many academic students of Marx, attempts to correct the view that Marx's most important work was passive, abstract theorising. He shows us that Marx, along with Frederick Engels, also played a vital organisational role in the formation of the young workers' movement. In doing so, he covers the ground of all the most important practical and tactical debates between Marx and the Blanquists in the 1840s, with the supporters of Proudhon in the '50s and '60s, and with Lassalle and Bakunin in the '60s and '70s.



Riazanov's excellent and readable introduction to the work of Marx and Engels shows quite clearly how Marx applied his superior theoretical understanding of the functioning of capitalism to the everyday tactical problems of the immature workers' parties. The lessons of some of the debates which took place in and around the Communist League during the period 1848-1852, about the relations of workers' parties to the democratic, bourgeois parties in the common fight against feudalism in Germany for example, are crucial to understanding the evolution of the theory of 'permanent revolution'.

The question of the correct attitude of communists to wars between capitalist nation-states, crucial during the 20th century, was also developed and elaborated in practical situations by Marx in the same period. Such debates within the movement were not dry-as-dust theoretical wrangles, but vital political decisions affecting the lives and deaths of thousands of proletarian militants. Marx was in his element here.

But as well as being a superb tactical politician, a foremost leader of the first socialist International, a man immersed in a sympathetic and acute understanding of the misery and degradation of the working class in Europe, he was also the greatest philosopher and economist we have seen to date. It was Marx who built on the gains of capitalist economics and philosophy, to evolve the only method of analysis which can consistently serve and guide the workers' movement—historical materialism.

Riazanov puts less emphasis on this aspect of his work, hardly mentioning Marx's greatest work *Capital*. However there is an excellent introduction to the philosophy of Marx, and its relationship to the work of earlier, idealist philosophers such as Hegel, Kant and Feuerbach. To those that tremble before the word 'philosophy', let me say that this brief exposition is written in very simple, explanatory terms.

At the time of this anniversary of his death, one could do much worse than read this excellent popularisation of Marx, as a way of beginning to grasp his significance, his brilliance and the overwhelming debt that we owe this great revolutionary today.

Kevin Todd

THE MAN WHO ORGANISED SALTLEY

THE BRIGHT NEW STAR in the firmament of the trade union left is Arthur Scargill, president of the 65,000 strong Yorkshire area of the National Union of Mineworkers and also a member of the NUM national executive.

His unambiguous denunciations of the social contract, his leading role in the fight against the productivity deal, and his generalship at the 'Battle of Saltley' have made him appear to many workers as the voice of a new clear-sighted militancy.

The attacks of the press on Scargill—the *Daily Mirror* described him as 'Scargill the Wrecker', and the *Daily Mail* called him 'a reckless, ruthless militant who could plunge us all into darkness'—have chilled the spines of the stockbroking belt. But such attacks have endeared him to the militants.

Scargill's rapid, almost meteoric rise up the normally slow-moving ladder of the NUM has been viewed with alarm by the right wing in the Union, and has caused more than a ripple of apprehension inside the Labour Cabinet. The Communist Party—whilst being careful not to make open criticisms of Scargill—are resentful that Mick McGahey, whom they have been grooming for the NUM presidency, is now second favourite to Scargill for this key post.

PROMINENCE

Scargill's prominence in the Union is not simply due to his undoubted abilities and drive, but is very much a case of the situation making the man. For many of the post-war years the NUM was dominated by the right wing. Atlee and Gaitskell and the TUC bosses could always rely on Sir Will Lawther and Sam Watson—then the main leaders of the Union—to deliver the NUM vote.

Yorkshire was considered to be in the safe-keeping of the right, and as the biggest area of the NUM this ensured that the 'moderates' dominated the Union. In those years miners' wages slithered down the national table, pits were closed, and militancy was at a low level. But by the late 1960s a smouldering discontent was beginning to simmer in the ranks, and a series of unofficial strikes broke out in Yorkshire in 1969 and 1970.

In 1972 that discontent reached boiling point. The Tory Government's attempt to impose a 7 per cent pay-norm was the last straw for the miners. The old-line bureaucracy could no longer hold the tide back, and a national strike was called by the NUM.

LEFT SHIFT

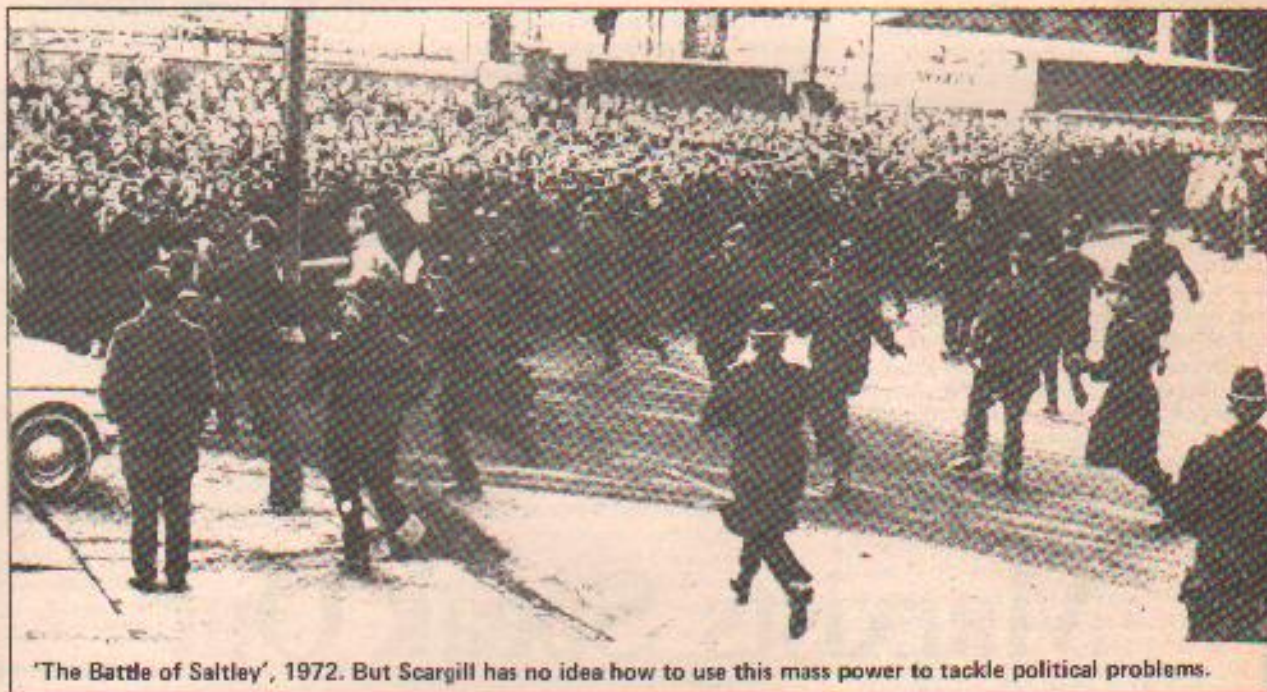
During that strike Scargill became the chief organiser of the Yorkshire 'flying pickets'. Four hours after taking a call in the Barnsley HQ of the NUM, he had organised 400 miners on the road in the direction of Saltley. After five days' battle with the police, a Scargill-initiated campaign led to 100,000 Birmingham workers downing tools in support of the Saltley pickets, with 20,000 of them joining the picket line. The battle of Saltley had been won.

Scargill's determination to use the resources of the Union to block off supplies from the power stations, and his willingness to challenge the Government, enhanced his prestige in the NUM in general and in Yorkshire in particular. A year later, following the death of the 'moderate' area president Sam Bullough, the Yorkshire miners voted by 26,130 votes against a combined vote of 14,916 for his two opponents, to elect Scargill as their youngest ever president.

As the elections of Scanlon and Jones in the 1960s represented a left-shift in the AUEW and TGWU, so Scargill's election in 1973 represented a left move amongst the rank and file of the NUM.

Scanlon and Jones had risen to office on their line of giving more power and backing to the shop stewards in their unions. In the early 1960s, piece-work was worked in most of the mass production industries, which were the main base of the AUEW and the TGWU. Negotiations carried out at shop stewards level were therefore invariably more important in determining the size of the wage packet than national negotiations.

By the '70s however, such a strategy was no longer sufficient. The state had stepped into the wages arena to save British capitalism. Pay-norms, incomes policies and the social contract were thinly disguised attempts to impose national wage restraint. The stakes had been upped.



'The Battle of Saltley', 1972. But Scargill has no idea how to use this mass power to tackle political problems.

To break the pay-norms calls for a national strategy and a willingness to take on the Government. Scargill's apparent preparedness to do this makes him appear much more 'a man of our times' than 'yesterday's' lefts like Scanlon and Jones.

Scargill is not, however, some personification of 'new' ideas in the working class. He is in fact a product of the traditions which spawned the miners' leaders of the early twenties.

The contemporary president of the Yorkshire miners may employ a more sophisticated vocabulary than the old-time leaders like A.J. Cook and Herbert Smith. He may favour the pin-stripe suit and trendy shirts as against Smith's cloth cap and baggy trousers; but like Smith and Cook, he is formed in the mould of left social democracy.

Like Smith and Cook, Scargill lacks a clear understanding of the relationship between the economic struggles of the working class and the political fight against the capitalist state.

He has grasped that 'responsibility'

wages, and is therefore bitterly critical of the old leadership of the NUM. He told Christine Dunn of the *Daily Mail* on 10 December 1974: 'The old guard were always trying to be reasonable, trying to be reasonable. I think they were collaborationists. The union were treated with contempt by the Coal Board.'

LACKS UNDERSTANDING

Rejection of the class collaborationist policies of the right wing is excellent. But while Scargill, like Smith and Cook in the 1920s, is quite prepared to lead the miners in a battle with the Government, he has no strategy for fighting the employers and their state other than super-militancy.

Cook and Smith, despite their tenacity and devotion to the miners' cause, were defeated in the 1926 General Strike because they did not fight the betrayals of the TUC right wing by using the entire force of the Union membership to appeal over the heads of the bureaucrats to the rank and file of their unions. Neither knew how to organise their forces to fight the capitalist state, and in the end they were forced back to relying simply on the isolated struggle of the miners.

Today the ruling class again has to take a tough attitude on wages, because British capitalism can only survive by effecting enormous increases in productivity without adding extra costs on the wages bill. When Scargill said of the 1974 wage claim—'The miners have made a wage claim. The Tories have made it political. We do not believe going outside these confines will help the miners or the trade union movement', he was failing to recognise this reality.

POLITICAL

It is good, of course, that Scargill should say on 17 February in reference to the settlement of the miners' wage claim: 'I am personally delighted that the Social Contract has been broken, because it will assist other sections of the trade union movement in achieving their justified wage claims.'

But Scargill has nothing to say on how this should be done, or what sort of demands other workers should make to gain protection of their living standards.

The miners have tremendous economic power. But this must be used to do more than pursue purely sectional ends. The miners should use their moral authority among workers and their power against the state and the employers, to take up such questions as the sliding scale of wages, the Shrewsbury campaign, the fight to defend the social services, and so forth in an active way. Unless they do this, the miners risk being isolated in the long run from other workers and will cease to be in a position to defend even their sectional interests.

This means that the NUM must play a political role. But Scargill, like other left social democrats, believes that politics are about parliament and elections, and what takes place at the workplace is to do with trade unionism. Healthy scorn for parliamentary politics—he once referred to the House of Commons as 'that talking shop' and said 'I am more powerful where I am'—does not prevent this traditional social democratic idea from having its effect of limiting the scope and range of struggle of a militant leader like Scargill. Thus he told Anne Scott James of the *Evening Standard* on 2 September

1974 that his choice for Prime Minister 'would be Wedgewood Benn'—in other words, the problem of the capitalist parliamentary structure is reduced simply to a question of personalities.

Politics cannot be left to Wilson or Benn whilst the miners carry on heroic and stubborn wages' struggles. The ruling class talk about the 'national problems'—and there is certainly no shortage of them. Inflation is rampant. There is a severe energy crisis. The social services are foundering. Unemployment is growing and bankruptcies are abundant. The conditions of the low-paid are getting more and more desperate. The working class movement has to find political answers to these problems and put forward a socialist solution. Militancy alone is not sufficient. Scargill's 'marxism' and 'socialism' stop short at the pit head.

Jeff King

*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: An introduction to their lives and work David Riazanov (Monthly Review Press, £1.50 paperback).

Trade unionists back fringe actors

WHEN WAS the last time that building workers came out in support of the theatre? Before this conjures up pictures of muddy boots and brick-hods cluttering the steps of Covent Garden or the Royal Court, we must make one thing clear.

Recent motions through shop-stewards' committees of the T&G, UCATT and AUEW, were referring to theatre groups like Red Ladder, 7:84 and North-West Spanner, which try to contribute to working-class struggles, rather than to the upper-class 'culture palaces' of the West End.

What prompted this sudden flurry of activity in the trade union movement was the recent announcement of the totally inadequate Arts Council grant to this section of the theatre. Although the subsidy has doubled, to £445,000 this is still less than half the figure required to give the 700 or so 'fringe' actors the Equity minimum wage of £30 per week, and still amounts to only 7.7% of the total subsidy to drama. Even the Drama Panel of the Arts Council itself recognised £900,000 as the lowest advisable figure!

A press statement from the Lucas Aerospace Combine Shop Stewards' Committee, representing 14,000 workers commented: 'We are particularly concerned that this should have happened at a stage when problems confronting the working-class of this country are so great...'

'It is our experience that presenting social and political issues in a clear and humorous manner through the medium of the theatre is of vital importance in developing understanding amongst those at the point of production, of the wider questions facing them. This Shop Stewards' Committee calls on the TUC and the trade union executive to support this campaign [for a higher grant].'

Since the reawakening of the trade union movement in the late '60s in the face of deepening economic crisis, significant sections of theatre directors, writers and actors have begun to identify with the working class and the problems of the community at large. Theatre has once more become relevant and accessible to working people. As the shop stewards at Lucas and many other trade unionists have recognised, such theatre must be promoted and defended like other parts of the social services.

Obviously the state is not going to

relish subsidising theatre groups which openly take the side of workers confronting the bosses, the Government and the State itself, rather than maintaining the myth of the 'neutrality' of art in political events. That is why the struggle for adequate grants is going to get harder, and why the campaign undertaken by the Independent Theatre Council (ITC) and The Association of Community Theatre (TACT) for '£1,000,000 for the fringe' will have to be extended beyond the bounds of Equity and a strategy of lobbies and petitions to the Arts Council.

The position taken by ITC and TACT is that the increased subsidy should not come from a redistribution of the existing budget, which would deprive other sections of the arts of much-needed cash. That is an important point to make. However nothing in the statements of ITC, TACT or the Equity fringe sub-committee spells out anything like a fighting strategy to make the Labour Government cough up.

This has to look to the best allies the fringe theatres have in the present situation—the trade union movement, tenants' associations and other working class bodies. Only a policy which relies on the organised strength of the labour movement, and which sees its common links with the struggle to defend other social services, will prove effective. That is why the statements coming from Lucas Aerospace workers, and T&G and UCATT branches in Camden in support of the fringe are so important and should be built on.

Carl Gardner



Street theatre as fringe actors lobby the Arts Council a fortnight ago

Women's conference slams TUC charter

The TUC's charter for working women, published last week, became the main focus for attack at a women's conference held by the TUC's south-east regional council on Saturday. Not one of the delegates, representing over 200 trade union branches and trades councils, was prepared to defend its limited demands—and delegate after delegate stormed to the platform to condemn in particular the omission of any demand on abortion.

The conference made it abundantly

clear that the TUC charter fails completely to confront in a meaningful way the real problems facing women today. It contains such choice pieces as 'employers must accept the need for women to work the hours which would enable them to meet their commitments as mothers or assist them to care for elderly dependents.'

In contrast to the 10-point Working Women's Charter, presented a year ago by the former London Trades Council, the TUC's palid version fails to take up: abortion and contraception; a national minimum wage to fight against low pay (although this is the policy of the TUC); family allowances; opposition to deterioration in working conditions; the role of women in the trade unions. Although the organisers of the conference used to take any resolutions, the regional council secretary announced at the end of the day's barrage that the TUC's charter would clearly have to be weighed against the 10-point charter.

Very few of the 250 delegates appeared to be impressed by the brave utterances of the 'star speakers' on the issues of women's rights. Surprisingly enough, not one of them actually mentioned a word about internationalism. Shirley Summerskill, junior minister at the

Home Office, managed to speak for 45 minutes on equal opportunities and women's rights as citizens without a single reference to the role of the family, child-care facilities, or abortion.

She came under heavy fire from dozens of delegates who demanded to know what the Labour Government was prepared to do to close the many loopholes in the Equal Pay Act, what measures it was going to take to protect the Abortion Act from being further eroded, what the Government was planning to do to stamp out sexism in schools and the media;

what it intended to do to restore the cuts in health and education expenditure. Dr. Summerskill obligingly offered to refer these points to the appropriate Ministers. Delegates erupted in anger when she said that every MP should vote according to his conscience on the question of abortion and that the Labour Party (like the TUC) could not take a formal position on this issue.

Hopefully the TUC's annual women's conference, which takes place in Hastings at the end of this week, will endorse the Working Women's Charter and reject the TUC's attempt to stifle the demands that are now being fought for. Ingrid Falconer

will be necessary to force the Labour Government to act. Union officials are also remarkably reticent about the results of a feasibility study and on the outcome of their discussions with Lord Bewick at Bonn's Ministry of Industry. Meanwhile, the Institute of Workers Control has printed a pamphlet on Imperials which argues in favour of utopian schemes for workers' cooperatives. But a workers cooperative would still have to operate in the shrinking typewriter market that forced Littons to quit Britain.

Only nationalisation without compensation of not just Imperials but the whole typewriter and office machines industry, with workers control to guarantee no loss of jobs or reduction in manning levels and wages, can guarantee the workers future. This is the only 'feasible' road left.

HULL IMG PUBLIC MEETING
'The Redundancies Crisis—For a Socialist Solution'
Speakers: Helen Charlesworth (senior shop steward, T&GWU, Imperial Typewriters); Tim Hall (IMG Political Committee).

Wednesday 19 March at 7.30 p.m. in Stevedores and Dockers Club, Postern

The struggle for the teachers' pay claim starts now

TEACHERS from schools throughout London will be meeting this Thursday 13 March to discuss the way forward on their April pay claim and in defence of victimised teachers.

The delegate conference has been called by Wandsworth Association of the National Union of Teachers in conjunction with the campaign committee set up earlier this year at a conference opposing the Houghton Report on teachers' pay. The Houghton Report was thoroughly divisive, giving large increases to the administrators and heads, and peanuts to those on the lower scales or just starting teaching.

The conference comes at a time when authorities throughout the country are implementing savage education cuts, which have already provoked strike action or the threat of it by teachers in traditionally docile areas such as Buckingham, Leicester, and even Richmond. In London the Inner London Education Authority is moving to crush the possibility of a revolt against the cuts by victimising teachers who took part in strike action against the Houghton Report and in support of the TUC-backed lobby of Parliament to demand the release of the imprisoned Shrewsbury pickets.

The overriding priority for teachers is to throw these attacks back if they are to stand a chance of fighting a well-out on the claim and against the cuts—especially in staffing. An important part of the cuts are being made by cutting back on the 'reserve fund' which is usually used for employing extra and part-time staff. Since the autumn of 1973 teachers have been refusing to fill-in on jobs that have been cut and many kids have been receiving only a part-time education.

On both fronts—victimisation, and the education cuts—the NUT Executive has given no lead. In South Hackney, where five teachers are to be disciplined for supporting the TUC Shrewsbury lobby, the NUT wrote to the IEA telling them the action was unofficial. Communist Party teachers, who have members on the Executive like Max Morris, are saying that the action was the result of 'confusion' over whether the NUT officially supported the TUC action.

The IS group have gone along with this, failing to confront the CP on the political basis of defending the right of teachers to support actions in the interests of the whole working class. In this way they have helped weaken the overall campaign to defend all victimised teachers.

Thursday's conference must be the launching pad to force the NUT to organise a national campaign of action against the cuts, and forge unity in action with other school workers affected by the cuts and all sections of the labour movement which have an interest in defending the

imised teachers can be the first step in this process.

This is why the Defence Committee is particularly keen to receive resolutions from other trade union bodies supporting their struggle. Resolutions etc. should be sent to the Defence Committee, c/o 24, St Agnes Close, London E9. Its next meeting is on Monday 24 March at 7.30 pm at the Prince Albert pub, Wharfedale Road, London N.1. (nearest tube Kings Cross).

Bernard Fegan

THRESHOLDS

from page 1

miners, railwaymen, hospital and local government manual workers have outstanding threshold claims. And 400,000 local government white collar staff in NALGO are demanding an extra 60p a week for every 1% rise in the cost of living since last November.

But so far only relatively small groups of workers have won new threshold agreements. These include 44,000 white-collar workers in the British Steel Corporation who are due for 1% rises for every 1% increase in the cost of living since December.

They have achieved the nearest that exists in Britain to permanent wage protection against inflation—a sliding scale of wages. This would involve an automatic monthly increase in pay for every increase in the cost of living.

The fight for the automatic defence of all aspects of working class living standards against inflation—social expenditure and state benefits such as grants, pensions and dole, as well as wages—is central to the fight against the social contract.

Groups such as the railwaymen and powerworkers, who are fighting for 'new money' increases as well as consouation into the basic rate of existing threshold payments, should start to campaign throughout the working class for automatic protection of any wage increases they achieve by fighting for 'nil-norm' threshold payments as part of any settlement. By taking this up on a class-wide basis, the most powerful sections of the workers' movement would be effectively defending the weakest sections and dealing a real death blow to the social contract.



Winmarie Greenland, a delegate from Camden NUT, asked Shirley Summerskill what she was doing to restore the cut-backs in education and to enable women to get easier abortions under the NHS. Dr Summerskill strangely omitted to answer these simple points in her summing-up!

International Marxist Group



(British section of the Fourth International)

97 Caledonian Rd., London N.1.

I would like more information about the IMG and its activities

NAME

ADDRESS

Imperial's — 'support' they could do without

WITH THE OCCUPATION of the Imperial factory at Hull now three weeks old, the Labour-controlled Humber-side District Council is making its contribution to the struggle. It decided to 'congratulate and support' the occupiers—and then informed them that they would be assessed at £100 a day for rates!

Despite this the occupiers are fighting on and receiving widespread working class support. Hull dockers are blanking imported Litton typewriters and refusing to handle machinery being removed from the Leicester factory, while workers from Marathon Shipyards—formerly Upper Clyde Shipbuilders—have donated £500 to the struggle.

But union officials have failed to agitate for solidarity actions from other sections of the labour movement beyond requests for moral and financial support. And to save Imperial's more than the determination and courage of the few hundred workers occupying the factory will be needed.

Solidarity action including strike action in other sections of the office machines industry and generally in the

Newcastle scaffolders say NO MORE SHREWSBURYS

'NO MORE SHREWSBURYS' was the shout that went up from 200 scaffolders and other militants demonstrating outside Newcastle Magistrates Court on Monday, 10 March. Inside 10 pickets, dragged off the Eldon Square picket line by police in late January, were facing committal proceedings on various trumped-up charges.

Contingents joined the demonstration from the Barking and Dagenham Shrewsbury Defence Committee and the Wigan Building Workers Action Committee, along with militants of the International Marxist Group from Scotland and Yorkshire, as well as Newcastle.

Only a few demonstrators were allowed into the public gallery as all ten defendants were committed to the Crown Court for trial on £50 bail.

BIGGEST TRIAL

This is the biggest single trial of pickets since the Shrewsbury 24. McAlpines, who were instrumental in getting the Shrewsbury lads sent down, are also the major employers on the Eldon Square site. Scaffolders have only recently been unionised on Tyneside, and the outcome of the trial and the eighteen week-old scaffolders' strike at Eldon Square will be crucial for effective union organisation in the area.

This attack on pickets is just the latest (and the biggest) move in the bosses' offensive against picketing since the Labour Government came to office. A successful campaign to get the charges against the 'Newcastle Ten' dropped could be the

turning point in efforts to get strike action to free the Shrewsbury Two.

Meanwhile the Eldon Square strike committee have advised scaffolders throughout Tyneside, who have been out in support over the past seven weeks, to return to work. An official spokesman for the strike committee issued a statement that read, in part: 'Pickets will remain at Eldon Square. If any form of scab labour is brought in from any area to work anywhere in the north-east these men will be called upon again.' At the time of writing it is not yet clear what this will mean for the struggle, but the scaffolders have been under intense pressure in the past weeks from the Transport and General Workers Union officials who have done all in their power to break the strike. Only an enquiry is promised, in place of the scaffolders' earlier determination that there would be no return to work until all scaffolders on Tyneside, including the men at Eldon Square,

workers press

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6th March, 1975.

Mr. R. Pennington,
National Secretary, International Marxist Group,
182 Pentonville Road,
LONDON, N.1.

Dear Mr. Pennington,

I enclose two issues of the Workers Press which contain two articles on the role of the International Marxist Group at Red Lion Square on June 15 and the role of the International Marxist Group at the inquiry into Red Lion Square before Lord Justice Scarman.

We believe they raise important questions in the labour and trade union movement which require an answer from the IMG. A full disclosure concerning your 'un-named' member who gave written evidence to the inquiry is particularly urgent. Since Lord Scarman and the police know the identity of this individual do you not think it is time that the labour and trade union movement also knew? I have attempted to obtain some clarification on this matter from your centre but without success. We ask you once again, will you name this member?

S Johns

Stephen Johns
Workers Press editorial board

Dear Comrade Johns,
In your article in Workers Press on 6 March you say that: 'The International Marxist Group has an obligation to the entire labour and trade union movement to give a full explanation of their involvement in the Red Lion Square debacle.'

Actually, comrade Johns, it is you and your organisation that has an obligation to explain why you wobbled on the anti-fascist struggle at Red Lion Square and on all the other anti-fascist mobilisations both before and after Red Lion Square.

Your insinuation that 'the IMG are covering up for a police agent in their ranks' is both offensive and particularly obscene when the IMG is facing a witch-hunt from the state following the publication of the Scarman Report. One may add that it is a strange way for the WRP to defend militants against the attacks of the ruling class.

In order to put a stop to your slanderous references to the unnamed witness, I will explain why that comrade's name was withheld. He had just taken a job in a factory which was unorganised, and he was involved in trying to organise the labour force. Obviously had he been called, and his name blazoned across the press, it would have been very easy for the employers to sack him. This would have been the effect of naming him—is this what you want? Of course, we had no guarantee that the Tribunal or the police would not notify his employers, but we had to take those steps open to us to protect our militant.

We will be very interested to hear from the WRP what it intends to do in defence of the IMG—because do not fear, comrades of the WRP, the attacks now being made on the IMG are the forerunners of further attacks not just on the revolutionary left but on the entire working class movement.

Yours fraternally,
Bob Pennington (for the IMG Political Committee).

were accepted back by the building firms.

The scaffolders at Eldon Square will now face the difficult task of fighting on in isolation. This makes it all the more urgent that resolutions of support and financial donations flow in, along with pledges to take action in defence of the ten arrested pickets.

Resolutions and donations to: Tyneside Scaffolders Strike Committee, c/o Eddie Brady, 86 Benwell Lane, Newcastle-on-Tyne. (tel. 0632 - 32635).

JAMES DRAKE



FREE SHREWSBURY TWO!

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Marches around the Shrewsbury issue—such as that last Saturday at Leicester Prison, where Eric Tomlinson is held—must be tied in to an ongoing campaign in defence of all pickets

