

Workers' fight

3p

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KEEP FIGHTING AND

PUT THE VOTE IN

FOR LABOUR



MARTIN THOMAS

"SOCIAL CONTRACT", "national unity" — the main slogans of this election are like hollow, resounding gongs, serving only to try to drown the questions being asked by working people.

What are the important issues at this election time?

LIVING STANDARDS AND PRICE RISES. Both Tories and the Labour leaders warn of their intention to keep working class living standards down. The Tories promise a wage freeze by law; Labour wants to achieve the same result through the voluntary good services of trade union officialdom.

The policy Workers Fight supports is: Automatic, legally binding, zero threshold increases, at least 60p for each 1% rise in prices. Monitoring of the cost of living index by the labour movement. Equal pay now, and abolition of the special category of 'women's jobs'. A national minimum wage of at least £30, to apply to pensions, grants, and state benefits, too. No wage freeze; full support for all workers fighting to improve living standards.

TRADE UNION RIGHTS. The Tories announce that they are willing to base themselves on the present Labour Government's Trade Union act — knowing that the amendments made in Parliament meant that it includes most of the items from the Industrial Relations Act which are any practical use to the employing class.

Both Tory and Labour governments have built up the Special Patrol Groups and carried through the prosecutions against the Shrewsbury pickets. The Tories actively encourage the strike breaking "citizen militias"; the Labour leaders passively tolerate them.

We say: dissolve the Special Patrol Groups. Free Warren and Tomlinson and withdraw the charges. Demand that Labour carry through its promises to liberalise the law on picketing if elected. Most importantly, prepare for workers' self defence on the picket line.

RACIALISM. Tories and Labour leaders between them over the last ten years or so have put together an impressive array of immigration laws — helping to fuel the growth of racialism which

has now led to the National Front's appearance on the scene. This Labour government promised an amnesty to "illegal immigrants" — but then 75% of the cases considered were found to be "not eligible". By applying for the amnesty, those immigrants had just let themselves in for deportation.

Workers Fight says: Repeal all the racist immigration laws! United action to defend black workers against racist attacks.

IRELAND. Under Tory and Labour governments alike, one whole 'province' of the 'United

Kingdom' has been kept under military occupation.

Workers Fight's policy is: Self determination for the Irish people — the unit being 32 counties, not the artificial Six County statelet. Demand Labour breaks the bipartisan policy and withdraws the troops now. Solidarity with the Irish Republican Army

against British imperialism.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND REDUNDANCIES. Keith Joseph, for the Tories, frankly advocates massive unemployment.

Labour advocates bailing out the weak bosses, giving subsidies or nationalising the worst cases. But once having nationalised, they plan 'rationalisations' — which will mean unemployment.

Workers Fight advocates: work or full pay; a shorter working week with no loss of pay; workers' inquiries into any redundancy proposals; nationalisation of bankrupt concerns without compensation.

THE CRISIS. Overall, the Tory solution to the capitalist crisis is to directly attack the working class through wage cutting, increased unemployment, and picket bashing.

The Labour leaders place some hope in restructuring through nationalisations. But they, too, promise unemployment and falling living standards.

That is all capitalism has to promise or offer. To Workers Fight struggles for a socialist solution to the crisis: working class democratic control and planning of the economy, the breaking up of the present police, army and state structure, and the building up of a new state of workers' councils.

This socialist solution can only be carried out when the majority of the working class are ready and willing to fight for it. Unfortunately, the revolutionary socialists are a tiny minority as yet. Because we are not yet strong enough to put ourselves forward as an alternative, we will be voting Labour in this election. Vote Labour — but keep on fighting — and that will include fighting against a new Labour government if it is elected. Fight with us for revolutionary socialist policies in the trade unions, in the Labour Party, and in all the organisations of the working class.

must give full support to the 24 hour picket at SEI, particularly on Mondays.

Sue Arnall

TORY SLANDER ON W&R PICKETS

THE strike at Wingrove and Rogers has had to contend with not only increasing police intimidation every day on the picket line, but also lies in both the local and the national press.

Recently, the Daily Express has published a slanderous story, coming from the local Tory MP (Steen), that acid had been thrown at the scabs and a rope tied across the gate. Even the Daily Express didn't explain how this had been supposedly possible with the large police contingent guarding the scabs.

As Rita Smith, shop steward and strike committee member, has said: "There have been 35 police present at the picket line. If the allegations are true, how come there have been no arrests?"

Contd. on back page.

NO TO 2-YEAR STRINGS

The Ford workers' rejection of the company's offer has met howls of abuse from the capitalist press. These wisecracks who only manage to put two and two together when it comes to their own fairly fat bank balances have tried to use this rejection to lash the Labour Government's "social contract" boast with too.

"The largest offer ever made", "the largest offer in the company's history", and so on... these are the generous and mindless estimates of what Ford's have offered the workers.

But who has looked into the strings? Who has worked out what the increase means on the BASIC RATE? And who has tried to calculate what the real increase is, since the deal offered is over a TWO YEAR PERIOD.

The details of the offer have not yet been made public, but

even at this point we can say that a two year agreement right now is not something that the trade union movement should agree to. There should be no time limit to any deal made. Workers need protection against inflation, not in the form of phoney promises from the Government, but in terms of a zero threshold with the threshold increases pegged to a cost of living index worked out by the trade unions or factory committees. No time limit should be set; we must insist on the right to re-open negotiations whenever we feel we need to.

Guarantees of that kind are, in any case, worth a far sight more than the "promises of the social contract". The right to fight and the readiness to do it are what are threatened by being tied up in so long an agreement as two years.

PORTUGAL'S LEFT SHIFT

THE RESIGNATION of the conservative General Spinoza as Portugal's President was a defeat for the supporters of the old Caetano regime, who had been using Spinoza as a bulwark against the Left.

For the past few months this section of Portuguese society had been busy reorganising itself politically in preparation for the promised elections next March. Feeding off the disorganisation inside Portugal and the disorientation caused by the rapid movement towards independence in the colonies (despite Spinoza), the Right believed it had a good chance of establishing its political rule under the new post-Caetano system.

Spinoza, the figurehead and hero of the Armed Forces Movement which took power last April, associated himself with this 'silent majority' and steadily moved away from the more radical inclinations of the junior officers. The crunch came when Spinoza attempted to get his 'silent' supporters onto the streets to protest at the 'anarch' in Portugal and the abandoning of the white settlers in Mozambique. The Left, in alliance with radical sections of the Army, moved swiftly to prevent this demonstration and arrested or detained a batch of right wing Army Generals and former Caetano politicians.

In the resulting power struggle, Spinoza was forced to resign. The announcement was greeted by victory parades through the streets of Lisbon by the Left; more right wingers were rounded up, including former members of the secret police who had gained sanctuary from the Spinoza regime.

Spinoza has been replaced by General Costa Gomes, the former Army chief of staff who is a 'moderate'. Already he has attempted to paper over the cracks in the facade of 'national unity' which has existed through a Cabinet containing not only Army officers and 'moderate' republicans but also Socialists and 'Communists'.

Pressure

The pressure from the near collapse of the Portuguese economy and from the decolonisation process will still be there despite this reshuffle. The Socialist and 'Communist' ministers still continue their policies of class collaboration, and their support for anti-working class measures.

The key to the future, however, is in this: that the masses feel their own strength all the more powerfully with each victory over reaction. The Socialist Party and 'Communist' Party will find it increasingly difficult to control the working class masses. Each victory over the Right will make it increasingly difficult for the 'ministerial' socialists and so-called Communists to explain to their working class supporters why there should be compromises at their expense with the forces of conservatism.

Spinoza had already seen, and was frightened by, the increasing confidence and power of the masses, and it was this that led him to try to mobilise the Right as a counterbalance.

Fundamentally, Spinoza was dissatisfied with two things. He believed that the 'Communists' and Socialists were getting too

much power, and that the Portuguese working class as a whole was not adapting itself to 'normality' — i.e. there were still strikes despite the new restrictive labour laws, there wasn't enough censorship of the press, especially the news from Africa, despite the new press laws.

Secondly, the de-colonisation process had taken on a momentum of its own. When Spinoza took office he wanted a solution to be reached where Portugal would retain a major say in the running of the colonies — a neo-colonial relationship, with the colonies federated to the 'Mother Country'. This would have been the best solution for the imperialist powers with investments in Mozambique and Angola, and especially for Portugal.

Liberation

However, once the talks on independence had started, and once Guinea-Bissau had forced Portugal to grant immediate recognition, the liberation movements of Mozambique (Frelimo) and Angola (MPLA) stepped up the pressure. Only two weeks ago, Frelimo took over in Mozambique and the Portuguese Army and white settler population (who had attempted, violently, to prevent this takeover) beat a hasty retreat. Spinoza became so worried that he decided to take over the talks with the MPLA himself. Angola is by far the richest of these three African nations, and the prize jewel of Portuguese colonialism. Already the white settlers there have engaged in pogroms against the African population and are now threatening UDI. It remains to be seen what attitude Costa Gomes will have towards the negotiations.

Now is the time for the Angolan liberation forces to step up their fight for the freeing of their country. If they can manage to wrench Angola away from imperialist influence it will not only be a further worry for the Apartheid states of South Africa; it will increase the contradictions in Portugal itself.

The situation there now is that there is mass power, feeding and growing on each of its own victories, like the present one against the Right.

It is held in check by the organised political parties based on or claiming the support of the working class. These dumbly follow the "Armed Forces Movement", the exact tendency of which is difficult to make out, but which seems to be of a Nasserist, or even left Baathist hue (as in Syria). The objective possibility for workers' power exists; the policies of the workers' parties are, however, tailor made to strengthen the power, authority, and prestige of the military junta.

This is at present 'left'. It may move still further 'left'. It is no substitute for socialist workers' power. At a certain point it can — and the fundamental needs of Portuguese capitalism demand it certainly will — move to crush the independent power of the Portuguese masses, now chained to it; chariot by the so-called workers' parties. Spinoza's going is a victory for the working class, but it is not a full, final, or even secure victory.

EBANE

WOMEN OCCUPY AT SEI-MEN SCAB

AFTER six weeks of picketing the SEI Heywood factory, 20 women strikers occupied the factory late on Sunday night. Bluffing the security guards, they made their way in and immediately hung a banner saying "Occupied by AUEW women fighting for equal pay" from the third floor.

The women had found they were not getting very far with picketing from the outside, and as Bella Fullard, a shop steward, said, from inside the factory: "We thought it was time for brute force. We are quite happy here and will stay until we get what we want."

The strike began seven weeks ago, after eight fruitless weeks of negotiating to get equal bonus rates paid to the women.

After occupying the factory, the women have concentrated on holding the switchboard and some adjoining rooms. In response to the local bosses' efforts to intimidate the women with extra security guards and dogs, a 24 hour picket is being even more firmly maintained. This picket also ensures supplies get through to the occupiers.

On Monday, however, the local boss, Brian White, won a strange set of allies. After management had broken into the factory, nearly 200 AUEW members, all male, entered the occupied factory and started work. Except for the AUEW convenor and one other male AUEW member, the rest of the workforce, all men, are still scabbing on the strike.

picket line

GEC, owners of the factory, have tried to get matters settled, possibly fearing that other women GEC workers will follow the example set by the women at Heywood and fight for equal pay. The threat of such action worries them far more than the Equal Pay Act! There is a black on the SEI goods at Manchester docks and the airport. But Eccles SEI is still using new components from the Heywood plant! The AUEW national leadership must implement national backing and take firm action against the scabbing members.

Meanwhile, rank and file trade unionists in the area

LOW PAY—AND HOW NOT TO FIGHT IT

DAVID HAINES REVIEWS
"LOW PAY AND HOW TO END IT", by Alan Fisher and Bernard Dix. Pitman £1.25.1

IF crocodile tears were penny pieces, the "low paid would be rich now. Not a single election, and more ominously not a single attack on the trade unions, passes without a reference to the lot of the low paid. A favourite ploy of the Tories was, and remains, arguing for a wage freeze in such a way as to imply that the disgraceful living standards of the low paid were a direct result of the demands of the dockers, printers, car workers, or builders.

A reply to this nonsense coupled with the outline of a policy of struggle against low pay, coming from just those union leaders who have experience in that area could hardly come at a better time. With "a better deal for the low paid" a dead cert clause in the invisible ink of the "social contract", a way of fighting for it without selling the right to fight for improvements by any other section of the labour movement is a must.

ARGUED

But before you think that Alan Fisher and Bernard Dix's new book "Low pay and how to end it" is an answer to your prayers, let it be said in no uncertain terms: they have written a well researched, detailed, closely argued... absolutely dreadful book!

They are, of course, respectively the General Secretary and Research Officer of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE), whose members are among the lowest paid trade unionists; they work in hospitals, local government, and a few associated areas.

Arguably the boast of being the leader of one of the lowest paid unions is just the wrong kind of recommendation you want for this kind of a book. But at least you would expect that they had drawn the lessons of the fights they have been associated with.

In 1970 the local government manual workers took on and defeated a newly elected Tory government to win a fairly substantial pay rise. At the end of 1972, hospital ancillary workers were defeated in a long drawn out struggle against a Tory government that had been hammered so hard by the freeing of the Pentonville 5 and the victory of the building workers' strike — not to mention the miners at the beginning of the year — that one might have thought that any really concerted action would have knocked them out. In 1974 we have seen the tremendous fight put up by health service workers, particularly the nurses

POLITICS

What the latter two struggles showed, though, is that the commitment of trade union leaders is something you gauge in practice and not on the basis of books.

If anything, the connection between this book and those struggles is that the book represents a defeatist, bureaucratic alternative to what these efforts stood for. Fisher and Dix no doubt hope to be remembered more for their prose than their punches.

The tandem-twins begin with — and repeat several times — their starting point in laying out a strategy to fight low pay:

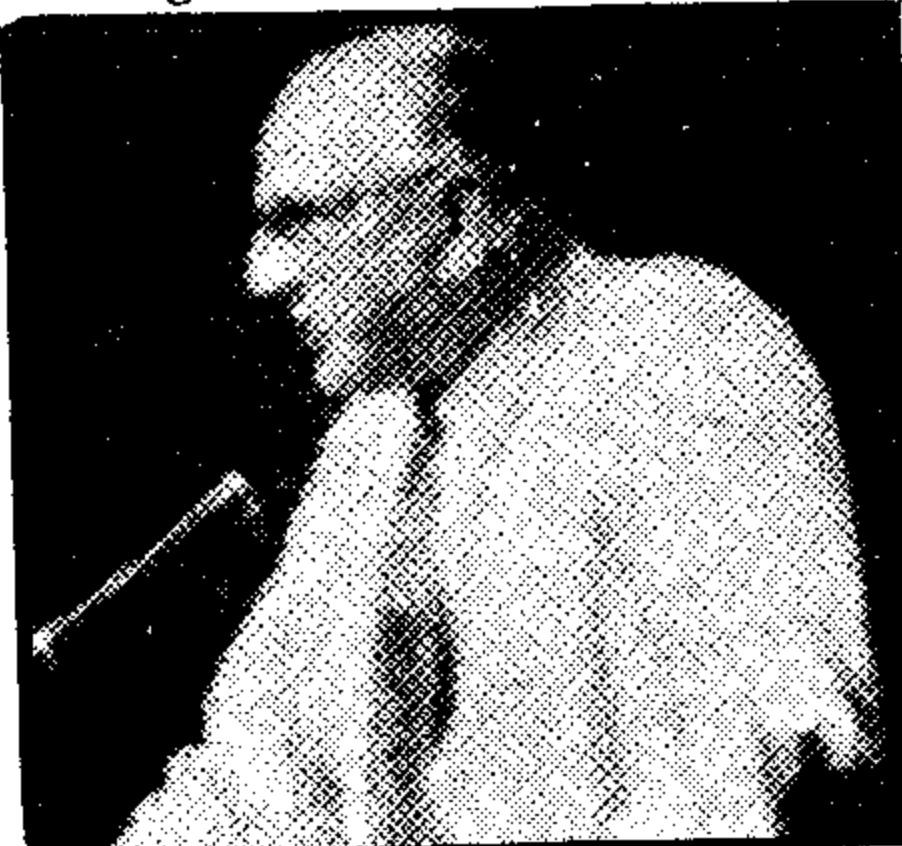
"If we are to force a positive change in this attitude, we need political action, which in turn rests on the need to promote organised, informed, and articulate action by those who have the potential power to insist that a political solution is applied to the

problem of low pay. Those who have this potential are primarily active trade unionists and their allies in the Labour Movement, and the axe we are grinding must be used by them.

But that these "politics" are not our politics is abundantly clear from what follows. For instance, the tawdry ritual of claims that incomes policy, "planned growth in incomes", or any of the rest of the Tory ad Labour clap-trap can help the low paid is swallowed in principle. The authors merely regret that "opportunities have been missed". In fact, the chapter titled "A missed opportunity" refers to the failure of the TUC to make a reference to "low pay" in such documents as their "lengthy and detailed policy document entitled *Economic Development and Planning* (1963), in which it justified its decision to participate in the work of the National Economic Development Council".

They see the failure to improve the situation of the low paid as a result of the lack of "a direct reference to low pay" in those documents and debates.

They are incapable of seeing that "National



T & GWU leader Cousins — advocate of "planned growth of incomes"

"Economic Development" means the increase in the wealth of the owners of industry, not the workers in it. They are incapable of seeing that improvement in wages is not a result of an improvement in the "nation's rate of economic growth", but of the direct militant action of the working class. They fail to see that getting round a table comes at the beginning and the end of a struggle: at beginning to make a demand and find out whether it can be won without a fight; and at the end to establish formally victory or defeat. But it cannot take the place of struggle!

Their blindness on all these points — blindness due not to stupidity, but to their privileged position, tied more closely to the capitalist state

than to their rank and file members — just about sums up the reformism of the trade union bureaucracy. It is clearly shown in Fisher and Dix's "solution" to the problem of 'low pay'.

MINIMUM

The solution, they say, is for a Labour Government to put through Parliament a statutory minimum wage, so that:

"Each year representatives of the TUC, the CBI and Government would meet, and, in a bargaining situation, would reach agreement on the level of the national minimum wage for the next twelve months. That agreement having been reached it would become a statutory obligation on all employers to pay not less than the minimum wage."

For Fisher and Dix, then, "politics" means the Labour

Government putting through a national minimum wage, and also doing various things to discourage the employers from ignoring and evading it, or packing up business as a result of it. Fair enough, so far. But that's all their idea of 'politics' stretches to! Not once, in the whole book, is the fighting involvement of the union members even mentioned.

On the contrary. All that they pin their hopes on is some never-defined "Socialist



Programme" that would include a pledge on low pay. In

Price control? - a letter

THE HEADLINE in the last *Workers Fight*, "Healy backs down on Price Control", could be read as meaning that the paper believes meaningful price control is possible under market capitalism and that it is to be advocated by socialists.

Probably it is the result of last-minute carelessness and rush, because the text of the article is unambiguously contemptuous of the measures that Healy backed down from, having first touted it as an important contribution to the cost of living problem workers face under capitalism.

Market

Nevertheless it is worth spelling out why even a hint of advocating price control under capitalism would be nonsense for a socialist newspaper which takes its basic stand on the independent struggles of the working class and not on any variant of reformism by the bourgeois state. Price control under market capitalism is impossible. There is no overall plan and allocation of resources. Even were such an overall plan possible for one government, world prices would still be outside its administrative control, though the scope for effective policy decisions on prices would be immensely greater.

The dynamic equilibrium and level of investment, etc. of capitalism is regulated by the rate of profit. A Labour government or any government running the capitalist system which

arbitrarily controlled prices, disregarding the inevitable effects on the rate of profit would drive private capital out of activity or into bankruptcy and disrupt the entire functioning of the system. Such a course is inconceivable for any government working the capitalist system, and doing so, necessarily, within its own laws.

The only control of prices open is through Government subsidy, under which profits are guaranteed. Obviously on any important scale this would involve massive state expenditure. Price control of this sort under the recent Labour Government has been utterly marginal as a contribution to solving the cost of living problem of the working class no more than a token, in fact.

Any even slightly meaningful extension of such "price controls" is hardly conceivable except as part of a deal of the Social Contract type. Moreover, they would certainly be accompanied by government manipulation of workers' income (taxes, family allowances, social insurance), so as to offset the cost. Working class gains would be apparent, not real. Ruling class gains would be real enough if they could reduce workers' activity to that of making appeals to the state for intervention to better or even stabilise its living standards!

All the signs are that the ruling class needs a drive to cut working class living standards. Even if it could allow stable living

standards, the price would be a hermetically sealed social contract, between the unions and the state, with no role at all for the self-organised activity of the working class.

Talk of price control, or even a hint of approval for it as a solution to working class problems, means:

a) to spread illusions that the capitalist system can be made to work other than according to its own laws. It is therefore reformist.

b) to endorse the window-dressing and comenship with which this Labour Government has tried to bamboozle the working class;

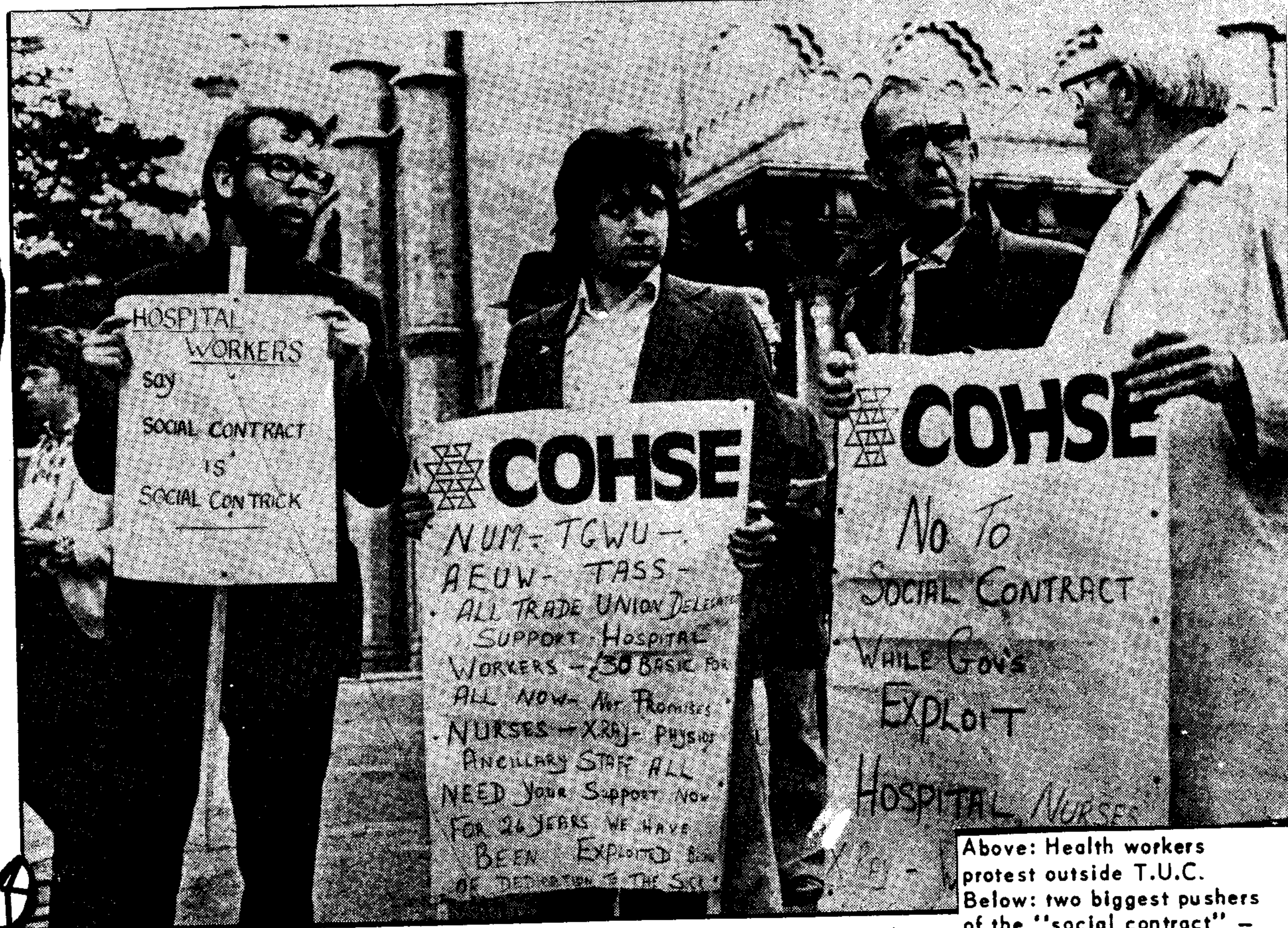
c) to advocate an effective social contract.

Threshold

It cuts across every attitude and slogan *Workers Fight* had fought for in its previous seventy issues. It flies in the face of the leitmotif of the paper: that the working class should rely on its own real strength where it has it and can exercise it at will, not to beg that a bargain-hungry government should lower prices, but to fight to push up its own income. We need not price control but a sliding scale of wages. That is, zero thresholds linked to real incomes, and under the control of workers' committees which audit the cost of living.

A paper which advocated this as *WF* does, should avoid ambiguous headlines.

John O'Mahony



Above: Health workers protest outside T.U.C. Below: two biggest pushers of the "social contract" — left — Len Murray (T.U.C. Gen Sec.) and, right — Jack Jones, to-day's T&G leader.

other words, the whole book actually amounts to little more than a back door vote of approval for the latest idea in wage cutting, the 'social contract'. For this 'socialist programme' of the authors doesn't even claim (as some members of the TUC recently claimed for the social contract) to be a springboard to fight for socialism. Oh no. It just means business as usual: TUC, CBI, and Government get together round a table and settle everything over the heads of the people directly affected.

And business as usual is going to mean low pay as usual. This could be proved by looking at the 1964-70 Labour Government's record and its

'incomes policy'. But in the chapter devoted to this, Fisher and Dix draw the opposite lessons. That is, they favour 'Incomes Policy' or any other pay freeze, provided that low paid workers were made into a special case under it. What was, in fact, a vicious but unsuccessful attempt by a Labour Government to use its moral authority within the trades union movement as a weapon to solve the employers' problems is lamented solely as a "missed opportunity" to solve the problems of low pay.

DIVORCE

Similar examples could be found in almost every chapter of the book: each one would illustrate the basic fact, that being officials of NUPE means for Fisher and Dix that the topic of low pay is important to them — after all they make a good living out of it — that their approach typifies the reformist, routinist, "oh for a quiet life" union officials.

Consequently, they look at low pay as "specialists in the subject" and divorce it from other questions. They make the basic assumption, that low pay is a special problem — which NUPE leaders could hardly deny! — and it can be overcome separately from other struggles... then the union leaders and employers can get back to the familiar "bargaining situation".

This "familiar bargaining situation" is a world of unrealities, though. It is a world in which inflation does not exist. It is a world in which the determined opposition of the employers and government crumbles to the subtle advocacy of trade union general secretaries and their research officers. It is a world in which only your own union exists — separated from all others. It is one where the economic situation is something reduced to statistics to back up an argument, not something which forces the employers and the government to step up the attacks on the working class, including the low paid. It is a world that rarely rings to the tramp of marching feet, the calls to strike or protest action; only the patter of little arguments of little weight.

Instead of demanding that the minimum wage be linked



to a Price Index determined by the labour movement, so as to take account of inflation. Fisher and Dix propose it be renegotiated annually with the CBI and the Government. Inevitably this would, firstly, tend to lead to the real value of the minimum being pushed down; secondly, these negotiations would tend to displace struggles for real rises and improvements in conditions; and thirdly they put the fate of the low paid in the hands of those, who are keeping them low paid.

Nowhere do Fisher and Dix mention the need to extend the principle of such a minimum, linked to a Price Index, to all low incomes, including pensioners, students, unsupported mothers, and so on. That could be a vital slogan through which the labour movement could get widespread support and sympathy. But it is just ignored.

Lastly, they ignore the dire economic straits of British capitalism. They seem to imagine that a vaguely radical fight through the Labour Party will be enough to win, and to enforce, a National Minimum Wage. (Evasive employers would be referred to industrial tribunals and fined a few pounds!)

Thus the whole book is fatally flawed. It contains useful statistical material, but that is also available elsewhere. It puts forward a thoroughly reformist, routinist, and quite unreal perspective. Contrary to its grand finale, calling for surgery on capitalism, what is needed is to use the fight against low pay as one of the platforms from which the working class can go forward to the execution of capitalism.

DOUBLE EDGED ELECTIONS

An Opposition within I.S.

THE announcement of elections — the first in Greece since the Centre Union Party went back "to the country" to solve the electoral stalemate resulting from the elections at the end of 1963 — has met with mixed responses.

The right, traditionally thrown into a panic by the onset of elections, wants them to take place soon; they support Karamanlis' call for elections on November 17th. The left, on the other hand, is not so enthusiastic.

Cabals

Andreas Papandreou, the son of the last democratically elected Prime Minister of Greece, has protested that elections will not be meaningful prior to a radical purging of the state machine of the rightist officers, police commanders, civil servants, and judges. Realising — as he surely did before the coup d'etat of April 21st 1967 — that the factional in-fighting of the various caucuses, cliques and cabals on behalf of their local and foreign business backers actually decided the direction of political life for the bourgeois parties, he knows that whoever is victorious in the coming elections will be the hostage of these conservative groups.

That, of course, is true providing you do not smash the state machine. And as that is something only a revolutionary would advocate and mobilise the workers and poor peasants to do, it can safely be assumed that Mr Papandreou's Junior will not.

No doubt he has taken the tag, the Greek Allende, seriously. But, incapable of acting

like a revolutionary, he draws from Allende's defeat in Chile a totally passive, defeatist conclusion. Instead of mobilising the masses to sweep the reactionaries out and smash the state, he wants the traditional leader of right wing extremism, Karamanlis, to do the job of making the state "safe for reforms" for him.

Papandreou believes that a delay in calling elections would allow the left more chance to rally the masses to put pressure on Karamanlis to do that.

Karamanlis, who has been soft pedalling on the purge, has formed a new party, "New Democracy", which he hopes to style after the Gaullist bloc,



the UDR. How "democratic" he is can be judged by the electoral system the polls will take place under — a system brought in in 1961 by Karamanlis to make the most of the "favourable" results that he had rigged by force and fixing. The system is called "reinforced proportional representation" whereby Karamanlis got 57% of the seats in Parliament by getting 41% of the votes in 1961.

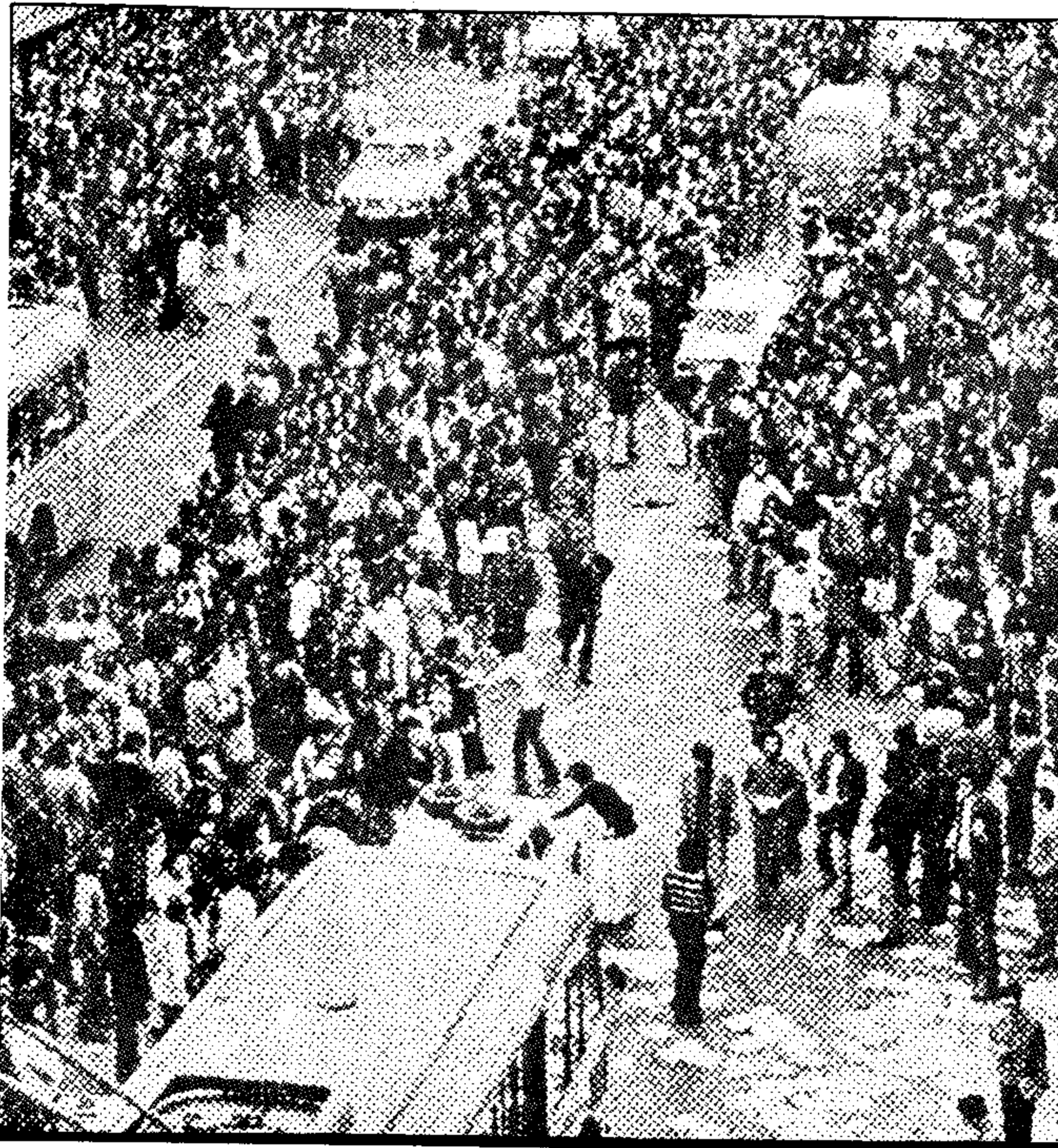
The old coalition of the Centre Union — a party in name only — has broken up, being split into a right and left wing under foreign secretary George Mavros and Andreas Papandreou respectively. This break-up is one sign of the first small steps of a healthy polarisation. (Ironically it was the 1967 colonels' coup that stopped his polarisation in the first place, triggered off as it was in part by the death of Sophocles Venizelos, leader of the right wing of the Centre Union; the death completed the vacuum on the right in that party after the defection of over forty deputies to the King's puppet party.)

The right wing will go where it belongs: further to the right. It will merge with the force around Kannelopoulos, Pezmozoglou, Mangakis, and Iordanidis.

Vacuum

This will leave a left wing with a delicately re-united Communist Party (at least for the election) and Papandreou — no doubt to its left!

Whatever Papandreou may say about the state machine, though, he will be forced to take part in the elections on Karamanlis' terms. And there



Polytechnic students protest against the Junta last year

will be no possibility of following it up with a junior version of the "Anendotos", his father's campaign of "unrelenting opposition" to the accomplished fact of the Karamanlis vote rigging.

If the election results in a Karamanlis - Mavros coalition — as seems likely, then the great upheavals of the past few months and the heroic struggle particularly of the Athens polytechnic students will have given out onto the worst option of all: a conservative Gaullist-type government, a state machine not radically purged, and the

possibility of these getting a considerable boost from the huge loans that await the renewal of Common Market associateship (which will happen as soon as the election is over).

The referendum on the return of King Constantine can be best taken in the stride of the Karamanlis group at that time. Just now it would serve to divide the right wing Monarchists from the right wing Republicans — which is one of the things that the left had hoped to bring about by a delay of the election date.

Forty years ago this week, the Communist Party was fighting the fascists in Cable Street. There together with the ILP (who in fact were the principal organisers of the action) they broke the strutting arrogance of the Mosleyites, leveling them down to the gutters where they belong.

A month ago, at Speaker's Corner, Communist Party spokesmen were warning that any speaker who advocated direct action against the fascists would have the public address system cut off. Instead, they said, we should ask the Labour Government to ban the National Front... under the Race Relations Act.

The nature of the Race Relations Act is summed up in the fact that this law, supposed to protect black people from racists, was first used against a black man, Michael X. Only the most slavish trust in capitalist parliamentary procedures could make anyone support the Communist Party's policy

ularly is a bit more complicated. Obviously it does involve the belief that a Labour government is more likely to give what we demand than another government. Looking at past Labour governments, that belief seems to be an illusion.

The fact, though, is that the Labour Party is the only substantial parliamentary political expression that the working class in Britain has produced. Until there is a real

clarification of the demands workers make on Labour governments — from wistful hopes that perhaps the government will do something for us, to precisely worked out demands coupled with a determination to act independently if the Labour leaders don't grant the demands.

So revolutionary socialists generally do support demands like the NUPE demand for the Labour government to bring in a national minimum wage.

time to demand that a Labour government ban the fascists and to explain clearly the capitalist nature of that government and the state it rests on.

The case is quite clear at times when the fascists are a serious threat, in terms of taking power. Capitalist governments simply will not take serious action against them at such times. If the fascists seriously threaten to take over, that means they

ation. Would we therefore demand that police protection should be given to all picket lines? Not at all! Despite this or that occasional action which may benefit workers, the class nature of the police force as a weapon of capitalism remains constant, and that is what we must base our policy on.

The basic issues are really no different when the fascist strike breakers and scabs are parading in the streets instead of lurking outside a factory. We do not want the police involved. When the police are involved, we need a hostile, wary, critical attitude to them, not an attitude of egging them on. Even if, by way of exception, the police give us some help occasionally, we know that in the long term they will work against us.

Or, to extend the situation to an international scale: it is possible that capitalist 'democracies' will fight and even defeat fascist powers. Indeed, it actually happened, in the second world war. But, as David Haines argued in the last but one issue of Workers Fight, it would have been wrong for revolutionary socialists to adopt a policy of demanding Britain and America fight Hitler.

Councils

When politically un-educated workers demand that the Labour Government ban the National Front, their intention; are sound. But the state and the government are not neutral; they don't simply react to pressure motivated by good intention; by adopting good intentions themselves. A Labour Government would probably react to pressure to ban the National Front by using laws like the Public Order Act and the Race Relations Act — and probably using them more against the left than against the right.

We have to take account of these probabilities, coldly and clear-headedly. It's no good saying, "oh, we would demand the Labour Government introduce such-and-such perfect socialist law to ban the NF", unfortunately, Labour Governments do not go along with the exact wording of resolutions drafted by revolutionary socialists.

The practical effect of the demand for the Labour Government to ban the NF is to increase illusions and to reduce people's will to get out

FOURTY YEARS BACK: FORGOTTEN LESSONS



Anti-fascists set up barricades in Cable Street

socialist party, it is inevitable that workers wanting to get reforms will try to get them through Labour governments. It's not just a matter of illusions, though the idea that Labour governments are at all well-disposed to the working class is an illusion. It is a fact that under working class pressure Labour governments sometimes will give reforms. They grant those reforms as sops to divert and damp down working class activity — but, nonetheless, sometimes they do grant them.

Blithely

As revolutionary socialists, of course we fight to build a real socialist party. But we haven't got one at the moment, and an essential part of the process of building one will have to be a sharpening and

But there are limits. If we are to be scientific socialists, we can't just blithely go about demanding all manner of good things from governments without looking coldly and clearly at exactly what those governments are and what they will do.

For example: any socialist in Spain who demanded that the Franco government implement a broad programme of democratic rights would be a dangerous idiot. That programme would require the overthrow of that government. The same goes for the socialists who during the first world war demanded that the imperialist governments conclude a just peace, or socialists in Britain today who demand a socialist programme from a Labour government.

It is impossible at the same

have a lot of support within the police and the army; and even with the best intentions no government can take decisive measures against the fascists with that police force or that army.

At times like the present, when the fascist danger is nowhere near the threat of them actually taking power, the issue is perhaps not so obvious. At such times, it is possible — unlikely, but possible — that the government may take some action to ban fascists. Surely, then, it's reasonable to demand that they do ban the fascists?

Hostile

But, is it possible that police may protect picket lines against strike breakers? Yes — it is very unlikely, but it might happen in this or that situ-

THE following statement was distributed at last weekend's conference of the International Socialists by the 'Left Opposition' grouping.

As far as we are aware of the political positions of the 'Left Opposition', Workers Fight would have some important disagreements, considering their positions sectarian, for example, on the question of rank and file movements. Nonetheless we welcome the appearance of this opposition grouping in the IS.

The Platform of the Left Opposition is the culmination of a two year struggle within the organisation.

Firstly, against the manner in which Workers Fight were witchhunted out of the group in 1971, and secondly the manner in which Socialist Worker joined with the hysterics of the bourgeois press in condemning the IRA after the Aldershot bombing the following year.

We developed through struggle in IS from the position of seeing these deviations as "mistakes" made from a fundamentally correct approach to building the revolutionary party, to the position of recognising that far from being mistakes they were symptoms of a much more serious disease.

When building a rank and file movement is made synonymous with building IS instead of relating to the real world where the militants are in and look to reformist organisations and reformist leaderships, when building a mass women's movement is made synonymous with building IS and conference votes to line up with the reactionaries in union branch meetings and trades councils in opposing the Working Women's Charter, then we can say with confidence that IS has come to the end of its sectarian road and the slogan on every issue reduces itself to saying that there is no salvation outside the tiny church of Tony Cliff (though this ageing pope is about to make way for a new priesthood around Carver and Nagliatti).

We are prepared to fight for the ideas contained in our platform, "In Defence of Marxism", within IS if we can, outside it if we must. The work we have outlined in our platform and the ideas from which these practical conclusions flow will form for us the basic starting point for a revolutionary regroupment. The numerical strength of the existing revolutionary groups, their papers and apparatuses, impress us not at all. We believe with Lenin that Marxism is powerful because it is true, and not, as the hopeless centrists in IS believe, that it is true because it is powerful.

Correspondence to Joe Quigley, 99 Barclay Rd, Warley, Worcs.

on the streets and act against the fascists.

Obviously this doesn't mean revolutionary socialists would vote against a resolution on fascism which we basically agreed with but which had the demand for the Labour Government to ban the NF as one small clause. Also, there is a different situation with local councils.

Without going into hair-splitting about what is and what is not part of the state, it is clear that there is a difference between local councils and central government, in terms of central government being closely linked to and largely controlled by the permanent apparatus of the capitalist state — courts, police, army and so on. Socialists have always condemned participation by working-class representatives in capitalist governments — but no socialist ever dreamed of denouncing the Clay Cross councillors for joining a "capitalist government".

It is perfectly valid for socialists to demand that local Labour councils refuse the use of council-controlled premises to the National Front, and call on the local labour movement to enforce the ban.

Here, as always, however, the key must be the fight to mobilise the rank and file of the labour movement against racialism and against threats to our organisations.

MARTIN THOMAS

NEWS BRIEF UCATT 1 NETHERLEY

50 men from UCATT, T&GWU, and EETU, who are employed by the Liverpool Corporation Depot to maintain houses in the Netherley area have been out on strike this week. "We are protesting at the depot supervisor. We want him out and as quickly as possible".

Also Liverpool Corporation Minor Works stewards have won an important victory — they themselves now choose 50% of new labour.

Stan Clare

UCATT 2 PARKINSON

The Parkinson strike is still on. The work on the M153 contracted to Parkinson's will have to remain undone. The men, who have now been out for over 11 weeks, recently agreed to attend the Building Industry Conciliation Board. This Board had suggested a number of points as the basis on which a return to work could be negotiated.

But when the shop stewards met the Parkinson management, these bosses still stuck to their old line. On the first point — the most important one for the men — reinstatement of all the men — the bosses offered to take back 12 immediately, and another 50 at the end of October, with no guarantee about the rest.

The stewards immediately walked out, and a mass meeting was called for the following Monday. Even though the men know the fight could be a long one, they are still determined to win.

Send messages of support and money to R.S.Walls, 24 Crescent Rd, Wallasey, Merseyside.

UCATT 3 POCHIN'S

The total labour force of one of the New Manchester Polytechnic Pochin sites held a site meeting last week and decided to press for 100% trade unionism on the site. Every worker on the site agreed to join the union, with the exception of one. The men gave the firm one and a half days to either persuade him to join the trade union or remove him from the site. Neither was done, so the whole site stopped work, and a picket was mounted on the gates. After two and a half days the dispute was settled, with the man being suspended pending a local Disputes Tribunal being set up. It must be added that the men on the site will not allow this man back, or indeed allow anyone on the site without a trade union card. There is also strong feeling on the site that the time lost should be paid for by the firm.

Ian Hayes (UCATT convenor)

BFI STRIKE ENDS

The strike at the British Film Institute is now over. ASTMS members were in dispute over the summary dismissal of Kevin Gough-Yates, Deputy Curator of National Film Archives, previously agreed dismissal procedure had been broken, and the strikers regard the fact that the issue has gone to arbitration as a victory. British Film Institute management had originally declared they would not accept a ruling by an Arbitration panel.

This was the first strike in the history of the British Film Institute, but a constant picket was maintained on the National Film Theatre and on BFI offices.

Alan Haslam

WORKERS FIGHT PUBLIC MEETING

The case for a revolution ary regroupment Speaker - S. Matganna. The Australia Bar, Hurst St. near New Street BIRMINGHAM. Sat. 5th Oct. at 7-30 pm.

Published by Workers' Fight, 98 Gifford Street, London N.1 Printed by voluntary labour Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office.

NALGO RIGHT-WING STARTS WITCHHUNT

A LETTER sent to all Branch Secretaries of the National Association of Local Government Officers (NALGO) in the Humberside area, has been given wide publicity in the national press, and especially in the 'Local Government Chronicle', 'trade journal' of local government management.

This letter, signed by five members of the National Executive Committee of NALGO, is the start of a right wing witchhunt against members of the militant NALGO Action Group.

The letter, accuses the NALGO Action Group of being "well organised, vociferous, and rigidly determined on a fixed programme which makes no concession to reasonable argument..." If this accusation has any force, it is only through the use of emotive words. If someone described the NALGO NEC — for example — as poorly organised, silent, and indecisive, would they take that as a recommendation? What is wrong with rank and file

members of the union having strong opinions and trying to convince other members that those opinions are right?

When rank and file delegates succeed in getting a resolution through NALGO conference in favour of continuing action over the London weighting, this — according to the five right wingers — "is a disturbing example of the ease with which extremists can infiltrate a dispute and use it as a weapon against a democratic system which they seek to destroy." But when the NALGO leaders voted at the TUC for the Social Contract, against NALGO conference instructions — that, apparently, was all right!

The letter goes on to accuse the London NALGO member-

ship of "squandering £1 million from the Strike Fund". That is, the London NALGO members decided to put the Strike Fund to its proper use — financing the fight for better living standards.

Attacks

Certainly the rise of rank and file militancy, and the growth of the left within the public sector, and white collar unions, is posing a challenge to some of the old practices and policies which have dominated these unions. Hence the right wing backlash. For example, Clive Jenkins of ASTMS was successful in throwing Ian Gibson, a member of the International Socialists and an elected

member of the ASTMS NEC, off that NEC. APEX, the clerical union, has banned International Socialist members from holding certain union offices, or gaining delegacies to bodies outside APEX.

In the Union of Post Office Workers, action against left wingers and militants has in some cases led to suspension of those members from the local union offices they hold. In the Civil and Public Services Association, an anonymous group, called 'The Moderates', has appeared since the last conference, and in its first few circulars has slandered the rank and file group, 'Redder Tape'. As a result of slanders against one union official, the CPSA NEC has threatened legal action against anyone

found responsible for the leaflets. Reliable sources trace such material back to the old Catholic Action group, which ran the CPSA for the last 20 or so years, after witchhunting the Communist Party out of the union in the late 1940s.

One notable feature of these attacks in the white collar and public sector, is that the Communist Party is not seen as the enemy, but the groups to the left of them are. The struggle of the CP, over the last 20 years, to win the ear of influential trade union officials, means that they reject such vulgar activities as rank and file caucuses to thrash out militant policies for the membership.

Against the right wing attacks, there is only one answer. Take the discussion back to the rank and file, and draw them into the debate between the left and right on the issues raised. There is no other way of building a base from which to defeat the right wing.

Stephen Corbishley

Bolton socialists step up anti fascist-campaign

Neill Duffield

the police and declared in the local press that if the 'smear' campaign continues they will ask for the election results to be declared null and void. "This is not the way to fight an election", whined Geoffrey Booth, one of the two candidates who are putting up. The other one, Bill Roberts, an AUEW convenor, strongly protested that his "rights are being violated".

At the conference it was unanimously agreed that it is not enough merely to aim our attacks at the National Front.

We must undermine the base they build on. That means a concerted attack on racism.

Bolton is a town with a large immigrant population and racism is on the increase. After the election the anti-fascist committee intends turning its attention to the trade unions.

Factory committees, local branches, etc. will all be urged to invite speakers from the committee to come along and speak on racism.

For socialists in Bolton the formation of the committee is an enormous step forward, not only in the fight against racism and fascism, but in the fight for socialism. The committee is a united front encompassing a whole cross section of the labour movement. As such it provides a forum for our ideas and policies, and a chance to visit large numbers of local trade unionists and present a socialist perspective as an essential part of the drive against racism.

I.M.I. PLAN NATIONAL ACTION

John Bryant

A mass meeting is to be called next Monday, which will vote on the recommendation of the IMI Witton craft stewards to go for an all-out strike.

Despite the initial turmoil and

the "now we strike, now we don't" tactics of the stewards, they seem now to have got a grip on things. They have rejected management's divide and rule offer of different rates (all amounting to about a £5 rise) for the different sections.

Two aspects of the stewards' action are particularly important. Firstly, they have called a combine meeting to organise blacking and other support action throughout the national IMI complex. This is a tremendous step forward, and an organisational advance that should not

be allowed to let slip after the dispute. Secondly the stewards have chucked out the idea of soft pedalling because of the election.

At first they suspected that management were trying to force a strike right before the election to add weight to the idea that the 'social contract' is worthless (as indeed it is, from the point of view of working people) and harm Labour's election chances. Now the stewards have given up speculating about this and gone ahead with the recommendation to strike.

ON September 13th John Tyndall spoke to a public meeting in Bolton and announced to an audience of over a hundred that the election campaign would be followed by an all-out assault by the National Front on the trade unions — the aim being to get in and control them.

But before the meeting could be held at all, the police had to remove 150 trade unionists and socialists who had linked arms to block all entrances to the building. The picket line was charged by the police, people were dragged out by the hair, and fourteen arrests were made.

For the small but active anti-fascist committee it was an important turning point. On 25th September we organised an anti-fascist conference and were able to persuade Farnworth Trades Council and several local trade union branches to sponsor it.

support

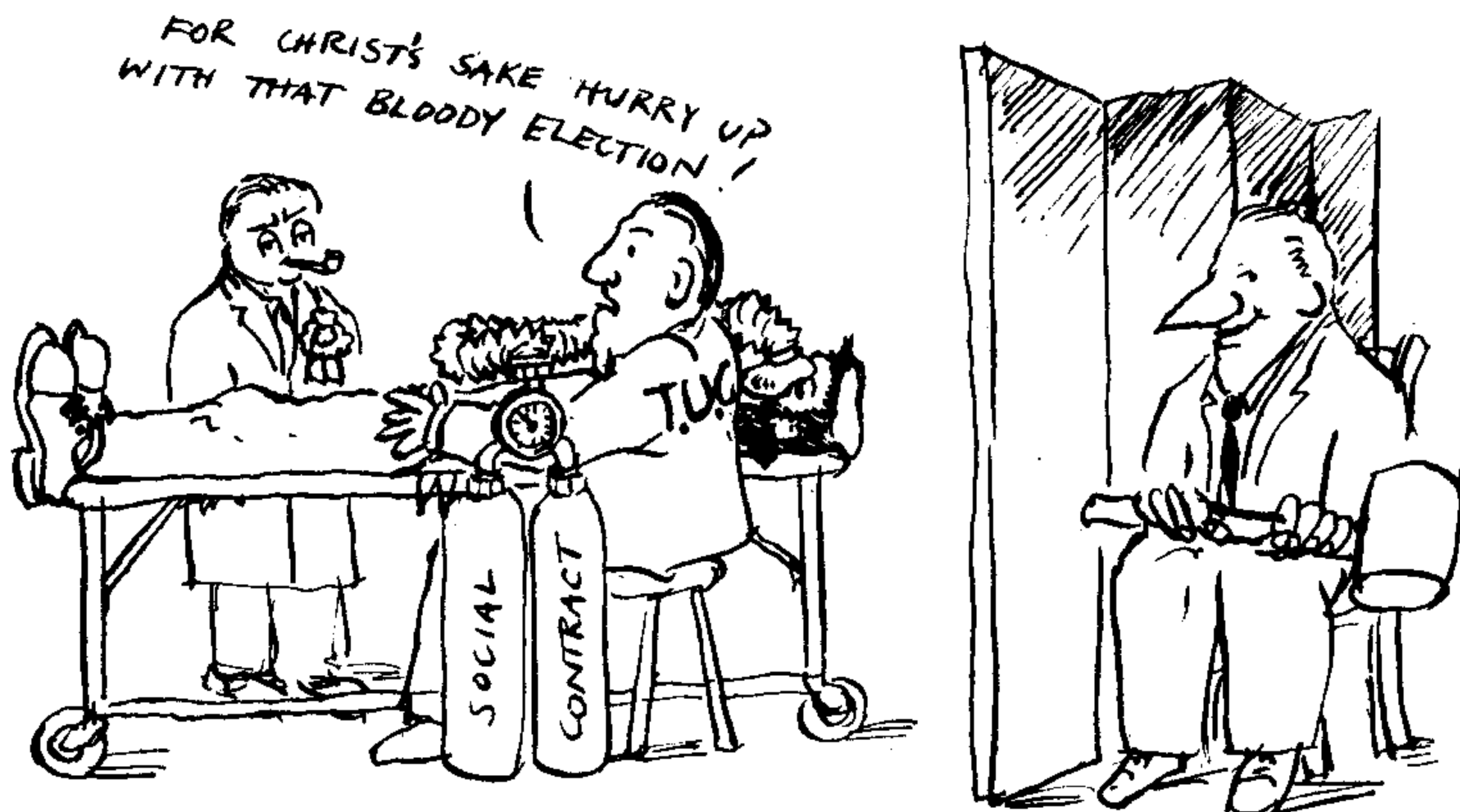
The turn-out was good: 60 people, about half of whom were delegates from trade union branches, district committees, and political parties. The Labour Party also sent delegates.

The meeting was chaired by Roy Ratcliffe (WF) and the speakers were Eileen Murphy (WF) and Frank Hankinson, chairman of Farnworth Trades Council. Despite the very broad base, a resolution was passed, with only two votes against, giving full support to the demonstration which tried to stop Tyndall speaking. The present anti-fascist committee was greatly expanded, and a room has been provided for its future meetings in AUEW House, the main trade union centre in the town.

unions

Anti-fascist work in Bolton is now really taking off. 20,000 leaflets are being distributed and posters are going up all over town. The campaign is well-organised. Groups of twelve are doing the leafleting and sticking closely together for defence. They have detailed street route maps and alarm whistles in case of attack.

The National Front are so rattled by it all that they have made an official complaint to



DON'T FORGET THE 2!

ON OCTOBER 24th, Des Warren and Ricky Tomlinson come up for their appeal against the jail sentences imposed on them at Shrewsbury for charges arising out of picketing during the 1972 building workers' strike.

The Greater London Association of Trades Councils is

organising a demonstration of solidarity, from Euston station to the Law Courts on the Strand.

It is important that this action is well supported. Since Warren and Tomlinson were released on bail some months ago, many trade unionists have become quite complacent about the Shrewsbury case. The fact remains, though, that the bosses' courts did manage to force trade unionists into jail for picketing; and if there is no strong show of solidarity on October 24th, it is quite likely that they will extract their full penalty.

In that way, a very bad precedent will be set for the forthcoming major class battles likely in economic crisis. Employers will take heart, and in cooperation with the strengthened police forces will mount more attacks on the picket line.

Already the campaign for action on October 24th has won support from two white collar unions: the British Library CPSA branch, and West End ASTMS branch. More support is expected, especially from the building sites and the UCATT branches.

S.C.

REPUBLICAN OFFICES RAIDED

THE office of the Irish Republican Information Service at Parnell Square, Dublin, was raided by armed detectives only two days after the "Free" State Prime Minister, Cosgrave, met Harold Wilson in London.

The two are no strangers to colluding in the attempt to destroy the Republican movement; the abrogation of civil rights there under the Offences against the State Act is the necessary complement to free speech on the Irish question here.

The raid took place on the morning of September 13th, when about fifty members of the political police (Special Branch) burst in, and arrested the four people who were there at the time. The government agents wrecked the offices of the Irish Republican Information Service and then embarked on a wholesale looting operation. Everything of value in the office was seized and hauled away — typewriters, duplicating machines, files, and a mailing list which contained hundreds of addresses of foreign

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NUT: LONDON FIGHT OVER?

THE three tier London Allowance for teachers was finally accepted by the NUT at a special conference last Saturday, the 28th. Hence a two year campaign has ended with acceptance of a structure calculated to split London teachers.

But this must be seen as only an interim payment, and we should be preparing to fight for a substantial increase when negotiations reopen next year. London teachers have learnt a lot of lessons about unofficial action, and won't be so reluctant to take it in future. Joint meetings between Inner and Outer London boroughs should be initiated by Rank and File to avoid the isolation that many Outer London schools felt in the recent campaign.

At the same conference, allocation of £10 million for schools in "areas of social deprivation" was decided upon. This was a sweetener introduced by Reg Prentice to buy off militants in London's hardest hit schools, and completely avoids the issue of why these "areas of social deprivation" exist in the first place and how to get rid of them. Since the NUT Executive is dominated by Heads, and since Heads have been receiving their slice of the cake for some time now, it is hardly surprising that the Conference ratified decisions taken with virtually no consultation with the classroom teacher.

Classroom teachers, and especially Rank and File, cannot let the next issues, the Hoghton Inquiry into teachers' pay, go by without a much bigger fight, and there are signs that a major battle is looming. We must fight for an extension of the sanctions of no covering until salary levels and job specifications have been improved to such an extent that the crippling teacher shortage is removed. We must demand a sliding scale of wages with cost of living increases monitored by classroom teachers. Already the threshold payments have caused such a problem for Leeds Education Authority that they are cutting back on recruitment and trying to steal threshold money from other areas of educational expenditure.

I. HOLINGWORTH.2.10.74

from page 1 WINGROVE & ROGERS

When the women saw Steen about this, he refused to withdraw the slanders until the strikers "disproved" them.

Working class support for the strike is continuing to move slowly. The local AUEW official (Broderick) has been talking of organising support for the daily picket, but it seems this will happen only after the election. But the fight can't wait until then. The need to win the strike — both for the union in Wingrove and Rogers and as an example to workers, mainly women, in sweatshops around Merseyside — remains. The best way to support this struggle is to turn up on the picket line every morning from 7.15 to 8am (Domville Rd, off Edge Lane).

LONDON Workers Fight forum — on the 25th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Sean Matganna speaks on "The Chinese Revolution". 8pm, Sunday 6th October, at the 'George', Liverpool Rd, N.1 (near the Angel).

South West London Workers Fight readers' meetings: Thursday 3rd October, "Why British workers should support the IRA", speaker Mick O'Sullivan; Thursday 17th October, "What is Revolutionary Unity?". 8pm at the 'Pavement' offices, 8 Falcon Rd, SW11.