

RED WEEKLY

NO DEAL WITH HEALEY

6 MAY 1976

No. 149

PRICE 10p



Pushing through cuts in jobs, living standards and public services: Healey, Jones, Callaghan, Murray and Scanlon

THE GUILTY & THE SILENT

THESE ARE THE GUILTY MEN. Over the last year they have been perpetrating a fraud on the working class that makes John Stonehouse's disappearing trick on Miami beach look positively amateurish.

They have cut living standards by five per cent. This disappearing act was conceived last summer as the £6 limit and confirmed on the sands of Blackpool.

They have watched the social services being slashed to the bone — and promised only more cuts.

They have wept tears for the unemployed — and supported policies that can only mean higher unemployment.

These people have justified their actions by claiming that this is the only way to preserve the Labour Government. Yet every step they take brings the return of the Tories nearer.

PLOTTED

Now they are writing the final lines of the most outrageous fraud yet. Healey's recipe of 3 per cent plus tax cuts was cooked up in cahoots with the trade union bureaucracy. For the sake of decency a little argy-bargy had to go on in public — but all the Treasury's calculations have been done on the basis of a 5 per cent deal.

Wage cuts won't cut inflation. The falling value of the pound — the City's contribution to the Government's fraud show — will push up prices. Food and raw material costs are already soaring.

BUT IF THESE ARE THE GUILTY ONES, WHAT OF THE SILENT ONES.

Benn continues to sit in the Cabinet listening day in and day out to the anti-working class policies of the Government being cooked up — but does nothing to alert the workers movement in advance. Ray Buckton of the drivers' union ASLEF, Reg Birch of the AUEW, Alan Sapper of the film technicians' ACTT, Clive Jenkins of the white-collar ASTMS, and Ken Gill of TASS sit on the General Council of the TUC listening to the sell-out being plotted — but do nothing to rally the workers movement against it.

It was Clive Jenkins, after all, who wrote in *Tribune* after last year's TUC Conference: 'Leaving aside the £6 limit, the TUC was a very progressive affair.'

While the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party condemns the cuts — with Benn abstaining — and cooks up parliamentary pipe dreams for taking over the banks, no actual proposals for working class action to defeat the cuts and defend jobs are fought for.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party restricts its action to putting pressure on the silent ones. If one such left's lips crack apart to croak some word of opposition to the Government's policy, it's headline news in the *Morning Star*.

But no serious campaign is being mounted by the CP to mobilise industrial action for 26 May — the day named by the 3,057 delegates at the Na-

Cont. on back page



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

'Lefts' who won't fight: Gill, Buckton and Benn

ALL OUT ON 26 MAY

Scottish housing - the fight begins

Over the last couple of years Scotland, and above all Clydeside, has become identified with the urban deprivation and social decay usually associated with cities like New York or Naples.

This was the context of the first ever conference of the Scottish Council of Tenants, held in Stirling on 24-25 April with over a hundred delegates from tenants and community organisations, political organisations and trade unions - including the Scottish NUM and several trades councils.

The STUC and the Labour Party conferences in Scotland have both recently discussed the question of Scottish housing. Both produced resolutions arguing for a clear break from the massive interest charges on house building, from the speculation and profit making of the building companies, and from the Government's cuts which bolster up Scotland's position as 'Europe's biggest slum'.

But resolutions on paper are no threat to the banks or the construction bosses. The Stirling conference was the first opportunity to pull together all those prepared to go beyond words, and take practical action on housing.

'Principles'

Some people, however, will use any excuse to avoid a fight. Dennis Canvan, well known 'left' Labour MP, refused to speak because Jim Sillars from the Scottish Labour Party was among the seven labour movement MPs invited. Canvan, however, raised no objection to sharing platforms with the SNP or the Tory Party during the anti-EEC campaign.

In light of that, the thousands living in Glasgow slums, the unemployed build-

ing workers, and the Scottish homeless may find it a bit difficult to understand the 'principles' which prevent Dennis Canvan from taking part in a joint fight for working class housing.

Tenants

In its final session the conference discussed a resolution from the Scottish Council. The resolution included 'support for the resolutions by the Labour Party's Scottish conference at Troon and the STUC at Perth. We ask the Scottish Council of Tenants to prepare and launch a campaign to implement these resolutions'.

At this point leading members of the Communist Party, including ex-councillor Finlay Hart from Clydebank, rose to oppose the resolution on the grounds that 'it is up to the Labour Party or the STUC to implement their own resolutions'. According to this argument, the decisions of the labour movement and its organisations are of no concern to the rest of the working class once the voting is over. But the conference voted by a large majority to reject this argument and endorse the Scottish Council resolution.

The conference was very much a first step, but an important successful one. As Rowland Sheret, a leading member of the Scottish Council of Tenants and Raploch Tenants Group, explained: 'All too often the hands go up to vote against the state of Scottish housing, but nothing is done. This conference and the campaign following it provide a real opportunity to unite all those who are actually prepared to take practical action to make decent working class housing into a real social service.'

Neil Williamson



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

NUS conference voted for action on 26 May despite opposition from Executive

STUDENTS BACK 26 MAY

The first national union to take up the call for action on 26 May against the Government's cuts in wages, jobs and public services was the 770,000 strong National Union of Students, meeting in conference at Llandudno last month.

The call for the Day of Action came from the 27 March Assembly on Unemployment, dominated by the Communist Party and 'left' bureaucrats. But at NUS conference the opposition to it came from...the CP and 'left' bureaucrats! Their opposition to it may have had something to do with the fact that the resolution, jointly put forward by members of IS and IMG, made concrete proposals for student strikes, occupations,

and other forms of direct action on 26 May, coupling this with defence of the 44 arrested Right to Work marchers.

The passing of this resolution against Executive opposition was just one sign of the increasingly insecure position of the Broad Left leadership - an alliance of CP and 'left' Labour members. Another sign was the loss of their absolute majority in the elections. Indeed, Broad Left candidates for two positions - secretary and treasurer - would have lost to revolutionary candidates but for backing from the Tories.

The growing strength of the Tories in NUS was shown by the election of one of their candidates, Steve Moon, onto the Executive. Moon stated that he only wanted to be 'a thorn in the side' of the Broad Left, but would 'work at driving out' the far left from the Executive. No wonder his election was warmly greeted by the Broad Left.

MACHINE

The latter are reaping the fruits of their machine politics, on which they have relied for nearly a decade as an alternative to campaigning among the mass of students for their policies. With the financial backing of Tory Central Office, the Federation of Conservative Students is out to construct an equally well-oiled machine in a bid to boost Tory student votes in national and local elections, as well as building FCS as the dominant force on the right in NUS.

But if it was the Tories who profited in the elections, it was the left who gained in the debates, with sections of the Broad Left's supporters deserting it on major questions of policy.

This was most clearly revealed on the question of democracy in the student movement. The right's argument for secret elections which would atomise the student body was overwhelmingly defeated - the *Times Higher Education Supplement* commented that 'the conference...seemed to bury once and for all the issue of electing the members of the Executive by secret ballot'. But it was not defeated by the abstentionist position of the Broad Left, who merely argued that each college should be free to decide its own system.

DEMOCRACY

The alternative which won the support of conference was a resolution from Bangor to increase direct democracy by making Union General Meetings the sovereign bodies of NUS locally. Such mass meetings are the best way of involving students in deciding policy and electing their representatives accordingly. To emphasise this, the Bangor resolution also called for conference motions to be ready in their final form sufficiently early to allow them to be discussed and voted on in the colleges.

But this was not the only setback suffered by the Broad Left leadership. Along with voting support for action on 26 May, the conference threw out the Broad Left's attempt to win endorsement of the class-collaborationist Trib-

une economic policy, which includes import controls and the like. And on international questions the Broad Left leadership also suffered important defeats.

DETENTE

Delegates protested as the Broad Left tried to cover up their lack of support for the demonstrations on International Women's Day and the anniversary of Bloody Sunday. Further condemnation of the Broad Left's lack of an internationalist perspective in practice came with the referral back of that section of their report dealing with Angola and southern Africa.

The roots of this lack of internationalism were dug up in the debate on the 'unanimous' communique issued from the 13th European meeting of Student Unions in Bucharest. This justified many aspects of the policies of the bureaucrats in the Kremlin which run counter to NUS policy.

In a clear rejection of Stalinist detente policies and the ignoring of the suppression of democratic rights in Eastern Europe, the report as a whole was thrown out and the delegates to the Bucharest conference censured. Conference went on to adopt a proposal that future delegations should be elected from conference.

POTENTIAL

On almost every issue under debate the NUS conference showed that students are looking for an alternative to the bankrupt policies of the Broad Left. One sign of the potential for a left alternative came with the big support in the presidential elections for independent socialist Hugh Lanning, who attracted a number of votes from the Broad Left's traditional base of support despite the rather motley crew who hung onto this electoral coat-tails.

Such an alternative will not be provided by the aptly named NOISS (National Organisation of International Socialist Societies), loudly though they may try to claim that mantle. Their ultra-left sectarianism (particularly towards the Labour Party, where they refuse to distinguish between its right-wing leadership and its mass base) cuts them off from those students who retain reformist illusions in the Broad Left but are looking for a policy which can unite students with the working class in a fight against cutbacks.

Nor do NOISS present any strategy for how students should fight for an end to British involvement in the affairs of the Irish people or the defence of the rights of women and overseas students now under attack.

The support voted for 26 May provides a chance to build unity in struggle which must be grasped with both hands. Through joint action with workers in the colleges, militant students can cement the result of NUS conference as a blow for the Broad Left but an opportunity for the student movement as a whole.

The wrong road to car nationalisation

A slashing attack on the Government's motor policy, and a demand for the nationalisation of British Ford, Vauxhall and Chrysler and their integration with British Leyland, has been launched by TASS, the staff section of the 1½ million strong engineering union (AUEW).

Yet TASS's answer to the mess in the motor industry is to aim for the production of 2½ million cars a year by 1985. Despite its purple prose about 'servicing society's transport needs rationally', preventing congestion and environmental pollution, and liberating the creativity of all those who work in the industry, the main proposal in TASS's *Trade Union Response to the Government White Paper* is for more of the same.

Nowhere does the pamphlet say

how the industry is to be nationalised and what it is to produce - presumably that is to be left to the goodwill of the Government and the multinationals. In fact, far from preparing the workers for a struggle to impose nationalisation through workers control and the opening of the books, TASS meekly states that 'we do not...believe that Ford (or General Motors) would refuse to co-operate'. Thus will the power of the multinationals be vanquished!

And how will the single state firm be run? Well, there's a token reference to workers control, but the 'inspiring document' that 'forms the basis for a really viable, creative National Motor Corporation' is the Leyland Shop Stewards' submission to Ryder.

TASS should go and tell that to the workers in Leyland plants throughout the country who are now fighting mass sackings and speed-up with one hand tied behind their backs, because their senior stewards are up to their necks in Leyland's class-collaborationist worker participation schemes.

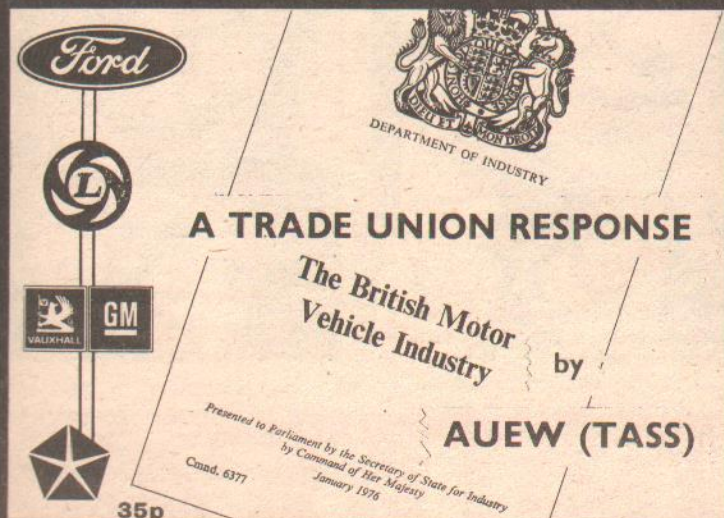
The pamphlet's authors would have done better to look at an alternative 'trade union response' produced by TASS members in the car industry - the Whitely stewards' report on Chrysler. Using even the information on product planning, design, investment and so on which they see as part of their job, they were able to compile a line by line refutation of the arguments used by the company and the Government on Chrysler.

Sterility

Although weak on conclusions - it did demand the nationalisation without compensation of Chrysler, but proposed no plan of workers' action to achieve it - it could have become the basis for a fighting opposition to the Government's run-down plans. Hopefully the current investigation of the state of the car industry being carried out under the auspices of the Institute for Workers Control will be able to draw on this experience.

Ironically the TASS report concludes by commenting on 'the sterility of the capitalist motor industry in producing any answer to the problem it has created'. But not least of the problems confronting car workers in bitter fights over pay, jobs and speed-up is the political sterility of even their 'left' trade union leaders.

*A Policy for the British Motor Vehicle Industry: A Trade Union Response to the Government White Paper, by AUEW (TASS).



CP BLOCKS ACTION

ROAD BLOCKS are being built to the action decided on at the National Assembly on Unemployment in March.

They don't as yet come from the trade union bureaucrats who are stomping the country pleading support for the Government's plans to force down living standards further through incomes policy. They come from those who were their closest friends until very recently — the Communist Party.

controls, and a fight for the adoption of socialist solutions as the only way out of the crisis for the working class.

'Technical' objections were at once raised against discussion of the motion. All right, said the delegates from Woodseats, let's discuss it at the conference on 10 May. Vi Gill of the Communist Party stepped in. The only motion that would be discussed was that of the Executive Committee of the

went away with high hopes in March, should examine the reason why the Communist Party is now applying the brakes. Unity does not prevail on the question of incomes policy among the 'lefts' who lent their support to that conference. Yet the one thing that dominates the political stage at this time is the deal being cooked up with Healey.

The question of direct action, whether it be on unemployment or



The 27 March Assembly on Unemployment—the CP's call for action committees turned out to be just rhetoric

Many of the 3,000 delegates who attended the Assembly must have had illusions that the Communist Party — the main political force behind the organisation and mobilisation for the conference — had serious intentions of fighting for the policy passed. These must have been reinforced in Sheffield when a report-back from the Assembly was taken at the Trades Council. A motion calling for a half-day stoppage and demonstration was passed, and a date was set for a conference of all trades council delegates and shop stewards in the city.

DELETED

Only one thing was deleted from the programme of action decided at the Assembly — the building of a local broad-based action committee. In other words, the stage was set for a day of protest and no ongoing activity on the question of unemployment except at the say-so of the Labour lefts and their Communist Party fellow travellers.

But these moves have not gone through without opposition in Sheffield. Trades Council delegate Ron Thompson put forward a motion from his Woodseats branch of the AUEW welcoming the guide to action from the Assembly, particularly those sections referring to the need for local organisation and action. The motion called for a one-day stoppage, rejection of the reactionary nationalist ploy of import

Trades Council. No local action committee was going to be established in Sheffield.

Blocked by these manoeuvres in the Trades Council, militants in Sheffield will be fighting for workers democracy at the conference by demanding that this motion be heard and unity forged around its proposals.

Delegates to the Assembly, who

the cuts, raises centrally that strategy of the Labour Government which the left leaders are politely allowing to go through without any organisation of their base for a fight. The fight for action on 26 May must include the demand that these lefts organise action and break from being Callaghan's 'most loyal opposition'.

CLPs start cuts fight

BY CLIVE TURNBULL,
EC member of Selly Oak CLP, Birmingham

The rejection by the Labour Party leadership of demands for a special Labour Party Conference is the starting point for an important national conference against the cuts this weekend.

The conference has been organised by Labour Against the Housing Cuts. Writing in the *Chartist* newspaper, LAHC secretary Ted Knight explains why they called it:

'The developing pattern of public spending cuts put into operation, and those projected by Denis Healey, made it clear that housing could no longer be seen in isolation. Housing, education, health, social services and public transport are all under attack. The living standards of every working class family are threatened!'

Support has come from a number of Constituency Labour Parties and trades councils. We in Selly Oak CLP

have put forward a resolution to the conference calling for the implementation of the 1975 Labour conference policy on the NHS, highlighting the demand that the principle of automatic compensation for inflation in the health budget be extended to all the social services. We point out that a crash programme of public works, to replace old schools, hospitals and the like long overdue for closure, will help to meet social need and create employment. The motion also welcomes the recent proposals for the nationalisation of the banks and clearing houses, and declares itself for the cancellation of the national and local debt charges 'which constitute such a drain on social expenditure budgets'.

The conference provides a very valuable opportunity for something long overdue — a national focus for opposition to the cuts in the Labour Party.

IN FOCUS

IMPERIALIST SCRAMBLE IN AFRICA

A desperate scramble is taking place in southern Africa today in an attempt to safeguard imperialist profits and influence through a neo-colonial solution for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) and Namibia. The defeat of imperialism in Angola has set off a series of political and social crises that now begin to threaten the stability of the heart of imperialist exploitation — South Africa — and bring to the fore the need to extract that thorn in their side, the Smith regime.

The two year 'decolonising' plan proposed by Callaghan and endorsed by Kissinger has been suicidally rejected by Smith, who has instead embarked on a project of bringing into the government tribal chiefs long ago bought out by the regime. This policy has been rejected by even the most right-wing of the nationalist leaders, such as Joshua Nkomo. The continued intransigence of Smith therefore threatens to lead to a situation of mass mobilisation against the regime — a situation that could very soon go beyond the control of the 'reformist' leaders and take on a clear anti-imperialist dynamic. As Angola showed, the impact of such a dynamic would not limit itself to the boundaries of Zimbabwe, but would rapidly light the powderkeg of South Africa itself.

Essentially motivated by the need to protect the very high rates of profit from South Africa, and acutely aware of the potential of the present political situation in southern Africa, US secretary of state Kissinger last week went on a new globe-trotting mission on behalf of the international capitalist class. Kissinger made his trip to gain the support of the various neo-colonial regimes, and was notably generous with hand-outs in return: Kenya received \$17 million, while Mozambique gained \$12.5 million for closing its borders with Rhodesia. Other 'neighbours' were also promised a similar handshake.

Kissinger repeatedly stated that the US would support all moves towards removing the Smith regime by any means...except force! The US will cut off all imports of chrome from Rhodesia — a major factor in allowing the Smith regime to survive the UN sanctions. The final part of Kissinger's message dealt with the need to begin a policy of 'liberalisation' in South Africa, together with a call for the incorporation of SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) into the 'negotiations' for an independent Namibia.

But the situation is too rife with contradictions to be easily balked by the policies of Kissinger. An increasing number of skirmishes by the guerrillas along the border, and strategic attacks along major transport routes, along with the gradual move of the 'reformist' ANC (African National Council) under pressure from its base towards support for the armed struggle, all contribute towards increasing the demoralisation amongst the reactionary whites and Rhodesian armed forces.

South Africa is also experiencing growing internal problems. With inflation running at an annual rate of 15 per cent, and fuelled by a vast increase in defence expenditure (40 per cent), there has been increasing unrest amongst the black population. This has been reflected in a series of militant actions — notably the Newcastle bus strike last year and a number of other strikes since then. The impact of the Angolan revolution has led to a further growth of confidence in the masses, forcing even collaborationist black leaders like Chief Gatsha Buthezi to make speeches about 'majority rule'.

Pressure on Smith

Kissinger's backing for Callaghan's policies may however have come too late for the international bourgeoisie. Certainly, repealing the Byrd amendment which allows the US to buy Rhodesian chrome would have a drastic effect in applying pressure on the Smith regime. But its implementation is likely to take several months, and much may have happened by then.

Despite all his previous hot air over the involvement of Cuban troops in Angola and aid from the Soviet Union, Kissinger is now singularly silent on this issue. Not surprisingly! Whereas in Angola it suited the book of the Soviet bureaucracy to give support to the anti-imperialist struggle led by the MPLA, in Zimbabwe they have once again put themselves on record in favour of a neo-colonial solution. Thus Gromyko stated on his recent visit to London that the USSR wanted a peaceful solution in Zimbabwe; thus the Soviet bureaucracy supports the Nkomo faction of the ANC, which until very recently was in favour of negotiations with Smith and now receives the favours of Kissinger.

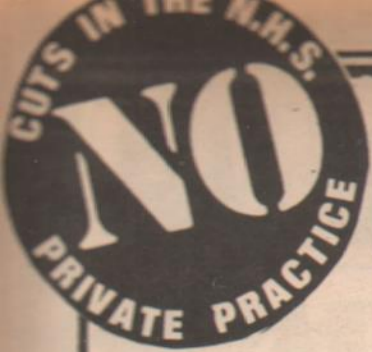
The Communist Party in Britain, in line with the Soviet bureaucracy, has simply mouthed its support for 'liberation movements' and for 'majority rule settlements' in Zimbabwe. Without making it clear that it is the Labour Government that is in the forefront of imperialist manoeuvres, and without defining clearly the intentions of the Labour Government — to bring about a neo-colonial solution in Zimbabwe — the CP leaves the door wide open for Callaghan to carry out these plans over the heads of a confused working class.

The establishment of a neo-colonial regime in Zimbabwe would represent a major defeat for the southern African masses. British socialists must build solidarity now with the struggle in Zimbabwe to thwart the Labour Government's reactionary policies. The issue of southern Africa must be taken into the labour movement with the demand that the Labour Government break all links with racist South Africa. In this way we can help to shut off the door to a neo-colonial solution, so that imperialism's defeat in Angola turns into a rout throughout southern Africa.

IMG African tour

The last NUS conference referred back the Executive's report on southern Africa, which failed even to mention the role of the Labour Government in propping up imperialist interests. It is clear that the issues raised in this struggle are increasingly important, and to meet this need the IMG Student Commission is organising a tour of the colleges between 10-28 May at which supporters of the journal *Africa in Struggle* will speak on the tasks of solidarity.

In the coming week the following meetings have so far been organised: Manchester University, 11 May; York University, 13 May; Hull University and Newcastle, 14 May. If you want to organise a meeting in your college, write to or phone the IMG Student Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1. (01-278 9526).



OUR STATE OF HEALTH

Part 1: Drugs and Decay

'Doctrinally inspired nonsense', thundered the editor of *The Times* in response to the Labour Party's proposals on the drug industry. State control of only one of the monopolies is advocated. But however half-hearted the measures may seem, they have touched a very raw nerve in the establishment.

The reason for this outburst is quite straightforward. The production of drugs under capitalism is related to profit, not to medical need. Over 85 per cent of the NHS drug market is controlled by 13 major companies, who are protected by state patent laws. These laws guarantee the right of a manufacturer to be the sole marketer of a drug for 16 years.

The manufacturers claim that they need to re-coup money they have spent on research. In reality this means they monopolise the market and safeguard their profits by being able to charge exorbitant prices.

Advertising

The NHS pays heavily for its subordination to the drug firms, providing an annual average 18 per cent trading profit. This contrasts with the average rate of return of 12 per cent in all other manufacturing industries.

More money is spent on advertising drugs than research — in 1965 advertising costs were £15.6 million, whilst research costs totalled £11.6 million. In Britain it has been estimated that 42 per cent of the drugs are ineffective in any case.

The domination of capitalist interests over medical care has ensured that doctors are given a vested interest in maintaining the *status quo*. Doctors can and do prescribe all treatment and are given a monopoly of medical knowledge which they jealously guard.

This strengthens their bargaining power — witness how the consultants can impose their own demands on the Government — and makes sure that they are deeply committed to preserving their own powers irrespective of whether or not they clash with the health needs of people.

CRISIS IN THE HEALTH SERVICE

THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION



'STRUGGLE FOR HEALTH' PAMPHLET No. 4
IMG PUBLICATIONS 15p

New IMG pamphlet, price 15p plus 8p p&p from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.

IMG HEALTH COMMISSION

The elderly — seen by a production conscious ruling class as poor investments — are treated as unimportant. The waiting lists in the NHS are crowded by old people. A common waiting period for operations on arthritis of the hip now varies between two and three years in many areas.

Mentally handicapped children — not seen as the most promising recruits to the future labour force — are packed into understaffed, underheated, decrepit institutions. An average of £25 a week is spent on their care, compared with £100 a week in an ordinary hospital for the simple basic needs of a patient.

For the ruling class the function of health care is to provide and maintain a productive labour force. Illnesses or physical and mental ailments and conditions which need long treatment or for which there is no known cure are low on the list of priorities for treatment, and generally bottom of the list for research funds.

Priorities

Brian Watkin, who writes the weekly column 'Reflections' in the journal *Nursing Mirror* — widely read by nurses — has no doubt where capitalism's priorities should be.

In the 8 April edition of the magazine, he says: 'Day centres for the elderly will more than pay their way by virtue of the fact that they make it possible to avoid taking some elderly people into much more expensive residential care.'

Worried about the loss of production through people attending out-patient clinics during the day, he suggests they could run them 'in the evenings' and concludes by pointing out that while 'some groups would suffer in the short term', it all 'depends on what we as a nation produce'.

Watkin's dream of 'conveyor belt' medicine is merely a product of the forced separation under capitalism of the physical cause of an illness from social and environmental conditions. The emphasis is on 'cure' rather than 'prevention'.

Rickets

In Glasgow, for example, there has been an increase of rickets for the first time in 50 years. This is caused by overcrowding due to bad and inadequate housing and poor diet because the poor do not have enough money to buy the right food.

Even though more money is spent in Scotland on medical services to combat infantile mortality, a larger percentage of the child population die in Scotland than in England. A recent Government report candidly admitted that overcrowding is directly related to infant deaths.

The effects of unemployment, a direct responsibility of the capitalist system, in imposing reduced living standards on workers has physical effects on their diet and health. It also causes distress and anxiety as well as creating tensions between husband and wife, parents and children, and causing increasing mental stress.

Meanwhile the psychiatrists on their own are powerless to alter or change the social conditions that have caused the mental disorders of their patients, and so fall back on prescribing drugs which may offer temporary relief but do nothing to tackle the root of the problem.

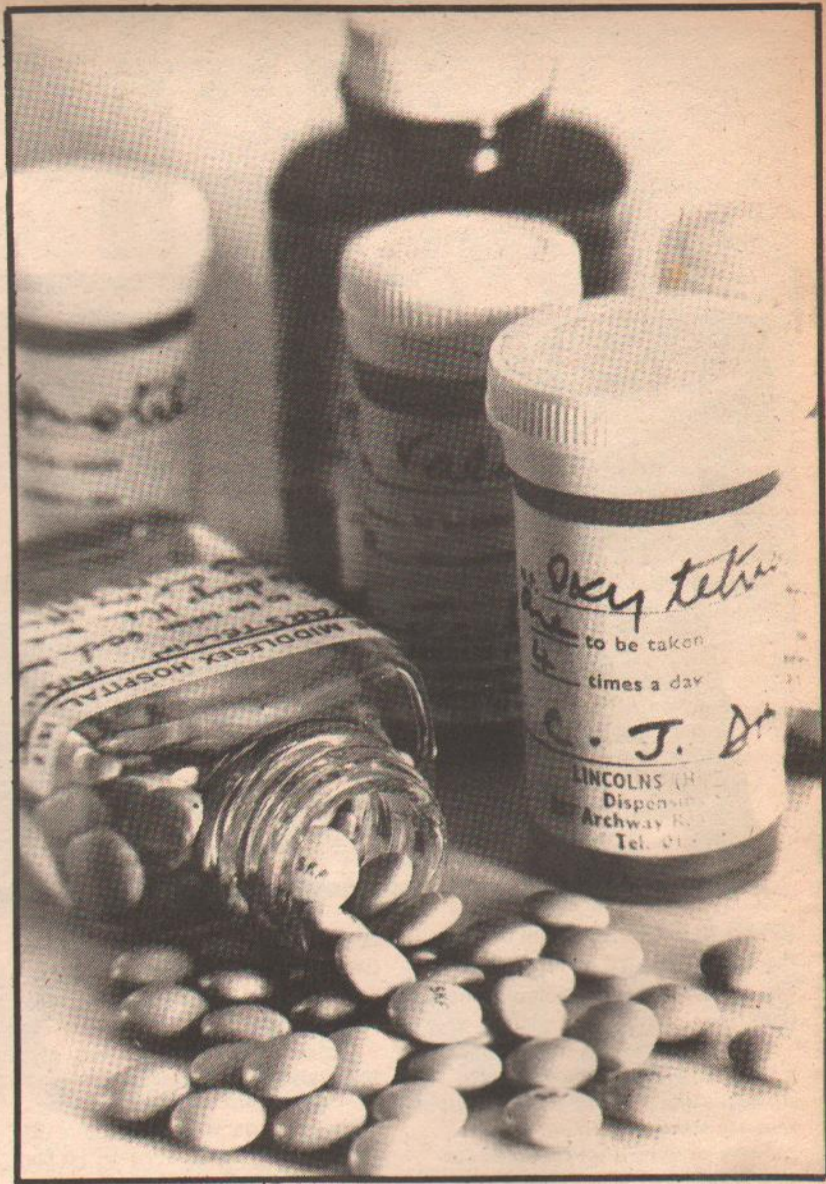


Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

NCC PETITION

As part of the campaign to defend and extend the National Health Service the NCC has launched the petition we reproduce below.

Every serious militant who is against the policies of the Labour Government and wants to fight its attacks on the health and safety of working people should support both the petition and the lobby of the Labour Party Conference.

Make sure that you take the petition in your union branch, get your Labour Party members to sign it and circulate it amongst their workmates. At every meeting called against the cuts get signatures for the petition. From now until October, when Labour meets in Brighton, a massive campaign should be launched in every sector of the workers movement to get support for the demand that Labour implements conference policy on the NHS.

Order copies of the petition from Dr Paul Stern, 55 Bridge Lane, London NW11.

BACKS LABOUR CONFERENCE POLICY

We the undersigned are totally opposed to the way that the National Health Service is being savagely cut and run down. An already sick and declining health service is now in real danger of falling apart with all the dreadful consequences that entails for working people whose health and very lives are put in danger.

We therefore support the lobby of the Labour Party Conference called by the National Coordinating Committee Against Cuts in the NHS and urge that the Labour Party Conference implements the resolution that it carried last year on the NHS. The resolution read as follows:—

This Conference views with concern the inadequacies of the National Health Service and calls upon the leadership of the Labour and trade union movement to pledge itself to a socialist policy for the Health Service.

Conference therefore:

- (a) rejects any cuts in the National Health Service and demands a very substantial immediate increase in health expenditure to recruit new staff, pay adequate wages, provide attractive career structures at all levels, replace outmoded buildings and ensure the provision of an equally high standard of health service facilities throughout the United Kingdom, and believes that in future health expenditure should be linked to price and wages indices to protect the National Health Service from further cuts;
- (b) calls for a free National Health service at the point-of-use with complete abolition of prescription, dental and other charges;
- (c) welcomes the proposed removal of private practice from the National Health Service but is concerned that it be completed rapidly and that existing part-time contracts must end. It further demands that the long-term aim of the Labour Party be the total abolition of private practice with all private medical care outside the National Health Service under Government control as a first step and the prohibition of all private patient insurance plans;
- (d) demands the public ownership of the pharmaceutical and other industries which
- (e) demands the abolition of all nursing agencies and the rapid move by the National Health Service towards the non-use of agency staff or outside contractors for any purpose;
- (f) calls for all management bodies to be democratically elected and to include elected representatives of all grades of employees within the service;
- (g) calls for an extension of occupational preventative and rehabilitation health care schemes with a major expansion in the number of health centres;
- (h) calls for extended facilities for pregnancy testing, contraception, and abortion so that they are available to all women on request, free of charge, and opposes moves to restrict the availability of abortion on social grounds.

Conference, desperately alarmed at the stagnation in morale and innovation in the National Health Service and concerned at the continued erosion and constant amendment of plans for the future, calls upon the Government to publish within one year a major White Paper embodying a Ten Year Plan for the development of the service.

National Health

THE BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE AGAINST CUTS IN THE NHS

New issue of NCC Bulletin—price 10p plus 8p p&p (20% off all orders over 10) from: 55 Bridge Lane, NW11.

TRADES COUNCILS

1926: IN ACTION

Just what role did trades councils play in the General Strike? DAVE CARTER of Darlington Trades Council reviews Emile Burns' *The General Strike, May 1926: Trades Councils in Action* (Lawrence and Wishart £1.25) — a documentary record compiled in the immediate aftermath of the strike.

The General Strike is often seen as marking the beginning of the emergence in Britain of localised 'dual power' — a period in which the working class starts to organise under its own authority areas of production and distribution independently of those controlled by the state. As a result there is a danger of a romantic myth developing about the part played by trades councils during the General Strike, fed by their role in developing Councils of Action.

A more realistic view of both their strengths and weaknesses emerges from Emile Burns' book on the General Strike, *Trades Councils in Action*. The book was compiled in the aftermath of the General Strike on the basis of a questionnaire sent out by the Labour Research Department and completed by over 150 trades councils.

Officially the TUC General Council charged trades councils with 'the responsibility of organising trade unionists in dispute in the most effective manner for the preservation of peace and order'. What was uppermost in the minds of the General Council was how to stop the strike getting out of hand — and particularly their hands.

The notion of trades councils organising local initiatives and activity which might embarrass their lordships of the General Council will come as no surprise to militants currently fighting the new Rule 14, which seeks to limit the role of trades councils to policing the General Council's policies in the local labour movement. But organise they did.

Picketing

Centralised picket organisation occurred in Bolton, Leyton, Pontypridd, Stockton and Wakefield. Committees were set up covering defence corps, food and prices, permits for transportation, information, entertainments and sports. In dozens of cases, local strike bulletins were issued in addition to the TUC's *British Worker*.

But the limitations of the Councils of Action were seen in the ease with which the General Council was able to call off the strike despite the almost universal opposition of these bodies. And despite the ability of the workers to organise the day-to-day running of society during the strike, very little of this continued afterwards.

The essence of dual power is that the working class begins to organise

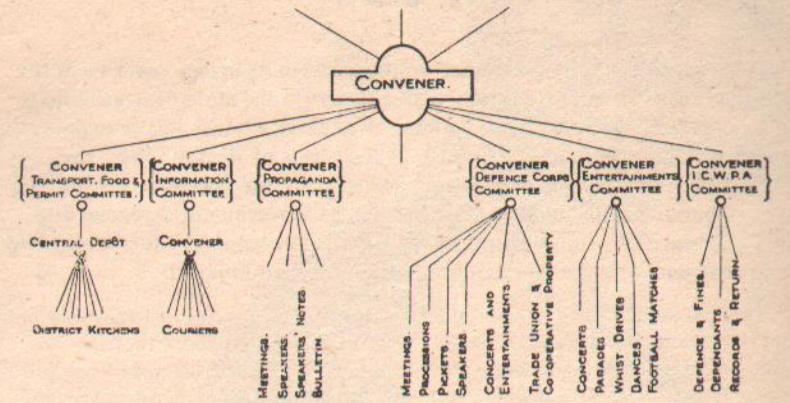
its own 'state apparatus' independently of that of the capitalists. It is therefore interesting to note the attitudes of the local Councils of Action towards the police — the most obvious representatives of the repressive apparatus.

Lincoln, for instance, reported that 'the police asked us to supply the whole of the Special Constables — which we did'. Only in those areas where there were riots and police charges on pickets was systematic workers' self-defence organised. The most advanced example of this — and of a Council of Action that was really taking on the character of an embryonic soviet — was in Methil in the Fife coalfield.

The secretary reported: 'At the beginning, the Workers' Defence Corps comprised 150 men, but this rose to 700 after police charges on pickets. The areas was patrolled by the Corps, organised in companies under ex-NCOs, and there was no further interference by the police with pickets.' The picture of police and strikers playing football matches in Plymouth was far from typical.

During a period in which the ability of trades councils to organise a challenge to the Government's policies is increasingly being attacked by the TUC, *Trades Councils in Action* is a timely reminder of the success — and limitations — achieved by these bodies 50 years ago. All those fighting Rule 14 will benefit from studying it.

WORKING PLAN OF THE METHIL TRADES & LABOUR COUNCIL. COUNCIL OF ACTION FOR EAST FIFE



TWO EXTREMES: The most advanced Council of Action during the General Strike was probably that organised by the Methil Trades and Labour Council. At one time it had 700 pickets patrolling the streets under the command of ex-NCOs to 'dissuade' police interference with pickets. Meanwhile in Plymouth the police were playing football with striking miners. That match is well publicised. Methil Council of Action isn't.



LETTERS

I.S. MEMBERS WRITE:

As members of IS and Camden Trades Council EC, we deny the implication from Geoff Bell & Co ('Open Letter to Socialist Worker', in *Red Weekly*, 22 April), that we have stopped fighting Rule 14.

Our tactics in Camden are geared to the peculiarities of Camden, yet they misleadingly fail to mention these peculiarities, and indeed have shown little appreciation of their significance.

Geoff Bell, for instance, argued that Camden should continue defying the TUC as Clay Cross defied the Government — an absurd analogy. We support the idea of trades councils holding out where possible and in situations where they will be able to continue operating in defiance of the TUC. Unfortunately Camden is not such a situation at present. No amount of windy rhetoric can hide the fact that whereas Clay Cross was solid, our Trades Council is split down the middle and the secretary is doing the TUC's dirty work for it.

The secretary — Sid Gregory, a CP member — actively pushed the TUC to suspend Camden, making acceptance of Rule 14 the condition of entry to the 11 May delegate meeting. He did this to weaken the left; left delegates excluding themselves would restore the majority which the CP/right Labour bloc once enjoyed.

Accepting the entrance condition is not an issue of principle but a matter

of tactics. Treating it as a moral issue would give Gregory the result he wants. And we need to be at full strength inside the May meeting to win resolutions already tabled to remove Gregory and to initiate a campaign from within the Trades Council against Rule 14.

Of course IS supports the 7 May meeting [called by Camden delegates to launch an all-London campaign against Rule 14—at Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq. at 7.30pm]. But we don't accept counterposing a London-wide campaign to the perhaps less glamorous local struggle. Support from Camden for a wider campaign means removing Gregory and changing the balance inside the Council. His removal would be a warning to other unpaid bureaucrats who collaborate with the TUC's anti-democratic manoeuvres.

Most branches with left delegates, including signatories of the 'Open Letter' have voted to accept Rule 14 under protest as the only way of now continuing the fight against it inside Camden Trades Council.

Hopefully we will have the voting strength on 11 May to insist that all delegates be allowed in; to remove Gregory; and pass the resolution for joint action with other councils leading to a national campaign against Rule 14 within trades councils and trade unions. — JAMES ANDERSON, ALAISTER HATCHETT, NIGEL SIEDERER.

1976: I.S. INACTION ON RULE 14

Camden Trades Council was the first trades council suspended; it was therefore in a unique position to wage a London-wide campaign against Rule 14. But IS delegates were so wrapped up in the bureaucratic goings on in their own backyard that they failed to grasp the wider issues at stake.

THE EDITORS REPLY: The letter from comrades Anderson, Hatchett and Siederer reflects the complete failure of the IS delegates on Camden Trades Council to understand what is the fundamental issue at stake. The issue is not the manoeuvres of Sid Gregory, the aim is not to sacrifice all on the tentative hope that the 'left' can control Camden Trades Council. Such a view of the fight Camden Trades Council has waged against Rule 14 is parochial in the extreme.

Camden Trades Council was the first trades council suspended; it was therefore in a unique position to wage a London-wide campaign against Rule 14. And this is what the majority of members of the Trades Council left caucus — including two IS members — supported at a meeting of that caucus. There was an appreciation that whatever the 'peculiarities' of Camden, the essential task was not to remove this or that unpaid bureaucrat — the essential task was to give a lead which could draw into action all those other trades councils who have rejected Rule 14.

Unhappily the majority of IS delegates failed to appreciate this fact. They were so wrapped up in the bureaucratic goings on of their own backyard that they failed to grasp the wider issues at stake.

What is more, by giving in to the tactic of signing the letter, the IS delegates have given the green light to every other TUC policeman up and down the country to indulge in the same tactics whenever they are faced with opposition. Gregory's tactics have paid off — whether or not he himself is removed — because IS members in branch after branch have been led to urge the necessity of capitulating at the first hurdle.

The comrades writing from Darlington were probably unaware of such developments — but these, rather than fine articles in *Socialist Worker*, are the facts which matter in assessing IS's attitude

to Rule 14. However, we of course agree with comrade Pearson's comments about the failure of both the IS and the IMG to co-ordinate action nationally when the TUC first announced Rule 14 in October 1975.

When Rule 14 came before Darlington Trades Council in Early February, neither Red Weekly nor *Socialist Worker* had yet picked it up. An IMG comrade did move rejection, only to be told that this would mean expulsion from the TUC. 'Caught on the hop', the comrade reluctantly voted for the rule while successfully moving that a letter of protest be sent to the TUC. But the case of Camden is entirely different.

We conclude with two points. Red Weekly is happy to print these letters from IS members; we are quite willing to let our readers judge just who has waged the most consistent campaign — not against Sid Gregory, but against Rule 14. But sadly *Socialist Worker* has not adopted this attitude.

In the past six weeks it has published letters supporting Zionism, comparing the Provisional IRA to Spanish Fascists, and attacking a woman's right to choose. *Socialist Worker* seems quite happy to publish such right-wing letters; but when IS's much heralded ability to 'fight' is questioned, the letter remains unpublished.

Secondly, we would draw the attention of IS members to an important historical parallel; that of the 1920s, when the TUC threatened to ban trades councils which remained affiliated to the Minority Movement. The CP urged trades councils under its influence to accept this proscription on the basis that they would then be in a better position to campaign against the ban. But the only result of their action was to hasten the decline of the MM.

We can only hope that IS's similar advice over Rule 14 will not mortally damage the campaign that must be waged against this latest TUC proscription.

I was very annoyed by your printing of the 'Open Letter to *Socialist Worker*' on Rule 14 signed by delegates to Camden Trades Council, as *Socialist Worker* made our viewpoint very clear on 3 April in an article 'What We Think'. I suggest the signatories of the letter in *Red Weekly* read *Socialist Worker* regularly so as to be in full possession of the facts.

Further, anyone who knows anything of IS politics should also know that opposition to any form of restriction like Rule 14 is automatic. We do not need to be 'urged' to do what our politics tell us is correct. — EUNICE SHARPLES (Darlington IS).

'CAUGHT ON THE HOP'

Your article (15 April) on the fight against Rule 14 adopts a formally correct position in the same way as *Socialist Worker* has done. You then went on to castigate some IS delegates who voted the wrong way. I regret that practice and theory do not always coincide, for in our trades council both IMG and IS comrades voted for Rule 14.

This, I believe, does not show any lack of purity in those concerned but highlights the panic which took place when we were confronted with the rule

change. I understand that many trades council delegates were 'caught on the hop'.

The major failing for which the revolutionary left as a whole, both IS and IMG, must take the blame is in not co-ordinating action nationally in October 1975 when the TUC circular was first issued. It is necessary, after all, to give three months notice to trades councils before alterations in the constitution. The TUC followed their rules to the letter and we did not respond. TONY PEARSON, Darlington.

1. Hard pounding, gentlemen

The changes in the value of sterling on the foreign exchange markets in the past few weeks have 'accidentally' coincided with the state of negotiations on the second phase of incomes policy. Whenever a union leader makes a speech which suggests even a quibble at the terms of Healey's deal, the pound falls and a crisis is announced. When the same leader comes running back to announce his undying devotion to the Government's policies and the imminence of total capitulation to Healey, the value of the pound obligingly rises and an 'improvement in confidence' is announced.

This particular form of capitalist 'aid' to an anti-working class economic policy should come as no surprise. It's all in a day's manoeuvres for a ruling class that has been 'carrying out similar operations for decades. Virtually every single attack on the working class has been carried out in the name of 'saving sterling'.

- In 1931 a huge wave of selling sterling set the scene for Ramsay MacDonald's betrayal and the formation of the National Government with Tories and Liberals.
- In 1947 massive selling of the pound was used to persuade the TUC to accept the first post-war wage controls.
- In 1966 a round of selling sterling was used as the excuse to introduce a wage freeze and huge cuts in social expenditure.
- In 1975 it was another fall in the pound which was used as the opportunity to introduce the £6 limit.

Old Story

In 1976 the same old story is being repeated. Of course the general capitalist crisis provides the background to such falls in the value of the pound, but nevertheless their timing and use is often due to a literal conspiracy of the capitalist class.

In 1964 the Bank of England itself aided a run on the pound when the new Labour Government promised a few minor reforms. On 24 November of that year the Governor of the Bank of England came to see Wilson, who reported the meeting as follows:

'Claiming that our failure to act in accordance with his advice had precipitated the crisis, he was now demanding all-round cuts in expenditure, regardless of social or even economic priorities....I asked him if this meant that it was impossible for any government, whatever its party label, whatever its manifesto or the policies on which it fought an election, to continue, unless it immediately reverted to full scale Tory policies. He had to admit that that was what his argument meant, because of the sheer compulsion of the economic dictation of those who exercised decisive economic power.'

Prepared

The 'run on sterling' of summer 1975 which led to the £6 limit was an example of exactly the same methods on a much grander scale. This 'run' was almost certainly prepared at a meeting of the international Bilderberg group — an international organisation of financiers and politicians whose organisers include the Rockefeller family.

This group held a meeting in Turkey on 25-27 April 1975 which was attended by Healey, Thatcher, the Governor of the Bank of England, the chief executive of the Esso oil company, the senior vice president of IBM, the secretary general of NATO, the secretary general of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the vice-president of the European Economic Commission, the chairman of the Dresdner Bank of West Germany, the President of the Fiat motor company, representatives of the Rothschild family, a number of advisers to President Ford,

and a whole series of other key political and financial directors.

This meeting discussed the problem of the British economy in the light of the Labour Government's election pledge against a wage freeze. In the week following the meeting the pound suddenly fell by over 3 per cent in value. The Bank of England did not intervene.

Pattern

Then, following the YES vote in the EEC referendum, something which the capitalists wanted out of the way before moving to an incomes policy, the pound began to plummet — again without the Bank of England seriously attempting to stop the dive. Immediately Healey stepped in and, with Wilson, demanded the £6 limit as the only way to 'save the pound'. The TUC backed down from previous opposition and accepted the wage controls.

The pattern of 'runs on the pound' is only too familiar, and the present one is merely the latest episode in a long story. Norman Atkinson MP was quite right to point the finger at the conspirators in the City last week. He should back his words by organising a labour movement inquiry into their activities.

Well-known

The ways to deal with any 'run on the pound' are well known. In fact they have always been employed by the ruling class when it wants to deal with its own problems rather than use the falling 'value of sterling' as a weapon to attack the labour



Chancellor Healey and the governor of the Bank of England share a smile. After all, what's a run on the pound when its organised between friends.



movement. Suspension of the foreign exchange markets has been used not merely by British governments but by hardly revolutionary regimes such as that of General de Gaulle. The forcible take-over and sale of British capitalist assets abroad was carried out in both world wars.

Open Books

The technical means to smash the currency speculators are easy. But the point is that this Government is the chief organiser and abettor of the policies which need the periodic scares on the value of the pound.

Fighting the speculators means revealing the machinations of this Government and the industrialists with which it is in league. Opening the books of the financiers by workers representatives would soon reveal what is going on. The working class should recognise the 'pound scares' for what they are — a method of attacking the labour movement.

THE C THE B

Over the past few weeks we have been bombarded with 'facts' about the economic crisis by the press, television, Labour politicians and trade union leaders. 'Facts' which are aimed at bludgeoning the workers movement into accepting an even tougher wages policy than the one that has already cut living standards by five per cent over the last year.

Every time a union conference blows cold over the three per cent plus tax cuts fraud, the pound drops another cent. But who is behind the run on the pound?

When tougher wage controls are demanded we are told that this is necessary to beat inflation. Varley and Healey tell May Day demos that in eighteen months shopping will no longer be a nightmare of ever escalating prices. But is it wages that cause inflation?

At the same time huge cuts in social spending are implemented, destroying thousands of jobs — in the name of helping to save jobs elsewhere.

In these pages we take apart the lies being peddled by the Labour leaders and the capitalist press. The arguments developed should be used by mili-

2. Higher prices make better profits

The capitalist class always use two main arguments to show that wage controls 'benefit the worker'. The first, and most ludicrous, is that it is necessary to compete with other countries. Why this is farcical is simple — because the workers of those other countries are being told exactly the same thing!

The latest facts and figures on wage settlements in other countries show only too well what is happening. In Japan steel workers have been offered an 8.5 per cent increase — the smallest offer since 1966 and in a country with a 9 per cent annual inflation rate.

WAGE CUTS

In West Germany, Ruhr miners have been forced to accept 5.25 per cent, central and local government workers 5.3 per cent, and rail and post office workers 5 per cent, in a country where price rises are running at 5.5 per cent. As the Economist magazine cynically commented in a report on West Germany: 'Unemployment will stay high but the silver lining is that workers are settling for smaller wage increases than in the past.'

Meanwhile, despite these low wage increases, Japanese steel prices and German coal prices continue to rise. The low wage increases in every case are justified by the need to compete with foreign countries, including Britain, where the workers are being told to accept wage cuts to compete with the workers who are being forced to accept wage cuts to compete

with them! It is a crazy merry go round in which the only winners are the divide and rule tacticians of the ruling class.

If, as the bosses argue, the wage increases won by workers in Britain are too big to enable them to compete with foreign economies.....

Why, instead of trying to cut British workers' wages, don't they urge the workers in other countries to increase theirs?

An international campaign for wage increases, however, is something we don't think the capitalists will be too keen on.

The second argument used to justify wage controls is 'the fight against inflation'. Healey continually repeats that his number one priority is to get the rate of inflation down to 5 per cent. In fact he not merely knows that this is not going to happen, but is pursuing policies which will actually help to prevent it from happening.

The very fall in the value of the pound which is being used to 'encourage' the TUC in coming to a wages deal is one such example. Even the financial press admits that the fall in the value of the pound was started by the Bank of England.

Already, due to the fact that capitalism is only interested in plundering the countries of the 'Third World' and not in increasing the output of vital

CRISIS: G LIES

tants in every union and Labour Party branch to win rejection of any deal with Healey and mobilise support for a massive turn out for the Day of Action on 26 May called by the National Assembly on Unemployment.

At the same time the real alternatives to the sterling blackmail, the inflation fraud and the lies on jobs should be fought for:

* **ON STERLING** — a labour movement enquiry into the speculators — close down the foreign exchange markets, take over all British investment abroad, nationalise the banks and finance companies under the control of the workers;

* **ON INFLATION** — demand automatic increases in wages to compensate for increases in the cost of living;

* **ON JOBS** — impose policies of work-sharing with no loss of pay, reinstate all the cuts, and embark on a programme of socially useful public works. Nationalise under workers control and without compensation all firms creating redundancies.

materials in a planned way, the price of food and the crucial goods needed for production in Britain is soaring. The price of copper has gone up by 60 per cent since the beginning of 1975, while the price of coffee has nearly trebled, the price of wheat has increased by 15 per cent and that of cocoa has gone up by nearly a half in the same period.

The average price of raw material and food commodities has increased by a third in the last year, and more increases are on the way. The *Financial Times* of 14 April admitted: 'It is not generally recognised that whatever happens to world grain markets, UK prices of wheat and barley (the basic material of bread and animal foodstuffs) will have to go up much further by the end of the transitional period in 1978 to stay in line with EEC levels.'

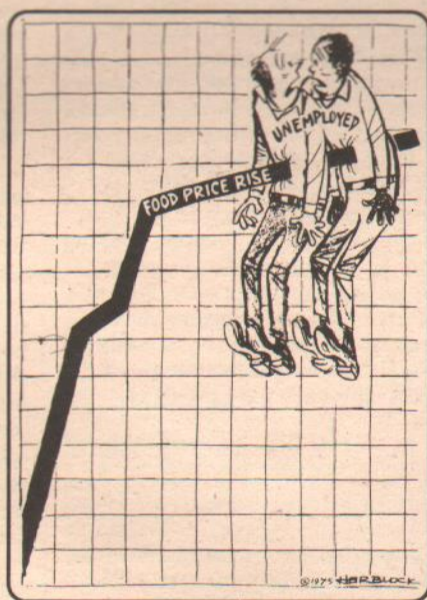
MAKE WORSE

The effects of the forcing down of the value of the pound will make this situation much worse. When imported commodity prices rise, roughly half that is passed on to wholesale prices. Thus the 10 per cent fall in the value of the pound will add 3-4 per cent at least to prices.

This makes nonsense of Healey's claim that price rises due to all changes will be brought down to 5 per cent. Far from aiming to fight inflation, the Government with its policy of pushing down the value of the pound is actually consciously increasing inflation.

As well as pursuing goals which deliberately increase inflation, the Government lies when it claims that high wages are responsible for increased prices. Just look at what has happened to prices compared with the share of wages in the economy.

Ever since the war the rate of increase of prices has been speeding



© Herblock in The Washington Post
'It's nice to know we're helping to hold it down a little'

up — accelerating even further since the early 1960s. For example in 1957-58 the increase in prices was roughly 4 per cent, in 1960-61 about the same, in 1964-65 it was up to 5 per cent, by 1969-70 it had reached almost 8 per cent, and by 1975 it was running at 25 per cent. Yet throughout this period the share of wages in the economy has actually been falling.

FALLING

Figures printed by the business magazine *Politics and Money* in February 1973 showed that take-home pay after taxes fell as a percentage of national income from 60 per cent in 1957 to 58 per cent by 1965 to 56 per cent by 1970. Today, after wage and tax increases, the percentage is even lower. In short, far from soaring wages putting up prices, wages have actually been decreasing as a proportion of the economy at the same time as the rate of inflation has been soaring.

The fact that an actual fall in



'Have you heard the one Denis Healey has been telling the unions about cutting unemployment to 700,000 by the end of 1979!'

3. Chopping jobs - Healey's real aim

Red Weekly has many times exposed Healey's lies on cuts and jobs. The most scandalous one of all is that the proposed deal will cut unemployment — specifically, that it will cut it to 700,000 by 1979.

The Government is at present engaged in a gigantic productivity drive — the full weight of which is being felt by workers in Leyland and other firms. The aim of this is to drive the rate of increase in productivity above the 4 per cent it has averaged in the last ten years. But this 4 per cent plus increase in productivity is predicted at a time when realistic prospects for an increase in output only average 2-3 per cent at most!

If production goes up less rapidly than increases in the rate at which workers can produce, then less jobs are going to be available, not more. You don't need to understand economics to see that Healey is lying through his teeth — only the ability to add up.

Even the capitalist class is a bit embarrassed about Healey's lies on

jobs. The forecast made by economists at the London Business School in the *Sunday Times* put it rather delicately:

'In fact our present forecast suggests that demand will be insufficient to get anywhere near an unemployment rate as low as 3 per cent by 1979 (the Chancellor's target). Indeed, we do not see unemployment falling below the million mark throughout the period — and at the end of the decade it is likely to rise again.'

Others put it less carefully. *The Times* for example, considered on 7 April that it was necessary to discuss the possibility of a situation of '2,000,000 unemployed, and deindustrialisation quickening to a gallop'. This is probably somewhat alarmist even for the capitalists, but it shows that Healey's promises are a mockery.

Just as vicious as his attack on jobs, however, are the proposals for cutting public expenditure. In addition to providing vitally needed hospitals, schools, houses and other

wages as a proportion of the economy can accompany soaring prices is conclusive disproof of the argument that it is wages which are responsible for inflation. The 'costs' which go to make up prices are determined by many more things than wages — in fact the cost of wages in the average product is around 60 per cent.

In other words, even if the whole increase in wages were passed on, the present £6 increase — roughly 10 per cent — would only lead to prices going up by 6 per cent. In fact prices are going up at an annual rate of over 20 per cent. This cannot be accounted for by wage increases.

The real reason why capitalists maintain this huge increase in prices is to allow massive increases in profits which can only be achieved by putting up prices, and keeping down wages. What can be achieved by holding down wages and letting prices rip has already been seen in the United States.

In General Motors, for example, profits in the third quarter of 1975 were up fifteen times on a year earlier — an increase of 1,500 per cent at a time when wages were going up by less than 10 per cent! Already the business sections of newspapers such as the *Daily Telegraph* predict for Britain that while wages will go up by 3 per cent in 1976, profits will go up by 20 per cent.

No Confusion

There must be no confusion on the arguments about wages and inflation. Wage increases are not the cause of inflation. The Government is not trying to keep down inflation but is letting it soar. The aim of its policies is not to keep down prices but to keep down wages so that profits can soar.

As to what all this will mean for the economy and the working class,

things — and there is still a huge shortage of these — public expenditure is one of the only ways in which unemployment is prevented from rising even more rapidly than at present.

For example, in the ten years from 1965-75 industrial employment fell by 15 per cent. The only reason why unemployment did not rise even further was that jobs were then still being created in the public sector.

Quite apart from the savage attacks contained in the Government's White Paper on expenditure, incredible plans for further cuts have recently been revealed. The *Sun* reported on 27 April that plans were being made to stop annual inflation-linked rises in pensions; cut social security payments to strikers; raise council house rents; drastically cut still further the rail services; and cut the health service. As the paper put it: 'Did ex-Premier Harold Wilson know what was coming and decide to get out while the going was good?'

We don't know the answer to that, but everyone should know right from the start that Healey's promises on jobs would result in him being imprisoned for perjury if there were any such thing as an honest capitalist court! The truth is that under capitalism unemployment in Britain will never again fall below one million — and by 1980 it is more likely to be nearer two million.

MP Neil Kinnock bleated in *Tribune* on 16 April: 'What iron-clad guarantee has the Government obtained or what machinery has it invented to ensure that cuts and sacrifices will be turned into new investment, higher productivity, fresh jobs and lower prices?' The answer is of course none.

There is no way of ensuring that any sacrifices made by the working class benefit it or increase production as long as industry remains in private hands. This is one of the reasons why socialists reject all forms of wage control under capitalism — including against capitalist apologists such as Kinnock.

The way forward for the working class is not acceptance of incomes policy in the vain hope that it will cut inflation, but insistence that the workers will bear none of the cost for capitalism's crisis. The demand for automatic wage increases to compensate for every increase in the cost of living is the only way to achieve this.

'The Political Police in Britain'

Reviewed by KAREN MARGOLIS

Throughout its rise and fall as a dominant imperialist power, the British ruling class has dealt with internal political threats in a highly sophisticated fashion. Political groups and demonstrations have only rarely been banned; torture of political opponents is almost unheard-of. While the British security forces slaughtered and tortured in the colonies, their counterparts at home generally kept their gloves on.

For most of this time the ruling class has been able to use the crumbs of its imperialist achievements in order to erect a facade of liberal democracy centred on Parliament. But behind this facade, protected by secrecy, lies the repressive apparatus of the state.

This is the starting point for Tony Bunyan's study of *The Political Police in Britain*,* the first detailed account of the history and practice of the secret police. His examination of the Official Secrets Acts and 'D' notice system shows why we know so little about the Special Branch, M15 and M16. His investigations into the workings of these agencies shows that they know a lot more about some of us than we would imagine.

It came as no surprise to Bunyan that the Secretary of the 'D' notice Committee (whose job is to prevent publication of anything 'not in the national interest') tried to obtain a copy before publication — obviously with a view to censoring it.

The information Bunyan gives is a powerful argument against those who prefer to believe that Britain has no 'political' police. But this is something that most political activists, trade union militants, blacks and Irish people know already. For them, Bunyan's intention is to provide information 'on precisely those aspects which may lead to an everyday knowledge of the activities and practices' of the political police.

Special Branch

The Special Branch was set up in 1883 to deal with Fenian bombings in London, and since its inception has kept watch on all groups and individuals — whether supporters of violent action or not — who challenge the power of the state. Since the job of the Special Branch is prevention rather than cure, it is increasingly entering the realm of policing ideas.

The scope of activity of the secret agencies is thus extremely wide. It is determined at any particular time by the degree of political unrest. Specialist sections of the Branch deal with such questions as Ireland and the Middle East; these can be strengthened or diminished as the need arises. The Branch and M15

are also known to work with their overseas counterparts, such as the CIA and the South African BOSS.

There is one area in which the Branch has consistently operated: industrial unrest. After the dock strikes of the late 1940s, for example, it set up a special squad to find the ringleaders — suspected of being 'Communist infiltrators'.

Files

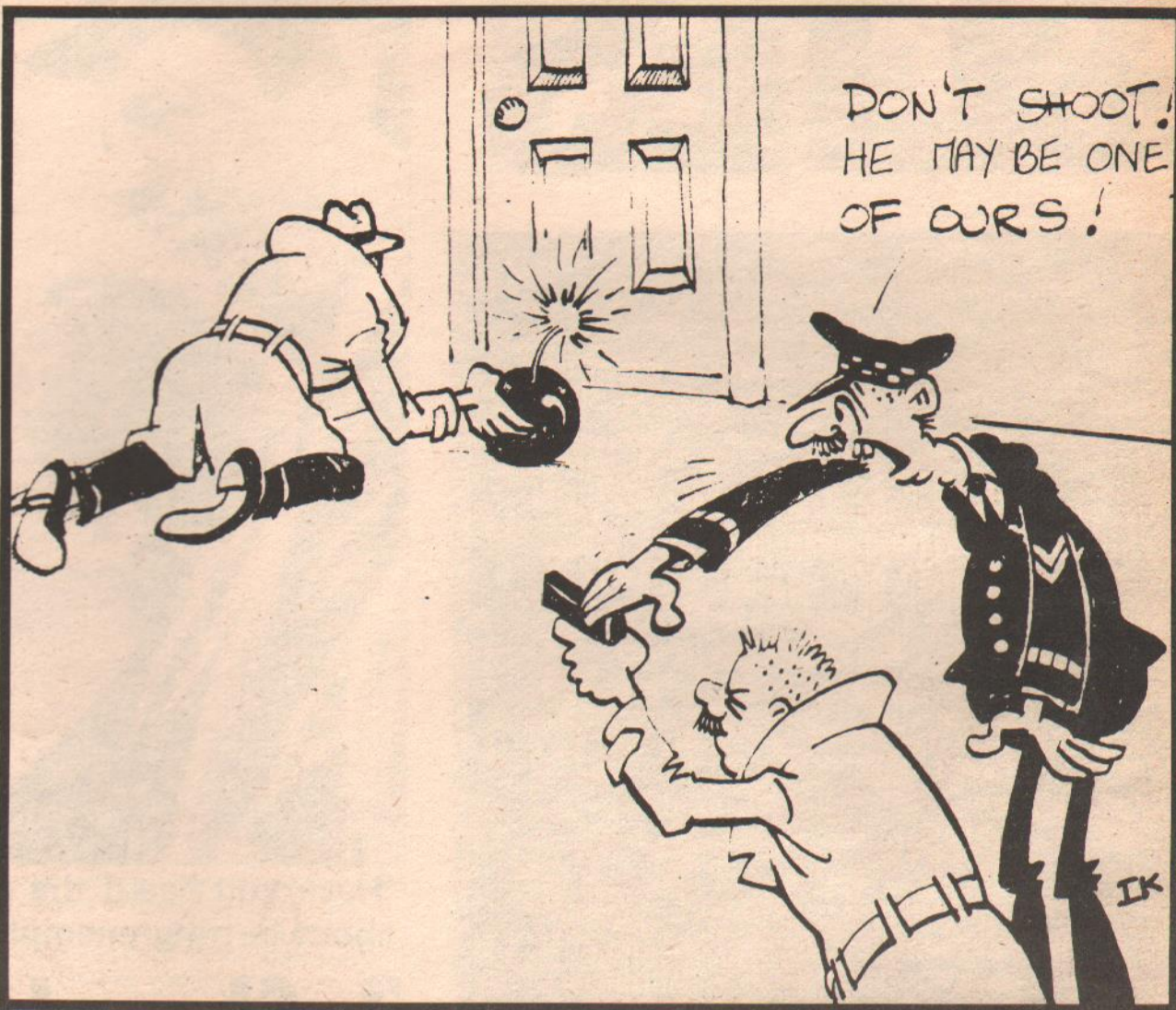
In the Strachan's dispute in 1973, the Branch again uncovered 'infiltrators' — this time the International Socialists. The Branch is reputed to keep files on over two million people, and regularly photographs demonstrations and pickets.

There are two key features of the Branch's operations in industry. The first is its willingness to work with any sympathetic individuals or organisations — including informers, employers, trade union leaders and right-wing bodies such as the Economic League. After the 1940s dock strikes, for instance, the Branch gave information to Deakin, General Secretary of the T&GWU, which enabled him to witch-hunt a militant out of the union.

Secondly, the Branch does not shrink from using 'black propaganda' and smear tactics to isolate militants.

The activities of M15 — set up in 1909 after a German spy scare — often overlap with those of the Branch. M15 is responsible for counter-espionage, and also shares joint responsibility with the Branch for international subversion. This operational connection between espionage and internal subversion (including strikes, civil disobedience etc.) is justified by the theory that those who oppose the state are linked with an 'international conspiracy' controlled by Moscow, Cuba etc. (A rather neat way of discrediting political activists.)

M15 goes about its business even more secretly than the Special Branch. Bunyan describes how it has



monitored wage claims, recruited student informers, and even kept Labour MPs under surveillance on suspicion of being fellow travellers of the Communist Party.

The renewed rise of extra-parliamentary action in the 1960s posed the whole police force — and especially the secret police — with new problems. It became clear that the scope and variety of dissent was such that they could not simply respond in an ad-hoc fashion. What was needed was a plan which would enable all security forces to operate in coordination but with flexibility.

Ireland

The recent development of the National Security Plan (NSP) is very interesting, because it shows how closely political events and changes are linked with changes in the security forces. As Bunyan points out, the background to the NSP is the world recession. As the Government and the employers attempt to impose wage cuts against growing resistance from the working class, they will turn ever more frequently to their repressive forces for help.

Two factors rammed home the need for contingency planning. The first was that trade unionists were increasingly adopting direct action tactics. The closing of the Sattley gates by a mass picket while the police stood by helplessly had a major impact on those responsible for internal security.

As Brigadier Brian Watson of the Army General Staff said later: 'The whole period of the miners' strike has made us realise that the present size of the police force is too small. It is based on the fundamental philosophy that we are a law-abiding country. But things have now got to the state where there are not enough resources to deal with the increasing numbers of people who are not prepared to respect the law.'

The major factor which affected the drawing up of contingency plans was the continuing Irish struggle. This is a factor which Bunyan does not consider in detail, and his book is weaker for its omission.

The occupation of the Six Counties by the British Army has several

times threatened to tear apart Britain's liberal democratic facade. But while it remains, the Army is gaining experience in countering internal dissent. This is why almost every Chief Constable has toured Northern Ireland, and almost every British Army unit has carried out duties there. They learn techniques of riot control, computer surveillance, phone tapping and infiltration of political organisations.

Most importantly for internal defence operations, Northern Ireland has educated the British security forces in how to wage a 'hearts and minds' campaign. Essentially, this involves getting as close to the 'insurgent' population as possible, winning them to support the Government, and isolating the militants. Recent reports that some English police forces are looking into 'community policing' show that the 'hearts and minds' approach has crossed the Irish sea.

This, then, was the background to the formulation of contingency plans for Britain in case of a 'national emergency'. Bunyan draws together all available information on what is entailed by these plans, and discusses the growing coordination between the police and Army which is necessary for its effective implementation. The Heathrow manoeuvres and other joint-police Army operations (including joint weapons train-

ing) are ways of testing and refining these plans.

The Labour Government has carried on where the Tories left off. Indeed, the Special Patrol Group (probably responsible for the death of Kevin Gately at Red Lion Square in 1974) was set up in 1965 by a Labour Home Secretary. And it was a Labour Government which sent troops into Northern Ireland in 1969.

Labour

Successive Labour governments, while setting the seal on the development of the repressive apparatus of the state, have at the same time claimed to be representing the interests of the working class. We should demand that the present Labour Government shows us how it is safeguarding those interests — including revealing to the workers' organisations what contingency plans are being laid, what changes are taking place in the police and Army, and what measures they propose to ensure that the police and soldiers can exercise their democratic right to organise in trade unions.

And our first step must be to demand immediate withdrawal of the troops occupying Northern Ireland.

* *The History and Practice of the Political Police in Britain* by Tony Bunyan (Julian Friedmann publishers, £4.95).

-WHAT'S ON-

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS day school: Sat 22 May, 10.30-5.00 at Nottingham Teachers Centre, Cranmer St. Speakers include: Jean Cousins (NCCL), Liby Elsom (NUPE), Sylvia Greenwood (TGWU), Judith Hunt (AUEW-TASSI), Mel Read (ASTMS), Una Walton (Tobacco Workers Union). Creche provided. Information, registration (75p, or 40p for unemployed) to: Tina Pamplin, 4 Melrose Avenue, Sherwood, Nottingham (tel. 601588).

GENERAL STRIKE discussion of issues raised, Sat 8 May, 7.30pm, Tyneside Socialist Centre, 235 Jesmond Road, Newcastle.

ONE-DAY Chile conference organised by Hull CSC and sponsored by AUEW Dist. Cttee and Hull Labour Party. Sat 8 May, 11am-5pm at Carron House, 78 Beverley Road, Hull. Speakers include Brian Nicholson (TGWU), Pedro Cornejo (Chilean TUC) and representatives of MIR and Chilean CP.

EAST LONDON Gay Centre is now open in basement of 19 Redmans Road, Stepney, E.1. Phone 790 2454 or call in between 8-11pm any evening. Benefit disco: 13 May at N.E. London Poly, Livingstone Road, E15.

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WOMEN & WORK conference organised by Leicester & District Trades Council: Sun 16 May, 2-6pm. Creche available. Details from: P. Kirkham, 52 Daneshill Road, Leicester (tel. 23123).

GREATER MANCHESTER Troops Out Movement forum: 'Ireland and the British labour movement'. Tues 11 May, 7.30pm, the Ducie Arms, Great Ducie Street (Victoria).

ANGOLA WORKSHOP, Sat 8 May, 10.30-5.30 in Africa Centre, 38 King St, London WC2. Send 50p for registration and papers to: Angola Solidarity Committee, c/o 30 Romilly Road, London N4.

CRITIQUE SEMINAR series: Frank Richards on the 'Communist Parties and the Capitalist Crisis'. Weds 12 May, 7.30pm, in Room S-418, St Clements Building, London School of Economics, Houghton Street.

SOUTH-WEST region demonstration against cuts in social expenditure—Sat 15 May, 1.30pm, at Ellis Fields, centre of Taunton, Devon. Called by NUPE, supported by ASTMS, T&G, NALGO, AUEW.

DEFEND THE RIGHT To Work badges—17p including postage from: Jo Ann, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1. Bulk rates on enquiry (01-278 9526).

GLASGOW Socialist Forums—every Thursday in the Tona Community Centre, 7.30pm.

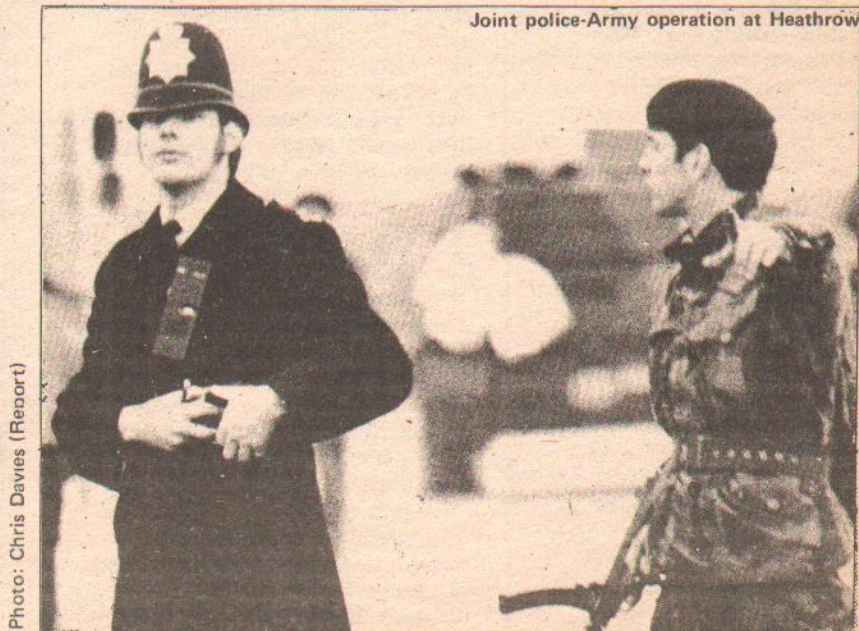


Photo: Chris Davies (Report)

Joint police-Army operation at Heathrow

7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES

JOHN MAGEE reports from Belfast

The Royal Ulster Constabulary, the paramilitary force established as a front-line defence for the sectarian Orange statelet in the North of Ireland, is to be equipped with SLR rifles to supplement its present armory of .303 rifles, Stirling sub-machineguns, and Walther pistols. In the same announcement, the Police Authority confirmed that the RUC were also to be re-equipped with armoured cars. This announcement comes at the same time as growing evidence

that the sectarian Ulster Defence Regiment is to be increasingly used as a back-up force for the RUC. Nationalist districts have experienced stepped-up activity by the para-military police over the last few weeks in line with Merlyn Rees's declared commitment to involve the RUC 'more in the main role of dealing with the security situation'. In the early stages of the Provisional truce the RUC made occasional sorties

into Republican areas, but met with such fierce resistance that they had to desist. At that time, the Provisional IRA emphasised that the RUC were excluded from all provisions of the truce and would not enjoy any 'immunity'. Since then a lot of water has flowed under the bridge. The Provisionals' truce is dead in all but name. At the same time the Constitutional Convention, established by the British Government in the apparent hope of a Loyalist-SDLP agreement, has collapsed with the Loyalist UUUC's insistent demands for the return of Protestant rule.

Paisley's paper, the Protestant Telegraph, spells out in its current issue what this would mean: 'Locals not strangers in control, locals not strangers in uniform? Whatever divisions exist in the ranks of Loyalism, this is one policy on which all are united. Despite the Provisional IRA's military campaign, the chances of the Loyalists getting their way are not so unreal as some commentators apparently believe. It is true that with the retirement of

Sir 'Jamie' Flanagan, currently RUC Chief Constable, all the top security leaders will be British. But there is no guarantee that the forces they command will meekly follow the Labour Government's policy. During the Ulster Workers Council stoppage in May 1974, the British Army flatly refused to confront the Loyalist para-militaries. As for the RUC and UDR (almost 100 per cent Loyalist in composition), even Merlyn Rees was not so naive as to imagine that he had any hopes of winning them to oppose the stoppage. With the UDR in tow, the RUC obviously look with relish on the prospect of gaining vengeance on those areas from which they were so unceremoniously turfed out in 1969 — even if they have to use armoured cars bristling with machine guns to get it! While SLRs are being distributed to the ranks of the RUC, the anti-Unionist masses remain disorganised. Denied any real role in the struggle, passive spectators to the 'secret' talks between the Provisionals and the British Government, they have been left powerless in the face

of the betrayal by the SDLP and the Southern Government of the gains of seven years struggle. As a result they are confused and demoralised, and prey to the campaign of vilification being carried out by British imperialism against the resistance. If the anti-Unionist working class do not raise their guard against the cynical attempts of the British Government to depict Republican militants as 'gangsters', then the door will be wide open for the RUC's return to the ghettos — a door presently kept ajar only by the 15,000 British troops in the Six Counties. And with the RUC back in the ghettos, the Loyalist para-militaries would be hot on their heels. The danger signals have already gone up. What remains in question is whether the militants of the Republican movement will recognise and in so doing begin to lay the basis for ending the retreat of the anti-imperialist movement. To accomplish this task, the resistance movement as a whole must understand that military rhetoric is no substitute for the involvement of the masses in what is, after all, the struggle for their own liberation.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Last week Jimmy Carter more or less assured himself of the Democratic nomination in the US presidential elections, with a runaway victory in the Pennsylvania primary. STEVE CLARK, a reporter for the American Trotskyist paper *The Militant*, probes behind the plastic smile to lay bare the real Jimmy Carter.

'There are a lot of things I wouldn't do to be elected', Jimmy Carter told a group of junior college students in Florida. 'I wouldn't tell a lie or make a misleading statement. I wouldn't betray your trust. I wouldn't ever do anything to avoid a controversial issue.' Carter is pegging his White House hopes on creating the impression that he is somehow a different breed of politician from the run-of-the-mill, deceitful variety that most Americans have come to expect in the aftermath of Watergate and the Vietnam War.

QUACKERY

Hollow promises and plastic personality, however, don't set Carter apart from his Democratic and potential Republican opponents. The results of recent primaries only prove that smiling Jimmy is the Democrats' most skilled practitioner of political quackery. The important questions are: Where does Carter stand on the issues? Whose interests does he speak for? For example, what does Carter have to say about unemployment? About cutbacks in health care, education, and other social services? About workers' declining buying power? Just what you might expect from one of the agribusiness's well-heeled peanut growers and distributors.

'The answer is simple', Carter wrote in a recent fund-raising appeal. 'We must live, as a nation, within our means. The solution will be painful. Any homemaker knows it's hard to cut back. But any business person can tell you what will happen if you don't.'

Carter opposes government-financed public works programmes to provide useful jobs for those out of work except 'for areas and groups afflicted by acute unemployment'. With eight million U.S. workers still jobless even by official figures — 7 to 8 per cent of the work force — the whole country should qualify!

As Georgia's governor, Carter was a champion of the 'open shop'. Georgia's so-called right-to-work legislation has helped make it a haven for corporations looking for low-paid non-unionised labour.

While Carter would be stingy with badly needed social programmes, he

would, however, leave the mammoth \$115 billion war budget 'about the same, maybe 5 per cent less', he told Jules Witcover of the *Washington Post*. 'But I would not ever let our country be vulnerable', Carter was quick to add, not wanting even his tiny reduction proposal to be misread. Carter might spend only \$109 billion!

As Carter's campaign speeches attest, he has set his sights on both the black vote and the anti-black vote. During the weeks before the Florida primary, he would eulogise a list of bicentennial heroes in his talks. Before black audiences, the list stretched from George Washington to Martin Luther King. But King's name was conspicuously absent from Carter's talks before white crowds.

This style of campaigning is nothing new for Carter. In his 1970 primary race for governor in Georgia, Carter ran a thinly-veiled anti-black campaign. 'I could win without getting a single Negro vote', Carter boasted at the time, and that is almost what he did. Carter's appeal was so racist that he won the primary while receiving only 5 per cent of the black votes cast.

As governor, Carter tried to polish up his national image as 'presidential material' by appointing a few blacks to office. Yet in 1972 this 'enlightened' governor publicly threatened to support a racist one-day school boycott to protest an Augusta, Georgia, desegregation plan unless the state legislature called on Congress to initiate a constitutional ban on busing.

BUSING

Today Carter claims that he no longer supports such a constitutional amendment, but he is still very much against busing. Carter hopes to cash in on mounting racist opposition to school desegregation, but he has plenty of competition from Henry Jackson, George Wallace, and even the 'progressive' Morris Udall.

Carter's election literature does not devote even one sentence to the discriminatory lay-offs facing women and national minorities today. His strongest statement is: 'I support the efforts of women to achieve equality through court actions when that is required.'



Carter is also an opponent of the right of women to choose for themselves whether or not to have an abortion. Although Carter says he opposes a constitutional amendment banning abortions, he told *Newsweek* last February that he 'might support a federal statute minimising abortion beyond the first thirteen weeks of pregnancy'.

In Carter's campaign literature, he claims to have publicly opposed the Vietnam War as early as 1971 (quite late at that). Yet in May 1972 Carter backed Nixon's murderous mining of Haiphong Harbor in North Vietnam, even saying that the decision was 'long delayed'. He supported Ford's last-ditch efforts a year ago to shore up the Thieu regime.

Current demonstrations by Palestinians on the occupied West Bank of the Jordan River have focused worldwide attention on Israel's expansionist aims and its brutal suppression of Arab protests against these policies. Yet Carter contends that it is 'not feasible' for Israel to return the land it seized during the June 1967 war from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan.

Carter's positions on issues could shift quickly in the White House, and the same is true of all the other candidates. The words of a Udall, a Jackson, a Reagan, or a Ford today — when they are angling to get elected — can mean little or nothing after January 1977.

Ultimately, these Democratic and Republican politicians share the same goal: preserving capitalism at all costs. From this standpoint, Carter stacks up neither better nor worse than the others.

Radical journalist held in Bangladesh

Dutch free lance journalist Peter Custers, who is well-known for his reports on Bangladesh, has been detained in Dacca Central Jail since 8 December. His health and safety are in jeopardy.

First news of his arrest was published in the 11 February edition of *De Groene Amsterdammer*, a Dutch weekly of which he is a correspondent. Custers also works for the daily *De Volkskrant* and, outside the Netherlands, he writes occasionally for *Le Monde* and periodicals in India, Hong Kong and the USA. His colleagues in Dacca and abroad know him as a trustworthy and conscientious journalist, well-informed on Bangladesh matters. His sharp analyses of the situation in Bangladesh are highly valued.

In the arrest warrant Peter Custers was accused of unspecified 'anti-state activities'. The fact that the Dacca authorities have never publicly admitted his detention nor put him on trial before one of the martial law tribunals — now in operation — suggests that they have not yet decided whether to expel Custers or proceed to a formal charge.

The fact that he is imprisoned in Dacca Central Jail is highly alarming. The inmates are in constant peril of their lives, especially because of the existence of gangs of criminal convicts protected

by the prison authorities; they not only have power over fellow-prisoners, but are also enlisted for the not very subtle interrogation methods of the police.

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SPANISH COPS IN MAY DAY REPRESSION



Demonstrators attempt to build barricade in Barcelona against police attacks

The massive mobilisation of the power of the Spanish state in a ruthless campaign of intimidation and repression prevented the Spanish working class from celebrating May Day in a truly massive fashion.

Despite the fact that the so-called 'liberal' Home Secretary, Fraga, promised months ago that the right to demonstrate would soon be granted, all requests for permission to demonstrate on May Day were curtly refused by the authorities. For the past two weeks the Spanish police have been on a state of alert to block any attempts to build illegal demonstrations, arresting dozens of militants in a drive to prevent the distribution of leaflets, putting up of posters, or holding of planning meetings.

Show of Force

On May Day itself the police organised a massive show of force in all the major cities, ruthlessly attacked demonstrators with tear gas, rubber bullets and baton charges, and made 1,000 arrests.



In Barcelona the main city square was occupied by a large force of police, including an armoured car, the city centre closed to traffic and groups of heavily armed riot police stationed throughout the city ready to move against any attempts to assemble.

Running Battles

Despite this show of force groups of demonstrators formed up across the city, engaging in running battles with the police until they were forced to disperse, and then re-forming. At one point as many as 3,000 demonstrators were able to assemble before police began their onslaught. This went on from 10 in the morning until the early evening.

The concentration of police forces in Barcelona was so intense that it weakened the repressive ability of the police elsewhere in Catalonia. In the industrial town of Sabadell more than 2,000 workers held a rally at which local workers' leaders appealed for the construction of a genuine, free trade union move-

ment and denounced the Government's phoney 'reform' schemes. Half this crowd then defied the local police and staged a march through the town under their very noses. In Tarrassa some 3,000 workers took part in a similar rally.

In Madrid several thousand workers and their families responded to the appeal of the Workers Commissions to attend a festival in one of the city's parks. Elsewhere the scenes of Barcelona were being repeated, with small groups of demonstrators gathering and being dispersed by police assaults.

In the Basque city of Vitoria, 5,000 workers attended a mass in

memory of the workers killed in the recent strikes there, called by the Strike Coordinating Committee. After the service local workers' leaders addressed the crowd on the significance of May Day, and a stone monument was laid on the spot where two workers were shot, inscribed 'from the workers and people of Vitoria to those fallen in defence of the rights of the working people'.

Demonstrations

Further demonstrations took place in all the major cities of Spain, and received the same repressive treatment.

WOMEN BATTLE WITH FRANCOISM

Interview with Maria, a militant of the LCR/ETA-VI (a sympathising organisation of the Fourth International) and an activist in the 'autonomous' women's movement in Barcelona

* What are the problems facing women today?

The position of women under the rule of fascist Spain still applies today in relation to sexuality, marriage and the family and in every aspect of women's lives. For instance, the husband, as head of the family, can make any and all decisions relating to his wife and children and the woman has no legal right to challenge this.

Furthermore, under the infamous 'social danger' law which has wide-ranging powers, thousands of women have been sentenced to prison or large fines for 'crimes' such as abortion, distribution of contraceptives, being gay, prostitutes, etc.

In addition to this, there are also many women political prisoners who have been tortured and imprisoned by the regime. The women's prisons are some of the worst in the country.

Finally, the present economic crisis, the massive increase in the cost of living, the crisis in building, health, schools, etc. particularly affect women, and in the *barrios* (local districts) they have been playing a very important role in the struggle.

* Can you say something about the women's movement and how it began?

Well, you must be clear that the women's movement is still in the process of being built. The Movement of Democratic Women (MDM), which has been in existence since 1966, is allied to the Communist Party and the positions of the Democratic Junta. The MDM has largely been concerned with organising women to take up the question of political

prisoners, or various democratic demands, but not on the question of women's oppression as a central point of departure.

Other groups include the 'autonomous' current in Barcelona (in which I am active). As it suggests, the 'autonomous' current is fighting for an open and independent women's movement — that is, open to all women's groups and tendencies within the women's movement generally and not tied to any single political party or mass organisation.

* Can you tell us a little more about the 'autonomous' current?

Yes, First of all we have organised ourselves in groups in the different localities and each sends representatives to a Co-ordinating Committee, which functions mainly as an information body and if necessary co-ordinates city-wide activities.

From the start we felt it was important to work in the neighbourhood committees, where the level of struggle is often very high, taking up demands such as nurseries, play areas, traffic lights, ambulance services and many other questions. Many of us have played an active role in fighting for these demands but also trying to take up wider questions of women's oppression.

For example, we have produced a pamphlet on contraception and abortion (the first of its kind in Spain) on the basis of a woman's right to control her own body, which has been widely distributed (over 5,000 copies), and we have argued that the demand for free contraception and abortion/a woman's right to choose be taken up by the local neighbourhood committees.

To what extent do the Workers Commissions recognise and take up demands relating to women?

This is a difficult problem, and we have to say quite clearly that the Workers Commissions have not taken up demands relating to women.

This does not mean to say that women have played no active role in the strike committees, assemblies, etc. On the contrary, more and more they are becoming active — especially, for example, in the very militant strike at INGRA, which has lasted now for more than 80 days and where women make up the majority of the workforce.

Women too have been playing a prominent role in the current Telefonica strike, both in the assemblies and in the mass demonstrations.

* Have you been able to integrate some of the demands about women into the overall mobilisations against the regime? For example, it seems important that women who have been in prison under the laws relating to abortion, contraception, etc. should be included in the general demand for amnesty?

Yes, this has been an important initiative. On 8 March, to commemorate International Women's Day, the Co-ordinating Committee of the various women's groups organised a demonstration to the women's prison in Barcelona taking up demands for amnesty for all women imprisoned under Franco's laws. The demonstration took place soon after the police murders in Vitoria, and when solidarity with the workers of Vitoria was raised some women left the demonstration.

On the days of action on 1 and 8 February, we agreed to intervene to take up various demands on women's rights. But the stewards of the Communist Party took our placards from us, using

the excuse that it wasn't the proper place to raise these demands and that it would split the demonstration. We must be sure this does not happen again.

allow elections to a Parliament in which political parties will not be recognised, with the most important workers organisations illegal, and in which an upper house based on the present cabal of die-hard Francoists will hold the power to block any measures they dislike.

The repression of the Spanish workers' right to celebrate May Day and affirm their own demands and unity is an insult to the entire international labour movement. It should be treated as such and galvanise workers everywhere into more determined efforts to assist our Spanish brothers and sisters to wipe out this rotten and repressive dictatorship once and for all.

* What are your immediate perspectives?

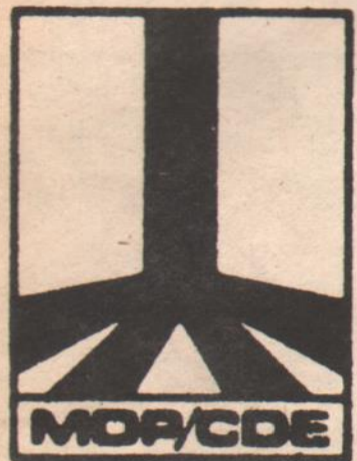
We have planned a demonstration for 2 May which is 'Mothers Day'. This will take place in front of Barcelona's maternity hospital. In this way we want to expose 'Mothers Day' as a festival which aims to reinforce women's inferiority, glorifying the role of the woman in the home while at the same time denying her the right to control the number of children she has, or the right not to have any children at all.

We are demanding the right to control our own bodies, and the freedom to use contraceptives. And since society does not give us the means to prevent pregnancy, we are campaigning for free abortion on demand.

In Spain now we use every means possible to make the demands of women's liberation public. From 30 May there will take place in Barcelona 'the Catalan days for women'. This conference is legal and brings together different currents — from the neighbourhood committees, from the university, from the 'autonomous' women's movement and from various social centres.

Each group is responsible for one particular theme: women and education; legislation; the family; sexuality; mass media; politics; etc. The 'autonomous' movement is responsible for the session on women and the mass media — magazines, television, films, etc. — and we hope to show it is possible for women to struggle against this systematic discrimination within the mass media.

For further information and messages of support, write to ANCHE, Via Layetana 39, Barcelona, Spain.



PORTUGAL

After the elections



The Portuguese elections gave a majority of votes to the parties of the working class. The Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the far left together won 53 per cent. This result shows more than ever that the working class did not suffer a decisive defeat on 25 November.

The results are a setback not only for the ruling class, but also for its parties — the Centre Democrats (CDS) and the Popular Democrats (PPD). The CDS, led by Freitas do Amaral, doubled its vote, but the bourgeoisie needed a CDS-PPD government in order to launch a thoroughgoing attack on the working class.

The capitalist press is now raising the cry for a PPD-SP government. But Soares knows that the SP vote represents a vote against any coalitions with the right. Moreover, any move to the right would increase the tensions within his already divided party, and also offer the CP and far left an opportunity to make further inroads into the SP's base in the working class.

It is clear that the crisis can only deepen. Not only has the ruling class failed to consolidate its own parties in government, but its hope of obtaining a strong military president, supported by all the major parties and the various factions of the Armed Forces Movement, looks more distant now. With the determination and militancy of the workers and peasants largely intact, and major struggles on the agenda, Portugal looks set for a hot summer and autumn.

The elections also show that a vanguard still exists, outside the grip of the reformist misleaders of the SP and CP, under the influence of the extreme left. Within this vanguard we can see that the influence of our comrades in the Internationalist Communist League (LCI) and Revolutionary Workers Party (PRT) is growing. Below we look at the election performance of the extreme left; and at that of the LCI, Portuguese section of the Fourth International, in particular.

Balance shifts inside far left

The political crisis that hit the extreme left after 25 November found a sharp reflection in the elections. The votes for the FSP (Popular Socialist Front) and the MES (Left Socialist Movement) fell sharply. These two organisations — together with the PRP (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat), which boycotted the elections — have failed to make any balance sheet of 25 November. The price they have paid is a decline in influence and a series of internal crises.

Without doubt the party that has gained the most ground on the far left has been the UDP (Popular Democratic Union). The LCI and the PRT also increased their vote.

The vote for the FSP declined by 24,319 to 41,842. Its losses appear to have been most severe in the working class districts — for example its vote fell by 3,155 in Setubal, 8,070 in Lisbon and 2,181 in Oporto. Having lost many members after November, the FSP election campaign limited itself to television broadcasts and a few meetings.

However the biggest loser was, without doubt, the MES. Its total dropped by just over 26,000 — falling by 6,011 in Oporto, 3,310 in Coimbra, 3,077 in Santarem and 5,779 in Lisbon.

The campaign slogan of the MES called for 'unity of the people against fascism, for popular power', in order to block the 'advance of fascism'. At a time when the masses have been increasingly turning to and building their own organisations, as can be seen by the increase in unionisation over the past months, the MES has

been calling for anti-fascist committees.

Its failure to understand the present political situation is underlined by its inability to answer a key question of the campaign — that of



Otelo de Carvalho—PRP want him to stand for president

what government should be called for by the workers.

For the ultra-lefts of the PRP all these questions are irrelevant. The lesson they have drawn from the events of last November is that they 'made the call for the armed insurrection too late'. Today 'it is for the armed insurrection that we continue to struggle'.

They considered that the bourgeoisie was using the elections to prepare the return of fascism; and besides, the working class by voting for the SP and CP would not only add to its reformist illusions, but would also divide itself! Hence the PRP decided to have nothing to do with the elections.

However, it sees no contradiction between this position and also call-

ing for Otelo de Carvalho or another figure from Copcon to stand in the presidential elections in late June or early July.

The UDP, the only Maoist group not to concentrate on the 'social fascist' CP, made important gains. As in the Constituent Assembly elections, it secured the election of one deputy as a result of the 31,330 votes it won in Lisbon, while in Setubal it took 7.81 per cent of the vote. Despite the fact that it made an abstract call for 'an anti-fascist and popular government', it also offered concrete solutions to the problems faced by the working class and other oppressed layers.

It is estimated that the UDP held over 50 public meetings every day, including one of 10,000 in Lisbon and another of 4,000 in Oporto. Overall its vote rose to 91,064, which shows an increase of just over 14,000 on the previous combined total of the UDP and the FEC(ml) last April. Clearly the consistent work that the UDP has been doing in the workers movement, plus the fact that it distanced itself from the Revolutionary United Front (FUR), won it votes — particularly from the other centrist groups.

For the LCI the campaign extended its national influence. Even in the north, bastion of the conservative CDS and stamping ground of the fascist ELP, it won votes: 647 in Braga, for example, 865 in Vila Real, and 581 in Viana Do Castelo.

Increased

Standing in every district, the LCI vote rose to 16,186; and when this is added to the 5,144 of the PRT, who supported the LCI last year, then the overall increase in the Trotskyist vote was 10,541. In both Oporto and Coimbra the combined LCI-PRT vote exceeded that of both the FSP and the MES, while in Lisbon the Trotskyist vote increased by over 500.

Throughout the campaign only the LCI called for an SP-CP government based on a democratic con-

gress of the trade unions and workers commissions and breaking with the presidential pact. Today, as both the SP and CP ignore the wishes of the workers and peasants by refusing to form a new government, the LCI has intensified this call.

When the masses voted for the SP and CP, they did so in order to defend the gains of the revolution — the gains that have been won through the action of the masses. It was only after the workers took to the streets against the Spínola coup of 11 March 1975 that the bulk of the nationalisations occurred; and the Government only conceded the wage demands of the building workers

The LCI's campaign

In the course of the election campaign the LCI more and more showed itself to be an organisation making rapid progress. The fundamental self-criticism of its participation in the Revolutionary United Front (FUR) made at its special congress was applied during the campaign in a way which both influenced numerous militants of the extreme left and also attracted towards the LCI those reformists critical of their own leadership.

For the LCI the campaign was a success which could not be reflected in the election results. The numerous public meetings (more than 200) that took place throughout the country all attracted a good response — which from this point of view put the LCI immediately after the UDP, and well before the MES.

The audiences at these meetings were very attentive to the coherent programme of the LCI, centred around unity of the working class. Its denunciation of the pact between the Revolutionary Council and the major political parties, and the bonapartist projects of the Revolutionary Council (which cost the LCI a four day suspension of its electoral rights) found a growing sympathy.

Moreover its agitation for a government of the SP and CP responsible to a democratic congress of the trade unions and workers commissions homed in on the central question of these elections.

last November when they found themselves locked in the Constituent Assembly for two days.

The LCI demands that Soares and Cunhal carry out the wishes of the workers and peasants by immediately forming a government — based not on the bourgeois state and the presidential pact, but on the mobilisations of the masses and a democratic congress of all trade unions and workers commissions including those led by the Socialist Party. Such a national congress could really work out a plan of action to defend the gains of the Portuguese revolution.

Ric Sissons

In Gondomar, a working class suburb of Oporto, the LCI campaign provoked a lively discussion within the local section of the CP and forced a local CP leader to take a public position — he was then immediately expelled for opposing the pact.

The following week the comrades of the LCI organised a meeting in Gondomar's school, attended by more than 100 workers. Among those who came to participate in the discussion were the whole of the local CP, with their former leader.

In Braga, Setubal, Pombal, Covilha, Coimbra, Evora, Beja, Leiria — to mention only the most important — the LCI campaign had the same impact, and met with the same response. In Oporto and Lisbon more than 1,000 people attended the LCI's meetings.

An important step forward has been taken. The recomposition of the extreme left currently taking place will of necessity allow thousands of Portuguese workers to take up their responsibilities towards the whole working class through regrouping in a revolutionary party capable of leading them to victory.

COMRADE MARK CALDOW, a leading member of Cambridge International Socialists, died in a road accident last month. The loss of his political abilities is a great one, not only for IS but for the revolutionary movement as a whole.
—CAMBRIDGE IMG

Watch out - there's a Goodman about

The huge bulk of Lord Goodman has thrown a heavy shadow over working class expectations that this Government would get rid of pay-beds in the National Health Service.

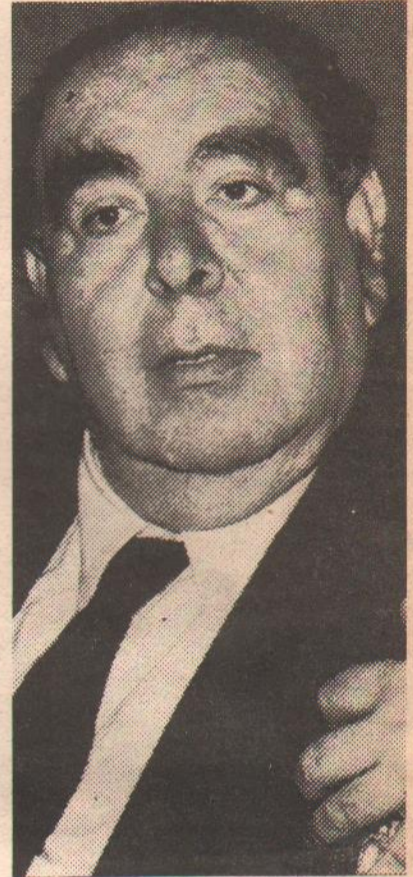
Goodman was the go-between appointed by the Labour Government to deal with the consultants. Just how impartial was his position was revealed in a recent letter in *The Times*, where he declared that he had won for the doctors 'a victory for private practice'. The consultants had achieved 'a massive compromise'.

The issue has leapt back into the news with a fresh wave of industrial action launched by the consultants, to keep pay-beds in the NHS and fight against any restriction on private medicine outside. All this has been accompanied by massive full page advertisements in the daily press. Labour's retreat has only encouraged them to demand further concessions.

Under Goodman's new proposals, only 1,000 of the 4,444 pay-beds in the NHS will be phased out in the near future. Yet when ancillary workers took blacking action against pay-beds in 1974, their struggle was bought off by promises that the Labour Government would deal with them through Parliament.

Castle's initial proposals were a watered down version of what they expected, but now even these limited measures will not be implemented. Ancillary workers feel they have been conned, which is why workers at the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading went so quickly into action a fortnight ago.

The consultants at the hospital went on a two day strike in defence of pay-beds. But the unions organising the ancillary workers responded by putting a ban on private patients and refusing meals to doctors taking action. Confronted by this 'tit for tat' opposition, most of the doctors went back to work with-



in hours - the first battle in the new round of pay bed disputes had been won by the labour movement.

Support for the fight to get rid of private practice is growing through the campaign to implement the policy adopted by the 1975 Labour Party Conference - for the abolition of pay-beds inside and outside the NHS. The Royal Berkshire workers have shown the essential accompaniment to that campaign - action in the hospitals!

NO EASING UP

A third of our time is up. But a third of our target isn't. That's the disappointing story this week in our fight for £1,500 a quarter for our Fighting Fund.

Of course, it's easy to get demoralised as the 'left' leaders do nothing to counter the anti-working class schemes hatched up by Healey and Jones. But as the General Strike showed 50 years ago, reliance on the 'lefts' is fatal. That's why *Red Weekly* fights for independent working class action to defeat the policies of Callaghan-Healey-Jones and oust them from their positions of leadership in the labour movement. But we can only wage that fight effectively with your help.

And remember - the fight isn't confined to Britain. Imperialism has already suffered grave setbacks in Vietnam and Angola. Now southern Europe is ready to explode as workers in Spain, Portugal and Italy begin to flex their muscles. The repercussions will certainly be felt in Britain. But only *Red Weekly*, as part of the Fourth International, can drive the lessons of these struggles home in developing the working class offensive right across Europe.

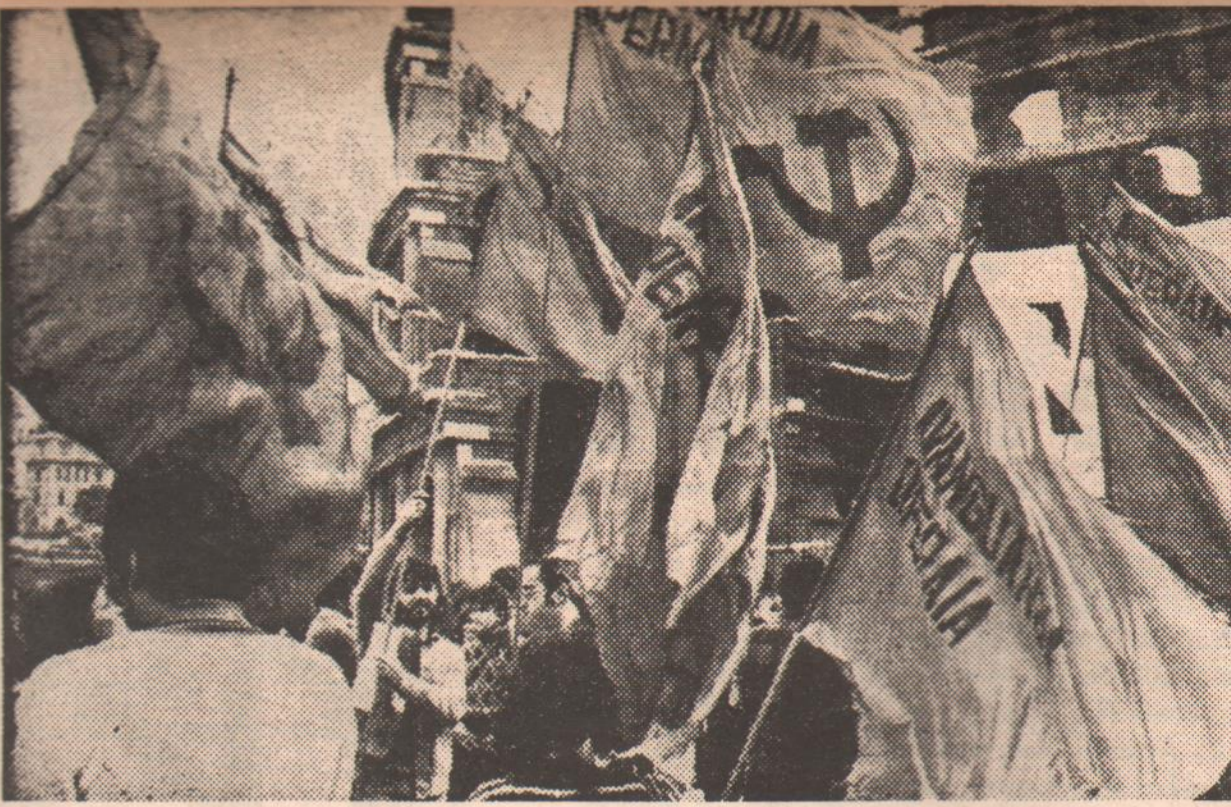
You need *Red Weekly*. And we're not ashamed to ask you to demonstrate your appreciation with hard cash - the only thing that pays the ever-increasing bills with which we're faced. To give you one example: foreign producers of newsprint recently raised their prices by 10 per cent. But the entire value of that increase has already been wiped out by the fall in sterling, and any minute now they'll be back for more.

Our thanks this week to: Scottish reader, £15; West London IMG, £10; *Red Weekly* supporter, £10; Hull IMG, £5.20; Anon, £3; Cambridge IMG, £1.90; Durham IMG, £1; J.K., £1. That makes a total so far of £460.41. But there's still a long way to go. Help to make it shorter by posting your contribution now, to: *Red Weekly* Fighting Fund, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.



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ITALY IN CRISIS

May Day in Italy saw another display of the power of the working class. But it saw also the distress signal of a tottering political structure. The dissolution of parliament, as hundreds of thousands of workers demonstrated in the streets, meant the end of the minority Christian Democrat administration - the 38th government in 33 years.

The General Election to be held next month will be the most critical since the end of the last war. The Christian Democrats find themselves in complete disarray. Unemployment stands at seven per cent. Inflation is running at over 20 per cent, the highest in any major industrial country.

The lira has dropped in value even faster than the pound (by one third since January). This has sparked off a wave of capital smuggling from the country that now exceeds more than £25m a day.

The Christian Democrat administration has become associated with inefficiency and graft. Various scandals link the party with the Mafia, CIA financing, and pay-offs from Lockheed.

The current crisis inside the Christian Democrats is so intense, in fact, that TV chiefs were unwilling to screen coverage of their recent conference. It was thought that the sight of the delegates heckling, interrupting and occasionally breaking into scuffles would only further discredit the Government.

The fascists, meanwhile, have taken

THE SILENT

Cont. from front page

tional Assembly on Unemployment in March as a day of action against unemployment.

But there is an alternative - one of fighting opposition to the Government's policies. South Wales miners have slapped in a claim for 33 per cent. A series of strikes have rocked British Leyland. A third of the Scottish TUC Conference voted against Jack Jones for a class struggle fight against Labour's Tory policies.

The conferences of both the National Union of Journalists and the National Union of Students have voted to support action on 26 May.

In the final weeks leading up to 26 May the task before militants is clear: to fight for industrial action to demand that the TUC breaks with the Government's anti-working class policies.

NO DEAL WITH HEALEY - ALL OUT 26 MAY!

advantage of the impotence of the traditional ruling class parties to launch a further series of provocations and arson. Many of the factories and bus depots have been guarded by workers defence squads to nip outrages in the bud. All the Moro Government did was to bleat hopelessly about ending political violence.

The election has been carefully timed to side-step two big problems for the Italian ruling class. First the national wage agreements - which last for three years - had to be settled beforehand. The final agreement goes to the rank-and-file for ratification this week, rushed through by the trade union bureaucrats to stem the run on the lira.

Abortion

The election also means that the long-awaited referendum on abortion will be postponed, perhaps indefinitely, because of the rule that referenda may not be held in election years.

The Communist Party (PCI) has found both issues acutely embarrassing. The wage agreements were due to be concluded at the end of last year, but the PCI held back because....the working class was too strong! Major concessions forced from the employers through struggle would have damaged the CP's electoral project of 'respectability'.

On the abortion question, in pursuit of the 'historic compromise' between the Christian Democrats and the PCI, both parties put forward a similar position - abortion would no longer be considered a crime, and would be allowed in some cases.

The far left, the Socialists, the non-parliamentary Radicals, and the women's movement, however, put forward the demand for free abortion on demand. This made the PCI very vulnerable on its left flank, since it was estimated that 65 per cent of the population supported such a policy. Indeed, the PCI women's organisation came out in public disagreement with the party leadership on the issue.

The election comes only after months of support given by the Communist deputies in parliament to ensure the survival of the Moro Government. Indeed, earlier this year PCI trade union leaders threatened to call a general strike against any attempt to dissolve parliament.

But now the PCI are stressing the fact that similar class collaboration in the future will greatly depend on the inclusion of the CP in the Government.

The massively increased vote for the CP in the regional elections last June has given the CP an impressive pistol to

hold at the heads of its 'friends' in the big bourgeoisie. Prodding the latter in the other direction, however, is the near hysterical reaction of the ruling class in the United States, who threaten their European colleagues with the withdrawal of the entire US military presence if 'Euro-Communism' (as Kissinger terms it) is allowed to grow from the Italian situation.

Kissinger's statement reflects the dilemma in which the US finds itself: unable to make a direct military intervention into Italy, because of the strength of the working class; and equally incapable for the same reason of pulling off a coup utilising the extreme right wing in the state apparatus with the support of the Italian fascists of the MSI.

The next election will probably give a majority of deputies to the workers parties - the Socialists and the PCI. But the PCI will fight tooth and nail against the formation of such a Government, because it would greatly raise the combativity and class consciousness of the Italian workers to the extent where they would burst through the policies of managing capitalism in Italy which form the backbone of its programme.

Far left

The far left in Italy, if they do not succumb to the tremendous pressure exerted by the PCI, can build greatly in this period. In particular, a struggle for a government that excludes all representatives of the bourgeoisie and bases itself on an anti-capitalist programme expressing the struggle of the masses can reach out to the multi-millioned ranks of the Communist and Socialist party workers who still retain illusions in their leaders.

The struggle for such a government will entail a fight for a clear programme of action which can defend the standard of living of the Italian workers, impose workers control over production, and bring about a generalised reduction in the work week without loss of pay to deal with unemployment. It also means battling against any attempt to call off the mass struggles during the period of elections.

The Italian Trotskyists of the GCR will be fighting for a slate of the entire far left in the elections which clearly takes up the central concerns of the Italian working class with the aim of providing an alternative leadership to those workers who are beginning to look beyond the treacherous schemes of the PCI leadership.