

RED WEEKLY

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JEREMY THORPE

JEREMY THORPE has been hounded out of the leadership of the Liberal Party after one of the most sustained and vicious campaigns ever waged by the gutter press.

We hold no brief for Thorpe. He is a prominent member of the ruling class, and the Liberal Party likewise fights openly for the interests of capitalism.

Nevertheless, the meaning of the attack on Thorpe is that the capitalists are clearing the decks for an all-out assault on the working class. They need to rebuild a strong Tory Party which can stick the knife in once Labour has softened up the workers movement sufficiently.

The Liberal Party is an obstacle to this plan, which must be disposed of however brutally.

Furthermore, the grounds for the campaign against Thorpe—that he might once have had a homosexual relationship—are a danger signal for the working class. Such a theme can and will be used to split the workers movement. We have to spell out that we defend absolutely the right to choose one's sexual orientation without discrimination.

For consider: if that's what they'll do to one of their own, what won't they do to the working class?

FIGHT THE WAGE-CUTTERS!



Photo: CHRIS DAVIES (Report)

FASCIST CREST TO TORY WAVE

A wave of Tory victories in the local elections provided a guide to where the anti-working class policies of this Government will lead at the next General Election.

But there were more sinister undercurrents. In Leicester the National Front polled 43,700 votes — 18.54 per cent of the total cast, with their share in one ward rising as high as 30.7 per cent. In Bradford the NF also made big gains with a total vote of 9,399 — nearly four times the total fascist vote last year. And in Blackburn the National Party, a recent split from the NF, actually succeeded in winning two council seats.

These candidates achieved their success on an openly racist ticket, attacking immigrants as the cause of unemployment and cuts and calling for repatriation.

Last week also saw a vicious campaign in the 'popular' press against a homeless Asian family. Their 'crime' was to be temporarily housed by the council in the supposed luxury of an airport hotel.

If this racist revival in the press gave a boost to the fascist vote, it did its job well. But those whom we really have to thank for the fascist gains are even more familiar and a lot more dangerous.

The present Labour Government and TUC leaders, whose present policies run from import controls to 'protect British against foreign goods', to immigration controls and limited work permits to 'protect British jobs', have not only kept alive all the racist prejudices that surface on these occasions, but have increased them by calling for even tighter controls.

The fascist right has now cashed in with a vengeance. What is more, it does not intend to let any of its new-found support slip, but plans more activities, particularly in areas such as Bradford, where the large immigrant communities can be used as targets for racist attacks.

But there has been another response developing to both Labour's policies and the right-wing offensive. It took shape in Bradford last month when a huge counter-demonstration of immigrant and left organisations confronted the NF's attempt to march through the immigrant communities.

When the NF began to gain ground a few years ago, they suffered a severe jolt backwards as the counter-demonstrations of the left pinned the fascist label firmly on their backs. Despite a rapid turn towards populist rhetoric to get rid of the tag and live down the criminal fascist past of their leaders, the NF is now increasingly turning again towards provocations and physical violence to drive home the same old message.

When it parades these colours by invading the immigrant communities, these communities must be defended as they were last month in Bradford. They must be defended, too, against the police, who also showed their true colours in their over-zealous protection of the fascists and whose racist brutality is no stranger to the black communities.

At the same time the Labour and TUC leaders, whose policies are clearly reinforcing racism and feeding the support of the far right, must not be allowed off the hook. Every trade unionist and member of the labour movement has a responsibility to challenge these policies now, which have all too soon born pernicious and dangerous results.

A BATTLE IS GOING ON THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. It is taking place at every union conference and in every trades council, trade union and Labour Party branch. It is being fought out on the district committees and in the shop stewards committees.

It is a battle between those who support the the Government's policies and those who — at least in words — oppose them.

The last few days have seen the Transport & General Workers Union executive unanimously endorsing the TUC and Government's new round of wage cutting. With the masterly air of a feudal baron presiding over his fief, Jack Jones has swung his 'lefts' into line.

Meanwhile, Denis Healey was receiving a standing ovation at the annual conference of the clerical workers' union, APEX.

BUT...the annual conferences of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs, the Technical and Supervisory Section of the Engineering Union and the Civil and Public Services Association have all overwhelmingly rejected the new pay deal.

More is involved than a battle of words — the jobs, social services and living standards of the working class are at stake. South Wales miners have contemptuously rejected Healey's proposals and demanded £100 a week. Scottish, Yorkshire and Lancashire miners have supported them.

But one-time 'left' Lawrence Daly says that the Government's policy will be carried at the miners annual conference in July, while right-wingers are threatening a possible split in the NUM if the union goes against the deal.

In the engineering union an equally savage fight is taking place. With Scanlon throwing his weight behind Healey and Callaghan, the issue has been sharply posed to the supporters of the Broad Left: with the 'left' bureaucracy for paper unity, or united action against the cuts and unemployment.

If the right is gaining the upper hand in the trade unions and the Callaghan/Healey leadership of the Government feels more secure, this is for two simple reasons:

1. The right wing knows what it is doing. Every capitulation, every betrayal is justified by a single phrase: to do otherwise is to bring down this Labour Government and return to the never-ending struggle suffered under the Tories.

2. The left bureaucracy, where it has not

actually gone over to the right, has not raised a finger to mobilise action against the policies of the Government. Their inaction simply serves to demoralise their supporters. This was reflected at the ASTMS conference, where despite overwhelming rejection of the pay deal, the right emerged with a small overall majority on the executive.

BUT THERE IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE LINE OF THE RIGHT IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

It is possible to fight for more jobs, better wages and social services and maintain a Labour Government, by demanding the removal of

those leaders responsible for the present anti-working class policies of the Labour Government and the replacement of their supporters at every level of the labour movement.

In every union and Labour Party branch, opposition to the policies of the Labour Government exists. The vast majority of Constituency Labour Parties are opposed on paper to Healey and Callaghan's policies. In some unions the opposition forms a majority.

Bringing these forces together in a common movement of class struggle action could put paid to Labour's Tory policies and hasten the defeat of the right wing.



ASTMS delegates vote to reject pay deal—but leaders refuse to organise fight. See conference report, page 4

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

ALL OUT ON 26 MAY

YOUR NEXT WAGE CUT

The Government and the TUC have agreed to cut your wages. That is the meaning of the 4½ per cent plus tax cuts deal concluded last week.

A year ago, Harold Wilson predicted a one per cent fall in living standards over the coming year. Under the £6 limit they have already fallen by 5 per cent.

Chancellor Healey is now predicting a 1-2 per cent drop in real incomes over the next 18 months. Multiply that by five, and you get a better idea of what your standard of living won't be in another 18 months.

Healey has got all he wanted. When he originally floated the idea of 3 per cent plus tax cuts in his Budget speech, what he was really aiming at was an increase in average earnings of 6-6½ per cent when wage drift was taken into account - Treasury estimates were based on this.

SHUT OUT

On paper, the TUC pushed the first figure up by 2 per cent - but at the cost of shutting all the back doors by which workers might have tried to increase their earnings:

1. The £6 increase and next year's 4½ per cent will not be consolidated into basic rates. Yet it is the basic rate on which all premium and overtime payments are based. Loss of earnings on such payments alone will total between 1 and 2 per cent.

2. There is no provision for productivity deals. We don't want them anyway, but it was productivity dealing which drove a coach and horses through the pre-1970 incomes policies.

3. Skilled workers who have seen their differentials eroded have no loophole by which to increase their earnings.

4. With the introduction of the £6 limit some groups of workers, like the railway workers and car workers at Rover Solihull, were able to get 'transitional agreements' allowing them to gain more than the £6. In year two of the pay policy these are ruled out.

5. Equal pay deals were excepted from the £6 limit, but the Treasury calculates that their effects on wage drift have been absorbed.

All in all, in the year to July 1976 the effect of the £6 limit has been to cut the rate of wage increases to between 13-15 per cent. But even in March prices were running at a year on year rate of 20 per cent.

FIDDLE

This is Healey's sleight of hand. People are suffering the increase in prices before they receive any increase in wages. So far nearly seven million workers have received the £6 - but it's still to come for many more.

Similarly, in the period December 1976 to December 1977 Healey aims to reduce the annual rate of inflation to 5-6 per cent. But even

if all workers were getting an average 6 per cent increase in earnings, this would still mean a wage cut because the effects of inflation are suffered now, not after a pay increase is granted.

But the biggest fraud in the scheme cooked up between the Government and the trade union bureaucracy is the so-called 'fight against inflation'.

Over the last two months alone, the value of the pound has fallen by ten per cent on foreign exchange markets. The slumping value of the pound has meant an immediate increase of two per cent in food prices.

But when the general rise in commodity prices is taken into account, the situation is even worse. Commodity prices are one third higher than this time last year. In just over a month, even measured in dollars, they have gone up by about 7 per cent.



'For my next fraud.....'

Last week coffee and tin reached all time record levels on the London market, with cocoa coming within a hair's breadth of its record 1974 level. Copper, lead and zinc prices are also soaring (see graphs). The impact of the falling value of the pound and rising commodity prices will be at least a 4 per cent increase in prices in the next year.

Add that to the fact that the employers will add on two per cent to prices just to finance the pay deal, and that Healey's changes in indirect taxation in the budget added 1 per cent to the cost of living and, even before 'normal' increases in prices are taken into account, we have 7 per cent inflation compared with a 6 per cent wage deal.

But that's not all! The bosses have made it clear that they want yet higher prices to produce bigger profits - they're looking for at least a 50 per cent increase in profits - allegedly to finance investment in industry. At the moment, though, attempts to boost production are being 'financed' by productivity drives on existing plant, putting more workers on the dole - a policy being actively encouraged by the Government's industrial strategy and the National Enterprise Board.

Never mind, though, higher prices mean bigger profits, and Call-

aghan and Healey will agree. But more price increases still are in the pipeline, because Britain at the moment obtains key foodstuffs at over 12 per cent below Common Market price levels. This agreement will be phased out after June, although no time scale has been fixed as yet.

WORSE OFF

And just in case you forgot the Budget and Healey's other pronouncements, the Government is committed to reducing the subsidy elements in food, nationalised industry prices, and rents. Most City forecasters reckon that the annual rate of inflation will still be around 13 per cent at the end of this year and 8.5 per cent at the end of 1977. So much for Healey's five per cent increase.

Furthermore, those figures are not based on the real increase in the cost of living for the ordinary person on the Clapham omnibus, but on global figures which include all sorts of luxuries with relatively stable prices that never enter into the realm of working class purchasing power.

The Government and the trade union bureaucracy are putting over on the working class one of the biggest frauds ever committed. Every worker will be worse off collectively as a result of the social service cuts, and unemployment is likely to remain over a million and increase to two million by 1980.

That is the price working people are paying for the treachery of the Labour Government they elected, the collaboration of the traitorous bureaucracy of the TUC, and the miserable capitulation of the 'lefts' in the unions and Parliament.

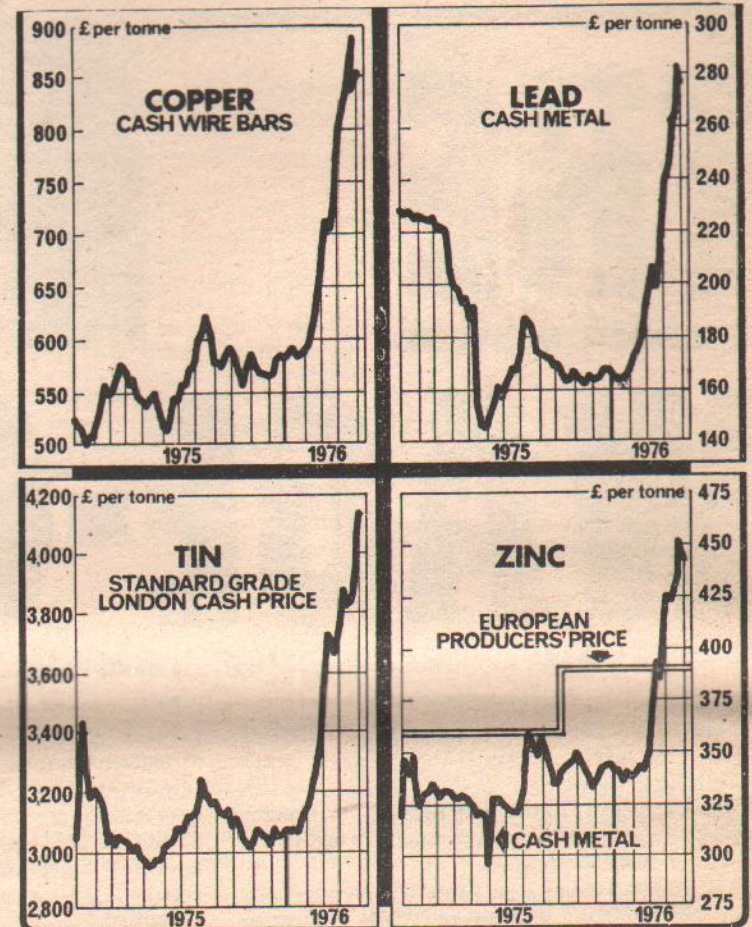
Mick Gosling

Teachers organise

A 'sign-in' of unemployed teachers is to be organised by the Inner London Teachers Association on 26 May. It will take place at the National Union of Teachers headquarters, Hamilton House, between 5.30 and 7.30 pm.

The decision was taken by the Finance and General Purposes Committee of ILTA, which also adopted an amendment moved by supporters of the Socialist Teachers Conference calling upon the NUT Executive to endorse ILTA being represented on the 26 May demonstration by the 80-strong Divisional Council and where possible by one person for each of the 2,000 schools in the division.

North London Teachers Association also moved that ILTA negotiate with the Inner London Education Authority to allow time off so that all London teachers could participate in the demonstration. This resolution was also passed overwhelmingly, and it was expected that it would be endorsed along with the others by the ILTA Council at its meeting on 11 May.



The explosion in commodity prices will alone add four per cent to prices.

ENGINEERS

This month the policy-making body of the AUEW (Engineering Section) meets in Scarborough to discuss the latest TUC-Government deal on wage restraint and other matters.

Not so long ago the AUEW was regarded in many quarters as the pillar of opposition to the Tories. But in the last year it has taken a major shift to the right, and the National Committee is likely to vote support for the Healey deal.

Starting with his withdrawal of the AUEW resolution on the 'social contract' at the 1974 TUC, Scanlon has slowly but surely taken the union along the path traced out by right-wing general secretary John Boyd. He has played a leading role on the TUC General Council in working out the details of the new sell-out, he has openly called for cuts in public spending, and in the recent tool-makers' strikes at British Leyland he intervened directly to order a return to work.

Scanlon's move to the right has been made possible, however, by the silence of the Broad Left on all the key issues facing the rank-and-file. This alliance of the Communist Party and Labour 'lefts' has breathed hardly a word of criticism of Scanlon's capitulation. At no level of the union, apart from a bit of resolution mongering, has the Broad Left even att-

empted to organise any opposition to the Executive and Scanlon.

The result is clear to see. Living standards have fallen, redundancies have been imposed without any major opposition, the union leadership has collaborated with employers like British Leyland to push through speed-up and rationalisation, amalgamation of the four sections of the AUEW seems as far away as ever, and the union is still lumbered with the postal ballot.

SHODDY

The lack of any fight back by the Broad Left has also allowed the right wing to recapture a majority on the Executive as well as winning important local positions. In the Midlands, for example, the right made a clean sweep of every single post up for re-election in the March ballot.

The failure of the Communist Party even to acknowledge the rightward swing of officials like Bob Wright and Scanlon, despite their part in such shoddy deals as the Chrysler closure and the British Leyland strikes, has left the union membership wide open to the influence of the TUC, the Labour Government and the press barons.

IN FOCUS

The Communist Party and 26 May

Not so long ago Hugh Scanlon was declaring his absolute and complete support for the Government's economic strategy in the wake of Chancellor Healey's slashing attacks on social spending. Last Wednesday he got the chance to prove it. Along with 24 other members of the TUC General Council, he voted for Phase Two of the Government's pay deal. Last year the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers executive opposed wage restraint.

No less significant was the fact that Ray Buckton, leader of the drivers' union ASLEF and star turn at the National Assembly on Unemployment, also voted for the deal. This was not mentioned in the Communist Party's paper, the Morning Star. Equally the 'lefts' in Parliament raised not a murmur of protest when Healey crowed over his triumph in the House of Commons. Meanwhile Tony Benn was informing the delegate conference of the Lancashire miners of his unqualified support for the next round of wage cuts.

The complete and utter capitulation of the 'lefts' in the face of the new Healey deal has also exposed the Communist Party's refusal to break from the left bureaucracy and wage a campaign for independent class action in defence of jobs, wages and living standards. With only two weeks left till the 26 May day of action on unemployment, the central proposal coming from the 27 March National Assembly on Unemployment, the CP is not making any sustained campaign for strikes or other centralised action in the Morning Star. And with isolated exceptions, such as the decision of London building workers to strike on the day, there are no major signs of a campaign on the ground.

Where are they now?

In areas like Sheffield, the Communist Party has attempted to block resolutions to set up action committees to campaign for 26 May — a proposal formally passed by the Assembly. Every militant who wants to fight Labour's attacks and the class collaboration of the TUC must ask themselves why this is so. The CP promised 26 May on the promise of support from sections of the left trade union bureaucracy. But where are these lefts now? Backing the pay deal, for the most part.

In addition, those militants who are prepared to take action are increasingly reluctant to take part in one day strikes which have no political direction other than to provide background crowd scenes for the antics of these self-same useless lefts. In such a situation the Communist Party has a clear choice: to scurry further to the right in pursuit of the 'lefts', or to join in action with the revolutionary left. That is something the CP stumbled into at the Scottish TUC when Jack Jones, spoiling for a fight on incomes policy, chose as his target the resolution from Stirling Trades Council, which clearly outlined a class struggle alternative to collaboration with Callaghan and Healey. The CP voted for the resolution — having been put on the spot by the right!

On 26 May the CP leadership has made an obvious choice. It will pull off the odd strike to keep its credibility with its supporters. But in most areas it will strenuously oppose anything not rigidly in its control. It will not challenge the bureaucracy at any level.

But it would be wrong to conclude from the manoeuvrings of the CP and the 'lefts' that no challenge can be made to incomes policy and mass unemployment. The annual conferences of three white collar unions — the Civil and Public Services Association, the Technical and Supervisory Section of the AUEW, and the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs — have all rejected the deal. Welsh, Scottish and Yorkshire miners are up in arms over it. Even the traditional non-militant Lancashire region of the NUM voted 104-100 against it. The National Union of Seamen's conference, while accepting incomes policy by 34 to 28, then put in for a 50 per cent pay rise!

Basic demands

It is in this deeply contradictory situation that revolutionary socialists must intervene in an attempt to draw together all the partial and limited movements of opposition to the Government's policy and the TUC's class collaboration. This means turning 26 May from a simple protest against unemployment into part of a continuing campaign against all the Government's policies on jobs, wages and social services. Red Weekly urges its supporters to argue for local public rallies to prepare the fight around four basic demands:

- No to the incomes policy.
- The TUC to break with the Labour Government's policies.
- Restoration of all cuts in social spending. Rejection of the White Paper on public expenditure.
- A programme of nationalisation and public works sufficient to guarantee the right to work and meet social need.

In the build up to 26 May and beyond, militants should be committing all possible district committees, trades councils, trade union and Labour Party branches to organise action committees and support for national lobbies of the TUC special conference on 16 June in London and the TUC's annual congress on 6 September in Brighton.

The summer months will see bitter fights at many union conferences over the policies being pursued by the Government and the TUC. Militants must see to it that they can give a clear line of march to all those breaking with the Government's policies.

Red Weekly urges its supporters to take part in all local actions and meetings organised for 26 May. London and Home Counties supporters should mobilise for the demonstration called by the London Confederation and London Co-op Political Committee, which assembles at Tower Hill at 1pm to march and lobby Parliament.



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

DEFEND THESE MARCHERS!

On Friday 21 May one of the biggest political trials ever to take place in Britain opens in North West London. The 44 Right-to-Work supporters arrested when the police launched a vicious assault on their march from Manchester to London come up in court.

Three separate assaults took place in the space of a few hundred yards when the marchers came off the Hendon flyover site at Staples Corner. An independent trade union enquiry into the police assault has since been set up by Barnet Trades Council.

John Phillips, president of the Trades Council, reports that the enquiry has won widespread support

from the local trade union movement, including from the shop stewards committee on the Staples Corner site and that at Smith's Industries, where another of the assaults took place. Forty three statements from independent witnesses have now been obtained, as well as those from the marchers themselves.

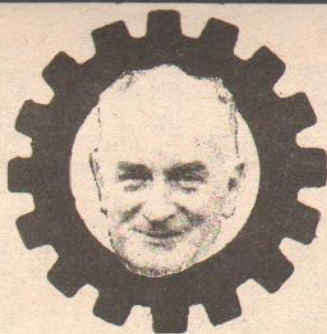
The enquiry members include Syd Bidwell MP, Brian Stanley (Labour Party NEC member and general secretary of the Post Office Engineering Union), Vincent Flynn (ex-general secretary of the printing union, SOGAT), Jack Morrish (general secretary, Customs and Excise Union), Jack Collins

(National Union of Mineworkers Executive), Mike Quinn (convenor, CAV Simms), and Dolly Seeley (convenor, Patent Die Castings, Park Royal).

Supporters of Red Weekly should pass resolutions through their trade union and Labour Party branches calling for support for the workers enquiry into what happened at Staples Corner, and donating funds to: Defence Fund, Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Trade union banners should be taken along to the picket of Hendon Magistrates Court, The Hyde, London NW9 on Friday 21 May. The picket starts at 9.30 am.

BY THE RIGHT, QUICK MARCH



In this situation the National Committee is unlikely to feel inclined to rock the boat. While militants should demand that their delegates vote against the Healey package and for the Broad Left resolutions (calling for a £29-a-week across the board national claim, a £70-a-week national minimum wage in engineering, immediate 35-hour week without loss of pay, longer holidays, total opposition to incomes policy, etc.), they should not expect much in this direction.

Even if the Broad Left resolutions are carried, the right now has sufficient hold of the union machinery to block any attempt to implement such policies. And the Broad Left has shown itself incapable of mobilising the rank-and-file independently of the union officials. A resolution passed at last year's National Committee calling for industrial action against unemployment has been totally ignored and forgotten.

In any case, none of these resolutions contain the type of demands necessary to unite the working class in a successful offensive against the Labour Government's anti-working class policies. No specific measures — such as work-sharing with no loss

of pay, the opening of the employers' books, and nationalisation under workers control of firms creating redundancies — are advanced to fight unemployment. Nor do they attempt to fight for the protection of wage rates against rising prices through automatic increases based on a trade union cost-of-living index.

For these reasons the right are likely to consolidate their position further at the National Committee. But the road ahead is not all roses for them. The toolmakers' strikes at Rover-Triumph, Rover Solihull, Rover Tysley, SU Carburettors, Tractors & Transmissions and Austin Longbridge have already revealed a deepening opposition to wage restraint among the rank-and-file.

CRACKS

The next round of incomes policy will see much larger cracks emerging in the TUC/Labour Government policies. With a background of rising unemployment and slashing cuts in the social services, it will become increasingly difficult for Scanlon to stamp out opposition as he did with the toolmakers. This makes it an urgent task to begin to develop an alternative national opposition in the AUEW, by con-

sistently attempting to mobilise broad layers of the union around specific actions against the policies of the right wing.

LOBBY

The Day of Action on 26 May, the lobby of the special TUC in June and of the TUC Congress in September are all obvious focuses. Where necessary these initiatives should be launched without waiting for a green light from the Broad Left, but a systematic effort should be made to win Broad Left supporters to these actions.

Organisational barriers, like that erected by the IS with Engineers Charter, should be avoided as sectarian. However, where the base of support for such initiatives is sufficient, militants should attempt to organise together within the Broad Left to fight for their positions.

In this way moves like the setting up of the Engineering Voice Group in Birmingham, which involves militants from over 12 factories, can begin to lay the basis for developing a real class struggle opposition in the AUEW to the policies of the right wing and the Broad Left.

No action from TASS leaders

'Same militant policies, same lack of action by Gill', commented one delegate leaving last week's conference of TASS, the staff section of the AUEW engineering union.

This year, as last, the conference voted to reject the Government's pay curbs. But no systematic campaign for national action by the union on 26 May and no fight to mobilise the membership against the pay deal was proposed.

With the leadership standing politely

aside for Jones and Scanlon, the rank-and-file have to take the lead. Policies passed at the conference provide a starting point. The demand for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay was passed with an amendment condemning systematic overtime.

Another motion recognised that real industrial democracy was not possible while the means of production remained under private ownership. The motion recognised that the bureaucratic management of nationalised industries must be

ended. Unfortunately the motion confined itself to putting up blue-prints for worker participation, rather than showing how the demand of opening the books enables the rank and file to formulate their own solutions through the fight for workers control.

Militants in TASS can take a lead through the fight to get these policies implemented. They will not get it from their leadership.



West London Medical branch delegate Dominic Costa demands action against wage cuts

ASTMS leaders cover-up for right

On every vital question facing the trade union movement, 'left' Clive Jenkins and the executive of the Association of Scientific, Technical and Managerial Staffs covered up for the right-wing policies of the Labour Government when the union met in conference at Eastbourne last week-end.

Despite Jenkins' show vote on the TUC General Council against Healey's pay swindle, he is bitterly opposed to organising any action against these pay laws. He prefers to moan that nothing has been forthcoming from the other side.

By failing to come out openly against all incomes policies under capitalism, by leaving the door open for a deal if Healey would only offer some 'concessions', and by refusing to discuss action to fight the pay laws, Jenkins and his cohorts simply acted as aides to the right wing. Indeed, on incomes policy Jenkins made it clear where his friends really are as he whined: 'I do not like the people who are supporting me.'

Nasty

Clearly he does not like those people who are fighting the right wing. In a particularly nasty display of witch-hunting, Jenkins insisted that Tony Kelly was not a member of the union, thundering: 'We do not want to get involved in Trotskyist politicking in Newham North East.'

These words must have encouraged Reg Prentice, an opponent of almost all the policy decisions reached by recent ASTMS conferences. The role of Jenkins and those members of the Broad Left who sided with the executive on this issue only gives aid and backing to the clique inside the Labour Cabinet who are imposing wage cuts and unemployment on the working class.

Fight back

The rank-and-file, however, are beginning to fight back on this issue. On Sunday evening a meeting called by Kelly's branch, Charing Cross ASTMS, and supported by the International Socialists, the IMG and the Workers Socialist League, was attended by about 80 delegates and observers. This meeting decided to launch a campaign for the re-statement of Kelly, and the attendance of many members from both branches and divisional councils shows the support that it can get in the union.

On the issue of the National Health Service, there was an attempt to refer back the NEC report because it contained only six lines on the cuts in the NHS, with no mention of any action taken by ASTMS to implement last year's resolution. This was probably not unrelated to the fact that the executive had

opposed last year's conference call for opposition to all cuts, the banning of private practice, and a fight for a sliding scale of health expenditure. The reference back was lost by only four votes, 233 to 229.

As Jenkins and his allies made left noises, and moved further to the right in practice, the open right wing gained ground inside the union. The results of the NEC elections showed that the Broad Left/Jenkins

group had lost its majority. As they cling to each other's coat-tails, refusing to fight Callaghan's pro-capitalist policies, the right wing gain ground.

The united action of the revolutionary left in building the meeting for Tony Kelly shows the need for united action on all questions inside ASTMS and other unions. A fight back can and must be organised. The revolutionary left has a responsibility to initiate such united action.

UNION REPORTS CONFERENCES

JOURNALISTS ATTACK BIAS, BACK 26 MAY

The National Union of Journalists has finally begun to come to grips with press freedom. The longest applause at the union's annual conference last month was for a delegate from Barnsley, where the local branch has been subjected to the venom of the mass media for requesting trade unionists not to speak to non-union journalists.

While Journalists Charter, the IS-dominated rank-and-file grouping in the NUJ, has been at pains to argue that the battle for a closed shop has nothing whatever to do with press freedom, delegates were left in no doubt that any journalist appealing to the labour movement for assistance has to reckon with the contempt in which militants hold the media.

SMEAR

As Phil Williams, the Barnsley delegate, asked the conference: 'Do we, and you, deserve support from the same trade unionists we as journalists smear every day in our newspapers? What are you doing to fight news editors, copy-tasters, sub-editors, editors, and plump proprietors to make sure your copy is not turned into a despicable insult on working people?'

The dynamic unleashed by the Barnsley action, which a big majority at the conference urged other branches and chapels to take up, clearly influenced other decisions on editorial content and control. A virtually unanimous resolution called for the sacking of Lord Shawcross, big business chairman of the Press



Ovation for Barnsley delegate Phil Williams after his denunciation of media bias

Council, while a number of delegates argued for the total abolition of the Council.

A resolution originally put forward by IMG members, instructing the NUJ executive to initiate a labour movement conference on press freedom within six months, was also narrowly carried on a card vote. The urgent need for the issue of the ownership, control, and access to the mass media to be brought into the broad arena of the working class was demonstrated by the response of the conference to a red-baiting report of its proceedings in the *Daily Telegraph*.

The executive was told to demand a

The ousting of Kate Losinska from the presidency of the 215,000-strong Civil and Public Services Association was a sharp retort by the rank-and-file to the massive press and legal campaign launched on her behalf in recent weeks.

The impact of that campaign did make itself felt at last week's conference with the elections for the executive, where the 'left' majority narrowed from six to two votes. However this weakening represents the weakening of the Broad Left in the union. Two *Redder Tape* sponsored candidates, one a member of the International Socialists, were elected.

The growing political weakness of the Broad Left was also revealed through its choice of the successful presidential candidate - Len Lever, a 'moderate' and 'candidate of convenience'.

There is a crying need for firm leadership in the union, as opposed to 'patch-up jobs' like Lever. The militancy is there. The conference threw out Healey's pay deal and called for industrial action against any increase in workload resulting

from redundancies. This will be needed - the Government has just announced that there may be redundancies of 35,000 to achieve 'savings'.

The support for the positions of *Redder Tape* revealed that need for leadership. Two questions, however, reveal the failure of this IS dominated grouping to come to grips with the political problems that are increasingly of concern to the union's members.

The IS refused to fight for the amalgamation of the CPSA with the 100,000 strong Society of Civil Servants. Traditionally the Government has sought to divide Civil Service workers through Whitley Councils and the separation of workers on different salary grades and departments.

Amalgamation

Amalgamation would greatly strengthen civil servants' bargaining power, preventing the loss of militants from the union through promotion, and most importantly reaching out to the higher paid members of the union to win them to the side of the lower paid in a common struggle. The IS refuses to take a Marxist approach to the problem of the middle grade salaried workers, and instead substitutes emotive talk of a 'bosses union'.

Hostility

Similarly, the hostility of the IS towards the policy of a sliding scale of wages and the counterposition of flat rate increases shows a lack of concern with the fact that inflation is driving the middle classes to desperation through wholesale reductions in their living standards.

The conference, with the support of the executive, called for support for the 26 May Day of Action on jobs, urging chapels to examine how they could best support the demonstrations. In London the union's Book Branch has called a meeting for all its chapels at 11 a.m. (in the St Bride Institute, Bride Lane, off Fleet Street) prior to the demonstration, and it is expected that the Magazine Branch will endorse this initiative.

But this victory was matched by substantial defeats over wages and new technology. In both cases the left's resolutions were put forward by supporters of Journalists Charter and reflected the total inadequacy of pure rank-and-file.

PROTECT

On wages the resolution merely called for a return to free collective bargaining, without raising the need to protect workers' living standards against the effects of inflation through a sliding scale of wages. On new technology the conference was simply urged to freeze its introduction for a year pending more negotiations, with not a hint of the necessity to open the employers' books and impose workers control over any technological innovations via work-sharing with no loss of pay.

The conference took a clear stand on women's rights however. A successful resolution urged participation in the Working Women's Charter Campaign and the formation of women's committees

Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

Photo: ANGELA PHILLIPS (FL)

A Return to the Thirties?

Ever since the Second World War, capitalist politicians have promised that there would never be a return to the 1930s. They have had to promise this in order to persuade the working class to accept capitalism again after the experiences of mass unemployment, fascism and war. As Conservative politician Lord Hailsham put it in a debate in Parliament in 1943: 'If you don't give the people reform they will give you revolution.'

For almost thirty years it appeared that capitalism could indeed 'deliver the goods'; and at least in the major capitalist countries, production and living standards rose and mass unemployment was avoided — although in the 'Third World' capitalism reduced hundreds of millions to starvation and waged terrible wars such as that in Vietnam. Reformist Labour politicians appeared to be able to get results, and talk of the need for socialist revolution appeared romantic nonsense.

In the last five or six years, however, strong notes of doubt have begun to creep into this apparently rosy picture. In Britain living standards have dropped sharply in the last two years. Unemployment runs at 1¼ million on official figures, and much higher in real terms, with no prospect of the dole queues coming down below a million again. Slashing cuts in the social services are taking place. Industrial production is actually at a lower level than it was in 1970. A real smell of the 1930s is in the air.

According to the reformist politicians of the Labour Party, this is just a temporary hitch. According to them, after a few sacrifices things will start to get better again. But as the dole queues lengthen and the shopping baskets get lighter, this looks less likely. More people are prepared to ask whether things are really going to get better under capitalism. Will the sacrifices now being demanded last just for a couple of years, followed by a return to the old prosperity, or will the demands for sacrifice be never ending? Will the 5 per cent pay cut demanded by the £6 limit, and the similar cut in living standards coming under the present pay deal, be followed merely by worse attacks?

If what we are living through is just a hiccup in capitalist prosperity, then a few sacrifices might appear justified. If, on the other hand, capitalism has no good times to offer whatsoever, then accepting cuts in living standards doesn't appear such a rational idea. If things are only going to get worse no matter how much is given up, then it would seem logical to think not about sacrifices for capitalism but about how to overthrow it. We therefore have to be very clear on what is at the root of the present crisis; and why, despite temporary ups and downs, there is no chance whatever that things will get anything but worse under capitalism.

Profits of death

The best way to understand why this is so is to ask why the post-war capitalist boom took place in the first place?

The answer to this is very simple. The temporary period of capitalist boom after the Second World War was created on the basis of the coming to power of Mussolini and Hitler, the mass unemployment of the 1930s, the destruction of the trade union and labour movement in virtually every country in Europe and East Asia by fascism, and the death of 50 million people in the Second World War.

If this fact were widely known and understood, it would lead on its own to a veritable revulsion and revolt against capitalism. What sort of system is it that can gain prosperity only over the greatest mountain of corpses in human history? For that reason, the myth is carefully maintained that the cause of the Second World War was the fight for democracy, to defeat Hitler, or some similar aim.

The real significance of fascism, unemployment and the war comes out only too clearly, however, in the real figures which the capitalists consider important — profits and wages.

— In Italy, the coming to power of the fascist dictator Mussolini saw the greatest wage cutting exercise in that country's history. The real wages of the working class were cut by 20 per cent between 1922, the year before the fascists came to power, and 1938, the year before the outbreak of war. Only in 1948, twenty five years after the fascists had seized power, did wages regain their 1922 level.

— In Spain, industrial output doubled in the years between 1935, the last year before the outbreak of the civil war won by the fascist Franco, and the late 1950s. But real wages fell by nearly half by the early 1950s, and even by the end of that decade the workers were producing twice as much for no higher wages than 25 years earlier.

— In Germany, the coming to power of Hitler, and his banning of the trade unions and political parties of the working class, was followed by the most gigantic profits boom in history. In the six years from 1932 to 1938 the total of profits made by German capital increased from 8 billion marks to 20 billion marks, and the total of profits nearly doubled in relation to wages. Meanwhile the length of the working week was increased by 40 per cent. By 1959 the share of wages in the German economy was still

lower than at the time of the Great Depression in 1929.

— In Japan, the country of the 'economic miracle', the share of wages in the economy was smashed down during the 1930s and the war, and fell even further during the 1950s as the Japanese working class was

unable to make up the war-time losses.

These rosy figures in the account books of the capitalists reflected the terrible methods of fascism, the extermination of the Jews, and the wholesale slaughter of war. Put in those terms, each of the 25 post-war boom years cost approximately 2 million corpses of the victims of fascism and war. Although later other factors helped the post-war boom, this terrible slaughter was the 'achievement' on which post-war capitalism was rebuilt.

But despite the gigantic gains in profits during the period of fascism, unemployment and war, it is one of the characteristics of capitalism that it demands profits and 'sacrifices' of the working class on an ever greater scale. Modern capitalist competition requires investment on a scale which the capitalists of Hitler's Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and the unemployment politicians of the 1930s could scarcely dream of.

For example, the development costs alone of the Pilkington float glass system, the most advanced in the world, were £10 million. That is small beer, however, compared with real international projects. To re-equip British Leyland costs £1,000 million, Concorde costs £1,000 million, a new computer system costs £500 million to produce, and the American

supersonic bomber, the XB1, may cost up to £2,500 million. Furthermore, the rate at which equipment and products wear out or become obsolete has vastly increased. In the 1930s, for example, ICI calculated the life of their investments as 20 years. Today they have to pay back their money on much more expensive investments in a mere five years.

Sacrifices

Confronted with the need to make profits on a scale never even envisaged in the past — and under capitalism, all production of goods is regulated by profit — capitalism is forced to launch, as in the 1930s, an ever-increasing series of attacks against the working class. If the last few days have seen more optimistic reports from bodies like the CBI, it is for one reason only — declining working class wages and mass unemployment mean that companies are looking forward to a major increase in profits on the basis of defeats of the working class. As always, capitalism can only hope to alleviate its problems even temporarily on the backs of the working class.

But although capitalism has already extracted great sacrifices from the working class, it has hardly got started yet. The rate of profit is nowhere near the level achieved in the capitalist heyday after war, mass unemployment and fascism. For example, in the post-war period up to 1956 the rate of profit was calculated by *Lloyd's Bank Review* as 16 per cent. By 1966 it was down to 11 per cent. By 1972 it was 6 per cent. By 1974, on the figures produced by the Bank of England, it was down to 4 per cent.

Even allowing for the undoubted manoeuvres carried out in capitalist accounting, there is no doubt that capitalism now has to look for a massive increase in profits. And how will this be sought? Once again the model which developed in the 1930s is reappearing.

Criminal

Massive unemployment is not merely one of the worst crimes against the working class, it is also the most criminal waste of resources in existence. In the 1930s the losses of production in the United States economy alone amounted to £150,000 million. Today, in the smaller British economy, the same pattern is seen. One and a quarter million workers unemployed means a loss of production of well over £3,000 million a year.

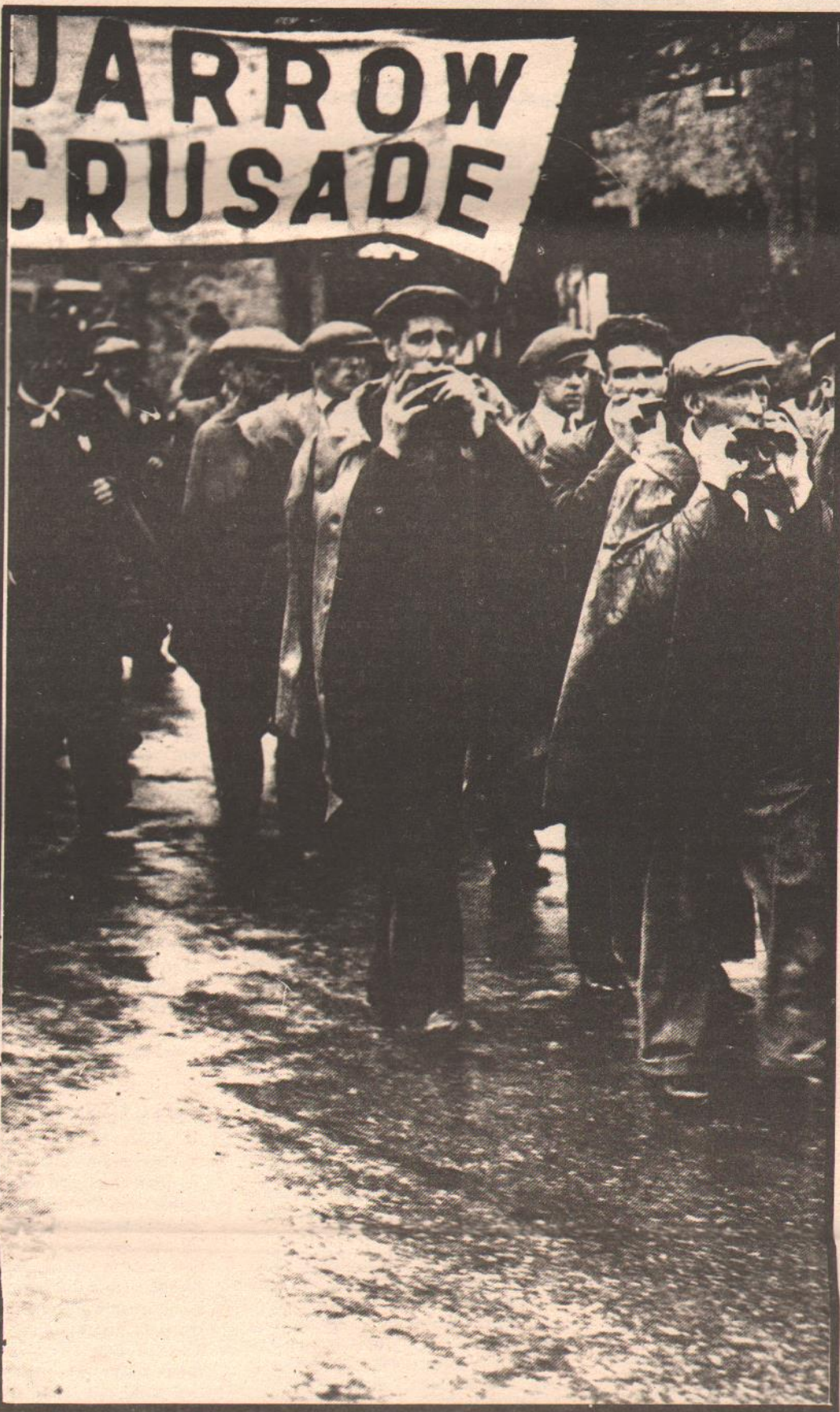
Wage cuts were carried out in an open way in the 1920s and 1930s by reducing the amount in the wage packet. Now they are carried out in a more roundabout way by preventing wages from keeping abreast with inflation. But the end result is the same. The 5 per cent fall in real wages under the £6 limit is just the old wage cutting of the 1930s wearing a more modern hat.

Slashing social expenditure was the issue over which the capitalists brought down the Labour Government in 1931 and created the ultra-reactionary Ramsay MacDonald coalition which cut social security payments. Since then the working class has won the great gains of the welfare state. Now the capitalists are once again attacking housing, the health service, education and all gains of the social services.

As yet, however, the capitalists are only just getting warmed up. After these first economic attacks will come the still more vicious political ones. In the 1930s the unions were banned in many countries and savagely attacked in others. The Tories were defeated over the Industrial Relations Act, but they will be back for more when they think the situation is more favourable.

In the 1930s, anti-Jewish demagogues such as Hitler came to the fore for the capitalists — today, as yet on a small scale but with the same deadly virus, we see the emergence of racist politicians such as Powell. In vile torturers such as Pinochet of Chile and Geisel of Brazil we see the real image of capitalism's future. As the fight for profits steps up capitalism will resort to still more terrible weapons. It is for this, not for a new capitalist boom, that the present sacrifices are demanded. The dream of a 'liberal' capitalism beloved of the Labour reformists is a utopian dream of the past. The only way forward is not to sacrifice for capitalism but to work out what demands can protect the working class and use the capitalist crisis to overthrow this murderous system. That is what we will be looking at in the coming weeks.

JOHN MARSHALL



Europe - Ford's Alamo?

President Ford stood outside the Alamo in Texas, where Davy Crockett went down against vastly superior Mexican military forces. He had chosen this historic site to rebuff Ronald Reagan's claim that US foreign policy amounted to acting 'as if we expected the Soviets to inherit the earth'. A few days later, Reagan swept to a landslide victory in the Republican primary in Texas. Ford hadn't done much better than Crockett.

Not that Ford hasn't been doing his best to beat Reagan at his own game. Recently he commented: 'Detente was only a word that was coined. I don't think it is applicable any more'.

Kissinger has also been trying to show that he is not the liberal liability that the American press make him out to be. To voters in Arizona, he denied all stories of the US being second best, adding: 'I am here to tell you that America remains and will remain the most powerful nation in the world.'

Secret

There is more to this hairy-chested rhetoric than votes. A secret meeting of US ambassadors held in London in December heard Kissinger say: 'We must contain the Soviets and prevent their expansion either through Western weakness or through the application of military force.'

But despite the claims of Communist Parties all over the world, this is not a return to the Cold War situation in Europe. Kissinger went on to say:

'The Soviets are not the key element that is producing the instabilities in Western Europe. A Communist Western Europe would be a headache for us. It would be a headache for the Soviets as well. They probably prefer not to see Communist powers taking over in Western Europe.'

What the American ruling class



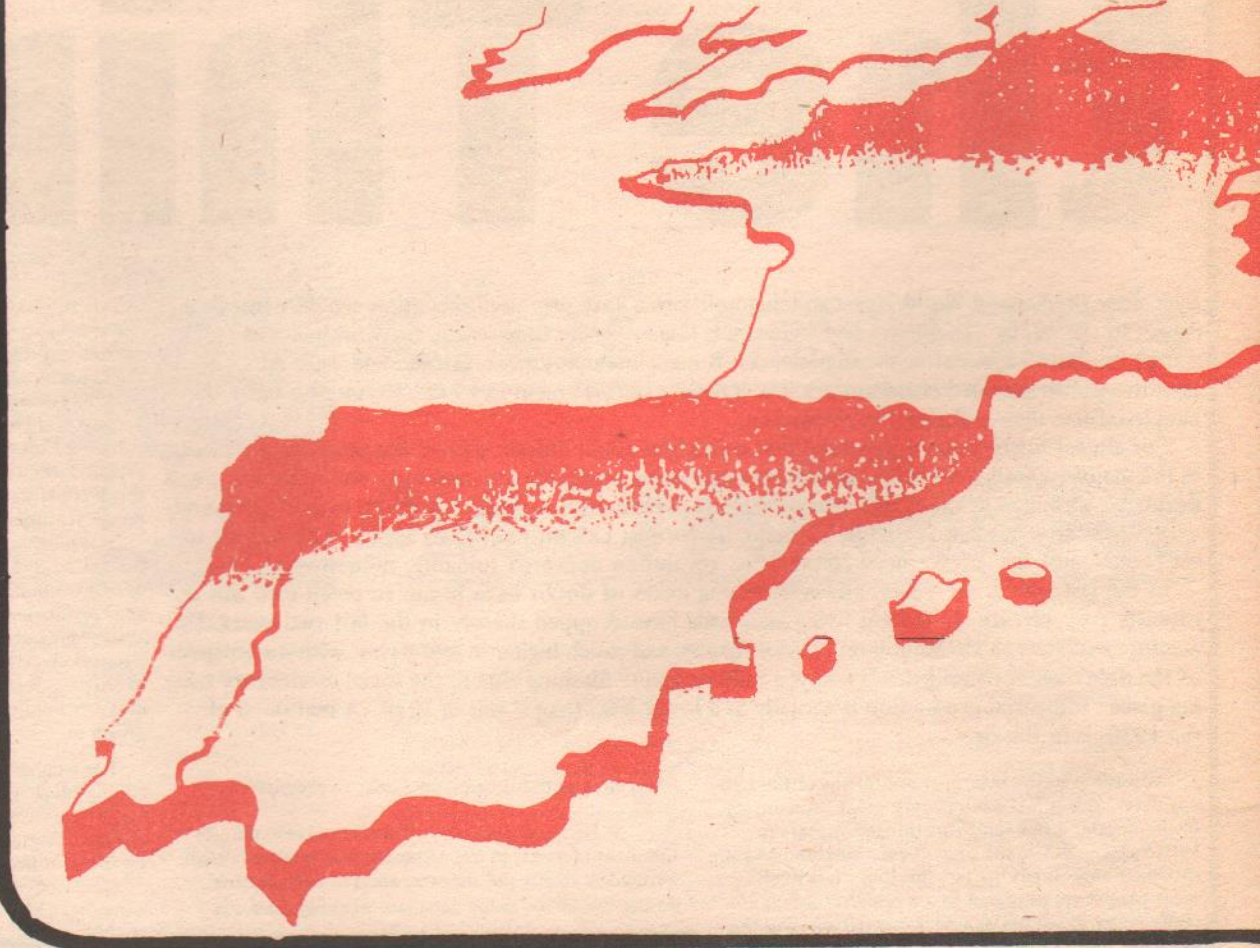
fears above all is not Soviet expansionism, but the revolt of the Western European working class.

The Cold War in Europe saw threats of direct military intervention in Italy and the open sponsoring of counter-revolutionary forces in Greece. US imperialism still has the capacity to make such an intervention, but the defeats suffered by imperialism in Vietnam and Angola in-

dicade the turn of the tide.

Despite the apparent electoral success of Reagan's foreign policy proposals, the American people would not stand by and idly sanction US involvement. Most important of all, such intervention — whether through counter-revolutionary forces such as the neo-fascist MSI, or more directly — would meet the bitter resistance of the Italian working class.

THE COMMUNIST SURF THE U.S.N



Marshalling Italy

American naval planes swooped low over the workers' strongholds in Turin, Milan and the other major industrial cities. Eleven war ships were despatched to Naples to join a great naval armada patrolling Italy's coastal waters. It was the spring of 1948. President Harry S Truman had just authorised 'full use of political, economic, and if necessary military power' to prevent a 'Communist take-over'.

In France and Italy, Communist Parties had been included in coalition governments with ruling class parties. Their role was to help the capitalists in post-war reconstruction on the basis of bourgeois order.

Italian workers had instituted workers self-management through 'Red Factories' even under Nazi occupation. In both countries there were armed partisan movements of hundreds of thousands, while the official national armies were in disarray. Disarming the workers, policing strikes and getting workers to accept austerity and discipline — the Stalinists repaid the capitalists in full.

It was not until May 1947 that the capitalists in both countries felt strong enough to dispense with their services and kick them out. The Stalinists went quietly.

But in the April 1948 elections in Italy, the Communist Party made a renewed bid for governmental office with the Socialist Party. With the Communist take-over in Czechoslovakia only a few weeks old, this was the signal for a mighty campaign of coercion by the US, in alliance with the Christian Democrats and the Vatican.

No absolution

The Pope announced that he had instructed the clergy to refuse absolution to those who voted Communist. The Christian Democrat regime headed by de Gasperi paraded thousands of troops heavily armed with US-made weapons. Fascist gangs swarmed on the streets, attacking workers meetings. Labour leaders



Stalin and Truman—carved up Europe between them after Yalta

were kidnapped and assassinated.

The strategy of the White House was to pressure Italian voters into rejecting the workers parties and backing capitalism. The US's gross national product was about half of the world's total. It had money to spare. The massive Economic Recovery Program (the Marshall Plan) was introduced to contain and roll back Communism in Europe.

Marshall himself, as US Secretary of State, declared that all aid would be cut off to Italy if its people 'choose to vote into power a government in which the dominant political force would be a party whose hostility to this program has been frequently enunciated....'

Italy was also the first playground of the newly formed CIA. Harry Rositzke, a former CIA official wrote in the January 1975 issue of *Foreign Affairs* that in 1948 'the National Security Council gave

the CIA the responsibility for "political, psychological, economic, and unconventional warfare operations".....'

Four million dollars were poured into the coffers of the bourgeois parties. At the same time, a month before the elections were due to take place, Washington promised that it would look favourably on the restoration of the territory of Trieste and the return of some of Italy's African conquests if a right-wing government was elected.

The result was that the Christian Democrats swept to victory with 48 per cent of the vote. It was this victory which paved the way for nearly 30 years of undisputed dominance of the bourgeois ruling bloc by the Christian Democrats, putting off until now the evil day when once again they are faced with the prospect of having to rely on a coalition with the Communist Party to maintain capitalist order and protect private property.

The possible instability of the Yugoslav political regime after the death of the aging President Tito — with the possible emergence of a hard pro-Stalinist faction — has allowed the US to project the possibility of withdrawal of NATO from Italy in front of the Italian electorate. Kissinger's threats of a total cessation of the American military presence in Europe are supposed to play on the fears of Soviet invasion in Germany.

But much of this means very little. Two countries, Portugal and Iceland, have already included Communists in their governments while remaining in NATO. Furthermore, a NATO withdrawal from Italy would lose the US a key strategic base in the Mediterranean.

Economic

No — the real means of US coercion on Italy lie in the economic sphere. The threats on troop commitments in Europe provide the European bourgeoisie with sound electoral reasons why they should 'speak out' against the new 'Eurocommunism'. But the real methods of the imperialists, if they choose to use them, are currency speculation, trade embargoes, the closing down of manufacturing subsidiaries, and the cessation of capital loans.

From such actions only two conclusions are possible. One is the speedy demise in the chaos of a collapsing capitalist economy of any government containing parties which are the target of the imperialists, assisted by the mobilisation of the forces of reaction in that country. This is what happened in Chile.

Strategy

The other is the break-up of capitalist relations of production, their control by the workers movements, and the seizing of power by the armed working class. Only such a strategy can defend the working class and its allies from domestic reaction. Only if the working class enforces its control over the capitalists can the measures necessary to prevent sabotage of the economy — up to and including the nationalisation of all foreign trade and control over exports of capital — be implemented.

The Big

The Communist Party of Italy points of contention in discussion of the bogey man for US imperialism — the European revolution in Poland — the split of the Communist Parties — the dependence on the Kremlin.

For thirty years the leading role in successive Italian governments has been played by the Christian Democrats. During this time they have largely ruled in coalition.

The 'centre-left' coalitions of the 1960s and '70s marked a concession to the radicalisation of the Italian working class through the inclusion of the Socialist Party (PSI). But the project has collapsed as a result of the failure of such coalitions to make the working class pay for the cost of the worsening economic crisis of the Italian capitalist class.

First signs

The first real signs of a dramatic upturn in support for the Communist Party came with their success in the regional elections last June. This gave the Italian electorate a chance to 'taste and try before buying'. In many areas the Communists ran exclusively on the grounds that they had 'clean hands' — that they were not part of the web of corruption that encompasses Italian political life, and that they could therefore run things more efficiently.

The Christian Democrats and to lesser extent their partners in the various centre-left coalitions were the main target for this 'clean up' campaign. The irony of the growing support for the Communist Party is that they now propose the rehabilitation of the centre-left formula — but with themselves included.

The name given to this strategy is the 'historic compromise'. The aim is an alliance with the Christian Democrats, the main party of the bourgeoisie.

Some joke

The PCI discounts the relationship of the Christian Democracy to the most powerful sections of the

GE NIGHTMARE



Bad Wolf

has become one of the hottest of the future of Europe. It is the ready terrified by the beginning of al. It is the focus of the growing Western Europe from political dep-

Italian bourgeoisie. Enrico Berlinguer, the General Secretary of the PCI, ridicules the idea that this party is 'destined by nature, in the last analysis, to be or become a party on the side of reaction. It is downright laughable'.

Berlinguer's central theme is that the 'democratic-antifascist' collaboration that was interrupted in 1947 by American imperialism can and must be taken up again. At that time the Italian bourgeoisie, finding itself in dire straits, briefly accepted the 'historic compromise' through the participation of the Communist leaders in the Government.

Of course it is possible that the predictions of Berlinguer & Co will be fulfilled, and that they will be called upon to join a government of 'national salvation'. The salvation of the bourgeoisie will nevertheless have to be at the centre of any such government's activities if it is to retain the support which Berlinguer so humbly requests.



Women's rights are explosive issue



CP leader ENRICO BERLINGUER

The 'historic compromise' informs more than election tactics. The outgoing Christian Democrat administration only survived so long through the grace of God...and the votes and support of the Communist Party deputies in Parliament.

The oppression of women has become an explosive issue in Italian politics, generating a movement which can call demonstrations of over 50,000. And for opportunist reasons it was this issue on which the Socialist Party seized to begin its campaign to bring down the Government.

For months the PCI bent over backwards to get a meaningless compromise bill agreed with the Christian Democrats. But no sooner was the deal made than it was torn up by the Christian Democrats, provoking the subsequent fall of the Government.

Compromise

The way forward to the 'historic compromise' has however been smoothed by the agreement just reached on the national wage contracts. Despite a cost of living clause, the deal essentially means a fall in workers' living standards over the next three years.

In return the unions have won vague rights to consultation over major investment projects and subcontracting. But what the deal really amounts to is that the Italian workers have accepted a period of relative austerity in expectation of political concessions.

The PCI-led Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL) has increased its size from 3 to 4 million workers since the upsurge in 1969, and its strength and growing influence cannot be disputed. It has succeeded to a large extent in channelling the movement that arose in the factories into the delegate council system — which the CP theorise as one of the forms of 'direct democracy' needed to complement the parliamentary institutions.

This theorisation, and the leadership exercised by the Communist Party in most major factories, explains a great deal about the apparent paradox of the right-ward drift of the PCI leadership and the initiatives carried out at the base by its cadres.

Among these initiatives are those of 'self-reduction', where workers and tenants pay what they themselves consider to be a fair price for transport, rent, gas, electricity and other services. Most of these initiatives are organised from the base of the factory councils.

Far left

The far left have often played an initiating role in these actions, and have grown to the extent that the three main groups of the left — PDUP, 'the party of the united proletariat for communism', Avanguardia Operaia, and Lotta Continua — expect to get over a million votes in the coming election. This force undoubtedly represents the growth of a large vanguard which has seen through the reformist project of the PCI and the disastrous consequences it could have for the Italian working class.

The slogan of a 'left government' pushed by the PDUP and AO unfortunately does not get to grips with the concrete programme which is needed to push forward the Italian working class, and leaves unclear what class forces should compose this government.

The Italian Trotskyists of the GCR will continue to fight for a united far left slate around the slogan of a PSI-PCI government basing itself on the bodies taking forward the mass struggle on an anti-capitalist programme. That is the direct and opposite response to the reformists of the Italian Communist Party.

US backs spanish bunker

Italy is not the only country in Europe under the microscope of American foreign policy makers today. They are also closely watching Spain, which straddles two areas now of particular concern — the Iberian peninsula and the Mediterranean.

The US can rightly lay claim to a long-standing cultivation of the Spanish regime for just such a situation. Immediately after the Second World War, Spain was badly discredited in the eyes of the victorious imperialist powers (and even more so before the labour movement) by virtue of its close association with the defeated fascist powers and the active assistance it gave them during the war. (Franco was far less prudent than Portugal's Salazar in this, who throughout the war hedged his bets.)

But US policy makers, gearing up for an international offensive against the working class and upset by recent evidence of Communist strength in France and Italy, were attracted by the stability of the Franco regime — founded on its success in smashing the economic and political organisations of the working class. They thus moved to usher Franco out of cold storage and into the warm embrace of the 'Western Alliance'.

Hostility

The tide of hostility in Europe and America to this erstwhile companion of the fascist powers had still not subsided, blocking efforts to bring Spain Marshall Plan aid. But it could not prevent such 'unofficial' schemes as the \$ 25 million loan made to Spain by the Chase Manhattan Bank in 1949.

With the onset of the Korean War, the US threw caution to the winds in cultivating Spain as an ally against the 'Communist menace'. Official US Government credits were now extended to Spain and top US military brass began a campaign in favour of a military pact with the dictatorship. The US successfully pressed for an end to UN sanctions against Spain and its admission to the various UN bodies, and led the way in returning its Ambassador to Spain, faithfully followed by France and Britain (where the Labour Government was still in office).

It proved too difficult to bring Spain into the NATO pact (although the more prudent Portuguese dictatorship had been a founder member), so negotiations were set in motion for a separate US-Spanish military agreement, which was eventually concluded in September 1953.

This agreement, and the series of renegotiated treaties which followed it, remain in effect today. In exchange for economic and military aid totalling some \$ 2 billion, the US has been able to build up a num-

ber of major air bases, and an important naval base on the Mediterranean.

This 'Spanish connection' has not so far been of top order importance to the US. True, the Iberian peninsula is an important area strategically to the US, as the European land mass with the closest geographical proximity to the US itself — enhanced in the case of Portugal by the staging post of the Azores in mid-Atlantic, and in the case of Spain by its strategically valuable Mediterranean coast line. But the Spanish army is looked on as a rather shoddy affair by the American military, and too heavily tied up with maintaining domestic order.

Alliance

The alliance with the 'democratic' capitalist nations of Europe has thus come first, which explains why the US has never taken a hard stand on bringing Spain into NATO, and has palmed off the Spanish army with second-hand, outmoded military equipment (much to the resentment of the Spanish military).

But today these alliances are no longer as stable as they once looked. NATO is in grave disarray, and a number of the US's main partners seem 'threatened' with the prospect of left-wing governments including the Communist Party. And all this while the Mediterranean is starting to become a prospective international hot-spot.

Under these circumstances the Spanish alliance is becoming more important than ever. This was reflected in the renewal of the treaty last year, which involved a substantial increase in aid and, for the first time, a statement of 'common interest' and system of military coordination between US and Spanish forces...in the Mediterranean.

But all this will not be worth the paper it is written on if political events in Spain should start to follow those in Italy or (horror of horrors) Portugal. For this reason the US Government has its fingers firmly implanted in the pie of Spanish politics, and we can expect it to be grabbing handfuls before long.

It is ably assisted in this both by the American military establishment, which has close links with its Spanish counterparts, and by big US corporations like the notorious ITT, which has dominated Spain's telephone system since the '30s (and whose President in Spain is a former Government Minister).

Undoubtedly one of the reasons why the 'reform' schemes of the various 'liberal' currents in the dictatorship continue to run into heavy water — and why the continued banning of the Spanish Communist Party is a common theme of them all — is that the die-hard wing of the dictatorship can count on an important measure of support from US imperialism on this question.



Supporters of the North London Committee Against Repression in Spain picketed the London headquarters of Standard Telephones and Cables on 7 May to draw attention to the role of multinational companies in Spain. STC is part of the ITT empire which was recently locked in combat with the workers at its Spanish subsidiary. Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

PARTICIPATION: POISONED ICING ON THE ROTTEN CAKE

What do Clive Jenkins, Jack Jones, the current chairmen of Williams & Glyn's Bank and Guest, Keen & Nettlefolds, and ex-ICI chairman Jack Callard have in common? The polite answer is that they're all members of Lord Bullock's government-appointed committee to examine 'a radical extension of industrial democracy in the control of companies' — a significant cog in the workings of Labour's 'social contract' with the trade union bureaucracy.

Pay controls

In return for severe pay controls and actual reductions in working class living standards, the TUC leaders were initially promised three distinct legislative measures, each directly beneficial to union bureaucratic interests. The Trade Union & Labour Relations Act removed the discredited Tory anti-union laws; the Employment Protection Act improves selected workers' rights and encourages unionisation; and now the Bullock Committee is preparing the final instalment — laws requiring 'worker participation' in industrial management.

1974 Congress

The Committee is expressly briefed to work on the basis of the TUC's detailed policy statement, 'Industrial Democracy', passed by Congress in 1974 (which em-



Bullock Committee member Clive Jenkins

phasises the election of 'workers representatives' to new company boards 'through trade union machinery'. In addition, it has relatively little time: the re-structured companies legislation is due in 1977/78.

What is at stake is a development of the current strategy of cutting workers' real incomes and employment levels, in the interests of capitalist profit, through a nationwide class-collaboration exercise designed to 'permanently' channel workers' discontent over the present crisis into the 'safe' arena of boardroom meetings — as opposed to the 'dangerous' setting of the factory or street.

Voluntary

Thus it is that the CBI has suddenly declared for 'industrial democracy' (via largely voluntary participation agreements), as has the Engineering Employers' Federation. Mr James Prior has also announced Tory Party support for 'participation to start on the shop floor and operate at all levels' (speech on 20 February 1976).

As for Messrs. Jones, Scanlon et al, with their history of brave 'left' speeches to Workers' Control conferences over recent years, their vision of progress for the working class (participation today, tomorrow — socialism?) now appears to

be coming to life — with the convenient side-effect of considerably extending the formal influence of union bureaucrats within the economy. So what exactly does the TUC plan hold in store for the working class?

Two-tier

The policy conceived in Congress House proposes a two-tier board system for the management of private enterprises. Each firm would have a Supervisory Board to determine general company policies, which would then appoint a Management Board to handle day-to-day issues.

The Supervisory Board would consist 50 per cent of 'workers representatives' elected via the unions (who 'should not be obliged to relinquish union office' and would be 'subject to recall and re-election'), wherever unions are recognised. But there are certain fundamental

flaws in this projected 'historic advance of democracy'.

The most well-intentioned and union conscious 'workers representative' on a company board will find him/herself trapped within a structure bound hand-and-foot by market forces, by the largely unplanned condition of the industry concerned, and the general ups and downs of the capitalist economy. This important feature of private industrial enterprise management means that every decision taken by the 'workers representatives' — on such vital issues as the size of the workforce (and possible redundancies), the level and scale of production, the choice of products, etc — is swayed by these outside forces to a considerable degree.

Result

The result is that even were 'workers representatives' to enjoy a clear majority

on the board of an enterprise, they would be forced by the nature of the capitalist economy itself to resort to the same anti-social practices as 'ordinary' managements — sackings of employees, resistance to justified wages and conditions claims, 'divide and rule' wages systems, victimisations — when market forces so required. The mental and moral anguish some of them might genuinely suffer in this situation would not assuage the material pressures on them, though a few might grow disillusioned and resign.

On the contrary, the small privileges that would no doubt accompany membership of the board (time off work to attend meetings, make visits, etc; expenses and occasional company socials and dinners; new status in the workplace, etc.) would prove attractive to large numbers. Thus a process of bureaucratisation of a new layer of workers would be born.

Of course, it will be argued that the system of election of these 'representat-

ives' by their workmates, and their formal accountability to the shop floor via union machinery, will prove a counterweight to bureaucratisation. But experience elsewhere shows that only a constant struggle for independence from the power and structures of privately-owned capital — as



Jack Jones—also on Bullock Committee

opposed to integration within its machinery — can guarantee real working class democracy.

The 'classic' West German model ('Mitbestimmung') shows that the shopfloor election of board representatives in West Germany — a regular phenomenon — in no way hinders bureaucratisation, nor, in itself, challenges capital with any serious extension of workers' democratic influence. Participation remains class-collaboration. How should the working class respond?

Social democrats, from the right to the very 'left', offer participation as a 'natural' outgrowth of the union militancy of recent years and the growth of shop stewards' functions in the workplace. Borrowed from 'left' unions and centrist parties in France and elsewhere, theories perceiving participation as 'practical progress towards workers control' are heard anew, as are muddled concepts of participation as 'helpful' experience for tomorrow's worker-controlled economy.

Coates and Topham of the Institute for Workers Control have argued typically: 'While we have written extensively attacking the idea of participation... we favour a policy of setting down a number of key demands calculated to transform "participation" schemes into "control" ones' (*Workers' Control as a Strategy of Socialist Advance*, 1970). Yet they confine their own ideas for such demands to the *individual workplace level*, whereas what is needed is a clear overall strategy at the level of *whole industries and of society*.

Illusions

The Communist Party, while it rejects participation plans in the private sector, is 'in favour of workers participating in the management of publicly-owned industries under present capitalist conditions' (i.e. in industries controlled today by the bourgeois state) as an 'immediate need' (Bert Ramelson, *Morning Star*, 11 March 1975). This creates sad illusions concerning the nature of present-day 'public ownership' of industry, which at root serves capitalist rather than working class interests.

The urgent need is to prepare now for the forthcoming intensification of the 'industrial democracy' debate within the labour movement which the Bullock Committee will encourage, and seize on the opportunities it will provide to combat confusions and illusions on the subject among militants. Only a sustained campaign to halt the 'participation' bandwagon and insist that the working class takes no responsibility for the workings of the market economy will meet this new threat from the 'social contract'.

At the same time, the rare chance this offers to take the *real issues* of workers control of the economy and the state into the labour movement must not slip out of our hands. Time is relatively short for that crucial task.

RICHARD NEUBAUER

ALICE IN THUNDERLAND AS STUDENTS BATTLE ON

French ministers change, but not their policy towards the education system.

May '68 began with a general strike of the universities and schools. At that time the students were already in struggle against the policies of the bourgeoisie, which aimed to make education 'profitable' to the economy by adapting it to the needs of the capitalists.

Every year since has seen a new decree published, always along the same lines; every year has seen a new minister of education, as a result of the struggles provoked by the unpopularity of their reforms. This year's new minister, Alice Saunier Seite, has proposed a more direct say for industry in the university programme than ever before; while her counterpart responsible for secondary education is pushing through a tougher selection process.

French students have been struggling against these proposals for more than two months now. Since 15 April there has been a general strike in the universities, and the struggle has also been joined by school students and students of the CET technical schools.

Organisation

The organisation of the movement is an example of real democracy. Each of the three sectors has elected a strike committee in every school and in every town. These committees send five delegates to national meetings, where they bring motions for discussion and voting and which decide on the way forward for the movement.

There have been four national coordination meetings up to now. One in Amiens, one in Toulouse, one in Paris and the most recent one in Lyon. All motions are read out, discussed and voted on. The main aims of the students are outlined in the main motion adopted up to now: 'The objectives of the student movement are not to struggle against the reforms of the universities as a defence of the *status quo* or of sectoral demands, but it is to include this struggle in a more general struggle against capitalist education'.

Because of this struggle the Government has had to postpone the application of the reform. But they have not abandoned the project. They hope that in time the movement will be isolated and will perish.

In this they are helped by the attitude of the French Communist and Socialist Parties, whose main preoccupation is the legislative elections of 1977. They therefore do everything in their power to prevent any movement which could harm their 'respectable' image.

Both the SNES-SUP (CP-dominated teachers' union) and the UNEF-Renouveau (CP-dominated students union) were very careful at the beginning of the strike. In previous years they had excluded themselves from the move-

strength of the movement on the May Day demonstration, the UNEF-Renouveau is actually helping the Government by calling for an end to the strike, thus betraying the remaining 75 per cent of students who are ready to continue the struggle. The SNES-SUP, meanwhile, refuses to call a general strike of teachers in solidarity with the students. For the CGT (CP-dominated union federation) the student-worker alliance simply equals the common programme in 1977.

But despite the wishes of the reformists, the struggle continues in the French universities and schools. Its strength lies in its democracy, its determination, and its orientation towards the struggles of the working class. Forums and commissions are attended every day, in every college, by workers who do not



French students march against proposed reforms

ment and lost many members because of their sectarian attitude towards the representative body of all the students, the national coordination meetings. So at the beginning they participated in the coordination debates, even though their attempt to give the movement a 'CP/SP common programme axis' was not successful at all.

But now, after the massive show of

think that the solution is to wait for the elections.

The French Government must not be allowed to win this war of attrition. Student readers in particular are urged to get their organisations to send telegrams of solidarity to the next coordination meeting of the French student movement, c/o Rouge, 2 rue Richard-Lenoir, 93100 Montreuil, France.

CUTS FIGHT STARTS IN LABOUR PARTY

'Cuts were wrong under Barber in 1973; they are wrong in 1976 under a Labour Government.' This is how Bob Hughes, former MP for Aberdeen, opened last Saturday's national conference called by

'Labour against the Housing Cuts'. Delegates from 30 Constituency Labour Parties, 11 Labour Party Young Socialists branches, and several trade union branches and trades councils attended the conference.

Conference organisers Ken Livingstone and Ted Knight, both Labour councillors, put out a call for socialist policies. But it was left to successful resolutions from Birmingham (Selly Oak) CLP and Hackney North and Stoke Newington LPYS to spell out the concrete demands which constitute 'socialist policies':

- that social expenditure should be linked to price and wage indices to protect it from the effects of inflation;

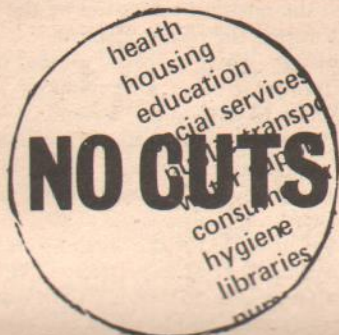
- for a crash programme of useful public works;
- for the cancellation of local and national debt charges;
- for the abolition of the private sector through a programme of nationalisation.

Most important, the resolutions spelt out *how* to fight for 'socialist policies'. Support was voted for the 26 May Day of Action and the lobby of the Labour Party conference called by the NCC against the cuts in the NHS. And the conference made a call for a lobby of the 16 June special meeting of the TUC.

It was agreed that these should constitute the first steps in a campaign which would involve removing any delegates, councillors and MPs who support cuts, replacing them with those prepared to defend and extend the social services.

The conference could act as a

real launching pad for the mobilisations of militants in the Labour Party to initiate a national campaign against the cuts. This means a real drive to turn the resolutions



passed into action. A big effort must be made to win delegates to participate on the Labour Against the Cuts Committee set up by the conference, and to win wide support for the Labour Against the Cuts bulletin.

Supporters of the bulletin should be organised up and down the country into caucuses to campaign for its policies, to coordinate their actions with trade union branches, trades councils, shop stewards committees, etc. in local cuts committees. Resolutions should be moved to Labour Party conference along the lines of the Selly Oak resolution.

The demand must be raised that all left MPs and councillors who claim to be against the cuts should join the campaign for mass action against the Labour Government's anti-working class policies, associate themselves with all bodies fighting against the cuts nationally and locally, and throw their weight behind building Labour Against the Cuts as a national open caucus in Labour Party.

- WHAT'S ON -

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.

BATH: Demonstration and rally against cuts in welfare state. Sat 15 May, assemble 1.30pm, Victoria Park, Bath. Speakers include: Labour MP, member of NUT Exec., and local trade unionists. Organised by: Bath Trades Council, NUPE, CPSA, NUS, WWC and others. Further details: Bath 62274.

RISE FREE bookshop is moving next Monday, 17 May, to: 155 Drummond St, London NW1.

WORKING WOMEN'S Charter and Labour's legislation—public meeting, Thurs 20 May, 7.30pm at Roubek pub, Tottenham Cr Rd (Warren St tube). Organised by London WWCC.

CHILE: labour movement conference organised by Manchester and Stockport Chile Committees. 2-5pm Sun 23 May, in AUEW offices, The Crescent, Salford. Speakers include: Pedro Cornejo (CUT), Andrew Bennett MP, Colin Barnett (NUPE), Mike Gatehouse (Nat Sec, Chile Solidarity Campaign).

RED LADDER THEATRE wants more rungs... We are a collective touring theatre company based in Leeds, and we want: (1) A Performer—of either sex, preferably with Equity membership and musical skills; (2) An Administrator—she/he should have organising experience and knowledge of the trade union and labour movement; (3) A Musical Director—she/he should be able to play one or more musical instruments and write and arrange music. All to start in September. Wage £45 a week. Please write giving details of experience and reasons for interest in the work. Red Ladder Theatre, 20 Westminster Bldgs., 31 New York St, Leeds 2. Leeds 456342.

LIVERPOOL Iberian Week, 17-21 May. 17 May, 8pm: Workers Struggles in Spain and Portugal; 18 May: National struggles in Spain.

18 May, 8pm: National struggles in Spain. 19 May, 8pm: Women's struggles in Spain and Portugal. 20 May, 8pm: Films. 21 May, 9pm: Social evening. All events in Stanley House, 198 Upper Parliament St, Liverpool 8.

REVOLUTIONARY Communist Group: 'The crisis and the struggle to build the Marxist tradition'. First of a series of meetings on the fundamental questions of Marxism from the standpoint of today. Discussion will be structured around articles published in Revolutionary Communist journal and will lay the basis for a political defence of the working class in the current crisis. 7.30pm, Tues 18 May, in Earl Russell pub, 2 Pancras Road (Kings Cross tube).

CAMPAIGN to Repeal the Immigration Act: benefit performances of 'Me See it Gonna Blow' by the General Will. Mon 17 May, 7.30pm: Oval House (Oval tube). Weds 19 May, 7.30pm: Artists for Democracy, 143 Whitfield Street, W.1.

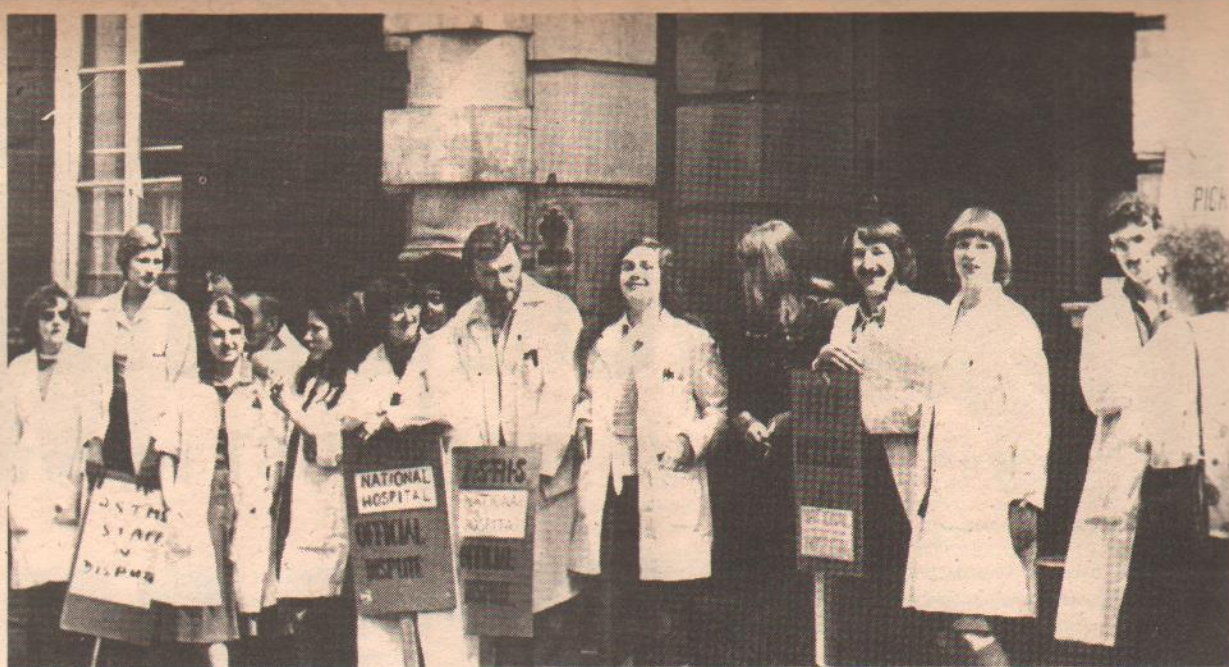
MOTOR INDUSTRY: IWC meeting, Sun 23 May, 7.30pm, Digbeth Civic Hall (Cttee Rm 2). Speakers: Tom Litterick MP, Jim Shutt (AUEW/TASS), Bob Ashworth (T&G).

WORKERS BOOKSHELF: A socialist mail-order book service offers a wide selection of books on Marxist theory, labour history, women and international affairs. Pamphlets our speciality—over 60 titles. See (footscap) for catalogue to: Workers Bookshelf, 150 Foster Road, Trumpington, Cambridge.

MICHAEL FARRELL on 'Northern Ireland: the Orange State' Peoples Democracy public meeting, Fri 21 May, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1.

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).

WOMEN'S RIGHTS day school: Sat 22 May, 10.30-5pm at Nottingham Teachers Centre, Cranmer St.



Members of the white collar union ASTMS held a token strike at the National Hospital in London last Friday to protest the sacking on 6 April of Lesley Nairn, a senior technician in the Chemical Pathology Laboratory. Ostensibly she was sacked because she refused to see a private psychiatrist employed by the hospital, after a brief illness and after a Guy's Hospital consultant psychiatrist had declared her fit to return to work. ASTMS members argue that Lesley was sacked because of her activity in union affairs — a crucial issue at a time of escalating cutbacks in the NHS.

OUR STATE OF HEALTH 2. CAPITALIST PROFITS BEFORE WORKERS' NEEDS

The British working class was the first to win a relatively free health service in capitalist world. The NHS was formed both because of the pressure of the workers movement and because of the needs and interests of the ruling class.

For the working class, a return to the appalling standards of pre-war health care was unacceptable. For the ruling class, it was abundantly clear that the inefficient pre-war medical system could not provide at low cost a reasonably healthy labour force.

From the very outset, however, the capitalist state stamped its authority on the newly formed NHS, whose function has remained essentially curative. Social factors such as unemployment, bad housing, exploitation and oppression — all vital matters in determining the state of health — are ignored.

Packed

The Regional Health Boards set up by the state to run the NHS hospitals at local level were packed with businessmen, local dignitaries, doctors and the odd cleric who could be relied on to accept the needs of capitalism. The allocation of funds to the NHS has always been determined by the needs of the ruling class — hence slashing cuts in the NHS and hand-outs to industry when capitalism is beset by crisis.

The dominance of the NHS by the consultants was sanctioned with Nye Bevan's capitulation to their demands for private practice to remain both inside and outside the health service. Not only did this leave power in the hands of the consultants, but it ensured that private practice could leech off the NHS and that the capitalist ethos of money being able to buy preference was perpetuated.

The first post-war Labour Government refused to nationalise the drugs industry, which meant that the NHS was made a virtual medical and financial prisoner of the giant monopolies who control the drug market.

As capitalist medicine proceeds essentially from the physical symptoms of illness, ignoring their social causes, its solutions range from surgery to the use of medicine and drugs. This not only creates a profitable and protected market for the drug manufacturers and results in a massive waste of resources, but often also causes reversals in former scientific progress. For example, the over-prescription of penicillin — not to deal with specific illnesses but to treat the common cold — has led to a marked reduction in its effectiveness.

The establishment of the NHS reflected the State's acceptance of the Beveridge Report of 1942, which argued that a rationally planned health service would gradually decrease in cost as people

got more and more healthy. This illustrates capitalism's overriding concern with doing no more than maintain a healthy labour force — the assumption being that once you have eradicated the worst excesses, the workers will be fitter to carry on producing and both the state and the employers will be better off.

Beveridge's hopes of declining costs proved to be an illusion, however. From the initial cost in 1948 of around £400 million, the annual cost of the NHS has now climbed to just under £5,000 million.

Ever since the NHS was set up, the ruling class has been haunted by the spectre that it and the other social services would use state funds which were needed for private industry and defence requirements. Always when the crunch has come, the capitalist class — invariably with the support of the Labour leaders — has put private profit and imperialist armaments before workers' health.

The watering down of the four NHS Hospital Building Plans shows this process at work. In 1962 (i.e. after 13 years of no hospitals or plans) a national network of 265 seven hundred bed District General Hospitals (DGHs) was proposed. In 1966 this was thought too ambitious, and less new hospitals were thus projected.

In 1969 the DGH was thrown out in favour of the 'Best Buy Hospital', which was cheaper because it provided fewer beds per head of population (2 per 1,000 vs. 3-4 per 1,000). Yet again in 1974 this was thrown out to be replaced by the Modular Hospital Plan. Here the bed

number is down to 300, and it can be built up in stages of 100 beds or so.

This process mirrored the decline of the British capitalist economy, with the state tailoring its health building programmes to the needs of capital rather than the needs of working people. Bevan's reforms have remained and will continue to remain paper plans with nothing on the ground, as the reformists have never seriously posed the question of workers control over the state and private health industry.

From the mid-1960s (starting with the Porritt Report), the ruling class favoured re-organising the three aspects of the NHS (Local Authority Health Services, the Hospitals, and the GPs) under more centralised state control. It wanted this for one reason only — to make the NHS work more effectively and more cheaply for the capitalist class. But only under the 1970-74 Tory Government was a sufficiently centralised bureaucratic structure achieved with the chairman and half the members of the Area and Regional Health Authorities appointed from the Department of Health.

Control

The re-organisation of the three sections of the NHS, because it was not carried out under workers control, lost its potentially progressive aspect of allowing a better planned and integrated health service. Instead, its function is to provide that centralised administrative structure which the state needs for the *planning and carrying out of cutbacks*.

However, the Labour Government fully understood that closing wards and hospitals; sacking nurses, ancillaries, technicians and even doctors (especially foreign junior doctors); and thus decreasing health care and increasing waiting lists will provoke a *massive* response from the working class. The new streamlined bureaucratic administration of the NHS could be too blunt an instrument to cut back the NHS without causing the blood-letting of demonstrations, strikes, occupations, etc. It is in that context that we must see the role of the Royal Commission.

Although it was created at the time of the consultants' threatened resignations, it is now being turned into a means for pulling in the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracy behind its aims. The crisis in the health service can only be resolved by the capitalist class if they are able to re-allocate money within the framework of an overall cutback in the finances available to the NHS.

The purpose of the Royal Commission is to determine how best that can be done, and the purpose that the so-called workers' representatives will serve on that Commission is to put trade union 'authority' behind capitalism's attacks on workers' health.

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.



Socialist Party leader Mario Soares

The formation of a majority government by the workers parties in Portugal is a real possibility following their conquest of 53 per cent in the recent elections. In fact, from the point of view of the interests of the Portuguese masses, it is an absolute necessity.

The immediate formation of a Socialist Party/Communist Party government would not only encourage and strengthen the ability and determination of the workers and peasants to maintain and extend the gains they have made so far. It would also put these leaders on the spot before the thousands and thousands of Communist and Socialist voters who still have illusions in them.

But as history has shown, reformists are thorough cowards when faced with the prospect of taking power in a pre-revolutionary situation — and the present Portuguese breed is no exception. Less than 24 hours after the results, Cunhal and Soares declared on television their support for the present Sixth Provisional Government, saying that nothing must change until after the presidential elections in June.

Reactionaries

The longer the workers parties delay in forming a government, the greater the room for manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie. Defeated in the elections and unable to launch the offensive they had planned against the workers, the ruling class will seize every opportunity to undermine the position of the peasants and workers. Already they are blaming their defeat on the fact that they did not attack the workers parties strongly enough, that they were too timid. And they do not mean just verbally.

Wounded

In Amarante, a town in the North of Portugal, members of the Centre Democrats (CDS) shot and wounded a comrade of the Internationalist Communist League (LCI), and were allowed to escape by the police. This is an example of what it means to be 'too timid'! And it is an example that these reactionaries will be seeking to repeat in the coming weeks.

Against these attacks, and others like them, the workers must organise in their own defence. While the backpedalling of the reformists gives the reactionaries time to prepare new forms of attack and new alliances, the workers are being deserted by their leaders in the interests of sectarian manoeuvres around the forthcoming presidential elections.

President

So far two candidates have presented themselves — an admiral (the present prime minister) and a general (head of the Army). Both these military gentlemen are being courted by various political parties.

At the moment Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo looks like getting the support of the Socialist Party, while General Ramalho Eanes will undoubtedly have the support of the

For a CP-SP Government!

DAVE WIMHURST reports from Portugal



Presidential candidate Admiral de Azevedo

bourgeois CDS and Popular Democrats (PPD). However it is not unlikely that the SP will jilt the admiral in favour of the general. So far the CP has merely emphasised that the president must be a military man, without naming any specific figures.

As far as the bourgeoisie is concerned, the presidential election is of great importance following their defeat at the polls. An all-powerful president can soon push aside the problems imposed by the workers parties' majority on the parliamentary terrain — as long as he is favourably disposed towards the

bourgeoisie, of course. At the moment both candidates are so disposed, with Eanes being the clear favourite.

Carvalho

The centrists of the Left Socialist Movement (MES) and the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP) have declared their support for Otelo de Carvalho as a candidate, although he himself has said that he is not running.

As far as the PRP is concerned, there is apparently no contradiction between boycotting the 'bourgeois' general elections in the most ultra-left fashion and diving head first into the race for the presidency. The only conclusion to be drawn is that the PRP place the presidential elections above classes and the class struggle — which falls right into the 'bonapartist' trap set by the bourgeoisie.

From the right to the left, military figures are winning the support of political parties in the race to the presidency — with one exception, the LCI. We will only support a candidate from the working class; and if no candidate is presented by any other political party, the LCI will present its own candidate, a workers candidate, and will call for a vote for this candidate against all military or bourgeois candidates



General Eanes—also standing

This position completely accords with the position presented by the LCI during the recent election campaign, which revolved around the central question of workers unity and how to defend and extend it. During the campaign the LCI called for a national congress of the trade unions and a national conference of the workers commissions as the best means possible for the working class to centralise their experience of the past two years, to develop their own organisations, and to unite as a class in the struggle against Portuguese and European capitalism.



Alvaro Cunhal—heads Communist Party

This theme underlies the demand for the CP and the SP to form a government responsible to these forms of workers organisations. This theme underlies the necessity to present one, and only one, workers candidate for the presidential elections, to unite the workers' vote against the uniformed representatives of capital.

Strike

It is clear that the next period in Portugal will be marked by deeper and more prolonged struggles. The workers are showing that even if they have won a majority in the elections, and even if the next national elections are only two months away, it is their own struggles that are the most important.

In Coimbra, one of the largest and most important ceramic factories in the whole of the country is entering its third week of strike. The workers in the pharmaceutical industry are launching a total strike in support of their collective contract. The workers in the shipping companies are preparing to go on strike within a few days. The miners are still in struggle.

Without a doubt, this summer in Portugal will be a great deal hotter than the tourists have bargained for.

Rhodesia - the stench of racism



One of the 'protected villages' set up by the Smith regime in an attempt to starve the guerilla fighters of support. Just who these villages protect can be seen from the positioning of the security keep — in the middle of the huts.

Whipping is still a common punishment in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) — for Africans only. This is just the crowning point of a dung-hill of racist laws now exposed* by which 277,000 whites maintain their ascendancy over 6 million Africans.

White supremacy didn't start in Zimbabwe in 1965 with Ian Smith's Unilateral Declaration of Independence. It was the basis on which the British conquered and ran the country from the turn of the century. Smith simply rendered it more 'profound' by bringing in a system of virtual apartheid.

LAND: On the crucial question of land, for instance, on which the majority of Africans depend for their subsistence, the Land Apportionment Act of 1969 designated 45 million acres as European and 45 million acres as African — in a land in which Africans outnumber Europeans by over 20 to 1. The best farming lands are exclusively white. African areas are further away from railways and

existing main roads, 82 per cent being more than 50 miles away from urban centres.

EDUCATION: 'At present the amount spent on the education of each African child is less than one-twelfth of that spent on his 'European' counterpart. In 1975, approximately R(hodesian) \$30 million was spent on educating the children of six million Africans while R\$25.74 million was spent on the children of 307 thousand whites, Asians and coloureds' (p30).

EMPLOYMENT: 'It is believed that there are now at least a million Africans unemployed. Despite the fact that the actual numbers employed in the towns have risen considerably over the last decade, the proportion of Africans in employment has fallen from 17 to 14 per cent On average, whites in employment earned almost eleven times as much as the average industrial black worker in Rhodesia in 1972' (p25).

Just in case any African was tempted to use 'normal' means to change this situation — such as going on strike — section 31 of the Law and Order Maintenance Act makes it a criminal offence punishable by up to five years imprisonment for anyone to incite strike action in 'essential services' — with the burden of proof being on the accused. And 'essential services' include not only a long list of specific areas but also 'any other service declared by the President by notice in the Gazette to be an essential service for the purpose of this Act' (emphasis added).

But that is not all. In section 48 of the same Act, an act of terrorism is defined as an act which is likely to 'endanger, interrupt or interfere with the carrying on of any essential service' Thus African workers who strike in 'essential services' could face death or life imprisonment!

The only way the white ascendancy can be maintained is through naked repression. The most elementary rights — to assembly, free speech, free trade unions — do not exist. But all these measures have proved ineffective — even the *diktat* of September 1973 making it a capital offence to fail to report the presence of guerillas.

In order to try to prevent the African tribes from assisting the guerillas, the authorities began removing tribes-people from their villages in early 1973 and resettling them in 'protected villages'. In Vietnam the Americans called them 'strategic hamlets', and just who the villages protect can be seen from the picture on this page. The evacuated areas are 'no-go' areas in which you are liable to be shot on sight without warning.

NOTORIOUS

'By the end of 1973, 8,000 had been moved from the "no-go" areas, and of these 6,000 had by December 1973 passed through a notorious transit camp established at Gutsa, 150km north of Salisbury. Conditions in the camp were such that disease was rife and at one time four or five children were dying every day from cholera and measles. There were only three water taps, and only two African orderlies for medical attention. Each family was allocated one hut irrespective of the size of the family and the age of the children' (p71).

The imperialist powers are now scrambling to save what they can in southern Africa. Vorster has opened up a policy of 'detente' towards the neo-colonial black regimes in Africa, the better to mask his own domestic savagery. Kissinger repeatedly states that the US will support all moves to remove the Smith regime by any means — except force.

British socialists must stand four square behind the armed struggle of the Zimbabwe guerilla fighters and help hasten both the downfall of the Smith regime and the spread of armed struggle to the bastion of white racism — South Africa itself.

**Racial Discrimination and Repression in Southern Rhodesia*, a legal study by the International Commission of Jurists. Price £1.

New tasks face TOM conference

This weekend the Troops Out Movement holds its national delegate conference, at a time when the need for consistent work on the Irish question is more vital than ever.

In the past the TOM has been very much to the fore of such work. Cutting across the chauvinist ideas of the Communist Party — which in calling on Britain to 'reform' the Six Counties, denies the right of the Irish people to self-determination — the TOM has gained impressive support within the working class movement for the twin demands of 'Troops Out Now' and 'Self-determination for the Irish people as a whole'.

The latest initiative of TOM, a mass labour movement delegation to Ireland, provides an example of this support. Already it has gained the sponsorship of 13 Labour MPs and many trades councils and trade union bodies.

Members of the IMG at the TOM conference will be arguing that the delegation must be planned in a way that allows the development of much more consistent work in the mass organisations of the working class —

the trade unions and the Labour Party. The aim must be to establish TOM support groups which would organise and regularly agitate on the Irish issue in the unions, CLPs etc. This would enable the movement for Irish self-determination to become much more integrated into the life of the mass organisations, overcoming TOM's previous tendency to separation and isolation in this respect.

Detailed

To ensure an impetus for such initiatives, this TOM conference must agree to a detailed agenda for the delegation, establishing precisely where it will go and who will be invited to address the delegates. Already the vagueness of the delegation's agenda has been used by supporters of the Communist Party in a number of trade union branches to argue that it will be fixed so that only those who support TOM or sympathise with it will be met. The only way to answer such slanders is

to work out and circulate a detailed agenda now.

The same detailed planning should be made with regard to the follow-up to the delegation. IMG delegates will be arguing for a series of regional and trade union sector conferences to take place as soon as possible after the delegation returns.

The major such initiative should be an open conference for members of the Labour Party — which the TOM agreed to hold over six months ago. From such conferences and report-backs the various support groups could be established — which would both widen the intervention of TOM and help to build the movement generally.

What the TOM needs now, above all, is a series of concrete realisable targets. Members of the IMG will be presenting such targets to the TOM conference; and as a sign of the seriousness with which the IMG regards work on this issue, we will be contributing significant resources to building both TOM and the Labour movement delegation over the coming months.

7 DAYS in the 6 COUNTIES

JOHN MAGEE reports from Belfast

Some 1,500 women and men are held in prison camps in the North of Ireland as hostages by British imperialism.

The vast majority of these political prisoners are members of the Republican organisations, and the price of their release is the surrender of the anti-imperialist resistance and acceptance of the British Government's schemes for the return of a Stormont-type regime in the Six Counties — a regime that, because of the undemocratic sectarian character of this Northern statelet, can only be based on Loyalist dominance.

All kinds of harassment and brutality have been borne stubbornly by the political prisoners; and their determined voice raised consistently in defence of the anti-imperialist struggle has been an important element on many occasions in rallying support for this struggle. This fact has not been lost on Merlyn Rees and the Labour Government, with the result that as from 1 March this year, political prisoner status (or special category status, as the official jargon describes it) was abolished.

Rees hopes to isolate the political hostages from the anti-Unionist working class by branding the former as 'criminals'. This forms a central part of the Labour Government's general strategy of depoliticisation of the struggle in the North of Ireland.

Dominated

According to Rees, 'the rule of law will be imposed impartially through the courts'. But as we have repeatedly pointed out in Red Weekly, the Northern Irish courts are dominated by servants of the Orange ascendancy.

Furthermore, British 'democracy' has ensured that the 'rule of law' in the Six Counties will be administered by the sectarian Royal Ulster Constabulary and Ulster Defence Regiment, the armed wings of the Loyalist political parties.

It is impossible to overestimate the impact that the removal of political status will have on both the prisoners and the anti-Unionist working class. Not only will the prisoners face isolation from the nationalist community, but inside the prison camps they will also be isolated from each other.

For the last 18 months, British imperialism has been constructing new blocks of individual cells to accommodate the future political hostages and destroy the solidarity of the compounds. Such arrangements will deprive the individual prisoners of any defence against

the brutal assaults which are continuously being made by prison screws and British soldiers.

If the anti-Unionist working class can be convinced that the opponents of imperialism are 'gangsters', then British imperialism will be well on its way to securing the defeat of the Republican struggle that it has so unsuccessfully sought over the last seven years.

Leadership

It will hasten the moves being made to get the RUC back into the nationalist ghettos, and open the door to the involvement of the UDR in these areas. Five hundred UDR personnel are being trained in riot control at summer camps in England over the next few months, and only the totally naive would believe that this is to equip them to deal with Loyalist mobs.

Despite the importance of this latest attack on the political hostages, the leadership of the Republican organisations have made no effort to mobilise the anti-Unionist working class in defence of the prisoners. The Official leadership presents only a deafening silence. The Provisionals resort to retaliation against individual prison officers, which only leads to further aggression against the prisoners and efforts to split the militants of other Republican organisations from their Provisional comrades.

In this situation, a petition has been launched by the People's Democracy and supported by the Movement for a Socialist Republic (Irish section of the Fourth International) in defence of political status.

Both groups see the petition as a means of beginning to mobilise support within the ghettos and laying the foundation for a mass campaign in defence of the political hostages, and for their release. To this end, meetings are planned in all the different areas to establish committees which can organise support for the campaign.

The need for international support for this campaign cannot be overstressed. The only 'criminals' in Ireland are the agents of British imperialism and its allies. The only 'crime' of which the political hostages are guilty is of having consistently fought against the oppression of the capitalist class.

Workers in Britain must remember that the time will come, and soon, when they too will be looking for recognition for political prisoners of their very own.

The Orange Card

BOB PURDIE reviews *Northern Ireland: the Orange State*, by Michael Farrell (Pluto, £5 paperback), and *The Protestants of Ulster*, by Geoffrey Bell (Pluto, £2 paperback).

It is fortunate that two such complementary books on the Irish question have become available at the same time. They deserve to be widely read, and will prove their worth over the years in clarifying the problems posed in this area for Marxists.

Mike Farrell's book is the first detailed political history of Northern Ireland. It is not surprising that it took a Marxist to write it, because for many years bourgeois historians wrote 'finished' after the 1922 Treaty Settlement, ignoring the recurrent signals from Northern Ireland that the Irish problem was

far from solved.

The book is particularly important for its material on the 1918-21 pogroms, its description of the 1932 Outdoor Relief struggle in which Protestant and Catholic workers found a short-lived unity, and its tracing of the frustrations of middle-class nationalist politics. None of these subjects had been adequately dealt with previously.

The book, in short, is a major achievement and every page gives evidence of detailed and meticulous research. However, I have to confess that I was somewhat

disappointed, as I had expected the book to be much more analytical. Mike says that he wants the facts in the book to speak for themselves, but a more analytical approach would aid readers unacquainted with Irish history to digest more easily the vast chunks of fact.

Part of the problem, of course, is the necessary limitations of any study of Northern Ireland. For instance, Mike records the fact that the support for IRA campaigns amongst the population of the Free State was emotional and sporadic — but why was this?

To a large extent, the failure of the Republicans to build up effective support in the South has determined the course of the struggle in the North in recent years, and yet Marxists have produced no convincing explanation for this fact. Mike's book is a major contribution to the discussion on the Irish problem, but to develop further that discussion will have to take into account the British and Free State dimensions.

Protestant

Geoff Bell's book is a less weighty, but no less interesting, study of one aspect of the problem in Northern Ireland. In a deftly woven tapestry of the politics, history and culture of the Northern Ireland Protestants, he gives us an insight into their view of the world.

Again I am probably obtuse in wanting more, but it seems to me to be particularly important to expand on the definition he gives of the Protestant workers as constituting a 'labour aristocracy'. I agree with this description, although it clearly does not apply to all Protestant workers. But it is useful precisely in that it gives us a point of comparison with other groups of workers who have had a very different

political history.

The classical labour aristocracy in Britain was that section of the working class which originated in domestic production, and the workshop trades, and whose consciousness was deeply marked by the individualism of their production methods and the *laissez-faire* tradition of their wage bargaining. To maintain their wage levels they instituted a strict demarcation between themselves and less skilled workers.

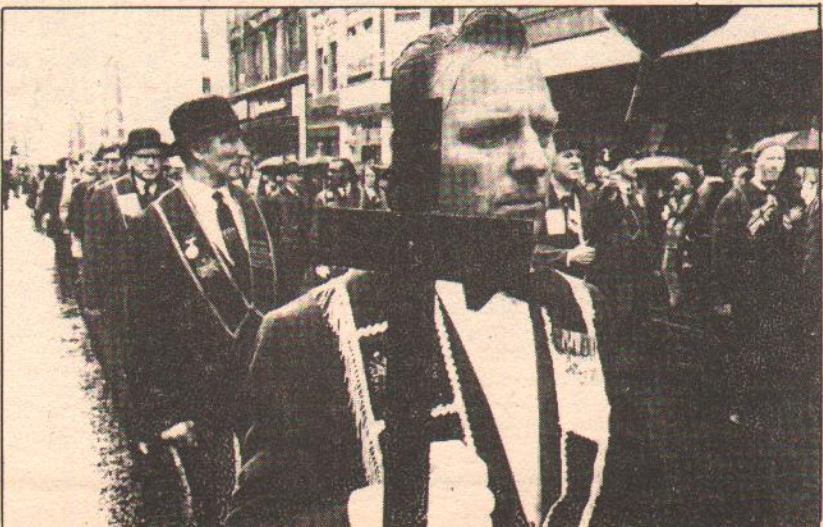
Privilege

The early craft trade unions came out of this reactionary section of early industrial society. But the Orange workers in Belfast conform most closely to a transitional form of the labour aristocracy which developed in the early stages of large-scale production. Significantly one of the best examples of this is the ship-building industry, the sector of industry in Belfast in which Protestant privilege has been most strongly entrenched.

By the first decade of this century, however, the divisions between the labour aristocracy and the unskilled workers in Britain began to break down. They broke down alike in areas like Clydeside, where the working class maintained religious sectarian divisions, and in areas where sectarianism had been entirely forgotten. How does a comparison with this experience cast light on the problem of the working class in Northern Ireland? It would have been interesting to have Geoff's ideas.

I am sorry if I seem to be carping about these fine books, but possibly the fact that they stimulate such questions is a tribute to their achievement.

Bob Purdie



DEFEND WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

UNITE

AGAINST RULE 14!

A lobby of the annual conference of trades councils in Swansea on 22 May will be the next step in the campaign against the TUC's new 'Black Circular', Rule 14. This proposal was endorsed at a meeting called by the Camden Trades Council Defence Committee last Friday which was attended by 50 trade unionists, including members of 12 London trades councils.

The new Rule 14 is simply the first step by the TUC to stifle any resistance to their class collaborationist policies. As opposition grows to unemployment and the cuts, trades councils have been playing a leading role in organising local protests against the Government's policies. Now the TUC is attempting to shackle trades councils, turning them into the mouthpieces for its policies in the labour movement rather than the co-ordinators of action against Labour's Tory policies.

Despite the debate and disagreements at the meeting on the best way to fight Rule 14, there was total unanimity on the need to mount such a campaign throughout the labour movement. The dangers of the new rule have already been seen in Sheffield, where the Trades Council has used it as an excuse to dissociate itself from the Working Women's Charter Group.

Birmingham Trades Council, meanwhile, has been informed by the TUC that the annual conference of trades councils can't actually discuss Rule 14 because...it's against TUC policy! Stinchley AUEW No.2 branch, which was to have moved a motion at the next trades council meeting opposing Rule 14 and mandating Birmingham Trades Council delegates to vote against it at the annual conference, will now have to take the issue to the union's Executive Committee.

Although Rule 14 is aimed at curbing the activities of trades councils, the fight against it will have to take place first and foremost in trade union branches, passing resolutions to their executives for debate at the TUC annual congress in September. In Camden the AUEW, Central London ACTS (TGWU white collar section) and several other branches have already thrown out the rule. But if trades councils themselves are to provide the focus of opposition to Labour's anti-working class policies and the TUC's sell-outs, then they too must fight to reject or reverse Rule 14.

To prepare for the lobby of the TUC

in Brighton, a much broader and more representative meeting for all trade unionists and trades council delegates is being built on an all-London basis for 26 June. Militants in other areas should also be putting in resolutions supporting and sponsoring the lobby of the TUC now.

Only a campaign mounted at every level of the trade union movement will

succeed in defeating the TUC's latest proscription and aid the working class in its coming struggles.

Details of transport to Swansea on 22 May from Camden Trades Council Defence Committee, c/o 164b Haverstock Hill, London N.W.3.

ANNA LARKIN

CP's scandalous role

The Communist Party has at last discovered Rule 14 — although it has been mandatory for all trades councils since the beginning of January.

The occasion: an article in the *Morning Star* on 5 May by Vic Heath, executive member of Camden Trades Council. The purpose: to attack the very people who are organising an all-London campaign against Rule 14, the Camden Trades Council Defence Committee.

Maybe Vic Heath has 'forgotten' that his own Trades Council was the first to be suspended and threatened with expulsion by the TUC. And for what? For standing out in defence of workers democracy in the labour movement.

Maybe Vic Heath has 'forgotten' that in his eagerness to remove the 'extremists', it was his own trades council secretary and Communist Party member Sid Gregory who suspended Camden Trades Council even before the TUC had decided on such action.

It is hardly surprising that the TUC's threat to disaffiliate all trades councils that do not adopt Rule 14 has been seized upon by the Communist Party as an excuse to toe the line, chasing ever faster rightwards in pursuit of the left bureaucracy. After all, unlike the original Black Circular, the new Rule 14 does not mention the CP by name, and could even be used against those forces to its left who want to go beyond token protests against the policies of the Labour Government.

Vic Heath is, of course, against Rule 14. It's just that the CP doesn't want to fight it. In practice they have motivated a vote for Rule 14 on the grounds that it can then be ignored — but just look at the decline of the Minority Movement in the late '20s and early '30s after the CP had used the same excuse not to fight the TUC's ban on trades council affiliation.

Anyway, 'an individual trades council does not have the powers to change Rule 14', argues Vic Heath — only TUC-affiliated unions can do that through resolutions to the next TUC congress. *Red Weekly* completely agrees that a mass campaign in trade union branches passing motions to national executives is vital. But this is *not* what the CP has been doing.

Secondly, not to wage a fight in the trades councils themselves is to ignore why Rule 14 was brought in: to smash the potential trades councils have shown in organising demos and conferences against the cuts and unemployment and providing a focus for struggle in local areas.

Finally, in attacking the Defence Committee the CP is actually attacking the people who have laid the basis for a national campaign against Rule 14. Every trades council should follow that lead — as should CP militants if they're serious about fighting Rule 14.

RED WEEKLY

German state murders Meinhof

ULRIKE MEINHOF is dead. The joint leader of the West German Baader-Minhof urban guerilla group allegedly hanged herself in her cell on Sunday. But defence lawyers and family are claiming she was murdered by the West German authorities.

It would not be the first time that revolutionaries have suffered such a fate under a government headed by social democrats. Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were similarly disposed of after the failure of the Spartacist uprising of 1919.

And in Germany today the image of capitalist prosperity is maintained by the incorporation of the trade union bureaucracy into the state and a series of draconian limitations on political liberties. The five million people employed by state agencies — 20 per cent of the work force — are all subjected to tests concerning their 'loyalty to the constitution', — which involves 'historical research' into their backgrounds going back as far as ten years. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) completely supports the 'decree on extremists'.



ULRIKE MEINHOF

heim, defence lawyers were systematically excluded, state prosecutors refused to release to the defence 90 per cent of the evidence, and defendants were ruled unfit to appear in court. Meinhof herself had been kept in almost permanent isolation for four years.

In 1974 another member of the group, Holger Meins, starved to death in prison because the authorities failed to give him enough liquid food after a long hunger strike. Ulrike Meinhof, too, is now dead. The 'trial' continues.

Speaking tour on SOUTHERN AFRICA

organised by IMG Student Commission

MONDAY 17 MAY

Lunchtime: Birmingham Poly (speaker Mark Roberts)
Evening: Birmingham Univ. (speaker Mark Roberts)
Evening (8pm): Chetwynd Room, Kings College, Cambridge. (speaker Clive Baldwin)

TUESDAY 18 MAY

Lunchtime: Canley College of Ed. (speaker Mark Roberts)
Evening: Warwick University (speaker Mark Roberts)

THURSDAY 20 MAY

Lunchtime: Oxford Poly, Main Lecture Theatre
Evening (8pm): Lecture Room 23, Balliol College, Oxford Univ.

If you want to organise a meeting on southern Africa in your college, contact IMG Student Commission, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1 (tel 01-278 9526).

Witch-hunt

As for the trade union bureaucracy, the leadership of IG Metall (the metal workers union) has introduced its own ban on 'extremists'. Members can be expelled simply by a decision of the leadership and without any investigation, thus losing their rights to any union protection and hence their jobs. Some unions go so far as to use the advantages offered them by the political police (*Verfassungsschutz*) in the struggle against oppositionists.

The emergence of urban guerilla groups in response to the Vietnam war and the passivity of the German working class was the politics of despair. But the Baader-Meinhof defendants were tried and convicted by a hysterical campaign in the Springer press before they ever came to court. Ironically, Meinhof died at the very moment when that press was being silenced through the strike action of printworkers against the Government's incomes policy.

When the trial got underway in the specially erected fortress court at Stamm-

DISAPPOINTING

The latest round of union conferences has revealed the deep crisis of leadership inside the working class. Those union leaders who have taken a position of opposition to the wage cut deal with Healey show no intention of waging a fight against it. None of them have raised the socialist alternative of a sliding scale of wages to place the responsibility for the crisis and inflation where it belongs — on the backs of the employers.

Red Weekly has been assisting the fight of our comrades delegated to these conferences, from the Scottish TUC to the ASTMS conference last weekend. But to develop this work, the paper must be strengthened; and the total received for the Fighting Fund this week is both disappointing and inadequate. We're still only up to £491.91 — still short of a third of our target of £1,500 by the end of June.

Our thanks to those who did respond this week: Scottish supporter, £15; H. Mee, £3; North London IMG, £9; and South West London IMG, £4.50. But we want to print a list twice as long next week. Help us to do so by sending off your donation now, to: *Red Weekly Fighting Fund*, 97 Caledonian Road, London N.1.



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Report)

When Brazilian dictator Geisel visited Britain last week, he spent most of his time closeted in Buckingham Palace fixing up a variety of business deals — all paid for with the sweat and blood of the Brazilian workers and peasants, of course. When he did venture out, he was dogged by pickets protesting at the visit.

But Latin American solidarity cannot begin and end with one visit. As if to emphasise this — and the strong links being forged between the different repressive regimes — an urgent appeal was issued last week to save the life of Edgardo Enriquez, a leader of the Chilean MIR.

Enriquez was arrested on 10 April, not in Chile but in the Argentinian capital of Buenos Aires — a clear warning to those

who have spread illusions in the intentions of the new Videla regime. He was last seen on 17 April in one of the city's prisons.

It is urgent to mount an international campaign to stop the Argentinian military from handing Enriquez over to Pinochet's torturers, and demand instead his immediate release. That such campaigns can have an important effect was shown as recently as last month, when Chilean metalworkers' leader Juan Olivares was released by the junta after more than a year in prison. Among those organisations which had adopted him was the Birmingham branch of the electricians' union, EETPU.



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