

Workers' ACTION

No.96 Mar.25-Apr.8, 1978 10p

STOP THE WITCH HUNT!
Nine T&GWU militants at the Cowley car plant are being threatened by district and regional union officials with penalties including expulsion from the union and banning from office for life. If they go under, hundreds of other militants will be at risk. Join the defence campaign.
CONFERENCE, SATURDAY 8th APRIL
1pm, Cowley Community Centre, Oxford.

Resolutions opposing the witch-hunt should be sent to TGWU headquarters at Transport House, to Region 5 headquarters in Birmingham, and to Frank Corti, Secretary 5/293 Branch, 4 Queens Close, Botley, Oxford.

THE HATE REPORT

**WE'RE FOR
LABOUR
BUT FOR
SOCIALISM
TOO**

'A GIFT FOR RACIALISTS' — that's how immigrant organisations are describing the Report of the Commons Select Committee on Immigration and Race Relations.

Their horror at what the Report says, and at its unanimity, is only matched by the glee of the Tories and the National Front fascists.

The Report gives complete endorsement to Margaret Thatcher's racist vote-catching which was so rightly attacked by Labour only a month ago. Yet five Labour MPs have put their names to it — and one of them is Syd Bidwell, Labour Left winger, MP for Southall and hitherto a "race relations" campaigner!

No wonder the Tories are crowing.

The Report calls for:

■ A precise annual quota of immigrants from the Indian sub-continent; here it blatantly drops the pretence of being about "immigration" and descends to straight "Paki-bashing".

■ Tighter internal checks and controls. This could mean identity cards, and "Pass Law" Apartheid-style powers allowing police to step up their witch-hunting of black people. The ten MPs regard the present bullying and persecution of blacks, the dawn raids, indefinite imprisonment and summary deportation as "soft". Extra Social Security checks will mean that no-one with a black face or foreign accent can go to the SS, or even to a doctor or hospital, without risking rudeness and a special third degree on top of the usual red tape.

■ Penalties for knowingly employing "illegal immigrants" and an end to so-called amnesties for "illegal immigrants". Thus the Report stokes up the hysteria against people whose only 'crime' is to break the racist rules, and helps to cast suspicion on whole communities.

■ More resources spent detecting "phony fiancés": that is, more sex-snooping on marriages when a fiancé has come from abroad (unless they're white, of course) Such a marriage will risk one

Israel terror did this



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partner being deported if the sex-snoops aren't convinced.

■ Children above the age of 12 to lose the right to join their parents here.

■ A new, tighter British Nationality law. This could revoke or re-define existing commitments — and provide for official Second Class citizenship.

The Select Committee — 5 Tories and 5 Labour MPs — say they are interested in "good race relations". Yet expectedly their Report has been greeted with outrage

"Hitler's identity control on the Jews consisted of the Star of David armbands. Did that reduce anti-semitism?"

Lewisham Community Relations Officer

and dismay by all the major organisations representing black immigrants. Are these MPs simple-minded fools, or is their idea of "good race relations" a society with whites on top and blacks here on sufferance, living in fear and bundled about like cattle?

With stinking cynicism

these MPs are blaming black immigrants for the joblessness and housing shortages created by capitalism, and which they in Parliament have done nothing to fight against. And by doing that, they further establish hard-core racism at the very centre of British politics.

With this Report the two main parties serve up the filth and lies of the National Front for the consumption of the electorate — and in the hope of its approval.

The line of the major

parties is clear: "good race relations" means pandering to the gutter-racist and the fears of those misled by the professional pogromists of the National Front.

What about Bidwell, well known on the platforms of the Left and a prominent sponsor of the Anti-Nazi League? This traitor should

be pilloried for this foul deed and for the cover he has given the hard-line racists. The Left should declare him "untouchable". Only this way can we with any consistency fight to purge the Labour movement of racists in its ranks.

What the Report contains and recommends is not automatically law. The labour movement should organise now to pledge MPs to vote against any of it in Parliament. We should demand:

- ★ End all immigration curbs
- ★ Purge racists from positions in the labour movement
- ★ Labour movement support for black self-defence
- ★ No platform for fascists

This special 12-page Easter issue of Workers' Action covers two weeks. Our next issue will be dated 8th April.

THE OFFICIAL Labour election broadsheet for the May 4th council elections has the message: "We know Britain is getting better and better. Thanks to Labour".

This make-believe and bluff will surely stick in the gullet of many Labour activists. How can we repeat this nonsense on the doorsteps? And who do we think is going to be taken in by it if we do?

The facts are:

■ The Government has organised the cutting of real wages and living standards — more than any Tory government has dared to do, or been able to do, as far back as figures have been kept.

■ It has cut tens of thousands of jobs in the public sector. It has only tinkered with the unemployment situation. Nationalised firms operate without concern for the workers' lives — as British Leyland is doing by closing its plant at Speke.

■ In north-east Ireland it has continued the bloody war of repression to beat down nationalist resistance and to preserve the Partition which British imperialism imposed on Ireland in 1920.

The Labour Government continues to enforce the Tories' 1971 Immigration Act. Immigrants face deportations, police raids at dawn, arrogant and brutal inquisitions and restrictions.

Unemployment, social service shortages, social dilapidation and decay, have bred widespread disillusion and exasperation. For the first time since the 1930s fascism has become a political force to be reckoned with.

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Schoolkids have every right to protest

IVAN WELS, a Nottingham teacher, reports on the school students' protests.

"WE ARE fed up with being pushed out in the rain in the dinner hour, having to find something to eat, and then sitting in the class room wet all afternoon."

That is how pupils demonstrating in Birmingham last week against teachers' union sanctions put their case.

The sentiments were echoed in several parts of the Midlands in the last week of term.

In Nottingham, at Top Valley comprehensive school, 350 pupils attempted to march to the council house after padlocking the school gates and pelting teachers with eggs. They were dispersed by police without reaching their objective.

Many pupils from other schools in the area, Mansfield, Bingham, and Bulwell, reacted in a similar manner and were dispersed by police, or threatened with expulsion from school.

This highlights the cynical gagging of the National Union of Teachers Executive Committee, which has recommended action whose main effect is petty vindictiveness against school students. Did the Executive really expect NUT members in nursery and primary schools to throw young children onto the streets in the dinner hour and close the gates? Or did it count on turning round to classroom teachers and saying: we want to fight, we propose action, but you don't respond!

Can we really regard the

sanctions as an overt ban? Stopping such activities as school plays, concerts and so on has its main effect in the internal working of the school, and doesn't affect the authorities at all. On the other hand, there is a reactionary, 'devil-take-the-hindmost' aspect to the sanctions: already some NUT members are parroting the NAS/UWT line that 'welfare is the responsibility of the parents' and that there should not be a school meals service at all.

The reason the NUT Executive chose such action is obvious... they thought they were picking a soft option. Since the activities banned are classed as voluntary, teachers do not get paid for them, and headteachers will not lose pay when stopping them. Also, since the activ-

ities are voluntary, the Executive says that through some mystery of the union constitution it can only 'strongly urge', not instruct, members to enforce the sanctions.

All this has meant that the Executive has been able to give a little display of militancy without advancing the fight for a decent living standard for teachers by one inch. The latest episode, when the teachers' union leaders stalemated pay negotiations over the difference between 9.8% increase and 10% increase, is mysterious — but without doubt it's another case of the competitive bureaucratic manoeuvring of the different unions' leaders.

Such cowardly behaviour is typical of an Executive that has consistently refused to

fight since 1969, and has spent most of its energy gagging the membership. If the Exec were really serious about fighting for the 12½% claim it would be giving out an instruction, or calling a ballot, for strike action.

The matter is going to be discussed at the Annual conference over Easter. Every delegate should call on the Exec to drop the present sanctions and put forward a call for one-day or half-day strikes. This, together with demonstrations, will show that we are prepared to fight; and on that basis we could get the support of pupils and parents.

In the meantime we should recognise that the pupils have every right to protest at being thrown out into the rain at midday.

AMERICA's striking coal-miners have put President Jimmy Carter, supremo of the capitalist 'free world', firmly in his place.

Carter issued injunctions ordering the 160,000 strikers to return to work. One hundred obeyed. The other 159,900 said they weren't interested in Carter's law.

Masked pickets turned up at the pits, to check on the tiny trickle of scabs.

Despite bluff and threats, Carter and the US bosses could do nothing about it. In fact the coal-owners have made major new concessions.

This week the miners are voting on whether to accept those concessions or press on for more.

The new offer drops the coal-owners' major demand for penalties against unofficial strikers. At first coal-owners pressed to have it written into the contract that unofficial strikers would be fined up to £12 a day, and the leaders would be sacked. In their second offer (24th February), they retreated to just demanding the contractual right to sack 'leaders' of wildcat strikes. Now they have dropped even that.

But the miners' demand, that the right to strike over local grievances be written into the new contract, has not been met.

As regards pay rises, the coal-owners' offer has shifted relatively little. They offer about 37% increase over three years, but that hasn't been a major issue in dispute.

Medical cover has been

Not a chink in US miners' unity

a big issue. The miners won a major health scheme in 1950. Last summer the health scheme fund ran dry, and the management and the unions announced that miners and their families would be charged for health care.

The miners demanded a return to the previous system of full cover for themselves and their families. The 24th February deal offered cover for bills over \$700. The new deal reduces the limit to \$200.

The coal-owners' first offer (6th February) included

a go-ahead for incentive schemes. In the second offer (24th February) this was dropped — but it reappears in the third offer, subject to majority approval at local level.

The union demanded equal pensions for all retired miners. At present pensions are much lower for miners who retired before 1974. The latest coal-owners' offer includes only a small shift on this issue.

One recently retired miner commented: "I wouldn't blame them (miners who

retired before 1974) if they set up a picket line at the mine if a contract with such provisions were ratified. And if they picket, working miners will respect their picket line".

On Wednesday 15th, after news that the UMW negotiators were proposing a new agreement, scores of militant miners stormed union leader Arnold Miller's office in Washington. Their message was expressed tersely by one placard: "This agreement better be good".

One of the militants declared: "It's worth staying out another 100 days to get a contract that maintains hard-won rights". Already the miners have had almost four months without strike pay.

The coal-owners and the industrialists raised a great outcry about coal stocks running low to back up the use of Taft-Hartley. Now that Taft-Hartley has failed, they have changed their tune. Now they say there is plenty of coal in stock and they can hold out much longer!

Sizeable supplies are still coming through from non-union mines, keeping the

Indiana state police guard a scab coal convoy



A FEATURE of the miners' strike has been the massive meetings held in the coalfields.

With many of the union's top officials afraid to show their faces, the meetings have developed from the early set-piece rallies into a real forum for the strikers.

At meetings of up to 3,000 strikers, the microphone has been open for any union member to get up and speak on the contract, on mine safety, on strike tactics, and — more angrily with each attempted sell-out — on the weakness and treachery of the national UMW leaders.

Discussions have ranged from the growing disillusion with Jimmy Carter — who posed as the 'miners' friend' when he wanted their votes and now tries to break their strike — to how to get rid of UMW President Arnold Miller.

Miller has tried to sell out the strikers at every stage. He

even spend \$40,000 of union funds on trying to 'sell' the coal-owners 24th February offer, employing PR firms and buying radio and TV time. Meanwhile the miners get no strike pay, and have seen no trace of \$2 million donated from the carworkers' union and \$1 million from the steelworkers.

So, for example, in District 2 of the UMW, in Pennsylvania, all 63 locals want Miller replaced.

Miller is skulking well out of the way. But he has found one little voice to speak up for him: the Communist Party of the USA.

"Now is not the time to desert our leaders or call for resignations... Those who would depart from our tradition of complete unity during the national strike are traitors", declared UMW local official John Chach, quoted favourably in the CP's "Daily World" on 24th February.



MILLER AND CARTER—TWO REJECTED PRESIDENTS

ISRAEL's response to the Palestinian raid two weeks ago has been brutally predictable. Under the cover of "avenging Jewish blood" — some thirty Israelis had been killed in the PLO raid — the Zionist leaders sent between 25,000 and 30,000 troops into Lebanon.

According to Israeli military authorities, their aim was to take a strip of land some seven miles wide running parallel to the border and clear it of Palestinian guerillas before leaving.

It was soon clear that Israel's ambitions went far beyond this aim. Indeed Israeli aircraft not only backed up ground troops in the border zone and throughout the area south of the Litani river, but carried out bombing raids on Tyre, on Sidon and as far north as Beirut itself.

Now the roads leading north out of the battle area are jammed with Lebanese and Palestinian refugees. The main cities of the north, in particular the capital Beirut, are now scenes of gun-battles in which armed gangs hired by landlords and police fight off desperate refugees trying to squat in empty flats and houses.

Those who reach the north are the lucky ones. The fate of two families fleeing the Israeli bombardment of the port of Tyre gives a truer picture of the horrors of the invasion.

At 2.30am two battered old Mercedes cars carrying the thirteen members of two families were driving through the village of Aadloun when an Israeli commando unit surrounded them, killing everyone including four children under the age of five.

Timing

Certainly the timing of this bloody invasion can be attributed to the PLO raid two weeks ago. But Israel's leaders have been itching to have an excuse to launch just such an assault.

Over two years ago Israeli forces invaded the south of Lebanon in an attempt to provoke and give cover to Syrian intervention in the Lebanese civil war. The Syrian intervention on the side of the Christian-Lebanese Right alliance against the Palestinian-Lebanese Left front proved decisive in turning the tide of the civil war against the left.

With the Syrians and the Christian Right once again in control of the situation in Lebanon, Israel restricted its role to arming, supplying, advising and giving medical care to the Christian forces in the south.

From time to time this commitment was stepped up and troops, tanks and armoured cars were sent in, though the scale of this was kept down. At the same time Israel began what is called its "good fence" policy by which the southern border checkpoints could be crossed by Lebanese Christians for purposes of work, trade and hospital treatment in Israel.

During this period Israel hoped that Lebanon's new government under

OPPOSE ISRAEL'S BLITZKRIEG!



Syrian patronage would wipe out the Palestinian presence south of the Litani. But despite numerous attacks by Christian militiamen backed up by Israel in addition to Lebanese and Syrian regular army attacks, the Palestinian population kept up its resistance.

UN troops

The Fateh organised raid on March 11 gave Israel the excuse it needed to step up its action in Lebanon. Fateh itself seems to have achieved its aims in part: Sadat's so-called "peace" initiative now looks much more like the sell-out of the Palestinians that it really always was and Fateh's own prestige amongst the Palestinians has probably

fallen in all of Lebanon." In other words, Israel is saying that it will dictate what is and is not permissible within the territory of Lebanon.

As against the US which wanted UN troops to intervene, Israel wanted Lebanese units to control the situation for it. Having given the Palestinians a battering, the job can now be safely left to the forces of the Lebanese right again.

Of course, Israel will remain ready to further its war against the Palestinian people that it has transformed into a nation of refugees by direct intervention any time it feels the UN or the Lebanese troops are not 'taking matters in hand'. If this does not work then permanent occupation will



risen.

The Begin government meanwhile has been able to get out of the tight corner it was in with Begin now able to satisfy all the different Zionist trends and unite the nation behind its leadership for the present.

While the Israeli military authorities first announced their intention of liquidating the guerilla presence in the border area, Chief of Staff General Gur told a Tel Aviv press conference: "We are not talking anymore about a security belt but about a general agreement and arrangement in the area."

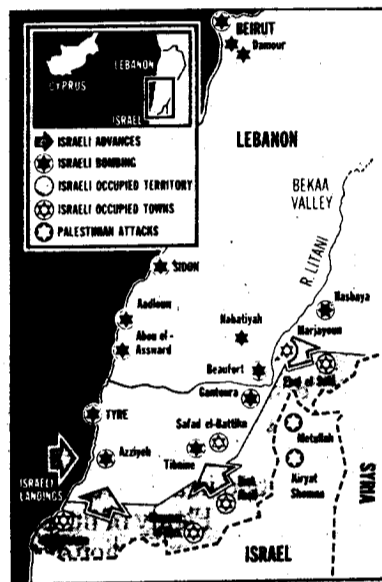
"We hope," he said, "that a political agreement will cover the whole of south Lebanon and put an end to the terrorist act-

be on the agenda.

The United Nations — the flagless enforcers of oppression — has made its view clear: its force will occupy a large part of Lebanon "for the purpose of confirming the withdrawal of Israeli forces, restoring international peace and security and assisting the government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area." That is, it will do the job for the Israelis before they are too discredited.

The Soviet Union, which poses as the friend of the Palestinians, abstained on the UN vote, but only because no time limit was put on the life of the UN force.

It is noticeable that the UN is not sending in troops



End of the waiting game for French workers

THE FRENCH right wing got its predicted majority, and something more, in the second round of the elections last Sunday, 19th. And the Union of the Left fell apart again.

Robert Fabre, leader of the Left Radical Movement, declared as the results became clear: "Today I considere myself unbound by the engagement I made in signing the common programme in 1972..."

The Left Radicals are a splinter from the Radical Party, which is party of the majority right-wing coalition. In 1972 they decided that the Union of the Left was likely to win power — and they could ensure a few ministries for themselves by offering their support. Now they seem to be scuttling back into the right-wing fold.

For the bigger parties of the Union of the Left, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, there are bigger problems. Theoretically a centre-left alliance of non-Gaullist majority parties (Republican Party, Radical Party, Social Democratic Centre) with the Socialist Party would have a parliamentary majority. In practice there is little chance of such an alliance being formed.

Socialist Party leader Francois Mitterand will probably have to continue some alliance with the Communist Party, with a view to being elected President in 1981.

As for the Communist Party, it has little option but to continue the left alliance. But it will face heavy disillusionment among its membership, who for six years now have been fed the perspective of working for a Left government.

After the initial demoralisation caused by the right-wing victory wears off, working-class militancy will be less affected by the mood of 'waiting for the elections' than it was before. The French revolutionary left, according to figures now available, got 600,000 votes in the first round (500,000 for Lutte Ouvriere, 100,000 for the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire and its allies), and the prospects for them are far from bad.

Collin Foster



Giscard d'Estaing

TWO ISSUES FOR THE LPYS

Gordon Brewer argues that the Labour youth movement should play a more active role in united-front campaigning against racism and fascism.

Racism

WE FACE the growth of the biggest fascist movement seen in Britain since the 1930s.

The Tory Party has rediscovered the usefulness of racism to gain votes. The price of the racism Thatcher paints with the veneer of respectability is being paid in blood by the black communities.

The Labour Government has propped up the racism widespread in British society by enforcing and defending the 1971 Immigration Act. The recent case of Kwai Yuk Tam, whom Rees deported to Hong Kong despite her brother being prepared to support her financially in Britain, shows the depths to which the Government is prepared to sink to adapt to the present racist climate.

Workers' Action argues for united front campaigns against racism and fascism. The policy we propose for these campaigns is:

- No platform for fascists
- End immigration curbs
- Purge racists from positions in the labour movement
- Labour movement support for black self-defence.

The campaigns should unite all prepared to fight for these demands: Constituency Labour Parties, Ys, other socialist groups, trade union branches, and organisations of the black communities.

Where does the LPYS majority stand in relation to this?

It has been more active against fascism in the past year; and the National Committee document, 'The Battle Against Racism and Fascism', gives a glowing assessment: "The organised youth of the

Labour movement, the LPYS, are not new to the fight against racism and fascism. For many years, we have been agitating in the Labour Party and in our trade union branches and trades councils for the full might of the organised working class to be used to combat the National Front and other fascist organisations".

The LPYS, it declares, "played a decisive part" in the Lewisham events of August 1977, when the fascists were routed by 7,000 left wing demonstrators.

But Lewisham, it says, was "a big turning point". Before then, the document implies, anti-fascist actions were a matter of "small groups of socialists who seek to substitute themselves for the mass activity of the Labour movement organisations".

Fascists

Indeed, before Lewisham, and more so before the summer of 1976, the LPYS majority policy was to counterpose arguing for opposition to fascism in CLPs, trade union branches, and so on, to immediate militant action. For black people threatened by the fascists it had the scarcely reassuring answer: when the labour movement is united on a bold socialist programme, it will deal with the fascists. And in the meanwhile...?

It was the "small groups of socialists", the more militant sections of the YS, and the black youth, who responded to an immediate threat with

immediate action — and thus gave a lead which has helped draw thousands of others into the anti-fascist struggle. That the LPYS majority has joined those actively fighting to drive the fascists off the streets is to be welcomed. But they join in as latecomers, not as front-rank fighters. And the exaggerated self-congratulations on the YS role at Lewisham can't conceal that.

There are still confusions and ambiguities.

Some of the conference resolutions from the majority reflect the new YS line, for vigorous action to enforce no platform for fascists, to purge fascists from the labour movement, and to end immigration controls; some stop short where the old policy stopped short, with the general formula, "only a bold socialist programme can defeat racism". Most are an uneasy combination of the two.

The resolutions stress the need for socialism to solve the problems on which racism breeds. They argue that the stress on the need for socialism is what makes a really socialist campaign against racism different from an inadequate campaign.

It is true that the social conditions on which racism thrives can only be removed when the working class moves into action to deal with unemployment, low wages, and bad housing. But that is not the same thing as petitions for the Labour Government to bring in socialism. And talking about the big struggles of the future is no alternative to engaging in the immediate

struggles of the present.

Words of support for socialism in general don't cost much. They don't make the difference between an effective and an ineffective anti-fascist campaign. The dividing line is whether you are prepared to help the black communities defend themselves against racist attacks.

It is whether you are prepared to oppose all immigration controls as racist. It is whether you are prepared to argue for workers to go out on the streets against the fascists rather than relying on Parliament and the police.

Arguing for socialism is fine. The problem is that the YS majority still often counterpose their arguing for socialism against maximum unity in action against the fascists now.

United

Their confusion on this question was shown in the recent regional YS conferences. At the London regional conference, despite all the good intentions about building anti-fascist committees proclaimed in the national conference document, the majority voted against an amendment calling for the building of united-front anti-fascist committees.

A week later at the Scottish Organisation of Labour Students conference, Workers' Action supporters challenged the majority on the London vote. They asserted they were totally in favour of united front committees, and voted

for a Workers' Action motion on racism and fascism.

The following week, at the Scottish Regional Conference, the majority, including many of the people who had been at the Scottish Labour students' conference, voted against almost exactly the same motion! At the North West regional conference Militant voted for anti-fascist committees while arguing against them in their speeches. For a tendency which claims to have clear answers on the major questions of the day, this is hardly a very convincing record.

Another side to the LPYS majority's attitude to united-front activity is shown by the National Committee's recent quietly announced decision to sponsor the Anti-Nazi League. The ANL is not really a united front campaign based on action against the fascists. It is a behind-closed-doors alliance of the Socialist Workers' Party and some MPs, geared to getting celebrities to make declarations against the National Front.

The ANL does not oppose immigration controls, but it does support police bans against the NF. The tone is set for the ANL not by the militant socialists within it, but by the liberal celebrities.

The YS should press inside the ANL for it to be transformed into a genuine united front based on action. But the conference document merely says that we ought to argue for socialism while supporting the ANL.

The YS majority's policy is two-faced: ultra-purist in relation to local anti-fascist committees, but with a live-and-let-live attitude to the ANL and its galaxy of celebrities.

WORKERS' ACTION will be arguing at the YS conference for the YS to take a more consistent and active role in building a fighting campaign against racism and fascism.

ONE OF THE most important resolutions to be discussed by the Labour Party Young Socialists annual conference over Easter concerns the organisational structure of the YS. In the form of an amendment from Ilford South the conference will discuss proposals to:

■ Elect the YS National Committee at conference — on an eliminating ballot to allow for the representation of minority tendencies.

At present each member of the NC is elected separately by his or her region, and there is no right of minority representation. Under this "winner takes all" system, a minority could gain 49% of the votes in each region, and still have no NC representation.

■ "County Conferences and Youth Committees in place of the Regional Structure except in London, Scotland, and Wales. (The existing Labour Party regional organisations are in general an impediment to campaigning politics)".

■ "A real commitment to political education with at least six day schools in each region per year".

At present it is possible for the official YS machinery to go for two years (as in Scotland now) promising to organise a school. What happens is that the 'Militant' tendency organises its own factional schools (which it is entitled to do), and looks on YS schools with little enthusiasm because its political monopoly is not guaranteed there against the presence of other tendencies.

■ "Trade union youth bodies,

Democracy

must be allowed to affiliate".

In fact democracy in the LPYS is more formal than real. A national conference within which an authoritative National Committee operates, and which has no power over this leading body (only the NEC delegate is elected by Conference) does not have meaningful control of its own affairs.

It can decide what it likes (and does pass policy resolutions) — but without the power to do anything. It can neither act to remove an incompetent leadership, nor put in a new NC to carry out its policy.

Recall

The present structure of the YS was set up in the mid-'60s after the rupture with the Socialist Labour League (WRP) led section of the YS. Since the recreation of the YS in 1960 the NC had been elected by conference. The present arrangement was meant to help the Labour Party machine bridle the youth movement by removing control of the YS from the annual conference.

The 'Militant' majority has snugly fitted into and used that arrangement, without any

qualms. It tightly controls the conference through the system of "NC recommendations" on each vote.

'Militant' argue that the YS is more democratic than the rest of the labour movement. It is true — but that only shows how bureaucratic the Labour Party and most trade unions are!

Parliamentary democracy operates on the basis of our "elders and betters" having all the real power to decide, but giving us a chance to be consulted and have a vote occasionally. The bureaucrats in the labour movement have taken over a similar system to protect their complacent routine.

Committees which dominate conferences, denial of the right to recall officials, squeezing out of minority views, are all part of this system.

Working-class democracy is different. The nearest approach in normal capitalist conditions is the shop steward system. The membership controls, and can at any time replace, the representatives. Every serious point of view has an equal right to be heard. Members think for themselves and decide for themselves, rather than just being consulted.

The 'Militant' YS majority made much fuss about their allowing the small Tribune minority which existed on the YS NC until recently to circulate minority reports.

But now no minority is represented on the NC; the 'Militant's' relative majority in the YS membership is transformed by the system of election into a 100% majority on the NC. So now there are no officially circulated minority reports.

Majority

Elementary democracy would demand that political minorities should have free access to the machinery of the national organisation — whether or not they are represented on a National Committee, even a centrally elected one. But there is none of that in the YS!

A serious leadership, concerned to foster a lively youth movement, would understand how irreplaceable the fullest possible exchange of views and opinions is to a youth movement.

Rebel youth find the existing YS atmosphere of pseudo-Marxist

piety both stifling and repulsive.

Accounts of the early years of Lenin and of Trotsky, of Marx and of Engels, tell us about the process of comparing and experimenting with ideas which was required to shape these socialist fighters, to allow them to work out their basic political convictions consciously.

The leadership of a youth movement which aspired to organise masses of proletarian and rebel youth would go out of its way to create a free and fearless atmosphere for debate.

'Militant's' wholehearted agreement to work within the existing structures, and its use of those structures to monopolise YS political life, are the measure of its willingness to accept the Transport House view of the YS as a small-scale appendage of the Labour Party — one tightly enough controlled so that it doesn't become a nuisance to the party leaders. It is also the measure of its rejection of the perspective of building an active, mass youth movement.

The Ilford South amendment — with the addition of the demand for equal access to the YS national machinery of any minority in the YS membership at least 25-strong — would massively improve the possibilities of turning the YS outwards and of building a mass working-class youth movement. The Conference should pass this amendment, and the YS nationally should campaign to get the Labour Party to accept an amended constitution for the YS.

Michael O'Sullivan

Red Brigades take on the bloody state

AT 9am on the morning of March 16th, Signor Aldo Moro, five times Prime Minister since the end of World War 2 and one of the most notable leaders of Italy's Christian Democratic Party, was being driven to Parliament, where the recent pact between the Communist Party and the Christian Democrats was to be formalised. But he never got there.

He was kidnapped by — it would seem — 11 or 12 members of the Red Brigades, who machine-gunned his five body-guards before bundling Moro into their car and disappearing.

The Moro kidnap was followed — according to press reports — by a claim by the Red Brigades that they were holding Moro: "This morning our organisation carried the attack to the heart of the state". It was clear that if the Red Brigades were responsible for the Moro kidnap, the aim was to stop the trial of what are described as "14 leaders of the Red Brigades" in Turin.

The trial has already been postponed three times. In 1976 it was postponed after the killing of Genoa's Prosecutor General, Francesco Coco. Coco's chauffeur and bodyguard were also killed. Two weeks ago, one of the heads of the Turin special branch was shot dead while waiting at a bus stop, and the trial was postponed a third time.

The victims of the Red Brigades — if we can go by press reports — are politicians (kidnapped), judges (shot or kidnapped), lawyers (shot or knee-capped), policemen (shot), journalists (knee-capped), and bankers and businessmen (kidnapped or knee-capped).

It is, of course, difficult to disentangle from the mass of accusations, claims and attributions what really is the work of



Aldo Moro in captivity

the Red Brigades. Certainly the Italian police themselves have been shown to have colluded with the army and with fascists to try to frame left-wingers.

For instance, on 12th December 1969 bombs went off in Milan and Rome. Immediately the police and press put the blame on 'anarchists' and arrested Pietro Valpreda, a leading light in an anarchist group, the "22nd October organisation". Later other members of the organisation were arrested.

In the hysterical atmosphere whipped up by the right wing the police saw their chance to murder another leading anarch-

ist, Pino Pinelli, by pushing him out of a fourth floor window during interrogation. Pinelli had been arrested following two waves of bombings. The first was later shown to be the joint work of fascists and agents of the Greek colonels, the second the work of fascists.

Valpreda and his comrades were framed up by the police and spent several years in jail.

Nevertheless there can be no doubt that while in 1969 and in the early seventies the police and the fascists, jointly and separately, were organising acts of terror and provocations, with the downturn of the mass struggles in Italy after 1972

SMITH HOPES TO DIVIDE AND RULE

ON MARCH 3rd an 'internal settlement' was signed in Salisbury, Rhodesia, between the settler regime and some black African politicians. It was a desperate gamble by the white racists.

Ian Smith is gambling that the coalition with Bishop Abel Muzorewa and the Rev. Sithole will confuse and divide the black popul-

ation. In alliance with Muzorewa, Sithole, and such of their supporters as can be mustered, he can, he hopes, defeat the guerrilla forces of the 'Patriotic Front' led by Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe.

The Smith regime wants to introduce elements of civil war into its drive against the guerrillas, to exploit rivalries among nationalist politicians, and to 'Africanise' the war.

Under the settlement power is now held by a four-man executive council of Smith, Muzorewa, Sithole and a long-time stooge of Smith's, Chief Chirau. Smith has a veto.

On 1st January power will be passed to a Parliament elected on universal suffrage. It will, however, be far from black majority rule.

The internal settlement allows for an indefinite continuation of some of the mainstays of the system set up under British colonialism. The Army will not be disbanded, and remains under white control. It is the same with the police and the civil service, though there is talk of phasing out the white civil service at the current rate of wastage — 14% a year.

White property built up over 90 years of colonial rule is guaranteed, ensuring massive social weight for the 250,000 whites. Large areas of land are still reserved for whites only, though that will probably be modified.

The crowning seal in the deal is that 28 out of 100 seats in the new Parliament are reserved for whites, who will have a special electoral roll. Any legal change in the Constitution will require a 78% majority.

The aim is to preserve army, police, civil service, and property rights, letting them be modified gradually so as to include and co-opt a subordinate black middle class, and thus to halt the struggle by the people of Zimbabwe for control over their own destiny.

There is to be a whites-only referendum on the deal. After 12 years of sanctions since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, it is pressure from the guerrillas of the Patriotic Front which has forced Smith to make this gamble.

It could fail. Hundreds of thousands of Zimbabwean peasants have been uprooted and re-settled in special villages where Smith's army can keep them under surveillance and prevent them giving aid to the guerrillas. It is the same system which the Americans used without success in Vietnam and Britain used successfully to suppress the Communist guerrillas in Malaya.

Zimbabweans are still being hanged by the regime which is now joined by Muzorewa and Sithole. They may quickly wind up discredited, and thus strengthen the hand of the guerrillas.

The Patriotic Front has rightly denounced the settlement as a betrayal of their people by Muzorewa and Sithole. It pledges to continue the war for real black majority rule — against Smith and against Smith's black stooges.

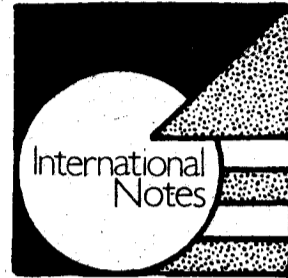
Britain and the US have for some time taken the public position of supporting the Patriotic Front leaders. They had calculated — and that calculation may still prove correct — that Smith would not be able to settle the "Rhodesian situation" and that in time the Patriotic Front would win.

They didn't want in that case to lose influence with the new government and perhaps open the door to the influence of the Soviet Union.

In addition, Britain and the US value highly their trade links with the "Front Line" African states who support the Patriotic Front.

Now Britain and the US are anxious not to allow their much vaunted "principles" (immediate majority black rule, a straightforward universal suffrage on a single electoral roll) to get in the way of cuddling up to Muzorewa, Sithole and Chirau. If Smith looks like "settling" the situation on his terms, they will ditch the Patriotic Front — as will the "Front Line" states in the long term.

Britain and the US will now be urgently trying to secure their trade links with these states, in the event of Smith and the sellout merchants winning out.



there was a significant rise in left-wing terrorism.

More recently a number of far-left organisations have fragmented and fallen apart. Meanwhile the PCI has grown stronger and shifted even further to the right. Disorientated, cut off from the mass of organised workers by a treacherous Communist Party, and lacking a revolutionary strategy, many young people have opted for a direct confrontation with the oppressor state.

When the chained and caged comrades of the Red Brigades face the court, they face the force of the ruling class, they look unflinchingly down the barrel of a weapon held in the hands of the oppressors of the working masses of Italy.

Their war against the enemy — our enemy, the enemy of the entire working class — is clearly political in motivation. When the Red Brigades in a leaflet describe jails as "tombs of the living dead in which to bury the proletariat and its vanguard", it shows its commitment to the liberation of the proletariat, however much we may disagree with its methods.

Argentina: 55 prisoners massacred

ARGENTINA'S military dictatorship massacred 55 people at Villa Devoto jail last Tuesday, March 14th. It is an addition to an estimated toll of 8,000 victims of the dictatorship since it seized power in March 1976.

According to the prison authorities there was a revolt, by the common rather than the political prisoners. A section of the jail was set afire and troops, police and helicopter gunships joined in putting down the revolt, apparently sparked off when guards started searching the cells.

73 prisoners were injured in addition to the 55 killed, and prison authorities said five guards were injured by the flames.

The figure of 8,000 killed over the last two years comes from the Argentine Commission for the Rights of Man. Amnesty International has estimated that there are 8,000 political prisoners and 15,000 people gone missing and unaccounted for since the coup.

There has been military rule in Argentina ever since 1955, with an interlude of civilian rule by the Peronists between 1973 and 1976. The jail slaughter will give added weight to the campaign, already underway, to boycott the World Cup being played in Argentina this year.

Shocks for West German bosses

IN WEST Germany, the last week has seen a major escalation in the dispute in the print industry, whilst in the South West 80,000 engineering workers are on strike.

The printers' dispute about the introduction of new technology led last Monday to a national lock-out by the employers. The printers' union had been on strike in a number of major centres to try to wring guarantees for the jobs of the compositors where computerised typesetting is introduced.

The employers at the Süd-deutsche Zeitung — one of the biggest regional dailies — have taken the union to court to attempt to force the printers back to work.

At the same time the engineering union IG Metall has called a strike in the North Württemberg-North Baden area, which includes many major motor, electrical and engineering factories, and is traditionally a pacesetter area for wages.

IG Metall's original national demand was for an 8% rise with

job security clauses and clauses to prevent downgrading of skilled workers. In Baden-Württemberg they were offered 3½%, and in Nord Rhein Westphalen 3%.

The rank and file in these areas voted overwhelmingly for a strike (86.4% for in Baden-Württemberg, 90.3% for in Nord Rhein Westphalen), but the bureaucracy does not want an all-out strike. They have already made it known that they would accept a 5% offer.

SCABS

In Nord Rhein Westphalen they are holding back the strike call and in Baden-Württemberg they only called out 80,000 of their 400,000 members. The employers responded by threatening a lock-out from this Monday, 20th, of 200,000 engineering workers in the area. They also sought injunctions to prevent strikers from

blocking factory gates to non-union scabs (and such pickets were also condemned by union officials).

The government wants to keep down the total incomes increase this year to 5%, and it has been manoeuvring to end the strikes. In the printing industry, the head of the Federal Labour Office was called in to mediate before the lockout.

The DGB (German TUC) has hinted at action in solidarity with the printers (but done nothing), and meanwhile tried to get Chancellor Schmidt to intervene directly.

The current strikes — unlike the spontaneous and largely unofficial strikes of 1969 and 1974 — have been called and controlled by the bureaucracy. Yet the determination of the West German print and engineering workers may well produce some shocks for their trade union bureaucrats as well as for their bosses.

BRUCE ROBINSON

SECULAR THUNDERBOLT STRIKES 'GAY NEWS'

IN THE DAYS when gods really held sway over people's minds, blasphemy was something they dealt with themselves: a summary thunderbolt or chasm opening up under one's feet, or a more protracted penalty of bad luck into the seventh generation.

Then, in Europe, the Church took over the business of maintaining the fear of God — and with it, its own position of power in the feudal order. Later, fighting subversives, revolutionaries, radical freethinkers and atheists, the new bourgeois state picked up the old medieval common law against blasphemy for a covert attack on free speech.

Last Friday, the Appeal Court confirmed ancient superstition, medieval heresy-hunting and Victorian moral and political repression as living law for the closing decades of the 20th century.

But the victory in this case against Denis Lemon and *Gay News* goes neither to 'God', nor to the Church, nor even to the bourgeois state. In the trial and Appeal Court summaries, none of these was held to be the offended party: rather, it was the sensibilities of small-minded, unimaginative middle-class English Protestants of the Mary Whitehouse variety that were held to be in need of the law's protection.

That, of course, extends the old law considerably to make it very diffuse indeed. Strictly enforced it could include the Bible itself — and a great deal of other religious and mystical writing which, like James Kirkup's poem published in *Gay News*, doesn't treat sexuality and religious feelings in separ-



A 'drag' Mary Whitehouse joins the picket outside the appeal court

ate compartments of life, and uses strong language and images that would no doubt be out of place in cosy modern religious broadcasting but are an integral part of both poetic and religious tradition.

Ignore

Great swathes of Catholicism and Lutheranism, steeped in martyrdom, torture, and religious imagery, must also be offensive and disturbing to the Whitehouse league.

Of course, laws are not strictly enforced, for the legal establishment always operates with a double standard. Dragnet laws like blasphemy, conspiracy or even obstruction of the highway give the state weapons

to use or ignore as and when it chooses. The police won't descend on the Hayward Gallery and confiscate certain obscenely anti-religious works by 1930s surrealists on view there currently. But film, television, newspaper and book producers will be looking over their shoulders and proceeding with caution, anxious to handle religious questions with kid gloves, just in case...

Two other aspects of the *Gay News* trial are notable.

The whole premise of the trial was that the homosexual standpoint of the poem in question — 'The Love That Dares to Speak its Name' — made it more blasphemous in the eyes of the law. Thus, though homosexuality and limited homosexual practice is now legal, the law still openly

represses homosexual self-expression.

Second, in extending the protection against blasphemy from 'God' and the Church to C. of E. public opinion, it clearly discriminates in favour of one religious and social group.

Atheists

Mary Whitehouse has said she would like this anomaly ironed out, by extending the law to protect all religions. In that case she would outlaw Christianity itself, which is deeply blasphemous in the eyes of Jews and Muslims, and indeed religion itself, which is offensive and outrageous to atheists.

Rachel Lever

Wanted: United fight to save 40,000 jobs

IF LEAKS in the capitalist press are anything to go by, Eric Varley will announce a plan to axe 40,000 jobs in the steel industry.

In effect Varley's plan is a return to the position worked out by the Tories under Heath. When Labour came in, the threatened works were relieved under a review conducted by Lord Beswick, and Labour pro-

jected plans for increasing steel investment and steel output.

It seems that under that plan some plants previously due to shut down would stay open — though in order to achieve higher productivity, the British Steel Corporation were still aiming to cut thousands of jobs.

Now Varley has come up with the same plan as the Tories were putting forward

— but worse! According to the new plan:

■ Virtual all investment plans which would increase steel-making capacity in Britain in the next five years will be scrapped.

■ Nearly 40,000 jobs will go over that period, with 15,000 targetted to be chopped this year.

So far there has been no militant response to the closure plans. Instead there is

talk of 'the national interest' and the need for 'import substitution'.

It is high time that the workers in the steel industry — whether in plants scheduled to be closed soon or not — created a National Action Committee with a policy capable of leading a fight-back against redundancy. Such a policy would have to be based on the idea of work-sharing without loss of pay.

'DEATH RATE RISES IN THE MINES' Scargill

THERE have been eight deaths among miners in the first two months of 1978, compared with three in the equivalent period of 1977. That was a rise of 160%.

These shocking figures were revealed to the Yorkshire area council of the National Union of Mineworkers by Arthur Scargill. In addition, he told the council, meeting at Barnsley, that serious accidents had gone up by 59% in the same two months.

"I submit", said Scargill, "that the introduction of the incentive scheme has been responsible for the dramatic increase in deaths and industrial accidents". Rightly Scargill placed a great deal of emphasis on the question of safety in his campaign against the introduction of incentive schemes at area and pit level.

As expected, the National Coal Board rejects Scargill's interpretation of the figures — though it doesn't dispute the figures themselves. According to the Board, coalface accidents are actually down, and the increase is to be attributed to the transport and haulage operations.

The NCB also say that two months is too short a time to see a trend.

We have little doubt that the tragic figures of the first two months will soon be seen as a clear trend. Then, no doubt, the Board will blame the 'accidents' on the miners themselves.



Arthur Scargill

A reply to "Women and Ireland" ALWAYS 'WOMEN AND THE X QUESTION'

THE COMRADES of the 'Women and Ireland' group complain [Letters, last week] that our report of the Edinburgh conference on Ireland did not cover contributions from them and from other left groups.

Any short report has to be selective. We thought it was important that the conference gave a platform to the organisations of the Irish resistance, and so we made special mention of the contributions from Provisional Sinn Fein and the IRSP. Apart from that the debate between Workers' Action and Militant was the central event of the afternoon.

We did not mention speakers

from the First of May collective — because they did not, as a collective, have a speaker.

Comrades Keenan and Hickman object that our report did not cover the discussion on 'new strategies' to take up the Irish question in Britain. But the nature of these 'new strategies' remained unexplained both at the conference and in their letter.

The First of May collective seems to want to solve the political problems of getting across an understanding of the Irish question by a search for some 'new' organisational scheme. The attempt seems misguided to us, and certainly it has not yet shown results.

For our part, at the Edinburgh conference we affirmed our intention to fight for labour movement organisations to sponsor the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland. Since then, we have succeeded in getting Edinburgh Central CLP to sponsor the Tribunal. We do not claim any marvellous successes, but we have yet to notice 'new strategies' doing any better.

Comrades Hickman and Keenan also accuse us of being 'sectarian' in debate at the conference. What do they mean? Sharp debate is not sectarian. Wouldn't the comrades agree that Militant's views on Ireland deserve to be criticised harshly?

Then the comrades say that our failure to mention their own particular tendency was "indicative of Workers Action's total disregard for women as an autonomous political force". Who is the sectarian now?

Brid Keenan and Mary Hickman also say that "all [!] the groups totally [!] ignored the importance of women for any [!] revolutionary struggle", and this was "obvious" from our failure to make special mention of the role of women when debating the Irish national question.

Workers' Action supports the autonomous organisation of women against their specific oppression. In Ireland, we would not

say that women should hold back on fighting for their rights because their fight would cause disruption when it came up against the strong influence of Catholicism inside the Irish nationalist movements.

Yet comrades Keenan and Hickman do not mention the Churches, or the often backward attitudes of the Republican movement, or the reactionary laws of the southern Irish state, in their listing of the questions we should have mentioned on 'women and Ireland'. Instead they seem concerned to demand recognition for a separate niche for 'women and' the Irish national question.

That is a typical feminist focus — but also one which in the end diverts from the real struggle for equality for women, and chimes in with the ideas of 'separate but equal' status for women expressed by the worst reactionaries.

In comradeship,
JENNY FRASER

FLEET STREET GOES DEAF FOR THE FRONT

by James Ryan

JOURNALISTS often justify the volumes of uncritical coverage they give to the National Front, its doings and the opinions of its leaders, by saying that they are 'newsworthy'.

But that doesn't explain why the national press fails to report the doings of the Front when this might really tell you something about what sort of an organisation it is. How come the following little story (reported in part in the local press) escaped the eagle eyes of Fleet Street?

At the beginning of March the Oak Tree pub in West London was the venue of a dance for the 'Old Folk of

Acton'. Folk age fast in those parts — most people present were under thirty.

In reality it was the inaugural meeting of the Hammersmith National Front branch. Addressing the gathering were none other than John Tyndall and Martin Webster.



Apparently, things didn't go too well. According to the branch chairman, former Mosleyite Robert Edwards, Tyndall was constantly interrupted, and "you don't do that at National Front meetings". Indeed not. But Martin Webster had an even rougher ride, inside the meeting and

out of it. After the speeches were over, Webster retired to the bar. Luckily for him he had some friends with him.

Around 1 am a row started and someone lunged in Webster's direction with a razor blade.

Within seconds two men had their faces and arms slashed open. The aggressors were chased out of the pub and down an alley. At this point one of them turned with a carving-knife in his hand and stabbed one of his pursuers in the lungs and liver. He and his companions then made their escape.

The young man who had been stabbed was Richard Sullivan, aged 17, a much-

esteemed member of the local Para unit and a leading light in the Young National Front. The NF leadership thought so much of him, apparently, that they created a special post for him in the YNF.

A great story. You can see the headlines. You could even throw in the bit about Martin Webster himself joining in the pursuit (for a while anyway — he seems to have disappeared at the crucial moment). A valiant young martyr for the cause, probably a victim of red Terror.

Or was he? From his hospital bed, Richard Sullivan tells a different tale. According to him, his assailants were in fact members or ex-members of the National Front itself. And the NF leadership are rather anxious to keep it all quiet. Sullivan is upset:

"The Front have treated me like dirt. I don't want to know about them any more. All they're concerned about is to cover up this whole thing. None of the organisers have been to see me and they don't want to know about me."

"I think the Communists look after their own sort better than the Front looks after theirs. I think if the National Front come into power there would probably be a dictatorship".



A death-bed conversion indeed! In fact he didn't die, but he may well unless he keeps his mouth shut.

This fact is understood by another young man from the same branch, who has also decided to leave while he is still in one piece. He is singing, too — to the anti-fascist paper, *CARF*, in their next issue — but his confessions are all strictly anonymous. Beating up blacks, daubing paint on houses and mosques, arson — all the things a well-adjusted young member of the NF becomes acquainted with.

Hammersmith National Front branch is splitting apart under the pressure of these events. You can even get the Chairman of the branch — himself on the point of expulsion — to tell you a thing or two. He may tell you about how a large number of branch members were recruited in prison by the screws. Or about the West London organiser, Martyn Neale, who works as a 'security officer' for the Metropole Hotel and has a reputation for intimidating strikers.

You'd think there was a story in all this somewhere, for Fleet Street sleuths to dig out. But it all depends on what you think is 'newsworthy', doesn't it?

Coventry union-bashing racist has T&GWU eating out of his hand

The Coventry TGWU District Committee have recently decided to hold their Annual Dinner Dance at the Allesley Hotel, Coventry whose owner Kilpatrick, is a notorious racist and anti-trade unionist. Worse still, the event is to be held on May Day!

The March meeting of the Coventry Trades Council decided overwhelmingly to write a strong letter to the T&G district committee, demanding they change the venue of their Dinner-Dance and promising to picket the event if they did not.

The Trades Council has had experiences of Kilpatrick before. When he opened his first hotel, The Royal Court, he was proud of the fact that he operated a colour bar. Members of the Trades Council and the local Indian Workers' Association successfully challenged this colour bar by turning up en masse at the hotel and getting a lot of publicity in the papers.

Some TGWU members at the Trades Council meeting used this activity as an excuse. They said that Kilpatrick was no longer a racist, he employed blacks in the kitchens and even had a steel band playing now and then. They said there would be black TGWU members at the Dinner Dance and this was a step forward against Kilpatrick.

Exploit

But as Bro. Desai of the UPW pointed out, the fact that Kilpatrick is prepared to exploit blacks as workers is no sign that the leopard has changed his spots. Any black worker knows that when he goes to the bar at Kilpatrick's hotels, he is pushed to the back of the queue and charged higher prices.

Bro. Desai had himself tried to deliver a telegram to one of Kilpatrick's hotels. He was deliberately kept waiting while other jobs were done, until he said "If you want your bloody telegram, you can come to the GPO and get it."

Other delegates pointed to the publicity Kilpatrick had got when he had flown in bread from West Germany during the bakers' strike, as well as the notoriously low pay and bad conditions at his hotels.

One TGWU member replied that if unions scrupulously examined all the hotels in the district they would never have a Dinner Dance (there were cries of 'Too right' and 'Organise them first then').

CP members voted against the main resolution and for a tame amendment on the grounds that they did not want to strain the delicate relationship between the Trades Council and the TGWU District Committee.

DAVE SPENCER

Racists put a lump of concrete through the window of Hornsey Labour Party's office in Middle Lane, North London.

Hornsey LP has a good record of anti-racist activity. It sponsored the militant turnout at Wood Green last April 23rd against the National Front. It has planned a big anti-racist march on April 15th — but this has come under the Police ban on marches under the Public Order Act!

Philip Lewis (right), vice chairman of Hornsey LP, said "Our answer to this is to continue the struggle as we have done in the past and to show the fascists that we are not frightened by them or their bricks."

The police have ignored the attack and declined to investigate. It is doubtful, however, if they will turn a blind eye to any socialist marching in Hornsey in contravention of their ban...



Carworkers black goods for Apartheid

NEIL COBBETT reviews the Anti-Apartheid Week of Trade Union Action (March 13-21).

The most important activities during the week were those of workers at British Leyland's Cowley and Solihull plants. At the Rover Solihull plant shop stewards pressed ahead with their decision to black goods for South Africa, in particular Land-rovers for the use of the apartheid regiments military and security forces. Similar action was taken at Cowley.

All blacking of goods for South Africa by British Leyland workers had the backing of the Leyland Combine Committee so when a delegation of shop stewards at Rover Solihull informed management of their intention to implement the resolution calling for blacking of goods management were forced to agree.

In Coventry there was a picket of British Leyland's HQ, which attracted quite a lot

of support. It was mainly supported by contingents from the AUEW and was based on the following three demands (which a deputation put to the British Leyland bosses):

- Recognition for the black Metal and Allied Workers Union, which has branches (unofficially) in Leyland's South African plants.
- Disinvestment from South Africa.
- Banning of all sales of Land Rovers and other equipment for military use.

In addition there was a series of successful meetings held in the Midlands, including Leamington, Rugby and Coventry which were addressed by speakers from SACTU and local trade unionists and anti-apartheid militants, the meeting in Leamington attracting an audience of over 80.

In London the boycott of South Africa by CPSA members at the British Library went ahead as planned. No work

was done on any orders, enquiries etc from South Africa. A successful public meeting was held, addressed by one of the editors of SACTU's newspaper. In addition, leafletting and picketing of the Bloomsbury site was a success, the response from other members of staff and users of the library generally being quite favourable.

Elsewhere, apart from meetings and pickets, the picture wasn't as bright. The proposal from the print union NATSOPA for a ban on all South African ads for the week was ignored. In many areas local anti-apartheid groups had to organise inspections of London Co-op shops in order to make sure that the London Co-op would actually carry through its own ban on the sale of South African produce during the week. But a series of lunch-time pickets of South Africa House sponsored by various unions (UPW, ASTMS) did go ahead.

1800 teachers rally against racism

1800 people attended 'All London Teachers Against Racism and Fascism' rally on 16th March, at Central Hall Westminster.

Venessa Wiseman (Lambeth NUT), chairing the rally, stressed that there was no time for discussion from the floor, and added that the rally should be a united stand against racism. This view, that discussion could create disunity (and conversely unity can be achieved by avoiding discussion), was shattered, not by howls of protest from the floor, but by the speeches of the platform speakers.

Two headteachers spoke of the 'multi-racial curriculum'

and the documents and resources produced by the Inner London Education Authority in support of this trend. One of them then went on to talk about "fascism from the Left".

Dick North, a left wing member of the NUT exec, put a different point of view. For all ILEA's progressive gestures, black teachers have been discriminated in London in terms of security of contract pay. Many are still near the lowest rate of pay, many remain on temporary contracts for years; many fail to get their work permits renewed.

North went on to say that it was not multi-racial curriculum

innovators, but militant teachers, who had persuaded ILEA to change its attitudes.

A. Sivanandan from the Institute of Race Relations argued that black kids do not want patronising white teachers giving courses on black studies or the Hindu religion. The need is not for 'Black studies', but 'white studies'. By this he meant educating white and black children on the racist history of British imperialism, and on the relationship between the economic needs of capitalism and the immigration laws.

A conference is planned for the All London Teachers Against

Racism and Fascism'. It has to work out a political basis for the campaign, so that there are coherent answers and effective mobilisations against the NF, and against racism in schools, the media and in government legislation.

ALTARF's political platform should include:

- * Opposition to all immigration controls
- * No platform for fascists
- * Purging racists from positions in the labour movement
- * Labour movement support for black self-defence

Cheung Siu Ming

WORKERS IN ACTION

from front page

WATCH, PRESSURISE AND FIGHT!

It exploits the view, fostered by the Labour government, that black immigrants are a 'problem' — and makes them a scapegoat for the capitalist system.

■ The Government has allowed the police to give massive protection to fascist shows of strength — and to have bans imposed which hit anti-fascists a hundred times harder than the fascists.

It has allowed the Equal Pay Act and the Sex Discrimination Acts to be dead laws on the statute book.

If Harold Wilson, James Callaghan, Denis Healey —

or Michael Foot and Wedgwood Benn — should blame their record on the present crisis of the capitalist system, the answer is this: they have consistently put the interests of the employers above the interests of the working class.



In so far as they have had a choice, they have chosen against us.

Only a government of *Reg Prentices* could build up this record and then say, "Britain is getting better and better".

It's no use just cursing Call-

aghan. He has done what the left allowed him to get away with.

The 'Left' in the Parliamentary Party have either been in the Government — like Benn and Foot — or they have been passive, shirking the job of organising the necessary and unavoidable fightback by the movement against the attacks on our conditions.

The working class needs an answer to its problems under capitalism — the slashed living standards and social services, the mass unemployment. It needs to organise to fight back. The labour movement should organise that fight back. But the essential role in organising the fleeing of the working class since we kicked out Heath has been played by the TUC, in an unholy alliance with the Labour Government and the CBI.

Now the Labour Party is in the run-up to a general election, with the record of the Government hung like a millstone around its neck.

The right wing have no answers because they consciously hold to the values and concerns of the capitalists. The "official" Left is largely silent. Over the last four years it has shown again that it is hopelessly trapped into the same system of values and that it has no stomach for a real fight even where its policies differ.

It is this failure which has allowed the political and human filth of the National Front to have a serious impact on the electorate.

It is against this background of Labour government attacks on working class interests that militants like Socialist Unity and the Socialist Workers' party will stand candidates against Labour in some constituencies.

But what of socialists within the Labour Party — those whose conception of socialism is linked to the interests of the working class, and who are in the Labour Party because it is the mass party of the British working class?

Either we will abandon the

political field entirely to the anti-socialist leadership of the party, and just slog like dumb footsoldiers in the election.

Or we will begin to fight to commit the wards, LPYS branches, GMCs, Trade Union branches and Trades Councils to fight for socialist answers to the immediate problems of the working class.

If we don't campaign as socialists the electoral benefits will fall to the Tories and the fascists with the latter being the main beneficiaries at the grass roots level, corralled by the disillusioned and disconcerted. Only socialist policies can counter them. And it can't be 'socialism' with the face of prosperous bankers, complaisant Ministers and time-serving bureaucrats. Nor one which promises paradise and only gives you the dole queue.

We need a campaign for socialism with a militant face, a face set like flint against the will of capital; a campaign that is not content merely to elect Labour MPs to Parliament and then leave them to 'get on with it', but which will monitor, pressurise and fight them if they put a foot wrong.



The campaign will combine support for Labour in the elections with a fight-back against the present Government, for socialist policies:

■ No more wage curbs! No more strike-breaking by Labour!

Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions. Demand immediate wage increases backdated to make up for the 6% drop in our living standards over the last two-and-a-half years.

■ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.

■ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — work-sharing with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and an end

to overtime. That would deal with the dole queue.

Nationalisation under workers' control of all firms threatening closure:

■ Make the bosses pay, not the working class! Cut defence spending, not hospitals. Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

■ Freeze rents and rates. ■ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.

Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.

■ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.

■ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now!

■ The black working people in South Africa and Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. Black South African goods and services!

■ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.

The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working-class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working-class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and the bosses.

Any readers who wish to campaign with us should contact us at 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

Speke: Occupation the only answer

ACCORDING to Eric Heffer MP, the problems at Speke — where British Leyland are planning to close the no.2 plant, with a loss of 3,000 jobs, arise from the fact that Merseyside is on the wrong side of the country.

The basic evil, according to Heffer, is the EEC. (Weren't there redundancies in Britain before joining the EEC? Or don't they exist today in non-EEC countries like Spain?) Merseyside suffers specially because it is on the far side of Britain from the other EEC countries.

There's not much perspective for struggle that can come from that diagnosis. And in fact the only practical proposal that Heffer has come up with for saving the jobs of workers in his constituency and other Merseyside constituencies is... asking the Government to appoint a Minister for Merseyside.

If Eric gets the job himself, it might solve his economic problems; but it won't help the Speke workers.

Meanwhile, inside the plant,

the mood is slowly changing. When the closure was first announced, many workers wanted to take the lavish redundancy pay which — so the press said — Leyland was offering, and get out. They had been on strike for 17 weeks, and laid off before that.

Now the workers are receiving regular pay packets, and there is still nothing definite from Leyland on the redundancy terms. Meanwhile, other closures and redundancies, at Birds Eye and GEC, have brought home the fact that other jobs won't easily be found.

The Leyland Combine Committee's resolution of 18th February, pledging full support to any action the Speke workers may take, has also reached the shop floor now.

If the April 9th conference called by the Trades Council gives a lead, then real action at Speke is possible. That can only mean occupying the plant, setting an example for Birds Eye and GEC, and starting a working-class fight against unemployment all across Merseyside.

ANTI-CUTS CAMPAIGN WINS REPRIEVE FOR HOSPITAL

A THREE-MONTH temporary reprieve has been granted to Bethnal Green Hospital, after a fight by the local community and workers at the hospital with growing support from local labour movement bodies.

The campaign has by no means succeeded in reversing the decision to change the hospital's use from general to geriatric, with a loss of 300 beds. Nor does it rule out eventual closure.

Management will phase in changes and conversions gradually, and quietly fail to replace staff. In three months' time the hospital will be in the middle of staff holidays and more-vulnerable to Hounslow-style takeovers. At Hounslow Hospital, where workers were fighting closure, a gang from the health authorities suddenly descended a few months ago and whisked away the patients in a sudden 'raid'.

The decisions were announced after last week's Area Health Authority meeting, where a picket was mounted and local Labour

councillors expressed their opposition to the change. They called for a public enquiry, saying the change from general to geriatric was not justified in an area where numbers of beds are already being reduced and where health service cuts have already affected many local hospitals.



The scandalous reply from District Administrator David Kenny was that if Bethnal Green was kept open in its present role it would not be 'medically safe'. Yet the amount of money involved in keeping the hospital open and viable is a mere £350,000. Balance this with the £2,400 million underspent by central government, so zealous in carrying out health service cuts that they retained 50% of the money allocated!

At a public meeting last Thursday, 16th, a new phase of the fight began. Hospital Shop Stewards' representativ-

es pledged their support for picketing when needed, non-cooperation with moves of equipment, and resistance to any 'visitors' like architects or surveyors sent in by the management for the conversion scheme.

Reports from other local hospitals show the blindness of planning by the authorities. A doctor from Hackney Hospital, also facing closure, showed how a directive to reduce the number of beds per person to the national average took no account of the type of area, and the lack of local back-up care in the community. In the area round the hospital, where living standards are low and housing poor, demand for hospital care is about 64% higher than the national average.

East London has taken the brunt of the hospital cuts. Poplar and the Metropolitan are now closed. Hackney, the London Jewish, Plaistow maternity, St. Leonards are due for closure. At the London Hospital, Whitechapel, a new block for research is

being built with no wards, but because of the so-called nursing shortage an acute ward has been closed. The same hospital has a 50-bed private wing, fully operational.

Money has gone to modernise Bethnal Green's operating theatre — now scheduled for closure! — and £10 million has been spent on the new casualty department at the now-fated St Leonards.



Appeals were made from the platform for the recruitment of nurses. Despite 3,500 unemployed in this sector, the Nursing Times carried no advertisements from District Management for staff below the higher grades.

Many of the contributions concentrated on the practical means of defending the hospital. Some saw it in terms of an 'East End wartime spirit' rather than a fight against Labour Government policy in conjunction with all other workers. SUSAN CARLYLE

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to *Events*, 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

FRIDAY-SUNDAY 7-9 APRIL. National Women's Liberation Conference. Ladywood School, Birmingham. Registration £3 from Birmingham Women's Centre, 76 Brighton Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham 12 (021-449 2931).

SUNDAY 9 APRIL. Liverpool Trades Council Conference on the Speke closure. 11am, Everyman Theatre, Hope St. Credentials for labour movement delegates. 25p from the Trades Council, Victoria St, Liverpool.

SATURDAY 22 APRIL. National Council for Civil Liberties conference for trade unionists on pregnancy and the law. Details from NCCL, 186 Kings Cross Road, London WC1 (278 4575).

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 29-30 APRIL National Abortion Campaign National Conference. *Saturday*: day school on positive legislation. *Sunday*: resolutions on NAC's aims and structure. Details: NAC, 01 485 4303

SATURDAY-SUNDAY 29-30 APRIL Socialist Teachers' Alliance Open Conference on the Politics of Education. London. Registration fee £2 (students/unemployed £1), from 25 Highgate West Hill, London N6. Make cheques payable to 'Politics of Education Conference'.