

# workers power

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## No holding back

## to preserve a

## wage-cutting Government

# SMASH THE FIVE PERCENT LIMIT

By Robert Black

CALLAGHAN has named the price for the survival of the Labour Government. It is the 5% pay limit for all workers. In calling off the election Callaghan has staked his future on a cut in wages for all workers.

The trade union leaders have made no preparation to break the 5% limit. The TUC went through the rituals of denouncing pay restraint, but union leaders hoped that an imminent elect-

ion, plus the threat of a Tory Government, would take the pressure off them to turn their words into action.

Callaghan has removed that prop from them.

■ ■ The action of the Ford workers, the claim of the council workers, show that the energy and anger exists to bust Labour's pay code. Their action challenges the 5% pay limit, and therefore the future of the Government

itself.

The trade union leaders have been forced to act. Under the pressure of spontaneous stoppages, Moss Evans of the TGWU was forced to support the Ford stoppage. Failure to do so would have allowed the situation to run out of the control of the union leadership.

But Callaghan can now face the entire Labour movement with an ultimatum. To break the 5% limit is to jeopardise the Labour Government. With a declining pound, and orchestrated press hysteria, the government can simply be pushed from office by

a vote in Parliament. Hold back, he will argue, and keep Labour in office.

To this challenge our answer must be clear. No sacrifice of living standards and conditions to keep Callaghan's government in power. No holding back on the struggle so as to keep an anti-working class Labour government in office.

If Labour falls from office because organised workers have broken the pay code, the responsibility lies squarely with the Labour leaders who govern at the behest of the bosses and the bankers.

The trade union leaders and Labour 'Lefts' will see things differently. They will wheel out the spectre of a Tory government to dampen the conflict with the Labour government. 'Callaghan they will say, 'is a lesser evil than Thatcher.'

■ ■ But the record of the Labour government, elected on a wave of industrial militancy that drove Heath from office, destroys this argument. Labour, because of its links with the trade union leaders and its support among millions of workers, has been able to force through attacks which the Tories could never have achieved. Four years of Labour government have won the bosses wage controls, unemployment and a trade union membership policed by Duffy and Chapple. Callaghan and these gentlemen have as their aim the further weakening of the shop floor organisation of the working class.

Against this record, a movement to break the unions from Labour's wage cutting plans, to revive the struggle in the factories and workplaces is the only guarantee of defending workers' interests. That struggle must be carried through against the Labour government to strengthen resistance to future attacks launched by either Labour or Tory cabinets.

If the struggle against pay restraint forces an election, should we take the record of the Labour government as ample evidence that we should not vote for them?

We do not think so. While we must fight Callaghan's plans, taking no responsibility for the plight of his government, we will still be calling for a vote for Labour.

■ ■ In doing so we do not call for a vote for the policies of the Labour government. We are for a Labour vote as an elementary act of class opposition to the open bourgeois parties. But, we vote for Labour alongside other workers without hiding for a moment our conviction that the leadership of the party are tied lock, stock and barrel to the bosses and bankers. Alongside workers who do not agree we will vote Labour and organise to support every struggle that takes the class forward ... whichever government those struggles are waged against.

In this way those Labour leaders whom whole sections still have illusions will be put to the test.

## As NF opens new headquarters

# A-NL lets Nazis march

ON SUNDAY the 24th September a thousand fascists marched from Charing Cross to their new headquarters in Great Eastern Street. They were allowed to take the streets as a direct result of the ANL's sabotage of any sizeable counter-demonstration. Asian leaders in the East End said they were ashamed and disgusted at the ANL leaders actions. The assembling of tens of thousands of Anti-Fascists in Brockwell Park for Carnival 2 was revealed for what it was a monstrous diversion.

## Hoax?

The plans for the Fascist march were known a clear two weeks before Carnival 2. Workers Power officially notified the ANL itself, the SWP and the IMG. In response these organisations claimed that it was 'only a rumour' or 'a hoax'. It later became clear that they knew at this stage that the Front were marching.



When the Hackney and Tower Hamlets Defence Committee decided to mobilise to defend the area around Brick Lane the ANL leaders changed their tune. Brick Lane could be 'defended' but a counter-demonstration was a diversion. They refused point-blank to re-direct the Carnival into what could have been a massive defeat for the NF. The call for 'volunteers' to go to Brick Lane unsteward with no leadership was merely a pathetic fig leaf - an attempt to pose as the defenders of Brick Lane.

What did the Carnival offer as an alternative to an active attempt to impose No Platform For Fascists? It offered a platform in Hyde Park dominated by the forces of Reformism. Wedgwood Benn was introduced by the chair as having played "an excellent part in the struggle against racism". When has this Minister in the Labour Government ever taken a stand on the racist immigration acts, on the

massive police protection for fascist demonstrations, on the police harassment of blacks? Not once. Arthur Scargill correctly said from the same platform that "You don't allow free speech to people who inflict terror as the NF does." Good! But that was precisely what the decision to march in the opposite direction did.

## SWP

The organisation which bears the major responsibility for the events of 24th September is the SWP. Their conception is of a 'mass movement' based on liberal anti-fascism. One that refused in order to maintain a front with the Wedgwood Benns and the motley collection of celebrities, to actively break with the principle of 'freedom of speech'. The ANL is devoted solely to making vapid propaganda full of references to the second

world war. The use of Rock Against Racism type concerts, useful as an auxiliary device to attract youth has totally usurped the centre of the ANL's tactics.

The IMG tailed the SWP from the outset. They added to the ANL's statements an attack on those who did call for the re-orientation of the Carnival stigmatising us as "playing into the hands of the NF". We can expect to hear more of this scandalous demagoguery as these centrists have to mount a cover up for their actions.

Workers Power has been saying for months that the ANL and its mobilisations are a serious step backward for the struggle against fascism. That it represents a collapse into the Popular Frontist politics of the CP. The anti-fascist forces must be freed from the dead hand of the ANL. We call on all anti-fascist committees to disaffiliate. We call for them

Continued on back page

## editorial

# Workers Power Goes Monthly!

This is the first issue of the new monthly newspaper, *Workers Power*. No doubt many on the left and in the working class movement will greet the appearance of yet another socialist newspaper with cynicism. Yet it is not lightly that we add to this list.

The class struggle in Britain over the last decade, with its rises and falls, has successively bolstered and broken the forces on the revolutionary left. The May events in France in 1968 were followed by the most intense period of class struggle since the 1930s. In Chile the Popular Front Government came to power only to be brutally, if predictably, smashed. Mass pressure in Portugal and Greece brought down right wing dictatorships and in Spain a new era of class struggle dawned with the death of Franco. In Britain different groups of workers, ranging from the dustmen to the miners, swept into battle against Heath's Tory Government.

### **gimmicks**

During these balmy days left wing groups, notably the IS/SWP grew apace, drawing many industrial workers into their ranks. However, beyond the reformist cry of "boot out the Tories", such groups never offered these workers a strategy to take them beyond industrial militancy and towards a battle for state power. With the return of the Labour Government in 1974 the left wing groups, baffled by the continued hold of social democracy, found themselves floundering. The IS/SWP was particularly affected. With epidemic rapidity, factions and oppositions were expelled to form a myriad of new "Trotskyist" organisations.

Since '74 a drift to the right in the major industrial unions has pushed the left wing groups away from the necessary tasks of building and fighting for communist politics inside the labour movement. Instead they have retreated into a series of fleeting campaigns and gimmicks.

The SWP, having lost their industrial base, pretended that nothing had changed. They hurled abuse at the Labour Government and called for continued militancy. Their paper became preoccupied with the concerns of the SWP such as the blatant front organisation The Right to Work Campaign. They showed a total blindness to the disorientation, and advance of the Right, in the labour movement. The political confusion caused by the Labour Government could only be met with a steady decline of Socialist Worker into a paper that emulated what its journalists thought was working class language. This vulgar baby talk became a replacement for political analysis. The latest turn of the SWP is potentially more disastrous than the Right to Work Campaign. This is the ANL. This marked a sharp turn to the right by the SWP and underlined their failure to build an anti fascist movement in the working class.

### **unity**

The other notable tendency to emerge and grow during the early 70s, the IMG, had their own gimmick to solve the crisis of strategy in the working class. They argued for a unity of all left wing groups around a catch all statement of aims. They ignore the serious differences, and the reasons for those differences, that exist between the various organisations. Their efforts have so far only attracted the petty bourgeois libertarians of Big Flame and the frustrated and nostalgic ex-members of the SWP, the International Socialist Alliance.

This unity offensive has involved the abandonment of even the pretence, by the "Trotskyist" IMG, to continue the traditions and methods of Trotskyism. The contributions to the paper of the unity merchants, Socialist Challenge, by the modish intellectuals, thrown up during the student upheavals of '68, do nothing to disguise this fact — they merely give it an academic gloss. Furthermore, the paper has abdicated the responsibility of fighting for a communist strategy in the working class in favour of uncritical interviews with left bureaucrats. All this in the interest of building nebulous "class struggle oppositions" in the unions.

Workers Power does not scoff at the desire for unity on the part of many serious working class militants, dismayed by the fragmentation of the left. Indeed we would consider ourselves and our paper to be the most vigorous and genuine fighters for revolutionary unity. For us, unity is primarily a question of politics. We will fight alongside any workers in concrete actions against the bosses. But we will not accommodate our programme to the illusions of those workers. Likewise we will work in action with the other groups while at the same time sharply polemicising with them over their errors and confusions.

### **debate**

We do not consider the questions of unity, of programme etc, to be simply a British problem. For us there can be no such thing as a purely national revolutionary party. The IMG's parent organisation, the USFI, is involved in false unity projects world wide. We are committed to debate with groups internationally. We believe the revolutionary programme to be an international one. Consequently we are in favour of reconstructing the Fourth International.

With some, our course will be unpopular. But we believe that only with absolute clarity of programme, by calling things by their real names, by fighting unflinchingly for a communist workers party, will we be laying the basis for real unity. Our monthly paper is a crucial step in achieving this.

# SHAH'S RULE SHAKEN



Shah of Iran

The massacre in Teheran on the 8th. of September, which resulted in the death of hundreds of unarmed demonstrators, has given a temporary breathing space to the Shah.

The corrupt despot's regime rests solely on brutal forces of repression. He is armed, and backed to the hilt, by those bastions of 'human rights' Jimmy Carter, James Callaghan and David Owen.

The deepening revolutionary upheaval in Iran has passed through several phases. A campaign against repression was launched by dissident writers last spring. Meetings attracted ever larger crowds, particularly of students.

### **STRIKES**

In November of last year, while the Shah was in Washington, police fired on students at Aryamehr University.

The demonstrations that followed gained the support of the urban masses in several cities. The leadership of this movement fell to the Shiite Moslem religious leaders. The more radical sections have as their goal the overthrow of the Shah and the re-introduction of the 1906 constitution. That constitution had certain liberal elements while its clerical provisions would hold serious implications for the workers and other oppressed strata of Iran.

The forces mobilised in demonstrations, strikes etc. have widely differing class interests. The liberal bourgeoisie wants a constitutional monarchy. They want to preserve Iran's alliance with Imperialism. Many of the small traders of the bazaars, the impoverished small landowners and the unemployed, identify their ills correctly with the Shah's regime. But, under the influence of the religious leaders, they see the answer in a return to a patriarchal Islamic utopia.

The Iranian working class holds the

key to the only stable alternative to the Shah's regime. One that can meet the needs of the oppressed nationalities of the Iranian Empire, the rural poor, the unemployed and women. Already major strikes have erupted in the car and textile industries. Over 7 million strong, the Iranian workers have the social weight to take the lead in the struggle to overthrow the monarchy.

### **STRATEGY**

The repression of the last 23 years has hit working class militants hard. As a result the Iranian working class has only the most localised industrial leadership. Stalinism, in its Soviet or Maoist forms, can only be a source of confusion and defeat.

Whilst in no way underestimating the struggle around 'democratic demands' only the perspective of working class power can guide the Iranian revolutionaries to the correct tactics and strategy in the coming period.

Dave Stocking



Foreign Secretary David Owen

America is reported to be training 100,000 troops for intervention, should their guarantor of stability in the Gulf lose control of his own forces. The Iranian army is stiffened by many thousands of American advisers. The reports of soldiers shooting themselves and their officers, show how badly this stiffening is needed.



demonstration against the Shah

## where we stand

— For revolution leading to a dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers councils. The parliamentary road to socialism is, as Chile showed once again, a bloody soaked blind alley.

— For a democratic centralist revolutionary party based on a transitional programme for working class power.

— For the re-founding of the Fourth International on the basis of a new international programme, a leading centre and full democratic centralism.

— For unconditional support for all national liberation struggles against imperialism.

— In none of the so-called communist and socialist countries does the working class hold state power. It is oppressed and exploited by a bureaucratic ruling class. For a social revolution to transform these countries into workers' states.

— No free speech for fascists. Against all immigration controls. Labour movement support for black self-defence.

— Support for all demands to improve the position of women; free abortion and contraception on demand, for the right to work, equal pay, free 24hr

creche facilities etc. Womens complete emancipation can only be won by the overthrow of capitalism. This necessitates the building of a mass working class women's movement under communist leadership.

— Against all discrimination and persecution of gays.

— In the trade unions we fight for their total independence from state. We fight to transform them into organisations under the direct control of their members. Against the privileged trade union bureaucrats we fight for a national rank and file movement based on the workplaces. For militant policies a national rank and file movement based on the workplaces. For militant policies to defeat the employer/government offensive—no incomes policy under capitalism, direct action to fight unemployment, cuts, inflation.

# IRELAND: LABOUR'S BLOODY YEARS

Despite all the sabre rattling between Callaghan and Thatcher in the run up to the election, one issue provoked no lively debates, no clashes where Labour 'lefts' could let off a bit of anti-Tory rhetoric. That issue was Ireland.

For ten years, on no other single issue has there reigned such perfect unanimity between the two sides of the House of Commons. In Labour terms this permanent truce goes by the name of bi-partisanship. One can say with certainty that where Labour is found hand in glove with the Tories it is not the latter who have abandoned the interests of their class.

Whether British repression was handed out by the cold blooded hypocrite Rees, or the gruff torturer Mason, the message for the anti-imperialist population of Ireland has been identical. The over-flowing jails, the systematic use of torture, the SAS assassinations and the brutal searches are a constant reminder to the Catholic population that the Labour Government, like the Tories, works entirely in the interests of British imperialism.

It is not merely the unshakeable unanimity between Callaghan, Mason and Thatcher that is so striking. The Tribune Group, decrepit, but still in existence, has with one or two exceptions, a contemptible record of silence, or, even in the case of Stanley Orme, total complicity in imperialism's deeds in the North. Eric Heffer could write, concerning Soviet dissidents, that the Labour left "must give their support to human and civil rights everywhere, whether it is in Northern Ireland or the Soviet Union." Well said, Mr. Heffer! As the

author of a book called 'The Class Struggle in Parliament' when did you last, in Parliament, vote against the Prevention of Terrorism Act, move a motion of censure on the Government's Northern Ireland policy? We will limit ourselves to possibilities within the bounds of Parliamentary procedure — not expecting you to create unseemly incidents in the



The continued lease of life of Callaghan's minority Government hangs partly on concessions made to the Ulster Unionists, and their spokesperson Enoch Powell. What these may be is not yet known, beyond the already announced bolstering of the Orange bigots by the increased allocation of MPs to N. Ireland.

What lies at the root of Labour's

investment. The feeble moves towards liberalisation founded on the Orange backlash. Lower middle and working class Protestants totally refused to give up their privileges in jobs, housing and the monopoly of political power. Nor could these moves meet the elementary demands like 'one man, one vote', jobs, houses, etc. Seeing that these things were impossible as long as the sectarian statelet existed, the Catholic masses undertook the struggle to smash Stormont, and spearheaded by the IRA, they succeeded.

Britain committed its army to the hilt to contain and hurl back the advance of the anti-imperialist population. At the same time it had to defuse the situation by 'power sharing' i.e. the inclusion of a few SDLP politicians in a N. Ireland Executive. The response of the Protestant paramilitaries was the Ulster Workers strike of 1974 which shattered the power sharing Executive. Events demonstrated the usefulness of the British Army as a weapon against Orange sectarianism and clearly revealed that it was fundamentally on the same side as the bigots.

Labour was left without even the democratic fig leaf that Heath had of pressing on towards a solution. Callaghan has and can have no solution other than more blood and more repression. Its purpose is the total exhaustion of the anti-imperialist struggle and the isolation of the IRA — its 'criminalisation'. Thus the development of the techniques of repression serves an immediate purpose integral to British strategy. They are not inhumane excesses which can be reformed whilst leaving troops in Ireland. Also they have a longer term purpose. N. Ireland has become a grisly training ground for the British Army to develop the methods necessary to use 'at home' when the going gets rough. Thatcher

and the troglodite Airey Neave may shriek for further repression but they represent only a difference of degree — a degree that Mason will concede to the army chiefs tomorrow if he does not do so today.

It is in the direct interest of the British working class to bring an end to this shameful record — performed in the service of its own enemies, the British bosses and bankers, but in the name of the British Labour Movement. N. Ireland is an armed citadel of reaction.

There the troops are trained, the tactics are evolved, the weaponry developed, all under the disguise of 'Anti Terrorist' measures, which will be used to intimidate and destroy the British Labour Movement and Irish resistance. The heroic struggle of the Catholic population is against our major enemy. The British Labour Movement's support and assistance to them is shamefully long overdue.

## solidarity

For those who call themselves revolutionaries in Britain it is obligatory to declare unequivocally our support for the IRA and their struggle to drive the British forces out of Ireland. We do not place a condition on this support that the IRA become socialists or that we approve of their tactics.

In our view the republicans are politically not a party of the Irish working class. Certainly they are not revolutionary communists. We have the sharpest criticisms of many of their tactics. But our criticism is not designed to get us off the hook in the face of chauvinist 'public opinion'. Its aim is to assist in developing the strategy and tactics in Ireland and Britain that will help rid Ireland of 'our' imperialists forever.

Since the only force in Britain which has the potential for breaking the murderous grip of successive governments is the working class we fight for a central orientation towards the trade unions and the rank and file in the Labour Party. There we seek to build a united front of all those willing to mobilise to achieve the immediate withdrawal of the army of occupation, the repeal of the PTA and the release of all Irish prisoners of war, and the recognition of the right of the whole Irish people to determine the fate of the six counties free of all British interference.

BY MIKE EVANS



The NAC Trade Union Conference could be a major step forward in re-orienting the campaign along these lines. However, all the indications are that the conference is being organised in such a way as to squander the possibilities. Despite the fact that the conference is being co-sponsored by the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, no Labour Party delegates are being sought or allowed. Clearly any campaign which seeks to force a Labour Government to stand by a woman's right to choose must base itself on both wings of the Labour movement — to exclude CLP's, YS's etc., is needlessly to restrict its potential. Neither is the conference being built as an arena where policy and strategy for the campaign can be debated, rather it is being developed as a rally, with plenty of speeches from trade union leaders, but with no

opportunity for the delegating trade union bodies to put and debate resolutions — indeed it has been proposed that a resolution sent in from one trade union body, Tameside Trades Council, should not be taken!

The fight for abortion on demand can only be won through the forces of the organised labour movement. The NAC Trade Union Conference could be a springboard for such a campaign. To do so the conference would need to debate and decide on its attitude to positive legislation, how to organise and fight on the question of abortion in the trade unions and Labour Party, its relation to LARC, etc. There is a real danger that the conference in November will do none of these things. Unless NAC's perspective changes the campaign will slide further into downturn and fragmentation.

Clare Silverman

## ABORTION ON DEMAND ~ force Labour to legislate!

In October 1977 the Labour Party Conference voted to 'campaign vigorously for the realisation of freely available abortion on request on the NHS'. The right of every woman to choose whether or not to have a child is a fundamental democratic right and a central demand in the fight to end women's oppression, as such the conference decision represented a step forward for all women

However, at the same time, an escape clause was given to Labour MPs and the Government when delegates overwhelmingly refused to abolish the 'free vote' on the issue, thus allowing MPs to vote according to their 'conscience'. This 'liberalism' in fact masks the timeworn method by which Labour Governments ignore conference decisions they do not like — through the non-accountability of MPs to the party. In the case of abortion it clearly recognises the 'right' of substantial numbers of Labour MPs to flout conference decisions and in fact paves the way for the introduction of restrictive legislation and further attacks on women's rights.

The present Labour Government has been complicit in a series of attempts to restrict the already inadequate abortion rights of women under the 1967 Act.

It was only the massive mobilisations and actions of the newly-formed NAC which prevented the James White Bill from becoming law.

In 1976/7 the Benyon Bill

received the backing of 100 Labour MPs in allowing it time for debate. This Bill was again only narrowly defeated with 50 Labour MPs voting for it at the 2nd reading and 2 members of the Tribune group, Rene Short and Maureen Colquhoun, absenting themselves from the crucial stage of the Standing Committee.

The most recent attempt of Tory MP Bernard Braine to introduce a restrictive Bill under the 10 minute rule faded, but it is an indication that there is no lack of anti-abortionists prepared to pioneer restrictive amendments to the 1967 Act, if not for its repeal.

At the end of last year, David Ennals, Minister of Health, held a 'secret' meeting with Benyon, White and Abse, a notorious anti-abortion campaigner, to discuss the possibility of the government putting its own restrictive Bill.

If the Tories win the next election they will undoubtedly put forward legislation to severely restrict abortion rights — but if Labour win it is not unlikely they will attempt to do the same. This means organising now within the labour and women's movements to prevent this happening, clearly pointing out the record of the Labour government and that it is only action from the working class that can prevent Labour carrying out these policies.

But it is not enough to wage a defensive campaign against restrictive Bills as NAC and the Labour movement has done. Such a perspective necessarily condemns any campaign to the sporadic existence that characterises NAC — mass mobilisations against restrictive

Long Kesh concentration camp

slavishly pro-imperialist policy with regard to Ireland? Fundamentally it lies in the failure of the 1960s policy of the British ruling class which envisaged a gradual liberalisation of the sectarian statelet in the north as a prelude to the eventual re-unification with the South — now outstripping the 6 Counties as a magnet for British

bills followed by confusion and lack of direction when the threat has apparently passed. The only sure way to defend and extend a woman's right to choose is to build a campaign in the labour and women's movement which can force the Government to implement abortion on demand, that campaign must start now — election or no election.

The NAC's orientation to waging a defensive campaign has severely undermined its base and support over the last year. While accepting that positive legislation should be campaigned for 'at some time in the future', NAC has no immediate perspective for such activity in the labour movement. Indeed, there is a strong section of NAC in favour of concentrating instead on finding 'friendly' left MPs to introduce a Bill.

This has left the NAC groups locally without orientation and has seen an increasing tendency to concentrate on winning out-patient abortion clinics, which, important as they are, has pushed NAC towards localism and fragmentation. The decision by NAC to defer the campaign for positive legislation prior to the false alarm October election was disastrously wrong. The hostility of the labour and trade union leaders to abortion on demand has been clearly shown by their support for a free vote in parliament and the Labour Government record on the question. A campaign at rank and file level is needed to fight these leaders and an election period is a vital time to demand of these leaders that they implement party policy on abortion.

# The conflict in the Middle East

Grins and hugs  
greet Camp David  
sell-out

## THE CAMP DAVID TALKS

The deal struck between Sadat, Begin and Carter at Camp David represents a blow to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. Sadat's separate peace deal with Israel allows for eventual (from 2 to 3 years) full Israeli withdrawal from the Sinai, and nothing for the Palestinian people. Sadat's sell-out includes the acceptance of Israel as a *normal* Middle-Eastern state, and the development of a self-governing 'autonomous' West Bank and Gaza after a 5 year transition period during which Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians will *share* power. This allows for the Palestinians to "participate in the determination of their own future".

Israel will have the veto over returning residents of the West Bank and Gaza and Palestinians outside Gaza and the West Bank will have no right of representation. Israel will also have the veto over the Palestinians who participate in the West Bank-Gaza talks, effectively excluding the PLO. Israel has made no

commitment to remove or curtail the establishment of settlements in the West Bank, nor has she been asked to.

### SETTLEMENT

While Sadat has obtained an extension of his political future, there can be no possibility that this 'settlement' will bring peace. Israel's expansionist policies remain, the existence of 1½ million Palestinians and the political instability within Egypt will force more confrontation and upheaval.

For the US stability in the Middle East, even a short term stability, is vital. Carter's eagerness to organise the Camp David talks at a time when any 'peace' solution seemed doomed is a testimony to the fact that the US cannot afford a new war. Begin's statement "It was the Jimmy Carter conference... he worked harder than our forefathers did in Egypt when they built the pyramids" bears this out.

The key to America's continued interest in the Middle East lies in its dependence on oil. By the late 60s oil made up 30% of total US foreign assets and 60% of its income from the colonial world. With 6% of the world's population, America consumed in 1972 33% of the world's energy. 5 of the 12 leading American companies were oil concerns. Prior to 1972 America had provided nearly all its own oil but by the early 70s the situation worsened dramatically, production levelled off, and began to decline, while demand rose.

### WATCHDOG

By 1985 America may have to import half its oil and this demand will possibly exceed the amount that the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) are at present producing.

Since 1948 a colonial-expansionist Israel propped up militarily and economically by America has acted as the

watchdog of Imperialist interests, dividing the Arab world and defusing anti-imperialist struggle. In 1967 after the expansionist Israeli war on the Arab states Newsweek commented "To Washington the combination of Israeli muscle and US sweet talk had produced eminently satisfactory results... As an indirect beneficiary of the Israeli blitz, the US should at least be in a position to neutralise the Middle East, so that its oil can be profitably

for the benefit of world commerce."

But after 1973 the reliance on Israel to act as an Imperialist watchdog was not enough to stabilise the Middle East. In 1973 the OPEC countries took advantage of the Arab-Israeli October war to quadruple the price of oil, to take majority holdings in the oil production of their own states and to use a ban on oil to America and Holland, coupled with a 25% overall reduction in output, to exert pressure on Israel.

The intention of countries



like Saudi Arabia with its reactionary feudal regime, was not to *break* from Imperialism but to strengthen its independence and negotiation power and force economic concessions from the US.

The US's new strategy was one of conciliation towards Arab regimes, and a continued economic and military commitment to Israel, in order to ensure that no repetition of the 1973 oil embargo took place. A new war in the Middle East could prove disastrous in upsetting this

## ZIONISM AND THE STATE OF ISRAEL

The Israeli state could not, and would not, effect any serious compromise at Camp David.

Zionism, the product of revulsion against the pogroms which started in Tsarist Russia at the end of the last century, was given a massive boost by Hitler's holocaust. The absolute refusal of the 'democratic Imperialists' — Britain and the USA — either before or after the Second World War to remove their immigration restrictions and allow in the Jewish refugees, immeasurably strengthened the Zionist solution.

### EXPANSIONIST

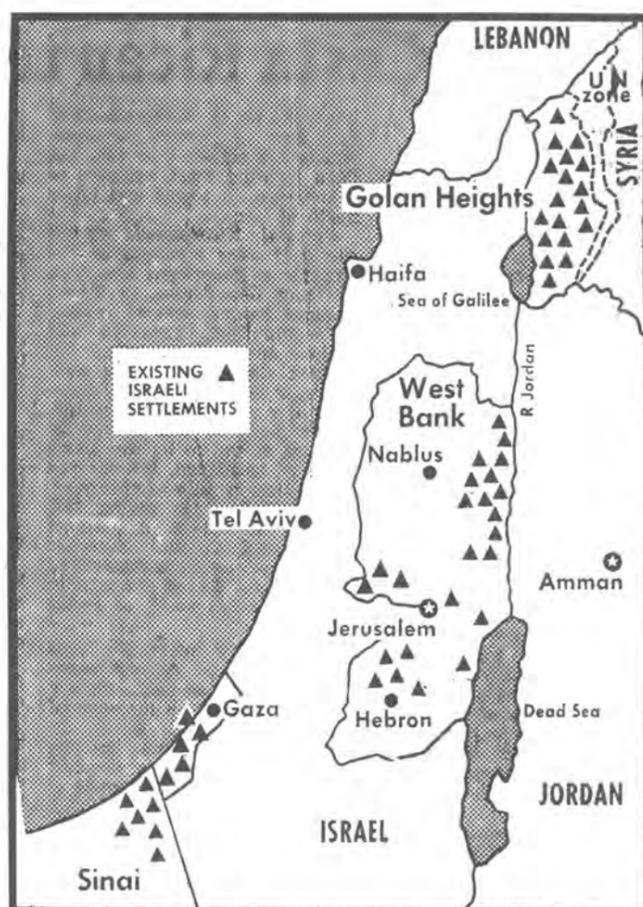
The ideology on which Israel is based, Zionism, is expansionist. Using the Old Testament as justification, Zionism regards all Jews, regardless of class, culture, language, etc, as the scattered elements of a nation. Zionism was, from its inception, the drive to find 'a

land without people for a people, without a land'.

Yet there were people — Arabs — in the British mandate territory of Palestine. Thus the refugees from racist persecution set out to become oppressors of the Palestinians, making them refugees and turning Zionism from a utopian 'solution' into an oppressive and racist ideology.

So, under British protection, the Zionists set about clearing the Arabs off the land and creating an all-Jewish class society. Weltz, head of the Jewish Agency, wrote in his diary in 1940: 'There is not another way than to transfer the Arabs from here to the neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them; not one village, not one tribe should be left. Only after this transfer will the country be able to absorb the millions of our own brethren.'

Thus the very basis of Israel's existence is expansionist. The invasion of Lebanon, the establishment of new settlements



in Sinai and the West Bank are part of this policy. Each of the three Arab-Israeli wars fought after the establishment of the Zionist state, in 1948 were the direct result of Israeli expansionism.

Inside Israel the working class are bound to Zionism through the Histadrut, mis-called a 'trade union' and which is completely integrated into the

state machine and controls the Israeli social security and health service. This 'workers' organisation' has never challenged the Israeli regime on either trade union or economic issues. The Zionist parties, the government and the Histadrut form the Jewish Agency which exercises control over the massive funds coming into the country from imperialism and Zionists abroad. The programmes

of the Zionists parties, both left and right, are indistinguishable in their final aim — expansionism. Only the methods vary. For the Zionists there can be no question of recognising the legitimate rights of the Palestinians. Those Arabs who remain within Israel are systematically discriminated against in jobs, land ownership, places of domicile, etc.

The mass media has made much of the 'Peace Movement' in Israel. On April 1, 45,000 people rallied in Israel for 'Peace Now'. Their main slogan is 'peace is better than a great Israel'. The significance of the Peace Movement is that for the first time amongst sections of Israeli society the blame for the war has been laid on the government, not on the Arab states.

However, the demand for peace is a reflection of war weariness, of the economic crisis in Israel — high unemployment, price rises and 'austerity measures'.

The growth of such a movement proves that increased pressure on the Zionists state does produce fissures in Israeli society. The movement still operates on the terrain of 'holding on to what we've got' rather than any recognition of the Palestinians' violated national rights.

It is fruitless to expect Israeli-Palestinian working class unity on any basis that ignores this central question. Even the discriminated against oriental Jews still have, as long as Israel remains a secure settler state, no aspirations to acquire the status of the Western Jews than to oppose Zionism absolutely. Only the Palestinian and Arab workers can lead a radical challenge to the Israeli state and eventually break the Jewish workers from class collaboration and Zionism.

# EGYPT AND THE ARABS



To understand Sadat's path to the Camp David sell out is necessary to understand the crisis facing the Egyptian bourgeoisie.

In Egypt the situation is one of extreme instability. The Egyptian economy, always unstable due to the inability of the bourgeoisie to invest and develop the country industrially, coupled with a huge bureaucracy and stagnating unproductive agriculture, has been severely affected by the world crisis.

Egypt was always dependent on the world market for outside capital, and when Sadat turned to the US, the economic aid it expected was not immediately forthcoming, while Soviet aid plummeted.

Sadat's 'open door' policy is dependent on finding new markets for Egyptian goods, and attracting foreign investment to the country. The effect of this policy has meant eliminating basic food subsidies (Egypt has to import most foodstuffs), as a means of reducing Egypt's chronic balance of payments deficit.

The ending of the food subsidies provoked a massive popular rebellion in January 1977, from the hopelessly poor workers and peasants. Sadat has virtually no room to manoeuvre domestically to make the 'Open Door' a success. The workers and peasants cannot be squeezed harder. Reforms and restrictions on the excesses of the bourgeoisie would be politically suicidal.

With inflation running at 40% this year Sadat knows the Egyptian situation cannot be saved independently of a settlement with Israel and that this can only be found with the active participation of the US.

Sadat made clear his commitment to 'peace' in the signing of the Sinai Accord in 1975 when, in exchange for a 30 mile withdrawal, Israel got arms sophisticated enough to devastate Egyptian defences. This effectively removed Egypt from the level of military confrontation.

Sadat has waged a relentless media campaign to convince the Egyptian people that a peace settlement is the key to economic prosperity. In fact, his only interest in Camp David was to secure the Sinai under Egyptian sovereignty.

Amongst the Middle Eastern states the only active

support Sadat has received is from Oman, Sudan and Morocco. Jordan, created by the British in 1948 to 'contain' the Palestinians uprooted from their homes, though taking no active part in Camp David, will be more willing to police any West Bank state eventually created through the US, Israeli, Egypt alliance.

The 'Rejectionist Front', Syria, Libya, Algeria, South Yemen and Iraq (although Iraq refused to enter a formal alliance with the others) has presented no coherent strategy or solution to the Palestinian question, and no effective challenge to the Sadat initiative. Libya and Iraq can afford to take very radical positions to



Yasar Arafat PLO Leader

a peaceful solution, since neither has been directly involved in an Arab-Israeli war.

Syria, on the other hand, now pushed to the centre of the confrontationist stage, has its own project for a 'Greater Syria' which would include Lebanon, Jordan, possibly the West Bank and Gaza, with a Palestinian entity included. Syria's main aim is to regain the Golan. Her intransigent condemnation of the peace talks were based on the loss of Golan, and Egypt's betrayal. This places Syria in an increasingly ambivalent situation with regard to the Palestinians.

The 'Steadfastness Front's' ineffectiveness was underlined when it fell apart at the first test of its strength — Israel's attempt to strike a death blow at the Palestinians in the Lebanon. The 'Front' split, pitting Algeria and Syria who approved the entry of UN forces, against Libya and South Yemen who opposed the UN occupation. The PLO was forced to collaborate with the UN forces. However, all the Arab states were united in their determination to keep out of the Israeli-Palestinian fighting. Syria was forced, with its control of Lebanon at stake, to become Israel's collaborator by remaining neutral in the war, and by banning arms and reinforcements for the Palestinian resistance. So, despite their rhetoric about unity and intransigence, at the first serious test the 'Steadfastness Front' collapsed.

For the Palestinians, the bourgeois rejectionist regimes, whose ideology is based on Arab unity and nationalism represent only a potential road block to the building of a Palestinian resistance.

dangerous balance. The selling of arms to Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Israel is one way for the U.S. of preventing a new confrontation and the withholding of arms a means to bring intransigent states back into line.

Just before the Camp David talks the US put pressure on Israel by declaring that her arms supply would be finally determined after the talks. At the same time concessions were held out to Sadat through the agreement to sell Egypt 50 fighters for the first time, while cutting Israel's request for 175 fighters down to 85 with no date for delivery.

The US's commitment to an Arab/Israel alliance has meant that the US has used this sort of pressure to curb Israel's expansionist policies. In Feb 78 Carter stated that the new Sinai settlements were "contrary to international law" and that "therefore they should not exist". But the US were also at pains to reassure Israel that the US remained "wholly and unequivocally committed to the security of Israel".

## HOVERING

The Soviet bureaucracy meanwhile has been hovering uneasily between the rejectionists and support for a negotiated settlement in which the rights of Israel as well as the Palestinians might be accommodated. Their policy remains that of finding political allies in the Middle East and dividing the Arab world. The Soviet Union will itself be faced with an oil shortage in the 1980s so it has a direct interest in peaceful settlement. The condemnation of the peace accords as a "plot against Arabs" and their attack on Sadat's "capitulatory" course is a recognition that the West Bank sell out will create new dissension in the Arab world and may upset the possibility of establishing a West Bank Palestinian state — a solution which the Soviet Union is committed to.

The Soviet Union will try to avoid a direct confrontation with the US and will continue to hold out for a resumption of the Geneva conference, where as co-chairman it can play a more active role.

The stumbling block to the Imperialist strategy remains the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian 'problem' (the driving out of millions of people from their homeland) represented prior to 1967 no meaningful threat to wither the Arab bourgeoisies, or Imperialism and the Zionists state.

## RESISTANCE

It was only after the 1967 war defeated the Arab forces that the Palestinians began to organise an armed resistance movement independently of the Arab bourgeoisies. It is their existence that has prevented a re-stabilisation of forces in the Middle East. The tying of the PLO leadership to the Arab bourgeoisies has provided a temporary solution in holding the resistance in check.

The PLO's response to the Camp David talks was to step up military attacks on Israel and call for a one day general strike. However, if the PLO were allowed to participate in the peace procedure via the UN they would be prepared to accept a Palestine West Bank State, thus implicitly recognising the right of Israel to exist.

The PLO recognises that the Arab bourgeoisies will not be prepared to support the Palestinians in any confrontation with Israel that may lead to the dismantling of the Zionist state. Terrified of losing that support the PLO is prepared to accept a compromise.

Fatah's argument that a West Bank state will provide a possibility for the Palestinian's to establish a military base for further attack on Israel and will represent an advance for the Palestinian people is clearly incorrect.

In fact the setting up of a West Bank state would only take place under the complete military control of Israel, Jordan and possibly the US. In effect the West Bank state would be an Imperialist prison for the Palestinians living there. — a Middle Eastern 'Bantustan' state. The military disarming of the Palestinians would preclude any further confrontation with Israel, demoralise the oppressed Arabs remaining in Israel and the Palestinians outside the West Bank, and be a severe blow to Palestinian self-determination. The bankrupt policies of the PLO, the refusal to build amongst the Arab working class and Palestinians outside Israel and the surrounding Arab countries, has condemned it to collaboration with the Arab bourgeoisies. The Palestinian 'rejectionists', while opposing the West Bank state offer no concrete strategy, but only the stepping up of armed struggle and attacks "carried out from the cease-fire lines of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan." Neither strategy represents a way forward for the Palestinian people.

There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East until the Palestinians win their struggle for self-determination and smash the racist Zionist state, replacing it with a secular workers state of Palestine. Sadat's sell out of the Palestinians can only provide a temporary lull in the battle against Imperialism.

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# SCLV ~ AT THE CROSSROADS

## WHAT IS THE SOCIALIST CAMPAIGN FOR A LABOUR VICTORY?

The July conference of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV) set itself the following aim: "... to ensure a massive class vote for the Labour Party and the defeat of the Tories — but to do this without supporting or lending credence to the dominant right-wing policies of the Labour and TUC leadership..." (WA 112). The ambiguity of this aim sums up well the amorphous nature of the campaign: is the SCLV an attempt to organise the working class for a fight-back against the next Tory or Labour Government, or is it simply the left-wing of the Labour Party election machine?

The conference failed to resolve this question and consequently resulted in a loose amalgam of varying political tendencies held together by a programme bereft of any concrete means of fighting for its demands or of achieving its ultimate aim of 'razing the capitalist system to its foundations'. We are now faced with a situation in which the various strands of the campaign have gone their own way; there is no common perspective no clear application of the tactic of 'critical support' for Labour.

In short, the SCLV is little more than a bloc committed to distributing common propaganda.

Workers Power attended the conference with a series of amendments to the SCLV programme which attempted to do two things:-

- 1) To elaborate concrete methods of struggle for workers on the key questions facing them (eg. we argued for 'direct action to prevent all plant closures', for occupations to force nationalisation of firms threatening redundancies).
- 2) To pose the need for workers to carry through this struggle to implement workers control and dismantle the capitalist state machine, central to this perspective is a clear call for workers' struggles regardless of whether they threaten the existence of the Labour Government or not. On the advice of the steering committee and W.A. supporter Andrew Hornung the conference decided not to discuss our amendments. We were reliably informed that we had a different

conception of the campaign to the steering committee and that any discussion of our amendments would be a diversion. This bureaucratic manoeuvre was clearly intended to stifle debate, the unity of the SCLV was to be preserved at the expense of a thorough discussion on the way forward for the working class in the election period. Ironically enough, the manoeuvre only served to prevent the only real unity between revolutionaries and reformists unity in action.

Having failed to gain any support for our positions we decided not to participate in the steering committee but to fight for our position in the local groups. We maintain a position of critical support for the campaign in so far as we agree with the general aim of the campaign and in so far as a basis for common activity exists around the programme.

However the drift of the campaign is clearly rightwards, away from a perspective of organising the working class towards a position of (to quote the SCLV poster) "keep the Tories out vote Labour". The SCLV has developed as an uneasy amalgam of those who wish to focus on a massive vote for Labour, on getting the SCLV policies in the election manifesto of the Labour Party (which is only a twist on the slogan "Labour to power on a socialist programme")—thus the ridiculous line of reasoning which argues that Labour could fail in the election because it doesn't have socialist policies—and local activists who key into any campaigns which are going.

For WP the role of revolutionaries in the forthcoming election period is clear, to sound the warnings to the class on the attacks which are to come, to provide a perspective for a working class offensive and to argue for the return of a Labour Government. Not because it is a "lesser evil" than a Tory Government, but because workers will only be broken from reformism when they take up the fight for what they consider to be 'their' government. It was for this reason that we posed our amendments, they were rejected because the SCLV does not share this perspective. In a period when Callaghan has clearly staked the survival of the Labour Government on the success of 'phase four' this crisis of perspective is particularly dangerous.

The SCLV is now faced with a

choice, either it will form a revolutionary tendency in the Labour Party on a clear revolutionary programme, or it can attempt to lay the basis of a real united front with reformists and centrists on the key issues facing the working class. For example the SCLV could fight alongside reformist councillors in a joint struggle to refuse to implement the cuts, on the basis of organising strike actions, etc, to prevent the run-down of social services—as the programme stands the reformists are committed to nothing other than passive opposition to the cutbacks.

If the SCLV fails to make this choice it is doomed to remain an impotent propaganda bloc.

CHARLIE SHELL



SCLV's election poster

## OPEN LETTER TO THE SCLV

Dear Comrades,

We believe that the cancellation of the election faces the SCLV with problems which aggravate the contradictions which its founding conference failed to grapple with — or even to discuss. The major forces in the SCLV consist of the supporters of two socialist newspapers — Workers Action and Socialist Charter. Apart from this it has largely passive support of a few big names in the PLP, parliamentary and local government candidates

and the sympathy of one or two trade union leaders. The SCLV has failed to mobilise significant forces within the Labour Party or the Trade Unions and shows no sign of doing so. It has restricted itself to propaganda against Labour's record in office and a call for a Labour vote.

At the conference in June — despite the refusal to debate our amendments to the programme we pointed out that the SCLV would perform no useful function if it did not attempt to mobilise for the struggle against the Labour Government's anti-working class policies. Callaghan has chosen to fight the next election on his government's record of humbling the trade unions — i.e. on imposing a 5% wage norm which will push down real wages. The TUC, despite its formal opposition to phase 4, has likewise made it clear that it will attack and sabotage workers' struggles to ensure a Labour victory. In this situation the key choice between defending workers' living standards and organisations and maintaining in power the anti-working class Callaghan government will be concretely posed in the immediate period ahead. We say that the position of 'no holding back on workers' struggles to preserve the Labour Government' is a prerequisite for active involvement in the battles of the autumn/winter 1978/79. The crucial task is to defeat the Labour/TUC determination to impose phase four and to continue their reactionary policies on unemployment, social spending cuts, Ireland etc.

We are for a Labour vote in 1979 as an elementary class vote against the Tories and the other bourgeois parties, but totally against sacrificing any group of workers, or the class as a whole, to a Labour victory.

We believe the SCLV has two principled choices as to its future. Either it can attempt to build a serious revolutionary current inside the Labour Party or it can be a limited but effective United front on certain key

issues. If it aims to be the former then its existing programme is inadequate. We believe that the amendments we proposed for the June conference remedy this. On the other hand if the 'Left forces' it intends to rally stand far from this position then united action on key issues is a possibility. In our view the essential planks for united action with Labour and Trade Union rank and file militants in such a campaign need to be sharply posed. For example:

- Smash phase four. Organised solidarity action with all workers fighting to break the paynorms. No incomes policy under capitalism. For substantial catch up claims and a sliding scale of wages to protect against inflation on the basis of a workers cost of living index.
- All out opposition to Labour's bloody policy in Ireland. No deals with the Ulster Unionists for their support in Parliament. Immediate withdrawal of the troops.
- For a 35 hour week with no loss of pay.
- Active Labour movement support for Black self-defence. Repeal the Immigration Acts.
- Fight to force the Labour Government to legislate free abortion and contraception on demand.
- Fight the cuts, for active non-implementation and 'over spending' by Labour Councils.

To Labour MPs, prospective candidates, local councillors, we demand that they put themselves at the head of all struggles and vote against all anti-working class measures even if this means the downfall of the Labour Government.

Only thus can the SCLV avoid acting as a cover for left fakers and really solidarise with workers on the receiving end of Callaghan's attacks.

We call on the SCLV Steering Committee to convene a new conference within two months to fully debate the re-orientation of the campaign with no bans on resolutions or suppression of contributions to the debate. Yours fraternally, Dave Stocking for Workers Power.

For more information on Workers Power . . . for back copies of our literature write to Workers Power BCM Box 7750 London WC1V 6XX

# BUSWORKERS TAKEN FOR A RIDE

LONDON'S BUSWORKERS and the travelling public have been shamefully betrayed by the treachery of the union full time officers, the cowardice of the central bus committee and the weakness of a majority of delegates to the Central bus conference. On September 12th the London central Bus Conference voted to accept London Transport's 'Bus Plan '78'.

The plan means cutbacks on over 80 routes, the withdrawal of some routes entirely, and the loss of over 200 jobs. London Transport announced the plan as 'not for negotiation'. This 'no negotiation' attitude so angered the Central Bus Committee (CBC) that they stirred their stumps sufficiently to ask the Central Bus Conference for the power to hold one hour strikes to force the opening of negotiations. Under the pressure of these stoppages the London Transport agreed to negotiate. As soon as they agreed the strike action was called off.

But the strikes were not started until April 22, the day the first set of cuts came into operation. We were fighting

schedules which were already in operation. To call off militant action when London Transport were backing down was criminal lunacy. When your enemy is retreating you put the boot in. A stepping up of the action at that point could have won a scrapping of the plan and a withdrawal of the April Cuts.

Flattered by their restored negotiating position the CBC now returned to the June Conference recommending the complete acceptance of the plan with a few cosmetic changes and sweeteners. Conference narrowly accepted this.

The decision was not popular in the branches. Many delegates were instructed to return to the July conference and vote against the plan. Under this pressure the July delegate conference voted to reject the plan.

With the initiative back in their hands the union full-timers and the CBC proceeded to do nothing to carry out the decisions of the July conference. In August they reported back that London Transport would not budge. Acceptance, they argued, was the only answer. They carried this at the August conference by the underhand method of "accepting the section officers report." Disgust with the official machine led several garages to go it alone. A series of 2 hour strikes started in 8 garages with other garages pulling their buses short in support of them.

The CBC now moved to settle the matter once and for all. They made Bus Plan '78 a special item on the agenda of the September bus conference. At the start of the meeting the Cricklewood delegate moved against acceptance. Instead, he argued that lightning strikes should be resumed if the April cuts were not withdrawn and the planned further cuts in October and March not suspended. This was narrowly rejected (by 37 votes to 31). London busworkers and their

passengers had been sold down the drain.

## HORACE CUT-THROAT

Even though London Transport have promised no more cuts for 5 years it is inevitable that Horace 'Cut-throat' and the Tory GLC will tighten the purse strings. The lessons of the past years will have to be learnt if we are not to see Bus plan 78 followed by Bus-plan 79, 80, 81 . . . and so on.

London Transport have reduced the number of bus operating staff from over 40,000 just after the war to 20,000 today. The union will have to **seize control of recruitment** if management's plans are to be stopped. The Central Bus Committee should demand the employment of another 5,000 workers and initiate action to secure jobs. The TGWU can find such a number itself from the ranks of its unemployed members.

Busplan 78 means work intensification. The answer to that must be a reduction in hours with no loss of pay. . . for a seven hour day now and an immediate increase in staff.

Against Management's plans to use productivity deals to bring us nearer roadside scheduling we must organise now to defend our

wage levels with no deterioration in conditions. We need a catch up claim of £35 a week to get us back to the standard of living prevailing before the Social Contract. Such a rise must be protected by automatic cost of living increases based on a cost of living index calculated by Trade Union and housewives committees.

## HOUSECLEANING

To wage a real battle for these policies we need a through housecleaning in the union. Only the annual election of full-time officers, with right of immediate recall would enable us to force them to represent us, not collaborate with management.

But the real problem lies at the base. The right wing in the garages must be challenged, the present leadership of the CBC must be fought, and unity in action has to be forged with other transport workers. To do these things, and to challenge management, requires the building of a garage based rank and file movement organisation fighting for socialist policies and to break the control of the union officials.

S.CUSHION

# in the unions

## AUEW — Right wing begins offensive

IN THE last two months, two Leyland disputes have been focal points for a growing attack on shop steward independence in the AUEW. The attack has been launched by the right wing leadership in the union.

Terry Duffy's defeat of Bob Wright marked a setback for the left in the union. It opens the way for a bureaucratic merger of the AUEW with Chapple's EEPTU. For this merger to take place however, Duffy, Boyd and the right wing know that they must undermine the ability of the rank and file in the union to resist their plans.

This is the reason for the threatened expulsions of the toolmakers at SU, and of the stewards at Bathgate. In the SU dispute Duffy even stated that he was prepared to allow the use of scab labour to keep the toolroom running.

### THE RECORD

In order to mount a serious fight against the AUEW right it is necessary to examine the record and intentions of the AUEW 'Broad Left'.

The policies of the Broad Left in the AUEW have been disastrous. After being elected on the promise of a meaningful national wage claim the broad left leadership did not organise a fight for one. In fact on occasions when the rank and file have shown a willingness to fight the Broad Left have sabotaged their efforts. Scanlon's career spans the sell-out of 1972 when the Manchester Engineers were left to fight alone, the 1977 TUC when Scanlon and the Labour Government's 1% limit by voting against the policies of his own union.



Bob Wright

The new darling of the Broad Left - Bob Wright - was recently interviewed in the CP's theoretical journal Marxism Today. Asked why the Broad Left had suffered set-backs he replied:

"the right wing and reactionary elements in the union have themselves become much better organised"

"Probably the weakness that has emerged on our side has been that in recent years sectarianism in left politics has become divisive, disrupting the pattern of unity that we founded the Broad Left movement on."

The Right certainly have become better organised, but we need to ask ourselves why. The answers lie in the shameful

record of the Broad Left. This explains why the Right have walked all over the Broad Left.

### INTERVIEW

Another Broad Left figure from the Scanlon era, John Tocher, interviewed in the latest issue of Socialist Review has given his strategy for fighting back against the Right. Unlike Bob Wright he is critical of the Broad Left's record. But all he offers as a way forward for militants is.. "That the Broad Left must be rebuilt under the maxim 'whoever wins the centre ground wins the day' ". Hardly the fighting strategy the left needs.

To start the fight-back Bob Wright argues the need "to rebuild the rank and file base of the union". In the face of the national secret ballot, and declining life in the branches Wright's bureaucratic recipe is simple. He proposes that "We may have to increase the size of the branches... hold meetings bi-monthly, or monthly, or perhaps even quarterly." Such a policy would pose no alternative to the stranglehold of the right. Only a fight for workplace based branches, for meetings to be held in work time, for all votes taken at mass meetings can do that.

The Broad Left offers only a continuation of the policies it pursued during the Scanlon era. It has no strategy for organising the rank and file to break the bureaucratic hold in the union.

Any movement setting out to rebuild the rank and file in the AUEW must base itself on policies squarely in the interests of the working class, fighting for those interests against both Tory and Labour governments. It must fight for branches based on the workplace, power to recall all officials, £100 minimum time rates and a 1% rise for every 1% rise in the cost of living. **ONLY THE FIGHT FOR THESE POLICIES CAN REVERSE THE ADVANCE OF THE RIGHT-WING'**

Steve Pitt



SU toolmakers — Duffy's first target

# COWLEY NINE

## defence is not

## enough

The threat of victimisation still hangs over nine T&G stewards at Leyland's Cowley plants. The last meeting of the Number Five Regional Committee decided not to take up charges brought by the Oxford District Committee. However, the local committee still has the power to press the charges, which in some cases could lead to expulsion from the union.

These militants have built a base of solid shop-floor support for opposition to participation and wage control. Successive management attempts to dislodge them have failed. The reason for the recent witchhunt are, therefore, transparent. The Cowley Nine are a threat to the plans of Leyland management, and to the T&G's officials' commitment to assist those plans.

It is for this reason that the campaign to defend the Cowley Nine is a vital part of the struggle against the class collaboration of the trade union leaders. It is also for this reason that the campaign to support Alan Thornett, Bob Fryer and the others can be the springboard for a serious movement in the T&G to democratise the union and break it from collaboration with the bosses and the Government.

### MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

The leadership of that campaign, however, have missed major opportunities to begin the urgent task of

building a militant rank and file movement in the T&G.

In April a conference was held, in Cowley, of T&G militants committed to defending the Cowley Nine. Speaker after speaker correctly pointed out that the victimisation was an essential part of the union leaders' strategy, and that if it was successful at Cowley they would widen their attack to any other group of workers who opposed them. Likewise, it was generally assumed that opposition had to be built and organised if the militants were to defeat the steadily mounting attack on jobs, conditions, union rights and wages.

Pointing to the need to fight for democracy in the union and, at the same time, for an offensive on wages and jobs, WORKERS POWER comrades argued that the defence of the Cowley Nine must not be left as a single issue campaign. The defence campaign was an opportunity to lay the basis for the necessary fight against the T&G leaders. While defending the Cowley Nine to the hilt, the assembled militants and their supporters around the country, could lay the basis for an ongoing rank and file movement in the T&G. The building of such a movement would, in fact, provide far greater support for the Nine than a single issue campaign. It was, moreover, an objective need of all militants in the T&G.

### SINGLE ISSUE

The leaders of the defence campaign argued differently. To raise any other question apart from defence for the Nine, they argued, would be to defocus that campaign. To WORKERS POWER proposals for reconvening the conference before the summer, they replied that it should only be reconvened if the victimisations went ahead.

After discussion, the conference passed, by an overwhelming majority, a separate resolution calling on the organisers to begin organising a recall conference on the basis of the

organisations represented at the April meeting.

The organisers have not acted even on this vague mandate. No conference has been called or announced.

The refusal of the district comm-



Alan Thornett 'fight for rank and file would defocus the defence campaign'

tee to drop the charges, the impending struggle over the Cowley pay claim underline the impossibility of limiting the battle in the T&G to defence of certain militants or support for particular factories.

The base certainly exists, not only in the Leyland plants, for a fight back in the T&G. But to go forward it is necessary to seize the opportunities that exist. The transformation of the T&G into a democratically controlled union fighting against the attacks of the bosses and the Government is an absolutely vital task for all militants in the union. Every struggle in the union, over both democracy and policies, has to be fought within the context of the need to build a rank and file movement aimed at achieving this transformation. It is for this reason that we repeat our call for the Cowley Defence Committee to reconvene the conference, to organise a democratic conference of T&G militants to hammer out the basis of a fightback and the building of a rank and file movement.

Steve Mc Sweeney

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# FORD'S:

## FIRST TEST FOR 5%

By Mark Hoskisson

THE FIRST major test of Callaghan's pay norm has come with the Ford workers' claim for a 25% wage increase and a shorter working week. The cabinet have already made it clear that they are staking the survival of the Government on the 5% wage limit. This means that pressure, including sanctions, will be applied to Ford's if they concede the claim. On their part the Ford management, with the possibility of massive Government aid for their plan to build a plant in South Wales, will undoubtedly attempt to avoid sanctions by engineering a deal, with the trade union bureaucracy, inside the pay norm.

The last few years have been ones of sharp recession for the motor industry. Weaker sectors, like Chrysler, have only just avoided going to the wall. Stronger firms, like Fords, have come through the recession relatively unscathed. The cost of that success has fallen on the Ford workforce worldwide. 50,000 jobs have been lost, massive speed-ups have been introduced and living standards and shop floor organisation have been attacked.

In defiance of Callaghan's 5% limit Ford workers in Britain are pushing for a £20 flat rate increase, a 35 hour week and increased sickness benefit, holiday pay, shift rates and pensions. Despite the militant sound of this claim, and the support it therefore enjoys, it was originally seen by the officials as a mere starting point for their negotiations. The record of Moss Evans (the previous chief union negotiator for Ford's) should serve as a warning for all Ford workers.

His successor, Ron Todd, called a national strike over the present claim. This opens the way for the smashing of the 5% pay norm. But, Ford workers must recognise that it

was never submitted to any mass meetings, a plan of action was never organised to achieve the claim and shop stewards meetings to discuss the claim were deliberately sabotaged by union officials.

These examples reveal an obvious divide between shop floor workers at Fords and the bureaucrats who supposedly represent them. At the moment it is the bureaucracy who have the upper hand.

### COMPROMISE

In this situation the present pay claim is crucial, both, in terms of smashing the pay norm and in opening the way for a movement to develop against the bureaucracy. Though the NJNC is talking about 25% past experience points to the likelihood of a compromise being made without the Ford workers themselves being involved or consulted. Furthermore, any deal is likely to be tied to 'no strike' clauses and increased productivity. So, while demanding support and action from their own bureaucrats - and the TUC which is nominally against the 5% limit - Ford workers must organise and prepare for action themselves to fight for the full 25% with no strings attached.

Last year's occupations over lay off pay and the whole history of strikes in Fords, show that the workers there are able to organise and win struggles. Success this time around will depend on overcoming the management imposed fragmentation that exists within the workforce and convincing other sections of workers of the need to move into action immediately against the 5% limit. It will also involve breaking the control the bureaucracy has over negotiations. This can be done by rebuilding a strong shop floor organisation, capable of sustaining the strike regardless of the manoeuvrings of the officials, and fighting for the full 25%.

### PREPARE TO FIGHT

If the bureaucrats are left in control of negotiations the current deal will be used by them and the management to further weaken shop floor organisation in Fords, And, unless a real fight is organised by the rank and file this claim will probably be manufactured so as to avoid a clash with Callaghan and leave the 5% limit intact. The message is clear. Ford workers, watch your leaders, and prepare yourselves now to fight.

## Control crucial at Leyland

By Dick Pratt

THE BRITISH ruling class are 100% behind the attempts by the European car bosses to smash Trade Union resistance to the 'rationalisation' of the motor industry. In circumstances of international cut throat competition there is no other solution open to them.

But for car workers there are alternatives. They mean a fight against management's attempts to cut the workforce and increase productivity. They mean a fight to break Callaghan's 5% wage limit.

### EDWARDES

Union leaders are attempting to stifle such a fight back. They are attempting to pressurise workers to participate in the attacks on their jobs and threatening expulsion from the unions should they resist.

The April announcement of the 'Edwardes Plan' was the signal for a renewed assault on the shop floor. Neither the Trade Union officials nor the Leyland combine committee organised any resistance to this onslaught. The Speke plant was closed without a fight. In the TGWU bureaucrats have witch-hunted militants who resisted the plans at Cowley. At Bathgate the AUEW District Committee withdrew the credentials of stewards who refused to recommend a return to work. Likewise the AUEW threatened the toolroom workers at SU with expulsion if they did not return.

The Combine Committee, while committed to 'Corporate bargaining' has prepared no national claim. Instead the Longbridge Works Committee are proposing a deal which would involve speed ups and redundancies in return for a mere £13 wage increase. In this situation it is crucial that a national fight is organised behind all claims that defend jobs and conditions, that Leyland workers unite nationally behind all challenges to the 5% limit.

### COWLEY

The Cowley Assembly workers have submitted a claim for a £27 per week increase to give them a uniform £100 minimum time rate, an automatic cost of living increase, and for a 35 hour week.

These demands, particularly the demand for the 35 hour week, must be linked to the struggle for workers control. The experience at Rover Cardiff is evidence of this. Stewards there demanded a guaranteed 40 hour week for 6 months and all overtime to be under their control. In the words of the convenor John Williams "We are no longer going to accept management's production figures and allow them to build up stocks so they can lay us off." Only if Leyland workers enter on the road of struggle for control against the management can jobs and conditions be secured.

Speed-ups and subsequent lay-offs must be met with the demand for work or full pay. Stewards must fight for control over hiring and firing, production schedules, the speed of work, and the hours worked. However to exercise that control workers need to know what work is available, what the state of the order books and accounts are. This means challenging the bosses' right to manage by forcing the opening of all Leyland's books for unfettered inspection by democratically controlled workers' committees.

The Communist Party, who

dominate the Combine Committee, have a different view of workers control. Their position was outlined in a recent pamphlet by Jon Bloomfield. Bloomfield claimed that "Participation is beginning to create a situation in which the labour force have greater control over their future by taking part in the major company decisions". But, what Bloomfield ignores is that while a few senior stewards haggle over the construction of a new mini plant the senior management are scrapping the new mini plans altogether. 'Participation' is an attempt to make shop floor representatives co-responsible with the employers in the drive to weaken shop floor organisation and derail resistance to the bosses' plans.

### NATIONALISATION

Leyland workers must organise now to build a plant based national stewards organisation that is capable of leading a national struggle with the bosses over wages, jobs and conditions. They must fight for the nationalisation, without compensation, of the entire motor and components industry under workers control.



Cowley workers vote for £27 claim

## Continued from page one Anti-Nazi League

to base themselves clearly on the essential planks:

No Platform for Fascists

No Immigration Controls

Active Labour Movement support

for Black Self Defence

Fascists out of the Unions

We call for a central orientation to the trade unions with the goal of a workers united front and workers defence squads to defeat the fascist gangs. A national

conference of committees and defence groups with this orientation is a vital task in the coming months.

The sell-out of Carnival 2 shows without a shadow of doubt that anti-fascists cannot look to the ANL for the day to day coordination of the movement. Let alone decisive direction at critical moment.

The ANL Carnival allowed the fascists to march, to repair their tattered morale. It left the East End undefended against gangs of fascists in the evening.



Moss Evans - forced to act

was pressure from them, their spontaneous action at Halewood and Southampton, that forced Todd to call the strike. There is already talk of a two year contract, a productivity deal, fringe benefits etc. Todd is likely to go for a settlement involving these rather than continue an all out battle with the Government for the full claim.

Ford have been able to deliver attacks on their workers in the past because of the structure of the company's negotiating body. The National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) is made up of union officials and Ford management. The various plant convenors have also been carefully integrated into this machinery.

The NJNC was established in 1944 and the trade union representatives on it are not and never have been accountable to their rank and file. The militant talking of the trade union side is only a cover for the cosy relationship that it enjoys with the Ford management. The battles it has had have been farcical set pieces modelled on the 'American' style of industrial relations. A claim is submitted, a mock battle ensues and a deal is reached.

### SABOTAGED

This was best illustrated by the 1971 deal which arose out of a 9 week strike. A wage contract was reached, binding for two years. It was not to be renegotiated, it involved a 'no strike' clause and it was arrived at by a secret ballot. This was a clear betrayal of the workers who had been on strike. Again in 1977 the deal which 'broke' the 10% limit

The forces existed to stop the Front. But to take such action would have meant the ANL breaking with its liberal and reformist backers. This the 'revolutionary' SWP and IMG would not do.

That is why we urge all those who have blithely fallen in with the ANL's demobilisation of the anti-fascist movement to break with the ANL tradition now. To do otherwise is to continue to allow the fascists to build their forces on the streets.

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

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