

## MAY DAY

The Editorial Board of 'Socialist Press' sends revolutionary May Day greetings to the labour movement of the world.

## UNIONS SCAB ON AUEW

As we go to press the 4,000 Heathrow engineers are waiting to hear whether the Executive Committee of their union, the AUEW, is prepared to make their strike official.

The men are striking in support of a claim for shift pay which they want to see paid to all AUEW members, regardless of grade, as a percentage of the basic rate of the 'Tradesman One' grade.

British Airways management have now agreed to discuss a joint shift pay claim with all the unions involved in Engineering and Maintenance but the other unions on the wages sub-committee refuse to discuss the details of the claim with the AUEW.

### WITHDREW

They say this is because the AUEW withdrew from the negotiating machinery. The wages subcommittee say they will discuss submitting a joint claim with the AUEW if the engineers return to the negotiating machinery and go back to work.

However it is quite clear that the negotiating machinery does not represent the interests of any of the workers it claims to negotiate for. Every level except the wages subcommittee (which has no powers, anyway) is staffed by unelected, full time union bureaucrats from the main unions—the TGWU and the EETPU.

At the same time, the Stalinists on the wages sub-committee have done everything in their power to prevent a joint claim being drawn up. Their overriding consideration is to stop an assault on Phase Two of the Social Contract, which is exactly what a joint shift pay

Cont'd, back page, col. 4

# JONES' 'FLEXIBILITY' CON-TRICK

"You can have as much as you like under Phase Three of wage control—as long as it's no more than you got last time". This was the sharp message of Labour Chancellor Healey's speech to the USDAW Conference last weekend.

Healey spelled out the type of wages straightjacket the Liberal-Labour coalition government and the TUC leaders are planning to impose on trade unionists.

The straightjacket itself as proposed by Healey is a 10% overall limit in actual earnings over the next year.

Because of people changing jobs, the widespread evasion of wage controls by management grades and the substantial sections of industry (eg construction and engineering) on piece rates not covered by wage controls, the overall earnings figure is always way above wage increases.

Under the 5% limit for example, earnings have risen by 11% over the last year.

In other words Healey's call for a 10% ceiling means another continuation of the present 5% limit on pay increases.

But as a sop to the trade union leaders, struggling to maintain the present round of pay policy in the face of a hostile membership,



Port Talbot electricians leaders.

Healey offered to leave the sleeves of the pay straightjacket a little bit loose.

He announced that the government was prepared to be "flexible" on how the 10% figure was distributed.

This notion of "flexibility" in wage control, along with the linked concept of an "orderly return" to free collective bargaining is now the main plank on which TUC leaders are basing their manoeuvres towards a Phase Three.

When Jack Jones for instance, gave a carefully-timed news conference at the beginning of this year's big union conferences, he brought to the forefront the deliberately misleading formula adopted at last September's TUC:

"The trade unions never envisaged long term stringent pay controls. We now seek agreement for an orderly return to free collective bargaining".

### EDITING

This speech, coupled with some shrewd editing by the gutter press and television became the source of confusion within the workers' movement—and was twisted to give the impression Jones was actually opposed to a Phase Three!

This was immediately seized upon by the Communist Party. They announced on the April 20 day of action against the Social Contract that Jones had now "seen the light" and been "won over" to opposing a Phase Three. And this line was picked up



A mass meeting of TGWU members at Heathrow—'blacklegs charter' keeps planes flying.

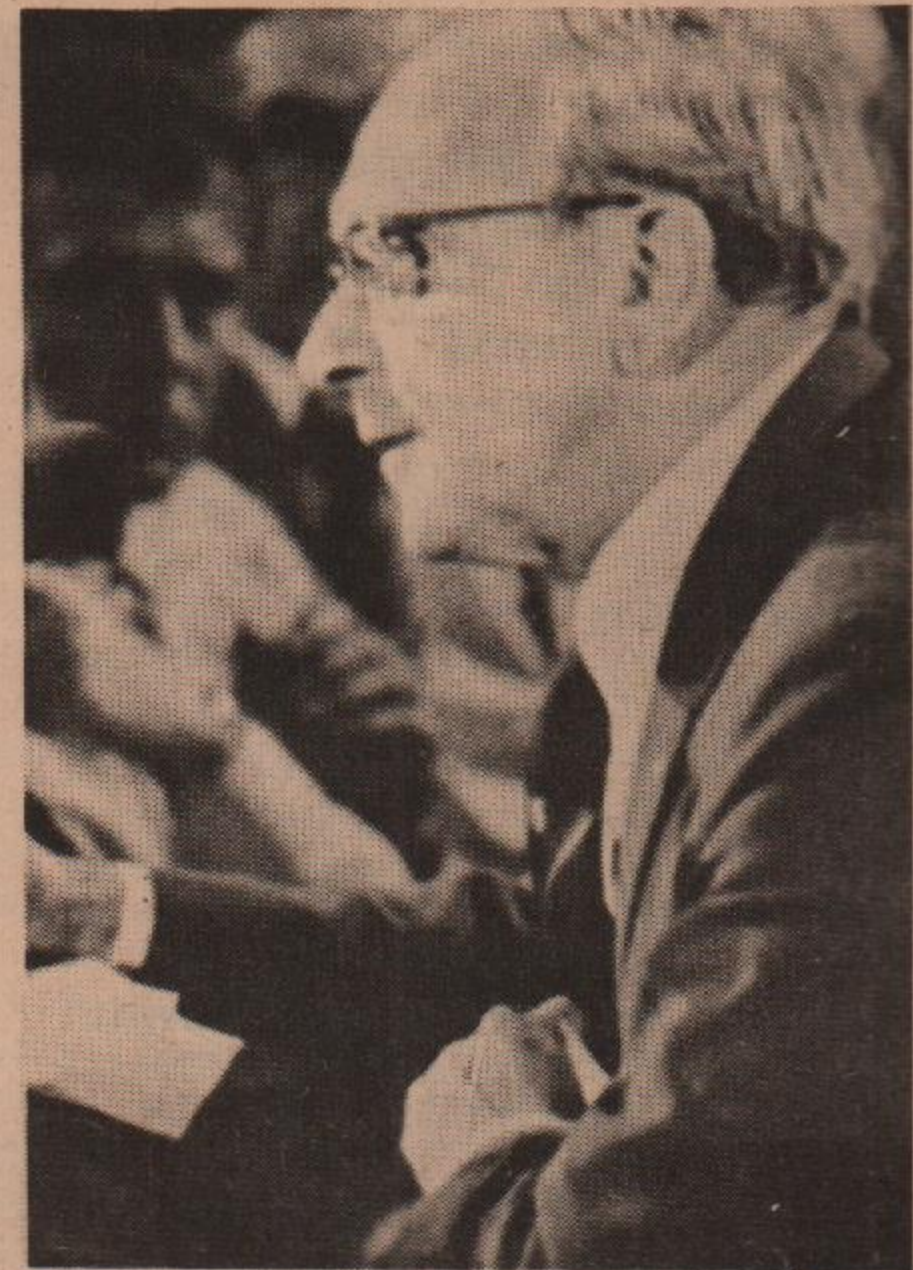


PHOTO: John Sturrock, Report.

only through a coalition deal with the Liberal Party which stands for rigid wage controls. The Callaghan-Healey leadership are being preserved simply to allow them to impose a Phase Three acceptable to British capitalism. Should they fail, the Liberals will withdraw support and a general election will bring a Tory government to power.

But should they succeed the government would remain even then at the complete mercy of the capitalist parties.

This is why former 'lefts' like Benn who remain in the coalition cabinet and use their 'left' credentials to call for trade union backing for the government are playing the most reactionary role.

The requirements of the working class are precisely the opposite—a break from the coalition and a fight in defence of living standards and jobs through breaking the Social Contract.

This is why workers must demand that the 'left' MPs who claim to oppose Callaghan's policies now take the lead in fighting for an immediate break from the Liberals.

Those who refuse to do so in the name of "saving the Labour government" are themselves acting as a prop for the coalition.

There can be no socialist policies while Labour remains in tandem with the Liberals.

### NEW LEADERSHIP

And to break the Social Contract there must be a fight for a new leadership in the unions prepared to put forward an independent programme for the working class—at the centre of which must be a sliding scale of wages in all agreements to protect incomes against inflation as assessed by elected committees of trade unionists and housewives.

This policy must be linked to full support for every section of workers now in struggle against the Social Contract and for big catching up increases to make up for the erosion of real wages that has already taken place.

Why you need a sliding scale of wages . . . . . p5



Heathrow maintenance men



# INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## ZAIRE: FRENCH PROP MOBUTU

Mobutu's government was claiming last weekend to be recapturing the territory taken in the preceding month by the guerrilla army of the Congolese National Liberation Front in the mineral-rich province of Shaba (formerly Katanga).

If the Zaire army has gained any ground it must be largely thanks to the influx of help from his imperialist friends.

French aeroplanes flew in 1,500 Moroccan troops and France is providing the services of crucial military technicians including paratroop instructors and engineers and possible pilots for Mobutu's 15 Mirage fighters.

This has been backed by British Labour Foreign Secretary David Owen, and by NATO.

Help has also been offered by Egypt, the Sudan, Uganda (Amin visited Mobutu last week), the United States, possibly South Africa, and certainly China.

The Chinese spokesman at the UN last week accused the Soviet Union of organising the invasion of Zaire by mercenaries.

The speed with which Mobutu's friends have rallied round testifies to the great economic importance of Zaire to imperialism (as a source of copper, diamonds, tin, zinc, uranium and cobalt of which it has 65% of the capitalist world's supplies).

## OWEN - HOD CARRIER FOR CARTER

British Foreign Secretary David Owen's eight-day, whistle-stop tour of southern Africa resembled Kissinger's flying diplomacy in more ways than one.

It now transpires that the plans he put to the racist Smith regime in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia) for a 'constitutional conference' were worked out in close consultation with the Carter administration, and they provide for the full involvement of the US government in all future negotiations on the future of Zimbabwe.

From being the errand boy of American imperialism in Africa, the British Foreign Office has now been demoted to being its bag-carrier.

Owen's plan is for a conference which will write a constitution directly, agreement on the main points having been previously reached in bilateral talks between the British-American side and—respectively—Smith and his 'moderate' African leaders such as Nkomo and Mugabe, who still claim a following among the guerrilla forces.

The US government calculates that through such a conference they can preserve a regime sympa-

It also points to the prevailing opinion about the fragility of Mobutu's pro-imperialist regime.

The concentration of its 40,000 strong army in Shaba however will endanger Mobutu's control in the rest of the country.

Antoine Gizenga, former deputy Prime Minister to Patrice Lumumba and exiled in the Soviet Union in the 1960's, now claims to lead another guerrilla army of the "Democratic forces for the liberation of the Congo" (FODELICO) in the eastern province of Kiva (the area around former Stanleyville).

politicians based on a black majority in the electorate.

They are alarmed that before very long the obvious lack of enthusiasm by Nkomo and his ilk for a serious liberation war may lead to their removal.

With Angola and Mozambique now in the hands of pro-Soviet nationalist governments, and the CIA-installed and fuelled Mobutu regime in Zaire under threat, the grip of imperialism in Southern Africa is seriously threatened.

This is why Carter last week asked Congress to agree a \$100 million Zimbabwe Development Fund, one of the main purposes of which will be to sweeten the attitudes of the white colonial elite to black majority rule.

Similar calculations underlie the approval of South African Premier Vorster (with whom Owen discussed his proposals before taking them to Salisbury) for the plan, and the reaction of Ian Smith himself, who compared it favourably at the weekend with the abortive Geneva talks.

And for the same reasons the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front have voiced some opposition, especially over US co-sponsorship of the



The Zaire conflict has highlighted the role played in Africa by the French government. French President Giscard and his Minister of Cooperation, Robert Galley, went to Dakar (Senegal) at the

weekend to preside over the fourth Franco-African summit conference since 1973, at which nineteen African countries are represented and where proposals for an 'anti-communist military alliance' will be discussed.

## ITALY - CP BACK POLICE

"The killing of the policeman Settimio Passamonti is new, barbaric evidence of the point of extremism which has been reached by subversive, armed gangs and organisations in their attack on every form of civil stability"

A proclamation from the extreme right wing? No, an official communique from the Secretariat of the Italian Communist Party on Thursday last week, following armed fighting between police and left-wing students in and around Rome University.

Firearms first came into the struggles on the campuses six weeks ago. Police shot dead a left-wing student on a demonstration in Bologna, a city at the centre of Italy's 'Red belt', whose entire administration has for decades been controlled by the Communist Party.

The role of the Stalinist leadership, in seeking to shift the blame for bloodshed away from the attacks by gangs of heavily-armed policemen onto the shoulders of students who will not accept massive cutbacks in education and employment, is a criminal one.

It forms part and parcel of their policy for the 'historic compromise' a full-blooded coalition with the Christian Democrats, whose minority government is only kept in office by Communist Party abstentions in parliament.

The Stalinists' lies also directly assist the government's attacks on the democratic rights they are so anxious to 'defend'.

Calling for the 'unity' of all 'anti-fascists', the CP leadership backed to the hilt Interior Minister Cossiga's announcement that all public demonstrations in Rome are

and his new orders to the police, allowing them to use their guns much more readily.

As everyone knows, Italy's police forces (virtually all equipped with firearms) are riddled—more than any European state apart from Spain—with fascists and their supporters.

In the last few years dozens of workers, students and left wingers have died as a direct consequence of police violence, without a single culprit being brought to justice.

The police forces, together with the notorious paramilitary 'carabinieri' and the intelligence services, have been the hatching-ground of a series of right-wing plots aimed at establishing the sort of Junta which the CIA imposed on Greece.

The national, reformist 'road to socialism' put forward by the Stalinists and social democrats in Italy is a death-trap for the working class.

They already face huge cuts in their living standards as the trade union leaders negotiate sacrifice after sacrifice from wage packets and social services to meet the conditions for a \$500 million IMF loan to Andreotti's Christian Democratic government.

Workers now also face police violence on a massive scale, backed by the approval of their own leaders.

The lethal political role of the Communist Party during last week brings to the fore even more sharply the importance of revolutionary policies to meet the crisis—for a sliding scale of wages and benefits, democratically decided by workers to match inflation.

And, to prevent violence and right-wing murders in broad daylight, workers' militias based on the trades unions, with the disbandment of the standing army and the

## ZAIRE: events since 1960

1960 The Republic of the Congo gains independence from Belgium. Kasavubu President, Patrice Lumumba Prime Minister, (oacked by the USSR), Gizenga, deputy Prime Minister.

Belgian troops support secessionist movement in Katanga province under Moise Tshombe. Lumumba calls in UN troops; Belgians leave. Lumumba overthrown and arrested by Army Chief Mobutu who imposes temporary military rule.

1961 Lumumba murdered, probably with CIA involvement. Gizenga sets up anti-Kasavubu temporary government in Stanleyville, later rejoins new constitutional central government.

1962 Gizenga arrested. Government and UN troops take Stanleyville.

1963 UN troops defeat Katanga secession.

1964 Tshombe forms government of "national unity". Belgian/American military intervention defeats new secession in Stanleyville.

1965 Tshombe dismissed by Kasavubu who is then overthrown in a military coup by Mobutu.

1966 Mobutu becomes personal dictator. Later forms People's Revolutionary Movement (MRP) to back him.

1966-74 Mobutu rules through police state methods, backs imperialist actions in Africa, has close links with the CIA.

1974 "Mobutuism", the cult of personality, begins.

1975 New legislative elections. No ballot boxes, elections by "more democratic method" of acclamation at public meetings. MRP wins 244 seats out of 244! Major economic crisis. Zaire defaults on international debts. "Zaireanised" firms handed back to foreign capitalists.

Zaire aids FNLA (whose leader is married to the sister of one of Mobutu's wives) in Angola civil war.

1976 New diplomatic and economic agreements with South Africa. Mobutu's personal wealth estimated at \$50 million.

## IN BRIEF

### CUBA

Pepsi, and the University of South Dakota basketball team, are coming back to Havana.

A senior Pepsi Cola executive was one of a group of American capitalists to visit Cuba at the invitation of Prime Minister Fidel Castro.



Castro

The visit follows one by US Congressmen and is part of the drawn-out but now more or less certain process of re-establishing diplomatic and economic ties between Cuba and the US broken by Kennedy in 1961. Carter now says that he would like Cuban troops to leave Angola but he does not consider it a precondition for the resumption of normal relations. And Castro long ago stopped making the withdrawal of the American Navy from the Guantanamo base in the east of Cuba a precondition on his side.

# TURKEY: NO SUPPORT TO ECEVIT!

The hostility of the Turkish masses to the National Front coalition government has been expressed in the first election meetings of the main bourgeois opposition party, the RPP.

A series of meetings addressed by party leader Ecevit drew no less than 200,000 people. Ecevit himself by concluding a deal with the Demirel government for an early election has played a key role in diverting the anti-government struggles of the workers, and preventing a collapse of the NF administration.

## CP BACKING

Yet the Stalinist leaders of the Turkish workers are backing Ecevit, helping to gather forces to support his demagogic speeches about "democracy".

This is in spite of Ecevit's vicious attacks on the "left". In one of his election meetings, he is reported as saying "If there are any communists in the RPP, just name them and I will deal with them".

The main fascist party the NAP (National Action Party) has refused to run jointly with Demirel's party. This indicates that the bourgeois are determined to keep the fascist card in reserve, while for now allowing Ecevit to head off a mass movement.

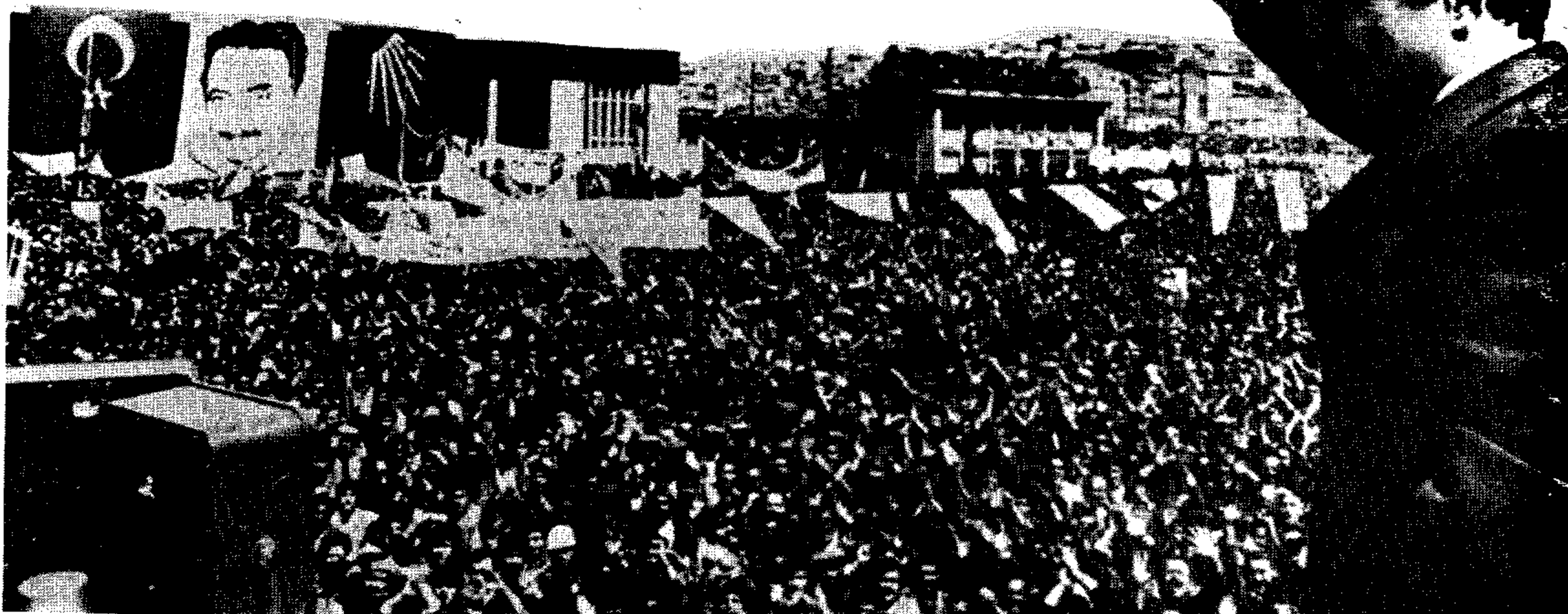
The only workers party allowed to participate in the election—the Turkish Labour Party—is under continuous police harassment in a bid to prevent any independent workers voice being heard.

## ARRESTED

Sixty-four members were arrested for putting up posters proclaiming "let the flag of socialism rise in Parliament".

There must be no let up in the struggle to remove the NF coalition government before the election.

But in the election itself there must be no vote whatever for the bourgeois RPP. Instead workers must demand the TLP break all links with the RPP and put forward a socialist programme to unite workers and peasants.



Turkish bourgeois leader Ecevit at election rally

# SPAIN: FASCISM LIVES ON

For the second time this year sections of Spain's fascist military have been threatening to seize power.

The legalisation of the Communist Party (following on the "disbanding" of Franco's National Movement) prompted the resignation of the Navy Minister and of two generals in the "parliament", and an emergency meeting of the Supreme Military Council.

## PROTEST

This last body finally reached agreement to limit its actions for now to sending a strong protest to the Suarez government.

According to the majority of the press, the terms of the protest were:

1. disapproval of the legalisation of the Communist Party which would nevertheless, in the national interest be accepted in a disciplined way, as a fait accompli;
2. an underlining of the army's "duty" to defend national unity, the national flag, the institution of the monarchy and its own reputation.

But the fascist paper *El Alcazar* (journal of the Francoist war veterans) said there were two more points:

3. the army's objection to the way in which, through the legalisation of the CP, the government had degraded the person of the King.
4. the army's readiness to resolve any future problems which might emerge "by using its own methods".

This situation was sufficiently tense for an army denial of the last two points to be broadcast every half-hour on Spanish radio for a whole day!

But whether or not they were in the message, there is no doubt that they represent the thoughts of a good many generals.

The powerful and well-financed fascist Popular Alliance of ex-Interior Minister Manuel Fraga has lined up fully behind the army.

## CORTES

It has also collected enough signatures to demand a special meeting of the Cortes (the fake parliament) to discuss the legalisation of the CP, which is still far from being accepted by the far right.

Stalinist and reformist leaders have responded to all this by either denying that it is happening or cringing before it.

Galvan, leader of the small but active reformist Popular Socialist Party said in a statement, strongly reminiscent of the Popular Unity government in Chile:

"The army has buried the prejudices of the war . . . and are becoming an army of professionals in the service of the nation and loyal to the crown".

The CP leadership, anxious not to cause any offence to the fascist generals cancelled its plans for a mass rally to celebrate legalisation.

And as a symbol of its abject collaboration, it has shamefully recognised the monarchist rather than the republican national flag and will display it at its election meetings.

## JUNE ELECTION

The election has now been fixed for June 15 with a three week campaign beforehand.

But it remains unclear what the elections are for. The government refuses to say whether the new assembly will have any constituent

powers or how the government will be constituted or even whether it will depend for its survival on a parliamentary majority.

The election will take place under conditions where numerous facets of the Francoist state remain intact.

The army and the police are untouched. Parties to the left of the CP are still illegal. So are all the independent trade unions.

## BOYCOTT

The legalisation of 100 political parties does not stop daily arrests for political activities throughout Spain.

After three "amnesties" there are still political prisoners.

Under these conditions, and where the working class is showing itself ready to go beyond the constitutional straight-jacket in which the right and the reformists and Stalinists want to hold it, we continue to believe that revolutionaries should demand a *boycott* of the forthcoming elections.

# DENMARK

Collective Contracts between Danish employers and unions have finally been imposed by government legislation.

After months of negotiations between representatives of the employers and unions had reached deadlock, the official arbitrator stepped in and worked out a compromise.

The compromise was balloted upon by the unions, who accepted it, and employers, who rejected it.

The government then made it into law, with the support of the trade union leaders.

## ONLY 6%

The new contracts don't give the workers much—a mere 6% including cost of living increments. Employers resistance seemed to centre on the new guaranteed minimum for lower paid workers of 29 crowns an hour (approx. £2.80).

However this is not a basic rate—the employers will be allowed to include bonuses to make up the 29 crowns. And it is a far cry from the minimum of 35 crowns demanded by the rank and file.

The fact that the compromise was a sell-out by the unions was reflected in the low ballot figures: 45.7% of TUC members voted.

two-thirds for acceptance and one-third against.

A considerable number of 'yes' voters do so because they have no confidence that their "leaders" will lead a struggle even if they receive a mandate to do so.

Four unions—among them one of the biggest—the Shop and Office Workers—didn't even give their members the privilege of voting, the union leaderships simply delivered block votes in favour.

The Metalworkers, another big union, sent ballot papers to the members' homes in spite of a conference decision to hold the vote at union general meetings where discussions could precede the vote.

In any case union members were deciding to accept or reject an agreement in which their original demands not only didn't figure, but had been dropped at the start by their negotiators who felt bound by the 6% Incomes Policy decided by the government and its right-wing allies the previous August.

The only newspapers appearing since the beginning of April have been those of the workers parties, an independent left paper co-operatively run, the Stock Exchange, (which isn't a member of the employers' association, and is printed by the Social Democratic

press) and a few local sheets produced by strike-breaking editorial staff.

## SOLIDARITY

The rest of the country's press has been stopped in solidarity with the locked out printing workers of the Berlingske Tidende concern, and to back up the Graphic trades negotiations for new contracts.

The Berlingske Tidende concern has co-opted onto its board an outside cowboy who has deliberately picked on the strongest organised workplace at the biggest firm in the branch.

It is clear that a major struggle against the printing trades is in the offing.

The lock-out workers have full backing by their unions, by the trade as a whole, and by the working class. But unfortunately it looks as if the workers' leadership is bargaining away jobs as negotiations appear to be developing.

The Stalinist leadership has proposed voluntary redundancy of 150 older workers over 12 months, coupled with redundancy payments (not a normal practice in Denmark, but used by the Stalinists to avoid a struggle against unemployment at B&W Shipyards also), and a "transition wage" to ease the move onto pensions from wages.

# WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

The Workers Socialist League is a Trotskyist organisation fighting to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class to lead the mounting opposition to the betrayals of both 'left' and right wing Labour and trade union leaders and the Communist Party, as they attempt to enforce wage control, sackings, speed-up and public service cuts.

As workers take up the struggle against these policies they are forced by the sheer weight of forces opposing them to confront *political* questions. Only with an understanding of the role of the labour bureaucracy and a programme to unite the broadest sections of workers in struggle can a way forward be found.

The Workers Socialist League is the only movement that sets out to do this, fighting consistently in the working class for *transitional* demands, which go beyond simply trade union militancy to raise the political questions to workers and prepare the forms of organisation and the knowledge necessary for the struggle for socialism.

As a result we have been at the forefront of struggles against the cuts, against wage control, for unionisation, and against redundancy. We have done more than any other tendency to fight the introduction of 'workers' participation' in industry. And we have strongly supported the Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, which has set out to show the link between the reactionary policies of the Social Contract and bureaucratic dictatorship in both the unions and the Labour Party.

But our practical struggle for the continuity of the principles and method of Trotsky's Transitional Programme is in no way a task confined to Britain. It requires an attention and involvement in the struggles of the working class internationally, and the fight to reconstruct the Trotskyist Fourth International.

So there has been a consistent drive within the WSL to deepen and enrich the movement's understanding of the history and the present crisis of the Fourth International as an essential part of our initiative towards its reconstruction.

We urge all readers who agree on the need for revolutionary leadership and the demands we put forward to find out more about the WSL and join our fight in the Labour movement.



# DAY OF DIVERSION



Part of the April 20 London demonstration

The April 20 'day of action' was called by the Stalinist-controlled Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions and the Leyland Stewards Conference to divert away from struggles now taking place against Phase 2.

The Communist Party wanted to put forward an alternative policy to those who want to fight the Social Contract. Their line is trying to put pressure on the TUC leaders not to accept Phase 3.

The Communist Party had turned the day from a one-day strike call to simply a "day of action". This meant that less than 50,000 workers were actually involved in any form of industrial action.

The organisers also organised demonstrations in various parts of the country, none of which was very big. In fact the demonstration in London could only be called a flop, with only 2,000, motor and engineering workers, with AUEW banners predominating, marching almost silently.

## SINGLE SLOGAN

In the march itself the only slogan put forward by the CP and others was "Social Contract Out".

The call for support for Port Talbot and Heathrow workers was only put forward by the WSL and the IMG. The IMG, however, contented themselves with saying "Smash the Social Contract" and calling for the TUC to "get off the fence", whereas the WSL centred on the necessity for strike action against Phase 2 and in support of

the Airport and Port Talbot workers.

No sound was audible from the 2 WRP members holding an ATUA banner.

About 150 people attended the SWP public meeting which exhibited the completely anti-political stand of the SWP. The only person to even mention the government was Jack Sheldon, a Labour Party member and toolroom steward who seemed proud of the fact that he had chaired the meeting at which the toolroom workers in Birmingham

had returned to work.

He didn't attack the toolroom leadership once and of course didn't mention the offer of strike action by the toolroom committee in support of the airport strikers which has now been dropped.

## NO BLACKING CALL

The docks steward, Eddie Prevost, longtime IS and SWP member never once mentioned the need to have imported blackleg

steel blacked on the docks.

Ian Morris, the airport steward, far from putting forward a position of leadership said that even if they didn't win the money he thought that they could get a guarantee from the management that they would pay a shift pay increase as soon as the Social Contract finished.

The meeting was wound up by John Deason who showed the SWP as usual tail-ending the CP, which had not been criticised from begin-

ning to end. He said "Jack Jones is beginning to hedge his bets. Maybe we won't have a Phase 3".

So the day ended on the note it started with—confusion sown by the Communist Party and their hangers-on.

# DEMO BACKS 'FRAMED' 18

Two days before the trial of the 18 Islington youth facing frame-up charges of conspiracy to rob, a march of 400 through Islington demanded their immediate release.

The lively march was supported by a number of local Labour Parties, union branches and political groups including the WSL.

It demanded the lifting of all the charges and expressed its protest at every police station in the area where the youths had been attacked.

This backing from the local labour movement must now be made solid by each organisation taking part in the workers' enquiry into the behaviour of the police.

The local Labour Party must in particular fight for the removal of Merlyn Rees, the minister of the Liberal-Labour government responsible for the racist activities of the police force.

One speaker in the concluding rally declared: "Black people are being made scapegoats of the economic crisis, and we will not have it! We are going to fight back."

She named a number of trials staged against blacks in which the police had lost out of hand, and said they must lose again in Islington.

The trial is expected to last about four months and cost a considerable amount of taxpayers money.



PHOTO: John Sturrock (Report)

Recent meeting to support Islington 18

# IRISH HUNGER STRIKES ENDED

The hunger strike by Provisional Republican prisoners at Portlaoise jail in the South of Ireland ended in its seventh week.

Fourteen men had till then been refusing food, among them Daithi O'Connell, former IRA Chief of Staff, and Kevin Mallon, former member of the IRA Army Council.

The condition of the men was quite serious—how serious no-one knows for sure, since the Fine Gael-Labour coalition government in the South refused throughout to release any information, and consistently prevented anyone from visiting the prisoners.

The hunger strike was in protest at the barbaric conditions prevailing in Portlaoise jail.

In particular, the prisoners were demanding an end to "strip searches", a method of prison control which involves stripping a prisoner, examining his genitals and probing his anus in an effort to discover explosives!

If a prisoner resists, he is punished with solitary confinement. This means being locked barefoot in a cell which has no furniture at all during the day, and only a mattress at night.

Visitors to the jail have also been strip-searched, and have often been obliged to wait several hours before prisoners can be seen.

All in all, a clear pattern is emerging of vindictive and constant humiliations aimed at destroying Provisional morale within the prison.

The Free State government, in addition, refused even to discuss the hunger strike, and prevented independent visitors from inspecting conditions in the jail.



British soldier in Ireland

The government also managed to silence the Irish press by threatening them with a law passed last autumn, which effectively states that any criticism of the government's "security policy" is IRA propaganda.

Yet despite the government's repressive measures, the hunger strikers won substantial support.

Three weeks ago, 2,000 people marched on Portlaoise jail; a fortnight later 5,000 marched in Dublin; and in the North, on Easter Sunday, some 40,000 took part in demonstrations to commemorate the 1916 uprising, and in support of republican prisoners.

It is not clear as we go to press whether any concessions were granted to bring the hunger strikes

to an end.

But what was required to win the full demands was a mobilisation of the Irish working class in support of the prisoners.

Yet the Provisional leaders consistently refused to do this, and instead contented themselves with appeals to a non-existent liberal middle-class to "pressurise" the Southern government into granting their demands.

Indeed, Ruairi O' Bradaigh, Secretary of Provisional Sinn Fein, recently stated that they do not want any conflict with the government, but merely want better conditions in the jails!

While absolutely supporting the prisoners' demands for an end to inhuman conditions in Portlaoise, socialists in Ireland must agitate for the immediate release of all political prisoners—North and South; and for an end to Labour Party participation in a coalition government intent on eradicating the Provisionals from Irish political life.

The questions raised by the action of the Portlaoise prisoners cannot be divorced from the struggle to rid Ireland of imperialist domination.

O'Bradaigh's remarks that Sinn Fein does not want a conflict with the Irish government cannot get round the objective fact that even a minimal improvement in prison conditions demands sharp conflict with the Free State regime.

The task in Ireland is not to shirk the issues raised by the Portlaoise hunger strike, but is to draw the correct political conclusions, and to proceed to a mobilisation of the Irish working class in order to defeat imperialism and its allies—both North and South.

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# Why you need

OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT LOOKS AT INFLATION FIGURES IN THE CONTEXT OF GOVERNMENT-TUC PREPARATIONS FOR A STAGE THREE OF WAGE CONTROL.

# a sliding scale of wages

Workers have no need to be told that the Social Contract has been a vicious attack on their living standards.

But it is worth pointing out that the value of the take-home pay of workers has been slashed by this Labour government to an extent which has no historical precedent in this country.

Before this government took office the biggest fall in real wages ever recorded had been a 5% drop in the economic crisis of 1857-120 years ago!

So the Social Contract has managed to do more relative damage to employed workers' ability to maintain their living standards than even the economic cataclysms of 1873, 1921 or 1929-33.

Just how much damage? The government's official figures showed that over the year up to February 1977 workers' average gross pay had gone up 11.4% while prices (at least the way the government calculated them) had gone up 16.2%.

That meant a cut of almost 5% in the value of gross pay.

But the cuts in take-home pay have been even more than that (about 6%) because as nominal wages go up, a higher proportion of pay is deducted in tax.

## TAX CUTS

If Phase 2 is not broken then by July the annual fall will have gone up to about 10% (or 9% if Healey ever brings in his conditional tax cuts).

But horrifying though it is, that is not a full measure of the price of the Social Contract.

The cut in real take home pay from the highest point that it reached before the Labour government brought in its pay controls has so far been 14% and by July if Phase 2 is not broken it would be 19%.

This means living standards cut by one-fifth—that is the record of the last 2½ years of Labour government.

But even that underestimates the effect of the government's policies on standards of living because it refers only to workers who are employed.

## UNEMPLOYMENT

The growth of unemployment under the Labour government to nearly 1½ million means that those working class families hit by unemployment have suffered a drop in living standards of much more than these figures show.

And all workers are hit additionally by the deterioration of the social services like health and education.

These figures suggest the very minimum wage demands which should now be taken up by the labour movement.

First of all just to restore real pay to the level it had already reached before the Social Contract, it would be necessary to get increases now on average of 17-18%



in gross pay.

(And for every month of Phase 2 that passes this figure would have to go up; by July it would be well over 20%.)

This would do no more than cover the cut in real take home pay plus the effect of the income tax system.

But that is only an average—many workers especially the low paid and some skilled workers would need a good deal more than this just to get back to positions already reached.

## INADEQUATE

But, in any case, for millions of workers, even the highest levels reached before the Social Contract were pitifully inadequate.

To provide all workers with even a decent basic living standard it is necessary also to put in large additional claims for the lower paid.

These wages would then have to be fully protected from being whittled away by new inflation.

And that means a demand for a sliding scale of wages which would make wages inflation-proof and tax proof.

A sliding scale means that any further rise in prices (as monitored not by the state statisticians but by elected committees of trade unionists and working class housewives) must be immediately and automatically compensated by wage increases which are sufficient

also to offset the effect of increases in the rate of income tax, and national insurance deductions.

Against even these demands the capitalists flinch in horror.

5% next year, they say, is all "the country" (that is, their vampire-like thirst for profits) can afford.

That is why the wage struggle which is now imperative, and which is held back only by the class collaboration of the Labour government (now in coalition with the Liberals) and trade union leaders, must be ready to turn itself into an all out fight against the capitalist system.

## OPEN THE BOOKS

The books of the bosses must be opened. Those that can afford to pay a decent wage must be forced to do so.

Those that can't must be nationalised without a penny of compensation and managed under workers' control.



PHOTO: Andrew Ward (Report)

Callaghan - proposed limit 10%

# OXFORD CUTS FIASCO

The bureaucratic coalition of Communist Party and right wing installed in the leadership of Oxford Trades Union Council last summer following the disaffiliation by the TUC of the old Oxford Trades Council has once again shown its complete opposition to any struggle.

Last Thursday at a public meeting to discuss "opposition" to the cuts in social services spending—attended by a mere 124 instead of 1,000 predicted by the organisers—they exhibited the most bureaucratic methods yet of controlling a meeting.

John Power, Trades Council President, looked round the

"knew the political makeup of the meeting", then refused to let any member of the WSL speak.

After having refused to allow a special trades council meeting held the previous week to amend or vote on the document (which had been drawn up by the Stalinists and the right wing) Power blandly ignored three amendments from the 5/293 TGWU branch.

These amendments set out to make the document into a fighting document against the Social Contract, calling for national strike action against the cuts and support for local sections of health or education workers taking action.

Power avoided the amendments by refusing to let Alan Thornett, Chairman of the 5/293 Branch speak and propose these positions, arguing that he had already allowed one speaker from the 5/293 Branch.

In the uproar and confusion which followed, with large sections of the meeting demanding the



Power

was able to force through the vote and claim that the document had been accepted by the meeting.

Meanwhile, teachers in the area on the whole were not mobilised for the meeting because it was held in the school holidays.

They are to be balloted following branch resolutions demanding the NUT Executive organise strike action if temporary contracts are not renewed by the

# LPYS IGNORE LIB-LAB DEAL

Judging from speeches from the 'Militant' dominated platform at this Easter's annual conference it would have been hard to guess that the Labour Party was faced with an enormous crisis.

The effects of the toolroom strike, and the continuing strikes at Heathrow and Port Talbot against wage control, forcing the right wing Labour government into an open alliance with the Liberals, the junior party of the employers—this major issue facing the working class at the moment was not tackled.

## RESOLUTION

This was not through our lack of trying. Composite resolution 35 including a Sheffield LPYS branch resolution drawn up by Socialist Press supporters, called for the organisation of, and support for, strike action against wage control and for catching up increases linked to rising prices, relating this to the fight for the removal of Callaghan and Healey and all those responsible for the Social Contract.

The overwhelming majority of delegates—'Militant' supporters—refused to debate this resolution seriously and quite happily went along with the platform's recommendation to reject it.

Their alternative? Resolutions like the one from Gateshead East LPYS demanding Callaghan implement socialist policies and that TUC leaders—the very people responsible for major attacks on working class living standards, trying to sabotage any attempt to break Phase 2—campaign for free collective bargaining after August!

## SLIDING SCALE

But other 'Militant' supported resolutions even called on the Labour government and TUC to implement demands like sliding scale of wages, work sharing and open the books!

The obvious fact that these policies will only be won by the working class in conflict with these bureaucrats fighting for their removal, for a break with the Liberals and for an alternative leadership, developed and tested in the class struggle itself was conveniently missed.

## DECLINE

The declining size of the LPYS Conference from 1500 last year to 1200 this year testifies to 'Militant's' bankruptcy.

Unless a new leadership is built in the LPYS which will direct youth into the unions and the Labour Party to fight for socialism against the bureaucracy both 'left' and right this decline will continue.

The alternative of the 'Left Action' talk shop of the Workers Action, Red Weekly, and Chartists supporters, was a failure at the conference, attracting little interest from the solid ranks of the 'Militant' supporters since it did not take up the most pressing problems they face.

## COALITION

A WSL leaflet however centred on the fight against wage control and the coalition. It dealt with 'Militant's' pro-Stalinist policies in the trade unions and their complete refusal to fight on the shop floor for their paper demands for a sliding scale of wages.

The leaflet aroused much more interest and was still being read and discussed the day after being given out.

This initial small success must be developed and more definite support gained at next year's conference if the LPYS is to grow and not remain a 'red pawn' of

# GMC SLAMS COALITION

The GMC of Portsmouth CLP has passed a resolution which indicates the kind of support which is building up for a turn to a programme which can defend the rights and conditions of workers.

"This CLP condemns the coalition deal with the Parliamentary Liberal Party.

We call on the NEC to convene a special conference of the Party to discuss a programme of socialist policies on which to fight a General Election and to elect a leadership to fight on that programme".

The resolution, which now goes to the NEC, must become the start of a campaign in the Labour Party to force the lefts on the committee to make a stand on this question.

Part of this campaign should be a lobby of the meeting where the



In drawing the lessons of the revolution and counter-revolution in France between 1848 and 1852, Marx wrote that "All political upheavals perfected the [state] machine instead of smashing it."

The meaning of this, he was later to explain, was that the *destruction* of the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the capitalist state was "the precondition for every real people's revolution".

The first 'real people's revolution' in which this precondition was met occurred in Paris in 1871.

Though its deficiencies were many, its weakness apparent from the start and its life short, the Paris Commune was the first prototype of the workers' state.

It was destroyed after two months in an obscene orgy of bourgeois vengeance - but not before it had lived long enough to establish fundamental lessons which all later proletarian revolutionary movements have needed to learn.

And its very occurrence heralded a new epoch in world history - the epoch of capitalist decay and of the proletarian revolution.

The declaration of the Paris Commune on March 28, 1871, was the highest point of the political upheaval in France which followed the defeat of the French army in the war against Bismark's Prussia and the abdication of the Emperor Napoleon III.

Louis Bonaparte had declared himself Emperor in 1852; this was an example, as Marx remarked, of one of the great characters of history occurring, so to speak, twice... 'the first time as tragedy, the second as farce'.

Napoleon III's reign, like his coming to power, had been a caricature of that of the man he claimed was his uncle.

While the first Napoleon was the conqueror of Europe, Napoleon III was a consistently unsuccessful dabbler in messy diplomatic intrigues around the world.

He had involved France directly or indirectly in a long string of wars from the Crimea, from which he emerged with slightly less discredit than the British, to the ill-fated French expedition to Mexico to install the Hapsburg Prince, Maximilian, as Mexican Emperor.

At home Napoleon III ruled through a zig-zag policy of repression and political "concessions" in the form of largely mock elections and plebiscites.

But his elections were not enough to placate the republican bourgeoisie and his repression was not enough to prevent the rebirth of working class political organisation after the disaster of 1848.

The rapid economic development which took place during his reign had increased the size of both working class and industrial bourgeoisie and diminished the relative weight of the peasantry on whose support Napoleon had come to power.

But by the end of the 1860s even this class had begun to abandon him.

His political days were numbered even before he perpetrated the final crushing blunder of his foreign policy—the war with Prussia.

Behind the war lay the growing challenge to the French bourgeoisie from the rising, increasingly nationalist, industrial bourgeoisie of Germany, led by the ruthless Bismark.

## WAR

Bismark was looking to a successful war against France, the leading power in continental western Europe, to allow him to finally unify Germany under Prussian leadership and to establish German political ascendancy in Europe all in one fell swoop.

Napoleon allowed himself to be drawn into this plan.

The immediate crisis which precipitated the war was a dispute resulting from Bismark's plan to install a German prince to the vacant Spanish throne.

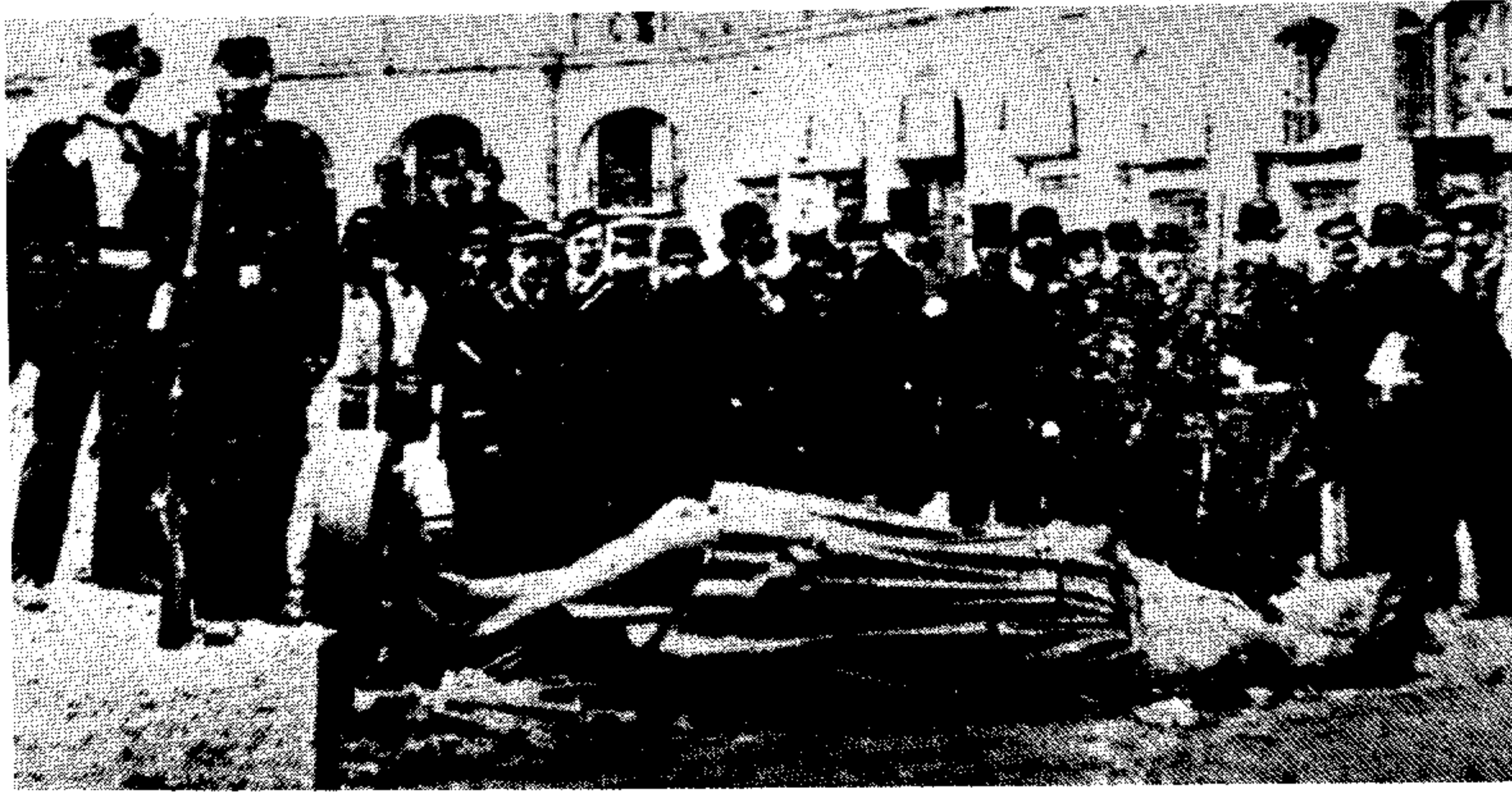
Bismark duped Napoleon into a declaration of war.

But it was not a popular war and soon became universally unpopular as Napoleon led the French army to catastrophe.

It was the shameful rout of the French forces at the Battle of Sedan, which convinced everyone that Napoleon was unfit to rule.

When the masses took to the streets of Paris demanding the Emperor's abdication they encountered no opposition. They forced the unwilling "left" deputies of Paris to declare a republic.

Napoleon and his hated Empress Eugenie fled to England. Fearing a revolution, the French legislative body agreed to a provisional Government of National Defence under General Trochu, including



The fallen statue of Napoleon.

# FRENCH REVOLUTION 1871: YEAR OF THE PARIS COMMUNE

This article, the first of two parts dealing with the events and lessons of the Paris Commune, is the continuation of our series of articles on the revolutionary history of France which began with the 1789 Revolution. We went on to examine the Napoleonic conquests, and then to look at the processes involved in the 1848 Revolution.

It was one of the latter, the lawyer Gambetta, who became Minister of the Interior.

After replacing all prefects (local officials) of the previous regime, Gambetta took a fateful decision.

He increased the size of the Paris National Guard to 360,000 in preparation for the expected German attack on Paris (which by September 25 was completely besieged by Bismark's army).

On October 7 Gambetta left Paris by balloon to become Minister of War and organise the relief of Paris from outside.

The reconstructed republican armies won a few victories but were at length pushed back.

The provisional government retreated to Bordeaux and resistance was confined to Paris where the Prussians intended to starve the capital into surrender.

Conditions in the besieged city were abominable. Food and all basic commodities began to disappear, though somehow the rich managed to continue to eat well in the expensive restaurants.

## SHORTAGES

For the workers and petty-bourgeoisie, shortages, inflation and semi-starvation were general. Unemployment grew rapidly as industry and commerce ground to a halt for lack of supplies.

And then in January Paris suffered three weeks of heavy bombardment by Prussian guns which killed 400 and wounded many thousands.

The workers were prepared to fight against Bismark's invaders, but not on the terms demanded by the bourgeois leaders of the Government of National Defence—namely as cannon fodder to preserve the property of the ruling class.

In the siege, therefore, the struggle for "national defence" constantly threatened to transform itself into social revolution.

Twice in Paris (on October 27



"Workers,

We have fought and have learned to suffer for our egalitarian principles. We cannot withdraw so long as we can help to lay the cornerstone of the social structure.

What have we asked for?

The organisation of credit, of exchange, and of production co-operatives in order to guarantee the worker the full value of his labour;

Free, lay and complete education;

The rights to assemble, to organise, to a free press as well as the rights of the individual;

Municipal administration of police, armed forces, sanitation, statistics etc."

From election wall-poster of candidates for the Commune presented by the International Working Men's Association and the Federation of Trade Unions, March 23 1871.

'Dual power . . . is of the same type as the Paris Commune of 1871. The fundamental characteristics of this type are: (1) the source of power is not a law previously discussed and enacted by parliament, but the direct initiative of the people from below, in their local areas—direct 'seizure', to use a current expression; (2) the replacement of the police and the army, which are institutions divorced from the people and set against the people, by the direct arming of the whole people; order in the state under such a power is maintained by the armed workers and peasants themselves, by the people themselves; (3) officialdom, the bureaucracy are either similarly replaced by the direct rule of the people themselves or are at least placed under special control; they not only become elected officials, but are also subject to recall at the people's first demand; they are reduced to the position of simple agents; from a privileged group holding 'jobs' remunerated on a high bourgeois scale, they become workers of a special 'arm of the service', whose remuneration does not exceed the ordinary pay of a competent worker.

This, and this alone, constitutes the essence of the Paris Commune as a special type of state . . .

Lenin, *The Dual Power*, April 1917.

and again on January 19) hopeless offensives against the Prussians were followed by attempts at revolutionary seizure of power by Parisian workers.

These attempts were brutally put down by forces loyal to Trochu.

The "left" Gambetta put down

similar moves in Lyons, Marseilles and Toulouse.

The bourgeoisie had discarded Napoleon but now stood in terror before the working class.

It was time to make peace with the invaders. A three week truce was agreed on January 22 to allow time for elections to a new

assembly which could produce a legitimate new government to sign a final armistice.

The elections of February 8 produced a vote for peace at any price. Gambetta, though personally elected saw his policies of "national defence" rejected and left the country.

"Citizens,

Our mission is at an end. We are new and rightful representatives . . . Citizens,

Remember that the men who will choose from among your own yourselves and suffer the same hardships

Beware, of the ambitions of those concerned only with their own advantage are indispensable.

Beware, too, of wind-bags who speak, a rhetorical effect or a wit else. And avoid those whom fortune rarely disposes to considering the

We are confident that if you have achieved an authentic people's representatives who will never see themselves

National Guard, March 25 1871.



will now hand over your town hall to

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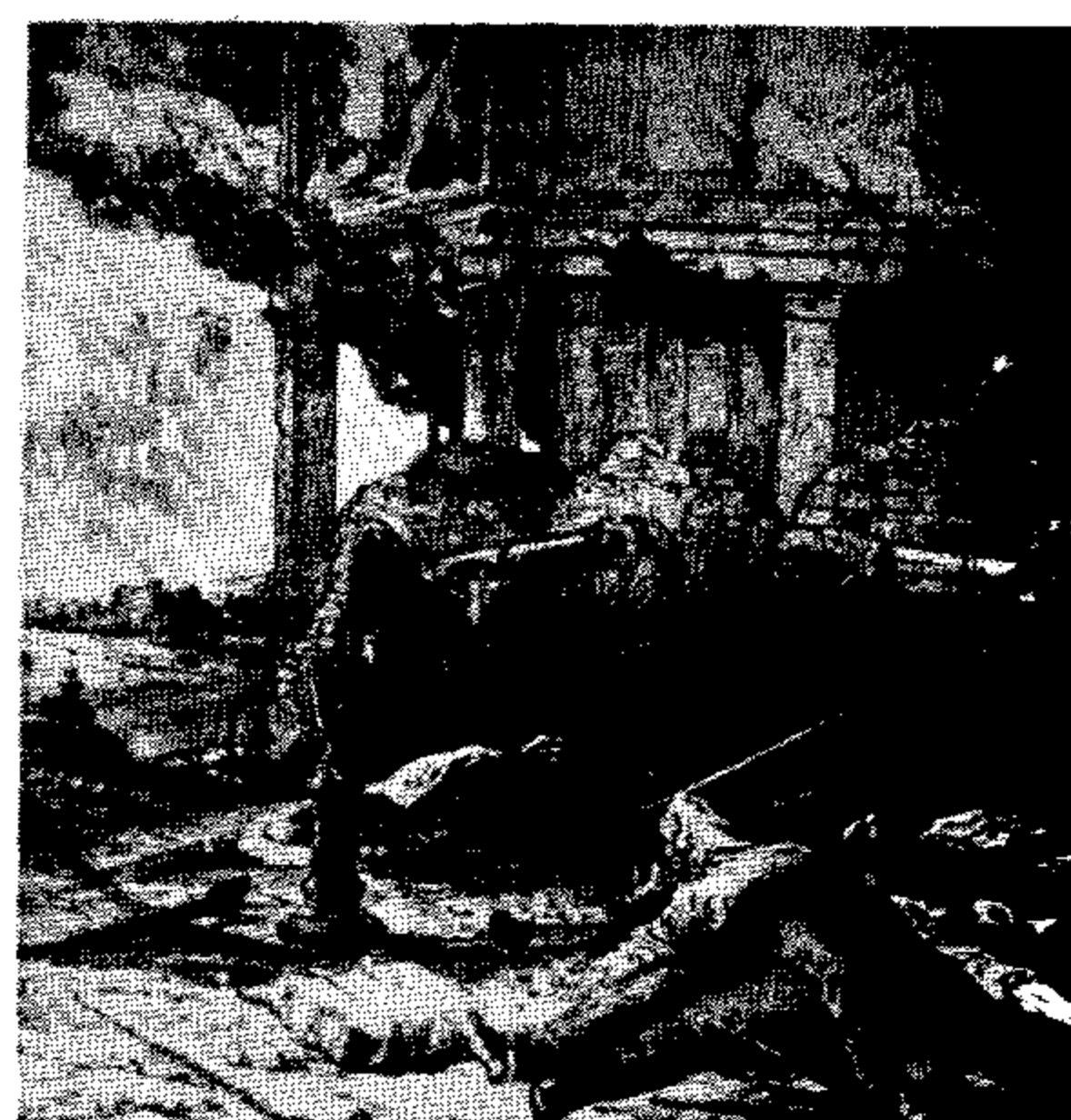
o prefer words to deeds. For them a  
icism is more important than anything  
has favoured excessively. The wealthy  
e working classes as their brothers...  
ollow these suggestions you will at last  
s representation and found represen-  
as your masters".

Town Hall

[signed] Central Committee of the



The crowd drags off the guns of the National Guard



A scene after the bourgeois revenge



London march in support of the Commune

the government, and one which increasingly saw itself in class terms as a movement of the working class against the bourgeoisie.

Dual power had been established and the scene was set for civil war. It was, Lissagaray wrote, "a spectacle unprecedented in the world's history—the greatest town of the European continent in the hands of the proletarians".

On March 26 the 'illegal' elections went ahead and two days later the Commune was officially established.

The new body, which had 90 members, was to be both a legislative and executive institution. The members were to be subject to recall by their electors at any time.

The work of administration was done by setting up nine separate Commissions consisting of members of the Commune.

Out of the 90 elected members 60 regarded themselves as 'revolutionaries' of some kind.

The rest were mayors, Liberals and Radicals of the bourgeoisie.

24 of the representatives were manual workers; the rest of the popular representatives came from the liberal professions (doctors, lawyers, accountants and publicists).

The leaders of the Commune, at least in part, realised, in Marx's words that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes".

The Commune began to destroy that machinery. One of its first acts was to abolish the standing army.

The National Guard of which all adults were to be members became the only organisation permitted to carry arms.

The new assembly was thoroughly right wing. It contained a large majority of monarchists. Nevertheless it was a republican, a political opportunist, Thiers, who became Chief Executive of the new state.

Thiers, whom Marx called 'that monstrous gnome', saw that his main task was to crush the workers' movement whose strength was concentrated in Paris and whose loyalty to the new regime was very much in doubt.

### DEATH SENTENCE

He decided to do this by strong measures. August Blanqui, a leader of the October insurrection in Paris, was sentenced to death in his absence.

Debts in the form of promissory notes, which had not been paid during the siege, were ordered to be paid forthwith; and rents, which had also been suspended, were to be paid at once.

These measures further alienated the Parisian working class from the Thiers government (which had now moved from Bordeaux back to Versailles though it still dared not return to Paris).

The fears of the ruling class centred around the fact that the Parisian working class was armed, having been incorporated into the National Guard.

### RELIABLE

Thiers, therefore, replaced its commander with a more 'reliable' figure.

And then on March 18 he sent his own troops to Paris with orders to confiscate the 400 heavy guns which were in the hands of the National Guard.

The attempt to remove the cannons was met with mass resistance. The women were first in the streets, arguing with the soldiers.

their officers.

By the middle of the morning of March 18 Paris was seething with revolutionary crowds.

At length Thiers' soldiers did turn against their officers and shot three of them dead.

The rest fled and so, on Thiers orders, did the remaining sections of the central government.

They left behind them a political vacuum which was instantly filled by the elected Central Committee of the Federation of the National Guard, the representatives of the armed masses of Paris.

The Central Committee resolved to hold power only for the few days required to organise elections.

But elections to what? Most of the Central Committee wanted to establish a Parisian municipality only equivalent to that of other French cities.

### AUTHORITY

But the masses had more revolutionary intentions—the establishment of a Commune, namely a government under which they would have full authority over justice and the police, and the administration of schools and hospitals and taxes and, in short, (as Lissagaray puts it in his famous history of the Commune) "a political form allowing them to work for the amelioration of their condition".

Marx and Engels had strongly warned their supporters in Paris against any precipitate and necessarily suicidal action while the war against Prussia continued and before the revolutionary political organisations of the working class had been sufficiently built up.

But once the decisive battle was forced on the Parisian workers by the actions of the bourgeoisie, Marx and Engels gave their unconditional support to the Commune and criticised its leaders for not

"France is going to be reconstructed. The workers have the right to find and to take their place in the new order of things which is being prepared.

The responsibility of the republican-socialist party must be put forth. The revolutionary socialist candidates stand for:

- a. The existence of the Republic not to be called into question under any circumstances.
- b. The necessity for workers to have political power.
- c. The overthrow of government oligarchy and industrial feudalism.
- d. The establishment of a republic which will guarantee political liberty through social equality—by handing over to the workers their tools of production, just as the Republic of 1792 distributed the land to the peasants."

From election wall-poster of the 43 candidates nominated to the national assembly by the International Working Men's Association, the Federation of Trade Unions and the Delegation of the Twenty Arrondissements, February 8 1871. (29 of these candidates were later elected to the Commune).

In fact the firmness of revolutionary purpose was shown by the working masses of Paris, after six months of starvation and internal and external treachery, prompted Marx to declare: "History has no comparable example of such greatness".

This is borne out by the account of the events by P.O. Lissagaray, who was a journalist in Paris throughout the Commune. He fought the Versailles invaders, escaped, and later wrote his *History of the Paris Commune* which received the approval of Marx.

Lissagaray wrote: "On the 21st, the situation stood out in bold relief. At Paris—the Central Committee, with it all the workmen and all the generous and enlightened men of the lower middle class. The Committee said, 'We have but one object—the elections. Everybody is welcome to cooperate with us, but we shall not

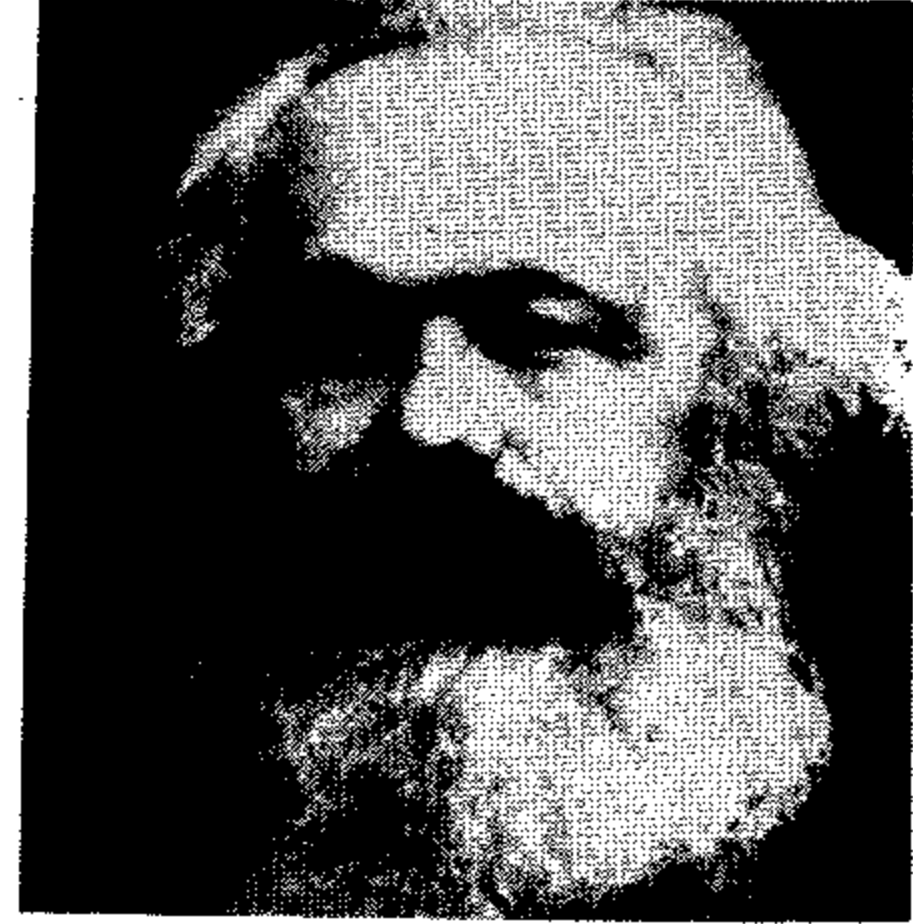
Hall) before they have been made'.

"At Versailles—the Assembly: all the monarchists, all the great bourgeoisie, all the slaveholders. They yelled, 'Paris is only a rebel, the Central Committee a band of brigands'.

"Between Versailles and Paris—a few Radical deputies, all the mayors (in Paris), many adjuncts. They comprised the Liberal bourgeoisie, that sacred herd that makes all revolutions and allows all the empires to be made. Despised by the Assembly, disdained by the people, they cried to the Central Committee, 'Usurpers!' and to the Assembly, 'You will spoil all.'"

The extreme weakness of the government in Versailles and the massive pressure from the people of Paris soon showed plainly that the movement in Paris was completely incompatible with the authority of the government in Versailles.

The movement was a revolution-



The police were made accountable to the Commune.

Church and state were declared separate; religious propaganda outlawed in state schools and all church property was declared national property.

### AVERAGE WAGE

All state officials were to be paid no more than the wages of skilled workers.

Through these measures the working class of Paris created a new form of state.

Marx's remark during the siege now became even more relevant:

"... the struggle of the working class with the capitalist class has, thanks to the Parisian fight, entered a new phase. However the affair may end, from this time we have attained a new starting point, and one of world-wide significance."



# TELEVISION REVIEW

## CHOICE OF EVILS

Choice of Evils, a television play by Jim Allen (author of 'Days of Hope') is an attack on the collaboration of the Catholic Church with fascism during World War II.

During the Nazi occupation of Italy Pope Pius XII signed a 'non-interference' agreement (concordat) with Hitler, as he had done with Mussolini.

God's representative on earth uttered no word when tens of thousands of Jews were deported from Italy and murdered in concentration camps by the Nazis.

Nor did the Vatican have anything to say about any other of the Nazi atrocities. 'Choice of Evils' is about such an incident.

One day in March 1944 a bomb placed by the resistance kills 33 Nazi soldiers. Hitler decides on instant vengeance—killing 330 Italian hostages (10 for every dead Nazi). Among those chosen is a priest.

The Nazis make sure Pius will make no protest which might

provoke more action against the Nazi occupation.

Apart from the Nazi officers necessary to the plot, the play consists essentially of four characters—Pius XII (unflinchingly indifferent to the fate of the hostages since anything is preferable for him to the spread of communism); Maria Cinelli, a resistance fighter; the priest, Father Borelli, who acts as a courier for the resistance; and Cardinal Volpone, sometime resistance sympathiser and a one-time friend of Cinelli and Borelli.

### MITIGATE

Volpone is anxious for the Vatican to intervene to mitigate the Nazi vengeance and save its tarnished image as collaborator in genocide.

He speaks to Pius with the words of "liberalism", distorting the demands of his resistance friends. And he speaks to Cinelli and Borelli in the words of the Pope.

But his attempt to persuade the Pope that for the Church to intervene would actually *undermine* the

influence of communism is dismissed by Pius with callous disdain. The Pope is waiting for US imperialism to replace the Nazi invaders as the Church's ally against communism.

And Volpone's attempt to get Borelli to sign a denunciation of the bombing in order to save his life receives only scorn and contempt.

Both as a presentation of the events and as political symbolism Jim Allen's play is a success. But the play for all its power fails satisfactorily to resolve a dilemma common to most efforts to put drama to the service of revolutionary politics.

### PROBLEM

This is the problem of combining naturalistic emotions and political symbolism in the characters of the play. In 'Choice of Evils' the symbolism is so clear that the characters fail to "live". This partly weakens the ultimate political purpose of the play.

Allen tries to show how Borelli's principles would be betrayed by

Stalinism. That is because Borelli and the resistance are politically led by the Communist Party and ultimately by Stalin.

Stalin was to betray the struggle against fascism to prevent it from developing revolutionary momentum.

### DEAL

Volpone reveals therefore that as a senior Vatican diplomat he knows of the deal which Stalin had made at the Tehran conference to divide the post-war world with imperialism into pre-arranged spheres of influence.

He predicts the post-war settlement—the Stalinist betrayal of the Greek revolution, and the return of Italian Communist Party leader Togliatti to arrange a coalition government.

But this crucial political point lacks dramatic credibility, and the revolutionary interpretation of history has less force than it should have because there is no character suitable to express it.

### REPUDIATION

The arch-opportunist Volpone merely uses these facts in an unsuccessful attempt to hammer Borelli into signing his repudiation of the bombing.

And as a result the words come over confusingly. But despite this the play is powerful. And the fact that the authorities of the Church were sufficiently frightened by it to suppress its performance for six years is some testimony to its truth.

## PRESS GANG

### Something to stop Jones coffin

It was a dangerous way for 'Daily Mail' readers to start the week.

They are given, as a group, to uncontrollable outbursts of fury, frothing at the mouth and savaging workers with furred umbrellas.

It was therefore asking a lot of their self control to splash across the front page the news that the Social Contract had been assassinated.

### BURIES

Twice as large as life the headline blared "Jack Jones Buries the Contract". In case anyone missed the message this was topped with a strap line reading: "Union chief admits: Pay curbs have failed".

For those who had the strength to read on the news looked grim. There was Jones, the architect of the Social Contract, apparently washing his hands of any more of the same. Dreadful memories began to stir that this man had once been public enemy number one.

Yet all is not quite what it seems.

The story started firmly enough. "The Social Contract has failed", Mr Jack Jones, its principal architect, admitted yesterday.

"It had not curbed inflation, nor had it cut unemployment".

But from this promising beginning the death agonies of capitalism took on a slightly less dramatic hue.

The devastating alternative Jack Jones was announcing to a shell shocked world was... an 'orderly return to free collective bargaining'.

### MINERS

The *Mail* droned on about Jones being forced by pressure from the miners and other workers to shift his ground. "Mr Jones has no alternative other than to concede a return to orderly collective bargaining in the hope that this will prevent huge demands".

"Mr Jones the political realist, is bowing to overwhelming pressure building up within the union movement against the Social Contract".

Jones, far from bowing or yielding to this pressure, was in fact announcing for the umpteenth time that he intended to ignore it.

### SCOTTISH TUC

The *Times* thought that hopes of Phase III had been dealt a 'severe blow'. But in their account of the speech Jones made on the eve of the Scottish TUC the paper blew the gaff on his motives.

Far from ending the Contract Jones was trying to get the Scottish TUC to support it. "He is seeking support from the Scottish TUC... for an extension of the understanding between the unions and the Cabinet on pay policy but the prospects are not good".

As it turned out, of course, the prospects were good enough, despite the TGWU delegation taking Jones at face value and voting to support the miners' motion.

Encouraged perhaps by the real substance of Jones' remarks the Scottish TUC voted for another year of wage controls. "We do not want a whole series of massive demands and massive strikes that could ruin the economy", said Jones.

So the *Daily Mail* can relax. Jack Jones was not after all burying the Contract. He was giving it the kiss

# MEDICINE FOR THE MASSES

"Away with all pests..." An account by an English surgeon in People's China. By J.S. Horn. Hamlin, £1.75. Published 1969. REVIEWED BY A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

This book is not new, but has a fresh relevance as struggles break out in defence of the National Health Service in Britain.

Its value as a book is that it gives an example of an alternative Health Service which is run for the good of the majority, where knowledge is not confined in the hands of a few all-powerful consultants but is the property of everybody who works in the hospital, and also the patients.

The problem of the monopoly of technical expertise being held by members and agents of the reactionary classes is one which impinges on many fields of production.

### LIBERATED

This book shows that the development of an advanced technology is possible if changes in social relations liberate the vast knowledge and expertise possessed by the working class, which is undervalued and underutilised by a bourgeoisie bent on maintaining their power through the control of knowledge.

The book gives no attempt at a political analysis in any way. There is only the most cursory discussion of important points, such as the national organisation of the health service and hospitals, and who decided the priorities in the statement of principles which was adopted at the First National Health Conference in August 1950.

These four principles are: "Health work should primarily serve the masses of the labouring people.

Chief emphasis should be placed on the prevention of disease. Close unity should be fostered between traditional and modern doctors.

Health work should, whenever appropriate, be conducted by mass campaigns with the active participation of medical workers".

### PAYMENT

Payment for services provided to individual workers is made by the

The harmful effect this system may have, tending to produce an unequal distribution and uneven quality of care between different areas is only hinted at and left unanalysed—as indeed are many other contradictions in Maoist China.

### DISCUSSION

In spite of these shortcomings this book should be widely read as a basis of discussion on issues concerning most workers in a technological society, not just those in the NHS.

The Chinese treatment of syphilis is a particularly good example of the redistribution of knowledge.

To combat syphilis in a country as large as China was a daunting task.

But armed with the fact that health is related to social conditions and social conditions were improving, the health workers' fight could also become the peoples' fight, and it was therefore possible to win.

As one worker, who was part of the publicity campaign for the need to be treated for syphilis, said, "Comrades, we're going forward to Communism and we can't take this rotten disease with us".

To combat syphilis, which is far from controlled—let alone wiped out—in the Western world, a historical analysis was presented to the workers and peasants with a simple questionnaire of ten questions to help people identify themselves as a possible case. This is very different from the elitist "education campaigns" and half-hearted provision of preventive and screening services in this country.

### NO PROFIT

There is no profit to be made from treating such diseases—who will pay the bill?

And the bill is always large if, in the conventional bourgeois manner, expensively trained people have to organise the programme.

After all, capitalist ideology insists that workers must not be



themselves. Yet in China, workers have ensured there is now no syphilis.

The description of medical research in China again provides an interesting contrast with our society.

### INSULIN

A group of young research workers attempted to manufacture insulin—and succeeded—in spite of opposition from their old professors, who said it was too difficult a problem for them.

The description of their enquiries and their use of the dialectical method simplified in some of Mao's writings, to develop their investigations is a useful example of the unity of theory and practice.

This is quite different from the work of students in a capitalist country who, in the author's words have to "cram their heads with empirical knowledge and dogma to pass one exam after another".

The research priorities in a socialist country will reflect the needs of workers.

China therefore leads the world in research and treatment of trauma especially the injuries suffered by workers and peasants—while South Africa for example spends its research funds on heart transplants to patch up decrepit, over indulgent white capitalists.

### NO NEED

China shows that neither research nor treatment methods



# SLL'S FIGHT FOR UNITY IN ACTION

By Di Parkin

The Socialist Labour League—fore-runner of the now degenerated Workers Revolutionary Party—played a major role in the mobilisation of national action against the 66-70 Labour government's infamous anti-trade union Bill "In Place of Strife" in 1969.

With important industrial power in sections of the docks and the car industry, the SLL was able not only to be the major initiating force in the strikes and protests in the spring of that year, but was able, in a principled way, to propose unity in action with the Stalinists—a proposal which forced them to fall in behind the SLL initiative for a one-day token strike on May 1 of that year.

In order to bolster up their conviction that unprincipled blocs and adaptation to all and sundry are the way to fight the Social Contract, the International Marxist Group now turns its attention towards falsifying that history.

## RED WEEKLY

This is done in an article in *Red Weekly* of 17 March, in which Anna Larkin writes:

"The ATUA and the SLL, far from leading the massive opposition to 'In Place of Strife', attempted to sabotage it. The CP called a strike and demonstration for 27 February 1969. Over 100,000 workers came out—despite the SLL's opposition to it". (Page 4).

She goes on to argue: "It was this action, not the call for a strike on 1 May in *Workers Press* [in fact the SLL had not yet launched *Workers Press*: their paper was the *Newsletter*!] the following day that was the springboard for the May action".

## RECORD

But the historical record of the SLL and the Communist Party shows that things happened very differently.

In January 1969 the SLL called



SLL demands on 'left' MPs to remove Wilson.

for a demonstration to demand that the trade union leaders act against the proposals of the Labour government. The SLL chose February 23, four days before the TUC met in Croydon to discuss the Labour government's proposals.

To counter this, John Gollan, General Secretary of the Communist Party, announced that his executive was in favour of a 24-hour national strike to "compel the government to keep its hands off the unions"—on the day the TUC

**The Newsletter**  
 Prepare for June 5:  
**Force T.U.C. to call GENERAL STRIKE UNLESS UNION LAWS DROPPED**

London—May 1  
**15,000 marchers determined to fight anti-union laws**

**Merseyside**  
**40,000 out—Meeting demands general strike**

**Oxford** Car men close down British-Leyland plant

**Merseyside resolution**

**I.S.E. charges dropped**

**BEST NEWS YET**

**The Newsletter press and television blackout**

**Main thrust of SLL policy - general strike action.**

were to meet, February 27.

## MORE NEEDED

The *Newsletter* replied: "We agree with this decision so far as it goes, but it does not go far enough. Much more than a one-day strike will be needed to halt this government".

(*Newsletter*, 15 January 1969). And on January 21 they stated: "This demonstration, together with the lobby of trade union executives proposed by the Communist Party are *musts*".

On January 25 the *Newsletter* reported the calls for action from London union branches for this day. The texts of the branch motions leave no doubt that it was the SLL which was moving them. SLL members successfully moved for a stoppage in the Cowley car plants—a decision which was later sabotaged by the withdrawal of the AUEW from the action.

And on February 12 the Political Committee of the SLL made a statement addressed to "every organisation, national and local, of the Communist Party, and to every individual member".

## UNITY IN ACTION

It was a clear and principled call for unity in action against the anti-union laws:

"We are supporting the national demonstration against the legislation called by the All Trades Union Alliance for February 23. The Communist Party has announced support for a one-day token strike on February 27.

We have said in the *Newsletter* that if such a strike is seriously prepared, we will support it. We know that militant workers in particular factories will give isolated support to this call, and our members will fight to support them.

But it is essential that workers coming into struggle after the Labour leaders' betrayals should gain confidence in the fight for a socialist alternative.

That is why we have stressed thorough preparation for an effective action, in which the

working class will learn how to use its industrial strength in the political struggle.

We propose therefore that a date be set—we suggest provisionally April 21—by agreement, some six weeks ahead, to which our joint efforts would be directed for a national stoppage: in engineering and motors, in the docks, in mines and throughout industry. (...)

These workers will gain confidence to fight if we make a definite step towards **UNITY IN ACTION** on the most vital issue facing the working class".

(emphasis in original)

The 3,000 strong February 23 SLL/ATUA demonstration in London passed a resolution in the following terms.

## SUPPORT

"We support every strike action against the White Paper and call for the maximum unity of organised workers for a massive national strike against the White Paper and the Wilson government".

The February 27 demonstrations were a large affair. Nearly 3,000 lobbied in Croydon.

Yet the bigger demonstration was in Liverpool where 35,000 struck and 7,000 demonstrated (according to the *Morning Star*), following a call by Liverpool Trades Council.

Who moved the motion for strike action in Liverpool docks? Larry Cavanagh of the SLL!

The SLL at that time were the major force in the Liverpool docks.

Where then in all this is there shred of evidence for Larkin's slur of sabotage and opposition?

Larkin goes on to effectively argue that the CP were the major force behind the May 1 mobilisation. This too, is untrue.

Immediately after February 27 the SLL changed their proposed date for joint strike action with the CP from the rather arbitrary 21 April (which opened the danger of the CP merely choosing a *different* arbitrary date) to the more obvious and difficult to avoid date of May 1.

And it was this initiative which was later followed by the CP, as we will explain in our next article.

# BEHIND NEW ATOM POLICY CARTER—FISSION FOR PROFIT

Amongst a series of well-publicised statements, President Carter recently made an announcement on US domestic nuclear policy.

He proposed to defer indefinitely the commercial reprocessing of spent nuclear fuels and the recycling of plutonium (a widely used material for nuclear war-heads); and to defer the date of the commercial introduction of "fast breeder" reactors which are fuelled with plutonium.

In drawing up these proposals Carter was no doubt strongly influenced by the report of a recent study, funded by the Ford Foundation.

Its authors, including a number of "liberal" US scientists and economists (among them Harold Brown, Carter's Secretary of Defence, and Joseph Nye, his deputy Under-Secretary of State), urge him to take precisely this course of action.

They base their recommendations on two factors. One is the enormous cost of reprocessing spent uranium-based fuels from conventional reactors to obtain plutonium to fuel fast reactors.

The other is the cost of developing a commercial fast breeder reactor, which has soared from \$2,000 million to \$12,000 million in the past few years.

there are larger reserves of uranium in the US than was previously realised—sufficient to fuel a major conventional reactor programme for several decades to come.

Britain's Prime Minister Callaghan, amongst others, has hailed the Carter proposals as a welcome initiative to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapon material and the attendant hazard of nuclear war. However, they are open to less charitable interpretations.

Most of the other major nuclear technology countries, such as Britain, have much poorer prospects than the US of adequate future uranium supplies and thus have developed fast breeder projects to circumvent this problem.

Fast breeder reactors can produce more plutonium than they consume. They could make those countries which have access to this technology much less dependent on the enriched uranium needed to fuel the US-designed conventional reactor—which forms the heart of 70% of the world's nuclear power stations.

The US is a long way behind other countries, especially Britain, in the technology of reprocessing and of plutonium-based fast breeder reactors.

If this technology is not made commercially available on the world market, then the US as supplier of 50% of the world's uranium has a distinct commercial advantage.

The US, pursuing the Carter line, could curb the attempts of other countries to acquire fast reactor technology and force them to maintain US-designed conventional reactors by temporarily denying

them access to the enriched uranium they need to fuel their existing conventional reactor programmes.

The US, pursuing the Carter line, could curb the attempts of other countries to acquire fast reactor technology and force them to maintain US-designed conventional reactors by temporarily denying them access to the enriched uranium they need to fuel their existing conventional reactor programmes.

Recently, Westinghouse, the leading US nuclear contractor, has defaulted on nearly 80 contracts to supply power stations with enriched uranium fuel, and no supplies of US-manufactured nuclear fuel have reached Europe since last July.

Exports of such material have been halted by Carter pending the introduction of new terms and conditions for its sale.

The US has a further sanction available to them. Under the terms of the Non-proliferation Treaty they could legally block the movement of spent US-manufactured nuclear fuel to reprocessing plants either within the country which used the fuel, or abroad.

This could affect reprocessing contracts being negotiated—for instance the one proposed between Japan and Britain, centred on the development of the Windscale processing plant.

These events should therefore be seen not as any progressive move by Carter, but as just the beginning of a heightened struggle between the leading capitalist nuclear powers for control of the world market in nuclear fuel and tech-







# INDUSTRIAL NEWS

## NUT: HANDS UP FOR THE DOLE

Teacher unemployment is now 20,000. This figure will double in September. Chancellor Healey's spending cuts have led to a drastic decline in resources available for use in schools.

On top of all this teachers' living standards have fallen along with those of the working class as a result of the Social Contract.

Against this background an observer at the National Union of Teachers (NUT) Conference in Eastbourne over Easter could be forgiven for believing he had stepped into a fantasy world.

Despite a flood of resolutions from local associations calling for more militant policies, the majority of the 2,000 delegates raised their hands time and time again for the do-nothing proposals of the Executive.

The tone was set on the very first day when a 5% pay offer under Phase 2 was overwhelmingly accepted.

### 20% INFLATION

Several speakers pointed out that this meant £1-£2 after stoppages for most teachers during a year when inflation will run at 20% at least.

But these arguments fell on stony ground in the absence of any alternative being offered by the platform.

On the third day of conference this support for wage control found its logical expression when the Executive was given the go-ahead to negotiate a Phase 3 of the Social Contract.

Thus the NUT became the first union to accept the 'guidelines' laid down by the TUC—with all its jargon aimed at disguising wage-cutting—'flexibility', 'a planned return to free collective bargaining' etc.

Still, there was obviously some disquiet that the Executive had failed to 'maintain and improve' teachers' living standards as instructed by the last conference.

The result of all this was a verbal pledge that a Special Salaries Conference would be held before any new deal was accepted.

### EXPERIENCE

Past experience will tell those teachers who oppose wage control that there is now a need to send resolutions from local associations to ensure that such a conference does in fact materialise.

On the questions of jobs, spending cuts and class sizes, an Executive memorandum was accepted stating that the union's 'action policy' (!) be kept under constant review.

Every amendment to this, which even smelled of militant action (not a single speaker on right or 'left' even mentioned *strike action*) was opposed by the Executive.

The worthies entrusted with this task were of course ex Communist Party hatchet-man Max Morris and fully paid-up Stalinist Sam Fisher.

Their betrayal can be seen in the wording of the memorandum itself. 'Action' is restricted to cases where any member is made redundant on a compulsory basis.

### ACTUAL CUTS

There is no mention of 'natural wastage' or voluntary redundancy—the ways in which teachers' jobs are *actually* being cut.

The sell-out of unemployed teachers was confirmed in the Executive's successful opposition to a later move to grant free union



Max Morris

membership with full rights to jobless teachers.

The conference also marked a further stage in the erosion of democracy in the NUT.

Teachers from Little Ilford School, some of whom lobbied the conference, failed to receive support against their suspension from the union for participating in a one-hour strike.

Even more sinister, the Executive gained support for the introduction of a postal-ballot type system, with all its connotations of Tory press interference in elections and ballot rigging, to replace the present method of voting at

meetings.

As the working class moves forward against the Social Contract the cosy debating circle atmosphere of the NUT will be rudely shattered and the need for a clear alternative to this betrayal will come forward.

Such an alternative must now be prepared around the struggle for socialist policies coupled with the fight for *NUT affiliation to the Labour Party*.

This demand is central to posing a break from the practice of 'liasing' with Tory and Liberal MPs and making a development towards an independent political solution for teachers in alliance with the mass of the working class.

## NUJ: PHASE 3 - BUT ONLY JUST

By the narrowest of slender majorities and after a major speech by the General Secretary, Ken Morgan, the National Union of Journalists fell for another year of wage controls at its annual conference in Ilkley.

It then proceeded to indicate an immediate desire to tear those controls apart.

The crucial vote went 149-141 to support an amendment tabled by the Central London Fleet Street branch and by the National Executive calling for a "planned return" to free collective bargaining.

Morgan, for whom this act of solidarity with the newspaper owners was his swan song, argued strongly that a "planned return" would save lower paid members of the union from a "free for all".

But the vote was swung, not by the Newspaper Society branches representing the lower paid, but by the highly paid moguls of Fleet Street, London Radio and Manchester.

Little wonder that they should not be averse to another year of controls. It was revealed at the conference that Fleet Street had found all kinds of individual solutions.

In one national paper throughout last summer NUJ members had been receiving £3.20 per shift "hot weather money"! Not counted of course against the Social Contract.

The feeling of the conference against wage controls was shown when an overwhelming majority voted to protect wages against rising prices.

Conference also voted for wage rises of up to £30 a week for

provincial journalists—indicating that the members supposedly helped by wage controls wanted no part in them.

The national executive argued strongly that to call out members of East Midland Allied Press in support of the five month strike at Kettering would lead to disaster. The journalists had already 'refused' to support.

Conference decided otherwise. Two NEC members were dispatched to East Anglia to call out the scattered small chapel members.

Within 24 hours the result was known. Almost all of the 100 journalists had obeyed the call.

The conference called for an end to government moves to deport Agee and Hosenball and to imprison two journalists and a source under the notorious Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

### NOT ASHAMED

But after Morgan again rose to defend the NEC inaction over the deportations and arrests ("I am not ashamed of a liberal approach") conference rejected a call to condemn the NEC.

The NEC called a day of action in which they suggested yet more telegrams to the Home Secretary and a march, which they said might not happen.

When Philip Agee spoke to the conference he spoke as someone who now accepts that his deportation is going to happen. Since the campaign centred on asking supporters of the state to rebel against its actions it is not surprising that Agee now accepts that he will have to go.

For events to turn out otherwise demands no less than determined

# EGA LIVES ON—SO FAR

Yet another date scheduled for the closure of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson Hospital came to nothing last Monday 18 April as a mass picket of hospital workers and supporters from all over London assembled outside the hospital.

Thus in spite of all the weaknesses of the EGA work-in, this tactic has now resulted in no less than three postponements of closure and kept the hospital open for more than six months.

Even more important, the example of the EGA workers in occupying their hospital has now been taken up by other hospital workers fighting closures including those in Hounslow.

Thus the EGA is still the centre of the fight to defend the NHS in London and it is this fact which has led the NHS unions to organise a conference of their junior bureaucrats at the hospital next Friday.

This move, designed to co-ordinate the inactivity of union officials relies on the prestige of the EGA work-in for its credibility.

Yet the conference was organised at the EGA without the knowledge of the stewards and NUPE stewards in the leadership of the

work-in have been told they will not be welcome even though their General Secretary, Alan Fisher, will be making his first visit to the hospital.



Fisher

This belated attempt to bring together union full time officials (only the ASTMS delegation will contain lay members) on the question of the cuts comes as a response to the first meeting of CLASH (the organisation formed by NHS shop stewards to build an all-London body to fight the cuts in the absence of any such initiative from full time officials).

Suspicious of the motives of full time officials, CLASH has called for a lobby of the full-timers' conference to call for an end to one day protest actions and to demand an all-out strike against the cuts.

### SUPPORT

Although supporting the one-day protest called by London NUPE on May 11, CLASH points out that more and more workers realise that one day actions offer no challenge to government policies and so only lose a day's pay for those taking part.

Health workers are urged to support the CLASH lobby at the EGA at 9am on 29 April. London NHS stewards are further urged to attend the next quarterly CLASH conference to be held on May 4.

Details can be obtained from: Colin Kenny, CLASH Secretary, Department of Virology, St. Mary's Hospital, Praed St., London W2.

### JAGUAR SANCTIONS

SANCTIONS (including two one day strikes) imposed by 100 fork lift truck drivers at Jaguar, Coventry, in support of their demand for regrading have been met by management with thousands of layoffs.

There are something like 5,000 workmen at present laid off.



Agee

strike action by NUJ members. But that is a question that none of the union officials want to raise.

As Agee is shipped off they will wave their liberal handkerchiefs and settle down to write to the Home Secretary once again.

## BUILDERS MARCH IN JOBS FIGHT

Several thousand building workers from all over the Midlands demonstrated in Birmingham on April 20 to protest against the Tory Council's plans to close the Direct Labour Department.

The department employs 400 men and will be phased out mainly through 'natural wastage'.

One council worker told Socialist Press: "The department covers a wide area and they can make it very uncomfortable for those who want to stay on.

Alongside 'natural wastage' they'll try to 'encourage' people to leave. We see this as the first step to slashing the other departments".

"The work done by the Direct Labour Department will be turned over to private contractors. I think that the Tories will come up with the idea of Council Departments competing with private contractors—having to put in tenders for council work".

The workers have set up an action committee to campaign for support.

They are demanding no closures of existing direct labour schemes and no 'natural wastage'. Each job should be filled by union members—thousands of whom are unemployed.

Support has come from workers in the Sandwell Direct Labour Department who have recently won a similar battle to the one being fought in Birmingham.



**MAY DAY GREETINGS**  
from the  
5/293 Branch TGWU  
Cowley Assembly Plant  
**END THE SOCIAL  
CONTRACT NOW!**

**WORKERS SOCIALIST  
LEAGUE**

May Day Meeting  
Sunday May 1 at 5pm  
(after the demonstration)  
**KENILWORTH HOTEL**  
Great Russell Street  
Speakers include:  
Alan Thornett, Shop Steward  
BLMC (in a personal capacity)  
and other international  
speakers

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bution to: Socialist Press  
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Fund, 31, Dartmouth Park  
Hill, London NW5 1HR.

**PICKETS AT THE NIGHT OUT**  
restaurant in Birmingham were  
beaten up last Monday by a group  
of scabs organised by the manage-  
ment.

The violence followed a demon-  
stration of 50 of the 333 scabs  
working in the restaurant to Trans-  
port House to hand in a petition.

Returning after the unsuccessful  
lobby one of the managers directed  
the scabs towards the picket—which  
was only manned by three girls, the  
rest of the picket having formed a  
counter-demonstration at Transport  
House.

# T&G coronation — according to plan

The problem with TGWU elections has always been the difficulty in analysing the results. The recent ballot for General Secretary has proven no exception.

Moss Evans, widely acknow-  
ledged as heir apparent to the Jones  
throne for the past three years was  
crowned last Thursday—thus ensur-  
ing the continuity of the Jones line  
(barring the unforeseen) for the  
next fourteen years until Evans  
retires!

It is understood that the  
counting of the votes took place  
behind tightly closed doors. No  
candidate as far as we can discover  
was able to attend the actual count  
or set eyes on a ballot paper.

Contrary to rule, branches were  
not this time allowed to count the  
branch votes, but were instructed  
to send unopened ballot boxes to  
the unknown scrutineers at  
Regional Offices.

Then almost five weeks elapsed.  
Voting ended on March 19. But the  
result was not officially announced  
until April 21. For these five weeks  
it was unclear whether counting  
would be at Regional Offices or  
National Office. The discarded rule  
book offered no guidance.

By the beginning of April  
however, the capitalist press began

announcing the result. Evans had  
won, they said—followed by Kitson  
and Cousins.

Though Jones went on television  
to say these reports were not based  
on fact, they were remarkably  
accurate.

**RULE BOOK**

The rule book states that “no  
candidate may be debarred from  
the count”. Taking this at face  
value one of the candidates, Alan  
Thornett, wrote to his Regional  
Office asking to be present at the  
count.

He received a reply from Region  
5 secretary, Brian Mathers, saying  
that since it was a national count  
Thornett should write to Jones.

A letter to Jones brought the  
reply that the count was at  
National Office on April 21.  
Thornett was invited to attend.

But on arriving at Transport  
House, he found there was not a  
ballot paper in sight. Instead, the  
Finance and General Purposes Com-  
mittee of the General Executive  
Council were sitting with calcula-  
tors, simply checking voting  
return sheets from Regional  
Offices!

So the mystery remains. *Who*  
counted the votes? *When* did they  
count them? *Who* appointed them  
as scrutineers?



TGWU Region 5 Secretary, Brian Mathers

But there is more complication.  
It is not even known whether the  
ballot papers still exist! The rule  
book says that the ballot papers  
must be kept for one month.

But it does not make clear in  
this case whether it means a month  
after declaration of the result or  
after the end of voting. Strangely  
in this election there was exactly  
one month and one day between  
the two.

It seems quite possible that  
while the F&GPC bent over their  
calculators for the “count” on  
April 21, the actual papers had  
already been consigned to Regional  
incinerators!

**SCEPTICAL**

We can surely be forgiven under  
these conditions if we admit to a  
degree of scepticism as to the  
results produced through such pro-  
cedures.

The first big surprise is the  
349,548 votes cast for Moss Evans,  
living embodiment of the Social  
Contract—one of the most unpopu-  
lar policies foisted onto the  
working class for many years.

Less surprising is the 119,241  
votes for runner-up John Cousins  
whose well-known name was  
boosted by a fraudulent press  
campaign claiming he opposed the  
Social Contract.

**BROAD LEFT**

And no surprise are the 75,000  
and 47,000 votes cast for Alex  
Kitson and Larry Smith. Kitson,  
the Broad Left nominee was named  
as the main ‘left’ contender by the  
press, while buses officer Smith  
drew on a big sectional vote. Both  
of course are full-time officials.

Tommy Riley, the SWP candi-  
date received 27,000 votes. This  
is a good result, and perfectly  
credible when you consider that

18,579 votes were cast for Bennet  
—a left wing candidate but also  
unknown outside his own area and  
with no campaign behind him.

Moving down the list, two mor-  
full-time officers were next in line  
—Miller (Rubber workers) and  
Walsh (ACTSS).

But then, curiously, we find  
three unknown names whose elec-  
tion addresses said virtually  
nothing—Bro. Fulton, Bro. Lyon  
and Bro. Dyos, with 17,319,  
14,010 and 11,919 respectively.

And only after this list, 13  
out of 15 candidates, do we find  
Alan Thornett with 11,493 i  
surely the most surprising result o  
all.

As the only nationally-known  
militant on the list, with a long  
record of struggle in the union and  
an election address which had been  
enthusiastically received in a  
number of areas, Thornett was  
widely tipped to equal or surpass  
the vote for the SWP’s Riley.

Yet the only candidates below  
Thornett on the official list are  
A. Moorhouse and D. Thatcher  
who never even submitted election  
addresses!

**SPOILED**

The mystery is not helped by  
the announcement that there was  
a massive 18,000 “spoiled ballot  
papers” nationally—nearly as many  
as the votes cast for the ACTSS  
officer!

One thing is clear from the  
results. There remains a hard  
struggle in the TGWU to establish  
ballot procedures in which democ-  
cracy can be seen to be done, and  
where members can have confi-  
dence that results actually reflect the  
wishes of the membership.

## TIGHTEN UNION NOOSE

Nine months of standing on  
picket lines, being harassed by  
racists and assaulted by  
management—and yet the  
strikers at Grunwick are more  
determined than ever to win  
their battle for union recog-  
nition.

They know the strike is costing  
the firm far more than it will ever  
save by withholding this basic right.

In fact, Grunwick management  
have pulled every dirty trick in the  
book—physical intimidation of  
strikers, pay rises for workers who  
scab, contracting work out private-

ly when trade unionists refuse to  
cross picket lines, and even refusing  
to accept the decision of ACA  
arbitration.

This struggle by a less-privileged  
group of workers for basic union  
rights has correctly won support  
from trade unionists across London  
and nationally.

Resolutions in support of the  
Grunwick strike have been passed  
by the TUC, by hundreds of trade  
union branches, trades councils and  
conferences. But the strike drag-  
on!

Any worker on the picket line  
will tell you how the strike could  
be ended in a day, or even an hour.  
total post office union blacking of  
all Grunwick post.

That is, extending the post  
workers’ refusal to collect and  
deliver the post from and to the  
factory, to the point where the  
employers are prevented from  
obtaining their mail.

Tom Jackson’s UPW Executive  
will not support such a black out  
the grounds that they are prevented  
from doing so by the High Court  
injunction obtained at the time of  
the threatened South African post  
black.

**NO SYMPATHY**

UPW rank and file have no  
sympathy with this judgement, as  
means they effectively lose the  
right to strike for any reason.

The Communist Party poses  
the foremost defender of the strikers  
—but will not launch a campaign  
in UPW branches or use its  
positions on the UPW executive and  
London District Committee to fight  
for a total black of Grunwick post  
and defiance of the High Court  
injunction.

While the CP blocks such action  
help is urgently needed to support  
the Grunwick 24 hour picket

## HOTEL STRIKES FIRM

‘If you can’t win after five  
months then you can’t win at  
all’. These words to the  
strikers at the Linton Lodge  
and Randolph Hotels in  
Oxford are not from Trust  
Houses Forte management  
currently fighting a bitter  
campaign against unionisation  
in Oxford, Sheffield and  
Birmingham, but from the  
TGWU Midlands Regional  
Committee meeting last week.

And Brian Mathers, the Regional  
Secretary told a delegation of  
strikers who lobbied the meeting  
during the lunch hour that they  
had “jumped the gun” by going out  
on strike in the first place.

Two hours later the Regional  
Committee took the decision to  
withdraw the £6 a week hardship  
money from the strikers. A rep-  
resentative of the Regional Com-  
mittee was sent to Oxford to inform  
the strikers of this decision.

That the strikers had “jumped  
the gun” was not a new accusation.  
Jack Jones himself was arguing the  
same line the previous week after  
being forced to meet a group of  
strikers from Sheffield and Oxford  
who had occupied his office in  
Transport House overnight.

Jones spent two hours explain-  
ing that ‘the union’ thought the  
strikers were unwinnable and  
offering to find them jobs else-

Like all bureaucrats, their self-  
defence mechanism is to peddle the  
same lies at every level of the appar-  
atus in the hope that constant  
repetition will give their arguments  
credibility.

Unfortunately for them, in this  
case the facts are well known.

Far from ‘jumping the gun’, the  
disputes began after the sacking  
of union organisers.

**“EXTREMISTS”**

Mathers and Hulett also see eye-  
to-eye on the role of so-called  
‘left wing extremists’ who are  
‘guilty’ according to Hulett, of  
giving the strikers the idea that the  
union should be organising national  
action against Trust Houses Forte!

It is a great tribute to the  
strikers that they were not demoral-  
ised or divided by the withdrawal  
of official support.

Not only did their determination  
increase but negotiations with THF  
and the owners of Linton Lodge  
last Friday actually showed some  
signs of making concessions.

Although the offers made were  
unacceptable—THF offered  
financial compensation with no re-  
instatement and Linton Lodge  
offered reinstatement but not to  
the strike leaders—further talks are  
scheduled for next week.

**RESTORED**

Faced with these developments  
the strikers have now been told that

money has been restored.

It was done, they were told, to  
pressure them into the meeting  
with management.

More likely it reflects the  
pressure of the TGWU leadership  
and the problems caused when the  
strikers refused to give up.

## HALEWOOD OUT

The continuing battle  
between Ford workers and  
management at the Halewood  
plant over the company’s  
attempt to impose harsh disci-  
plinary procedures has  
erupted once more.

In January a two week strike by  
production workers over the  
sacking of one man in the Body  
Plant brought the factory to a  
standstill. This time it is the tool-  
makers and maintenance fitters  
who have come out in defence of  
ten suspended colleagues.

The strike followed the  
company’s continued refusal to go  
through established procedures  
whereby workers are represented  
by stewards in questions of  
discipline.

The walkout occurred on  
Thursday 15 April when the ten  
men were suspended for

“leaving work early”. Production at  
Halewood is now at a standstill and  
1,000 men at Fords Southampton  
plant have also been laid off.

Fords have insisted that the  
dispute is a national question and  
have called for the men to return  
to work so that the matter can be  
taken up by the company’s National  
Joint Negotiating Council. They  
have laughably added:

“The disciplinary procedure at  
Halewood is better than at any  
other Ford plant”.

The stewards however have  
rejected this proposal outright, on  
the basis that the dispute is a local  
one in which management are in  
breach of nationally laid down  
procedures.

This latest dispute proves that  
nothing was really resolved by the  
January strike. This strike must  
continue until the company are  
forced to drop their attempts at  
speed up



# Mass movement grows against Bhutto



Only the frail loyalty of the Pakistan army now keeps Prime Minister Bhutto in power.

Against the growing wave of opposition to his regime Bhutto has declared martial law in the major cities, banned all press reporting of opposition activities or statements, arrested all the opposition leaders, and prepared himself for a seige.

This follows massive daily street demonstrations which army and police guns have attacked, causing the loss of over 250 lives in the six weeks since Bhutto's victory in the rigged elections.

The opposition has also called successful one-day general strikes and launched a campaign of civil disobedience which includes the non-payment of taxes.

## OFFERS

This is despite Bhutto's offers to re-run the provincial elections and, if the opposition gains a majority, to dissolve parliament and hold a new general election.

He has also responded to the opposition Pakistan National Alliance's Islamic fundamentalism by banning alcohol and gambling.

But this has not quelled the demands for his resignation. The PNA opposition is led by extreme right wing Islamic forces.

Their main platform includes calls for compulsory Arabic lessons, no votes for women and amputation for persistent thieves.

But increasingly the working class has been joining the urban petty bourgeoisie and unemployed on the demonstrations, not because they support the PNA programme but through total disillusionment with Bhutto.

## CRUSHED

Workers remember how in the name of "socialism" Bhutto crushed the mass movement of factory occupations which helped bring him to power in 1971, going on to trample on the democratic

rights of workers and institute a regime of inflation and rising unemployment.

Working class support for the anti-Bhutto campaign must create fears among the reactionary leaders of the opposition that the movement might get out of control.

This is why they are pleading desperately for the army to oust Bhutto.

The army however seems hesitant before taking power because of its memories of the disasters of its previous period of rule from 1958 to 1971.

## CONTROL

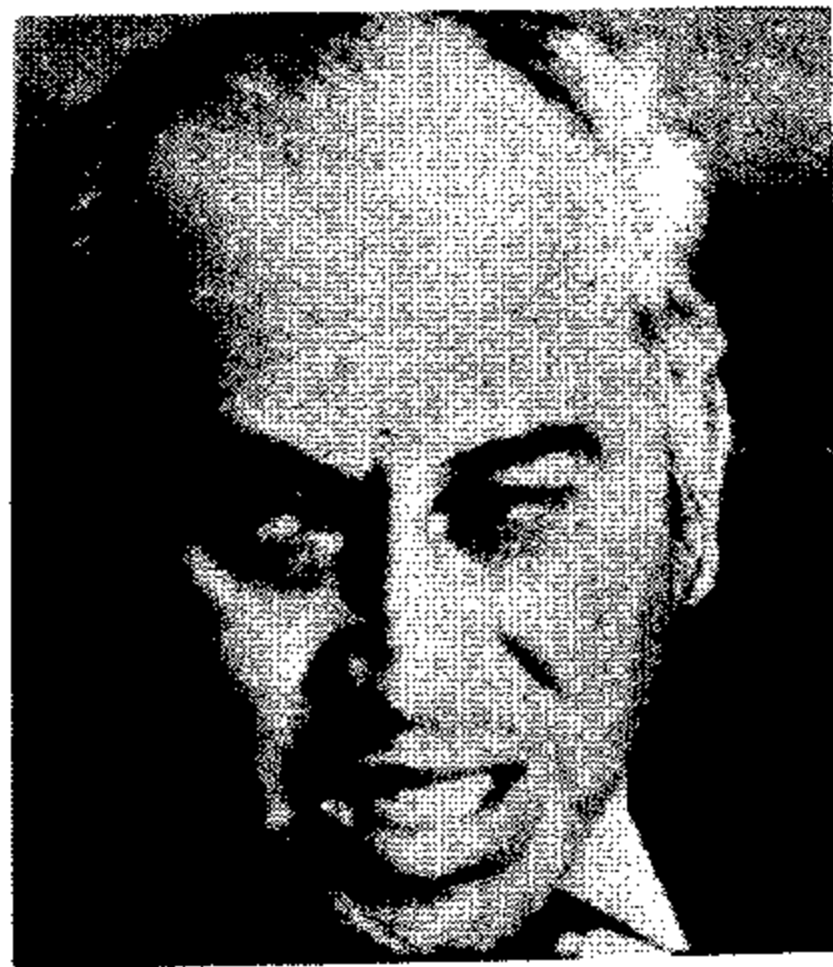
Bhutto is not totally isolated: he nominally controls in the cities an armed political militia which is part of his Pakistan People's Party.

And he has traditionally had support in the rural areas where the vast majority of the population still live, especially from the Zamindars, the rich peasants.

The present movement is still almost entirely confined to the big cities.

The political situation now seems to contain many of the ingredients of a civil war or a military coup.

The working class and poor peasantry can only lose from this situation until the fight is taken up



Bhutto

for the building of an independent political leadership to unite workers and poor peasants on a socialist programme.

This is the only real alternative to the present "choice" between stark Islamic reaction or Bhutto's repressive anti-working class policies which masquerade as "socialism".

## NF GETS PAST DEMO

About 1,000 fascists from the National Front with the full protection of the police horses, cordons, vans and other paraphernalia, were allowed to march through the North London borough of Haringay on Saturday 23 April.

In preparation for their campaign in the forthcoming GLC elections on 5 May, the NF decided to bring people from every part of the country to provoke the immigrants of this area who are mostly from Cyprus and the West Indies.

About 2,000 counter-demonstrators assembled in 'Duchett's Common' a small open space in front of the tube station at Turnpike Lane.

The turn out included a large proportion of North London Labour Parties, some trade unionists and a few Stalinists, together with IMG contingents.

Immediately next to this, behind a large cordon of police, the fascists assembled.

Meanwhile, around the corner on the High Street, about 500 other anti-fascists assembled at the beginning of where the fascists were likely to march. This was the only group which had a serious chance of doing anything beyond protesting at the presence of the fascists.

Eventually the characteristic noise of demonic drumming could be heard. Then the fascists came.

The police were nervous and soon outnumbered. Many individual demonstrators broke their cordons and hit out at the fascists.

The air was suddenly full not only of shouts of 'racist scum' but also with the red glow of smoke bombs, flour bombs, eggs, banner poles and anything else that came to hand.

A number of individual demonstrators were arrested at this point, but if there had been any kind of coordinated plan it would certainly have been possible to move out onto the road and prevent the fascists from marching.

The demonstrators were left feeling hoarse, frustrated and determined that next time a comparable mobilisation of the labour movement would be organised so that the fascists did not pass.

# T&G STEWARDS ATTACKED

In an unprecedented example of bureaucratic rule, the TGWU's No. 5 Regional Committee has withdrawn the shop stewards credentials from the four stewards victimised by management last August in British Leyland's assembly plant in Cowley.

The disciplinary action followed the regional inquiry last December into the management's attack on the four stewards.

Since that time the Regional bureaucracy has been refusing to declare the results of the inquiry.

This has meant that the stewards have remained unrecognised for the past nine months.

The inquiry was instigated in order to end the strike which had continued for a week and a half, in support of the stewards after the management's action.

It can now be seen that an inquiry called to investigate the actions of management was used to put the stewards on trial.

According to the press—the four stewards have still not seen the Inquiry Report—they were charged with calling a meeting of members "designed to discredit" the District Secretary David Buckle and the Senior Steward Reg Parsons.

Press reports indicate a substantial shift in the TGWU bureaucracy towards open political witch-hunting.

The report is quoted to the effect that the young Asian worker who the stewards and the 5/293 Branch set out to protect was a pawn used by "politically motivated" people.

It is also clear that the inquiry report contains details of a further attack on the 5/293 Branch and on militant workers in the plant.

According to the local press "radical changes" in the structure of the union at the plant are proposed.

## AUTHORISED

The Oxford District Committee is to be authorised to carry through these changes.

The *Oxford Mail* confidently predicts that all branch officers will in future be elected by ballot vote on the shop floor instead of at branch meetings as at present.

Such moves will be met with bitter hostility amongst workers who well remember the carving up of the 5/55 branch three years ago after Alan Thomett was victimised—a "reorganisation" which resulted in the setting up of the present 5/293 branch.



Counter-demonstration against NF march

PHOTO: Andrew Ward, Report

## Cont'd from front page.

claim would represent.

It was this same consideration for protecting Phase 2 of the Social Contract which led Reg Birch, Maoist member of the AUEW Executive Committee with responsibility for civil aviation, to repeatedly appeal for a return to work.

Meanwhile officials from 16 other unions on the airport signed the now-infamous "blacklegs charter" in an attempt to maintain British Airway services in the face of the industrial action.

What hostility there is among members of the other unions to the engineers' action is largely artificially cultivated by their leaders while it is evident that the electricians in particular are under pressure to come out in support.

On 21 April a mass meeting of engineers voted to return to work if negotiations set up at the instigation of ACAS between the AUEW and the wages sub-committee resulted in a satisfactory shift pay claim being agreed between the unions.

But the wages sub-committee immediately reverted to its previous position of no negotiations until the AUEW 'returned to the fold' and the strikers went back to work, and so the talks never took place.

A stewards meeting the following Saturday agreed to recommend a continuation of the stoppage to last Monday's mass meeting, and strengthened the picket on the Monday morning.

## FEARS

There had been fears that the day shift, who stand to gain nothing directly from this dispute might begin to drift back to work.

In the event virtually no-one crossed the picket line and those who did soon decided to come back out again.

At the mass meeting only 20 of the 4,000 strikers voted against a resolution to stay out and send the five negotiators with Reg Birch to a meeting of the union's EC to ask for official backing.

There is no doubt that official backing would strengthen the strike and ease the financial burden as the strike enters its fourth week.

But whether the strike is made official or not, the central issue remains the same. With the government now talking of a Phase III where settlements will again average only 5%, the engineers, even if they won their claim from British Airways, would have to wait until at least August 1978 for their money unless they are prepared to take on and defeat the Social Contract.

As a WSL leaflet handed out at last Monday's mass meeting pointed out:

— No return to work until the shift pay claim is paid in full by British Airways management.

— Demand the AUEW National Executive makes the strike official immediately; no more promises.

— Dismantle the bureaucratic negotiating committees. For new structures which are answerable to the membership—not management.

— Convene the BA Combine Committee to mobilise national strike action.

— Call on other workers, in particular the toolmakers who have promised support, to act on their pledge.

# MAY 5 POLLS

If apathy was running candidates in the coming local council elections they would stand a stong chance of outright victory.

That is the conclusion to be drawn from the canvassing work which is now feverishly attempting to repair the electoral damage done by the three years of wage-cutting, job slashing and social service wrecking carried out by the current Callaghan-Steel coalition government.

"I know Labour is the only party for the working class. But why should I vote for it this time?" is the most common response.

And it is this hostility to Labour's Tory policies which, ironically, brings the near certainty that the Tories will take control of the Greater London Council and a

Such a development will herald devastating cuts in social services, health and education, and are the responsibility both of the right wing Labour leaders and the fake 'lefts' who refuse to fight to remove them.

When the question of a vote for Labour in the local elections is linked to the question of a fight to drum out the Callaghan-Healey clique, there is a widespread response among working class voters.

Unless such a fight is developed the central political question of leadership in the mass working class organisations can never be resolved.

For this reason we call clearly for a vote for LABOUR in the local elections—and an all-out struggle for new leadership and socialist policies to be taken up in