

workers' ACTION

No.140

April 21, 1979

10p

From May 19
12 pages for
Workers' Action
see page 2

VOTE LABOUR and fight to win:

- ★ Wages protected against inflation
No pay limits.
- ★ Nationalisation without
compensation of firms sacking
workers. Cut hours, not jobs.
- ★ Troops out of Ireland
- ★ Free abortion on demand
- ★ An end to immigration controls
- ★ An end to business and state
secrecy
- ★ Nationalisation without
compensation of the banks.
- ★ Expansion of social services
- ★ A democratic, militant labour
movement.



Altab Ali was killed by fascists last year — at election time

LEICESTER, APRIL 21 Drive the NF off the streets!

THE NATIONAL Front will be pulling out all the stops to get a big mobilisation in Leicester on Saturday April 21st. We have got to stop them. The fascists want a real show of strength to boost what they themselves have called "a very, very heavy racialist campaign". It is our job to drive these racist thugs off the streets.

Leicester is an area where the Front hope to do well in the elections. A big mobilisation of flag-waving racists, they think, will make them look as if they are moving towards the 'big time'.

It is our job to see to it that they are stopped in their tracks. This is not just an election move, however.

The National Front has stepped up its harassment of blacks, its temple daubings and its abuse of Asians over the last six months in an effort to build up race-hatred in Leicester. If they can have the run of the streets on April 21st, that will lend forces to their threats and their arrogance.

A counter-rally will take place in Leicester on that day. It is supported by the anti-racist, trade union, and Labour bodies in the city, by the Anti Nazi League nationally and by many far-left political groups. Unfortunately, the Community Relations Council and their

supporters in Leicester intend to march away from the rally... not to confront the National Front, but to steer people onto a pointless procession of racial goodwill.

The majority of groups have committed themselves, rightly, to trying to stop the National Front. But there is some doubt as to what the ANL will do. Will it again endorse calls for the police to ban the fascists? Will it again make an agreement with police not to confront the fascists?

We are not just trying to show that we can get a bigger demonstration on the day. We know that. We are out to smash the National Front, to break the back of that poisonous movement of race-baiters and strike-breakers.

Picket the NF's
election meetings

6.30pm Friday 20th,
Islington Town Hall
5pm Monday 23rd,
Southall Town Hall.

12 pages for Workers' Action

FROM MAY 19th, *Workers' Action* will be going to 12 pages.

The 12-page paper is not intended to be the same as the 8-pages, only bigger. The extra four pages will be used for background analysis, in-depth discussion, debate and polemic.

Some readers, probably, will continue to buy *Workers' Action* mainly for the sake of the eight pages devoted to reporting and brief comment on current news and struggles. Some, probably, will find the background coverage in the other four pages more interesting. Most readers, we hope, will see a close link between the week-to-week political agitation and commentary and the longer, more analytical articles.

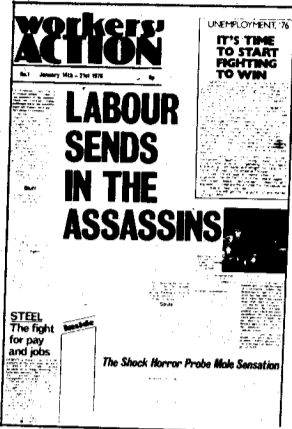
For any weekly socialist paper, the backbone of its regular exposures and calls to action is supplied by a few basic revolutionary working class ideas. But unless those ideas are supplemented and updated, readers with any

political experience will soon find that the paper has very little to teach them. And in the hands of the group producing the paper, those basic ideas will become schematised, one-sided, and eventually distorted.

Equally, subtle theoretical analysis can quickly degenerate into pedantry and word-spinning unless they are tied in with an effort to define political responses to and learn from the daily class struggle.

In our centre-page and page six features, we have provided some background for our workaday political agitation. With the extra four pages, we hope, the background coverage will become far more substantial and far more consistent.

Among the items we have scheduled for early publication in the expanded *Workers' Action* is the first English translation of Rosa Luxemburg's debate with Karl Kautsky in 1910 over Kautsky's strategy of 'wear-



The first issue of *Workers' Action* — three years ago

ing down' capitalist power — a debate which covers many of the questions currently being raised by the 'Euro-communists'.

Next week (April 28th) a new issue of *Socialist Organiser* will be produced, reporting, commenting on, and

summing up the General Election campaign. *Workers' Action* will miss that week so that our staff can work on *Socialist Organiser*.

The May 5th (bank holiday weekend) issue of *Workers' Action* will also be missed, to give our staff a free week in which to prepare for the 12 page paper. Another *Socialist Organiser* will appear for the weekend of May 12th, discussing the outlook under the new Government. So the next *Workers' Action* after the present one will be the first 12-page paper, on May 19th.

The 12-page paper will be priced at 15p. (If there are exceptional eight-page issues after May 19th, they will be at the old price of 10p). This price increase will not fully cover our increased costs. Like any other revolutionary paper, *Workers' Action* runs at a loss, maintained only by contributions from our supporters. At present our finances are specially low because of the expenses of

the election campaign.

So we are appealing to our supporters, our sympathisers, and also to readers who do not agree with our ideas but nevertheless think the paper is worthwhile and should be able to expand, to contribute towards a £500 fund for the launching of the 12-page paper. The fund is opening this week, and we hope to be able to close it by the end of May.

To help us in getting in finance for the launching of the 12-page paper, and also to expand our circulation, we are making a special offer on subscriptions. As from the beginning of June subscription rates will go up in line with the increased price of the paper. But until the end of May we are offering subscriptions at the old rates: *Britain and Ireland*, 25 issues £4, 50 issues £7.50. *Rest of the world: surface mail*, 25 issues £4.50, 50 issues £8.50; *air mail*, 25 issues £6, 50 issues £11. *Cheques etc payable to 'Workers Action'.*

Name

Address

I want to subscribe for 25 issues/50 issues

I enclose a donation of £

NEW ADDRESS

AS FROM this week, *Workers' Action* has a new address: P.O. Box 135, London N1 0DD. The old address (Box 1960, Rising Free, 182 Upper St, London N1) should no longer be used.

Why price curbs are a sham

OUR ANSWER to inflation is to demand a system of automatic cost of living increases in wages, grants, pensions and benefits — an 'escalator clause' or a 'sliding scale'.

A different answer is proving popular among left-wingers during the election campaign: price controls. It seems to be a simpler, more direct answer. And it has the backing of the official Labour Manifesto, which makes strengthening of the Price Commission its first promise.

On price controls, as on the Common Market, it is possible for MPs and candidates to make militant speeches without upsetting or confronting Transport House.

There has to be a problem somewhere. And there is. Britain already has price controls. Price controls are a normal feature of many west European countries. Yet inflation continues, full speed.

Price controls are a sham. They can be nothing else within capitalism. Price movements are the basic economic regulating mechanism of capitalism. If prices were controlled more than marginally, it would throw the whole economy out of gear.

Profits would slump, or turn into losses, in some sectors, leading to collapse. In other sectors, where productivity was increasing, the controlled prices would lead to rising profits. The normal workings of competition would break down.

Price controls are more than cosmetics only in a war economy, where international trade is sharply reduced, and widespread state regulation of industry and of labour is possible. But even then price controls do not halt inflation.

Price control is nonsense as an immediate demand. It is a demand, not for socialist measures, but for impossible capitalist reforms. It diverts attention away from working class mobilisation to empty hopes of Government schemes which can only be shams.

EEC: the great evasion for Labour's left

WHEN TONY Benn, at a meeting of Kensington Labour Party, blamed the Common Market for rising prices, unemployment, and taking away 'important democratic rights of the British electors', his speech got front page coverage in the national press the next day.

The EEC has become the biggest election cause for the official Labour left. But it is a fake.

EEC-bashing is an escape clause. If all the problems facing British workers can be palmed off onto the 'faceless bureaucrats in Brussels' then the *Tribune* group, along with Benn, can avoid challenging Callaghan, or taking responsibility for their own role.

Workers' Action argues that the choice between a capitalist Britain inside the EEC and a capitalist Britain outside the EEC is no choice at all for the working class. Our response can only be to develop international links between workers to meet the increasing links between the bosses of different countries.

Workers have no interest in preserving national boundaries, barriers which prevent a rational use of resources and separate us from our class allies in other countries. If the EEC could achieve genuine political unity we would be in favour of it. It will not do that because competition sets the bosses of the various countries against one another, especially in a period of crisis. The EEC is only an alliance of European capitalists in ruthless competition with each other, with capitalists outside the EEC, and with post-capitalist eastern Europe.

With the abolition of capitalism it will be possible to do away with national barriers once and for all. Until then workers can have nothing to

do with the idiotic competitive conflicts of the bosses. Our reply to their feeble and shaky attempts at unity should be to build up our unity, strong and resilient.

The arguments against the EEC as a 'rich men's club' are just demagoguery — as if there were no rich men in Britain! And the rest of the arguments are dragged in just as demagogically.

It is true that food prices are higher because of the Common Market's Common Agricultural Policy. The CAP fixes prices each year at a level which will keep the most unproductive sectors of European agriculture in business.

Any food coming into the EEC from outside has to sell at the fixed prices. Import tariffs mean that prices are considerably higher than they would be under free competition.

Prices are protected from competition within the EEC by the EEC Commission stepping in to buy up commodities whenever their price falls more than a certain percentage below the 'target price'. For example, in the case of grain the 'intervention price' is 5% to 7% below the 'target price'. If grain prices fall below that level, the EEC buys up grain and stores it.

Lakes

The stored food is either sold off cheap to countries outside the Market, converted into animal feed, or simply destroyed. These are the famous 'butter mountains' and 'wine lakes' of the EEC.

But it is also common practice for the USA and Canada to destroy grain in order to keep prices up. Farmers in the USA are well paid not to produce crops. The problem is not that the EEC is European, it is that it

is capitalist.

The high prices of EEC farm produce are designed to prevent small farmers going bust, as they certainly would in a system of free competition. In a socialist economy this problem would not arise. Destroying food when millions are hungry would be unthinkable.

The small farmers could be convinced of the benefits of large-scale production with-

by
**Gordon
Brewer**

out being driven into bankruptcy, and the reduction in the agricultural population could easily be absorbed by reduction in the working hours of both the agricultural and industrial sectors.

But under capitalism either the small producers go to the wall or there is some system like the CAP. When Benn and *Tribune* call for 'reforms' in the CAP they are in fact calling for the small farmers to go bust.

That is why a Dutch farm minister could denounce the recent call by Agriculture Minister and *Tribune* John Silkin for a farm price freeze as "backward capitalist rubbish".

It is not always Britain which has to pay for the subsidies to small farmers. Two weeks ago Britain was found guilty in the European Court of Justice of banning imports of foreign potatoes to keep prices higher than EEC levels.

If Benn and *Tribune* had spent one tenth the time they spend attacking the Common Market attacking the wage-cutting policies of the Labour Government, then they would do far more to help workers fight high prices.

On unemployment, the same story. Benn says nothing about the 35 hour week

but a lot about the EEC. He produces not one shred of evidence for blaming the EEC. The rise in unemployment in all the major capitalist countries since the early 1970s has nothing to do with British membership of the EEC. It has everything to do with attempts by international capital to rationalise and get out of the recession.

The nationalist line that the EEC creates unemployment is an open invitation to the bosses to play workers off against workers of another in the scramble for jobs. It is an invitation which the capitalists have been only too pleased to accept.

The tragic effects of this nationalism parading as socialism can be seen in the steel industry. All over Europe the steel bosses are sacking workers. The French capitalists are forcing through 30,000 redundancies. British steel sacked 16,000 workers last year, and the shut-down of the Corby and Bilston plants will cost another 5,000 jobs.

Recent West German government aid to a merger of two steel companies in the Saar was conditional on the workforce being cut by one-third. In total, the *Economist* magazine reckons 200,000 EEC steelworkers are up for the sack in the next few years.

To fight this attack, an international campaign for work-sharing with no loss of pay is needed. But the solution of *Tribune* is not to attack the bosses, but to hurl near-racist abuse at the Germans.

In its election broadsheet on the Common Market, *Tribune* talks about the "strategy to establish German hegemony in Western Europe".

Tribune are joined in this anti-German campaign by the French Communist Party. The CP have diverted

the militant struggle of the steelworkers into a fight against the same "German hegemony", violently denouncing German imports and calling for protectionist measures. The streets of Paris are plastered with CP posters saying "No to a German Europe".

You wouldn't think Germany was a capitalist country like Britain and France, split into workers and bosses. In fact, while French steelworkers have been diverted into a fight to preserve the French 'national interest', and British steelworkers from Corby call for 'keeping British Steel British', it was German steelworkers who struck at the beginning of this year for a 35 hour week, being defeated only through a sell-out by the union bureaucrats.

Task

If the example of the German workers were taken up on an international level, the sackings could be stopped. Instead the strategy of *Tribune*, Benn, and the French Communist Party makes the bosses' task all that easier.

Benn's other argument is that the Market erodes the democratic rights of the British people. But if the European Parliament is democratically elected, and if issues are properly debated there, what is undemocratic about that? What Benn and *Tribune* are against is just... the dreaded foreigners having a say in what goes on in Britain.

Neither under capitalism nor under socialism can Britain's future be determined by the British people alone. The world is now a closely interlinked system. The bosses want world capitalist rule; we want world workers' rule. Benn and *Tribune* want to pit British against foreigners, rather than workers against capitalists.

GOOD RESPONSE FOR 'TROOPS OUT'

KEN LIVINGSTONE is a Labour candidate who supports the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, but his Constituency Labour Party [CLP], Hampstead, does not. Hampstead is a Labour Party sharply divided between left and right, and policy changes frequently occur as the balance shifts.

A proposal to support incomes policy in the election manifesto was only narrowly defeated, while insertion of a 'troops out' policy on Ireland was only agreed at the last minute.

Hampstead CLP does decide democratically on its manifesto, but that is only the first step in the battle. The absence of a strong left

wing majority has made most of the party's election material little better than the usual compromise 'waffle' agreed to by CLPs. It includes such nonsense as a list of Labour's Achievements headed by the Government's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service [ACAS]... which is designed to stifle and delay trade union action!

Ken Livingstone told *Workers' Action* "I made it clear when I was selected as candidate that I would say what I think on the election platforms and the party can always get rid of me if it doesn't like it. We have managed to get a good leaflet on Ireland and the issue does

come up a lot in canvassing.

"Most people seem to agree with what I say on Ireland. Many of the Irish voters who think the party is right to call for troops out are against our policy of supporting abortion rights — but we've got a leaflet on that too.

"We have a leaflet on racialism which argues against the immigration laws".

In Hampstead a 2% swing is needed to win the seat; despite the opinion polls, there is a good chance of electing a left-wing Labour MP. But the important thing is to have a party strongly committed to a socialist fightback which he will be answerable to.



Many Labour voters condemn the record of repression and torture in Northern Ireland

Newham scores a victory — despite Transport House

A MEETING of the General Management Committee of Newham North East Labour Party on Tuesday 17th selected Ron Leighton as their candidate in the election.

The previous candidate, James Dickens, walked out two days after the election was declared. The reasons behind Dickens' resignation are obscure. Partly he seems to have been scared of giving up his job as a senior manager.

But the main reason was Dickens' politics. He refused to support the Ford strike last year, and then disgusted many members of the party by refusing to support the low-pay strike. In fact he even opposed the demand for a minimum wage!

With politics like these, Dickens had every reason to fear attempts by the Party to get rid of him at some future date, as they did with Reg Prentice. So he demanded that the GMC agree on a manifesto which would bind it throughout the whole period of the next parliament. When he got only a slim majority for this ludicrous proposal, he resigned.

Whereas Dickens is a right wing Tribune, Leighton is on the left of the Tribune group.

Leighton has made a name for himself by his opposition to the EEC — an utterly diversionary policy for a socialist. Despite this, the election of Leighton is a victory for the left. He is a printworker — unlike Dickens, who is a manager. And he has pledged himself to oppose wage restraint.

When Dickens resigned, the Tories kicked up a stink about a supposed 'Trotskyist' takeover in the party — although the 'Trotskyist' concerned, *Militant* supporter Nick Bradley, had no intention of putting his name up for nomination.

The real flouting of democracy came not from the left, but from Transport House. The local party were not allowed to choose their candidate freely. They just had a choice of three nominations foisted on them by the Labour Campaign Committee: Leighton, Bryn Jones (who told the GMC he would support a new Social Contract), and Tribune editor Richard Clements (who lost his chance when he started lecturing the GMC on socialism being a question of Intelligence and Reason).

If the local party had rejected all three, Transport House were geared up to impose a candidate on the party against its will. "If there is any nonsense on Tuesday we will have a candidate on Wednesday morning", said a Labour Party official. The real 'nonsense' is that Transport House can trample on the right of a local party to select its own candidate.

GORDON BREWER

All for a Marxist revolution?

Dear Mr Knight,

Is it true that you are a member of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory? It is using your name and putting forward some very interesting policies, on which I would like to know where you stand.

In a recent leaflet they propose:

* "Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation" — what happens to people's savings and pension funds?

* "Scrap all immigration controls" — can our overcrowded island really keep an open door to the world, and would this help racial harmony?

* "The Labour movement must mobilise to drive the Fascists off the streets" — as much as we all detest the National Front, is there no better way to defeat them than street violence?

* "Support all demands for weakening the police as the bosses' striking force; dissolution of Special Branch, MI5, etc" — and make it easier to bring about a Marxist revolution? Is this what the mobilisation on the streets is really for?

* "Not a penny for defence" — to help the revolutionary takeover as in Hungary?

* "Free abortion on demand" — will this add to the total sum of human dignity and happiness?

* "Support of armed combat against the White Regime of Rhodesia" — more violence and bloodshed, and what of the millions of Blacks who want a peaceful internal settlement to work?

* "Repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act" — and give an open licence to bomb, maim and knee-cap?

In the same leaflet the campaign which claims your support says:

"The record of this Labour Government is a grim one judged according to the interests of the working class. In the past four years it has presided over a 10 per cent cut in workers' wages; it has used troops to break strikes... and it presides with astonishing complacency over 1½ million unemployed".

As a Conservative I, of course, have very strong views on the great economic damage done to this country by the Labour Government.

However, I am not seeking to join it, or to support it in Parliament. As a Labour Candidate, you are. Therefore, if by some odd chance you were elected, would you support Labour or undermine it?

The people of Hornsey whom you are asking to elect you are entitled to know.

Yours sincerely,
HUGH ROSSI

SOCIALISTS ANSWER HORNSEY TORIES

Hornsey's Tory MP Hugh Rossi has opened his election campaign with an attack on the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. Labour candidate Ted Knight and local SCLV supporter Andrew Hornung reply.

'Economic power should not be subject to the whims of profiteers'

Dear Mr Rossi,

The electors of Hornsey will find it revealing that you choose to open your campaign, not by explaining your own beliefs and policies, but with an attack on me.

If you think you are going to hide yourself safely behind a 'red scare' smoke-screen in this election, then you are going to be disappointed.

The voters will want to know where each of us stands on the key issues facing Britain today, and that is why I am happy to answer the questions you raise.

The Labour Party is a democratic organisation. Through groupings such as the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, the Fabian

Society and trade union branches, members of the Party, including myself, are able to participate in these debates.

It is the view of the Labour Party that economic power should be used in the interests of the people as a whole and should not be subject to the whim of profiteers. The banks and financial institutions, whose activities affect the daily lives of every family, should be answerable to Parliament. Labour has always paid compensation for industries taken into public ownership, and so no small saver or pension fund has ever been threatened.

Current immigration controls are racist in content,

'We want a society where the working people rule'

HUGH ROSSI's open letter is obviously supposed to embarrass Ted Knight. The questions Rossi poses are supposed to trap this dangerous Marxist scoundrel into admitting to the good people of Hornsey that their Labour candidate is nothing but a bloodthirsty revolutionist dedicated to the plunder of pension funds and the looting of citizens' savings accounts.

Of course, this feeble exercise doesn't trouble Ted Knight — it does rather more to reveal the panicky state of mind of Mr Rossi. But sliding round some of the issues raised by Rossi's letter is not the best way for a can-

didate to reply whose election address proclaims, "Ted Knight is a socialist, and he is a fighter".

What is the socialist answer to Rossi's question about the nationalisation of the banks, "What happens to people's savings and pension funds?"

Rossi finds it quite all right that City sharks should control and profit from small savings and pension funds. Socialist change would mean collective control over resources by working people — who would of course respect small savers' rights and make sure that everyone got a decent pension.

Ted Knight seems to side

designed specifically against black and dark skinned people. Recent obscene indignities inflicted on New Commonwealth citizens arriving at our airports are a disgrace to Britain.

I am opposed to providing the National Front with any platform on which to propagate their evil views. I do not accept that fascists should have the freedom of our streets to physically intimidate or attack black, Asian, Cypriot or Jewish persons or property.

A man of your age should not have so easily forgotten the lessons of Nazi Germany.

Of course I am opposed to using the police as a strike-breaking force. The right to strike and to picket were hard-won freedoms by the trade union movement, and any attempt to interfere with them must and will be resisted.

I want more resources directed to expanding our National Health Service, to improving educational facilities, to securing bigger pensions and meeting the needs of the handicapped. If the choice is between these priorities and weapons of war, then I have no hesitation in making my choice.

The Labour Party believes that it should be a woman's right to decide for herself as to whether her pregnancy should be terminated or whether to have a child.

The illegal racist regime in Rhodesia must be defeated. The present elections are a farce. It is for the black people of Africa to decide how best to deal with Smith.

I have never supported terrorist activities. The Prevention of Terrorism Act has not stopped such actions, but its misuse has threatened the liberty of many innocent people.

The Hornsey Labour Party and I as its candidate have never hesitated to criticise the Labour Government when we considered it necessary. Isn't that what democracy is about?

When elected to Parliament I do not intend to be mere voting fodder. I will fight hard to represent the working people of Hornsey, and will seek to influence the policies of the Labour Government in their interests. I will not be a remote figure, but active and accessible to everybody.

Yours sincerely,
TED KNIGHT

with Labour's record of paying compensation for nationalised firms. But why pay a penny to the 0.8% of the population who own 75% of company shares? Of course, the most important thing is gaining control, but once in control, why burden the working class, the creators of wealth, with repaying those who have spent a life time exploiting them? Such repayments, besides being a burden, would also be a licence for gross social inequality.

Ted Knight is right to say that "current immigration controls are racist in content". Rossi's idea of 'our overcrowded island' is also racist. It is just a way of scapegoating black people for the problems of housing and unemployment which are created not by numbers but by Government spending cuts (cuts the Tories want to extend) and capitalism's crisis.

"Is there no better way to defeat [the National Front fascists] than street violence?", asks Rossi. Those who did not support anti-fascist street violence in Germany and Italy paved the

way for international violence on an immeasurably greater scale: the fascist atrocities, and World War 2.

Rossi wants to know whether the SCLV wants to get rid of the police so as to make a Marxist revolution easier.

Knight deals with the police's anti-strike role. More can be said: the main function of the police is to maintain the existing social order, capitalism, to protect capitalist property, and thus to resist changes towards socialism.

We want a society where the working people rule, without Chief Constables and Field Marshals bludgeoning us in the bosses' interests.

The SCLV hopes Ted Knight wins in Hornsey — we'll be fighting to see to it that he does. But we think that to be a socialist means "telling it like it is". We want to win votes for Labour, but if we don't "tell it like it is" we won't equip working people to run society themselves... and that, after all, is what socialism is all about.

ANDREW HORNUNG

More 'open government' was a promise in the 1974 Labour Manifesto — a promise that was not kept. The same promise is in the 1979 Manifesto.

JAMES DAVIES argues that the problem lies very deep. The army and police chiefs, and the top civil service bosses, have more real power than Parliament. And successive governments have helped to cover this up.

WHEN RON McKay arrived at Glasgow Airport from Belfast recently he was arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He was charged specifically with failing to fill in an embarkation card and not telling police where he had stayed in Northern Ireland — though, while not knowing the address, he gave a precise enough description of it for the police to track it down.

So what was all the fuss about? Ron McKay is a journalist for the London magazine *Time Out*. He had been in Belfast to interview members of the IRA, and had written an article on methods of police and army surveillance in the North of Ireland. Much of his information came from the British Army training manual: *Search for Munitions*.

Police in Glasgow questioned McKay, charged him under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and took copies of his article to see whether they could do him under the Official Secrets Act as well, for revealing what the training manual said.

Scandal

Ron McKay is the latest in a long list of journalists working for *Time Out* to receive the careful attention of the state forces. In 1975, the magazine's then news editor angered the authorities by revealing the 'Littlejohn scandal'. He was tried for dishonestly handling stolen property, and acquitted.

Two years later former CIA agent Philip Agee and reporter Mark Hosenball were thrown out of the country under a section of the Immigration Act. In February 1977, *Time Out* journalist Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell, who was working with him on a story, were arrested and charged under the Official Secrets Act.

Not all journalists get this treatment. Chapman Pincher of the *Daily Express* recently wrote a book which boasts all the way through that it is publishing secret information. But Pincher is a part of the system — a leak, but an Establishment leak.

In August 1973, Sir Robert Mark, then Britain's top cop, assured journalists that the system by which police issued special passes only to journalists they considered 'safe' would change. Soon after the meeting, however, he issued a circular which stated: "It is crucial... that in future holders of the [police] press identification card should find it of real value... In normal circumstances card-holders are to be provided with all such information and opportunities for access as can be made available... special facilities cannot be accorded to non-holders of the special identification card."

Dr Shirley Summerskill was the Minister responsible for the Home Office on Hull. She also

declared there was no truth to the allegation that drugs were used to dope prisoners against their will, only to be proved a liar within a week by a detailed press report. It is positively grotesque to assert that Summerskill is any less criminal than the prisoners she is responsible for.

This clampdown on the press is all part of the system of shielding the state forces — army, police, prison authorities and courts — and the state bureaucracy, from public scrutiny.

The Labour Government has done nothing to allow the public, press or even Parliament to penetrate into the secret affairs of the state forces. The Tories under Heath felt that they ought to make some gesture in the direction of so-called 'open government', and so they set up the Franks Committee to report on the operation of the Official Secrets Act. When the Committee reported the then Home Secretary Robert 'Securitor' Carr refused to accept its recommendations.

Labour promised to do right where the Tories had done wrong: they specifically pledged in their election manifesto to make changes in the system of state secrecy. In fact, they did nothing of the kind. On the contrary, one of Labour's last acts was to try to discredit Clement Freud's Official Information Bill, which would establish a public right of access to official information more or less along the lines of the Freedom of Information law in the USA.

With a Prime Minister who was for a long time parliamentary spokesman for the Police Federation, this will be no surprise. Although Callaghan wrote 'open government in the next parliamentary session' into the last Queen's speech, his own secret memoranda reveal that he has done everything to prop up and further protect state secrecy. A memo published last November showed that the Prime Minister had refused to tell Parliament of the very existence of some Cabinet Committees, let alone what they discussed.

Data

Secrecy does not protect the innocent, as the Government claims. Recently we have seen Home Office secrecy protecting the guilty.

At Hull jail, prisoners wrote long letters of complaint about brutality by warders, particularly after the 'riot' in September 1976. All these were ignored. When the Home Office did institute an inquiry, it exonerated all the screws, though it did find "occasional excesses of zeal".

Actually, even that was a breakthrough: usually reports of prison riots are kept completely secret. When Humberside police did decide to start an inquiry, it took over two and a half years. The Detective Superintendent leading the inquiry said he had never "experienced so much obstruction in pursuit of justice", and singled out prison management as the most obstructive. "Never before had I been so abused, insulted, aggravated or threatened", he complained.

Dr Shirley Summerskill was the Minister responsible for the Home Office on Hull. She also

declared there was no truth to the allegation that drugs were used to dope prisoners against their will, only to be proved a liar within a week by a detailed press report. It is positively grotesque to assert that Summerskill is any less criminal than the prisoners she is responsible for.

The Labour Government has spared no expense in seeing to it that behind the cloak of secrecy, the police and the army are well equipped not only with laws like the Prevention of Terrorism Act and the revamped conspiracy laws, but also with hardware.

The police and army both have new computer systems that hold a massive amount of information about a big section of the population. Information is not limited to those with criminal records, nor is access limited to the state.

Drugs

In August 1973, a pile of police records were found on a rubbish dump in North Devon. Some of the files were on people with no criminal record at all; they were just considered 'worth watching'.

With more and more private firms hiring ex-police-men as 'security officers', it is easy for bosses to 'plug into' the police computer system to get information on employees or applicants for jobs.

Britain's war in Ireland serves as a useful training and testing ground for the intelligence-gathering trade. As Ron McKay points out in the article which the cops were so worried about: "The Northern Ireland intelligence network is also linked to those on the British mainland. As part of the British police services, the RUC (and through it the Army) has access to two main police computers on the mainland: the Police National Computer at Hendon and the Metropolitan Police Special Branch computer, believed to be located at New Scotland Yard."

The Hendon installation is the main British police computer, and all police forces (including the RUC/Army) have direct access to it. Run by the Home Office, the PNC can store basic information — date of birth, address, vehicle ownership, etc — on up to 40 million people (the UK's entire adult population). It is known to contain at least some data on the political dispositions of a proportion of these people, and routinely indicates to enquiring police officers people who may be of particular political interest."

Guns

When the Home Office Committee on Data Protection reported last December, it had to admit that it was "unable to obtain any information" on the Army's intelligence computer. The Army just refused. The same with the Special Branch and MIS, Britain's secret police.

MIS is in no way controlled by Parliament. It makes no report on its budget and



Busy tracking down crime — police and friend watch pickets at Neap Wharf in 1973

activities to MPs — or even to the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary.

The number of guns issued to police also continues to rise. The type of high velocity rifle issued under a Labour Government to the police is one rejected by US police as being too dangerous.

The Special Patrol Group has actually been going since 1965, though it first came to the fore in 1972. At one time SPG vans were marked as being SPG vans, but not now. Along with greater anonymity went a doubling of the size of the SPG between 1965 and 1975. Police are assigned to spells in the SPG on a rotating basis, so there is an ever-increasing pool of men trained in SPG techniques.

Recent changes in police recruiting systems and training have also hardened the siege mentality of the cops. With school leavers now able to go direct to the Hendon academy and required, as cadets, to live in police houses, there is greater and greater emphasis on sticking together.

There is not a single aspect of the growing strength of the state's repressive apparatus that has not been boosted by Labour. The Tories

are the noisiest voices in the law and order lobby, but in its quieter way the Labour Government has helped gear up the police for anti-working class repression, safeguarded state secrecy and done all it could to remove all this from the public view. A new Tory government will know how to use the arsenal Labour has preserved and extended.

Force

A whole series of reforms are urgently called for: to dissolve the notorious SPG, Special Branch, and MIS; to make the police accountable to elected bodies; to establish the right of public scrutiny of their activities; and to give prisoners ordinary civil rights. Beyond that, however, working people can never be free as long as we have these watchdogs, trained and organised by the bosses, policing us.

Community policing and community self-defence, organised by working people themselves, are possible: it is only the bosses' need to maintain class rule that requires a special force of repression, trained and set apart for the purpose.



Liddle Towers: murdered by Gateshead police

ANOTHER LITTLE TOWERS?

JUST BEFORE he died, Ronald Blair, a 55 year old unemployed labourer, told his daughter that he had been given a "good going over" by police at Gateshead. A senior officer of Cumbria police is now investigating the affair.

This is the third serious allegation in three years against the Gateshead police. The last concerned the death of electrician Liddle Towers. He too complained of injuries at the hands of the Gateshead police.

It took a long time to get an investigation into the Towers affair, and not surprisingly it revealed nothing. This time police have been quick to agree to an investigation, confident that such inquiries are hardly likely to be anything other than a whitewash.



Ron McKay: arrested



Sgt. Creamer, Special Branch's expert on the left

A cop, a killer, or

THE OF C

THERE'S nothing police corruption. CID had four Chief three of them were of corruption at the

At least five po Constable and D spector were susp er this month, an pensions are expect same time, Scotl internal investigat is looking into alle Fraud Squad off been taking bribes.

The racket the F men have been has been going on That is five years period over which t Publications Squad to rake in protect Their activities we in 1973 through the porn-king James H

It was stated dur that up to £50,000 paid in bribes to c land Yard officers rata basis by rank week for a Chief £100 for an inspect Sergeant. The Obs cations Squad itse grant licences to shops in the West ing £1,000 protect each for doing so.

The corrupt offi turn for their pay clients that they w

ND



CID'S SEA CORRUPTION

...ud Squad... 1877 the... inspectors;... convicted... d Bailey... e officers... Detective... ctive In... ded earl... ore sus... d. At the... d Yard's... n section... ions that... ers have

...be raided, ensuring that there was insufficient evidence for the Director of Public Prosecutions to decide to bring a charge, or arranged that the prosecution's case collapsed in court. CID officers themselves used to sell hard pornography from the basement of Holborn police station, recycling seized material to vendors.

For every one of the convicted policemen there must have been dozens who knew of the crimes, but decided to say nothing. According to senior Scotland Yard officers, the Metropolitan CID was "the most routinely corrupt organisation in London" and "a sea of iniquity".

Tony Judge, former secretary of the Police Federation, describes police corruption and the pressure to conform to it: "It is a system which has its own rules, based on a curious code of ethics. The man who takes the money is expected to be scrupulous in his division of the spoils; another who finds himself transferred from a precinct can expect a lump sum by way of 'severance pay'."

The police officer with the personal courage to refuse to take part is shunned by colleagues. Any officer who exposes the system is marked as a traitor".

IN 1974 *Socialist Worker* urgently called on its readers to vote Labour and keep the Tories out. Since the *SW* has stridently proclaimed the Labour Party to be irrelevant. Now *SW* swings round again and calls for a Labour vote.

SW argues: "The brutal truth is that the effective choice today is between a conservative Labour Government and a triumphant right-wing Tory Government". SWP leader Duncan Hallas, interviewed in *Socialist Challenge*, says: "In terms of the national alternatives we have to say, 'Grit your teeth and vote accordingly'".

The basic idea is that the SWP can present an alternative at the level of the industrial struggle — but in terms of national politics socialists have to accept the choice posed by Callaghan and Thatcher and go for the 'lesser evil'.

As Duncan Hallas argues in *Socialist Challenge*, "If we had 30,000 - 40,000 people, we could do both — have an electoral and an industrial challenge. But we don't have such forces, so we choose". Passivity in relation to the politics of the British labour movement is the common factor uniting *SW*'s apparently contradictory attitudes to Labour: the attitude between elections that Labour is irrelevant (because you can wage the industrial struggle instead), and the attitude during elections that workers must vote Labour (because it is not as bad as the Tories).

WORSE

The front page articles of the last three issues of *Socialist Worker* focus entirely on attacking the Tories. The only mention made of the Labour Government is to argue that the Tories are much worse. After four years of writing off the Labour

SW looks after strikes, Labour looks after the rest

Party, the SWP follows in the wake of the official Labour left, conjuring up lurid images of 'Thatcher the Snatcher' and arguing that a Labour vote is the all-important thing.

A campaign for a Labour vote on the basis of fighting to call the Labour leaders to account can be a lever for revolutionaries in drawing workers out of reformist political passivity. *SW*'s campaign can only reinforce that reformist political passivity.

SW does try to mark itself off from reformism by saying: vote Labour and build the revolutionary party. But the slogan 'Vote Labour and join the SWP' can neither build a revolutionary party, nor help anyone to intervene in the election, nor be anything but jumbled-up nonsense.

'Vote Labour and build the rank and file movement' is no better. It amounts to saying: organise at workplace level, but you will have to leave the rest to the conservative Labour leaders.

The thousands of politically conscious workers who vote Labour do so because they cannot yet see a clear political or organisational alternative. The inability of the SWP to stand any candidates against Labour shows that it is a long way from being such an alternative.

A large revolutionary party could use tactics such as Lenin proposed for the Com-

Socialist Worker

IRON LADY WITH THE IRON HEEL



munist Party in the '20s: a 'workers election' where workers decide whether a Labour or a Communist candidate should go forward as the working class candidate in the election.

The SWP recognises that it is in no position to do that, but draws the wrong conclusion: that one should leave the election arena to Callaghan and Thatcher.

There is an alternative approach. A campaign for a Labour vote can be linked to a fight for working-class policies (which has been successful in getting such policies in some local Labour election addresses); for the replacement of right-wing Labour MPs (and this fight has seen some successes, too); and for a thorough reorienta-

tion of the local Labour Party and trade unions towards a democratic, accountable structure and active involvement in class struggle.

The SWP perpetuates the division between the political and economic struggles which is one of the weakest points of the British labour movement. The SWP prides itself on its intervention in the unions, fighting for democracy, accountability and a militant programme. Yet when it comes to a fight for the same principles in the Labour Party, the SWP argues that it is an irrelevant diversion as the Labour Party is dead.

Yet why vote Labour if the Labour Party is dead? The Labour Party is not fundamentally different from the unions: both have as their aim bargaining within the capitalist system, and the Labour Party is the extension of trade-union type bargaining into Parliament.

BETRAY

As Trotsky put it: "*The Labour Party and the trade unions — these are not two principles, they are only a technical division of labour... The same leaders guide the trade unions, betray the general strike, lead the electoral campaign and later sit in the ministries*".

Socialists who fight in the Labour Party do not ignore the importance of working class direct action, or believe the Labour Party can peace-

fully be transformed into a revolutionary party. But we do believe the fight against the British labour movement's conservative leaders and ideology must also be carried into the Labour Party.

SW's basic idea is that the economic class struggle is all-important and that revolutionary politics, here and now, is more or less identical with vigorous militancy in economic struggle. It is an idea which leads *SW* both into foolish 'ultra-militancy' and organisational sectarianism, and into political opportunism on almost all questions outside the economic struggle.

Its disastrous conclusions for political strategy are outlined in a *SW* pamphlet, *Can Socialism come through Parliament? Work in the Labour Party*, it argues, "is a complete waste of time".

STRIKE

"The only time the Labour Party could be captured would be at a time of massive struggles when it is irrelevant".

But the Labour Party's apparent "irrelevance" to industrial struggles depends on those struggles not being massive enough to challenge the state as a whole. If there were a general strike, then the workers' councils coming out of the strike would without a doubt at first be dominated by Labourites. Labour would be more "relevant" than ever.

In the likely event of a revival of fake-leftism in the Labour Party after a Tory victory in the election, those fake-lefts will seem to be the people who can tie the anti-Tory industrial struggles in with a political alternative. By its present attitude *SW* is just opening the door for those fake-lefts. And shouting 'more militancy, more militancy' in the next few years won't make up for that.

BRUCE ROBINSON

SOCIALIST UNITY: ALTERNATIVE OR SIDESHOW

TEN CANDIDATES will be standing in the General Election for Socialist Unity, an alliance led mainly by the International Marxist Group and Big Flame.

According to the IMG paper *Socialist Challenge* (5th April), this is "part of the fight for a socialist alternative to the bankrupt policies of the Labour government."

"The aim of Socialist Unity's campaign is to help build the campaigns and struggles necessary for working people to improve their standard of life and take control of society".

Socialist Unity puts particular stress on helping to build campaigns like the United Troops Out Movement and the Anti Nazi League.

An election, however, is not a 'single-issue' struggle, and to build for a socialist alternative an all-round socialist campaign is needed. Socialist Unity wants to be that socialist campaign.

That is where the problems start. Despite a few fairly good voting results in by-elections SU shows no sign of becoming more than an electoral alliance. It exists at elections, but otherwise not at all. It offers no ongoing campaign to people attracted to what it says at election time, unless those people join the IMG or Big Flame.

The Socialist Workers'

Party decided not to stand candidates in the general election because their experience of running in by-elections was that the impact was not big enough to allow any net gains at all. Although Socialist Unity has not reached the same conclusion, its experience does not seem very different; neither for the SWP nor for SU has electioneering been effective in building the socialist alternative which they rightly want to build.

Socialist Challenge declares that the socialist opposition which it hopes to build through the Socialist Unity campaigns should include "all those people inside the Labour Party who are prepared to take action against the anti-working class policies of their leaders". To start off by demanding those Labour activists vote against Labour is not a very good way of building unity!

The Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory joins in the general campaign for a Labour vote while also fighting for socialist policies. Such a campaign makes it easier to debate and discuss politics with that great majority of class-conscious workers who solidly vote Labour, and at the same time it makes it possible to link work at election time with an ongoing struggle for democracy,

accountability and militant policies in the labour movement.

It also makes it possible to have an impact in scores of constituencies — everywhere where the SCLV has supporters — while Socialist Unity is confined by its small numbers and resources to the 10 constituencies where it has been able to put up candidates.

In its 8th March issue *Socialist Challenge* said it would be supporting the SCLV. Since then it has not mentioned the SCLV. But that leaves *Socialist Challenge* readers in the other 600-odd constituencies with not much to do except give a hand to their comrades in the selected 10 constituencies and glumly vote Labour at the end of the day.

It could be argued that an electoral campaign outside the Labour Party is better than one inside because it can be bolder, clearer and more revolutionary in the ideas it puts forward. But if that advantage really exists here and now, then Socialist Unity certainly doesn't use it.

It is quite deliberately not an openly revolutionary campaign: the Socialist Unity alliance was put together on the basis of uniting all socialists who agree with putting up left-of-Labour candidates, whatever their

strategic views! The Socialist Unity election programme is not more radical than the SCLV's terser platform; on the contrary, it is actually a good deal less clear on the question of the state machine and the road to socialism.

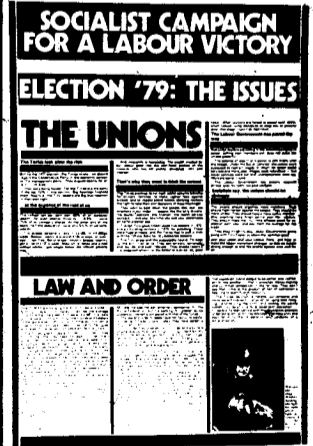
Does the SCLV stand in danger of being dragged in on the 'fake left' causes of the election, price controls and the Common Market? Yes: that's why *Workers' Action* carries articles debating these issues, and why the SCLV paper *Socialist Organiser* has criticised the EEC diversion. And Socialist Unity? Its election platforms have in the past included the illusion-creating demand for price controls. On the Common Market, Socialist Unity's platform says nothing, but the main component parts of Socialist Unity, the IMG and Big Flame, have supported the diversionary line that Britain should 'get out'.

Loose in its politics and organisation without any base of mass support or involvement to compensate, Socialist Unity will not be able to mount anything more than a sideshow at the election. In terms of its self-proclaimed task, building a socialist opposition to the Labour Government's conservative policies, it will simply be ineffective compared to the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

RHODRI EVANS



■ SCLV badges in red, white and black: 20p each, or six for £1. Add 10p for p&p



■ SCLV broadsheet on the election issues. Four pages, 2p. Add 10p for postage if ordering less than 20, and 20p if ordering more. Orders of more than 50 post free.

■ Get your election agent to order the SCLV leaflets on trade union rights, jobs, racism, housing, Ireland and women's rights. £5 per 1000.

■ SCLV posters in red and blue on yellow: five for 20p, 30 for £1. Add 20% for post.

■ *Socialist Organiser* special election issue 10p. Bundles of 10 post free.

■ All from SCLV, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16. Cheques payable to Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory.

Rhodesia: the fake election

THE TORIES are testing the ground for recognition of the 'power-sharing' regime in Rhodesia. Margaret Thatcher is sending a team of Tory lords to observe the voting for the 72 black seats in the 'one man, one vote' elections being held from April 30th to May 4th.

Thatcher's team is headed by Lord Boyd of Merton. As Alan Lennox Boyd, he was the Tory Colonial Secretary from 1954 to 1959, and main architect of the unsuccessful plan to preserve white minority rule not only in Rhodesia but also in Zambia and Malawi, by linking the three states in a 'Central African Federation'.

Boyd was responsible for jailing Malawi leader Hastings Banda without trial on the charge that Banda was planning to murder all the whites in the country. He was also responsible for a cover up of a British massacre of detainees at the Hola camp in Kenya.



The power-sharing agreement gives the 4% white minority 28 of the 100 MPs, five guaranteed cabinet posts, power to block any constitutional changes, and complete control of the army, police, judiciary, and civil service, through a series of Government commissions for which all but a handful of blacks are ineligible.

The elections for the black seats are only being contested by Smith's allies, Sithole, Muzorewa and Chirau, but strenuous efforts are being made to force blacks to the polls to give an appearance of support to the elections. Every voter will be required to dip their hand into an identifying solution — and face threats like losing their jobs if they don't vote.

Three quarters of the country is under martial law. The Rhodesian army has launched a series of attacks to boost its credibil-

ity in the days before the election.

At least 100 people were killed by attacks on nationalist guerilla bases in Zambia on April 11th. On April 13th Rhodesian commandos attacked Patriotic Front leader Joshua Nkomo's house in the Zambian capital of Lusaka, and on the same day Rhodesian troops invaded Botswana, disguised as Botswanan soldiers, to seize 14 refugees active in Nkomo's forces.

On the Rhodesian border with Mozambique Rhodesian troops have been bulldozing and poisoning maize crops planted by Robert



Smith: democratic convert?

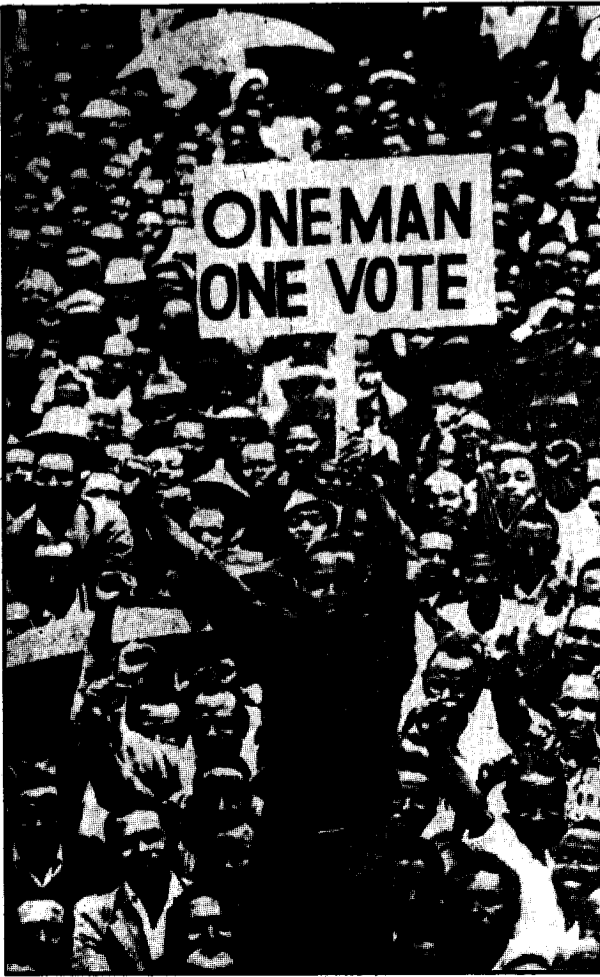


Muzorewa: happy hostage of his one-time enemies

Mugabe's guerilla forces.

The struggled of the nationalist guerillas remains the biggest threat to Smith's schemes to keep white minority rule under a new guise. The labour movement must support their fight against the phony 'democratic solution' in Rhodesia.

NIK BARSTOW



BRAZIL: WORKERS ON THE MOVE

by Bas Hardy

"DO I KNOW Jojo Baptista Figueiredo? Does he work here? He's to be the next president? Oh well, you can't expect us to remember the names of politicians, because we haven't had elections for 15 years".

That was a fairly typical reaction from a Brazilian worker to an inquiring foreign journalist. Although the Brazilian military have tried to legitimise the dictatorship, the working class in Brazil does not really care which general's face hides behind *os oculos escuros* ('the dark glasses').

In the Congress elections last November only 34 million Brazilians bothered to vote. More than five million spoiled their ballot papers, and 17 million voted for the 'official' opposition, the MDB. The government party ARENA retained its majority despite getting less than 12 million votes.

Party political broadcasts are even more farcical than elections. They consist of a series of candidates telling the listeners in turn their name, party label, address, occupation, and whether they have any offspring.

Despite the succession of former police chief Gen. Figueiredo to the Presidency Brazil's ruling military technocracy realises that its institutionalised dictatorship will not last long. That is why, in their own American business-style jargon, they have recently been pursuing 'political distention' under the slogan 'Brazil will not be another Iran'.

They are working for political liberalisation which will also safeguard, in an undefined form, a continued long-term military involvement in the political arena.

Liberalisation at a snail's pace has been going on in Brazil since the aftermath of the bloody mass repression of the left in 1968-70. Now there is a background of economic regression: an increase in the inflation rate to 42% by the end of 1978, a national debt of \$40 million (or 25% of national income); a decline in exports; and a reduction in the availability of foreign credit by over half in the last year.

Invest

Brazil is still a highly advantageous place for foreign capital to invest and its growth rate is higher than Britain's or other west European countries'. Yet the 'economic miracle' is running out of steam.

The 'economic miracle' could not have taken place without an attack on workers' wages and organisations. The coup which brought the generals to power on April 1st, 1964, led to the dismantling of the social and welfare institutions of the previous 'populist' regime, curbs on wages and the gradual imposition of Government-appointed bureaucrats at the head of the trade unions.

Last summer the working class protests became more than sporadic. After a group of militant union leaders exposed manipulation in the Government-determined cost of living index, to which wages are tied, a spate of mass strikes took place in the engineering and car industries in the greater Sao Paulo area.

It began in July with 3,000 workers in a Saab-Scania plant who held a stand-up strike in their factory, refusing to operate machines. Then close to 200,000 engineers in the Metal Workers' Union came out on strike and won 10%-15% wage rises. This was followed by national strikes of teachers, bank clerks, doctors and oil workers in September.

In October 350,000 metalworkers in and around Sao Paulo who had not been involved in the earlier strikes came out.

The strike wave coincided with the growth of 'Socialist Convergence', a broad socialist organisation seeking to tie the struggle for democratic rights to the struggle for socialism. The first national congress of Socialist Convergence last August drew considerable support — so much so that the military arrested 25 of its leading members for subversive propaganda. The 25 were accused of starting the strike wave and seeking to establish a dictatorship.

Brazilian workers no

longer blindly follow the reformist Brazilian Communist Party or the discredited nationalist politicians of the old regime. There are dangers, however, that the moves to an independent workers' party prompted by Socialist Convergence may be derailed. Recently a left wing union leader, Luis Inacio de Silva called off a two week engineering strike in exchange for Government acceptance of the union's right to negotiate independently with the employers.

Deal

Though it could be argued that this was just a tactical move, Inacio de Silva and others may forget about political independence in return for a Government deal recognising their authority as union leaders.

The economic crisis makes it difficult for the regime to buy off the top layers of the working class, and a further radicalisation still seems likely. As one engineer commented in the socialist newspaper *Versus*:

"The time to build a workers' party is now. If we didn't do it before it was because the dictatorship wouldn't let us. It has always been the right line to fight for workers' independence from the bourgeoisie. Those who say it isn't the right time never went to a factory and asked the workers.

"You only have to put the stick in our hands and we will kill the snake".

TEACHERS VOTE FOR ACTION

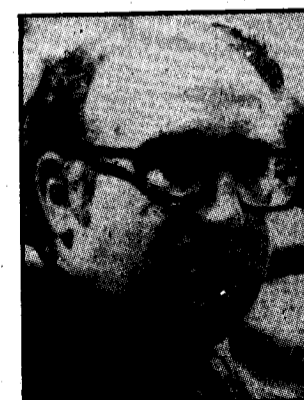
THE NATIONAL Union of Teachers (NUT) conference voted overwhelmingly on Saturday 14th to 'instruct the Executive to implement, at the earliest possible moment in the summer term, a withdrawal of good will as defined within the union's contingency plans'.

Moving the motion, general secretary Fred Jarvis strongly attacked the employers for being "dishonest, backsliding and untrustworthy", and condemned the rival teachers' union, NAS-UWT, as "inconsistent and opportunist".

This melodramatic 'fighting' speech was made to cover up for the Executive's lack of fight on the claim and their failure to extract a face-saving compromise from the employers. The left submitted an amendment, calling for opposition to the Comparability Commission,

Concordat and phasing of pay increases; for half-day strike action; and for a ballot of the members on no-cover action, in addition to the withdrawal of voluntary duties.

This amendment won a significant minority vote of



'Fighting' talk from Fred Jarvis

300. And the overwhelming vote for the main motion indicated members' anger, despite their awareness that withdrawal of voluntary duties such as school meals supervision is a very weak weapon.

A left-wing fringe meeting on salaries was attended by 100 people on the Sunday evening, 15th, with speakers from the CPSA Broad Left and the Scottish Rank and File teachers' group reporting on their current industrial action. The meeting agreed to fight on for a flat-rate increase in next year's claim and for rejection of comparability studies and incomes policy.

An emergency motion to conference has also been organised calling for critical support to Labour in the general election instead of the NUT's traditional 'political neutrality'.

The two left-wing groups in the union, the Socialist Teachers' Alliance (STA) and *Rank and File* have worked well together at the conference. There is no doubt that there is sufficient agreement on the main issues to form a united organisation, provided that room is left for democratic debate. Business-like discussions on the details of unity should be started. Unfortunately, the STA leaders used the second of two joint R&F/STA meetings at the conference to boost themselves as champions of unity: the result was wrangling which led to many non-aligned people walking out of the meeting.

The obstacle to unity is no longer the sectarian unwillingness of R&F to carry out joint action, but rather the point-scoring of the STA leaders.

PETE FIRMIN

Hypocrites vs. hypocrites

THE LATEST issue of Left, the paper of the Labour Party Young Socialists (LPYS), contains both an advert for the recently formed Campaign for YS Democracy, supported by Workers' Action and Clause 4, and an attack on the CYSD by the YS National Committee, which is dominated by the Militant tendency.

The main force of the YS NC's attack is directed at the National Committee of the National Organisation of Labour Students, who have decided to support the CYSD. The YS NC argue that it is hypocritical for the NOLS NC

to support the CYSD when it has abused democracy in its own organisation.

This is certainly true. And Workers' Action students in NOLS are quite prepared to unite with Militant in a campaign for democracy in that organisation. We also call on the NOLS NC to put its money where its mouth is. Recently they dissolved the NOLS regional committees because Militant were gaining control. If they want to support the CYSD they should implement the reforms it calls for in their own organisation.

However, the rest of the LPYS NC's attack just evades

the issue. They claim that the only reason Workers' Action calls for democracy in the LPYS is because we have "failed to make any political headway", and they produce figures to prove that the vote of the 'ultra-left' has declined in recent years.

Militant may well change their politics to suit their tactical ends. But that certainly does not go for Workers' Action. In any case, Workers' Action's votes have consistently gone up in recent conferences.

The other arguments of the NC are just as specious. They

argue against the election of the National Committee by National Conference because the YS is "not big enough", while they give no indication of when it is supposed to become "big enough" to merit this elementary democratic right.

Both Militant and Clause 4 are quite happy to trample on democracy when it suits them, then howl when their opponents behave in the same way. For our part, we see the fight for democracy as central to the fight to transform the YS into a fighting revolutionary youth movement.

GORDON BREWER

Mass picket called at racist club

REGULAR SATURDAY night picketing continues outside Pollyanna's Club in Newhall St, Birmingham. The club operates a colour bar thinly disguised as a quota system and a ban on hats.

Despite a massive police operation to clear the pavement outside the club, the pickets have been successful in turning away would-be customers. Pickets have also learned something new about the workings of the Race Relations act: the police claim that because Pollyanna's has been served with a non-discrimination order the matter is sub judice, and picketing is therefore illegal!

The Committee against Racism in Clubs is mounting a campaign to defend the nine people so far arrested. They are also calling for a mass picket on 28th April.

Rock Against Racism gig: 7.30pm, Digbeth Civic Hall; followed at 10pm by march to mass picket at Pollyanna's. Saturday 28th April.

Engineering bosses plan for battle

"THE CHAOS which has erupted in industrial relations recently emphasises the need for employers to do what they can... to maintain order".

With that introduction, the powerful Engineering Employers' Federation has issued a 'bash the stewards' handbook, "in response to demands from the membership for greater solidarity among employers to meet the pressures that are being brought upon them".

The EEF, a notoriously tough-minded organisation, is not just giving advice. The document gives instructions — and the EEF is quite willing to expel companies which break ranks.

The EEF's pamphlet, entitled *Guidelines on Collective Bargaining and Response to Industrial Action*, is published in full in the current issue of the militant engineering magazine *The Charter* (10p plus postage from Jack Robertson, 265A Seven Sisters Rd, London N4). It tells bosses to "press the need for the appointment of stewards with

proper qualifications who are competent for office.

"If an employer is dissatisfied with the number or quality of stewards appointed, he should consult with his Association [sub-group of the EEF] with a view to raising the issue in Procedure. Abuse of the position and powers of stewards should not be accepted..."

The document also includes the following points:

■ *Employees should be made aware that their employer is willing to provide facilities for secret ballots.*

■ [Employers] "should secure the inclusion of all substantive matters in a single agreement lasting for at least twelve months. Improvement or alterations to an agreed settlement or additional claims should be deferred until the resumption of negotiations on the agreed due date".

■ *Industrial action such as go-slows, refusal to work normally and blacking... should not be tolerated for more than a few days.*

■ *Lay-off pay should not be offered for those affected*

by disputes in the same plant or wider bargaining unit".

The EEF's worries about the "excessive bargaining power of organised labour" are focused on shop stewards, not the union officials.

Where procedure has been breached, for example, the EEF tells firms to negotiate with their local union official and not with the stewards.

The employers' reply to the current national engineering claim is summed up in two words: 'Not likely'.

AUEW President Terry Duffy has threatened industrial action. But the chance of Duffy matching his words with deeds is very small.

At factory level, however, the engineering bosses do face a threat. The Ford workers, the council workers, and the health workers have shown that militancy can pay. Every shop stewards' committee in the engineering industry now knows that this year's pay deal can be 15 or 20% if they fight, 5% if they don't.

At the same time the engineering bosses are being squeezed from the other side. Order books are still more than 25% down compared with 1974, and only marginally above the slump level of 1975. Engineering production is actually running a few per cent below 1975 levels.

The scene is set for confrontation — especially if a new Tory government gives the engineering bosses added fighting spirit.

RAY SAUNDERS



The Manchester engineering sit-ins of 1972

Simon Temple traces the background to a new case of victimisation in the TGWU

After the Cowley 9, the Birmingham 2

"THE REGIONAL bureaucrats are not prepared to tolerate lay members getting up and fighting for the interests of the union". That is how Johnny Groves sums up the link between the recent attempted witch-hunt against nine T&GWU militants at the Cowley car plant in Oxford, and the current charges against himself and Mick Regan, another T&G lorry drivers' shop steward in Birmingham.

Groves and Regan are charged with "bringing the union into disrepute" during an occupation of the local TGWU office during the drivers' strike early this year.

Johnny Groves explains: "To make sense of the charges against Mick and me we have got to go back to the end of 1977".

There was an election for a regional committee delegate from the Birmingham lorry drivers' branch, 5/35. The scrutineer refused to accept the results, and ordered a re-vote.

TOO BIG

We didn't know why. But soon the regional committee was insisting that our branch be split into four — supposedly because it was too big — and Alan Law (then both branch secretary and full time district officer) might have to resign — supposedly because of increasing deafness.

A full branch meeting in January 1978 decided unanimously to fight the split, which we saw as a bureaucratic attempt to weaken our organisation. A sub-committee of five members was sent to regional office. Arthur Davies, the regional chairman, and Brian Mathers, the regional secretary, insisted the split must go ahead, although Mathers did agree to combined meetings of the four branches.

Alan Law also tried to persuade the five to agree to the

split. He appealed to their loyalty, and told them he would have to resign as a full time officer unless they signed a paper agreeing that the branch should be split.

Tommy Shiel, Dennis Mills and Brian Daley agreed to sign. John Spooner and Owen Kenna refused. Law became abusive, called Kenna 'an Irish poltroon', and barred him and Spooner from the union office. He then crowed: "I'm back in the driving seat".

Law arranged elections for officers for the four divided branches, and called separate meetings — even though the split had never been agreed by the united 5/35 branch. The old branch committee was refused permission to meet in the union offices.

Three branches accepted the split but demanded the right for the four branches to meet as one. At the meeting of the fourth branch, Regan and Groves challenged Daley and Mills to give an explanation. Brian Daley then said, "I've had enough of this cover-up, the members should know the truth".

Daley explained that Alan Law had rigged the vote for regional committee delegate. He had sent out ballot papers to a few firms which might ask awkward questions — and put in a block vote for everyone else himself.

Despite Mathers' assurance, attempts to get a combined 5/35 branch meeting were blocked by Law. Groves and Regan decided the whole affair had to be brought out in the open. The press would not expose it without definite proof.

So Groves and Regan told some members of the new branch committee (made up of the combined committees of the four separate branches) that they would go to the police. The committee members told Law about the threat to go to the police and

appeal again for a combined 5/35 meeting. Law still refused, so the committee members gave Groves and Regan the go-ahead.

At the beginning of June Groves and Regan went to the police, and the affair became well known. This approach to the police went against the principle that the labour movement should sort out its own affairs independently from the state, and, besides, the police eventually decided there was nothing worth investigating.



However, an overall branch meeting was called on June 18th and passed a resolution calling for a full union enquiry into the splitting of the branch and the ballot rigging. Law refused to attend, claiming the meeting was unconstitutional.

ADVICE

The branches continued to meet as one, but there was no enquiry. After a stormy meeting which they attended in the late summer, Mathers and Davies had a talk

with some members of the branch committee and outlined the procedure the branch should follow to get rid of Law.

Following this advice, the branch committee called a meeting of shop stewards at Transport House, Birmingham. They found the meeting room had been locked up — but the meeting took place anyway, in the hallway, and voted that Law be replaced as the 5/35 branch's full-time officer. Mathers refused to accept

meeting that Davies and Mathers had set him up, telling him how to get rid of Law then refusing to accept the 5/35 branch decision.

The battle between Law and the branch heated up with the national road haulage strike in early January. Law failed to arrange talks on the claim with the local employers in time, and when the branch struck anyway he told drivers who phoned his office for advice to cross the picket lines.

Following this advice, one driver charged through a picket line in Smethwick, nearly running over two pickets. Furious about this, about 15 members of the branch occupied the district office.

Over Law's phone, managers asked: "Do you want us to get our drivers out on strike?" The drivers occupying the office were startled by this insight into Law's methods of trade union organisation, but naturally answered yes.

FALSE

Meanwhile, Law was organising a meeting with the bosses. This meeting — with the lay delegate from the 5/35 branch not present and not informed about it — agreed that the West Midlands would stay out of the national strike, on condition that the local bosses would pay the rate won nationally at the end of the strike.

The strike continued regardless. Law had finally gone too far. He has now been replaced as the full-time officer for the 5/35 branch. Questions are also being asked about Law's management of branch funds. But the bureaucrats have tried to get their own back, with the charges against Regan and Groves.

Groves is charged with "bringing the union into disrepute" by "leading a

party of people into Transport House and disrupting the work of the union"; Regan, by giving 'false information' to people phoning the office during the occupation. Regan also faces charges arising from another occupation of union offices, in West Bromwich.

The inquiry called by the regional committee agreed at its first meeting to adjourn to allow time to prepare the defence, and is due to reconvene soon. The inquiry may recommend to the regional committee that Groves and Regan be expelled from the union, in which case the final decision has to be taken by the TGWU's lay General Executive Council.

Davies, Mathers and other people involved in the whole affair are sitting as 'judges' on the inquiry, which makes it a long way from impartial. Groves and Regan have obviously been picked on: Paddy Moore, who was the most prominent figure in the occupation, has not been charged.

The March meeting of the 5/35 branch demanded the charges be dropped, despite an attempt by the branch committee to get the matter put off until the regional committee had discussed it. Support has also been promised from the National Port Shop Stewards Committee and the Southampton docks branch of the TGWU.

TGWU members are asked to put resolutions in their branches protesting at the charges and demanding they be dropped. Copies should be sent to:

★ Brian Mathers, Regional Secretary, TGWU, Transport House, 9/17 Victoria St, West Bromwich, West Midlands.

★ Moss Evans, Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1.

★ John Groves, 24 Cheltenham Drive, Bromford Bridge Estate, Bromford, Birmingham 34.

BL unions line up with the bosses

JIM CALLAGHAN's hopes for an industrial truce in the run up to the elections have been destroyed by the recently formed British Leyland United Craft Organisation (BL UCO). About half the 8,500 BL skilled workers, in 18 out of 34 plants, are out on strike, defying the combined opposition of BL bosses and union officials.

BL UCO's demands are basically the same as those of the BL toolmakers' strike two years ago — increased differentials and the right to separate negotiations. The time the skilled workers have named a definite wage target — £90 (though in fact BL UCO members in Rover are aiming for £120).

Of course it would be better if the skilled workers were united with all other BL workers for a common claim. In reality, however, the choice facing them is to rely on the remote and bureaucratic Joint Negotiating Committee or to take action through their own representative rank and file organisation, BL UCO. And anyway the union side have now withdrawn from the Joint Negotiating Committee in protest at the company's statement that parity increases will only be paid in five plants.

A victory for the craftsmen would smash BL boss Michael Edwardes' insistence upon linking all wage rises to productivity increases



Edwardes' fast fading smile

and open the door for a successful fight by all BL workers. To spread the struggle, the shop floor must construct a representative, recallable national negotia-

ting body in which the craftsmen would be able to participate.

The massive redundancies and wholesale plant closures which BL bosses have been threatening since the strike was first announced (and which they had planned anyway, strike or no strike) must be answered by a policy of work-sharing with no loss of pay and occupation of threatened plants.

The union leaders, who have been working hand in glove with BL boss Michael Edwardes to break the strike, must be called to account by the membership. Both the TGWU and the AUEW have called on their members to cross BL UCO picket lines. One AUEW district secretary in Birmingham, Bert Benson, has sent out a letter carrying the District Committee's seal calling upon members to do the craftsmen's work where necessary. This letter was distributed by the company.

At Rover Solihull, the AUEW has turned a blind eye to BL management (from Cowley) doing the craftsmen's work, and AUEW president Terry Duffy has appeared on TV talking about expelling BL UCO leader Roy Fraser from the union.

All BL workers should give the craftsmen 100% backing against both the company and the union bosses.

JIM DENHAM

Workers' ACTION

Dunlop: the crunch

THE TRANSPORT and General Workers' Union has called for nationwide blacking on the movement of all Dunlop goods in support of the workers at the Speke plant who are due to be sacked on Thursday April 19th. The blacking has stopped all movement of goods in and out of Speke, leaving £12 million of tyres trapped in the factory.

The 24 hour picket line is

being helped by a 'communitary picket' involving other workers, including some from the closed-down Triumph Speke plant.

Pickets have been sent out to other plants. At the Fort Dunlop plant in Birmingham, there has been a good response from lorry drivers who have refused to cross the picket despite being given conflicting stories from regional officials as to wheth-

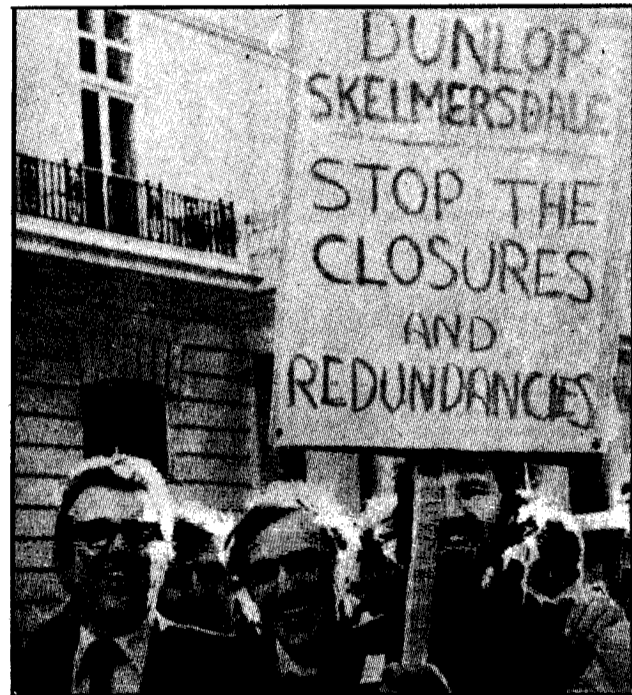
er the blacking was official. Dockers in Liverpool and Southampton are still blacking Dunlop goods.

The Joint Trade Union Action Committee at Speke won support for its 'viability plan', which involves agreeing to 1,000 job losses, at a mass meeting of 1,200 workers on Thursday 12th. But the bosses are refusing to negotiate even after these concessions have been made. Their attitude is "We've got one too many factories", and 'viability' is irrelevant.

When the redundancy notices expire on April 19th there will be a mass meeting to decide on the next steps, and the Action Committee has announced it will be calling for increased action. That action should be an occupation of the plant together with a maintenance of the blacking, with the demand for work-sharing with no loss of pay under workers' control throughout the combine.

If that happens, talks with the company about 'viability' will become irrelevant for another reason — the workers will be in a position to fight to save all the threatened jobs.

Donations and messages of support to R. Rinaldi, Treasurer, Dunlop Speke Action Committee, 11 Rudely Walk, Speke, Liverpool 24. BAS HARDY



Lucas launch a skirmish

1000 WORKERS at the Lucas Electrical battery factory at Foremans Rd, Birmingham, are on strike.

The dispute started over piece work values for the die cast section — the company has been prevaricating in negotiations for 18 months, so a fortnight ago the die cast section walked out. The rest of the factory was then laid off without pay.

On Thursday 5th the strikers decided to go back for further talks. But the company botched recalling the rest of the workforce and only 25% turned up. Then the company refused to pay average earn-

ings for that day unless the workers accepted complete job mobility. The workers refused.

On Monday morning Foremans Rd and the nearby Alton Works walked out, demanding full pay for all the days of the lay-off. The company have refused to talk until they return. Now pickets are on the gates and Lucas drivers are refusing to cross them. Nothing is going in or out, and the whole site of four factories is affected.

A mass meeting on Thursday 12th rejected the company offer of a payment of £10 to £15. They also rejected AUEW

full-timer Sam Robinson's call to return to work. The company have now met Lucas Birmingham senior stewards and warned there will be lay-offs in the 13 other plants, but the senior stewards have refused to put pressure on the strikers and have told the company that it is their problem.

Lucas Electrical's latest profit figures show a drop to £24 million as against £73 million the previous year, and the company is attempting to slash 3000 jobs in Birmingham electrical factories and force flexibility and mobility on the unions.

JIM DENHAM

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Paid ads (including ads for publications) 8p per word, £5 per column inch — payment in advance. Send copy to Events, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's paper.

Saturday 21 April. Troops Out Now, Self Determination for the Irish people. Demonstration organised by Glasgow United Troops Out Movement and Sinn Fein. Assemble 10am Queens Park Gates, Victoria Road.

Thursday 26 April. Manchester SCLV meeting: 'Labour's Foreign Policy'. 8pm at the Packhorse pub, near Deansgate Station, Manchester.

Saturday 28 April. Mass picket in protest at racist bar at Pollyanna's club in Birmingham. Rock against Racism gig beforehand at 7.30pm, Digbeth Civic Hall; march to Pollyanna's at 10pm.

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Times owners still want blood

BOSSSES at Times Newspapers have suspended the reopening of the Times and Sunday Times 'until further notice', and announced that 1800 workers will be sacked.

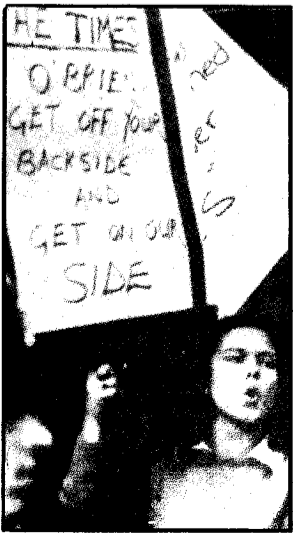
The unions at the Times have refused to accept all the

conditions laid down for the introduction of new technology — conditions that would lead to heavy job losses among the 3,000 Times workers. The NGA has refused to let other workers take over the NGA members' typesetting jobs.

An April 17 re-start date was set in March, when the bosses climbed down after three months of closure and bit-by-bit sacking of the Times workforce. The bosses agreed to negotiate, and the Times workers were re-engaged on temporary contracts. The original bosses' demands, including a no-strike clause, remained the basis for negotiation, and the unions seemed ready to make concessions.

But when agreement was not reached, the bosses announced that the temporary re-engagements were off. This means sacking all the workers except the 1200 whose unions have made deals with the Times bosses.

What Times workers need is not some new capitalist to buy up the paper, but a fight for workers' control.



Warning

SOCIALISTS in Coventry are warning the movement that a former left-wing activist has reappeared as the National Front (fascist) candidate for Earlsdon in the council elections.

Steve Davis joined the Workers' Fight group in Newcastle in 1968. He had previously been an anarchist.

Very soon he moved to Bristol, where he left WF and joined the Socialist Labour League. He was a member of the SLL for two years.

In the early '70s he came into contact with the Workers' Fight group again, in Coventry, without re-joining. He then disappeared from the political scene... until coming back as a fascist.

CIVIL SERVICE: VOTE NO TO THIS OFFER

LEADING Labour politicians breathed a sigh of relief when the national committees of the main civil service unions, CPSSA and SCPS, voted to accept the latest pay offer. They will put the offer out to branches with a recommendation to accept, and call off threatened action in the airports over Easter.

The TUC General Council members were also glad to have this embarrassing strike out of the way before polling day.

The CPSA Civil Service executive committee [CSEC] voted by 13 votes to 7 to accept the offer. There was one abstention from the right wing, and the only Communist Party member on the CPSA CSEC left the room to go on holiday before the vote was taken. On the SCPS National Executive Committee the vote was 14-8 for with 2 abstentions. All 8 votes against were Broad Left votes, though some BL members voted for.

The Government has offered 9% now, plus £1 per week for all civil servants earning less than £4,795 a year — to be backdated from April 1st. There will be another 5% on August 1st, and the remainder of the increase due under the Pay Research Unit (PRU) comparability scheme will be paid from 1st January 1980.

Some of the higher grades will eventually get around

30%, and most clerical workers around 20%. But the delay in paying the full increase will cost all these workers dear.

The PRU figures are based on 1978 calculations and should have been paid from 1st April 1979. The staging of the PRU money will mean that some of the lowest paid workers in the civil service will miss from £1.20 to £4.70 a week.

The staging of the pay rise will also undercut the struggle for next year's PRU claim... and get round paying for that claim.

The CPSA leadership, in particular General Secretary Ken Thomas, are clearly confident of winning the branch vote on the offer. They have control over the selective strikes, the Government is going to rescind the 53 Scottish Office suspensions, and unofficial action that grew after the mass one-day stoppage on April 2nd has now subsided — no national alternative leadership has been developed to coordinate, organise or lead it. To make it impossible to develop any momentum against the offer, all the branch meetings are to be held on one day — Monday 23 April.

Every effort has to be made to get a 'no' vote. The pay campaign is being sabotaged by the CPSA leaders refusing to call out the strong and militant areas like the

Department of Employment and the Department of Health & Social Security, or to bring CPSSA members in the airports out indefinitely with a back-up call for all out strike action in the rest of the civil service.

The rank and file may lose this vote, but they have gained confidence and experience in organising and controlling extended unofficial action. At the May 1979 CPSSA conference the fight must be carried forward to build a national alternative leadership.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY