

workers' ACTION

No.23 July 1st 1976 8p

Inside

William Tyndale

► p4&5

Interview with

J. Joshi
of the IWA

► p2

THE TUC have signed a draft of a new Social Contract — without extracting a single commitment from the Government. But if the government was 'unable' to make any definite commitments to the unions, it was able to make commitments in plenty to the international bankers and industrialists.

● In a 90-minute conversation with President Ford before the so-called Western Summit meeting in Puerto Rico, Callaghan promised that next year's public spending in Britain would be cut back even more than forecast.

● The Government unveiled its plans this week to boost private profits by a further £1,000 million by easing price controls. This would add another 1% to the official price index which is certain to rise 3% in any case as a result of last month's run on the pound.

● Healey has agreed to the demand of those who put up the 3-month standby loan that Britain will pay the loan back by borrowing from the International Monetary Fund. This would mean a further sharp cut-back in spending on health, education and social services. It would also mean another boost to unemployment.

The Labour Party NEC would be right to reject the Social Contract because it is a thoroughly anti-working class agreement, binding the workers to the interests of the bosses and burdening them with the bosses' crisis. Although it didn't take that stand, it wasn't prepared to sign a blank cheque, and as long as Callaghan and Healey will not guarantee no further cuts, the Social Contract is nothing but a blank cheque for the bankers.

Narrow

The the NEC victory was a narrow one. It was only possible because a number of ministers who are on the NEC didn't bother to turn up. They preferred to take tea and shake hands with Giscard d'Estaing.

The TUC, however, has overwhelmingly agreed to accept the new Social Contract. They laid down no conditions except that the government give a vague commitment to attempt to push unemployment levels down.

The latest unemployment figures show what that 'condition' is worth: the mid-June figure showed unemployment up by 6,500 at a time when it usually falls sharply. Anybody expecting the situation to improve later in the year should heed Employment Secretary Albert Booth's warning that there is little likelihood of a fall in unemployment this year.

In this situation, despite the smug vote of the TUC leaders, their actual ability to sell the Social Contract in practice will come under increasing strain. Already some public sector unions are committed to accepting the 4½% wages ceiling only on the condition that there are no further cuts in social spending.

So far the union leaderships have been so eager to fall in behind the Government's right wing policies that Callaghan, infuriated by the NEC vote, was able to threaten the NEC rebels that "The TUC will have something to say about this."

What will the Left do about their opposition to cuts, unemployment and the Social Contract? Will it turn into an empty gesture, a victory

A blank cheque for the bankers



ated; they are in a minority on the NEC; they have taken a stand against the line and policies of both the Labour Government and the TUC leadership.

The choice for the left is either to climb down, congratulating themselves on their principle and consoling themselves with their weakness — or else to come out clearly over the heads of the TUC, and over the heads of the NEC members who support government policy. Such

trade unions, on trades councils, all the way through to shop stewards committees, for a fight against government policies.

Effects

It would involve mobilising workers to fight the effects of cuts and unemployment.

If the Left are prepared to embark on such a campaign, their

seriously. Their vote against the new Social Contract could play an important part in mobilising the labour movement.

But if they are not prepared to take the fight outside the committee rooms, outside arguments with Callaghan and the TUC, then they will be trapped in their own impotence. Their vote will not have played a significant role in developing a fight to maintain living standards against the Labour Government.

PORTUGAL: EANES WINS NOW THE SQUEEZE ON THE LEFT WILL START

AS GENERAL RAMALHO Eanes won Portugal's presidential elections, with nearly four times as many votes as his nearest rival, the significance of his victory was underlined by attacks on Communist Party supporters in the streets of Lisbon and the bombing of the Portuguese-Russian Friendship Association.

The 61% of voters who opted for the "liberty and security" promised in Eanes' election slogan will not get exactly that. They will get a sharper and sharper squeeze on the left and on the independent organisations of the working class.

The squeeze will be supported not only by the openly capitalist parties, the PPD and the CDS, but also by the Socialist Party, whose slogan was "Eanes in the presidency, SP in government".

The large numbers of militant workers opposed to this programme of capitalist restabilisation were shown by the 17% vote for Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, whose populist personality campaign was supported by the major groups to the left of the Communist Party. But the campaign also showed the political unpreparedness of those workers — not only showed it, but reinforced it. Its politics never went beyond a vague wish to get things back as they were before 25th November.

The political confusion of Carvalho's campaign was expressed clearly enough by his comment on the results. "I am fed up with the political parties", he said: "and I am tired of being told I am against them"! He is reported as having announced that the support groups set up for his election campaign — the 'GDUPs' — would continue after the election. This was the perspective advocated by the Maoist UDP, as part of its strategy of a broad "anti-fascist" front for the "democratic" first stage of the revolution in Portugal.

The PRP, the other major group behind the Carvalho campaign, did not want to keep the GDUPs going beyond the election.

8% voted for Octavio Pato, the candidate of the Communist Party. The CP would have preferred to support a military figure. But they were forced into an independent candidacy by Eanes' firm insistence that the CP, having done its job in propping up successive capitalist governments since 25th April 1974, should now be ousted from any ministerial positions. Still the CP did not have the nerve to campaign clearly AGAINST Eanes. Pato's low vote was an inevitable consequence.

Confusion on the left in Italy

ON MONDAY June 21st, the results of the elections in Italy were announced, climaxing a whole month of intense political activity.

The surprising aspect was the re-consolidation of the Christian Democrats, the existing governing party. Its percentage of the total vote actually regained the 1972 level, after the massive setback it received during 1975 and in the March '76 local government elections. It came out of these elections with about 38% of the total votes.

The result produced a great disappointment within the working class. The massive air of expectancy building up before the polling was dissipated on Monday night, and despite the large demonstration outside the Communist Party headquarters, the atmosphere was significantly subdued.

The Christian Democrats consolidated themselves again at the expense of the smaller right wing parties like the PSDI, and also through a big decline in the vote for the fascist MSI. As such, the CDs have emerged as an even more right wing formation, and the internal reverberations will probably be great. Fanfani and the other diehards will see the result as a vindication for their hard line anti-Communist oriented campaign. As such Zaccagnini and Moro — the so-called 'progressives' of the Democrazia Christiana, who wanted some sort of opening to the PCI in response to the latter's 'historic compromise' initiative — will be discredited.

Solve

However, to what extent is the CD's success an indication of the traditional bourgeois party's ability to solve the deep economic and social problems facing the Italian bourgeoisie?

In fact, although the CD's re-consolidation is significant, they are still incapable of governing the country on a firm parliamentary basis. Thus new behind-the-scenes alliances and compromises will have to be reached. The classic malaise of Italian politics is once again coming into play.

Parallel to this the elections did see an immense growth in the PCI's vote. They polled 12.6 million votes, gaining an extra 18 seats in the Camera and similar increases in the Senate. Also, the PCI captured the major cities of Naples and Genoa, while the previous 'red regions' became even redder, with the PCI's vote reaching 60-70% in many large industrial centres in the north. And the PCI is the leading party in Rome.

The great failure among the left parties was the PSI, whose share of the vote fell from 12% to 9%, many of its votes going to the PCI, others to the Christian Democrats. Yet it was the PSI that brought about the collapse of the Centre-Left coalition government that had been ruling Italy for roughly eight years.

On the extreme left, the combined forces of the Democrazia Proletaria saw their vote increase to over half a million, giving them 6 seats in the Camera.

Class conflict

These results, although an immense advance for the left as a whole, were insufficient to actually create a 'left government', and predictably produced a sense of disappointment and impatience within the PCI's traditional base. The CP's call for "restraint in these difficult hours" will probably go unheeded.

Contradictory forces at play will produce an increasing level of class conflict.

For the bourgeoisie itself, the election results mean a postponement, not a solution, of chronic problems. Italy is still 'ungovernable' and ridden with 30 years of corruption and inefficiency. The working class itself is impatient and demanding more and more radical measures, resulting in rejection at the base of the idea of the 'historic compromise' (a PCI-DC coalition), which was also revealed in the PCI's significant silence on this point during the election campaign.

Inevitably the only solution for the bourgeoisie is a Communist Party oriented government, for only the PCI with its massive ideological and organisational presence within the working class can even hope to impose some form of wage restraint, reduce absenteeism in the working class and generally discipline it to suit the needs of the bourgeoisie.

Grip of PCI

But in such a situation, as in many similar situations (such as Chile) the working class response will be a spontaneous leftward movement, periodically moving out of the grip of the PCI.

The question is what the 'ultra left' groups such as Avanguardia Operaia, PduP and Lotta Continua (the major groups in Democrazia Proletaria) will do in such a situation and to what extent they will be able to capitalise on such a leftward movement and forge a clear political alternative to the PCI's reformist, class collaborationist policies.

Unfortunately, its ability to do this is very much in doubt, even by the most optimistic of interpretations. An astonishing political inability characterises these three major groupings which number their membership in the tens of thousands. From the ultra left sectarianism of Lotta Continua to the right wing conciliatorist PdUP (conciliationist to the PCI, that is) we see an inability to analyse correctly what a left government would mean and what its true role — to discipline the working class — would be.

Trap

As Colin Foster pointed out in last week's WORKERS ACTION the PdUP is actually in favour of joining the 'left government' and in this fashion somewhat mysteriously hopes to push it to the left. PdUP in essence refuses to see the reformist and social democratic character of the PCI.

Avanguardia Operaia basically falls into the same trap and more significantly is incapable of correctly posing the question of a rank and file movement. Rather like IS in Britain, it uses any initiatives in this direction as a crude recruitment drive for AO.

Lotta Continua veers between the most absurd ultra-left "situationism" to downright reactionary and dangerous initiatives (such as its attack on an abortion rights demonstration in Rome, claiming that women members of Lotta Continua were already "liberated" simply by being members of LC, and had no need to pose the question of women's oppression).

The confusion and disorientation within these left groupings will not only 'test' them in the coming period of mass mobilisations and rank and file pressure, but more likely will annihilate them as serious political forces capable of offering the necessary solutions to the Italian working class.

Antonio Germaro

WORKERS ACTION interviewed J. Joshi, National Secretary of the Indian Workers Association of Great Britain, asking him about the current situation that immigrants face and about the demonstration against racism called for July 11th. What were the historical roots of the present outbreak of racist attacks? He replied that they were to be found in the way in which Britain exploited her empire and was able at the same time to buy off British workers with scraps off the table of imperialist exploitation, while making them believe that black people were in some way inferior.

He went on to explain how the capitalists in the metropolitan countries nowadays reap super-profits from the exploitation of immigrant labour, and explained how Britain had institutionalised racism in the 1960s.

"In 1962 we saw the enactment of the Immigration Control Act. At that time, the Labour Party in opposition said that they would repeal the Act if they were elected to power. But during the Smethwick parliamentary election in 1964 Labour realised that racism was an effective political weapon. Within a year of taking office, the Labour Government capitulated to racism by introducing its White Paper in 1965, which reduced the number allowed to come into Britain to 8,500 — 1,000 of them to come from Malta as part of Britain's commitment to NATO.

"The whole of the leadership of the Labour Party capitulated to racism and has allowed racism to be continually used for political advantage.

"It was quite obvious that the racial situation would deteriorate in a planned way — the state gradually stepping up the legislation, and now in the present economic crisis, there is no better political scapegoat than the immigrant.

"The immigrant will be used, there is no doubt. Whenever there is a need to hide or disguise the bankrupt policies and the nature of the system in which we live, mythologies and lies will always be invented — "floods of illegal immigrants", "Pakistani with five wives", "West Indian muggers" etc. etc.

"All the time that black immigrants are here in this country it is the internationalism of the British working class that is on trial, not that of the black workers. The labour movement in this country has done nothing about it; it's no good pleading with people to be nice to each other, quoting from the Bible. Chanting "one race, the human race" won't get us anywhere — in the same bloody human race there are fascists as well! These ideas are vacuous. A correct class standpoint has to be put:

"If these facts about imperialism, about slavery, about Lord Clive, the East India Company etc. are not brought home to people then the right wing, the racists and the fascists will feed on the ignorance of the working class and will use the working class as a base in which to develop their rotten philosophies even further.

Police

What do you think of the response by the London-based Asian Action Committee to the physical attacks on black people, when they called on the Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, to intervene to increase police protection and strengthen the race relations machinery?

"There are many different views held by people who oppose racism. They all have a right to exercise these views. But these views of which you are talking have been deliberately fostered by the state. They have tried to present a professional middle class immigrant as the spokesman for the immigrant workers in this country. These people are trying to prove that they are 'whiter than white'.

"As far as the police are concerned, have we not seen that over the past 10 or 15 years the police take part in the harassment of black people? They don't prevent it. In the case of West Indian kids, drugs have been planted. When Pakistanis are beaten up, no action is taken. Haven't we seen it — the police as an institution are racist.

"As for the judiciary, the magistrates simply rubber-stamp the findings of the police. As for police protection — yes, it is our right, we must demand it from the state. But when we also see that police protection is practically non-existent, either we have to do something about it or we have to accept abuses, harassment, beatings-up, murders, our homes smashed, as something normal and natural.

"We know it is not natural and we are doing something about it. We said in reply to Enoch Powell in 1968 when he made his 'rivers of blood' speech: "Black immigrants must make sure that if Powell wants to shed rivers of blood, then it will not be our blood in those rivers."

"We must understand the significance of a united front against the oppressive forces of racism, fascism and even the state.

"Now the attempt is being made to divide West Indians and Asians by this "Asian" Action Committee. We are all being discriminated against. We unite with all black people in a common fight. Asians are not interested in competing against the West Indians for Peter Walker's good conduct certificate. What we

RIVERS OF BLOOD? NOT OURS, says Indian workers leader

All out July 11th Rally at Speakers Corner 12 noon

want is a broader anti-racism committee with all ethnic groups represented.

"As far as the race relations Act, it is supposed to protect the interests of black people. In fact it is being used against them: Obi Egbuna, Roy Saw and others. And now when it comes to the question of the real racists, we see what happens. We were told Robert Felf had to be released to prevent him from dying. Well, if he's going to die, what about Frank Stagg? What about all the people who have died in prison in this country and those who died in prison in India during the British Raj?

"Long Kesh prisoners, many of them are on perpetual bloody hunger strikes — does anybody ask why they should be released? We can see that this Race Relations Act is all a bloody fraud.

What is your view of the way that young Asians and young West Indians are responding to physical attacks by racists in Blackburn, the Midlands and London?

"Young, old, middle-aged — I don't distinguish between them. It's not true to say that only the young people hate racism. Nevertheless, the young people who have been brought up in this society feel more vigorously about the fact

progressives on the understanding of a joint struggle against racism."

Over the past few years we have heard a lot of the slogan "Black and White unite and fight". What are your views on this? What can the white section of the working class do to forge real unity with black workers?

"There are four points here. The main emphasis in fighting racism must be at the point of production. The trade union movement must be kicked up the backside to do some work re-educating white workers out of thinking that they are in some way superior. The interests of white workers are with black workers and not with white employers. When trade union leaders pass resolutions at annual conferences against racism it is bloody meaningless.

"Trade unions must make a conscious effort on the shop floor, there must be shop stewards committees against racism and for working class solidarity.

"Secondly, the role of the anti-fascist committees outside of industry is very important. They must lay down the class basis for unity and bring the dangers of fascism home to people. Only 30 years after the defeat of German fascism we are seeing the revival of the NPD in



Confrontation in Southall — police are part of the attack on immigrants

that although they go through the same educational process as white people, they don't have the same kind of opportunities in employment and in life generally.

"Our job is to unite the young, the old and the middle-aged and to set up a real force of resentment against racism. We do know of these attacks on black people — in the London area we know of 200 occurring in the last six or seven weeks. As a matter of fact our people are involved in defence committee work in the East End of London. The defence committee is run by the IWA along with many other organisations.

"If black people defend themselves, that is their right. I am in favour of defending myself so that I can live. Of course, we do not advocate indiscriminate acts of revenge on white people. The point is to get those who attack you. If I don't defend myself there is no-one else to defend me. The Race Relations Act won't defend me. The magistrates won't defend me. The police won't defend me. In fact, the whole system is against me, the immigrant worker.

"That is why on 11th July the demonstration will be a manifestation of, firstly, the assertion of the immigrant workers that they are here to stay and that no intimidation will demoralise them, and that they will defend themselves. Secondly, the unity with white

Germany, the MSI in Italy, the French Right, the National Front in Britain — all ganging up again.

"Thirdly, you may not agree with this, but it is our view that a non-racist member of the Tory Party is better than the racist Labour Party member. Anyone who speaks out against racism like the chairman of the Sheffield opposition Tory Group on the council, who said "I was brought up in Hitler's Germany and I don't want to see the National Front marching through this city". Anyone like that should be brought into the struggle.

Fourthly, white people must understand that the only way the slogan "Black and white unite and fight" can be realised is to encourage the unity of black people first. In 1968-69 the formation of the Black Peoples Alliance was a necessity because unless and until black people are in a position to unify their dissatisfaction and vent their anger from a united platform, they can't advance towards unity with white progressives.

"Of course, the eventual aim is to achieve black and white uniting and fighting. When all these four processes are going ahead we can expect to be much nearer realising militant unity between black and white."

Interview by Dick Pratt

THE Plessey joint sites Shop Stewards Committee recently sent a delegation of stewards from a number of Plessey factories in Britain to Portugal. The delegation was invited over by the Workers' Committee of the Plessey Princessa factory in Lisbon to reciprocate an earlier visit of Portuguese Plessey workers to Britain.

ALAN MARSHALL (AUEW TASS), who was a member of the delegation and works at the Plessey Beeston factory in Nottingham, talked to MIKE LEE of Workers Action about the visit.

"We went first to the Princessa factory, which is just south of Lisbon. It's a pretty modern place with good working conditions — and I got the impression that the Workers' Committee has played an important role in achieving this.

"This Workers Committee has 53 delegates on it, and an Executive Committee of 5. They don't have a fixed chairman or spokesman; the function is rotated, and at the time of our visit the job was done by a young woman of about 20.

"Things were very different at the Lisbon Plessey plant that we saw the next day. Conditions were very bad — in Britain we would have challenged the management very strongly over such safety conditions. There were unguarded machines, and there was no provision for emergency fire exits and so on.

"We had a long meeting with the

Fascist

Workers' Committee there, covering a wide range of issues. They asked us what we knew of the functioning of Plessey as a multi-national company, about wage rates in Britain and about how we thought the slump in the Telecommunications industry would develop and how it would affect Portugal. We were able to exchange information about how we had fought the crisis in the industry."

Mike Lee asked about the Workers' Committees — how, for instance, do they relate to the trade unions and the Intersindical union organisation?

"The Portuguese workers seemed to be making full use of the freedom to organise achieved since April 1974. But our delegation felt that there was a lack of experience of trade union organisation as we understand it here. There is a lot of suspicion of the Intersindical, and this is one of the main reasons for the development of the Workers' Committees.

"We did have the opportunity to attend a trade union meeting — which went on till about 4.30 in the morning! Although it was difficult to follow what was happening in detail, it was evident that Portuguese workers are still trying to thrash out a democratic structure for their Trade Union movement, since some political parties have attempted to use the structures left over from fascism to develop a power base for themselves.

"In this situation the Workers' Committees have taken on many of the functions which in Britain we would expect the trade unions to carry out. Within each enterprise the committees look after the industrial and political aspirations of the workers they represent."

Sabotage

Last year there was a big struggle against redundancies, when Plesseys tried to switch production from the matrices division at Princessa to Malta. Plessey in fact managed to do this, and there were 400 redundancies. Mike Lee asked about how the struggle was being continued, and about Plessey's attempts to sabotage production in their Portuguese subsidiary.

"One of the cold realities facing Portuguese workers is that they are affected by economic sanctions applied by inter-

national capitalism, and also face the international recession just like British workers.

"The Matrices issue was a highly political one. Plessey has a large share of the market for matrices. Their decision to move production to a 'safer' area was prompted by the mass upsurge in Portugal and the situation of uncertainty for capitalism there. It is to be expected that multi-national companies will move production at the drop of a hat, and they are well placed to succeed despite strong resistance.

"It seems, though, that at present Plessey doesn't want to wrap up its operations in Portugal, presumably because of the move to the right in the country. They are looking for markets in Portugal and Africa and who can say what they are doing with transfer price fixing. They may be making no end of profit by maintaining their concerns in Portugal despite a low level of product-

Build links to combat multinational companies

A SHOP STEWARD'S IMPRESSION OF PORTUGAL



Portuguese peasants discuss policy at a cooperative

ion. This is something which we're interested in investigating if we can get hold of the information.

During our visit we also learned of the formation of a Telecommunications Council. Here there is a strong liaison not only in the manufacturing side, involving Plessey, ITT and Marconi workers, but also workers employed by the Government who are responsible for operating the country's telecoms system.

"They are moving along a path which would involve making decisions to defend and enhance the position of workers in the entire telecoms field, and hopefully to developing a plan for workers' control of the whole sector.

"British workers can learn from this and I would like to see a scheme developed to build such a telecommunications Council of rank and file workers' organisations in Britain. This of course would have to be done by developing organisation at the same sort of level as the Workers' Committees. We couldn't rely on such a body formed by the national leaderships of our unions!"

Did the delegation meet other workers, apart from at Plesseys, we asked Bro. Marshall.

"We spent a day at the Soldier Luis Agricultural Co-op, 80Km. south of

Lisbon. The landowner had kept it for hunting, and the workers who have taken it over are facing enormous problems in their attempts to develop it as productive land. Funds are short, and the quality of the land isn't good. They're aiming to sell produce directly to workers in the cities, but they've really got an immense struggle ahead of them. I plan to contact the TASS members in Massey Ferguson in Britain and suggest they could perhaps adopt the co-op and get hold of a tractor by some means or another to send to these workers."

Campaign

"You were in Portugal between the April elections and the Presidential elections. What are people saying about the political situation?"

"Of course the main political topic at the moment is the Presidential elections, especially given that no clear cut majority party or coalition emerged from the April elections. The Socialist Party got the most votes, but not enough to form a government, and it won't join with the CP or the far left parties.

"Portuguese workers are in quite a shaky situation just now. We were told that the armed forces are being divided

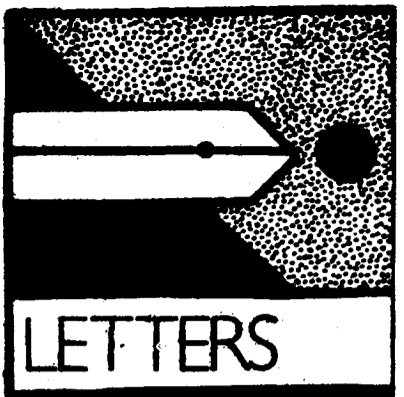
in two; with the development of a paramilitary police force. The old Armed Forces Movement is of course hopelessly divided.

"Continuing economic sanctions by international capitalism will mean massive struggles, and I believe the working class needs to be mobilised against a return to fascism which may now be gathering in the wings. I hope I am wrong, but we shouldn't be complacent anyway. I think it's up to workers here in Britain (and elsewhere) to support the Portuguese people in their fight against counter-revolution.

"Ours wasn't the first delegation of workers to Portugal, and won't be the last. I have no doubt that Portuguese workers are going to get support from workers in many countries. Many British and multi-national companies have factories in Portugal and similar delegations to ours should be organised.

"Working people in different countries will hopefully build links to combat companies like ITT and Plessey as they increasingly resort to international manoeuvring to protect and increase their profits.

"National barriers must be broken down and our contribution can be the building of a strong solidarity campaign here in Britain with Portuguese workers."



A prisoner speaks of the war in Ireland

Comrades — Perhaps the most revealing but least publicised recent statement on Ireland was made by the former Government Chief Whip and Cabinet member C the Wilson administration, Mr. Bob Mellish.

In a statement last month he declared in the House of Commons that the only way to end violence in the 6 counties of the north of Ireland was "for religious leaders to talk peace and not to continue to hate on the basis of religion."

Why, in the midst of all the violence and uncertainty, was this an important statement?

Here we have a former Cabinet Minister airing his belief that the basic problem here is one of religion. Is it any wonder we're in a mess? This ludicrous falsification is peddled by politicians and no doubt believed by many of them. And of course, millions of people in Britain believe it too.

For a real understanding of the present situation we must go not to religion, but to the history books. What do we find? England partially occupied Ireland for 400 years up to 1649, and following that date, totally controlled this island. Throughout this whole period, Irishmen for various reasons — some for land, some for nationalistic fervour and some just for food — fought against this foreign occupation. But for a variety of reasons, they kept losing.

This continual unrest was not to the liking of the English regime. A policy of colonisation was adopted. The vast majority of the colonisers, however, were poor people fleeing oppression in Scotland and England, and within a few years it was difficult to tell the difference between the colonisers and the natives: except on one point — religion.

In the 18th century, the two groups actually fought together against Britain, led by the United Irishmen. Partly in response to this, Britain helped to establish blatantly sectarian organisations like the Orange Order. Raising the spectre of 'Rome Rule', 'Catholic domination' and 'economic slavery', Britain was able to divide — and to rule.

The Protestants were lulled into a false sense of elitism and superiority. Hatred and rivalry, division and fear were fostered — right up to the present day. The Loyalist population came to fear that they would suffer under an all-Ireland Government, and in desperation they have done Britain's work and fought to prevent a united, independent Ireland.

The War at present being waged in Ireland is between the IRA and the British government. It is not a religious war, no matter how much the British government would like to portray it as such, but a war of liberation against British imperialist dominance of our country. The policies and politics of the Republican Movement, unlike the British government, is not sectarian, but rather it is based on socialist principles, as we recognise that it is only through socialism that we can hope to build a just and lasting society in which all sections of our community — except the exploiters — can live in peace.

Throughout the six years we have been at war our targets have been in the main of a military and economic nature, and where appropriate we have given warnings. Of course we have made mistakes. But considering the nature of the war and the scale of activity, innocent casualties have been light.

Mellish's statement is idiotic. It is not a matter of religious leaders here talking peace, for very few speak anything else. What is needed is for the British government to recognise that as long as it remains in Ireland, the Republican Movement will continue to fight it.

For centuries now Britain has exploited, in the name of capitalism (and before that of simple plunder) the natural and human resources of the Irish people. Through its artificial division of our country it has further driven apart the two sections of the Irish working class. We are determined now to end this criminal abuse of the Irish people.

R.G.McAULEY
Republican Prisoner of War
Cage 12, Long Kesh Prison Camp

SUPPORT GROWS FOR TOM IRELAND DELEGATION

IN LONDON last Sunday, June 27th, the TROOPS OUT MOVEMENT held an open forum as part of the build-up to the delegation from the labour movement due to visit Ireland in September.

PAT ARROWSMITH told the meet-

ing about her forthcoming action in saving the Hampshire Police for illegal arrest when she was detained under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. On the fight against this Act she also commented on the events the previous Thursday, when the



Costas Georgiou

"He is a classic psychopath" said a psychiatrist who had treated Costas Georgiou, alias Colonel Callan, who is due to be shot by firing squad in Angola.

"If he was on a charge of murder in this country" added Dr. Lyons "the plea of diminished responsibility would be introduced, probably successfully. He can't control himself... He probably enjoys killing..."

Ulsterman Dr. Lyons, who has treated many soldiers in the north of Ireland (which was where he treated Georgiou) then added: "He would probably have been excellent in a commando raid, or in a Special Air Services group."

landlord of a Willesden hotel had been dissuaded from letting his room to the Trade Union Committee against the Prevention of Terrorism Act by a phoned threat of violence claiming to come from the UDA.

She was followed by TONY CLIFF, TARIQ ALI and PETE BRADSHAW (of the Angola Solidarity Committee) followed up with a session of talks on various anti-imperialist struggles. What came across most from this was that no two struggles had been precisely analogous, and although the various speakers showed very clearly how imperialism had always used divide-and-rule tactics, it was hard to see what other characteristics could be applied directly to the Irish situation.

The speaker who made the most direct attempt to relate to the struggle in Ireland was Tony Cliff. Unfortunately, his comments — although mostly formally correct — fell very close to almost completely writing off the national struggle in the same way as the 'Militant' group does.

Three other speakers, COLIN SWEET of the British Peace Committee, KEN LIVINGSTONE from Norwood CLP and GERY LAWLESS on behalf of the TOM, followed.

Ken Livingstone told the meeting about the work which had to be

done to build a current in the Labour Party for the immediate withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. He pointed out that the Labour Party Annual Conference had not discussed Ireland since 1969. Unfortunately, neither he nor Gery Lawless took up in a clear and forceful way the arguments put forward by Colin Sweet, who had said that the demand for "Troops Out Now" was not an immediate practicality.

The final speeches from the platform were about the delegation to Ireland. First, MERVYN METCALFE President of No.16 division of AUEW TASS and a member of Coventry Trades Council, talked of the impossibilities of having an 'impartial' view on Ireland. PADDY PRENDIVILLE then went on to fill in some further details of the delegation.

It is now planned to book 70 places on a plane from London, with the possibility of booking further seats for flights from places such as Liverpool or Glasgow. The large majority of places will be used for delegates from either trade union or Labour Party groups. The rest of the places will be reserved for 'unofficial' groups such as tenants associations, women's groups etc.

The forum was completed with questions and comments from the floor.

KEVIN FEINTUCK

Polish workers derail price rises

FOR the second time in 6 years, the workers of Poland have stopped attempts to raise basic food prices.

In 1970, strikes and demonstrations spreading from the shipbuilding and dock towns of the north stopped a bid to push up meat prices by 25%. Even doctored 'official' accounts revealed that more than 40 were killed in clashes with police and troops. The Polish bureaucracy was forced, faced with this wave of workers' direct action, to withdraw the price increase proposals and kick out Party leader Gomułka in order to restore their authority. Under the leadership of Edward Gierek the Polish Communist Party has had to attempt to hold down prices and to sanction wage increases of up to 40% over the last five years.

All of this has been necessary in order to avoid further rounds of conflict with the Polish working class.

Many price rises have, in fact, been concealed by changes in packaging and specification. The discontinuation of one line and its replacement by slightly superior but markedly more expensive goods is standard practice throughout East Europe. There are reports of Polish workers openly protesting such practices during factory visits by Party leader Gierek.

The bureaucracy has had to rely largely on massive loans and credits from the west to hold down prices and finance investment. In view of this, the Party leaders have always argued that price control was temporary. Their enormous debts to western European capitalism, lagging exports, and now news that Russia will not be able to supply promised raw materials and fuel to its East European 'partners', have forced the Polish rulers to attempt another show-down with the workers last week.

Poland's foreign debt is staggering. Its western debt stands at about 6 billion dollars — of which 1.6 billion dollars are owed to France. Only last month Gierek was in West Germany scraping together another 100 million dollars' credit in exchange for Polish copper.

The servicing of these debts now takes between 20 and 22% of Poland's exports, at a time when agricultural production is dropping and grain and toulcer have to be imported.

Against this background of debt and crisis, the Polish ruling bureaucracy made the decision to try once more to force the workers to pay by raising prices. The press in the middle of last week carried a series of articles about 'unrealistic' pricing mechanisms. To those in the know this was the prelude to another price hike. Although the theoretically sovereign Polish parliament was meeting, the government announced the price rises by decree, and the Prime Minister appeared on TV to announce that meat was to go up by 69%, sugar by 100% and butter by 50%, together with a whole number of other rises averaging 69%.

The response of the Polish workers was swift and spectacular. Spontaneous meetings in the shipyards and factories voted to oppose the price rises. The workers of the Ursus tractor works outside Warsaw took the most decisive action. They hijacked the Paris-Warsaw express, stopping all trains going into Warsaw by cutting the electricity and ripping up the rails. And they proclaimed that they would not release the Express nor allow trains into Warsaw until the Government was prepared to step down. And faced with this immediate and intransigent response, the government did indeed back down.

Only 24 hours after his last TV performance, the Prime Minister was back on TV again. This time he was pale and quiet. He spoke for just one minute, to announce that the price increases were to be shelved, and put to the Polish parliament.

This victory for the Polish workers comes at an important time. The problems of the Polish bureaucracy are not unique in eastern Europe. Russia has announced that its trade deficit with the West was five billion dollars last year. The Russian bureaucracy is arguing for a lessening of its obligations to fulfill agreements struck with its east European common market 'Comecon' so that it can export its raw materials and fuel to the west for hard currency to pay some of its debts. The conference of Communist parties in East Berlin this week meets under a cloud, not only of a sharpening economic crisis in east Europe but also of last week's victory for Poland's workers. If the lessons and traditions established by the Polish workers are taken up elsewhere, the bureaucracies' room for manoeuvre will be cut down further. They'll have to

LAST SEPTEMBER, seven teachers from William Tyndale Junior School in North London came out on strike. The issue was a complicated one, and went back to the time when the National Union of Teachers was in official dispute over a claim for an increased London Allowance in the summer of 1974.

The seven teachers took part in that strike campaign. Dolly Walker, a right wing member of staff who thought the seven were 'too political', started stirring things up among parents, and a meeting was called where the seven were to explain to parents why they were striking for the London Allowance.

But this meeting rapidly degenerated into charges of political indoctrination at the school, and attacks on its educational methods.

Backstage manoeuvring by Dolly Walker, together with sections of the school's managers and some parents, continued until the whole thing blew up a year later. Meanwhile the number of children at the school was dropping, as parents were panicked into moving them elsewhere.

The right wing press got hold of the story and used it to mount a general attack on the "degeneration of the schools" which they said resulted from "progressive teaching methods". And this played into the hands of people like Rhodes Boyson, shadow Tory minister of education and an editor of the 'Black Paper' journals which advocate a return to traditional authoritarian methods of teaching. Boyson in fact wrote letters to Dolly Walker praising her and encouraging her to "keep up the fight".

When Tyndale School began to hit the headlines, the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) was forced to act. It set up an inquiry and tried to use the machinery of a school inspection to gather evidence for it. The ILEA was talking in terms of a very brief inquiry which didn't include an investigation into the role and activities of the managers who had been campaigning against the school's staff.

It was over the use of a school inspection as a means of gathering evidence which could be used against teachers (a dangerous precedent) and the narrow scope of the inquiry, that the seven went on strike.

As a result of the attendant publicity, the inquiry was widened in scope and eventually began on 27th October 1975 after the seven had agreed to return to work and cooperate with the inquiry. It was held under the chairmanship of Robin Auld QC, and went far wider and far deeper than anyone at first imagined — it became clear that the school was being treated as a test case for progressive education as such.

The inquiry finally finished earlier this year and the report, expected to be a quarter million words long, has yet to be published.

The seven staff — Terry Ellis (headmaster), Brian Haddow, Dorothy McColgan, Jackie McWhirter, Stephen Felton, Sheila Green and Stevie Richards, have been suspended on full pay since the inquiry started. They are still uncertain as to what their future will be. The school, after the initial chaos of being staffed by the inspectors at the time of the strike, has since the inquiry been run by teachers who are normally allocated to travel between schools giving specialist help. In that period, too, the ILEA has doubled the number of inspectors responsible for its primary schools, funding this move by axing its section which deals with the special needs of college leavers (at a time when most of them are failing to get jobs at all).

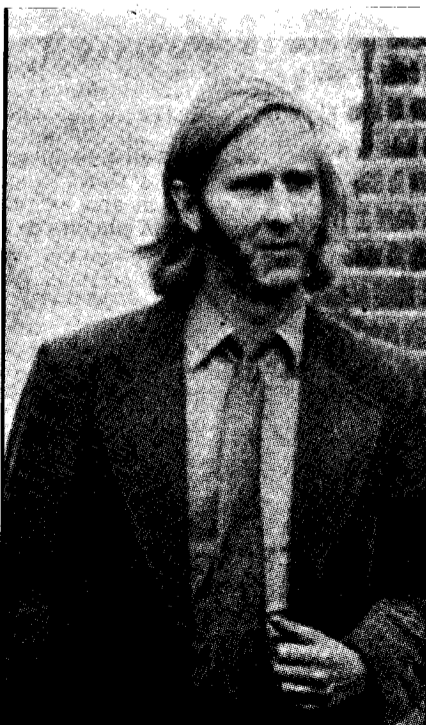
In this interview, two WORKERS ACTION supporters — Ron Haycock and Ian Hollingworth — both London teachers, ask TERRY ELLIS some of the questions that have been raised by the Tyndale affair.

WORKERS ACTION: Why do you think it was William Tyndale School and not any other school which hit the limelight?
TERRY ELLIS: Well, I think it's got very little to do with education because there are lots of other schools doing exactly the same thing as we were doing. There is almost certainly a political explanation. For a short example, on June 13th 1974 we held a meeting about the London Allowance strike to explain it to the parents. Some parents expressed discontent with the school's educational policy. We agreed to hold another meeting to explain that.

But two weeks after that, the whole affair had reached the top of the ILEA, it had gone straight through the Labour Party network, not through the Inspectorate at all. And this seems to be a highly unusual thing to happen to this sort of school where a few parents were discontented.

W.A.: As you say, the educational methods involved in Tyndale were very similar to those used in other primary schools. It seems that the Tyndale story revolved around two issues. First the role of the managers in controlling schools. Then, a hardening of attitude to what has come to be known as progressive education. The whole Tyndale outcry in the press was beginning to be used to ask 'what is going on in our schools?' and 'what is progressive education doing to our children?' Would you agree with that?

T.E.: If you take the position of the managers, the important point is actually that they have no powers whatsoever. They're put there by the Authority as a sop to local representation. Because our managers disliked certain things about the school, whether political or educational

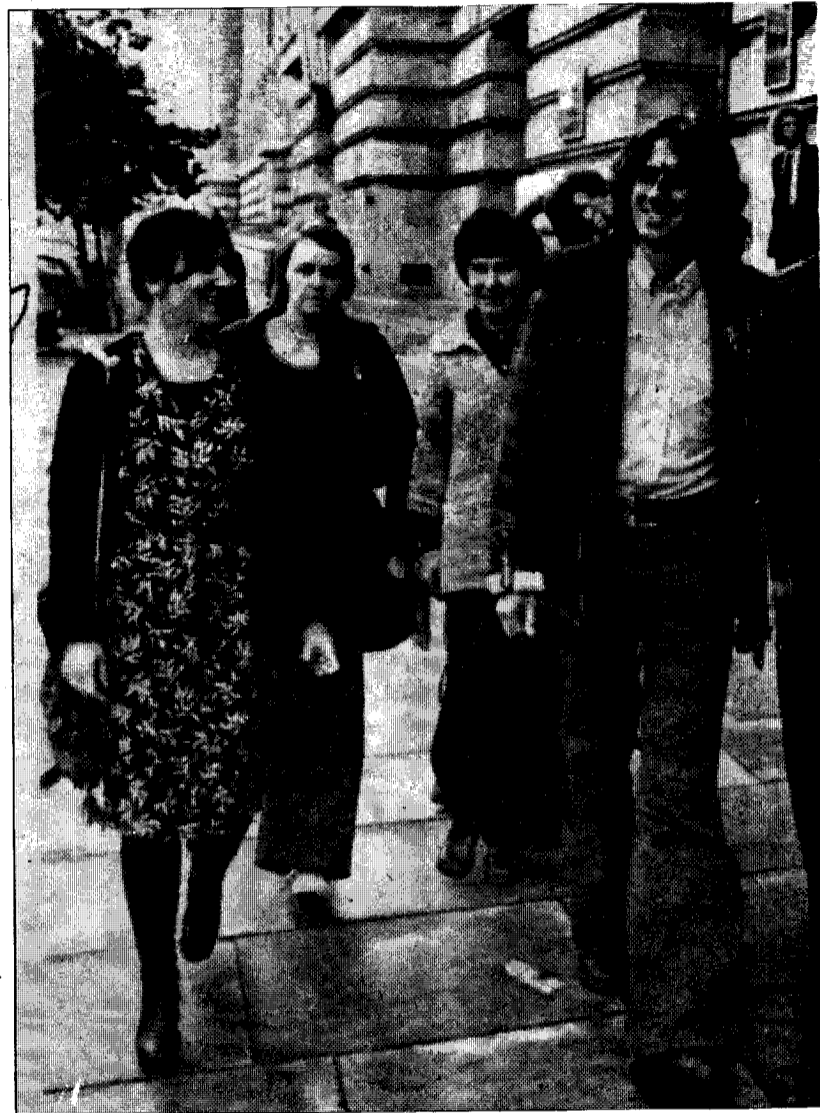


Terry Ellis

ing certain tactics to get things changed or to get rid of certain people.

They had no power to do it openly, they had to do it in an underhand manner. Our managers are middle of the road Labourites who want vaguely progressive education but with plenty of control. But they are willing to use a right wing backlash to hit the people they were attacking. The regime in the school at the moment is one of extreme repression, but the managers are going along with it because

WILLIAM TYNDALE: CAUGHT IN STRUGGLE WITHOUT



The William Tyndale strikers leave ILEA office

Haddow, McColgan and Co. back.

W.A.: Could you define what you see as progressive education?

T.E.: I always tend to look at it historically and say that the post-Plowden era saw this outburst of new views on education. People questioned the rigid roles of teacher and taught, there was a blurring of subject distinctions in primary schools and a great deal of fluidity in the curriculum.

These kind of things were seen as progressive in the late '60s. There was money to back them up and people could experiment quite easily in primary schools without getting attacked. Generally there was a feeling that this was the right way to do things — for whatever reason.

I think that progressive education in the end — in the late '60s model — bought peace at a price by becoming structured again, by the teachers going ahead and doing the same old controlling role they were doing under traditional education, but much more obliquely, much more manipulatively, not so openly coercive. If you look at various progressives like Henry Pluckrose you'll see they've backtracked like mad on what they were doing then.

I think what Tyndale did or tried to do — and a lot of this was only in the discussion stage anyway — was to break down some of these contradictions that were emerging in progressive education and try to genuinely do some of the things which were current in the '60s — in the field of positive discrimination within the school, gearing the school more closely to the needs of what are called 'difficult' children, social casualties etc instead of pushing the

cause more trouble, and just coping with others.

There was a lot of discussion — not necessarily much achievement — about more democratic ways of running the school, egalitarianism between children and staff. There was a general commitment to non-competition, a general commitment towards people working individually.

W.A.: You said eventually this new style of teaching had to buy 'peace at a price' by reverting to more obliquely authoritarian methods. When you say 'had to buy peace', from where? How had progressive education seemed to fail in the eyes of its critics?

T.E.: The difficulties progressive education had in the '60s were simply because using an informal approach, it was still judged by the formal criteria, in other words you can only get away with informal methods by saying they will work better or as well as formal methods.

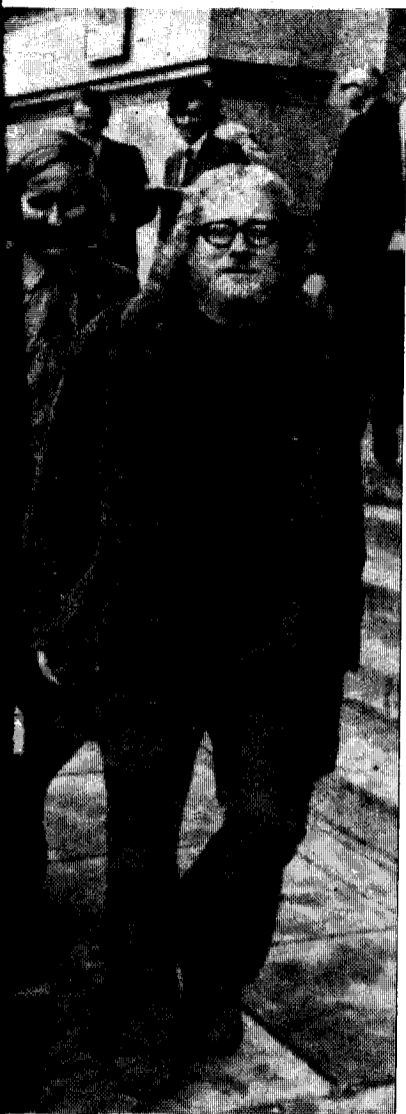
The pressures came from working class parents more than anyone else with their fears played upon by the propaganda put out by the people around the Black Paper: how their children were not going to get a "good education" in this strange fluid way of teaching instead of sitting in rows. They only judged the progressive method as valid if it produced the goods in the same way as the formal methods had produced them. Rhodes Boyson and Co. played on this fear by saying it won't.

Also, in a decaying society it was easy to attribute all the things that went wrong to progressive education — which Boyson and his friends often did. Everything was put down to the fact that children went to progressive schools — that there was a breakdown in discipline, teenage

An interview with Terry Ellis

NA

POWER



They can be places where you can make your own decisions and learn to make them. Anyway, you can't indoctrinate kids unless they sit down and there is probably more indoctrination in formal schools than in informal schools.

I've always argued that change in schools can only come about when there's change outside. They are in fact training grounds for people to fit in, and to do things that society outside sees as its 'needs': correct attitudes, skills etc for the society outside.

W.A. You said earlier that 'progressive' education was more clearly identified with the middle class, and that the working class identified more with traditional forms of education. To what extent have progressive teachers tried to get their ideas across, not so much to working class children, but to their parents, so that those parents would say 'this is the kind of education we want to see'?

T.E. I think getting through to working class parents is the most difficult thing of the lot, because there's such a vast amount of pressure in the other direction. Education has been sold to working class people in this country for a long time as their form of salvation, it has replaced religion. And a certain type of education has been sold on the simple lines of 'Look, you want your children to get on. Now this is the way to get on, by doing this, this and this at school.'

This of course is totally false because it is not the way that the working class gets on — it is the little door that you let a few people through when there are hundreds fighting to get out and it introduces an element of competition between working class people where they cut each other's throats. And it is a way of controlling them.

It is also a tactic of taking out the bright working class people and making them middle class. Take the leaders away — like 1984, a kind of thought-police idea.

But to put over to working class people that progressive education is somehow better for them, without putting over a political perspective at the same time, can't work. Yet once you put over the political perspective it's very easy to be labelled a 'red' who's trying to muck society up. And with the majority of the press always influencing working class consciousness anyway, once you get in that situation I think nobody will listen to what you are saying.

Airy

W.A. That seems to present a very pessimistic outlook for any individual progressive or left wing teacher. What would you say they should do?

T.E. I think the first thing to do is to recognise the problems. In the end progressive education has got to have a political perspective or else it becomes airy fairy playing around with pretty things in the classroom.

I think the first thing to do is to recognise the problems. In the end progressive education has got to have a political perspective or else it becomes airy fairy playing around with pretty things in the classroom.

W.A. Do you think the current backlash against progressive education is bound up with the economic situation?

T.E. It was obvious in the late '60s when the Plowden Report came out that if it

human resources were going to have to be available, and in a situation of economic cutback, these things are just not going to be possible, and therefore there had to be a way of persuading people to believe that certain methods which weren't going to cost so much were better.

But I don't think it's entirely economic. I think it's very easy to attribute a lot of the difficulties of society to the schools. This is where Boyson and the right wingers have angled their attack. Blame it on the schools, on immigration, on the breakdown of Victorian morals and discipline. Blame it on everything except what should be blamed.

W.A. How widespread in fact is this so-called progressive education? Does it take place in the majority of schools in the country, or only in a few?

T.E. According to the Bennet Report, he defined only 17% of teachers as progressive (from his own research and also research carried out in Northern Ireland and the Midlands). There were only 17% of teachers he defined as progressive in any way whatsoever. The majority of people opt for a kind of mixed formal/informal situation, and of course there are very many purely formal teachers, so it never has been, apparently, a very prevalent method. In my experience of seeing various London schools, most of them are quite repressive and formal.

Role

W.A. What would you say is the role of teachers here and now? What is the job that they are actually doing?

T.E. Well, for a start they are child-minders. They also have a kind of priest role, of moulding young



ILEA inspector watches the Tyndale picket

minds so that they have the right attitudes. This is imposed on them, although a surprising number of them want it.

There's also I suppose the neutral technical role, the passing on of particular skills and facts. But I always feel that the neutral technical role (which if schools were really what people say they are should be the most important one) is really under the present system the least important, because in practice it is the child-minding and indoctrination roles that turn out to be the most important.

This is why even formal schools are inefficient, because they don't do the neutral technical job properly on account of having all these other jobs to do as well.

I'd say there should be an egalitarian situation where people are experiencing problems together. What we put on the teacher so often is that the teacher is the fountain of knowledge, the fountain of correct attitudes, and that these must be passed on and that the child should be moulded. And I think this goes as much for so-called progressive education as for formal, because in formal education the child was seen as a little vessel to be filled with all the right things and you just poured it all in. Whereas with informal methods you just use the child as a bit of clay that you can mould with your fingers.

W.A. What sort of gains did you think you'd made at Tyndale in the process of teaching? For instance, one thing we've been hearing about lately is the conditioning in sex roles which starts before primary school. Did you make any positive attempts to overcome that in Tyndale?

T.E. There was never any sex distinction in any activity that was done — activities which are usually orientated towards one sex in school, (cooking for girls, football for boys) were not orientated in those ways as far as we were concerned. They

W.A. Can you tell us why you went on strike and what you were demanding at the time? Why did you strike instead of taking another course of action?

T.E. When the inquiry was first announced we were very dubious about its fairness. There was no information available about its scope. The only rough information we had was that it was going to be quite narrow because the Inner London Education Authority (ILEA) were predicting that it would only last 3 or 4 days.

We therefore had no confidence that it was going to look into all the things that we had been making a fuss about for so long, all the things that we thought were contributing to the downfall of the school.

Also the question of having the inspection first was a bad mistake on the part of ILEA. Inspections are not an information gathering exercise and they are not supposed to be used to gather information for use at a public inquiry. The whole inspection/inquiry formula was set up by the ILEA to get themselves off the hook. They were getting bad publicity and this was a quick way out.

We sought for weeks beforehand for more information, what documents would be available, everything we thought we'd need to make a good case. And they didn't give them to us. We didn't know who would be the chairman of the inquiry, who would be running it, what the procedures would be, how the report would be brought out — we knew nothing!

Our idea was to try and negotiate with the ILEA, to try to put pressure on throughout the Union, to try and put pressure on the DES,

parents, as opposed to the original scare-mongering petition against us, which in fact none of our parents had signed. It also involved speaking tours of schools while the strike was on, putting out leaflets and picketing the school.

W.A. Were attempts made to gather support from other sections of the labour movement? If not, why not?

T.E. We weren't looking for a situation of conflict, we didn't want to be forced to go out on strike. We weren't preparing the ground for a strike. We did try to get the matter passed through the local NUT branch on to the Trades Council, but the secretary of the Trades Council 'forgot' her correspondence on the matter (she is a member of the Communist Party) and discussion was ruled out of order by the chairman (who is a manager of the school!).

W.A. Given your overall conception of the nature of education in our society, what did you expect to achieve by demanding a public inquiry from the DES, who are the agents of the state in this respect?

T.E. I think that once we had been played into an inquiry situation, it was very important that certain things should have been revealed, the only way we could make sure that the Authority (the ILEA) did not use its position of power to twist an inquiry was to make sure that the Authority did not run it. We're still in this situation now: the Authority were party to the inquiry, they provided the judge for the inquiry, and when it is over they will provide the jury for the inquiry. So in fact they are sitting as judges in their own court!

enormous pressure on all teachers trying to practise new methods.

W.A. You said that you were attempting 'positive discrimination' in the school to help cope with the needs of what you call 'difficult' kids.

T.E. We felt that children should not be categorised, labelled and slopped down into dustbins. We very rarely referred any children to maladjusted classes because we felt that they weren't being done any good when they got there. We set out not to cope with them so much as to give them something positive. We devoted a lot of effort to this. The music therapy Tyndale Steel Band came out of this. The psycho-therapy unit in the school also came out of this. The psycho-therapy unit was not supposed to make kids 'better' and to give them higher reading ages but simply to give some relief to any child who came into the school and who needed it, to give some positive way forward for that child to develop as a person.

W.A. What would you say to the sort of 'Daily Mail' charge that your kind of teaching is a threat to the status quo of capitalist society as we know it?

T.E. That sort of charge is based on a false premise. It is based on the premise that somehow you can take 9 year old children and turn them into Red Guards for the revolution, which you can't — it isn't possible. I believe personally that you are not going to change the aspirations and abilities of any group in society by acting upon them for a very limited period of their lives while they're very young. They're coming to this establishment which by its very nature is a repressive one and all that can be done is to show that there is

to try and get help from other teachers. All these things were tried, but it was quite obvious a couple of days before the inspection that none of them was going to work. The Union had done absolutely nothing, at any level higher than the local branch.

And so this was the only way out, the only way to get a big public inquiry which would have to be open. The demands were simply information that we had been asking for for weeks, information that would go into everything including the local Council, Islington Labour Party, the ILEA itself.

W.A. How would you answer the charge that papers like the Daily Mail may have made, that you didn't want an inspection because you wanted to hide something?

T.E. That is a very easy charge to make, it is a very good charge to make. If I had been in their shoes I would have made it too. I stick on what I said before, that we were not objecting to an inspection as such, we were objecting to that particular inspection used in that way. According to the Chief Inspector of the ILEA, inspections are supposed to help a school because they help you evaluate your work. Inspections are not meant as a sort of evidence gathering mission for a judicial inquiry.

It was a bit like being questioned by a policeman about things which might be used against us afterwards without being cautioned.

W.A. What support did you get from the NUT and other sections of the labour movement?

T.E. Apart from the local branch of the NUT, very little.

W.A. You had a defence campaign organised. Could you tell us what forces were involved in that?

T.E. That was organised by Margaret Ford, a part time teacher in the Tyndale Infants School, plus other interested teachers from Islington and one or two parents.

If the DES as an outside agency — even though it's an agent of the state — had sat over the inquiry, the Authority would have been just another party, they would not have been able to use their power to twist things very effectively.

As things stand, we went into a situation where the ILEA had all the cards, and still have. And neither the managers nor ourselves had any power at all, and we still don't.

W.A. Did you consider at the time calling for a workers' inquiry into Tyndale?

Power

T.E. We were caught up in a struggle without power, where one of the parties had all the power. I think you can only go into that kind of struggle on terms that matter as far as those with power are concerned. The ILEA had the power, we had to go in on their terms. That is the only way anything would have been got out.

We may have got nothing out of this, we may have got something. Our concern was to see that the role of the managers and of the right wing ex-member of the staff, Dolly Walker, and the role of the ILEA, should be revealed. I think we had to accept we were going into a quasi judicial situation and we had to make the best of it. And we thought we could make a good case, provided we were given a fair deal.

Now I have great reservations about some of the things that went on in the inquiry, but I don't think that going into anything that was separated from that power situation would have been any more effective. It may have come out on our side, possibly, but it wouldn't have been seen as effective because it would have been seen as

Building a Trotskyist International

ON FRIDAY June 25th the British section of the Fourth International (the International Marxist Group) met the International-Communist League to debate the question of 'Building a Trotskyist International'. The debate was chaired by Harry Wicks, a veteran Trotskyist who opened the proceedings by stressing that though he adhered to neither of the groups debating "I am certain-

ly not neutral on the question of building a revolutionary international'. The IMG was at pains to persuade the ICL of the error of its ways in remaining an independent organisation and not joining the Fourth International — which in the context, of course, means merging with the IMG. Thus the keynote of their speeches was unity, and the thrust of their questions and of much of the debate was — what kind of differences just-

ify separation? Brian Grogan for the IMG said that Lenin had been a great advocate of unity of the Russian SDLP and had opposed all splits until they were unavoidable. Trotsky in turn had only pronounced the Comintern dead in August 1933 — after mistakes and betrayals on its part far greater than any the FI has made. Critical groups like the ICL should be factions of the USFI, was Grogan's message. The ICL had said the USFI was the 'mainstream' of Trotskyism. It had a duty to join that mainstream.

There was, he said, a logic in not joining, and that was that the ICL (and its predecessor Workers Fight) had to invent and exaggerate their differences, and would end up being very sectarian as had the WRP. Grogan's case was that the politics of the FI and IMG were the norm, whereas the politics of the ICL were increasingly made up of departures and inventions, developed precisely in order to stand apart. And this process would continue.

Other differences and criticisms levelled by the ICL were 'exaggerated' and were anyway 'under discussion'. (This was the main tenor of a later IMG speaker, Tariq Ali, who asked 'what's the big debate?' and implied that the ICL criticisms were all a fuss over nothing.)

Other themes of the IMG were that the ICL was applying standards for international unification which were different (and more stringent) than for the unity of two national groups. Trotsky, Jonathan Silverman pointed out, had said there should not be such a double standard (forgetting he had been attacking those who argued that criteria for international unity should be LESS stringent!). The ICL, said Stephen Potter, was formed by the fusion of Workers Fight (which characterised Russia as a degenerated workers' state) and the IS Left Faction (which said Russia is state capitalist). By such standards the IMG was just as close.

Vietnam

Jonathan Silverman asked whether the ICL's criticisms of the USFI were of the same order as the deep and fundamental failings of the 2nd and 3rd Internationals, which had led Lenin and Trotsky (respectively) to pronounce them dead? Or were the ICL applying a different standard to the FI because they characterise it as a 'programmatically international' and not a mass international?

He didn't clearly argue that it was one or the other type, though he was followed later in the debate by Peter Gowan, who tried to mesmerise the audience with a recitation of the names of countries where the USFI has sections, and said it organised some 25,000 militants. HE seemed to think that made it a mass international!

Peter Gowan also said that the question of Vietnam — and the ICL's criticism of the USFI's failure to advocate political revolution against the ruling bureaucracy there — could not be considered as central as the Russian question, which divided the workers' movement in the '20s and '30s. But he said that if the ICL considered it to be so important, they should join the USFI 'to put us right'. The implication seemed to be that the bigger and more important the USFI's mistakes, the more reason there was for joining it!

Opening for the ICL, Sean Matgamna said that cobbling together an all-inclusive federation was no way to build a party, and accused the IMG of distorting Lenin's views in order to rationalise the fact that the IMG exists in a state of dead-end factionalism. And within the USFI itself were two major streams with serious programmatic differences.



Lenin — founded the 3rd International Trotsky — founder of the 4th International

DEBATE BETWEEN ICL and IMG

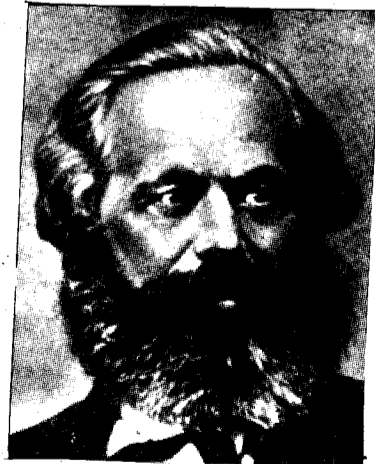
The ICL does not (as had been implied) deny the existence of the FI, not its organisational continuity with the FI founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938. That FI had been small. Though Trotsky had after 1933 hoped for major realignments which would give it a mass existence, he had gone ahead in 1938 on the basis of politics and programme rather than numbers. This programme was that of Marxism, as revived by the Communist International in the early '20s and as amplified by Trotsky in his analyses of Stalinism and fascism.

But after the war, the FI began to lose its focus on the central point of the communist programme — the self-emancipation of the working class through the power of workers' councils that control society.

It had begun to accommodate to non-working class forces which had overthrown capitalism (in Yugoslavia, later in China, after that in Cuba, now in Vietnam); and had begun to treat the basic tenets of working class power and its necessary organs (workers' councils) as optional extras. Instead of orienting to a working class revolution to gain these, the FI had resorted to advising the bureaucratic regimes that workers' councils would be a 'good idea'.

Replying to the charge that WF had sharpened its criticism and said different things about the FI and the IMG between 1972 and '76, John Bloxam said it wasn't because of some sectarian logic of self-differentiation, but because the IMG 'changed its positions regularly'. And Jack Price pointed out that the ICL positions on the Middle East (the call for a democratic secular state of Palestine) and on the Common Market (abstention from the chauvinist anti-EEC campaign in Britain) were not departures, but positions that the FI had itself departed from.

The inventiveness is on the IMG side, Cde. Price said 'and it arises



Marx — headed the 1st International

not from excess of imagination but from a desire to accommodate.'

John Hunt drew out the connection between positions of the IMG on national-scale events and the politics of the USFI.

The link, he said, was accommodation to forces judged to be vehicles of the next stage of the 'revolutionary process'. In this country, accommodation to left reformism: and he cited four recent examples — the anti-EEC campaign, the brief but very wrong adoption of a 'Trotskyist' form of call for import controls, the fear of a collision course that would bring down the Labour Government, and the call for a recall TUC which was raised

with no warning of how the Union leaders would use it to their own advantage.

Internationally, accommodation to Stalinism — on Vietnam, the USFI had said the Vietnamese CP was a revolutionary non-stalinist force, yet that CP had crushed independent working class organisation and denied the independence of the working class in the anti-imperialist struggle.

We need, said Cde. Hunt, to build independently of false leaderships. Citing the experience of German Social Democracy before 1914, he said it wasn't always wise to 'work inside' as a faction. The ICL was not ashamed of its independence.

Peter Gowan had included Portugal in his 'impressive list'. Unfortunately, in the light of the final ICL contribution from Martin Thomas, what was impressive here was the events, but not the performance in them of the USFI.

The USFI had first publicly split into two tendencies so antagonistic that they could have been on two sides of the barricades, not merely two sides of a debating chamber.

Portugal

One of these, the PRT, has a systematic adaptation to the Socialist Party, sided with the SP over the Republica affair, and condemned the 25th November paratroopers' revolt as anti-working class. The other group, the LCI, had signed a statement which supported the 5th Provisional Government of Vasco Goncalves, and submerged itself in the mish-mash of the FUR last summer.

Now these tendencies are coming to some rapprochement. Their programme for this week's presidential elections stated that if their candidate were elected, she would call on Mario Soares, (one of the bitterest enemies of the Portuguese working class) to take governmental power!

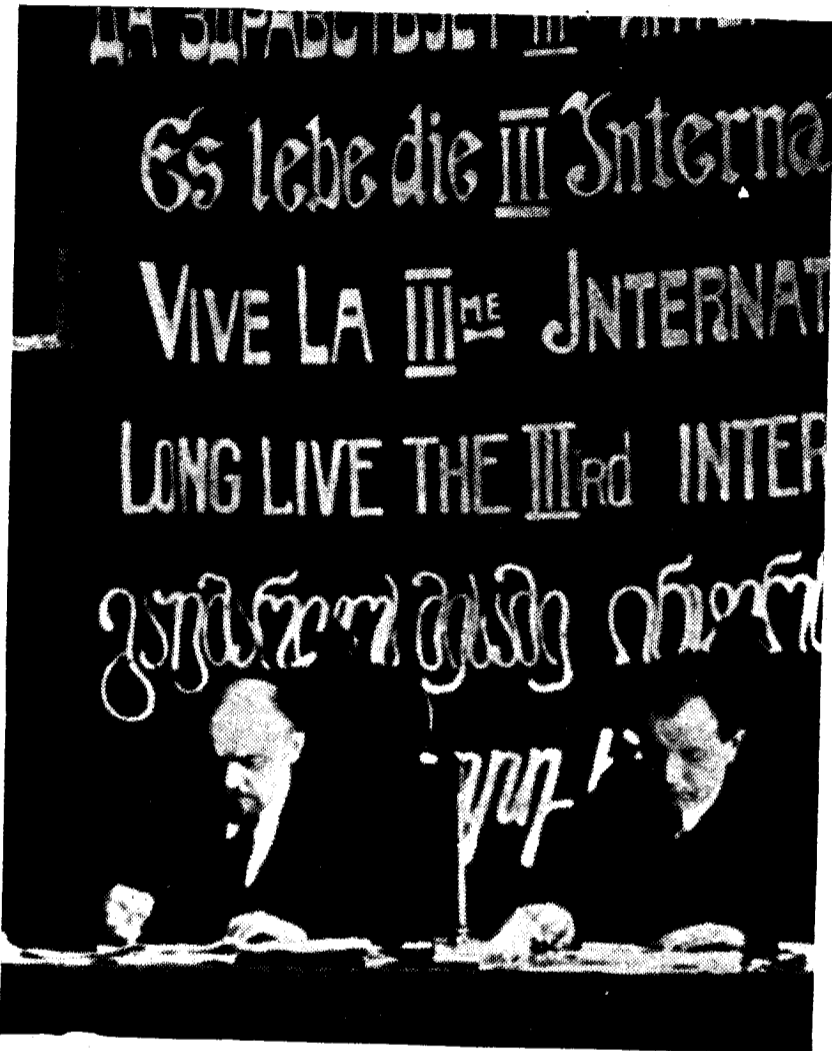
Finally, Martin Thomas (who had just returned from Portugal) recounted how the leaders of a minority in the LCI who opposed these politics had been expelled, and 40% of the section had split away. So much for all the hogwash about unity...

It seemed clear that the ICL's differences with the USFI are not a random collection of tactical criticisms, but relate to the chronic failures of mainstream post-war Trotskyism. The USFI's attitudes on Vietnam today reproduce those on China yesterday and Yugoslavia the day before.

Summing up for the IMG at the end, Grogan had nothing to say on Portugal except that 'the ICL hasn't done much about Portugal' nor produced even a pamphlet. (Here he echoed one of Tariq's more philistine remarks, that the USFI was developing theory by writing books...)

Lacking anything else, Grogan seized on a statement by Sean Matgamna that the IMG was tainted with racism because it had got itself involved in the chauvinism of the anti-EEC campaign. No matter that Matgamna had stressed that the racist taint was a matter of the objective logic of the anti-EEC position, despite the IMG's good intentions and acknowledged 'splendid record' in fighting racism. 'You'll be saying we're all stalinist agents next' Grogan said, as if that one, sharp formulation was to be the first step in the direction of the sectarian madness he had forecast for the ICL, cut adrift from the safe mainstream of the USFI.

RACHEL LEVER



Lenin at the 1st Congress of the Communist International in 1919 — the 3rd International replaced the 2nd which collapsed at the outbreak of war in 1914

workers' ACTION supporters' groups

Birmingham, Bolton, Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, Cardiff, Chelmsford, Chester, Coventry, Crawley, Durham, Edinburgh, Leicester, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Newcastle, Newtown, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Rochdale, Sheffield, Stafford, Stoke

Write for details of meetings & activities to:
WASG, 49 Carnac Street, London SE27

Name
Address

Asian youth fight back in Britain's Alabama

SUE ARNALL REPORTS FROM BLACKBURN

"It took a killing in Southall before Callaghan said anything. Do we need one in the North before we act?"

These were the sentiments expressed last week in Blackburn by members of the newly founded Asian Youth Organisation, and reflected their intention to wait no longer for their official leaders to get organised.

Forecasts of erupting violence are coming from all sides, not least the National Front which recently told the Lancashire Evening Telegraph that "Bloodshed in September verges on the inevitable" if the Action Against Racism demonstration in Blackburn goes ahead.

The racists regard the town as their territory. "It is like waving a red flag at a bull" to hold a multi-racial march in the town, said a spokesman of the National Front, adding that they intend to oppose such a march physically.

Most of the Asians I spoke to have been living in Blackburn for many years, and said they had always been aware of racist prejudice under the surface, but recently it had become far worse. 10 to 12 mills had recently closed down, and many were working short time, and workers are anxious about the future.

In a carefully planned campaign, the Labour Party has been cashing in on this insecurity. The campaign began with National Party chairman Kingsley Read opposing the building of a mosque, and with the aid of racist local press, it has been front page news since January.

Using lies and half truths, he seems to have managed to convince the voters, at least in his ward, that the Asians are the source of their problems.

Rumours

The Lancashire Evening Telegraph has chosen to give front page coverage to this campaign, printing rumours which they knew were untrue and featuring Kingsley Read's own special brand of Nazi racist theory about children of mixed marriages being, and these are his words (printed as if they were some sort of scientific definition) "degenerates".

The net result of all this has been a perceptible build up of abuse towards Asians in the town, and a growing popularity for the National Party and its racist policies of repatriation and immigration control. Kingsley Read not only uses the media to his advantage, but also makes it his business to go round pubs in the area systematically feeding new rumours into the lively local grapevine.

His new populist image, as your friendly approachable local white councillor, is certainly paying off for him, as he deals with local complaints on a full time basis from

his home. In the recent Race Relations Board case against him, he had petitions circulating throughout local factories and hospitals, and a fighting fund to pay his legal costs was daily monitored in the Evening Telegraph. Read is quoted as saying "I cannot vouch for the actions of my followers if I am put in jail."

The Labour Party has been stunningly inactive while all this has gone on. Their advice of 'ignore it and it will go away' has failed miserably and Kingsley Read has now become a household celebrity locally. As a result the Labour Party has lost 10 seats in the local elections, two of which went to National Party candidates.

The Tories are of course cashing in on the racist feeling and are openly campaigning for tighter immigration controls and a ban on social security payments to immigrants during the first 12 months. (It will be interesting to see if such a law would apply to white immigrants from Rhodesia!)

The Labour Party is planning to try to regain some of its lost credibility with a meeting on July 9th,

the petty continual harassment we experience from day to day would be to hit out in individual anger. But we want to organise politically to fight the cause of this racism."

Thus the Asian Youth Organisation has aims going beyond self defence and a physical challenge to the fascists. It aims to educate and organise the mass of black youth (including girls where possible) and to try to involve the elders of the community in a regular and political campaign.

They said "The thing is, the leaders in the community have been too busy getting personal prestige with the establishment, trying to impress white leaders, and so have not tried to involve the youth, let alone consult us."

But willy nilly the youth are involved, facing racist 'jokes' and slanders daily at work and attacks on the streets. Now they have to face increased police interference and harassment, since making statements to the press and to a recent TV Tonight programme. The police take every opportunity to stop and question leading members of the AYO, picking individuals carefully,



Kingsley Read's triumphal march

in favour of 'a multi-racial society'.

But the Asians who have been abused and attacked are in no mood to wait for any big meeting. Labour embraced racist immigration policies for fear of losing votes. Now

that these policies have helped the growth of fascists, it talks of racial harmony in the hope of... regaining lost votes.

Meanwhile, as one of the young Asians, Ali, told me, black people are afraid to go out alone after dark. Many people regularly receive obscene and threatening phone calls, and there has been a steady increase in violent attacks on individuals.

As in other areas, the traditional leaders' response has been to cool it. But Ali's companion Hussain said "We've always been cool, but now we need to organise to pull ourselves together. The natural response to

presumably to build up files on them for future prosecution. Ali was recently pulled out of work to be questioned. "They always ask your nationality, to suggest you have no right to be here. But most of us are British citizens and have no intention of being pushed out of this country."

They see political education as the best way to combat this harassment and to give confidence to the youth. "We should all know our rights. That will be a start." And those rights are, as they see them, the right to live and work here, to have a decent home and to live in peace, not in fear. These are things to be demanded and fought for, not to be apologised for.

One of them summed it up: "None of us is going to stand about any more and have the shit kicked out of us."

Rotherham election

According to Ron Hayward, Labour Party General Secretary, Labour's poor showing in Rotherham was the result of the complacency of Labour supporters: "They knew it was in the bag anyway."

The complacency is entirely on Hayward's side. Labour supporters stayed away from the polls in the Rotherham by-election because the Government's record and the Government's policies are blatantly anti-working class. In Rotherham, for instance, the unemployment figure is nearly 8%!

A safe Labour seat like Rotherham sees a 13% swing to the Tories and a 6% vote for the fascist National Front and all the representatives of the Labour leadership can say is

that the supporters shouldn't have stayed away.

But many workers in Rotherham will be asking why Labour has deserted them. And Labour supporters throughout the country must ask themselves: if we let the Government carry on like this simply to avoid

Deep

the Tories coming back, won't we really be giving the Tories the next election — a triumph over a Labour Party dyed deep with the shame of attacking the working class yet again?

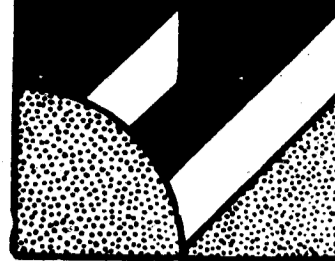
What that would mean is a re-

peat of the defeat after Labour's 1966-70 term of office...only worse. Between 1967-69 there was a good deal of fight left in both the official and unofficial trade union movement, centred around the struggle against In Place of Strife. This time, though, the entire official apparatus of the labour movement is branded with the Social Contract.

The writing's on the wall! The Rotherham result (with the October election figures in brackets) Labour 14,351 (25,874); Conservative 9,824 (8,840); Liberal 2,214 (5,340); National Front 1,696. The Labour majority fell from 17,034 to 4,527. The turn-out was very low...46%.

Memo to the Labour Party

Editorial



ANTI RACISM BEGINS AT HOME

THE LABOUR PARTY is to run a campaign against racism. The campaign is to be organised jointly by three sub-committees of the National Executive Committee (Home Policy, Press & Publicity, and Organisation).

Some of those calling for this campaign on the NEC genuinely recoil in revulsion from the racist filth peddled by the press and the fascist organisations, and want the Labour Party to make a stand against it.

As far as the Labour Government is concerned, however, it only opposes racism insofar as it disrupts the state's policy of 'pacifying' the blacks.

Nevertheless genuine anti-racists and socialists should use any meetings or marches the campaign initiates to make their views known. Above all this means exposing the Labour Party as a party riddled with racism, led by racists and one which in power and out has supported racist policies.

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

The Labour Party has been a support and tool of British imperialist plunder just as much as the Tories. It has never had different policies towards British capitalism's empire. The imperialism and colonialism Labour has upheld are the major roots of racism in this country.

The specific form of racism common in Britain today owes much of its impetus to Immigration Acts that Labour has either enacted or enforced. Immigration controls imply that people of another colour or culture are a 'problem' that has to be dealt with by controlling their movements. And their enforcement — with the hounding and manhunting of 'illegal' immigrants, including new born babies — builds up a picture of sub-human 'undesirables' that it is a danger to leave at large.

The Labour Party has open racists within it holding high positions, people like Robert Mellish (until recently Chief Whip), and Party leader Callaghan who as Home Secretary in 1968 slapped on emergency controls because British passport holders of Asian origin in Kenya were facing persecution and expulsion from that country.

Wherever you look in the Labour Party wards, it is difficult to find members who are clearly anti-racist. That is, those who are against all immigration controls, who are in favour of black self-defence, who are prepared, themselves, to defend blacks against attack and discrimination, or who do not demand that "immigrants should become integrated and adapt more to English ways."

And not one Labour MP opposed a recent motion in Parliament proposed by Tory MP Jonathan Aitken, deploring the "emigration of whites from Britain and the immigration of blacks into Britain" (Tribune May 28). "So far as the Commons' acceptance of the motion was concerned" wrote Brian Sedgemore, Labour MP for Luton West and an ex-chairman of the Wandsworth Council for Community Relations "it would perhaps be unfair to say that we are all racialsists now — though what it would be fair to say of us all, I know not."

The Labour NEC's campaign against racism is certainly not going to expose this record. And a campaign that fails to do that, that fails to make a start in purging racists from the labour movement, is no more than a salve to the consciences of the few liberals within Labour's ranks.

The Communist Party's paper 'Morning Star' uncritically welcomes the campaign. WORKERS ACTION says: use it to expose Labour's record and to fight for a real anti-racist programme that includes removing all open racists from leading positions in the labour movement, no platform for fascists, repeal of all immigration controls, defence of the immigrant communities against racist attack and support for their self-defence, and the setting up of nationally coordinated local anti-racist/anti-fascist committees that can mobilise forces in the working class to fight for this programme.

1,256,500 SIGNING ON: THE SOCIAL CONTRACT AS WE KNOW IT

"THERE must be more substantial measures to reduce unemployment if the trade union movement is to continue its role within the Social Contract as we know it" threatened Hugh Scanlon in an angry speech to the leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions.

The delegates to the Confed Conference, representing 2½ million engineering workers, heard Scanlon rage against "the calamitous figures of unemployment, which must by any standards be condemned as a disgrace."

But although Eric Varley, Minister of State for Industry, who also addressed the Conference, warned of further reductions in manpower in the shipbuilding industry, the conference did not, of course, challenge the Social Contract or question the unions' "role within the Social Contract as we know it."

The figures Scanlon was referring to were the Mid-June unemployment figures which showed that the seasonally adjusted figure for the jobless was 1,256,500 (5.2% of the working population) — an increase of 6,500 on the May figure.

They were preceded by the publication of a memorandum by Albert Booth, the Employment Secretary, who said that there was little likelihood of a fall in unemployment this year.

Even this bleak picture is over optimistic. The figures massively underestimate the level of female unemployment, and the memorandum failed to take into account the huge cuts in public expenditure — in particular on social services — all of which will mean loss of jobs.

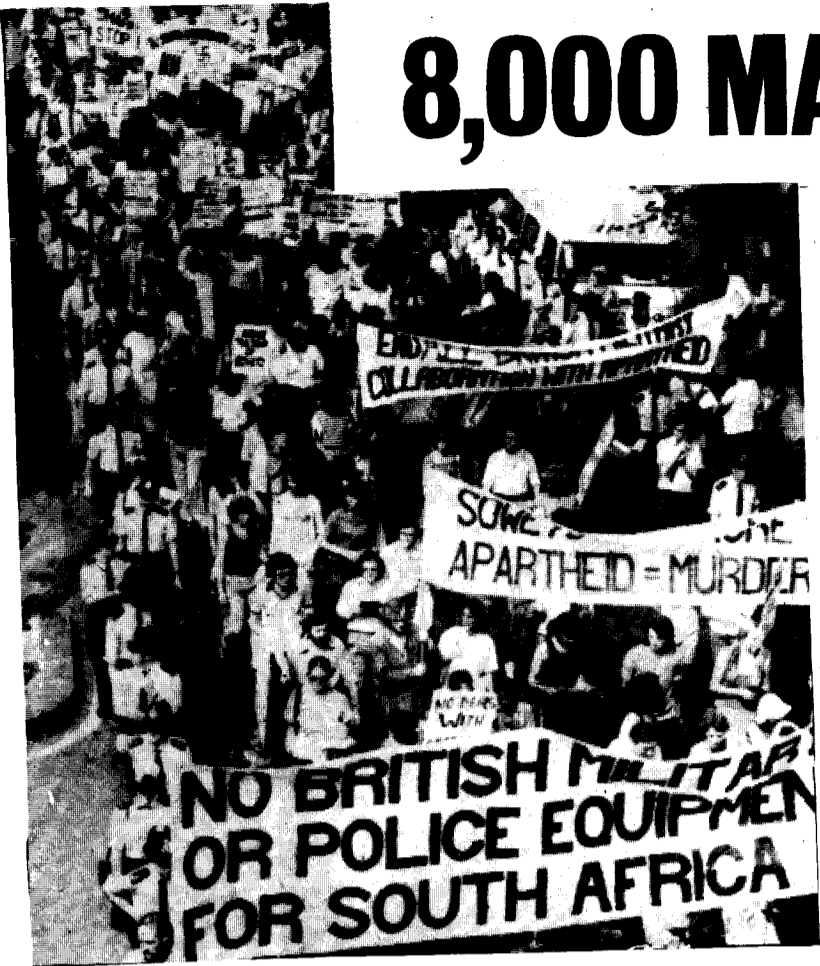
The worst hit by unemployment are the school leavers. There were 122,905 young people still registered unemployed in the mid-June figures — a hump up of 85,154 compared with the previous month.

Under pressure from the banks, both in Britain and internationally, to cut back even more than at present on public expenditure Callaghan has promised that the present wave will not be the last — there are bigger breakers to come.

WORKERS ACTION was against the Social Contract from the start, against wage controls and any restriction of the struggle of the working class to better its standard of living. These latest unemployment figures, the promise of more to come and the huge losses of benefit to the working class involved in the social spending cuts, make it all the more urgent for trade unionists to oppose the Social Contract and all that it has entailed.

WORKERS IN ACTION

8,000 MARCH AGAINST APARTHEID



LAST SUNDAY 8,000 people marched through London to condemn the massacres in South Africa and declare their solidarity with the black Africans fighting for their freedom.

At the head of the march were Labour MPs including Frank Allaun, Joan Lester, Stan Thorne and Neil Kinnock.

Speaking at the end of the rally Joan Lester, on behalf of the NEC of the Labour Party, called for the end of all British involvement in South Africa. She contrasted the Government's protests against apartheid with its economic and military cooperation with the Vorster regime.

Just how close that cooperation is has been revealed in a memorandum sent by the Anti-Apartheid Movement to the Government. It centres around the Export of Goods (Control) Act 1970, which prohibits the export of goods to certain countries. Among the items listed which can be sent to South Africa are "communication, navigation, direction-finding and radar equipment" "data communication equipment" and "radio transmitters" and other electronic equipment vital for improving South Africa's military communications.

In fact a vast range of goods can be sent to South Africa which are of potential military use, such as wind tunnels for simulating aircraft flight, and fuels

for aircraft. On top of that South Africa is permitted to get from Britain "primary explosives and priming compositions."

As well as general types of goods which can be exported the South African government has placed specific orders with British arms firms. Each time the contract has received the approval of the government. One example is the Troposcope system being supplied by Marconi; another is that of Hasler (UK) being involved in supplying Hasler (SA) with a message-switching unit.

If the Vorster regime can't get the equipment it needs this way, it can always get it by importing from Britain indirectly, using another country en route. A blatant example of this is the Rolls-Royce engines supplied for South Africa's 150 Impala light ground attack aircraft. These engines were sub-licensed by Rolls Royce to an Italian firm, from where they went to South Africa.

In a similar fashion Martin Baker rocket motors have found their way to South Africa via France.

The recent discovery of engines for South Africa's Centurion tanks being shipped out through the Channel Islands has led the Anti-Apartheid Movement to conclude that "there is strong evidence that British military

equipment can be exported to South Africa via the Channel Islands without any restrictions at all."

The Government knows this. An official of Aviation Jersey Ltd., who were supplying the tank engines to South Africa, claimed that his firm acted "with the blessing of the Ministry of Defence."

These weapons are being stacked up to deal with South African workers in revolt. Whether it comes in the hills or in the cities, the South African apartheid regimes is making very sure that it has the weapons to stay on top, however many people it mows down. European and American capitalism has far too much invested in South Africa to risk revolutionary changes which may go very much further than doing away with apartheid. So they make pious speeches and declarations and even enter upon 'arms bans', knowing full well that they can get the goods there by the back door.

But workers make these weapons, assemble and pack them, transport and ship them. Without British trade unionists, Vorster really would have a hard time stocking his arsenals.

And as long as British trade unionists continue to be party to this trade, then however many banners make a show on the protest marches, our fingers are still on the trigger as black workers are gunned down.

ADVERTISEMENT

"INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST" No. 1 now out, with articles on Portugal since 25th April 1974, the economic situation and the 4% limit, I-CL fusion resolution, other features, and reviews. Theoretical & discussion journal of the International Communist League. Copies 30p plus 10p p&p from G. Lee, 98 Gifford Street, London N1 0DF.

EVENTS

Small ads are free for labour movement events. Block ads, £5 per column inch. Paid ads, 8p per word. Send copy to 'Events', 49 Carnac St, London SE27, to arrive by Friday for inclusion in the following week's issue.

Wednesday 30th June. North London Workers Action meeting on RACIALISM - HOW TO FIGHT IT. Speaker: Danny Richardson. 8pm at Tottenham Community Centre, 628 High Rd, Tottenham.

Friday 2nd July. Red Weekly meeting on THE FIGHT AGAINST RACIALISM. Speaker: Tariq Ali. 8pm at Hornsey Library, Haringey Park Rd, London N8.

Thursday 1st July. THE ELECTIONS IN ITALY AND PORTUGAL. Big Flame meeting with Marcello Dallio and Oscar Figueiredo (PWCC). 8pm, The Triton, Paradise St, Liverpool 1.

Friday 2nd July. THE ELECTIONS IN ITALY AND PORTUGAL. Big Flame meeting, 7.30pm, The Ancoats, Gt Ancoats St, Manchester.

Friday 2nd July. BIRMINGHAM WORKERS ACTION social evening. At the Golden Eagle, Hill St. Bar, disco, raffles. Tickets 50p; on door, 60p.

Saturday 3rd July. LONDON N.A.C. DISCO, from 8pm at Basement, 29 Skelton St, London WC1. Adm. 50p.

Saturday July 24. Birmingham demonstration AGAINST RACISM AND FASCISM, organised by Birmingham Anti-Fascist Committee. Workers Action supporters to assemble 2pm in the car park at the top of Boulton Rd/Soho Rd, Handsworth.

Sunday 4th July. Demonstration AGAINST RACISM organised by Southall IWA and Trades Council. Assemble 1.30pm at Speakers Corner, Hyde Park.

Monday 5th July. THE ELECTIONS IN ITALY AND PORTUGAL. Big Flame meeting, 7.30pm, Conway Hall, Rd Lion Square, London WC1.

Sunday 11th July. Rally 12 noon at Speakers Corner - march at 2pm to Downing St - organised by ANTI-RACIALISM NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION COMMITTEE.

Thursday 15th July. Organising meeting for conference on RACISM AND THE MEDIA. 7pm at St Brides Institute, Bride Lane, off Fleet Street.

DEFEND THE HANDSWORTH 28. Defence costs for those arrested at the anti-fascist demonstration at Winson Green are rising, and money is urgently needed. Messages and resolutions of support from labour movement and trade union bodies especially welcome. Meet at the Handsworth 28 Defence

LAST WEEKEND, 26/27 June, the 700-strong Rank and File Teacher organisation held its annual delegate conference.

Since Rank and File's foundation the International Socialists have dominated the organisation. Up to about 18 months ago their domination was mainly a reflection of a political majority they commanded in Rank and File. But this conference marked a high point of bureaucratic control to the detriment of any meaningful political debate. IS did not rely on political debate, but dominated through a monolithic voting block of IS members, making up the majority of the conference.

No genuine rank and file organisation can live and breathe under such a regime, and many Rank and File groups did not bother to send delegates to a conference which was a foregone conclusion. There were about 100 delegates, compared to 150 last year, and only 80 stayed for the second day of conference.

The nature of the conference became apparent in the first ten minutes, when sweeping constitutional changes were made. First, the delegate National Committee, which used to meet every term, was swept away. Only two speeches were allowed on this issue. Elections for the editor and EB of the paper 'Rank and File' were then also abolished. Finally, a new procedure was adopted, that only IS motions on the order paper were to be moved. The others were just voted on at the end, but floor speakers, if they got the chance, could refer to them if they wished.

To understand the significance of these changes for Rank and File, we have to go back a little. On the last two National Committees, IS has not been able to dom-

I.S. carve up spells danger for 'Rank & File Teacher'

inate.

In December the NC adopted a programme of action against the cuts and unemployment which emphasised the need to direct ourselves to a genuine working class answer to the cuts and unemployment, which adopted automatic cost of living increases to fight inflation, demanded a sliding scale of social expenditure, and pointed to the need to integrate a sectionalised teachers' struggle into a genuine united front of workers to fight the cuts. This programme was formulated by non-aligned members and members of the International Communist League. IS were not only beaten, but had virtually nothing to say. The NC decision was totally ignored by the Rank and File Executive Committee who saw it as a counterposition to their determination to submerge Rank and File into the Right to Work campaign.

At the following NC, IS and their new opposition, the recently expelled Workers League, reached absolute deadlock over the question of the paper, sales of which

had been declining dramatically. Neither could agree on an editor or an editorial board. The I-CL and a non-aligned section proposed an election. Neither group wanted this, but they had to accept it. In that election, although Dick North of IS was elected editor, IS comrades found themselves bottom of the poll for the EB.

Clearly IS had lost a large section of middle-ground, uncommitted members of the organisation. They came to the annual conference determined to stifle any further debate by abolishing these troublesome bodies. They stated their reasoning quite clearly: "The Executive Committee does not debate perspectives but merely carries out decisions of conference". These words could come from the Executive of the most hog-tied, bureaucratically controlled union in the country.

On the National Committee: "members do not want to waste their time discussing bits of paper" (Jeff Hurford). Could this be a quote from some die-hard Stalinist? Or on the Editorial Board, from

Dick North: "The Editorial Board should not debate perspectives for the paper but should be selected by the EC on technical qualifications, and nothing else, its job is to administrate".

In other words, on no leading bodies of the organisation will any political discussion be allowed. The work will be done "administratively", i.e. according to IS policy.

So the business of the conference went through in a showpiece manner, with resounding speeches on the Right to Work campaign, absurd accusations of sabotage against anyone who may not think that it is the only thing in the world, capped finally with the appearance of John Deason from the IS Central Committee, followed by thunderous applause designed to impress the innocent and intimidate the guilty factional opposition. The vast majority of resolutions passed or failed without the slightest semblance of debate, some of them patently absurd and meaningless, but most posing the 'centrality' of the no-core issue and the 'key' nature of the Right to Work campaign in the struggle against unemployment.

On the evening of the first day, a meeting of the minority of the conference was called to discuss a way forward against the IS bloc. About 30 delegates attended, more than half of whom were not members of any political tendency. Members of the I-CL proposed an attempt on Sunday to re-open the debate on the Constitution and that the minority should walk out if this re-opener failed.

However, the Workers League, particularly, preferred to hang on to their shred of hope of actually getting their policies discussed and getting re-elected onto the Executive. This was understandable since they, in the past, as IS members, had tried to carve up conferences themselves, albeit less blatantly.

The I-CL member did put forward the re-opener motion, although they were not allowed to speak to it, and left the Conference in protest.

The effects of this Conference on the Rank and File organisation will be disastrous. The EC, as a narrow IS factional body, will lose credibility as the leadership of any sort of coherent broad-based rank and file movement. It could have been possible for Rank and File to formulate a positive position on IS's initiative on unemployment, but submersion, intimidation, and stage-managed showpiece can only destroy a genuine rank and file movement.

Workers Action believes that such a movement must be built around a programme that points out a workers' answer to capitalism and its crises. We also believe that this charade did not reflect the membership of Rank and File. The minority caucus on Saturday agreed unanimously that a Rank and File conference open to all members and interested militants outside the organisation should be called in the autumn term to enable a political discussion to take place. That conference must help to organise the potential for rank-and-file organisation. IS's policies are so wantonly destroying

Shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted

THREE WEEKS AGO THE first of the mass pickets in support of the 24 workers striking for union recognition at Automat, Swinton, was held. This followed a decision of the District Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Stewards the previous Monday to step up picketing in support of the strikers, who have now been out for 24 weeks. The most militant of the mass pickets took place a fortnight ago. On Thursday June 17th about 500 workers turned up to support the strikers. They came from Massey Fergusons, Chloride, Gardeners, and other local firms.

Some of the strikers decided to occupy the Factory. They, and some of the other pickets, managed to get into the main building, where they were quickly followed by a few police. The workers successfully barricaded themselves into the building away from the police. Meanwhile, outside, all was confusion.

Although the Automat convenor had been spreading round the word about the proposed occupation amongst the pickets, not all of them knew what was going to happen. In the ensuing chaos, the police managed to get control of the entrance to the factory, allowing them to move against the occupiers if they

and Communist Party member) stepped in.

After chatting to the police, he was allowed into the factory where he told the occupying workers that he could not support "illegal action" and persuaded them to leave...His action was defended, not surprisingly, by the Morning Star, which, in an article on Saturday June 26th, accused 'ultra-leftists' of carrying out the occupation, and said that Tocher was simply acting in their best interests by defending them from possible arrests.

Gloss

The article glosses over the fact that the occupation was the initiative of the Automat strikers themselves, and that they took part in it. If the Star's description of Tocher's motives for calling off the occupation is correct (which is doubtful) then his action was rather like shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted. If the picket had been arranged properly, there were enough people there to easily defend the occupiers from the police and allow the occupation to continue.

But militant tactics like this, although absolutely vital for bringing this protracted strike to a speedy conclusion, are anathema

to the Communist Party and the AUEW. The same article in the Star which condemned the 'ultra-lefts' also praised the picket the following Thursday, noting its 'peaceful' nature. In fact, the picket achieved very little. Arriving after most of the scabs had gone inot work, the pickets just stood around, eventually drifting off home or back to work.

The mass pickets will, and must, be continued, but they need to be organised much more effectively, arriving earlier than the scabs. But pickets alone will not break the dead-lock. The boss is already trying to recruit more scabs by advertising jobs for students during summer at Salford University. Luckily, this attempt was spotted and condemned by the student union executive.

Action in support of Automat needs to be increased. The call is growing amongst the strikers for daily mass pickets starting early in the morning, and a one-day stoppage by the whole of the Manchester Confederation. This would really put the skids under the Automat management, and should be organised as soon as possible. Meanwhile workers in the area must continue to support the mass pickets outside the factory gates on Thursdays. Their brothers and sisters at Automat have been out for over 5 months. They need every ounce of support they can get.