

NO WARSHIPS FOR CHILE!

All out against SPUC!

by FRAN BRODIE

On 28th April, the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) is organising a demonstration against abortion.

The leaders of SPUC are people like the Catholic hierarchy and right wing Tory MPs. Yet they wish to impose their prejudices as laws on all women, and make abortion illegal. Already, acting as a pressure group among hospital consultants with the power to allow or deny legal abortion, they have done much to stop abortions under the present law, which in any case makes it very difficult for women to get abortions.

Free abortion on demand, on the other hand, is in the interests of all women, especially working class women. For it is the working class woman who has to risk her life at the hands of the back street abortionist. To get an abortion 'legally' she must either be at death's door or already have several children.

Abortion on demand is a step towards control over our own bodies. The right to have — or not to have — children, without the Government or the Church laying down the law.

The politicians and priests who play on people's concern for children to mobilise them (often on the basis of sensational propaganda and downright lies) in defence of the 'unborn child' show less concern when it comes to protecting the children already born. Children living in damp and squalid hovels, children whose families cannot afford the bare necessities of life for them — meat, fruit, milk — let alone the odd trip to the countryside or the sea from the brick and concrete inner city jungles.

Standards

There was no shouting from SPUC when children in our 'welfare' state were deprived of free school milk, or when massive cuts in education expenditure were made. But SPUC is primarily interested in our 'morals', and not at all about our living standards and those of our children.

Anti-abortionists often talk of the 'right to life' of the 'unborn child'. An embryo in the period within which it is safe to carry out an abortion is not a developed human form and cannot be said to have consciousness in anything like the same way that human beings do.

Anti-abortionists may have mystical religious and philosophical beliefs which lead them to believe that an embryo is nonetheless a human being. They have, of course, a right to their beliefs, and a right to refuse abortions for themselves. But we cannot give them the right to impose their beliefs as law upon other people.

They even pretend to be concerned for women who have abortions, laying great stress on 'emotional problems' that follow abortions. We can only condemn as hypocrites those, whether SPUC or the Government, who would force women to bear unwanted children "for their own good"...

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ABORTION: WOMEN'S RIGHT. Demonstration against SPUC anti-abortion march. 12.30 pm, Sunday 28th April. Assemble Speakers' Corner.

Workers' fight

3p

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LENNON — LITTLEJOHN — STRACHANS LABOUR MUST COME CLEAN!

A police informer and agent provocateur is acquitted in a case which he set up to frame an 18 year old youth and discredit the IRA. Within a couple of days he makes a formal statement to a legal advisor and adds that he fears that Scotland Yard's Special Branch might kill him. A few days later his body is found in the mud. No comment, says the Home Office!

The National Council for Civil Liberties has called for an investigation into the Lennon affair that must answer certain questions. Was the Special Branch responsible for Lennon's death? Did Special Branch blackmail him into becoming an informer and agent provocateur? Did they pay him to set up actions and help frame others? Did they perjure themselves in the "Luton Three" trial, in which three men got sentences of 10 years each, and in the trial of Lennon and O'Brien only ten days ago? If so, who else was involved?

The Home Office refuses a public inquiry! The Littlejohn affair implicates a Tory minister and his staff in bank robbery and armed attacks on police stations if the brothers' story is true. It suggests that the British government has consistently tried to blacken the IRA and force the hand of the Irish government by stage managing criminal acts.

An enquiry? Not likely! Britain isn't the USA!

S.A.S.

The Provisional IRA and the Loyalist Ulster Defence Association join to accuse the British army terror squad, the Special Air Services (SAS), of fomenting sectarian strife by murdering Catholic workers.

The upshot? The Government admits the SAS is in Ireland and the Army denies it!

Irish Republicans, like militant workers, are described in the British bosses' press as terrorists — people who terrorise and destroy under cover of confusion. But the British army are told, is in Ireland to keep the peace.

What is the real picture coming to light?

Of course the Irish Republican Army carries out acts of violence. That is what armies — all armies — are for. Of course they operate partly in secrecy (though both wings of the IRA acknowledge their military actions openly and take full responsibility for them). If it didn't it would be wiped out tomorrow.

But, in the light of the revelations now seeping through,

the British army, the British police, and the British government fit the image of terrorists much better than do the IRA.

The IRA can rely on the conscious support of the oppressed catholic community of the north of Ireland, whose true interests it defends against British imperialism. The British army has to rely on tactics of the sort revealed in the Littlejohn and Lennon cases. And that is why British workers should support the IRA against the British government.

But the British government's department of dirty tricks doesn't just deal in Irish affairs.

SPIES

The recent revelation that Special branch have been keeping an eye on Strachans engineering works near Portsmouth for nearly a year is simply the latest in the long list of evidence of growing police surveillance of trade union and political militants. The fact that Brigadier Kitson, former professional British government terrorist in Kenya and the north of Ireland, has been advocating the use of special army squads in the class struggle in Britain, is now notorious.

At Strachans, the object of police surveillance seems to have been members of the International Socialists.

The matter-of-course agreement by the chief accountant, Mr Norman Grist, to act as a contact man for the Special Branch, informing on activities in the factories at Eastleigh and Hamble, serves as a scaled down picture of the whole set-up: bosses and state forces hand in glove.

The apparatus of repression exists under Labour as under the Tories: small-scale repression now, potentially massive repression later. Under the last Labour government this apparatus was markedly strengthened. The special police anti-picket squads remain in being under Labour, and are probably being strengthened now, just as the six Shrewsbury victims are still in jail now.

Until Labour comes clean on at least these scandals, the government will remain branded with the crimes of the mercenaries of the bosses' state. The labour movement must demand that the government does come clean. If it doesn't — and it is unlikely that it will — then the labour movement itself should set up its own investigation. In the coming

years, incidents like that at Strachans will become commonplace if we don't act now.

We should demand that the TUC, individual unions, or even prominent individual figures in the unions and the Labour Party, should organise a tribunal of investigation. In 1921, a Labour Party commission of inquiry on Ireland, concluded that "Things are being done in the name of

Britain which must make her name stink in the nostrils of the whole world", and called for the withdrawal of the British army of occupation, including the notorious 'Black and Tans'. In 1968, the unofficial tribunal on US war crimes in Vietnam exposed what was happening, to the whole world.

Labour must come clean!

Special Branch used this picture to threaten and pressurise Lennon (arrowed)



LENNON: 'Not the first' say NCCL

AFTER six hours of talking and checking a written record of what he had said, Kenneth Joseph Lennon walked out of the office of the National Council for Civil Liberties. His last words were "The Special Branch might try to kill me and make it look like an Irish job".

Four days later his body was found in a lane near Banstead in Surrey. There were two bullet holes in the back of his head. And all the papers wrote it up as an "Irish job".

By April 16th everything was different. The NCCL revealed the statement Lennon had made to them before his death and the tale that began to unravel was not that of an "Irish job" at all.

Basically Lennon's statement amounts to this.

In 1969 Lennon was involved in a demonstration in Newry in the north of Ireland, which led to his picture appearing in the press.

Four years later, in April 1973, Lennon, then 29 years old, was leaving Maida Vale Hospital in London, where his wife was having an operation, when he was approached by two Special Branch policemen. Using the fact of the photograph and the fact that they threatened to "lean on" Lennon's sister who was politically active, they pressured him to become an agent.

He was told to infiltrate the Luton Sinn Fein (the Provisional Republican political organisation). When he reported that nothing was happening "one of them said I should egg them on. They did not say what. But I got the message that they wanted more activity".

Lennon was instrumental in developing the illegal activities of a small group of Republican sympathisers. Through these activities three of them were arrested on August 9th 1973.

They were known as the "Luton Three".

In December 1973 the three were sentenced to 10 years for conspiracy to rob.

Lennon then set up a 19-year old youth, Pat O'Brien, by involving him in plan to free one of the three. In this he was helped by Special Branch.

Special Branch, however, failed in their primary aim. This was to draw the Bletchley and Northampton Sinn Fein groups into a conspiracy with Lennon who as both informer and agent provocateur would set them up. They had to make do with a small group of Republican sympathisers and paint up the affair as a major IRA plot.

For his part in the plan Lennon got him involved in, young Pat

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# None but the innocent

AT KIRYAT SHMONA in the far north of Israel, 3 Palestine guerrillas, members of the Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command, killed 18 civilians — mainly women and children — on Thursday April 11th.

In the rubble of the room the Israeli forces blew up to kill the guerrillas, leaflets were found in which the "suicide squad" explained its attitude and motives. They say that "innocent among you may be killed, but we blame you for willingly serving the purposes of the Zionist military establishment. ... these are the only methods which you understand. We can never accept the dispersal and the degradation of millions and your colonising settler presence.

"We want peace, but a peace based on the return of the land to its owners and your return to the land from which you came, a peace which, in our understanding of it, means the collapse of your state.

You face a choice either to go or to die."

The timing of the attack was no less precise. One of the prime objectives of the raid was to unhinge the delicate political union of the Arab leaderships and Zionism. In Israel, those willing to bend under US and Russian pressure towards negotiations with Sadat of Egypt are only barely keeping in check a revolt of the more openly expansionist sections. In this situation the PFLPGC hoped, and it may in part be successful, to impel Israel into retaliatory raids which would force

# killed at Kiryat Shmona

Below: Palestinian refugees driven out of Israel



Sadat and Palestine leader Arafat to begin at least a temporary retracing of their steps away from the sell-out of the Palestinian national aspirations and back towards the camp of Arab intransigence on the question of Zionism.

Accordingly letters were addressed in advance of the action by the 3 guerrillas to these leaders. To Sadat they accused "Arab Egypt, whose soldiers fought so gallantly in the October war, (of) heading towards a peaceful settlement". They reminded Arafat

that "we have heard you constantly saying that the revolution will continue until it achieves its aim, and we accept nothing less. We carried out our suicide mission, giving our lives in confidence that, through you, our sacrifice and that of all our martyrs will not be sold for surrender solutions."

At the very least, the PFLPGC must have been hoping that an upset in the diplomatic moves could at least give the Palestinian resistance movement a breathing space, and that their action — a daring, well planned raid into an urban Israeli area — would boost its morale.

## REACTION

It is possible that the PFLPGC further speculated on such a strengthening of rightist reaction within Israel as to reinforce Menachem Begin's chances of premiership with a 'Government of National Unity', which would constitute a further obstacle to the Kissinger plans. From this standpoint, the choice of Kiryat Shmona, with 85% of its inhabitants recent immigrants from Oriental countries (generally strong supporters of Begin and his Likud party) is logical.

But their choice of Kiryat Shmona, with its population of recent immigrants, also points to another element in their thinking, which is also contained in the leaflet. This is an element that socialists cannot support.

This is the step backward from the generally stated aims of the

Palestinians for a secular, multi-national state, a state which, though ending the "right of return" to Palestine of Jews who have no recent connection with the place at all, would permit all the people already living there to stay.

The bombastic tone of the leaflets ('either you go or you die') can be understood as an attempt to strike terror into the enemy population and demoralise it, rather than an actual policy statement. But there has been a tendency among some sections of the Palestinian resistance to begin to differentiate, and to try to say that those born in Israel have more rights than those who knowingly came there after the Palestinians had been expelled.

## VICTIMS

This is a dangerous line of thought, which will undermine the chances of the only possible solution — that of a secular, multi-national state caring equally for all its inhabitants — at the same time as giving no material aid to the struggle of the Palestinian resistance.

Just as the guerrillas expected, Israel immediately launched retaliatory raids into southern Lebanon, taking hostages, killing, and blowing up buildings. Dayan went on to threaten to reduce that part of Lebanon to a desert. Given the negotiations, this is unlikely. But, certainly, murderous raids by the Israeli military machine, often involving many more innocent lives in the camps harbouring that machine's previous victims, have been commonplace over the years. A fact which no doubt hardened the 3 guerrillas in their resolve. And a fact hardly mentioned by the pro-Zionist British press in its cries of outrage over the deaths at Kiryat Shmona.

Arye Ben Shmuel

# The last T

THE PRESENT minority Labour government is the first such since the ill-fated 1929 minority government of Ramsay MacDonald. There are a number of similarities between the two situations, and also some important differences.

In the 1929 election Labour emerged, for the first time, as the largest party in the House of Commons. There were 288 Labour MPs elected, as against 260 Conservatives, with 59 Liberals effectively holding the balance. Although the Liberals were not wholly united, they were sufficiently so to force a number of their own points upon a Labour government more than ready to opt for a quiet life.

## Committed

The decade up to 1929 there had existed a core of unemployed which had never gone below a million, and this was the dominant feature of working class life. Labour had fought the election on a programme committed to eradicating this long term unemployment. Despite the defeat of the general strike in 1926, Labour's vote had increased by nearly three million, as compared with the 1924 election. Moreover, the

A comrade recently returned from Yucatan, Mexico, has asked us to publish this account of recent events there.

IN THE main square in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, there is a statue of a 'conquistador' with an Indian under his feet. That is how it still is, even today.

The land was seized from the Indians in the early 16th century by Spanish invaders. The Spanish planted henequen (a fibre like sisal), entirely replacing the native crop rotation system of beans, maize, chili etc.

In the late 1930s, under Cardenas, there was a land reform. But because only henequen had been cultivated, the land no longer easily produces the native crops. The peasants gained arid land, capable only of producing henequen, without machinery and without financial aid.

In 1961 the landowners formed a henequen industrial monopoly — CORDEMEX. Peasants must sell all their production to the Agrarian Bank which in turn sells to Cordemex.

In 1964 Cordemex was bought by the state, with key positions given to landowners

# ALL 'MILITANT,' NO MARX

THE Labour Party Young Socialists held its 13th annual conference over the Easter weekend. Its organisers spent a proportion of the weekend congratulating themselves that it was the "biggest LPYS conference ever", that its influence was growing, and that soon there would be "a mass Labour youth movement".

It is not before time, if so. Children born just when the YS was launched following Labour's defeat in the 1959 General Election are now officially of age for admission.

The YS was launched to provide a blood transfusion for Labour's electoral machine. It immediately concerned itself with the problems of socialist strategy, theory, and tactics, and became a battleground between various Marxist tendencies and the Labour Party bureaucracy. It grew, certainly to a much bigger size than now.

## PURGED

Then the members of what is now the Workers' Revolutionary Party were purged and split to form their own YS. After various types of bureaucratic tightening up, the LPYS declined further in 1968-70, the period of the big youth mobilisation on Vietnam and of working class action against the Labour government. It has declined politically, too. All the tendencies on the revolutionary left were once involved — now the LPYS is completely dominated by the 'Marxists' round the weekly paper 'Militant'.

In all its existence the YS has never been anything like the mass working class youth organisation the British labour movement needs. It has been stifled by the fear of the Labour Party bureaucracy of allowing a really free, untrammelled working class youth movement to emerge, and disrupted by the internal civil warfare of various political sects.

## RATIONED

This conference gave evidence that it is now being smothered by the latest 'Marxist' tendency to assume control, and with the agreement of Transport House, too.

It was not in any sense a conference of a live youth movement, and it would be a nonsense to report it as such. It was a national rally of the

# LPYS Conference

BY JOHN O'MAHONY

'Militant' tendency, very many of them far too old for the YS.

Of the 1,500 people in the hall, never more than 10% were voting delegates. The faults and inadequacies of the resolutions and speeches were not those of young people thinking for themselves and learning. They were regurgitations of the lovingly cultured politics of a tendency already decades old.

The votes on resolutions were the result of tight factional control. Literally nothing was spontaneous even applause and laughs were grudgingly rationed

must accept this programme and then go on to pass a special Act of Parliament — called an Enabling Act — which will empower it to go full steam ahead to eliminating capitalism in Britain.

And what about the state apparatus — army, police, civil service — which serves the ruling class? Won't that state apparatus do what the state apparatus in Chile did and strike down the revolutionary Labour government? No, we're told not if Labour mobilises the working class movement first.

This programme, or rather



out, according to faction. The National Committee (elected not by conference, but on a regional basis) is almost entirely made up of 'Militant' supporters. They put up a speaker to reply to every section of the debate and made NC recommendations on how to vote. The chairman would then call a string of votes covering the whole section, ending each move to a vote with "NC recommendation...". Once he merely said the number of a resolution and stopped. Not a hand in the small knot of delegates moved. Then he hastily added the NC recommendation, and they moved! The only life, or contact with real working class conditions, was in the speeches of one or two young delegates describing their experience on leaving school and looking for work.

A resolution was passed demanding the nationalisation of the "250 monopolies" by a "Labour Government returned to power on a socialist programme". The Parliamentary Labour Party

scenario, starts with one improbability (firm commitment by the Labour Party to immediately nationalise the bulk of British industry) goes on to a bigger improbability based on the first (that the Parliamentary Labour Party would reflect this, or could be adequately purged to fight for such a policy actively) and gaily sails on, building a giddy pyramid of improbabilities, to the eve of the revolution!

## FANTASY

It is largely a fantasy, as is the slogan of 'Labour to power on a socialist programme'. The Labour Party is the party of the trade unions, which is why socialists who understand the central importance of the organisations of the working class concern themselves with it. But a socialist programme is more than just a shopping list for nationalisation. If it is to be an adequate guide to action for the working class, it must have a clear analysis of the nature of the

parties of the workers' movement, and, in Britain especially of the Labour Party.

The labour movement will have to be rebuilt from the ground up, politically, organisationally, and ideologically, to accomplish the socialist revolution. Whatever will be the reflections within the Labour Party of such a process of regeneration, it cannot be confined to the Labour Party. To write it all in as a series of transformations of the Labour Party is necessarily to cut down and bowdlerize both the conception of what needs to be done for socialism, and what the pre-conditions of it are in terms of working class action. Socialism is the creative self-liberation of the working class, or it is nothing.

## COLLAPSE

A socialist programme without a clear analysis of the state as the organ of the ruling class, and of what the working class must do to overthrow the state (being prepared and organised to meet the violence of the ruling class) — a socialist programme without that is a knife without a blade. Abstract talk of working class 'mobilisation' is not enough, and to see the mobilisation as the product of a summons by the Parliamentary Labour Party (this or any likely PLP) adds a pernicious dimension of confusion and illusion.

The problems of revolution through Parliament, and working class experience that revolution through Parliament is impossible, are squared by the addition of a new, magic, element, the 'Enabling Act'. This idea originates, significantly enough, in a book of essays by men such as Stafford Cripps and Clement Attlee, published in 1934, which tried to make Labour appear less threadbare after the experience of the collapse of German and Austrian reformism.

## FINE WORDS

Such talk does not give a lead for socialism at all, it simply lulls people into satisfaction with the existing state of existing organisations. It lulls people into being happy with fine words on paper, without looking at what those words really mean in practice.

(Report to be continued in the next issue of Workers Fight).

# IS RETREATS

Dear Comrades,

Your report on the Rank and File conference failed to draw out at least one important aspect as fully as it should have.

The argument advanced by Ken Hume that only 'minimalist' demands made it possible to unite workers should have been characterised as reactionary and opportunist, and not merely reported.

Two points need to be made very forcibly in this affair. First, it should be self-evident that in defence of working class solidarity the demand to combat racialism and sex discrimination are minimum programmatic points for revolutionary socialists. If this is not clearly understood, then it would be quite easy to have a minimum programme which Harold Wilson would put his name to. Second, what should be brought out into the light is that all those who argue and vote against such proposals as are contained in the amendment, which was rejected, are in fact supporting racialism and sex discrimination by default. On such issues, if one does not stand up and be counted, then one gives aid and comfort to prejudice, no matter how it is dressed up.

To give way to racist and sexist pressures in this way has meant that the I.S. leadership is giving notice that it is degenerating even faster than one would have thought possible. This is not merely a case of tail-ending, as your article suggested, but a definite retreat from elementary socialist principles.

Fraternally, Ken Tarbuck.

# FRENCH RIGHT LOOKS

FRANCOIS Mitterand, the candidate of the left, just could win the French presidential elections.

A recent opinion poll gives him 40% on the first round of voting, which takes place on May 5th. Unless one candidate gets more than 50% on the first round, there will be a second round on 19th May, with all except the leading candidates eliminated. The chances are that Mitterand will lose on that second round, but with a swing towards him in the next fortnight he could win.

Mitterand's chance comes from the disunity of the right. Since the death of President Pompidou, no less than six prominent figures from the ruling majority coalition have come forward as candidates at

one time or another: Chaban-Delmas, Giscard d'Estaing, Faure, Fouchet, Royer and Messmer.

When nominations closed on 16th April, Mitterand's major opponents were Chaban-Delmas and Giscard d'Estaing.

For 11 years, from 1958 to 1969, French politics was dominated by De Gaulle and the motley political coalition held together under his presidential power, the "Union for the Defence of the Republic". Pompidou was basically a caretaker for the twilight of Gaullism. Now men like Giscard, and, in a different way, Mitterand, want to modernise the political and economic structure of France. Even Chaban-Delmas, the official UDR nominee, scarcely

# A minority Labour Govt. THE LESSONS OF 1929

Liberals had also fought the election on a programme which they said would 'cure' unemployment, based on massive state intervention in the economy via public works, road building etc.. This programme was very 'radical' for its time.

If one takes into account the combined Labour and Liberal vote, it is clear that over 60% of the electorate was ready for radical change in 1929. It is important to remember this point, since the 1929 election was the first one in which all men and women over the age of 21 had a vote.



MacDonald

However, Ramsay MacDonald and the clique around him chose to interpret the situation as one calling for 'moderation', i.e. the non-implementation of even the mildly reformist programme of the Labour Party. In so doing they were in tune with the large majority of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

The practical consequences of this attitude were that MacDonald was only prepared to be tough when it came to fighting the left of his own party. The Labour lefts were virtually excluded from the government, and were ignored when it came to policy decisions.

## Co-operation

MacDonald spelled out what he wanted as early as 2nd June 1929, a month after taking office, when he mused: "how far it is possible, without in any way abandoning our party positions ... to consider ourselves more as a Council of State and less as arrayed regiments facing each other in battle ... so far as we are concerned co-operation will be welcome..."

This was particularly addressed to the Tories, and obviously points forward to a 'national' coalition, such as was to emerge in October 1931. This type of utterance was not so unusual for MacDonald to make, but looking back what is odd is that no-one on the Labour side challenged this statement, even the lefts of the ILP.

Before the election Labour had put forward the slogan 'work or full maintenance',

asking for unemployed benefits of £1 for men, with ten shillings for a dependent wife and five shillings for each child. (National average wages for men were £3 per week). But, feeling the pressure of 'moderation', when the Insurance Bill was introduced in November 1929 men's benefits were left at 17 shillings a week and children's at two shillings, with benefit for a wife being raised from seven shillings to nine shillings. And it was only after considerable pressure and protests by some Labour MPs that the notorious 'genuinely seeking work' clause of the Bill was amended so as to put the onus on officials to prove that a claimant had not been seeking work, rather than for the unemployed person to prove that he had. This rule was a bitter mockery considering that well over a million were unemployed at the time. But even this small, niggardly concession had to be wrung out of the government.

## Depression

Every measure that was put forward by the 1929 Labour government was a watered down version of the election manifesto. Yet each Parliamentary Bill was mutilated, as it came forward, by the opposition, both Liberal and Tory. Rather than put up a determined fight the government was content to allow a number of its Bills to be dropped completely.

But there was no thought of another election to obtain a working majority. The only thought of the majority of the PLP seemed to be utter loyalty to MacDonald's craving to stay in office, on any terms.

It was on the question of unemployment that the 1929 government showed its greatest failure. Even in terms of what the Liberals had been advocating, it was timid and rigidly conservative in its economic views right from the start. Its whole approach and programme for action was one of 'public works', in small doses

new Governor (a member of the ruling PRI party) was virtually eliminated.

But peasants and students took to the streets, acting together. The Frente Sindicalista Independiente, newly formed by the merger of three independent unions outside the employer-controlled CTM (Central Workers' Union), demanded the right to strike without fear of reprisal by the enterprise or by the CTM, the application of

# YUCATAN Revolt of the downtrodden

and other ruling class figures. 30% of the workers were dismissed because of the introduction of more modern machinery.

In 1968 — for the first time — the opposition party, Partido de Accion Nacional, won the elections, indicating growing discontent with unemployment, inflation and the agrarian reform. The P.A.N. attempted to implement the Federal Labour Law, giving better working conditions, and the Agrarian Reform Law, giving funds and rights to peasants — both part of the 1917 Constitution! But the federal government

crippled the new parliament by limiting credits to the Agrarian Bank.

In October 1973, there was a week of terrorism in Merida led by the nephew of the new Governor of Merida. This Governor had been virtually imposed by the President, against the wishes of the local parliament. The rampage by the Governor's nephew, Julio Sosa, using paramilitary forces, supposedly 'forced' the Governor to declare martial law and invite the army in to 'pacify' the situation. The army took over the Congress building and dissolved parliament. Opposition to the

## FOR LEADER

claims to be a Gaullist. Mitterand, a member of the Socialist Party, has said that he will take Allende for his model! Presumably not to the final details of dying with a gun in his hands...

Still, the road he promises to follow is the "parliamentary road to socialism" tried out in Chile. His programme includes important nationalisations; an increase in the minimum wage to 1200 francs (just over £100) per month; scrapping VAT on necessities and a 3-month price freeze, as well as easing taxes for the low paid and increasing old age pensions.

It's very much like the promises the Labour Party makes ... in opposition. Mitterand is no more likely to get to socialism than Allende.

He is not even likely to provoke as much worry among the ruling class as Allende did.

He has committed himself to remaining within NATO ("until a better alternative is found") and the existing constitution. He has taken care, to keep the working class support for him, organised by the Communist Party, well under his thumb — insisting that he standing on his own account, and will not accept any conditions for the CP's support.

## Contest

The CP leaders have bent themselves double to lick Mitterand's boots. Mitterand suggested that the CP should run its own candidate against him on the first round (so that he could demonstrate his independence from the CP to ruling class opinion, and so that he could get one up on the CP

by showing that he could defeat them heavily in a direct electoral contest). Even after Mitterand's invitation, the CP refused. Instead ... they have called off the traditional May Day workers' demonstration, in order not to embarrass Mitterand by even the slightest hint of working class militancy.

The CP's reformist degeneration is summed up in this fact: they cannot conceive of putting forward an independent working class voice in the elections. Their horizons are limited to finding the most 'left' ruling class politician around, and beseeching him to accept their support.

The task of putting forward an independent working class voice has fallen to the revolutionaries. After abortive negotiations for a common candidate, Arlette Laguiller of Lutte Ouvriere and Alain

and without any overall strategy. In the main it relied upon the initiative of local authorities to start such schemes, with the government merely supplying part of the cost.

Even if unemployment had remained at the figure it was at when the government had taken office, it is highly unlikely that what was done would have made any more than a small dent in the total, let alone 'solved' the problem. But in 1929 itself came the onset of the great depression and unemployment began to climb very rapidly, reaching 2,717,000 in 1931.

Most commentators since that date have tried to portray the problem as being one of a Labour government which did not even try to apply any of the new and novel schemes being pushed by Keynes and others. The implication is that had such schemes been adopted the unemployment problem would have been solved. However, the one country that did try these methods was not successful.

The U.S.A. had a large programme of state intervention in the 1930s, but full employment was in fact not reached until 1940-41 when it entered the second World War. It is true that the Labour government of 1929 was rather

two years in which it had bumbled from one expedient to another in harness with the Liberals and Tories, with the big majority of Labour MPs assenting.

The myth that MacDonald stabbed his party in the back is only partly true. Much closer to reality is that he took the final logical step of the policies pursued since June 1929. MacDonald has, ever since, been used as an excuse to cover up what was a fundamental failure of the Labour Party to have the will to fight for socialism.

## Ratting

The event which triggered the final collapse was the refusal by a majority of the cabinet to cut unemployment payments. But they had already agreed to cut teachers' and other government employees' wages, and to make other miserable cuts in public expenditure.

MacDonald's dramatic crossing of the floor to form a National Government gave those who stayed within the Labour Party an alibi. MacDonald's open treachery made the connivance in the whole policy of 1929/31 of the "loyal Labour" ex-cabinet members seem pale by comparison. Men like Herbert

In the 1931 elections Labour was scuttled, securing only 46 seats in the Commons. A "National" government, headed by Ramsay MacDonald, was returned. It ruled (with elections in 1935 and, of course, a variety of leaders) until 1945.

Today, the Liberals are relatively feeble. Their 6 million votes were largely negative votes, cast against the other parties. Wilson is obviously manoeuvring toward a general election. The left is not outside the cabinet, rather, its most prominent spokesmen are within it. MacDonald wouldn't have dreamed of performing Wilson's feat of persuading the left to accept — "for now" — such things as a statutory Phase 3.

Additionally, the votes for the Nationalists add another dimension of instability and unpredictability to the situation.

## Instability

The minority Labour government today is a sign of great instability within the system. The capitalist system was able to face up to the crisis of 1929 with a far more stable political situation. But there exists within the present situation a possibility of a



Unemployed workers stop London traffic in 1932

incompetent, and was hampered by having Snowden as Chancellor (a man with his feet firmly planted in the 19th Century and subscribing to 19th Century Liberal economic assumptions). But the real problem was that the Labour Party had neither desire nor will to fight capitalism.

When the Labour government finally collapsed in 1931, and MacDonald formed a 'National Government' with the Liberals and Tories, it was not a sudden event, a 'startling betrayal', but the outcome of

Morrison, a pillar of the Labour right until the end of the 1950s, had had to be persuaded by MacDonald himself that they could do better work by remaining with the Labour Party, rather than joining him in ratting on it. But this was not known widely, and the odium of the 1929/31 period attached itself to the final betrayal and not to the whole two and a half years of treachery; to the open renegade MacDonald, not to his aides and supporters who stayed behind with the Party.

protracted period of instability.

The majority of people have indicated that they are unwilling to go on in the old way, the ruling class are unable to go on in the old way, but there is lacking a decisive pole of attraction which can show the way forward.

## K. TARBUCK

the Federal Labour Law, and collective rather than individual contracts. In the next few months the FSI consolidated and grew.

In early February there was a wave of public denunciations of the Governor and of the functionaries of the Agrarian Bank, accusing them of fraud and misuse of federal funds to the peasants.

Then on 13th February a Student Union delegate and member of the FSI — Efrain

Calderon Lara — was kidnapped. He was a member of the worker-student committee of the CUESA construction company (in which the Merida Governor holds a big interest). The FSI immediately accused the state government and the CTM of the kidnapping, and a demonstration was organised in the city centre, demanding the body of Calderon Lara, dead or alive. The governor's response was a military attack on the University building, using machine guns, bazookas and tear-gas.

The students and workers barricaded the streets around the university, and after a fight lasting several hours, kept the army out. A general worker-student-peasant strike began.

## Kidnapped

The body of Calderon Lara was found on the 19th — half-buried at a roadside, with a bullet in the back of his head, three bayonet wounds, feet broken, teeth knocked out and face smashed. 4,000 people joined in a silent march to mark his funeral, the next day.

As the strike continued, many FSI workers were sacked, and four more people kidnapped. On the 27th, a general assembly of workers, students and peasants demanded of the government: 1) an inquiry in the crime of

Krivine of Rouge are both standing in the presidential elections.

Laguiller has played a leading role in a long bank employees' strike. Both she and Krivine will be continuing and stepping up workers' direct action for their own demands, irrespective of who is elected on 19th May, as the basis for the only real road to workers' power and socialism: the revolutionary road.

Martin Thomas



Francois Mitterand

kidnapping and murder; 2) dismissal of the chief of police; 3) dissolution of para-military groups; 4) acceptance of collective contracts with the FSI.

Under pressure from the President, Echeverria, the Governor declared that the Chief of Police was responsible for the kidnapping of Calderon Lara. According to the Chief of Police, "the intention was just to frighten Calderon Lara, my officers went too far." But many consider that the Governor's disclosure was in fact a manoeuvre to cover up the complicity of the CTM local leadership and the directors of CUESA.

On 4th March, 30,000 people declared the state government unconstitutional and demanded it should be dissolved. By the end of March the strike was still growing, with hundreds of peasants pouring into the city and joining the strikers. The newspapers were shut down — but every wall is plastered with newsheets and information, and loudspeakers touring the city acted as the people's voice.

But every day more and more soldiers are arriving, waiting on doorsteps and posted on street corners. As yet the people have no arms. And unless the people do take up arms, there could be another massacre like Bolivia or Chile.

5th April 1974

Delegates to the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers National Committee meeting, Worthing on April 23rd face two major issues.

Firstly, the need to defend the Union nationally and locally. The National Industrial Relations Court is now demanding £47,000 by April 29th, for contempt of court over the Con-Mech case. There is talk of the whole assets of the union being seized.

The other major issue which the National Committee will discuss is the national claim. It is over a year since the claim was put forward, but it is only since April 15th that an overtime ban has been started.

The original claim from the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (which the AUEW dominates) was for: £10 increase on the craftsmen's rate, raising it to a £35 national

## Engineers face a fight on two fronts — claim and fine

minimum, and pro-rata increases for other grades; a cut in the working week to 35 hours; equal pay; more holidays; and better sick pay arrangements. The Engineering Employers' Federation's reply offered £2.50 for craftsmen, £2.00 for other grades, and £1.80 for women. The CSEU then quietly dropped the question of hours, and probably equal pay and more holidays will receive only token mention in negotiations.

The overtime ban is the first serious threat to the 'Social Contract' since the election.

Before the election, Scanlon said he would refuse a "compact if it means a fall in wages". Now, though, the AUEW has come out with figures designed to show that

granting the full claim on the national minimum rate and holidays would increase the total wage bill only 7.7%, and would be within Phase 3. In the April issue of the AUEW journal, Scanlon writes: "To say that the engineers are mounting a threat to the government is not only silly but it is totally untrue". But the hard-headed employers' paper, the **Financial Times**, thinks otherwise. It claims that the overtime ban will seriously hit employers recovering from the Tory 3-day week, and "could also destroy Labour's chances of winning the next election".

The whole point of the 'Social Contract' is to relieve the pressure on the bosses where it is hurting most — in direct action for wages

and conditions — in return for 'social' concessions which look better than they are. It is an attempt by the Labour leaders to do the smooth way what the Tories couldn't do the rough way — and as such the engineers' action is a threat to it.

With this in mind, Michael Foot will be addressing the National Committee. He will urge acceptance of the 'Social Contract', and possibly offer concessions over the fine in return for soft-peddalling on the claim.

The overtime ban could be more effective than previous ones. With a backlog of orders, shortage of cash, and a general weakening of their competitive position as a result of the three day week, the employers are vulnerable.

Thus employers are likely to resort to lockouts, rather than see overtime bans drag on. Alternatively, while the Engineering Employers' Federation has declared against local settlements during the dispute, some firms may offer local deals in order to gain competitive advantage. Already, before the overtime ban started, there had been many local settlements.

As a result of these local deals

and the union leaders' retreat on the hours part of the claim, many workers stand to gain nothing directly from the claim as it stands. Where local rates are above the national minimum, the wage claim even if granted in full would do no more than affect overtime and holiday pay rates slightly. For this reason, if no other, militants must press strongly for the union leadership to reverse its retreat on the hours claim.

### Disunity

Another factor for disunity is the refusal of the EEUPTU (electricians) and the T&GWU to cooperate with the AUEW. The EEUPTU delegate on the national CSEU has said that his members will not operate the overtime ban, while Moss Evans of the T&G said national pay talks "serve no purpose. We would prefer to tackle low pay directly in the factories".

Lock-outs on any extensive scale could precipitate strikes. The danger in this case will be the more militant factories getting isolated. Meetings of shop stewards should work out in detail contingency plans to

prevent this happening: for example, 'grouping' of factories, with every factory in each group strictly committed to supporting the others; and flying pickets to bring out other factories, both in the district where the lock-out has occurred and in nearby districts. In that way engineers could prevent the Engineering Employers' Federation concentrating its strength and massive financial resources on the more militant areas, as it did in 1972.

Thus only in the very short term can the overtime ban be an effective substitute for national strike action. If the overtime ban is effective, it will spill over into strikes.

And that tactic of national strike action is also necessary to defend the Union against the NIRC. It is not enough to "not recognise" the NIRC; unfortunately, closing your eyes doesn't make the NIRC go away! Vigorous, national strike action could, however, not only defend the AUEW's funds and organisation, and win the claim; it could force the Labour government to dump the NIRC in double-quick time.

Even if the union leadership continues to dither, rank-and-file militants must act: to make the overtime ban effective; to organise support for locked-out or victimised workers; to appeal to miners and other workers for solidarity; and to prepare immediate strike action if AUEW funds are seized on April 29th.

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

**THE dispute which has hit British Leyland's Assembly Plant at Cowley, Oxford, for the last month reached a climax on Thursday 11th April when management withdrew recognition from Alan Thornett, T&GWU deputy senior steward.**

They claimed that his behaviour in the last three weeks had "blatantly demonstrated his unwillingness to use his best endeavours to keep men at work" while stewards went through procedure. Management have now stated that if Thornett continues his usual functions, he will be dismissed.

The background is this. British Leyland are trying to recoup losses from the 3-day week, clear the decks for a forecast recession, and fully implement Measured Day Work.

Measured Day Work is a form of productivity dealing which, while providing for big wage

## BLMC GETS TOUGH IN FIGHT TO IMPOSE MDW

increases when it is first brought in, cuts wage drift, restricts shop-floor workers' control over their working conditions, and assists speed-up. At Cowley, real wages have been cut over the past three years, but management have not yet got all they want out of MDW in terms of speed-up.

On March 21st industrial engineers with stopwatches appeared on the Marina line and management began reorganisation of the assembly tracks. According to the agreement finally gained in 1971, industrial engineers can only do work study "under normal operating conditions", and the resulting speeds and manning levels cannot be implemented until agreed mutually. The company was thus attempting a violation of the agreement, the destruction of mutuality, and a free hand for work study. This move by management led to strike action, but on 9th April the workers voted five to one to return, against the recommendation of the Joint Shop Stewards' committee.

As soon as the Marina line returned, 150 internal drivers struck, arguing that they had been laid off in breach of

agreements during the Marina dispute. 12,000 men have been laid off as a result in the Cowley complex. The bosses, seeing the five-to-one vote as an index of demoralisation and lack of faith in the leadership, victimised Alan Thornett.

The T&G shop stewards have voted unanimously to support Alan Thornett, and the drivers are staying out. In London, Hawley, the national officer, is discussing the matter with British Leyland top management — a dirty copromise may be in the air.

It is clear that British Leyland management, confident from their last victory, are determined to risk a prolonged shutdown in the interests of decisively weakening the union organisation and control and sweeping aside remaining constraints on a free hand to push speed-ups.

While continuing support from the drivers will keep the plant shut down, it is important to take the issue of victimisation and the right of workers to choose their own representatives in front of the whole workforce; to combat sectionalism; and to fight the bosses' arguments about where the blame for layoffs lies.

## 1,000 N.E. steelmen face the sack

On Thursday 11th April, just before the Easter holidays, British Steel Corporation management on Teesside announced massive redundancies, to amount to over 1000 workers. The redundancies, they said, could start to take effect from the end of the month, though no official notice has been given yet.

No official reason for the redundancy proposals has been given yet, either, but presumably they are part of BSC's general drive to 'rationalise' the industry.

In any case, resistance to the proposals must be organised urgently. The issue must be posed clearly as **WORK OR FULL PAY** without any of the confusing talk about 'viability' which has led to many previous struggles breaking up while each section sweated to prove its 'viability'. Confusing calls for a Government inquiry (not much use since the Government almost certainly approved the redundancies before they were announced) must be replaced by a clear call for a **workers' inquiry** to reveal the full facts.

The widest possible sections of workers, in the industry and in other industries, must be rallied to the campaign against the proposals. Preparations must be made to carry out works occupations if necessary.

Unfortunately, the stewards, and in particular Joint Shop Stewards Committee chairman Arthur Affleck (a member of the International Socialists) have so far fallen far short of what is necessary. Affleck has even failed to call a meeting, either in the time between hearing the BSC announcement on Thursday and Saturday (when the workers he represents went on holiday) or for that matter since.

His only policy suggestion is .... a Government inquiry. According to the **Evening Gazette**, his comment was "It is sheer bad management or the deliberate sabotage of an industry." But perhaps, Bro. Affleck, it is simply the normal operations of capitalism. What then?

Jack Price  
Tony Duffy

## N.U.T.: All noise and no action!

AT the time of writing, the 1974 Conference of the National Union of Teachers is just over half way through, and seems to be emerging clad in a coat of many colours. It started off on a sombre note with the address of the new President, Jim Caulfield, which contained the following incredible passage.

Speaking of the difficulties facing teachers, he listed: "the increasingly unhelpful attitude of many parents [perhaps the parents don't find headteachers, or authorities in general, very 'helpful' either; perhaps they don't find having their kids labelled as inferior very 'helpful']... the frightening toll of home-wreckage as a result of easy divorce and a complacent society [so he thinks it would be better if unhappily married people were legally forced to stay together?], the incalculable menace of accepted freedom of the media [so who should wield the blue pencil?], and the continued assertion that striking is good fun and work just another four-letter word [more of a problem for teachers is the fact that their long reluctance to take strike action has let things drift to the point where four-letter words are appropriate to describe their working conditions]..."

With friends like this, teachers might have been forgiven for thinking, who needs enemies?

Caulfield did mention the fact that a young teacher on the bottom scale (i.e. who stays in the classroom and doesn't get perks for administration) will have to serve 11 years before he or she reaches the average earnings of manual workers.

But even then, when Caulfield was asked what the NUT was going to do about teachers' low pay, he said "We are going to make a lot of noise".

Unfortunately, governments these days have ear-drums very resistant to that sort of noise. It takes action to move them.

Some of the Executive are afraid of initiatives for action from the 'shop floor', but now there are four members who welcome them. These are the four

members of **Rank and File**, the left-wing group within the NUT, who have captured places on the 37-strong National Executive. Among those ousted is the general secretary of the Inner London Teachers' Association, long-standing time-server Bob Richardson; he is replaced by 'Rank and File' editor Dick North.

The Exec. election results reflect increased discontent among teachers. Particularly urgent is the claim for an increased London Allowance, agreed in principle two years ago, but not paid yet. The government has promised something will be coming from the Pay Board in June, but the union is insisting on a settlement before teachers hand in end-of-year resignation notices on 31st May. A ban on covering for absent or non-appointed staff has been in operation for some months, and now strike action seems possible.

On Tuesday Reg Prentice, Labour Minister of Education, pleaded with teachers not to

strike. It's rather like asking a man who is being mauled by a tiger not to use his weapons to defend himself, but to wait for the official rescue party which is even now setting off for the jungle.

The argument which hits home to all teachers is, of course, that by striking they are disrupting the education of the children in their charge. What this means, at most, is that the striking teachers are spoiling their students' chances of gaining those little bits of paper that the bosses insist we must have before they will give us a decent job.

What it doesn't take into account is the long-term effects on children of the present chaotic conditions in (especially) city schools. If teachers allow the government to use children's education to blackmail them into not striking, they will serve neither their own interests nor the children's.

A half-day strike is definitely scheduled for 29th April.

Ian Hollingworth

## Foot tells NALGO to wait

THE refusal of Michael Foot to allow the agreed 'interim award' to local government workers to be paid has sparked off extensive strike action, and further bans on overtime and on work with agency staff.

The Whitley Council award only gave an extra £146 to inner London workers, and £105 to workers in the outer London area. The employers (the local

authorities) agreed — but Foot instructed them not to pay out. He said they must wait for the Pay Board report on London weightings, due in June.

The local government workers' union, NALGO, did not accept Foot's instruction. Immediately action was escalated. From April 17th 22,000 members are banning overtime and work with agency staff. Over 600 NALGO members will be out on strike. Ten or more boroughs will be seriously affected and the coming borough elections will be seriously disrupted.

The new instruction from the TUC effectively telling NALGO to knuckle under, will pose a serious challenge. NALGO's middle-of-the-road leadership are not keen to take on the TUC Rank-and-file NALGO members who are not willing to be sacrificed on the altar of the Social Contract and Phase 3 must look to an alliance with other workers fighting for London weighting, notably teachers and civil servants.

## SPECIAL BRANCH Contd

O'Brien got three years, while Lennon was let off because of police string pulling. In the words of one Special Branch man he quotes, called Harper, "We had a terrible lot of trouble arranging all this. Everyone was in on it — the Director of Public Prosecutions, the prosecutor, the detectives at Birmingham." He also included the Special Branch and was not sure whether the judge was involved.

O'Brien was convicted on 8th April. On the following day Lennon came to London. There he met Special Branch men again, including his main contact, one Ron Wickenden, who tried to get him to keep an eye on one of the Provisional Sinn Fein's leaders, Brendan Magill. Lennon refused.

Unsure what to do and fearing an attack either from Sinn Fein, or friends of those he set up, or the Special Branch, Lennon finally decided the next day to go to the NCCL and make his statement. Possibly he hoped the statement would provide him with some protection at least from Special Branch.

If the statement is true, then as the NCCL makes clear in a letter it has written to Roy Jenkins, the Home Secretary, it raises a number of vital issues. They say "Mr Lennon's case is not the first to have brought the activities of the Special Branch to public attention. In our view there are still a number of unsolved questions in the Littlejohn affair. On April 15th it was reported that the Special Branch had been probing the politics of people involved in industrial action at Strachans. we believe in the circumstances that a Parliamentary inquiry is necessary to ensure that public confidence in the British Special Branch is restored."

Of course there should be a public enquiry... so that everyone can see why they should have no confidence in the Special Branch. And particularly so that everyone can see their increasing involvement in political and trade union affairs and their role in Ireland and Irish politics.

## SPUC CONTD.

The only way respect for human life can be made anything other than a fraud is by fighting for a society in which the basic conditions of decent life are provided for all, in which murder by ruling classes and governments is abolished — a socialist society.

Wherever SPUC organise, with their lies, their moralising and their intolerable attempt to interfere in women's right to govern our own bodies, we must oppose them, demanding, instead of regressive medieval legislation, the right to abortion on demand. We need to organise against them in the schools, where they recruit many young people ignorant of the issues, and in the hospitals where they manoeuvre to deny even the few rights we have now under the law.

And whenever and wherever they come out on the streets, we must be there too. So organise a contingent to next Sunday's counter demonstration, which will be assembling at **SPEAKERS' CORNER** at 12.30pm.

## MEETINGS

**BUILDING WORKERS' CHARTER.** 5th National Delegate Conference. Saturday 27th April; Central Hall, Liverpool. Credentials — E. Nash, 11 Broad View, Liverpool 11.

**Merseyside Anti-Fascist Committee** wants to develop contacts with any other sympathetic group or individual carrying out anti-fascist activity. Contact c/o Transport House, 37 Islington, Liverpool 3. Any donations for this activity to the above address.

**SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF CHILE.** Labour must break all links with the junta and open the door to political refugees! 2pm, Sunday 5th May, Speakers' Corner. (Chile Ad Hoc Committee).

**TROOPS OUT Movement.** Conference — 10.15 to 6pm, Saturday 11th May. Collegiate Theatre, 25 Gordon St, London WC1. Credentials from T O M 28 Lammas Park Road, London W5.

**Conference against racism and fascism.** 10am to 6pm, 18th May; Renold Theatre, Manchester. Details from Manchester Anti-Fascist Committee, c/o 27 Thatch Leach, Chadderton, Oldham, Lancs.

**LIVERPOOL Workers' Fight socialist forum.** Cynthia Baldry on the State. 7.30pm, Wednesday 24th April. Stanley House, Upper Parliament St.

**MARCH AGAINST TORTURE.** Support hunger strikers' demand to be moved to Ireland. Stop force feeding. 2.30pm, Sunday 28th April. From Speakers' Corner to Ladbroke Square. (Joint Action Committee).

**ESSEX UNIVERSITY** Mass picket Wednesday April 24th COLCHESTER

**TEESSIDE Workers' Fight.** Sean Matgamna on "Ireland — what next?". 7.30pm, Monday 22nd April, at the Buttery, Teesside Polytechnic, Middlesbrough.

**FREE the Shrewsbury Six! Drop all charges!** Conference sponsored by Bolton UCATT. 8pm, Thursday 25th April, Spinners Hall, Bolton. Speakers: Bill Jones and John Carpenter, from the North Wales 24 Defence Committee. Also performance by Grass Roots Theatre Group.

There was an error in the article in WF 48 on the UCATT/T&G Shrewsbury 24 conference. The opening quote was of course from Jack Collins of Kent NUM, not "Jack Hollands" as printed.

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